Black African Immigrants in Australia: An exploratory analysis of the impacts of race and class on their lived experiences and adaptation processes.

Ayalew MERGIA

Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2005

Department of Political Science and Sociology
The University of Melbourne

Produced on acid-free paper
Abstract

The primary aim of the present study is to explore the impact of race and class on the lived experiences of Black Africans in Melbourne during their adaptation process as Black immigrants in the historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political context of Australia. Critical ethnography is the methodology for this study. Focussing directly on the everyday lives of Black African immigrants over a twenty-three months period during February 2003 to end of January 2005, the study reveals how racial factors articulate and intersect with class factors in the making and/or shaping of the lived experiences of Black Africans in Melbourne, Australia. The study uses a definition of race that focuses on the demarcation of 'races' as socio-historical constructions embedded in power relations that enable the majority to define the identities of racially defined minorities, definitions that serve to reinforce and perpetuate the minority group's inferior social status.

The mean age of the participants was 36.9 years (SD = 8.6). The participants were diverse in their manner of immigration, motivations for immigration, and household characteristics. Interviews, participant-observation, and paper-and-pencil tools (survey questionnaires) were the three methods used for data collection. Riesman's narrative analysis (1993) is the framework for analysing the interview data. Quantitative data provided descriptive information on demographic and immigration profiles, socio-economic and housing characteristics. The orientation of the quantitative component was to obtain a range of pictures of information or knowledge distributed within the population, and not to attempt any generalisation from the participants to the entire population of such immigrants.

Findings from the traditional analysis indicated that participants faced immediate issues of survival after they arrived in Melbourne. Findings from the critical analysis revealed that immigration policy, class, imperialism and capitalism are not abstract or concealed issues but rather very real ones that have a direct bearing on these immigrants' experiences and their capacities to adapt. Findings from the critical analysis reveal that Black African immigrants received mistreatment from both white
Australians (the dominant group) and non-English speaking Europeans (formerly oppressed groups). This study extends our understanding of immigrants' lived experiences; at the same time, it raises more questions for further investigation. In addition to the substantive contribution, this study also draws attention to several methodological issues pertinent to bilingual immigrant studies.
Declaration

(i) the thesis comprises only my original work towards the PhD,
(ii) due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,
(iii) the thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, figures, maps, bibliographies and appendices.
Acknowledgments

During my career as a doctoral candidate at the University of Melbourne, I was fortunate to have met several academics and non-academics, each of whom has made unique and extraordinary contributions to my studies and the ultimate formulation of this thesis. Expressing one's indebtedness in a venture of this sort defies quick and easy resolution. I therefore do not only want to thank those who have assisted me in the research and writing of this thesis but to let them know that I am truly grateful. Space limitations do not permit me to mention all of you individually, however, it would be inexcusable not to mention those persons to whom I am especially indebted for their supports in various ways. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Professor Ruth Fintcher, Professor Michael Webber, Professor Marcia Langton, Professor Verity Burgman, Professor Mark Considine, Professor Malcolm Smith, Associate Professor Susan Mannon, Dr. Timothy Marjoribanks, Dr. Karen Farquharson and Dr. Nicole Asquith for carrying out a strenuous task of not only helping me academically but also assisting me overcome my fears and worries in many times that I had felt down.

First, I wish to extend my sincere and heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to my primary supervisor, Professor Verity Burgmann, for the unique role she played in the accomplishment of this thesis. Her guidance, invaluable suggestions, advice, support, and constructive criticisms combined with her personal interest and concern to propel the study to a successful end by hiring from her grant an assistant supervisor to help in the editing of my work. She once again took time out of her busy schedule as Deputy Dean to the Faculty of Arts in addition to her role as a professor to the Department of political science and devoted countless hours at the closing stage of the thesis to reading, reorganising and editing my work. She once again took time out of her busy schedule as Deputy Dean to the Faculty of Arts in addition to her role as a professor to the Department of political science and devoted countless hours at the closing stage of the thesis to reading, reorganising and editing my work. Once again, her comments and suggestions at the final stage of the thesis were invaluable. Verity was above and beyond the call of duty as dissertation primary supervisor and her efforts are well acknowledged and appreciated. I owe a debt of gratitude to her for remaining friendly and cheerful while keeping me motivated to make certain that I produced a good thesis at the same time.

I wish to express deep appreciation and gratitude to Professor Ruth Fintcher (Dean of the Faculty of Architecture Building and Planning) and Professor Marcia Langton
(Professor of Australian Indigenous Studies) for giving me the opportunity to write the story that I felt needed to be told. I am indebted to them for their profound contribution to my understanding of the contemporary world. In particular, what I have been able to do in this thesis – the questions that I have posed, and the manner in which I have sought to explore them – would never have been possible had it not been for the enduring influence of Professor Ruth Fincher and Professor Marcia Langton. I wish to express appreciation for Susan Mannon for her willingness to serve as my external supervisor while I was away from Australia. Susan was preparing for field work in Costa Rica coinciding with the start of a major research project of hers at her University and has a great deal to take care of before she leave for Costa Rica, yet she took time out of this busy schedule to read my thesis. I owe a debt of gratitude to her for the countless hours she devoted to commenting, reorganising and editing my work. All the works she did was all well beyond the call of duty. My thinking has been deeply inspired by her incisive wit and iconoclastic wisdom, which has only surpassed by her singular kindness.

I also would like to express my deepest appreciation to Professor Mark Considine, associate supervisor, Dr. Timothy Marjoribanks, and Dr. Nicole Asquith, Department of Political Science, Melbourne University. I am grateful to Mark and Tim for not only reading my thesis with thoroughness and made numerous constructive suggestions but also for giving me the benefit of their precious time and experience to guide this novice scholar through the process of writing a thesis and inspired me to persevere as well. They gave me decisive support at critical junctures, for which I am profoundly grateful. Their generosity and their thoughtful discussions with me about my work were always helpful and broadened my understanding of what I was doing. I also wish to acknowledge the particular support and contribution of Nicole, for helping me across the finish line. I am indebted to her for the countless hours she devoted to proofreading my thesis and make certain that it was written with correct grammar and in good style. Her constructive suggestions and comments were profoundly helpful.

A distinct expression of gratitude and thankfulness is due to Susan Verrall and Dr. Shigeko Narayama, cherished friends, colleagues and staunch supporters who struggled mightily to aid, assist, cajole, inspire and otherwise push me to press onward
towards the higher mark of this achievement. Sue and Shigeko had always kept the
faith, stuck with me and never relented in their determination that I should become Dr.
Ayalew Mergia. Without their generous material and moral support all my efforts to
accomplish this thesis would have remained in futile. Both Sue and Shigeko have been
a vital interlocutor throughout the history of this project, and has played a crucial role
in the completion of this thesis. I owe a special debt of gratitude and appreciation to
Sue for her unstinting help and unwavering friendship, support and assistance
throughout the last two and half decades; stuck with me both in the good years and the
bad years; for her generosity, kindness and understanding over the many years we have
known each other; and through which, time, space and circumstances have never
changed her attitude, respect and friendship.

I want to register my gratitude to the Department of political science for assisting me a
research grant and for providing me with computer for use at home. I wish to thank all
the academic and support staff of the Department of political science, for their patience
with my constant requests for help, especially to Mrs. Rita De Amicis, Manager. I am
very much grateful to Mr Darren Smith, Web Developer and IT Officer, whose
computer wizardry, with his patience, tolerance, and understanding nature made the
completion of this dissertation possible. He was always there when I was confronted
with technical problems, and whenever I needed him for help, for which I am grateful.
I also wish to acknowledge the Statistics Consulting Centre of the University of
Melbourne. The statistical analysis in Chapter 4 and else where in this thesis owes
much to Dr. Graham Hepworth, of the Centre and I gratefully acknowledge his
contribution to the thesis.

There are many others to whom I still owe a debt of gratitude: Appreciation is
extended to Professor Hugh Collins, Master, Professor Malcolm Smith, Dean of
Studies, Phillippa Connelly, Dean of Students, Sara Martin, Development Manager,
Ormond College. My years both at the University of Melbourne and Ormond College
would have been unfathomable without Professor Malcolm Smith and Dr. Ros Smith's
generous mentoring. They were indeed a source of support, friendship and constant
encouragement throughout my stay in the College.
I would like to thank officials of the various refugee and immigrant service provision agencies and individuals in Melbourne and Canberra without whose assistance this thesis would not have been possible. Especially I wish to express deep appreciation and gratitude to Dr. Vernon Bailey, Professor David and Helen Green for their constant friendship and support throughout, without them I would not have dared open the gate of the University of Melbourne to begin the long and arduous journey to the so called PhD.

Last, but not least, I wish to thank the numerous Black Africans who have shown unflappable support for my work, participated in this study for sharing their lived experiences in Melbourne/Australia with me. I am grateful for their willingness to provide valuable information in the hope that it will improve policy making and enhance understanding. Their lives are testament to the notion that the power is in the people. Without being forgetful, I wish to extend special thanks to the leaders and elders of the African communities in Melbourne who asked to remain anonymous, for showing interest in the study. I owe special thanks to the Black African undergraduate students of the University of Melbourne, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and Victoria University who also asked to remain anonymous, for scarifying their time to participate in the pilot testing of both the interview and the survey questions. I am indeed thankful to them all for their generous contributions.

A distinct expression of gratitude and thankfulness, however goes to Anne Marie Adams for her diligence, steadfast support and for putting up with me during the final preparation of this thesis; and for the tremendous amount of material, moral, and spiritual support she so selflessly offered me in order to carry this study through to a successful completion. Also all figures, tables and map of Africa in this thesis were done by her. Lastly, for those who I forgot to mention, rest assured that your assistance is acknowledged in my heart. Thank you very much. In the struggle for equality, peace and justice we are all brothers and sisters in life.
Dedication

For those who have fallen fighting against fascism and dictatorship, I thank you for doing everything in your lives to make me a better person. For those surviving, I thank you for joining me in this struggle. You are all responsible for providing me the courage and motivation to finish this work. This dissertation is dedicated to you.
# Table of Contents

Chapter One .................................................................................................................. 1
  Introduction and Overview of the Thesis ................................................................ 1
    Background to The Study ...................................................................................... 1
  Historical Overview of Immigration in Australia .................................................. 6
  Contemporary Immigration in Australia .................................................................. 15
  Black African Immigrants in Australia .................................................................. 18
  Contribution of the Present Study .......................................................................... 24
  Organisation of the Thesis ....................................................................................... 26

Chapter Two .................................................................................................................. 29
  Theoretical Framework and a Review of the Literature ....................................... 29
    Introduction .......................................................................................................... 29
    Immigration Studies and their Limitations .......................................................... 29
    ‘Race’ and Racism ................................................................................................ 36
    Class and Class Structure ..................................................................................... 44
    Intersectionality of ‘race’ and Class .................................................................... 48
    ‘Race’, Class and Immigration ............................................................................. 55

Chapter Three ............................................................................................................... 60
  Research Methods, Data Collection and Methods of Analysis ....................... 60
    Introduction .......................................................................................................... 60
    In-Depth Interviews ............................................................................................... 64
    Participant Observation ........................................................................................ 80
    Survey Questionnaire ............................................................................................ 85
    Methodological Challenges and Concerns Experienced ..................................... 88
      Recruitment: Snowball Referral ....................................................................... 88
      Interviews with immigrants ................................................................................ 90
    Data Analysis: Use of Narrative Analysis in Bilingual Immigrant Research ...... 91

Chapter Four ................................................................................................................. 94
  An Overview of African Immigration and Description of Participants ............. 94
    Introduction .......................................................................................................... 94
    African Immigration to Australia – A Brief Overview ........................................ 95
      Sending Societies: Social, economic and political situations ......................... 95
# Table of Contents

Migration Patterns ............................................................................................................. 104
Settlement Patterns ......................................................................................................... 106
African Migration to Melbourne – Results from Survey Data ........................................... 110
Socio-Demographics Description .................................................................................... 113
  National Origin of Participants ....................................................................................... 113
  Age-Sex Structure ......................................................................................................... 114
  Marital Status ................................................................................................................ 117
Immigration and Settlement Patterns of Participants ....................................................... 118
  Reasons for migrating .................................................................................................... 120
  Reception on arrival ....................................................................................................... 121
Socio-Economic Features ................................................................................................. 123
  Educational Attainment ................................................................................................. 123
  Occupational Characteristics and Adaptation ............................................................... 124
    Labour Force Participation .......................................................................................... 124
    Income Patterns ......................................................................................................... 127
Housing ............................................................................................................................... 130
  Residential Distribution of Black Africans in Melbourne .............................................. 131
  Choices, constraints and discrimination in the search for housing ............................... 134
Chapter Five ...................................................................................................................... 143
The Adaptation processes of Black African Immigrants: Traditional analysis of
  ethnographic anthropology ............................................................................................. 143
  Introduction ................................................................................................................... 143
  Profile of Black African Immigrants in Melbourne ........................................................ 144
    Deciding to emigrate and Destination Decisions .......................................................... 146
    Preparing for Emigration and Waiting for Visas ............................................................ 149
    Arriving and Living in Melbourne/Australia ................................................................. 151
  Challenges Faced by Black African Immigrants in Melbourne ...................................... 152
    Adapting to a New Environment: Loss and Novelty .................................................... 152
    Learning a New Language/Accent .............................................................................. 157
    Education, Employment and Occupational Survival .................................................... 165
    Coping Mechanisms Among Black Africans in Melbourne ......................................... 172
    Social Support: Sources and Types .............................................................................. 172
    New and Old Social Networks and Relationships ....................................................... 180
Summary........................................................................................................ 188
Chapter Six ...................................................................................................... 190
‘Race’, Class and Life of Black African Immigrants in Australia: Critical analysis of ethnography ................................................................. 190
Introduction...................................................................................................... 190
External Factors ............................................................................................ 191
Immigration Policy ......................................................................................... 191
  Class Locations of Immigrants .................................................................. 192
  Reproduction of the Australian Class Structure ....................................... 195
Class ............................................................................................................... 197
  Workplace conflicts ................................................................................... 197
  Cross-class location conflicts .................................................................... 197
  Intra-class location conflicts ..................................................................... 198
‘Race’ and Class: Intersections ...................................................................... 201
Imperialism .................................................................................................... 203
  Stereotypes and Prejudice ......................................................................... 203
Australian Capitalism ..................................................................................... 207
  Marketing Culture ....................................................................................... 207
Credit .............................................................................................................. 210
Institutional versus Interpersonal Discrimination ........................................ 212
  Individual discrimination or Racism as an Interpersonal Affair ............... 212
  Institutional discrimination ....................................................................... 220
‘Race’ and Class in the Adaptation Process of Black Africans in Australia .............................................................................. 224
  Connection with host society ................................................................. 224
  Placement in Racial Categories .............................................................. 227
  Rapport with non-Black Africans including white Australians ............. 234
  Experiences with racial discrimination .................................................... 230
Summary......................................................................................................... 240
Chapter Seven ............................................................................................... 242
Conclusions .................................................................................................... 242
Introduction .................................................................................................... 242
  Findings of the Quantitative Analysis ...................................................... 243
  Findings of the Traditional Analysis and the Literature ......................... 247
List of Tables

4. 2: Africans in Australia.......................................................... 110
4. 3: Africans in Melbourne (By Origin of Birth Place, 2001)............... 112
4. 4: National Origin of Participants of the study .......................... 114
4. 5: Age-Sex Distribution of Participants..................................... 115
4. 7: Participant’s Year of Arrival to Melbourne............................... 118
4. 9: Participant’s Level of Educational Attainment, Melbourne......... 124
4. 10: Employment Status Among Participants................................ 125
4. 11: Distribution of Gross Household Yearly Income of Participant’s by Sex... 129
4. 13: Residential Distribution of Participants in Melbourne, (by Statistical Sub-
Divisions, 2001)........................................................................ 132
4. 14: Initial Difficulties Faced in Melbourne by Participants................ 135
4. 16: Current Difficulties Faced in Melbourne by Participants........... 137
4. 18: Difficulties Faced by Africans as a Group in the Housing Market in Melbourne 139
List of Figures

2. 1: Wright’s Basic Class Typology ................................................................. 46
2. 2: Wright’s Elaborated Class Typology ......................................................... 47
4. 1: Outline Political Map of Contemporary Africa ......................................... 97
4. 6: Age-Sex Distribution of Participants......................................................... 117
4. 8: Participant’s Year of Arrival in Melbourne ................................................. 119
4. 12: Distribution of Estimated Gross Household Yearly Income of Participants ... 130
4. 15: Initial Difficulties Faced in Melbourne by Participants ......................... 136
4. 17: Current Difficulties Faced in Melbourne by Participants ....................... 138
4. 19: Difficulties Faced by African in the Housing Market in Melbourne ........ 141
Chapter One

Introduction and Overview of the Thesis

Whether as nomadic tribesmen, explorers, colonists, involuntary migrants (i.e. slaves), immigrants, temporary migrant labourers, refugees, or asylum-seekers, all Americans share a common past – all have come here from elsewhere ... An old immigrant saying translated into many languages in the early 20th century goes ‘American beckons, but Americans repel’. To many new comers the adage seems no less true today than it was ninety years ago.

(Alan M. Kraut, 1994: 1-2)

Australia has welcomed people of all nations and cultures, but this welcoming was usually on a conditional basis, as long as they speak like us, behave like us and think like us, then, no worries mate. ... With the exception of indigenous Aboriginal peoples, all Australians are migrants or refugees of one generation or eight including the colonial officials and their troops, which should be regarded as a unifying factor and not a weapon to divide Australians.


Background to The Study

In the increasingly multi-racial society of Australia, the experience of people coming as immigrants from culturally and racially diverse societies passes largely unnoticed. How people from such societies construct a place for themselves and fashion new conceptions of who they are is the overarching concern of this study. The more particular focus is with the Sub-Saharan African immigrants in Melbourne, Australia (henceforth - Black Africans). Black African immigrants in this study are native-born Sub-Saharan Africans who are neither white nor Indian origin and who migrated to Australia from Africa or elsewhere. At the 2001 census, Australia Bureau of Statistics (henceforth – ABS) reported, 18,972,350 persons were counted as residents in
Australia, with 5,342,665 persons (28.2%) of the total population foreign-born (ABS, 2001). Although the research has not been able to distinguish in the official statistics between Black and White Africans in Australia, this same census reported there were 141,695 (0.17%) persons living in Australia and 32,958 (0.74%) persons in Melbourne from Africa (details are discussed in Chapter Four).

This research is a critical ethnography of Black African immigrants in Melbourne. I approach the experience of Black African migrants as a social formation that can be meaningfully examined at the intersection of two of its integrally related, mutually constitutive, and dialectically articulated features: (1) Black African immigrants as wage earners and casual employees (lower socio-economic status); and (2) Black African immigrants as specifically ‘Sub-Saharan’ or ‘Black Africans’. This study explores the lived experiences and adaptation processes of Black African immigrants in Australia where issues of ‘race’ and class enter all facets of social life. Thus, while this is a study of “Black African”-ness, this is not a study of something that might be called “Black African culture.” As Raymond T. Smith has written, “the task for ethnography is to analyse the complexities of the dynamics of class and status, rather than to enumerate cultural characteristics (or supposed characteristics)” (Smith, 1996: 197). To reiterate, then, the central concern of this research is to explore and examine the dynamics of ‘race’ and class in the everyday lives of Black African migrants in Melbourne – what it means to them, in the historical, socio-cultural, economic and political context of Australia – and how these factors affect their lives. In doing so, the specific aims are: to describe how Black African immigrants perceive, understand and interpret their lived experiences and adaptation process; to explore how Black African immigrants make a place for themselves in Australia; how they handle ‘race’ and class issues as they go through the process of adaptation; and to examine the impact of these two factors on the lived experiences of Black Africans in Melbourne.

Throughout the text, I use ‘race’ in its now standard usage of denoting its socially constructed status, and the lack of a biological ontological status, by setting the term off with single-quotation marks (see Gates, 1986). The distinction between ‘race’ and ethnicity is not a concept that would consistently be of analytical help in
understanding Black Africans’ lived experiences in Australia. Making that distinction in this dissertation is generally unnecessary and will be the exception rather than the rule. This is due in part to the rather undifferentiated way in which the term ‘race’ was actually used by historical actors with regard to Black or coloured peoples. I use ‘race/ethnicity’ when I need to include the cultural aspect of the group in the statements.

Hegemonic racist discourse often equates “American”-ness with racial whiteness, for example, and disqualifies or excludes African Americans altogether from the category “American”. Toni Morrison has addressed this racist dialectic poignantly, referring to the demands put upon immigrants to partake of a racial discourse that has “no meaning other than pressing African Americans to the lowest level of the racial hierarchy” (1994: 97), rendering “blacks as non-citizens, already discredited outlaws ... the real aliens (1994: 98). This, Morrison argues, is “the organizing principle of becoming an American” (1994:100).

In order to know what ‘race’ means in any particular context, we must locate the analysis in the very system of racism that perpetuates inequality. This study is constructed on the premise that for many Black Africans in Melbourne, there are likely to be various difficulties faced in their lived experiences and adaptation processes. An initial assumption to be verified is that factors such as ‘race’ and class have combined together or operated independently to create and perpetuate such difficulties. The analysis generated in this research relies primarily upon materials produced over the course of 23 months of ethnographic research in Melbourne.

Class - a system defined by the linkage between property relations and exploitation (more description in Chapter Two) - profoundly affects immigrants’ everyday lives. Analysis of immigration in Western Europe (Castles & Kosack, 1973), in Australia (Castles et al, 1988; Collins, 1988; Markus, 1985) and in North America (Bannerji, 1995) indicates that immigrants are welcomed because they are “structurally necessary for the national economies” (Castles & Kosack, 1985: 6). Employers cannot simply raise wages to attract workers for unskilled jobs at the bottom of the
occupational hierarchy because if wages are increased at the bottom, employers will face strong pressure to raise wages by corresponding amounts at other levels of the hierarchy. Yet, the bottom of the occupation structure cannot be eliminated from the labour market. Immigrants are brought in to fill the slots that are the least desirable and have been deserted by native workers because of inferior occupational status, low pay, and poor working conditions.

Immigrants are brought in to keep wages down and profits up for the capitalist class - and economic growth for the nation. Thus, immigration does not occur simply because of immigrants’ desire for more income, favourable conditions of life, or reunification with family members. Australia (Castles et al, 1988; Collins, 1988; Markus, 1985) and the United States (Vialet, 1991; Washington Post and Associated Press, 1996) open their doors to immigrants when there is a national economic need; yet the policy becomes tougher on immigration and immigrant benefits when the national economy is in crisis. Class is an under-studied concept in Australia - whether it is the immigrants or the host group which is studied; more prevalent has been analysis using the life cycle and socio-economic status (SES) approach.

Much of what we know about the relationship between ‘race’ and class has come from theorists who view the world from a conflict perspective. In practical terms, of course, this means that the majority of works in this area has come from social theorists with Marxist backgrounds. Having a basic understanding of the Marxist approach, then, will be helpful not only in evaluating the ‘race’- class issues, but perhaps also in formulating a new perspective on the complex relationship that exists between ‘race’ and class. Exploitation is involved in the class relations through the appropriation of labour effort of the exploited. Although socio-economic status (SES) and class are used interchangeably, they are different concepts. Socio-economic status (SES) is an outcome of class relations and exploitation in which the units of analysis are various age and demographic groups. Certainly there are academics that treat culture as a contextual variable while analysing their data. Knowledge created through the analysis of data using an approach, which treats culture as a contextual variable to explain all kinds of immigrants’ experiences “deflects attention from social factors,
influencing opportunity and privileges, such as class, 'race' and gender or from important institutional forces, such as political and economic structures” (McGrath, 1998: 19). More importantly there is an unintended consequence resulting from this individual-focused approach; that is, to place responsibility for optimal adaptation completely on individuals. Work or measures based on the individual-focused knowledge has great potential to support victim-blaming ideologies (McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler & Glanz, 1988) and to drive the attention away from the ‘causes’ of maladjustment problems of immigrants that lie in the environment.

Some ethnographic studies of Black Africans in Australia exist, but the effect of class and ‘race’ on Black African immigrants in Australia has not yet been studied; therefore literature on this topic is not readily available. This study aims to fill an important gap in the literature. As a result, the studies of Black Africans in Canada, the United States of America and Western Europe (the United Kingdom) serve as a frame of reference for this study of the Australian experience (Allen, 1994, 1997; Bannerji, 1995; Buraway, 1976, 1985; Castles et al, 1985; Cox, 1948; Frankenberg, 1995; Goldberg, 1990, 1993; Ignatiev, 1995, 1996; Lipsitz, 1998; Miles, 1982, 1989; Omi and Winant, 1993, 1994; Piore, 1975, 1979; Roediger, 1991, 1994; Said, 1979, 1989; Wilson, 1987, 1996; Wright, 2000). Although the proposed research focusses upon Black Africans in Melbourne, it is anticipated that many of the findings will be relevant to Black Africans who have migrated in other similar Australian settings, such as Sydney, Perth, Adelaide, Brisbane, Hobart, Darwin, and Canberra.
Historical Overview of Immigration in Australia

Australia, together with Canada, New Zealand and the United States, has aptly been described as a country of immigrants (Castles and Miller, 1993, Castles et al, 1992). Historically, massive inflows of immigrants, first from the British Isles, have been instrumental not only in the growth and demographic profile of the Australian population, but also in the transformation of the social, cultural, economic, and political landscapes of the country. Thus, immigration has left an imprint on every facet of Australian society (see for example, Burgmann, 1978, 1984; Collins, 1988, 1991, 2000; Freeman & James Jupp, 1992; Jayasuriya, 1984, 1991, 1997, 1999; Jupp, 2002).

When the British invaded Australia in 1788, they declared it 'a barren land without people' (terra nullius). However, the indigenous or native peoples – the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - have lived in this land for at least 60,000 years, or some 2,400 generations. In contrast, Europeans have been resident in Australia for only 210 years (Lourandos, 1997; Mulvaney and White, 1987). Extreme forms of discriminatory behaviour against the indigenous peoples began with the first colonial officials and their invading troops; massacres, systematic poisonings, lynching, and other forms of brutality against the native-born peoples of Australia have been well documented (e.g., Elder, 1988; Jupp, 2002; Reynolds, 1972, 1989, 2001; Tatz, 1999, cf.2001). As such, the history of the nation is rooted in deep-seated racism and prejudice.

Redcliffe-Brown and Noel Butlin believe that the number of indigenous peoples living in Australia before the initial colonial invasion as high as two million (cited in Keen, 1988:187; Butlin, c1983). Regardless, by 1901, their numbers had declined to 93,333 (National Population Inquiry [NPI], 1975: 458) and continued to fall to 71,836 in 1921. A juror, after acquitting one of the convicts implicated in the murder and massacre of natives declared in an interview:
I look on the blacks as a set of monkies, and the earlier they are exterminated from the face of the earth the better. I would never consent to hang a white man for a black one. I knew well they were guilty of murder, but I for one would never see a white man suffer for shooting a black (cited in Christie, 1979: 45).

With the indigenous Aboriginal population pushed to the fringes of white society, and the exclusion and attempted extermination of this population, immigration was the major source of labour. As such, there was a clear relationship between periods of labour shortage and increased immigration. For example, the years from 1860 to 1890 were times of generally high levels of immigration because of the gold rush. Australia was then forced to look to places other than the British Isles, such as Northern Europe and North America. While the immigration of other non-Anglo Celtic white Europeans to Australia was welcomed by the population, the non-Europeans (e.g. the Chinese) were feared by native-born Australians and this prejudice was to remain a pervasive thread in ethnic relations to the present day (Sherington, 1980:65). The response of white Australians to the immigration of Chinese miners during the 1850s led to considerable racial tension, sowing the seeds for the ‘White Australia’ policy of 1901. *The Age*, September 1896, warned that Asians were a greater threat than the Aborigines:

The Aboriginals were of too low a stamp of intelligence and too little in number to be seriously considered. If there had been any difficulty, it would have been obviated by the gradual dying out of the native ‘race’. What we have to be afraid of is that, from our geographical position, we shall be overrun by hordes of Asians (cited in Evans et al, 1993: 350).

Similarly, the illegal importing of Pacific Islanders, known as ‘Kanakas’, to work on the Queensland cane fields, fuelled concerns that cheap labour might threaten jobs. A member of the Victorian Legislative Assembly declared that he:

Anticipated the arrival of the day when this continent would be peopled by millions of pure Caucasian blood, speaking the English language, and maintaining the laws and institutions on which they prided themselves, and which had placed them in their
present position as a wealthy, an influential nation. It was in the power of this House to determine whether the colony should thus perpetuate [emphasis added] the greatness of the English nation or become merely an outlet for the teeming millions of China (cited in Sherington, 1990: 68).

In spite of its whiteness principles, the importation of cheap labour from Asia and elsewhere indicates how Australian capitalism benefited from non-white labour being vilified for racial reasons and therefore ostracised by the white labour movement. As Verity Burgmann observes, racist ideology, promoted by those who employed non-white labour just as firmly as by those who did not, facilitated capital accumulation in nineteenth century (Burgmann, 1978: 20-21). Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century, racism had become a code of faith for both the proud representatives of the British Empire and the republican nationalist democrats. As the ferociously nationalistic Bulletin put it, democracy and worker solidarity did not extend to the Chinese or any other ‘non-whites’. From 17 June 1893, its banner declared “Australia for the white Man – The cheap Chinamen, the cheap nigger, and the cheap European pauper to be absolutely excluded” (cited in Yarwood and Knowling, 1982: 185).

The concept of ‘race’ has historically been a key factor determining Australian immigration policy. Many culturally, physically, and demographically different groups were restricted from entering Australia so that the nation could protect and preserve what was then seen as its national ethnic heritage (see for example, Collins, 1988, 1991; Jayasuriya, 1984, 1991, 1997, 1999; Sherington, 1980:65; Willard, 1967; Yarwood, 1964). The first Australian Parliament voted in 1901 to mandate that a person who was to become Australian must be “white” and to re-enforce this in practice, the first Australian Parliament enacted the infamous policy known as the “White Australia Policy”, which become the central feature of Australian Immigration policy until its demise in 1973. On January 24, 1900, Sir Edmund Barton, Australia’s first Prime Minister, speaking in the House of Representatives in favour of the notorious education test in the Migration Restriction Bill, said: “I do not think that the doctrine of equality of man was ever really intended to include racial equality” (cited in Udo-Ekpo, 1999: 4). In short, there has been an intrinsic link between whiteness and access to being Australian since the arrival of the First Fleet. The Immigration
Restriction Act 1901 became the first substantial piece of law of the new Federal Parliament of the land.

The Immigration Restriction Act 1901 ensured that Australian immigrants should not only be of European origin but predominantly Anglo-Celtic (Elder, 1988; Markus, 1994; Tatz, 2003; Willard, 1967). Thus, the basis of Australian immigration policy prior to, and since Australia became a Federation in 1901, was racial exclusion (Butlin, 1983; Elder, 1988; Jayasuriya, 1991, 1999; Markus, 1994; Price, 1963; 1975; Willard, 1967; Tatz, 2003). In 1947, Arthur Calwell, in defending the deportation of a Chinese whom he claimed was not eligible to become a permanent resident of Australia, argued: “There are many Wongs in the Australian community, but ... two Wongs don’t make a white.” This statement prompted the Australian columnist, Phillip Adams, to conclude in an article “Bigotry was central to our migration and foreign policies ... Australia was devised as a white man’s country. Defiantly, arrogantly white” (cited in Udo-Ekpo, 1999: 5). Among other things, the primary objectives of the ‘White Australia Policy’ were to create an ethnically homogenous society, and to ensure that non-whites would not be permitted to settle, work, or live temporarily in Australia. This discriminatory policy was in line with prevailing concepts of nationalism and cultural exclusiveness then practised by many countries of the world, notably the United States, Canada and New Zealand. As Laksiri Jayasuriya has stated:

With the passing of this legislation [the Immigration Restriction Act 1901] of racial exclusion the ‘White Australia’ policy became the symbol of Australian nationalism and imperial sentiment, thereby associating it with ‘racism’. Overall, these attitudes and sentiments served to instil a sense of national identity, linking ‘race’ and colour (Jayasuriya, 1999: 17).

The ‘White Australia Policy’ was fully supported by voters, politicians, the general public, labour unions as well as well-educated statesmen (Willard, 1967:119), including Prime Ministers (Palffreeman, 1967; Price, 1974; Yarwood, 1964). Australia has contended with the conflicting interests of preserving the ‘whiteness’ of the nation while simultaneously ensuring an adequate supply of labour. As in the United States,
the hegemony in Australia of a ruling class descended from north western Europe (predominantly Anglo-Celtic) has involved the continuous task of producing a national “majority” racialised as “white”, against other subordinated segments of the working classes racialised as something else (Allen, 1994, 1997; Burgmann, 1978, 1984, 2001; Collins, 1988; Hale, 1998; Horsman, 1981; Ignatiev, 1995; Jayasuriya, 1991, 1999; Roediger, 1991, 1994; Saxton, 1990; Sherington, 1980; Takaki, 1979; Willard, 1967; Yarwood, 1964). “Whiteness” is not a fact of nature; it is a fact of white supremacy. Thus, the Australian nation-state’s labourious efforts at homogenisation entail an ideological manufacture of national identity and citizenship, inherently racialised as “white”.

Since colonisation, non-Europeans were seen as a competitive threat to white labour and their presence in Australia was portrayed as a danger to the preservation of white racial purity (Burgmann, 1978; 1984; Collins, 1988; Sherington, 1980). The installation of white privilege at the level of the state and in civil society functioned as a principle of racial selection differentiating what was included or excluded from membership within the ‘imagined community’ (Anderson, 1991) of the Australian nation. The inclusive and unifying appeal of the ‘whiteness’ principle to the disenfranchised white working class in Australia became the ideological motivation for a series of anti-immigration campaigns.

The solidaristic appeal of whiteness across class lines (Almaguer, 1994), served multiple interests that allowed whiteness across the social spectrum to protect and legitimate ‘social closures’ predicated on racial hegemony. Roediger argues “whiteness was a way in which white workers responded to a fear of dependency on wage labour and to the necessities of capitalist work discipline” (Roediger, 1991: 13). Verity Burgmann suggests working-class racism is a classic example of what Marxists have characterised as “false consciousness”:

Racist ideology preaches to the working class ‘race’ rather than class loyalty, as it maintains that humans can be classified into hierarchies on the basis of supposed biological differences. Working class racism exists, therefore, not because it
expresses real working class interests but because of the all-pervasive influence of ruling class ideology (Burgmann, 1978: 22).

Despite these policies, migration to Australia continued. Immigrants from Eastern Europe in the 1940s and early 1950s and from Southern Europe in the later 1950s and 1960s provided a source of unskilled and semi-skilled labour. English-speaking migrants, together with the Australian-born, were employed in jobs across the occupational and industrial spectrum. It has been argued that immigrant labour plays a similar role in all industrialised societies. Michael Piore argues that “the jobs in which migrants are concentrated all have something in common ... they can in some way be sharply distinguished from jobs held by native workers” (Piore, 1980: 16-17). Turpin (1986: 22), for example, argues that segmentation in the labour market has the effect of placing culturally distinct migrants in the least desirable occupational structures and making it difficult for them to break out of this employment pattern. Data from 1976, 1981 and 1986 census in Australia confirm these patterns, although in 1986, it was evident that many new Asian immigrants had broken through into the primary labour market (Collins, 1988, 1991; Castles, 1996) in these years immediately following the liberalisation of Australian immigration policy.

Given the country’s racialised immigration policies, however, those who entered Australia suffered and battled against racial prejudice and discrimination in their daily life (Castles et al., 1988; Collins, 1988; Jakubowicz, 1984, 1988; Markus, 1985; Martin, 1978, 1981). For example, immigrants typically become scapegoats for economic problems, such as unemployment, urban decline, and rising housing prices. D. B. Saddlington, among others, notes that racial difficulties are at their worst when associated with differences in skin colour (Saddlington, 1975: 112). Beginning in the mid-1940s, the non-English speaking background (henceforth – NESB) immigrants who arrived in Australia from Eastern and Southern Europe were the object of great prejudice and opposition from the Australian people. Public opinion was overwhelmingly against the continuation of Italian and Greek immigration in the 1950s (Collins, 1988; Markus, 1985), as it continued to be against each new wave of NESB immigrant workers and their families who came to Australia from Europe. Racist stereotypes flourished as “Balts”, “reffos”, ‘wogs’, ‘dagos’ and ‘wops’ - as the
Eastern, Southern and Central European immigrants of the 40s, 50s and 60s were popularly called in the derogatory vernacular of the day (Collins, 1988).

The official policy pertaining to immigrants' settlement in Australia from the 1940s until the late 1960s was assimilation. According to this policy, immigrants in Australia should adapt to the “Australian way of life”, including its language, customs and social practices. This means that immigrants were expected to discard their culture, language and history, and instead imitate “Australians”. Under the policy of assimilation, sameness was emphasised, while totally ignoring the practical needs of NESB immigrants (Collins, 1991). Immigrants were expected to behave and act like Australians (the Anglo-Celts) from the outset. This assimilation policy was at last abandoned, and after a decade of a policy of integration in the 1960s, multiculturalism was adopted as the philosophy underlying settlement policies in 1973 (Collins, 1991). The notion of assimilation is briefly discussed in Chapter Two.

Under the policy of multiculturalism, immigrants were encouraged to celebrate their culture and language and not be ashamed of their heritage. In order to address the particular needs of NESB immigrants many programs were introduced in the areas of education, health, welfare, the law and the media (Collins, 1991). English language training for adult migrants was promoted, as were community language programs in schools. The Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research was opened, which played an important role in providing research in support of a large immigration program, and the Office of Multicultural Affairs was established in 1987 “as part of the attempt to cater to the ethnic lobby” (Grattan, 1993:137). Under the banner of multiculturalism, measures to secure civil and social rights for migrants were introduced. Soon after the ‘White Australia Policy’ was abolished the Federal Racial Discrimination Act was enacted in 1975. This Act was a piece of legislation based on the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Australia (which is a signatory) has an obligation to guarantee all residents “the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to just and favourable remuneration” (HREOC, 1995: 3). In addition:
It is unlawful for a person to do any act involving a distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on 'race', colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, employment or exercise, on an equal footing, of any human right or fundamental freedom in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life (HREOC, 1995: 1-2).

Over the following years, similar legislation — either anti-discrimination or equal opportunity laws — was enacted in all the states and territories. Although it is not possible for racial discrimination to be simply legislated away, until the Racial Discrimination Act potential employer discrimination against immigrants was not directly attacked in Australia. The right of an employer before this Act was to hire or not hire whomsoever s/he chose, giving her/him the right to exclude individuals from employment on the basis of 'race', nationality/ethnicity or accent.

Multiculturalism was, however, soon exposed to criticism from a very broad political spectrum: from the right wing as well as from the left wing of Australian politics. The right-wing critique of multiculturalism is that multiculturalism is divisive, that it denies the distinctive Australian heritage based on British origins, that it was simply a response to the 'ethnic vote' and that it would encourage separatism with the resulting possibility of ethnic and racial strife. This right-wing critique argues also that too much power and privilege has been given to immigrant minorities at the expense of whites, who have been the victims of globalisation and economic restructuring (for details see, One Nation 1998; Barnet, 1986; Betts, 1988, 1999; Blainey, 1984; Rimmer, 1988; Sheehan, 1998). The One Nation Party, for example, argues that multiculturalism leads to “our people being divided into separate ethnic groups” and to a destruction of “our unique Australian culture and identity” (One Nation, 1998: 2-3, 10, emphasis added). To One Nation, our unique Australian culture and identity obviously means the Anglo-Celtic culture and identity.

Consequently, since its rise to power, the current government’s main objective with regard to immigration has become defusing public concerns about links between
migration, multiculturalism, and challenges to Australians' sense of identity. Its strategy has become distancing itself from multicultural policies. This it did by dismantling agencies that were symbols of government support for multiculturalism and by simply ignoring the issue. For example, the Office of Multicultural Affairs was abolished and its activities taken up by the Department of Immigration. The Bureau of Immigration, Multicultural and Population Research, was also shut down. Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, previously a cabinet portfolio, has been relegated to junior ministry status. And the English language-training program has been cut (Freeman & Bob Birrell, 2001; Jupp, 2002).

Critics of multiculturalism also have come from the left. The left argues that although multiculturalism redressed many of the settlement problems facing NESB immigrants, its focus has been mainly limited to dance, dress, diet and dialect aspects of lifestyle (Collins, 1991; de Lepervanche, 1984). Multiculturalism policy gives immigrants the right to retain their languages, music, food, religion, and folkloric cultural practices, while ignoring the racial, religious, or class conflicts that might be associated with them. In other words, the achievements of multiculturalism in the area of the economy and politics are much more limited or ignored. So, on the one hand, the left has commended how multiculturalism redressed many of the settlement problems facing immigrants, particularly NESB immigrants; on the other hand, the left is concerned that multiculturalism has been mainly limited to cultural practices and activities. The left is concerned that the root causes of immigrants' disadvantage within Australian society are either hidden or disguised by the emphasis on cultural recognition. This is the contradiction inherent in multiculturalism identified by the left: that emphasising culture has failed to address economic inequality in the labour market and racism in the Australian community. Multiculturalism has been described by the left as useful for 'sustaining the existing social order' and 'core values', and as an 'effective means of social control', precisely because it gives priority to ethnic rather than class considerations (for detail of the criticism from the left, see for example, Castles, et al, 1992; Collins, 1991; Hage, 1999; Jayasuriya, 1984, 1997; Jakubowicz, 1984; de Lepervanche, 1984).
Contemporary Immigration in Australia

Since the end of the 1970s, the countries of origin of immigrants to Australia have shifted markedly away from predominantly white to non-white ones. The result is that Australian society is today composed of highly diversified and heterogeneous immigrant groups all trying to carve a niche for themselves in this land of immigrants. Immigration is largely the source both of Australia's racial diversity and its national identity. The new migratory flows are extremely heterogeneous in character and motivations. For instance, the Middle East category includes both Turkish migrant workers and Lebanese refugees. Southeast Asians included impoverished asylum-seekers from Vietnam and Cambodia, as well as highly educated professionals from Malaysia and Hong Kong. Migrants from the Pacific region are predominantly New Zealanders, followed by Fijian Indians, and then by a fairly small number of other Pacific Islanders. There are a large number of refugees from Latin America, mainly from Chile and El Salvador, as well as migrant workers recruited in the early 1970s. While the overwhelming majority of South African immigrants are affluent European Africans, the migrants from the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa are mostly refugees.

Recent immigrants from developing countries differ not only in language and culture but also in skin colour. Indeed, immigrants to Australia since the early 1980s are more diverse in languages, customs, culture, religion, skin colour and physical characteristics than those who migrated before and/or after the 1970s. European immigrants in general had a distinct advantage, both racially and ethnically. That is to say, the racial variation that existed among Europeans was relatively minor (Collins, 1988). Moreover, in cases when an immigrant groups' mother language was not English, it was often linguistically related to English. And when the traditions and customs of immigrants were not identical with those of other Australians, they at least shared with those Australians common features of history and heritage that came from having origins that were European, as opposed to African and Asian or Caribbean. Despite the renunciation of the 'White Australian policy' in 1973, for 30 years, this study will show that racism lingers in subtle ways. As a New York columnist for the Herald Sun noted, Australia is "a racist, violent and brutal nation with a pathetically thin culture" and "racism ... a great Australian tradition" (Herald Sun, February 8, 2002).
Contemporary immigrants are disproportionately found in unskilled or semi-skilled manual jobs in the construction and service industries or among the unemployed (Vivianni et al., 1993; Iredale and D’Arcy, 1992). These immigrants tend to concentrate in jobs typically doing “many of the ‘3-D’ – dirty, dangerous and difficult jobs – and work for desperately low pay” (Stalker, 2001: 8), jobs which native-born workers shun since they are unpleasant, difficult and low-paid. This view has been supported by Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, who have argued that “immigrant workers in France, Germany, Switzerland, and Britain are usually employed in occupations rejected by indigenous workers … Typically such jobs offer low pay, poor working conditions, little security, and inferior status” (Castles and Kosack, 1973: 112). In Australia, according to Jock Collins (1988), English speaking immigrants from the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, Canada, and whites from South Africa appear to be incorporated into occupations in a way similar to that of Anglo-Celtic Australians, while other immigrants from NESB immigrants fill the jobs described by Piore, Castles and Kosack (Collins, 1988).

Data for the 1996 labour force of Australia reveal that while the general patterns of labour market segmentation described above by Piore and Turpin still hold true, some groups of NESB immigrant workers have broken into the primary labour market. Specifically, the elite immigrants from Asia arriving in Australia in the last decade have been highly skilled and qualified professionals, technicians and managers (Castles et al., 1997), a result of immigration intakes increasingly limited to those with the highest skills and qualifications. They have tended to enter under the independent skills and business migration category of the migration program (Collins, 2000; Collins and Castillo, 1998). Immigrant selection under the ‘point system’ (to be discussed in Chapter Four) lets those with most points in, and most points accrue for education and vocational qualifications and experiences, as well as English language fluency.

All this is to say that immigrants in Australia were/are not incorporated into the labour market in a homogenous way. Immigrants who came to Australia from English speaking areas have a similar labour-market profile to the Anglo-Celtic Australians, while immigrants from NESB disproportionately occupy the distinctly inferior
‘factory fodder’ jobs associated with immigrant workers in Europe. Immigrant labour is a latent reserve army crucial to the expansion of Australian capitalism. As the most recently arrived communities in Australia, the Black African immigrants have not yet had the opportunity to become established in the labour market. In attempting to become established in the labour market the communities must contend with the entrenched structural inequalities as evidenced by the over-representation of NESB migrants in casual and part-time work (Sargent, 1994; McConnachie et al, 1988).

The differential incorporation of immigrant labour in Australia has important implications for the class structure and class relations of Australian society and on the relationship between immigration and racism in Australia. Historical legacies of racism, prejudice, and xenophobia have justified the inferior position of NESB immigrants in the labour market and allowed deep wedges to be driven into working class constituencies, resulting in an expanded, but deeply divided Australian working class (Collins, 1978). Similarly, immigration has been instrumental not only in creating a multicultural factory of a working class but also in enabling many of the Australian-born to climb into the middle classes (Jupp, 2002). Since Australia is a capitalist society, (Collins, 1988), its overriding imperative continues to be capital accumulation, and its production relations unequal and exploitative class relations. The reproduction and recomposition of capitalist class relations is a central dynamic of capitalism, and immigration is central to the precise ways in which this reproduction and recomposition occurs in Australian society.

Maintenance of the Australian class structure is a tangential outcome of Australian immigration policy. The connection between migration and reproduction of the class structure is seen most obviously by the degree to which immigrants provide labour power in areas of the economy where supply would not otherwise meet employer demand; but also in some circumstances by providing capital and entrepreneurship. (details are discussed in Chapter Two and Six).
Black African Immigrants in Australia

Unlike most other contemporary immigrants to Australia, Black African immigrants have usually been forced out of their homeland. They arrive in Australia with few possessions and little, if any, knowledge of the life they can expect and of what is expected of them. Black Africans' emigration experience is most often filled with fear, trauma and tragedy, involving months or years in temporary refugee camps, separation from family and loved ones, dispossession of their material and non-material past, and an irrevocable break with their homeland (discussed in detail in Chapter Five). Regardless of socio-economic status before immigration, many such immigrants start their Australian lives in poverty. Almost all begin their Australian lives on some form of government assistance. However, focus on their cultural traits diverts attention away from these serious structural factors that shape their experiences of immigration. It also fosters the false notion that any failure to overcome difficulties is simply their own fault rather than being due to institutionalised blockages in Australia, such as the non-recognition of their educational attainments and occupational experiences. As a result, they occupy jobs that are marginal in relation to the mainstream economic structure, because they commonly encounter institutional difficulties in transferring skills and experiences.

Black African immigrants in Australia are not all the same, but come from countries with different histories, political traditions, and economic prospects within the world system. What unites Black African immigrants, however, is that once in Australia they are placed in the undifferentiated category of NESB immigrants of colour [black people]. And as such, migration for Black Africans often becomes a class leveller. For those who were professionals before their arrival to Australia, becoming an immigrant is often a journey across class lines – downwardly mobile from accountant, manager, doctor, and teacher to factory worker, service worker, and taxi driver. As explained in this and the next chapter, NESB immigrants are more likely to fill the 'factory fodder' jobs similar to those held by immigrant workers and guest workers in the United States, United Kingdom and Western Europe (Castles et al, 1998; Piore, 1980). In contrast, English-speaking background immigrant workers (white workers from New Zealand, North America, South Africa and else where) are more inclined to hold jobs similar to Australians; they are more concentrated in the upper echelons of the labour-
market (Collins, 1988; Lever-Tracy and Quinlan, 1988). In this way, the labour market is segmented not only along racial but also linguistic lines. Regardless, due to non-equivalency or non-recognition of their training and experience, persons who were at professional or occupational level in their home country are either not formally certified or not accepted in Australia. Among those who do find work, they are typically employed in positions that pay poorly, are part time, insecure, and lack benefits.

Existing research on Black Africans suggest that as these immigrants began the process of settling in Australia, they encountered enormous difficulties adapting to Australia’s socio-economic and political environment, as a result of racial discrimination. The dearth of scholarly material on Africans in Australia in part reflects the continuing problem of under-representation and marginalisation of Africans in academia. Black Africans in Australia, like many other minority groups, have been exiled to the margins of Australian history, struggling to have their stories added to the national account of Australia. While recent years have seen an increase in scholarly interest in Africans in Australia, the field taken as a whole remains underdeveloped. In contrast with the voluminous scholarly work on other Third World immigrant groups (e.g. Middle Easterners) and European immigrant groups (e.g. Southern and Eastern European immigrants), the published work on Africans is strikingly small. Given the growing size of this population in Melbourne, a great deal more work remains to be done.

Among the studies of African immigrants in Australia is An Exploratory Study on the Settlement of the Ethiopian Refugees in Melbourne, by Warzel and Taylor (Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, 1986). This study was undertaken when immigration from Ethiopia was at an early stage, with as few as 230 persons in Melbourne. This research examined the role of community and family support in the process of refugee adaptation in Melbourne. Since this report, the number of immigrants from the Horn of Africa states and its periphery (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda) living in Melbourne has grown to 6,212 (ABS, 2001).
Profile of the African Community in Melbourne (1990), conducted by Velislaw Georgiev, provides an overview of what it calls the ‘African community’ in Melbourne. The report is overly general in its findings. And despite its descriptive nature, the methodology used is unclear. There is a lack of demographic data, and some factual errors such as the statement that Djibouti is a major source country. The report was basically written as an aid to the Department of Social Security policy for African clients, comprising a number of recommendations to the Department.

Another work on African immigrants is Refugee Women - Still at Risk in Australia, by Eileen Pittaway (1991). This project includes references to African women only as part of a total project on refugee women. According to Batrouney (1991), Pittaway showed herself sensitive to the methodology used, ensuring that it does not objectify ‘refugee women’ but rather empowers them through, for example, conducting a series of seminars at which they would help shape the recommendations. Her work is useful in identifying the services that refugee women have found essential to assist them in their settlement in Australia.

Among the most thorough and comprehensive of the works undertaken on African immigrants in Australia are Trevor Batrouney’s Selected African Communities in Melbourne: Their Characteristics and Settlement Needs (Ecumenical Migration Centre, 1991); David Cox, Brian Cooper and Moses Adepoju’s The Settlement of Black Africans in Australia (La Trobe University, 1999); Lawrence Udo-Ekpo’s The Africans in Australia: Expectations and Shattered dreams (1999); and Applo Nsubuga Kyobe and Liz Domock’s African Communities and Settlement Service in Victoria (La Trobe University, 2000).

In his report, Selected African Communities in Melbourne: Their Characteristics and Settlement Needs, Batrouney examines the characteristics and settlement issues of selected African communities based in Melbourne. This report is the most useful of all contemporary research as a preliminary introduction to the various Africans living in Melbourne. Using document analysis, interviews and surveys to gather demographic data, Batrouney identifies the major African communities in Melbourne as Eritrean, Ethiopian, Somali, Ghanian, Sudanese and South African.
The Settlement of Black Africans in Australia, (a 62-pages research) by David Cox, Brian Cooper and Moses Adepoju, is another major attempt to explore the hardships faced by Black Africans in Australia. Sixty-six per cent of their respondents maintained that they had been treated unfairly in Australia based on racial or ethnic grounds (Cox et al, 1999:48). Some of the comments of their informants include: “Racism is a very common experience of Africans”; “they are subjected to racism most of the time”; “they need the government to address this issue ...”; and “There is prejudice which is very visible. People look down on you because you are black. They feel you are ignorant ... Africans are experiencing discrimination and stereotyping. There is a lack of knowledge about Africans and Africa as a continent” (cited in Cox et al, 1999:48). These researchers found too that only five per cent of Black Africans in Melbourne responded with an overall positive image or perception of media treatment of African communities (Cox et al, 1999:50).

The Africans in Australia: Expectations and Shattered dreams, by Udo-Ekpo is the most well researched of all the relevant studies. This book is not the history of African migration to Australia per se, but an attempt to document the migration experiences of black Africans and their struggle against racial discrimination, unemployment, poverty, and welfare dependency. According to Udo-Ekpo, the book “records the migration experience of black African men and women, their feelings, opinions, dreams, problems, frustrations, and future prospects. ... Having been marginalised, excluded, or rejected, most migrants operate at the fringes of mainstream Australian society” (Udo-Ekpo, 1999: xiv - xv). According to this study, African-Australians continue to experience racial discrimination daily; they have significantly higher levels of unemployment and underemployment; they believe they have been discriminated against in the public and private sectors of the Australian economy; and their overseas qualifications and experience have not been productively used in Australia (Udo-Ekpo, 1999, 13-14). Udo-Ekpo concludes that:

Black African immigrants work in conditions, which do not comply with basic industrial awards. On a practical level, they have little negotiating power to ensure they have the benefits other workers enjoy. Consequently, their concentration in poorly paid jobs reflects their relative lack of economic clout, their powerlessness, and their low status in Australian society (Udo-Ekpo, 1999:14).
Although Applo Nsubuga Kyobe and Liz Domock’s project, *African Communities and Settlement Service in Victoria* (2000) focuses on settlement and service deliveries issues, two pages of the project discuss discrimination. The focus group interviews conducted by the writers recorded “... a high rate of reports of perceived discrimination, and sufficient reference to specific examples for this to be noted as a problem. Some comments attribute difficulties in finding a job to discrimination ‘because of colour’, or suppose that a name on a resume has deterred employers” (Nsubuga-Kyobe & Dimock, 2000:46-47).

In *African Refugee Settlement Assistance in Melbourne* (1997), Lorraine Majka concludes:

> ...the black subpopulation encounters all the obstacles arising from differential treatment based on colour and cultures regarded as alien and inferior. A quiet middle class racism still permeates many levels of Australian society, and members of governmental structures themselves exhibit the most detrimental form of hard-heartedness (Majka, 1997: 25).

Other studies consist of short papers and reports. In all the works of Batrouney (1991:75-78), Cox et al (1999:48-51), Udo-Ekpo (1999, 13-14), Nsubuga and Domock (2001:46-47), and Lorraine Majka (1997:25) discrimination is reported in all service areas and in all walks of life. Upon observing their respondents' surname, seeing their skin colour, and/or hearing their accent, many employers and real estate agents frequently refuse a job or accommodation to Black African immigrants. In all research projects, respondents recorded that they were conscious of discrimination.

---

1 These include both published and unpublished publications and articles such as (1) ‘Indigenous East Africans’ in James Jupp (ed.) *The Australian People, 1988*, written by Henry Frendo. This paper presents a useful overview of African migration to Australia, showing an awareness, in a generalised form, of the characteristics and problems of Africans in Australia, (2) A three-pages article on ‘Egyptians and Sudanese’ in James Jupp (Ed) *The Australian People, 1988*, written by Malik Girgis, focuses on the migration to Australia of Coptic Egyptians, including those who had previously settled from northern Sudan, and (3) *Some Emerging Communities in Australia: An African Point of View* (Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia [FECCA]) is a report written by Samuel Anyaogu. This report focuses on the contradiction between Australia’s apparently non-discriminatory immigration policy and the actual number of immigrants from South Africa and Zimbabwe, in which white and coloured (Indians with British citizenship) immigrants predominate to the virtual exclusion of blacks.
against them in the workplace. Batrouney's sample was largely a well-educated group, but according to Nsubuga and Dimock (2001), there has been a recent influx of less-educated young people whose education had been seriously disrupted over many years of living in refugee camps, and of women who have received little or no formal education. The latter have come to Australia in the new women-at-risk category.

In their conclusion, Cox et al (1999) explained that:

The majority of Black Africans surveyed are convinced that antagonism towards them is frustrating them in their settlement at virtually every turn. They see themselves as often discriminated against in the employment market, even when they possess Australian qualifications; they tend to see themselves as discriminated against in their need to sponsor relatives to Australia; and they experience some discrimination when they seek out accommodation and pursue everyday activities like using public transport (Cox et al, 1999:62).

While Australia is regarded as one of the 'most' multicultural of societies, the reality of African-Australian life is not accurately portrayed in the Australian media. For example, the 1990 research by Heather Goodall and others on media representations concluded:

Our first problem was not so much a question of interpreting the representations of non-Anglo Australian populations in Australia, but in finding any non-Anglo Australians at all. The overwhelming message was that Australia is a mono-cultural society, and in this general sense the ads were trenchantly anti-multicultural: their racism and ethnocentrism lay in the exclusion of non-Anglo populations, and not in the manner of their inclusion ... the overwhelming majority of ads representing Australia exclude anyone of non-Anglo descent (Goodall et al., 1990:48, 52).

The study by Goodall et al. found that overall the Australian media presented images of ethnic Australians "in subordinate positions, or in caricature" (Goodall et al. 1990:66). The authors conclude, "there is now substantial evidence that the mainstream Australian media are neither competent in, nor capable of, accurately reflecting the diversity of Australian society" (Goodall et al., 1990:67). According to
the Australian National OpinionPolls (ANOP), "most approve of African migration and settlement in Australia; but a small minority of extreme right-wing elements vehemently oppose black African migration (cited in Udo-Ekpo, 1999: 9).

**Contribution of the Present Study**


This study provides the first empirical account of the degree to which 'race' and class contribute to the low quality of life of indigenous African immigrants in Australia. As such, the study is crucial in untangling the factors that affect their adaptation to life in Australia. In accomplishing this, the study provides especially useful information to augment our knowledge of Black African immigrant groups in Melbourne. It also affords us an opportunity to obtain invaluable insights into the background characteristics of Africans in their settlement experiences in Australian society.

This research offers an exegesis of an immigrant group that is racially and culturally distinct from those of the host society. By providing such documentation, the study is meant to be of more than academic relevance. It provides invaluable information not only for academics and researchers, but also for policy-makers, organizations that seek to assist immigrants, and community workers that are formulating programs of action for Black Africans in Australia. Awareness of the attributes of this distinct racial group should influence both the review of existing policies in such areas as housing, education, health, human resources, jobs and other social services, as well as the design and implementation of new policies responsive to the specific needs and characteristics of Black African immigrants. The research findings could lead to a greater awareness by both government and non-government institutions, not to
mention the public at large, about this particular population in Australia. A study such as this is important because of this population’s rapid and continued growth within this country.

It is necessary to generate fresh insights, particularly qualitative ones, on immigrants for a number of reasons. First, the immediate relevance of government-sponsored, policy-oriented, quantitative research on the welfare of immigrant groups is not always clear or helpful. Second, there is a shortage of community-oriented research that combines public interest, community involvement, and disciplinary insights. In this context, it is useful to explore immigrants’ lived experiences and their attitudes, feelings, perceptions and understandings of their new homeland. It is also necessary to generate and document immigrant histories and experiences at the grass roots level. James Jupp, a researcher on ethnic and immigrant issues, suggests that ‘we should move away from elementary survey-type questionnaires to a more qualitative approach’ in immigrant research (Jupp, 1995: 5). Likewise, Mark Wooden, a leading Australian labour market analyst, argues that:

Inequality of outcomes cannot be fully understood through quantitative studies. Such research should include exploration of the range of variables underlying specific NESB immigrants’ labour market disadvantage, including why some ethnic groups are more disadvantaged than others (Wooden, 1994: 274-5).

This thesis will thus provide a study of the lived experiences of Black African immigrants in Melbourne conducted by myself, a member of this Black African community. As one who has worked in his home country as a public administrator under three different regimes, and who has vigorously participated in the struggle for justice, freedom and equality in Africa and the Middle East, I belong to a generation of pioneer activists who matured during the course of Ethiopia’s youth movement. The purpose of this movement was to change the social relations of production in the countryside of Ethiopia from their feudal aristocratic form, to promote the welfare of the urban working class, and to free the economy from external dependence and imperialist domination. I was also the first among members of the Ethiopian democratic forces to show solidarity to the peoples of Eritrea, Palestine, and
Zimbabwe in their own liberation struggles. In my homeland, I was subjected to two periods of torturous prison life, and twice was forced to live as an immigrant in Western Europe, North Africa and the Middle East during the previous two Ethiopian regimes. Today, as a Black African immigrant in Australia, I am involved in another struggle to help a growing community of Black Africans in Australia.

**Organisation of the Thesis**

The thesis is organized as follows. As an introduction, *the present study* sets the stage for the whole study by providing background to the study, an outline of the statement of the problem being investigated, a historical overview of immigration in Australia, contemporary immigration in Australia, followed by contribution of the study explaining why this particular study is timely and of such relevance and conclude the chapter with structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two provides the theoretical framework and literature review. Initially, the chapter presents an overview of the processes of immigration and limitation of its studies, followed by a review of the literature on class, 'race', and their relations with immigration and concludes with a brief discussion of the notion of intersectionality of class and 'race' with reference to the sociological literature. By defining 'race' in terms of racism, at both the interpersonal and structural levels, and defining class in terms of work and culture, I show the connections that shape the experiences of Black Africans.

In Chapter Three, I detail the methodological approach and strategies I used to gather data and create understandings of Black African immigrants' lived experiences and adaptation processes in Melbourne, but it is a thoroughly ethnographic chapter in itself. Thus, it supplies the bridge in the thesis from Part One's epistemological discussion to Part Two's ethnographic emphasis on everyday life for Black African immigrants in Melbourne. The chapter begins with an affirmation of the central importance and unique validity of ethnographic knowledge. The chapter is organised into five sections. The introductory section briefly registers the importance and
inadequacy of critiques of ethnography and describes the key qualities of critical ethnography. The second section presents a discussion on in-depth interviews (the primary source of data for this study). The third section presents a discussion on participatory observation, the second method of data collection. The fourth section presents a discussion on the survey questionnaire - the third method of data collection. Information on sampling technique, sample recruitment and selection process, protection of participants, data collection procedure, data storage and management and the data analysis process is provided. Methodological issues and concerns experienced during the process of this research are discussed in the final section.

Chapter Four sets the stage for my analysis of racialisation in the immigration and settlement process. It is divided into two parts. The first part briefly presents the socio-geographic survey of Africa outlining pre- and post-migration characteristics of Black Africans in Australia. The intent is to facilitate the reader's comprehension of the stories that are presented in chapters five and six. The second part sets the stage for the actual examination of Black Africans in Melbourne. Based on the information obtained from the demographic, socio-economic, immigration and housing questionnaire, this chapter describes and evaluates the demographic profiles and the socio-economic characteristics of participants in this study. It also explores housing access among Black Africans in Melbourne and how access to housing is such a unique factor in the adaptation processes.

In Chapter Five, the patterns and process of ongoing adaptation of Black African immigrants is presented through a traditional ethnographic analysis. This chapter presents the stories of participant immigrants based on what they said in the interview, along with the insights gleaned from participant-observation research, in which the author took a further step to situate their stories in a broader historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political context of Australia so as to explore how this context constructed their lives.

Chapter Six addresses the issues of 'race' and class, as they are perceived by Black African immigrants, particularly the influence these issues have on their lives in
Australia. Critical ethnography goes beyond describing, “what is.” Rather, it explores how “what is” has come to be due to deeper structural characteristics such as ideologies and social control. Findings presented in this chapter illustrate how immigrants' lives are constructed by the external context in which their lives are embedded such as racism, class inequality, and Western imperialism.

In the concluding chapter, I explore the implications of this research by comparing and contrasting the findings with the existing literature. I also discuss recommendations for future research. This chapter expands upon the interpretation of the findings.
Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework and a Review of the Literature

One of the peculiar strengths of racism is that, while a racial view of the world might be fixed, the actual hierarchy posed can change and adapt according to circumstances. This means one supposedly inferior ‘race’ is more hated at a particular time in a particular place than another supposedly inferior ‘race’, and for apparently different reasons.

(Verity Burgmann, 1978: 22)

Introduction

This chapter provides a review of literature from the social sciences pertaining to the purpose of this critical ethnography. The first section reviews the literature on immigration, followed by a review of the literature on ‘race’, class, and their relations with immigration and immigrants. I then introduce Bannerji’s (1995) notion of the intersectionality of ‘race’ and class, with reference also to other sociological literature. Drawing from the same literature, the last section of the chapter then discusses how ‘race’ and class are connected with immigration and make up a framework for immigrants’ lived experiences.

Immigration Studies and their Limitations

Migration refers to a process by which an individual or group moves from one physical and social environment to a new one (Morrissey, 1983). Immigration, or external migration, is a subtype of migration; and unlike internal migration, immigration involves crossing national boundaries and settling in a country that is not one’s own (Cherunilam, 1987). Immigration is a physical transition that involves new
places, new faces, new rules, new norms, and new structures. Physical, psychosocial, cultural, political, social and economic aspects of the larger society (i.e. macro-systems) change due to the move. An immigrant is a micro-system nesting within the macro-system. These changes in the larger society ultimately require the immigrant and its component parts to make adjustments (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993).

The immigrant and component parts of the immigrant would use their private culture - a personal organisation of experience of the real world and standards for perceiving, predicting, judging and acting (Goodenough, 1963) - to interpret the encountered situations. They then react to the changes with available resources (e.g., personal adaptability, skills, capital, family support, social networks, social support) to manage the situations. This process according to Goodenough (1963) is adaptation. Adaptation encapsulates a broad range of experiences related to settlement, for instance, from the more immediate concerns of language, cultural, employment, and housing to on-going processes of political, economic and social participation in the new country. Due to the large influx of Southern and Eastern European immigrants into the urban centres of the United States, American’s population is losing its white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant numerical dominance. To account for these changes, the notions of assimilation and cultural pluralism were developed by American sociologists to signify the range of cultural adaptations by Southern and Eastern European immigrants in the United States. Migration studies were then refined by focusing on the “conditions of departure” and “conditions of arrival” for Polish migrants to the United States. The preoccupation of the Chicago School Studies with the ‘race’ problem and on European migration set the terms of debate on how to view immigrant cultures, racial groups, and adaptations in a host society (for a discussion of the various assimilation types, see Gordon, 1964: 72-73; and for a more general and thorough review of the literature on assimilation and cultural pluralism see Feagin, 1978: 27-35).

The purpose of migration studies until recently has been gathering demographic characteristics of migrants in search of individualistic motives to explain why people migrate so as to produce theories of migration that enable us to identify a list of ‘push’
and ‘pull’ factors. Push factors are conditions, which cause people to leave their country such as for example, famine, war, and absence of opportunity, poverty, political repression, and religious persecution. They are features or events that are pushing people away from their country of birth and so are perceived as bad. Pull factors are conditions, which convince a person to settle in a new country such as political and religious freedom, education, job or economic opportunities, equality. They are events that pull people towards another country and so are perceived as good. (Kunz, 1973, 1981).

Concerning successful immigrants, attention is focussed on such factors as adaptation, acculturation and assimilation of new immigrants. However, such a simplistic definition of immigration as movements of people from one physical and social environment to a new one diverts attention from the economic role immigrants’ play in the receiving countries. In other words, the focus on immigrant adaptation and what they had to do to acculturate, anticipates the possible range of explanations as being either assimilation (immigrants viewed as the uprooted) or cultural pluralism (old world traits transplanted). Unfortunately, the focus on how immigrants are received by the host society became increasingly a non-question. Any immigrant’s problem in the urban was treated as a question of cultural maladaptations in the same way that the root cause for the problems of Aborigines in Australia lies in themselves and not how Indigenous poples in Australia were treated by Anglo-Celtics. Rather than studying the sinister effects of racism, the pluralist was content to view social problems as resulting from cultural maladjustment (Feagin et al, 1999:27-35). Specifically, how particular immigrant groups are racialised and where immigrants are inserted into the labour market are key issues neglected by the early sociologists of migration (see Thomas and Znaniecki, 1984[1918-1920] and Thomas, Park, and Miller, 1921 for their lack of an economic analysis).

The majority of migration scholars assume that assimilation is both a normative ideal and an empirical inevitability. The assimilation and cultural pluralist positions both view American culture as a melting pot. In the first position, the melting pot produces a homogenous product much like a cream soup. In other words, the differences are
smoothed out to guarantee that each spoonful will taste same. A cultural pluralist position would characterise the melting pot as the producer of chunky stews. Differences are allowed to coexist in the same stew because the different tastes tend to complement one another in the formation of one big stew. The assimilation position, which argues all immigrants will confirm to the established (almost often white, Anglo-Celtic, Protestant) or the “Australian middle class” ways of living, is precisely the cultural model that participants of this study abhor (as discussed in Chapter 6).

The degree to which migration induces social disorganisation is one of the key points of Thomas and Znaniecki’s analysis. “Most of the motives which actuated the Polish migrants in the old country either do not exist any longer or are greatly weakened [in the United States] precisely because all social ties are loosened” (Thomas and Znaniecki, [1918-1920]: 281). It was the old world traits of the Polish migrants that would serve as the sources to draw upon for constructing a “genuine Americanisation”. For Thomas and Znaniecki, the shift from traditional to modern society was synonymous with assimilating the European immigrant to the “American” way of life. Embedded in their analysis is an explicit modernisation thesis of turning backward peasants, through the use of immigrant-built institutions, into genuine Americans prepared for the fast-paced, ever-changing life of modernity. The change required taking migrants from a backward and traditional society who assumedly led sheltered village lives, experienced unchanging social circumstances, depended solely on oral communications with like members of their group, remained completely passive in the larger matters of the day, and moulding them into cosmopolitan, Americanised citizens.

Generally speaking, what has been lacking in the study of ‘race’ relations, as well as the assimilationist and pluralist views, has been a recognition of the importance of class as potential determining factors in the subordination of one racial group by another. Park’s “race’ relations cycle” of “contacts, competition, accommodation and eventual assimilation” is particularly applicable to large racial groups (Park, 1950: 150). According to Park, following an initial contact between two or more racial groups, competition between those groups naturally arises. Such competition will
most likely be economic in nature, but its other forms include social, political and even racial competition. And yet Park argued that the ultimate result of this competition would always be some form of accommodation being made, and then over time, the eventual assimilation of the groups. Thus, the bulk of assimilationist and pluralist literature, in general does not address the role played by economic/class factors in creating and sustaining antagonisms between racial groups (Greenberg, 1980).

Manuel Gamio, (1930, 1971), a Central American anthropologist, addressed topics such as migration and settlement patterns, social and cultural adaptation, and inter- and intra-ethnic interactions that were very similar to the issues of concern for the Chicago School studies on European migration (see Gutierrez, 1995: 61; Sanchez, 1993: 120-123). However, in contrast to the story of inevitable assimilation that characterised the Chicago School studies on European migration, Gamio focused on how immigrants from Central America retained their Central American identities in the face of a particularly oppressive set of conditions and how many of these immigrants subsequently disparaged anything that was equated with becoming “American”. As one of his respondents told Gamio: “I don’t have anything against the pochos1, but the truth is that although they are Mexicans, for they are of our own blood because their parents were Mexicans, they pretend that they are Americans. They only want to talk in English and they speak Spanish very poorly. That is why I don’t like them” (Gamio, 1930: 129).

The bulk of assimilation literature effectively sidesteps the question of the extent to which class interests affect racial conflict. The analysis of the economics of migration has developed without a sustained class analysis of the social relations that immigrants are inserted into and how other factors (in the case of Black African immigrants, which includes the ‘race’/colour component) articulate in the formation of the lived experiences of immigrant groups. As the theoretical concepts were initially formed in works such as Parks and Burgess (1921) and Franklin Frazier

---

they were heavily influenced by the dominant philosophical trends at the time. According to Bulmer (1984), there are three major flaws to this form of analysis. The Chicago School studies are heavily influenced by the dominant philosophical trends at the time (particularly as a result of the dominant trends of Social Darwinism in turn of the century US sociology), and relied on evolutionary thinking, and thus these studies are problematic. Second, these studies are also dependent on 'Americanisation' as the model for assimilation, and contain views of 'race' that substitute cultural maladaptation in the place of the then reigning notion of 'race' based on biological inferiorities (Bulmer, 1984). Third, a lack of a concrete economic analysis, in the early research conducted by the American sociologists, implies that both racial minority and immigrant cultures are the source of backward ways that are particularly maladaptive to the modern metropolis of today’s American society.

The contempt by Gamio’s respondent for those Mexicans who try to “act American”, and behave like Americans, runs counter to the assimilationist view that immigrants will become increasingly Americanised over time and will eventually conform to the dominant group’s expectations. The cultural pluralism of Third World immigrants in North America or in Australia is much more complicated than existing cultural analyses of European migrant adaptation precisely because of the factors of class and racial oppression, which have not figured prominently in the study of migration. The next logical question becomes: if the study of migration, which originated from Thomas and Znaniecki, cannot account for the racialisation of Third World immigrants in the formation of their identities, does the Chicago School’s early research on ‘race’ relations further illuminate the situation of immigrants from Third World countries in the United States? The sociological study of the “problems” of ‘race’ and migration developed alongside the formation of American sociology at the University of Chicago in the first quarter of the Twentieth Century, which meant that at the turn of the century the Chicago School’s preoccupation with the “‘race’ problem” set the terms of debate on how to view immigrant cultures, racial groups, and adjustment in a host society.
This major oversight is problematic when studying any immigrant group to the West, but serves as a complete fetter on the study of Third World immigration to the United States as well as the West in general. The study of the cultural adaptation of black African immigrants whether in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom or Australia only makes sense within the context of how they are/were ‘race’d’ and ‘classed’ in conjunction. The contemporary state of migration studies does not provide an adequate explanatory framework for how immigrants from the Third World were received by the Western society. The cultural sub-specialisation of migration studies has, even to date, been stuck in the assimilation versus cultural pluralism debate that arose specifically to account for the adjustment of immigrants in the early to mid twentieth century (Alba, 1990; Bodnar, 1985; Conzen et al, 1992; Feagin, 1997, c.1999; Gordon, 1964; Greenberg, 1980; Hirschman, 1983; Kazal, 1995; Kivisto, 1990; Miller, 1985, Morawska, 1985, 1994; Steinberg, 1989). The analysis of the economics of migration has developed without a sustained class analysis of the social relations that immigrants are inserted into and how other factors (in case of Black African immigrants, the ‘race’ component) intersect and interconnected in the formation of the lived experiences of immigrant groups.

The development of separate research programs on the culture of migration and the economics of migration (borrowing from neoclassical economics, human capital theory, and economic sociology) is as much a result of current policing of disciplinary boundaries as it is an artefact of a long-standing tradition in sociology of isolating ‘causes and effects’ by analysing one variable while holding all other factors constant. Unfortunately, ‘race’ relations’ research has been reduced to a long-standing tradition of two extremes. Sociological studies of ‘race’ attempt to prove either that economically disadvantaged blacks are the same as the white middle-class or that

---

2 The assimilation school of migration studies has its origins in the Chicago School of Sociology at the University of Chicago and was subsequently elaborated upon and refined in the work of Handlin (1951) and Gordon (1964). But the argument that “old world traits” tend to be pervasive in the face of an inevitable Americanisation also can find a portion of its roots in the Chicago School. Cultural pluralism was defended initially by Kallen (1924), then Glazer and Moynihan (1970), and has found a renewed base of support in the new social history of immigration and ethnicity (e.g., Bodnar, 1985; Gabaccia, 1988; and Miller, 1985). For overviews of the research steeped in this debate from the perspective of history see Conzen et al (1992) and Kazal (1995), and from more sociologically based perspectives see Hirschman (1983) and Kivisto (1990).
‘Black/coloured immigrants’ are unable to be assimilated due to their inferior cultures (whether the source of inferiority be based on segregation, class factors, social distance, or biology). Understanding the intersection and interrelated nature of class and ‘race’ as it affects immigrants in their lived experiences is especially important. Because of the pervasiveness of ‘race’ and class in Western societies, and the significantly limited research on Black African immigrants in Australia focusing on the relationship between social class and people’s lived experiences, ‘race’ and class have been fore grounded in this study.

Similarly, in their research, Alejandro Portes (1978) and Michael Burawoy (1976) assert that the key issue in understanding the process of migration of individuals wishing to sustain their lives in capitalist countries is not how the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of new immigrants hinder their adaptation, but how their role as ‘others’, and the structural constraints of the labour-market, such as enforced segregation and the persistence of ‘race’/racism, class, gender and other forms of differentiation in the social formation of the country, make permanent adaptation unworkable.

‘Race’ and Racism

Western theorists in the 1930s claimed that ‘race’ was a biological category, but this theory was eventually discarded by world experts commissioned by UNESCO in 1947 and at the Moscow meeting of sociologists and biologists in 1964 (Rex, 1970). Cox also refutes the biological ‘race’ theory and states that:

There is no universally accepted definition of ‘race’ … for the sociologists a ‘race’ may be thought of as simply any group of people that is generally believed to be, and generally accepted as, a ‘race’ in any given area of ethnic competition (Cox, 1948: 319).

Nevertheless, social scientists are trying to grapple with the fact that people still think in racial terms as well as maintain institutions that perpetuate racial inequality. ‘Race’,
is a socially constructed category describing human variation based on physical characteristics (primarily skin colour) (Frankenberg, 1995; Williams et al, 1994). And, in Richard Williams' view:

Skin pigmentation (a natural feature of humans) is one embodiment of the sacred/profane split in the U.S system of vertical classification ... behind the marks from nature, differential power relations assign individuals to specific structural positions within the stratified social system (Williams, 1990: 39).

Racism is an oppressive system of ‘racial’ relations in which one ‘racial’ group benefits from dominating another and defines itself and others through this domination (Krieger et al, 1993). The ideology of the capitalist class can also often become the dominant ideology within society. In such instances, ideology is said to mystify or hide the true nature of control over the means of production. From this point of view emerges the argument that the rise of racist ideology is nothing less than an attempt by the capitalist class to justify the persecution of racial groups while drawing the attention of the working class away from working-class interests and working-class-consciousness. It is the racism, not the categories of ‘race’ that generates all sorts of activities or behaviours that perpetuate ‘racial’ oppression.

The analytic framework of “racialisation” emphasises the ways that ‘race’ or “racial difference” are produced and continually re-produced, and are always entangled in social relations and conflicts, and thus retain enduring significance because their forms and substantive meanings are eminently historical and mutable. As Howard Winant suggests, “attempts ... to define the appropriate meaning of ‘race’ in institutional life and to establish coherent racial identities based on that meaning ... continue to be unattainable. This is because ‘race’, a pre-eminently social construct, is inherently subject to contestation; its meaning is intrinsically unstable” (Winant, 1994: 58-59). Indeed, Theodore Allen has characterised the intrinsic contradictions that arise in attempts to sociologise ‘race’ as “howling absurdities” (Allen, 1994: 28). What creates the inequality across ‘racial’ groups in power, access to resources such as income, employment, education, housing, health status in either North America or Australia or in any Western settings is not ‘race’, but racism. Both concepts were
developed in the context of slavery and imperial colonialism. They provide rationales for the oppressor or the dominant group (for example, white Australians in the context of Australia) to (1) justify the exploitation of a group that has been defined to be inferior, (2) maintain the status quo, (3) reinforce the societal norm of 'racial' inferiority, and (4) define their 'normality' by defining other groups' differences as abnormal and deviant (Williams et al, 1994).

Thus, the analysis attends to the extensions and elaboration of racial meanings to social relations, practices, or groups that have previously been unclassified racially, or differently racially classified (Winant, 1994: 58-68; cf. Omi and Winant, 1986: 64-66). Allen argues that what is substantive and systemic about racial oppression — is precisely oppression, rather than 'race' (as a "phenotypical" or phylogenetic category of distinction). "By examining racial oppression as a particular system of oppression — like class oppression, or gender oppression or national oppression," he continues, "we find firmer footing for analysing ... the invention and the peculiar function of the 'white 'race'" 3, and likewise, for consistently theorising the organic interconnection of these systems of oppression (Allen, 1994: 28). Allen's critical intervention is instructive, in that it makes it possible to sustain an analytic distinction between racialisation, on the one hand, and racism (or more precisely, racial oppression), on the other hand.

Although 'race' and racism are often used interchangeably, they do not mean the same thing. In a simple way discrimination is defined as the differential treatment of people based on class, 'race'/ethnic origin, gender, or age. It refers to unfair or discriminatory actions taken against people perceived to be members of certain socially defined categories. Racism in its interpersonal form is no less insidious or damaging than institutionalised racism to those who are the direct targets of it. Structural racism has a major impact on the life chances of the subordinate group as a whole but interpersonal racism is how 'race' is felt: the words, thoughts and actions

---

3 For analyses of how white people construct their own whiteness as American-ness, for instance, see Frankenberg (1994) and Hale (1998). Frankenberg is too quick, however, to conclude that "American" is only a name for whiteness when it is whites who do the naming (1997:4). Chabram-Dernersesian (cf. 1997:120); Urciuoli (1996:2).
that make clear to both actors (the racist and the immigrant) their respective places in society. 'Racial' attitudes, beliefs, and actions permeate everyone's mind through mythology, stereotypes, ethnic jokes, and labels present in the media, cultural products, official documents, and many social contexts. Everyone develops an understanding of other groups under the influence of the distorted messages and then acts upon them towards other groups. As Tatum states:

Cultural racism - cultural images and messages that affirm the assumed superiority of whites and assumed inferiority of people of colour - is like smog in the air. Sometimes it is so thick it is visible, other times it is less apparent, but always, day in and day out, we are breathing it in (Tatum, 1999: 6).

The analytic framework of racialisation treats the production of racialised difference as an ever-mutable and unstable social process that makes the category 'race' an equivocal one. Rather than try to fix a spurious stability to the category 'race', which is impossible, I am concerned with the social processes that ensure its plasticity. What is more loosely called racism, I would argue, is better comprehended as racial oppression and exclusion, for this enables a focus on the materiality of oppression and the social inequalities and violence that it maintains; clearly then, racial oppression refers to a system of unequal power that is not merely reducible to the ideas or beliefs or attitudes that anyone might express. In this way, the articulation of the hegemonic racism toward other immigrant groups (such as Asians) by African immigrants or vice versa (as discussed in Chapter 5, 6 and 7), who are themselves racially oppressed, cannot be so simply disparaged as "racist".

Whiteness, as has been established by an extensive body of recent historical scholarship, has never been a transparent or natural category (Allen, 1994; Hale, 1998; Horsman, 1981; Ignatiev, 1995; Roediger, 1991; Saxton, 1990). Hegemonic constructions of whiteness as a normative, relatively "unmarked and unnamed" social category – as identified in the work of Ruth Frankenberg, for example – seem to be, in large part, a rather recent development (Frankenberg, 1995: 1). Indeed, it appears that for most of its career, whiteness has been the rather high-profile object of a history of relentless ideological production, recuperation, and re-elaboration (Hale, 1998;
Haney-Lopez, 1995; Harris, 1993). Certainly, not everyone is an active racist who consciously and actively engages in blatant, intentional acts of ‘racial’ bigotry and discrimination; but few can claim to be completely innocent of engaging in activities that support racism, for example, the collusion of laughing when a racist joke is told. The other important concept related to ‘race’ and racism is white privilege. Racism is an oppressive system that operates to the advantage of the dominant ‘racial’ group. White privilege means the systematic advantages of being white (Tatum, 1999). For example, there are many advantages of being white in the West: from earning higher incomes to access to housing, jobs, and services, to life expectancy, and to political power (Bannerji, 1995; Krieger et al, 1993; Williams et al, 1994). More importantly, it is not always apparent to a white person that s/he is privileged. For instance, white people may not know that being white decreases their chances of being stopped by police patrols. They may also not notice that being white decreases their hassles and being second-guessed while travelling (Dunlap, 2000). The system in the capitalist West is built toward the advantage of whites, thus it does not matter whether white Americans, white English or white Australians are aware of their white privileges; they benefit from the system in many ways. A white person does not need to ask for their privileges. However, this does not mean that all whites benefit from racism equally. Other factors such as class, gender, religion, age and sexual orientation also play a role in determining access to white privileges.

In North America, a more expansive view of ‘race’ and its social construction is offered by theorists who specifically work from the vantage point of non-White groups. For example, Ruth Frankenberg views “groups who are currently targets of racism – Native American, Latinos, African Americans, and Asian-Pacific Americans, as well as other non-White immigrants – as being racially different from white people, and from each other” (Frankenberg, 1995:2). It is not necessarily the characteristics of the racialised group that define ‘race’, but rather the perceptions by Anglo Saxons (in North America) and Anglo-Celtics (in Australia) that define other racial groups.
According to Omi and Winant, 'race' is also said to have continuing significance and alterable meaning. As such, a theoretical framework for understanding 'race' must,

be explicitly historicist. It must recognise the importance of historical context and contingency in the framing of racial categories and the social construction of racially defined experience (Omi and Winant, 1993: 5).

This means that political relationships, the global context and historical period of study are also considered as determinants of the racial formation process (Omi and Winant, 1993). When 'race' is defined in terms of racism, identities are imposed from those who view themselves as superior. Subjective views also enter the racial formation process, and there may be coercion involved, especially in colonial contexts where power relations historically determined the racial formation process. As John Rex states:

Although we would not wish to deny that in almost every case of intergroup relations some subjective, conceptual and normative factor enters into the patterning of social relations, we would suggest that social relations in many colonial contexts tend in some degree towards the situation which would be represented by an ideal type of purely coercive compliance (Rex, 1970: 11).

The identities of developing and developed countries are another extension or product of the imperialists' practice of Othering. Thinking about 'race' as the 'other' places the focus squarely on identities as imposed from above, not necessarily as self-constructed identities from within oppressed communities. It relies on a definition of racial identity as one that is imposed rather than a theory of subaltern self-definition. As Lawrence Grossberg states:

Theories of otherness, on the other hand, assume that difference itself is a historically produced economy, imposed in modern structures of power on the real. Difference as much as identity is an effect of power ... Rather they begin with a strong sense of otherness that recognises that the other exists, in its own place, as what it is,
independently of any specific relations. But what it is need not be defined in transcendental or essential terms; what it is can be defined by its particular (contextual) power to affect and be affected (Grossberg, 1997: 351).

‘Race’ thus becomes the underlying logic of Eurocentrism where the images of Europe are viewed as the most technologically advanced, sophisticated, rational centre that is the culmination of centuries of progress. The rest of the globe is thought to have been inhabited by savages stuck in their traditional, primitive, backward, irrational cultures. The modernisation project puts forward the claim that the underdeveloped world is only in need of a little ‘Western assistance’ to modernise their previously non-scientific ways of viewing the world, un-cultured ways of evaluating the world, and economically-backward ways of living. From the discussion on social ‘othering’, we can understand that ‘race’ is an invention of modern capitalist relations, of which imperialism is central.

Edward Said’s Orientalism (1979) and Tzvetan Todorov’s The conquest of America (1984) are the key texts in historically specifying the construction of the Other. Todorov argues:

Yet even if the discovery of the other must be assumed by each individual and eternally recommended, it also has a history, forms that are socially and culturally determined. The history of the conquest of America makes me believe that a great change occurred ... for almost three hundred and fifty years, Western Europe has tried to assimilate the other, to do away with an exterior alterity, and in great part succeeded (Todorov, 1984:247).

Theories of the ‘other’ specify the Eurocentric ways of racing other groups to legitimate colonial relations. Said draws attention to the notion of the socially constructed ‘other’ by European/Western imperialists. The Orient was, he wrote, “almost a European invention” and “one of its deepest and most recurring images of other” (Said, 1979: 1-2). In addition, the Orient has “helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, and experience” (Said, 1979: 1-2). The theory works well to explain First-Third world relations but is often unable to
deal with the construction of ‘race’ within the over-developed First World. The identity of the developed country label is associated with the image of wealth, safety, order, clean and good living conditions, cultural superiority, and high standards. As a contrast, the developing country label represents poverty, poor environmental safety, chaos, poor living conditions, cultural inferiority, etc. Most participants of this study learned or knew about these two socially constructed concepts after they were translated to African languages and imported to Africa by Western/European education. The point in this discussion of racial othering is that ‘race’ is an invention of modern capitalist relations, of which imperialism is central.

As noted earlier, white racism is linked to a system of privileges. Everyone marked by whiteness does not equally share the benefits of the system, but the system certainly furthers the enjoyment of privilege by a few. The forms of racism, which each sub-group actively resists, differ at the level of discriminatory practices. As Omi and Winant point out, ‘race’ “is a matter of both social structure and cultural representation” (1994:56). In a separate essay, Omi and Winant (1993) demarcate two dominant trends in the “race” formation thesis. Racism is a set of ideological beliefs; a way of thinking about the world in terms of superior and inferior groups that justifies unequal social conditions. Racism is also a structure that patterns racial segregation in housing, employment, health, and leisure activities. Further, racism is a set of attitudes and actions that are deployed on the level of interpersonal relations and have very real effects on how people deal with one another. It is keeping in mind all these levels that makes the term racism appropriate to describe why racially-defined; minority groups are systematically excluded from the benefits of capitalist societies such as Australia or North America or United Kingdom.
Class and Class Structure

Within the Marxist tradition of class analysis, class structure is a hierarchical social relationship defined by the ownership of labour power (i.e., capacity to work), the ownership of the means of production (e.g., raw materials, tools, land, capital), and the level of authority within property production. In traditional Marxist analysis, capitalists and workers are the two "classes" within capitalist society. However, because of complexities such as the existence of self-employed people, people not in the paid labour force, capitalist assets being owned by some employees, the concept of class structure in capitalist societies has been refined beyond a simple two-class framework (Wright, 2000). Erik Olin Wright argues that classes are structurally determined in relation to the productive forces and that the capitalist mode of production produces and reproduces two unambiguous classes - the capitalist and the working class, but also various contradictory locations between these two classes (Wright, 2000).

The sophisticated class typology developed by Wright (2000) is used in this study. This sophisticated typology of Olin Wright is also utilised in the Australian context by Najman and Western (2000). In *A Sociology of Australian Society*, (Najman, and Western, 2000), Chapter Four, Mark Western depicted the Australian class structure in terms of Olin Wright's class analysis, "Wright's typology gives us six class categories or class locations that together make up of the class structure of Australian society" (Najman and Western, 2000: 70-71). Wright also argues that structural changes in the course of capitalist development have led to the emergence of contradictory locations (e.g. top management, supervisors) which can be identified by virtue of their having the characteristics of more than one position in the relations of production and so cannot constitute a distinct unambiguous class. He finds that it is possible to be dominant on one or more while being subordinate on others. These situations are called 'contradictory class locations'. For this reason, political and ideological relations have a determining role in their alignment to one or other of the two main classes in a capitalist formation. Wright's position in analysing these 'contradictory locations' is that, when an agent has a contradictory location at the
economic level, political and ideological relations enter into determination of her/his class position.

In his class typology, Wright uses the relationship to the means of production to divide people in the paid labour force into owners and employees. He then divides the class of employees along two dimensions: (1) the relationship to authority within production and (2) possession of skills or expertise. Each of the boxes shown in his basic typology represents a class location - a location within class relations, not classes (Figure 2.1). By convention, capitalists and workers are often referred to as "classes", yet Wright explains that the more precise terminology for capitalists and workers should be "the fundamental locations within the capitalist class structure" (Wright, 2000: 20). He emphasises that the typology is "not a proposal for a six-class model of the class structure of capitalism, but rather a model of a class structure which differentiates six locations within class relations" (Wright, 2000: 20-21).

In other words, this typology is a map of class locations, not a map of classes. Wright also modifies his basic class typology by adding intermediary categories along each of the dimensions. On the ownership of means of production dimension, the number of employees is considered to distinguish between proper capitalists, small employers, and the petty bourgeoisie. On the authority dimension, the differentiation is made between managers and mere supervisors. The former are involved in organisational decision-making; whereas the latter have power over subordinates but are not involved in the organisational decision-making.

On the skill dimension, differentiation is made between occupations requiring advanced academic degrees and skilled occupations requiring lower levels of specialised training. This results in twelve -locations in the class structure, as illustrated in Figure 2.2. This 12-class location matrix can further be simplified to present the capitalist class, middle class, and working class. The three locations under 'owner' are classified as the capitalist class. All three manager locations, expert supervisor location, and skilled supervisor location are considered the middle class. Non-skilled supervisor, expert, skilled worker and non-skilled worker locations are classified as the working class.
The 12-class location matrix and its simplified version are the basic models that I use for analysis of this study. I refer to them as the “basic” models because they do not have the capacity to solve all class-related issues or research questions. For instance, this matrix does not include people not in the paid labour force (such as people in the welfare system, or in the domestic economy). This matrix is not developed to examine the class of a household or those working ‘under the table’ (cash-in-hand) or those especially exploited and oppressed workers not protected by unions. However, this matrix is useful because it allows me to examine how immigrants’ power in the labour market and labour processes and their class locations change after immigration. With that information, I could conduct micro-level analyses to further understand their experiences at their inter-personal level.
Exploitation is "a key concept for understanding the nature of the antagonistic interests generated by the class relations" (Wright, 2000: 9). Exploitation is involved in class relations through the appropriation of the labour effort of the exploited. Wright suggests that class relations can be understood in terms of three processes underlying the social relations of production: control of labour power, control of the physical means of production and control of investment and resources (Wright, 1976: 31). The capitalist class controls all these three processes while the working class is without control over investment or the physical means of production, sells its labour power (mental and manual) for a wage and does not control the labour of others (Wright, 1976). According to this definition, the working class includes not only manual workers selling their labour power for a wage but also, for example, those

![Figure 2.2: Wright’s Elaborated Class Typology](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Employees</th>
<th>Expert</th>
<th>Skilled</th>
<th>Non-skilled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capitalists: Many</td>
<td>Expert Managers</td>
<td>Skilled Managers</td>
<td>Non-skilled Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Employers: Few</td>
<td>Expert Supervisors</td>
<td>Skilled Supervisors</td>
<td>Non-skilled Supervisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty Bourgeois: None</td>
<td>Experts</td>
<td>Skilled Workers</td>
<td>Non-skilled Workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relation to Means of Production

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relation to Scarc Skills</th>
<th>Experts</th>
<th>Skilled</th>
<th>Non-skilled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manpower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Wright (2000: 22)
non-manual workers such as clerks employed in unproductive (such as wholesale and retail trade, finance and insurance) sectors of the economy.

Studies show that, although peer groups in North America, Australia, and United Kingdom do not always use the word “class”, they nonetheless evaluate their peers by criteria such as language, dress, size of residence, residential location, and style of home (McGregor, 2001; Jones, 1983; Stern & Searing, 1976). Any of the criteria represent the “ranking criteria absorbed from parental stereotypes” (Stern & Searing, 1976: 191). Lack of the word “class” in their descriptions implies that people do not always recognise the relationships among their actions, and class-consciousness. It reinforces people’s blindness to the existence of class. One of the functions of prejudice concerns the attitudes of the non-immigrant (white Australian-born in the case of Australia) working class towards the capitalist social order.

**Intersectionality of 'race' and Class**

Class and ‘race’ are rarely treated together in mainstream academic accounts as evidenced from early studies of migration that treat ‘race’ and class as competing independent variables (Frazier, 1939; Massey and Denton, 1993; Park and Burgess, 1921; Thomas, Park and Miller, 1921; Wilson, 1987, 1996). Using the notion of intersectionality of class and ‘race’, Bannerji (1995) suggests that inequality in North America stems from the interconnection and reinforcement of these two oppressive systems. Moreover, an analysis of immigration utilising Bannerji’s framework suggests that class domination and manipulation create a hostile environment towards immigrants. As a result of the influence of racism, non-white immigrants become the most underprivileged and exploited group in immigrant-receiving capitalist societies.

Analyses of immigration in Western Europe (Castles and Kosack, 1988), in North America (Bannerji, 1995), and in Australia (Castles et al, 1988; Collins, 1988) indicate that immigrants are welcomed because they are “structurally necessary for the national economies” (Castles and Kosack, 1973:6). Immigrants are invited to advanced capitalist countries to fill the slots that are the least desirable and have been
deserted by native workers because of inferior occupational status, low pay, and poor working conditions. The interests of the capitalist class are vulnerable to unionisation among workers (Wright, 1994). How can employers maintain their control and assure immigrants function as expected? One way to achieve employers’ goals is to disrupt workers’ solidarity through fostering distrust between employees.

However, this can also be achieved through mythology, stereotypes, and labels. Public officials blame poor immigrant communities for placing extreme burdens on public health care services and/or a ‘burden’ on tax payers. The public blames immigrants for overcrowding schools, rising hospital deficits and welfare costs, taking jobs away from the citizens, and creating a larger black and/or immigrants underclass. All of these claims easily intensify the anti-immigrant sentiment and turn that sentiment into anti-immigrant policies. The image of immigrants is largely negative. Public opinion has been overwhelmingly against the continuation of immigration in Australia (Markus, 1985; Collins, 1988), during each new wave of immigrants from NESBs. White Australian-born workers may refuse to work together with immigrants, or may try to restrict their numbers, or prevent them getting promoted. Unions campaigned in favour of the ‘White Australia Policy’ and often colluded with employers to ensure that immigrants were dismissed first in cases of redundancy.

In Marxist theory, the ideology of a ruling class can often become the dominant ideology within society. In such instances, the ruling ideology is said to ‘mystify’ or hide the true nature of the control over the means of production. From this point of view comes the argument that the rise of racist ideology is nothing less than an attempt by the ruling class to justify the persecution of racial groups while drawing the attention of the working class away from its real class interests. Thus racism, as well as social and economic differentiation along racial lines, are said to serve dominant class interests by pitting one segment of the working class (e.g., economically disadvantaged whites) against another (e.g., immigrant Asians or Black Africans).
The conclusion that one draws from orthodox Marxist theory, then, is that racial discrimination can be viewed as a manifestation of class interests. Oliver Cromwell Cox states that:

The fact of crucial significance is that racial exploitation is merely one aspect of the problem of the proletarianisation of labour, regardless of the colour of the labourer. Hence racial antagonism is essentially political-class conflict. The capitalist exploiter, being opportunistic and practical, will utilise any convenience to keep his labour and other resources freely exploitable. He will devise and employ “race” prejudice when that becomes convenient (Cox, 1948:333).

The words used to specify the concept of ‘race’ are social exclusion, representation, identity, racial inequality, difference, diversity, racial domination, “race” relations, and minorities. Any talk about ‘race’ must employ the terms racism and discrimination to understand what ‘race’ is. The capitalists are powerful and privileged actors who have an active interest in maintaining poverty and inequality. In polarised class relations (workers vs. capitalists), capitalists use their economic and political power to exclude workers from access to and control over certain important and vital productive resources.

Class and ‘race’ are analytically distinct concepts, but they cannot be treated as two distinct sets of relations. Blalock states that: “As long as minority membership remains among the defining criteria of class position, it will indeed be difficult to separate the two phenomena empirically” (Blalock, 1967: 202). Many analyses of social inequality (as in housing and health studies) treat ‘race’ and class as separate demographic variables and use statistical controls to determine which one explains the observed differences (Krieger et al, 1993). The conventional approach in the housing, health and inequality literature, in North America, United Kingdom and Australia, faces conceptual and methodological challenges in how to capture the intersectionality of ‘race’ and class. Fundamentally, the relationship between ‘race’ and class is not one that naturally coheres or one where absolute distinctions can be drawn. It is a matter of degree that we must clarify in each historical instance with each racialised sub-group. The degree to which racial and class oppression work in
concert is fundamentally a question concerning how classed the ‘race’ category and how ‘race’d’ the class category is in any particular context.

According to all socio-economic indicators, NESB immigrants are disadvantaged compared to English-speaking background immigrants (Collins, 1991). And while there has been improvements in the experiences of skilled and professional Asians, and to some extent European immigrants, as a result of globalisation, the ABS Labour Force Survey of July 2000 data confirms that NESB migrants continue to experience higher unemployment rates relative to Australian born persons and English-speaking background immigrants (ABS, 2000). Non-English-speaking background immigrants in Australia disproportionately work in the hardest, most routine and monotonous jobs in the worst conditions, often in the manufacturing and construction industries (Cope and Kalantzis, 1997; Watson, 1996). They are more concentrated in the labourers and operators occupational groups, while less concentrated in the professionals and para-professionals, clerks, and salespersons groups than are English-speaking background immigrants (Castles and Miller, 1993). One consequence of this pattern of labour-market segmentation in Australia is that NESB immigrants are concentrated in the lower echelons of the labour markets. As a result, they receive the lowest pay, and so non-English-speaking background immigrants have the lowest standard of living, with the exception of the Indigenous population (Collins, 1988).

NESB immigrants occupy a distinct and inferior section of the Australian working. The path to managerial jobs still continues to be problematic for many non-English-speaking background migrants particularly from Africa and South East Asia, which has led to a disproportionate number establishing their own businesses instead. Lawrence Udo-Ekpo states that “the relatively high rate of employment for the African community as a whole can be attributed to such factors as non-recognition of academic qualifications, lack of Australian work experience, racial prejudice, and a lack of useful contacts, as well as language acquisitions” (Udo-Ekpo, 1999: 70). As a result, according to Lawrence Udo-Ekpo, “There are well qualified African lawyers, doctors, engineers, managers, and academics who, having failed to find employment in their specialisation, are now engaged in menial or part-time and casual jobs, just to
keep their heads above water, if at all" (Udo-Ekpo, 1999: 69). In a similar manner, Buchanan and Watson (1997) show that non-English-speaking background immigrants are over represented in manufacturing and service industries where wages are the lowest; most of them in smaller and medium sized, mostly non-unionised private sector workplaces. In ABS data, Eardley presents figures for 1981-82 and 1995-96 showing a growth in the proportion of low-paid non-English-speaking background immigrants born in regions outside of Europe, such as Africa, Oceania, Asia and South America. While people from Europe were relatively under-represented amongst the low paid in both periods, the number of low paid non-Europeans grew disproportionately (Eardley, 1998: 20).

NESB migrants are also over-represented in casual and part-time work (McConnochie et al, 1988; Sargent, 1994). There is a range of non standard employment forms operating in the labour market since the 1990s in Australia (as elsewhere in the West) with levels of job security ranging from at worst, casual and temporary employment, through to intermediate forms such as part-time, fixed term, self employed and apprenticed, up to the ‘best’ examples, continuing or tenured contracts, (Brosnan and Walsh, 1998). This indicates that the Australian labour market is segmented into more or less privileged sectors based on factors such as racial background, gender, age and nationality. In this market, employers can behave non rationally or against their own interests by using discriminatory hiring and labour utilisation practices rather than employing the best workers. Other players within the labour market, such as professional associations and labour unions, may also contribute to discrimination by imposing rules to exclude outsiders and protect the interests of privileged groups (O’Loughlin and Watson, 1997: 9) as evidenced by a growing body of qualitative studies on the attitudes of employers and fellow workers towards migrant labour in Australia (see for example, Beggs and Chapman, 1988; Castles et al, 1988; Hawthorne, 1994; Iredale, 1992; Bertone and Leahy, 2000).

Similarly, most recent data confirm that NESB migrants continue to experience higher unemployment rates relative to Australian-born persons and English-speaking background migrants. The ABS Labour Force Survey of July 2000 reports an
unemployment rate of 7.3% for people of NESB, compared to 5.0% for English-speaking background and 5.8% for the Australian-born (ABS, 2000:24). Migrants from Africa and from South East Asia (particularly from Indo China) had rates of over 10 per cent. The traditional explanation for these higher unemployment rates is the time it takes for NESB migrants to adjust to their new homeland, learn English and find jobs; a view, which maintains that over time migrant unemployment rates converge with that of the general population. Yet, this view seems erroneous for it does not explain why, for example, according to the same ABS (2000) reports, people from the Middle East and Africa who arrived in Australia between 1981 and 1985 had an unemployment rate in 2000 of 15.5 %, or those arriving in the same period from South East Asia had a 9.3 % unemployment rate. This study suggests that the joined forces of class and ‘race’ have made these groups particularly vulnerable to the more adverse effects of the changes in the structure of the Australian economy and in the Australian labour market.

Bannerji suggests that to adequately explain inequality in North America, we should re-conceptualise our questions within the notion of ‘intersectionality’ of ‘race’ (or racism) and class (Bannerji, 1995: 121). It refers to the interconnection of racism and class exploitation and reinforcement between these two oppressions. For example, whites and non-whites in the non-skilled worker class locations are exploited by the class relations; yet there is a ‘race’d’ difference in cultural common sense regarding how they are to be “classed”: Non-whites are not expected to fill the higher management positions but fill that of manual labour or the lower level of white collar jobs. There are “racially” different expectations of people’s social presence and functions. Each ‘racial’ group is internally stratified by class, but the classes within the oppressor and the oppressed ‘racial’ groups are not equal because “members of the two ‘racial’ groups do not have equal opportunity to acquire education, occupation, income, and other attributes for higher class status” (Ogbu, 1979: 11).

Prejudice is particularly widespread among workers, as a result of the repressive socialisation process on the one hand, and of their insecurity and fear of competition on the other. Knowingly or unknowingly, the real causes of this hostility towards
immigrants are not understood by the white working class; instead the white workers rationalise their feelings by labeling immigrants as lazy and dirty, who bring disease, chase women, start fights etc. Even when the risk of competition for jobs and housing is named as one of the problems connected with immigration, this tends to lead not to criticism of the root cause of the problem (the socio-economic systems which produces such insecurity and social problems). They rather incline to antipathy towards the immigrants themselves, as if they have brought the existing socio-economic problems. Immigrants, therefore, take on the function of scapegoats for the deficiencies of capitalist society, which is unable to provide adequate living conditions and to guarantee security to the whole of the working population. In this way, the existing capitalist order is protected from workers' criticism because attention is diverted from its deficiencies. Aggression is turned against immigrants instead of against the privileged ruling class; hence, prejudice against immigrants is a powerful instrument in maintaining the social status quo.

Arnold Rose observes how coloured people in the United Kingdom are perceived by whites; "coloured immigrants (unlike white immigrants) strained the social services, bring in disease, are dirty, or compete for jobs, chase women and start fights" (Rose, et al, 1969:585). One of the functions of prejudice against immigrants is to conceal and legitimate the exploitation of their labour, by alleging that immigrants are congenitally inferior, a belief which manifestly serves the interest of the ruling class. While some political elites and public commentators oppose hostility towards immigrants in Australia (for example, some elements of Labour politicians, religious leaders and the left), others - prominent officials and public figures - do carry out campaigns designed to increase hostility towards immigrants in an attempt to manipulate fears about immigration into political capital by publicising the dangers posed by immigrants to Australia (Abbott et al, 2000; Barnet, 1986; Betts, 1988, 1999; Blainey, 1984; One Nation Party 1998; Rimmer, 1988; Sheehan, 1998).

4 The racist stereotype of Black people as “lazy” has tremendous currency throughout the West; for parallel ethnographic discussions in North America, see, for example, Wade (1993: 13-14, 253-266) and B. Williams (1991: 49-69).
'Race’, Class and Immigration

So far I have discussed how concepts of ‘race’ and class become oppressive mechanisms, produce inequality, and how they could frame immigrants’ lived experiences and constrain their adaptation processes. As discussed in Chapter One, ‘race’ and class have played a key role in the immigration policies of Western countries including Australia. In this section, I will extend the earlier discussions in this chapter and in Chapter One by using the information from the previous sections.

A large number of domestic/local workers have prejudiced and hostile attitudes towards immigrants. Immigrants are regarded as “competitors” for work. Immigrants are “others” who create problems for the receiving countries. Although immigrant and domestic working-class workers are underprivileged and exploited groups, domestic workers lack solidarity with their immigrant colleagues. Immigrant workers are first perceived by domestic workers as competitors for jobs, for housing and for scarce social facilities. As Burgman suggests, this cause of prejudice is a reflection of the basic insecurity felt by most workers:

Fear of economic competition from non-whites on the part of the Australian working class was the result of racist ideas already present in Australian society. The tenacity of racism is assisted by the internal dynamic of the prejudice in that racism, illogically of course, can be justified by pointing to its consequences. Australian working class racism was fed by the perceived tendency of coloured immigrants to work for lower wages, but this was the fault of the racist attitudes of the trade unions, which excluded coloured immigrants and organised against rather than with them. Only racism can explain the adoption of this policy, which then created the alleged reasons for its adoption (Burgmann, 1978: 22).

This hostility is of considerable political importance because it diverts attention from the real causes of working-class insecurity and splits the labour movement. As stated,
increasing unionisation hurts the interests of the capitalist class. Hence, lack of solidarity between the domestic and immigrant workers actually benefits the capitalist class. Studies in Western Europe (Castles & Kosack, 1973) in Canada (Filson, 1983) and in Australia and the United States (Castles et al, 1988; Collins, 1988; Kushnick, 1981) show that the degree of prejudice and hostility is more marked among working-class people than the capitalist class, and that the working class is the most opposed to immigration. By systematically developing a racially diverse labour force and cultivating nationalistic consciousness, Australian capitalists have been able to stimulate competition between the different groups of workers, weaken workers’ solidarity, and maintain their domination and interests. Although racism has been legally abolished, it is believed that the phenomenon is so much ingrained and still pervasive in the Australian political, social and economic environment that it has not disappeared, only developed into more subtle forms. Burgmann’s article is insightful about the deep seated and pervasive nature of the racist Australian climate. She argues that:

Racism ... is an especially virulent ruling class idea because it continues to work in the interests of the capitalist class even after its initial use as a justification for imperial designs, because it self-evidently divides the working class and lessens its resistance to exploitation (Burgmann, 1978:22).

Competition and intolerance become more intense if the worker is one of the undesirable ‘race’. Class conscious and interracial cooperation is a threat to the capitalist class (Kushnick, 1981), so racism has functioned to prevent the working class from “becoming conscious of the centrality of that [class] identity in opposition to the identity and interests of those who exploit them, the capitalist class” (Kushnick, 1981: 192). Racism confuses the white working class as to the basis of its privileges. White workers are encouraged to feel superior to non-white workers. Immigrants from the poorer, non-white countries of the world are believed to be incompetent (Anderson, 1985). White immigrants receive better treatment than non-white immigrants. In other words, the lived experiences of white immigrants vary from non-white immigrants precisely because of ‘race’ or racism. Moreover, after immigrants are exposed to a “racially” diverse and racist social environment for a period of time,
the ideology of ‘race’ emerges in immigrants’ minds. Such an experience refines immigrants’ previous understanding of people in the West and changes their relationship with other ‘racial’ groups (Park, 1995) and even with their own (Weiss, 1970). Because of ‘racial’ tension, ‘racial’ conflicts and ‘racial’ prejudice, the working class fails to maintain its cooperation and solidarity and becomes divided when confronting the interests of the capitalist class. On the other hand, the capitalist class is empowered by racism. The capitalist class is able to maintain its super-exploitation of “racially” oppressed workers and its continuing exploitation of white workers.

One simple explanation for this unfortunate situation lies in the fact of the non-recognition of the educational qualification, skills and training or abilities of many immigrants particularly those from Africa. This is also supported by Hawthorne (1994), and Pearce et al (1995), O’Loughlin and Watson (1997), and McConnochie et al (1988) in their study of migrants from Africa and Indo-China in Melbourne and Australia. Findings indicate that prospective employers would not accept respondents’ educational qualifications and skills simply because “these were obtained in Africa” or elsewhere in NESB countries. Even after taking refresher courses or upgrading their skills, the educated and experienced among them still found it very hard to find jobs. There is strong evidence of the concentration of Black Africans and other recent immigrants in blue-collar occupations in manufacturing and service industries as unskilled or semi-skilled manual workers (e.g., Bronsnan and Walsh, 1998; Buchanan and Watson, 1997; Eardley, 1998; Hawthorne, 1994; Iredale and D’Arcy, 1992; Mcconnochie et al, 1988; O’Loughlin and Watson, 1997; Pearce et al, 1995; Sargent, 1994; Vivianni et al, 1993).

Within the intersectionality of ‘race’ and class, non-white immigrants are the most underprivileged and exploited group in a “racially” conscious society. They are allowed into the country primarily for the benefit of the capitalist class and the maintenance of the class structure. Moreover, non-white immigrants are blamed for economic problems that existed prior to their arrival. They are linked to crime and other social problems. They are scapegoat for a wide range of problems (Bannerji,
As a result of misperceptions about immigrants by the host population, a xenophobic climate escalates particularly when the national economy slows down, or the unemployment rate goes up. Public anxiety and concern over the costs of providing services to immigrants increase. Violence against immigrants such as attacks on immigrants’ businesses (Anthias & Yuval-Davis, 1992) also escalates in other Western settings, although such a climate in Australia does not prevail. According to Manuel Castles (1984), the Australian experience of the past decade is consistent with that in the United Kingdom, Canada, France, and former West Germany, where the upsurge of racism is apparent in all the countries that experienced mass labour migration and subsequent settlement.

But what is different is that in Australia there has been a virtual absence of racist violence directed towards immigrants. One of the contradictory features of the racialisation of immigrants’ labour in Australia is that, despite entrenched racial prejudice at the level of attitudes among the Australian people, and except for the persistent and entrenched prejudice and racism directed towards the indigenous aboriginal people, there has been a virtual absence of racist violent actions directed towards immigrants in an organised and systematic way (Castles, 1984; Collins, 1988; Miles, 1982); although there has been an upsurge in physical violence against those of Middle Eastern appearance or of national and ethnic origins commonly associated with the Islamic faith since the 1991 Gulf War (HREOC, 1991; Hage, 1998). This pattern has been repeated since 11 September 2001 and the Bali bombings in October 2002. In both cases, there has been an intensification of existing, ongoing and everyday forms and patterns of vilification (HROEC, 1991, 2003; Poynting, 2002; Rath, 2001).

The following ‘race’ situation in the United States described by George Lipsitz is similar to the Australian ‘race’ situation described by Verity Burgmann at the opening of this Chapter.
There has always been racism in the United States, but it has not always been the same racism. Political and cultural struggles over power have shaped the contours and dimensions of racism differently in different eras. ... Racism has changed over time, taking on different forms and serving different social purposes in each time period (Lipsitz, 1998: 4-5)

In the next Chapter, the methodological approach and strategies used to gather data and create understandings of Black African immigrants' lived experiences and adaptation processes in Melbourne will be discussed.
Chapter Three

Research Methods, Data Collection and Methods of Analysis

If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.
(Thomas Dictum in Thomas & Thomas, 1928: 572)

Introduction

This chapter begins by registering the simultaneous importance and inadequacy of critiques of ethnography that remain only at the level of epistemological concerns with textual representation, and introduces an argument for the need to critically re-examine the practice of ethnographical methods. Ethnography is a research process in which researchers apply multiple methods to learn about the knowledge that people use to interpret experiences and model their behaviour (Bernard, 1994; Lowenberg, 1993; Spradley, 1979). There are two major traditions of ethnography: anthropological and sociological. The anthropological tradition is interested in describing subjective cultural experiences (Spradley, 1979); whereas the sociological tradition rooted in symbolic interactionism, places emphasis on power imbalances, social context, and the social-construction of reality (Lowenberg, 1993). Indeed, if “the discipline [anthropology] is best distinguished by its method” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992: ix), then anthropologists are challenged to theorise ethnographic methodology – the practice of ethnography itself – with an ever more substantial and exacting account of both its epistemology and politics, and the practical materiality and institutional embeddedness of both. “An authoritative, explorative, elegant, learned voice speaks and analyses, amasses evidence, theorises, speculates about everything except itself” (Said, 1989: 212). If it is the method that defines best what is the uniqueness of anthropological knowledge, then it is plainly the method that most deserves to be accounted for within the anthropological discipline.
Ultimately, of course, the problem is neither the “doing” nor the “writing” of ethnography, per se; both of these, to borrow Said’s phrase, are simply “various modes of being anthropological” — rather, the problem is anthropology as a discipline; it is the authority of the discipline that has required and made possible the authority of the method and the representational techniques, not vice versa. And the discipline of anthropology is inherently problematic because, as a discipline, it “cannot easily be distinguished from the process of empire” (Said, 1989: 214). This is not to deny the fact that various anthropologists have struggled with the political contradictions of their particular research settings; rather, it is to affirm that the historical specificity of those particular struggles have been produced at that conjuncture of anthropological research and the broader historical circumstances of inequality and domination through which those settings were constituted as objects of anthropological investigation in the first instance. In order for anthropological research to not serve the ends of imperialist domination, deliberate and diligent efforts toward its decolonisation are required (Harrison, 1991:104). As Peter McLaren points out, “the identity of the researcher qua researcher is both a discursive fiction and a social practice. The discursive tools of analysis used to uncover the authenticity of the studied ‘other’ become the unconscious predicates of the researcher’s own identity and subjective disposition ... in the field” (McLaren, 1995: 275).

Ethnography involves multiple data collection techniques because the purpose is to triangulate data. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Thus, three methods used to gather data in this study were in-depth interviews, participant-observation and survey questionnaires with emphasis on in-depth qualitative interviews. The quantitative component consisted of the use of a Demographic, Socio-economic, Immigration and Housing Questionnaire (henceforth — DSEIHQ). Data for this study was also generated from secondary sources. In qualitative research, the objective is to get as much variation in the responses as possible; rather than trying to be representative of a population. One of the goals of qualitative research is to describe an entire range of experiences. I used rephrasing, prompting, probing or examples to steer participants toward areas of concern for the research without diverting their stories from the issues so as to achieve objectives. In addition,
I closely monitored my own interactions with the participants and challenged myself to explore alternative explanations when examining the data. Critical ethnography shares several fundamental characteristics with anthropological ethnography and sociological ethnography.

In all these ethnographical approaches, life is seen to be structured by meanings, rules, conventions or habits adhered to by individuals as social beings. People constantly use these complex systems to organise their behaviour to understand themselves and others and to make sense of the world in which they live. All of these experiences are shared and handed down culturally through languages, skills and practices, experiences and constitute culture (Spradley, 1979). Meanings of activities and events are derived from, or arise out of, the context of people interacting. People constitute the context and, at the same time, are constituted by the context, and thus meanings are handled in and modified through an interpretive process. The interpretation is drawn from people's cultural knowledge and past experiences. Moreover, people do not act toward other people, objects, and ideas but toward meanings ascribed to them (Blumer, 1969).

The notion of reflexivity is also emphasised (Muecke, 1994; Thomas, 1993). The researcher is inevitably a participant throughout the interactive research process and the construction of text. As a consequence, the dynamic and mutual influence of researcher and research field on each other needs to be explicitly documented and analysed (Muecke, 1994). Power and status inequities in the researcher-participant relationship and the researcher's own points of view require rigorous examination with respect to the created knowledge (Allen, Benner & Diekelmann, 1986).

Influenced by the critical social theory epistemology, critical ethnographers, however, argue that cultural knowledge is a product of a combination of different social processes e.g., practice, experiences, activities, ideologies (politics), rituals and myths. The 'what is' described in the conventional ethnography has been justified by social ideologies, "a shared system of symbols that reduce conflict and function as a social control mechanism by providing a non coercive social glue that helps keep
things orderly" (Thomas, 1993: 8). These social ideologies construct justification for our actions as well as the actions of others and prevent us from perceiving hidden interests and situations. We generally do not recognise the extent to which we are constrained socially by ideological predilections. Critical ethnographers intend to redirect our attention to deeper structural characteristics such as ideology and social control (Thomas, 1993). A project of critical ethnography is “not simply the empirical re-presentation of the world but the transgressive task of posing the research itself as a set of ideological practices” (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994: 144).

The goal of critical ethnography is to nullify the effects of ideologists and emancipate participants (including the researchers) from ideological practice and beliefs. The participants think and act in order to realise alternative explanations and possibilities of the situation and uncover the hidden distortions that help maintain the oppressive systems (Campbell & Bunting, 1991; Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994; Thomas, 1993). More precisely, the product of critical ethnography is expected to make members of the discriminated group aware of how the broader social structure is connected with their lives, and members of the oppressive group become conscious about the privileges and power they have through a systematic domination of the society. The knowledge created by the critical ethnographer(s) and the participants is used to invoke social consciousness and social actions to change social domination and power imbalances.

Four inclusion criteria were defined in this study. (1) The individual immigrant is a Black African. (2) The individual immigrant must have emigrated from Sub-Saharan Africa to Australia. (3) The individual immigrant has lived in Australia for three years or longer. (4) The individual immigrant is between 21 years and 65 years of age at the time of the interview. In total 97 immigrants were surveyed, of whom 28 were interviewed in-depth. Another 17 of the 97 surveyed participated in the informal group discussion and their observations used for the purpose of this study. Data analysis consisted of (1) descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies, distributions and measures of central tendency) to summarise demographic, socio-economic, immigration and housing data and descriptive data obtained by the DSEIHQ, and (2)
analysis of interview data which involves finding key themes in the interview transcripts. All analyses proceeded at the individual immigrant level. Data sought in the individual level interviews, my participant observation as well as group-level discussions during participant observations were analysed and synthesised to represent a collective view of the ‘population’.

Throughout the research period that informs this work (January 2001 - November 2005), I did not enjoy the luxury of institutional funding, and so financed the entirety of my research through my own labours, and through the support and assistance of friends and colleagues. I was employed as a sessional teacher at the University of Melbourne (2001-2004), while also living at Ormond College as resident tutor until February 2005. In addition, I worked as a Security Guard most week-ends and during the summer vacation when not tutoring at the university. Thus, I provide a methodological account of my own practice as an immigrant and ethnographer as well that attends to the particular complications and contradictions of my role and practice as an immigrant with first hand experience and an immigrant with very close relationships among the people whom I struggle to represent responsibly throughout the text of this dissertation.

**In-Depth Interviews**

Interviews were the primary source of data. Participant-observation and paper-and-pencil tools were used for triangulation (Mitchell, 1986) and generation of questions. Recruitment for this study initially relied upon ‘snowballing’ - a technique for finding research subjects. One subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provides the name of a third, and so on (Vogt, 1999) referrals through my personal networks and key Black African community agencies and were effectively used to capture as many of such immigrants and potential respondents as possible. Immigrants participating in the study later became an important referral source for the following reasons. First, they were more likely to know immigrants that arrived within the last twenty years. And secondly, referred immigrants might feel more comfortable with the request to be “being interviewed”, given that their friends had gone through the process and had no negative comment about the experience. In
other words, an early trust may have been established through this connection. To guard against the possible exclusion of respondents, a recruitment flyer written both in English and Amharic\(^1\) (Appendix I) was used. With written permission from the Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre, South Eastern Region Migrant Resource Centre Inc., North East Migrant Resource Centre and from the Acting General Manager of Brotherhood of St. Laurence, the recruitment flyers were placed on the premises of their respective organisations. In addition, with the verbal permission of owners and leaders, chairpersons and managers, the recruitment flyers were placed on notice boards of community organisations, community churches, community restaurants, stores and in several high-rise residential complexes.

Each referral source received either the English or the Amharic version flyers. The flyers contained a simple abstract of the study, the contact person, the contact phone number and the inclusion criteria. I also explained the flyer in person when the flyers were passed out. This provided an opportunity to answer questions raised by the referral sources so that they would be able to better describe the study to prospective participants. There were two ways to initiate the first contact: interested immigrants contacted me or were contacted by me if they granted permission to call them via the referral sources. As a result, I initiated all of the first contacts, except for the nine who contacted me to express their interest to participate in the study after they had read the flyer.

During the pilot test of both the interview and the questionnaire, it was strongly recommended to use native African languages in order to enable many Africans to participate. This recommendation was also strongly supported by referral sources in the community. Due to poor financial assistance and resources, the flyer and all other essential documents such as the interview schedule, the questionnaire, the Plain Language Statement and the consent form were initially prepared only in English. Hiring and training interviewers to collect data in multiple languages is not feasible.

\(^{1}\)Amharic is the official language of Ethiopia, which was also the official language of Eritrea until its independence in 1991. It is the medium of instruction at elementary school level. Amharic is one of the seven languages in the country that originated from Semitic. The main Semitic languages (Amharic, Tigrigna and Guragigna) use Sabean alphabet and are the only languages in the continent to have their own script. They are more or less similar to the language used by ancient Phoenicians.
for a non-financed study like this. In addition, lack of competency in additional languages prevented me from effectively conducting both the interview and the questionnaire in several African languages. Among other things, one of the reasons for stipulating at least three years stay in Australia as one of the inclusion criteria was to overcome language barriers. The assumption was that those who were not speaking English before their arrival to Australia would have learnt to speak well in the three year period of their stay in Australia. After consultation with my supervisors, I was advised to use at least the national language of Ethiopia, so as to include as many Ethiopians and Eritreans as possible. It was hard to find the Ethiopian software in Australia; but thanks to the Ethiopian community in Melbourne, I was able to obtain the software and the essential training. The moral support I received from Eritreans and their willingness to be interviewed in their former official language was also an encouraging one. Of the 28 interviewees who participated in this study, only seventeen considered themselves bilingual, while the remaining eleven interviewees all listed their own language as the only language they spoke proficiently. Although they do not have problems with speaking English, two of the seventeen who consider themselves bilingual preferred to do the interview in Amharic rather than English.

The purpose of this critical ethnography research is to explore and examine the impact of 'race' and class on the lived experiences of Black Africans in Melbourne. A purposeful sample of twenty-eight Black African immigrants was recruited in the Melbourne metropolitan area from March 2003 through 8 March 2004. Purposeful sampling was selected because the orientation of this study was to obtain a range of perspectives distributed within the population, rather than generalisation from sample to population. The adequacy of sample size was judged by whether the sample could produce sufficient data to reach the intended result, and whether the deep, case-oriented thrust of qualitative inquiry is preserved (Sandelowski, 1994, 1995). The decision was primarily influenced by the purpose of the study, the methods chosen for the study, time limits, availability of resources, including number of investigators and financial support (Sandelowski, 1995), and theoretical saturation (or informational redundancy).
Only nine immigrants interested in participating in the interview stage of the study contacted me after reading the flyer. Forty-nine immigrants were referred both through my personal networks, and key Black African community agencies. Thirteen of these forty-nine immigrants were not included because: (1) Five immigrants did not meet the inclusion criteria, that is, they were under 21 years old (they were 17, 18, 19, 19 and 20 years old respectively). (2) Three immigrants (the sixth, seventh and eighth) were excluded because they were on student visas, in other words, they were not residents and had lived in Australia for less than three years. (3) Two immigrants (the ninth and tenth immigrants) were not included because they arrived in Australia on family category visas in early 2003 and mid-2003 respectively. (4) The eleventh immigrant eventually was excluded because the husband was not interested in spite of the wife's agreement. (5) The twelfth immigrant was referred after the source person obtained verbal consent from the son. But the mother declined to participate; she said "Our life is plain, we can not add anything to your work; nor we can bring any change to our [the Black population] situation. Every one knows how we are living, they know it, everyone knows it well, yourself know it well", and (6) The thirteenth of the thirteen immigrants was eventually excluded because the son was not interested in spite of the mother’s agreement. (7) In addition to these, another seventeen immigrants belonging to the Moslem communities declined, soon after the invasion of Iraq by the US led-coalition forces.

When I phoned each prospective immigrant, I gave a brief description of myself, purposes of the study, and the procedure (Appendix II for the two types of telephone script for recruitment). As a researcher, I was concerned about each participant’s understanding of his or her rights in the study. These immigrants, however, showed no concern whatsoever about the study and human subjects issues despite this study being the first contact we ever had. They appeared to have a great deal of trust in me. Some immigrants even said that they were glad that they could ‘help’. The motivation behind the “help” was either because “we all are from the Black continent having common problems” or “that is your school project and has nothing to do with African politics”, or “you are not sent by Australian Government to spy on us”. The pre-existing trust may be related to (1) the trust in the referral sources, and (2) the images of “student” versus “researcher” in relation to the level of power to do harm.
This level of trust did indeed have positive impacts on the future research-participant relationship and data collection.

The participants and I negotiated a time and place for the interview after verbal consent was obtained on the phone. Because of cultural influences, although immigrants were told to select a time and place that was convenient and comfortable to them, usually they deferred that decision to me. I was given permission from Dr. Stephen Ziguras, Acting General Manager of the Brotherhood of St. Laurence, and Mr John Patsikatheodorou, Director of the Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre, to use one of the rooms at the Ecumenical Migration Centre (Fitzroy) and at Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre (Footscray) respectively. I recommended these two places and asked participants to select one of the places for us to meet. I gave them a choice to maintain the shared power relationship between the participant and myself, and to avoid causing them unease due to having to make a decision that would not be appropriate culturally. Typically, African people would be hesitant to give a direct response, because it would be considered impolite. While one participant met me at the Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre in Footscray for the interview, the remaining twenty-seven participants declined to have the meeting at the two places recommended to them. These participants did not want the interview to take place at any migrant/refugee related agencies. Thanks to Professor Malcolm Smith (Dean of Studies of Ormond College) and Professor Hugh Collins (Master of Ormond College), I was allowed to use Ormond's Frank Raleigh meeting room.

In each household, the person who first contacted me, or with whom contact was first made, is the ultimate interviewee. Most of the interviews were conducted in the evenings or on weekends at the participant’s residence (46.4%), nine interviews at Ormond College (32.14%), and three (10.7%) at participants’ offices or workplaces. While two interviews were conducted at Flemington Community School\(^3\), the remaining one (3.6%) interview was conducted at the Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre (Footscray). Payments of $15 dollars for each participant who

\(^3\) The two interviews at Flemington Community School were conducted at the office of the Chairman of the Oromia Community (the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia).
participated in the study were provided to encourage interviewees' participation and provide compensation for time and effort expended. Seventy-five per cent of interviewees, however, refused to accept the payment as a sign of their moral and material support to me. All blessed and wished me all the best. For instance, Mr. Teka, together with Mr. Aklog and Mrs. Hamelmal (his brother and sister-in-law) said: "Our payment would be your success in your project. Be strong, never give up, and complete your program. That is the reward we would be expecting from you."

Protection of participants was ensured through several mechanisms. All of the procedures were outlined to and approved by the University of Melbourne Human Ethics Committee on 24 January 2003. As described above, referral sources were given study flyers and I explained the study in person to referral sources. Immigrants were not contacted until I had the permission from the immigrants to initiate the phone contact. More information about the study and participation in the study were provided during the phone call. The voluntary nature of participation was emphasised as well. Verbal consent to participate in the study was obtained during this phase. Prospective immigrants were not pressurised to participate in the study. Prior to every interview, participants were assuredly guaranteed strict anonymity and confidentiality in terms of their identity and responses or information they provided for the study. A Plain Language Statement (PLS) (Appendix III) and a written consent form (Appendix IV) were developed for the study and provided to all participants before each interview.

Every participant was requested to sign the Letter of Consent before the interview. As a result, all participants agreed of their own volition to sign the Letter of Consent. Most interviewees read the consent forms and the Plain Language Statement before signing their names. Their non-verbal communication appeared to suggest that reading the consent form was a matter of formality and that they did not have doubts about what I had explained to them. Seven of the twenty-eight participants simply jumped ahead to the signature part. The purpose of the study, procedure, benefits and potential risks, confidentiality, and participants' rights to withdraw and to refuse to respond were included both in the Plain Language Statement and the consent form. I
also verbally explained this information to them before they read the written forms. The next section offers information on data storage and management.

Information was gathered through a semi-structured interviews conducted with one individual adult household member for twenty-eight immigrants privately from each household. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to make sure that all of the respondents covered the same issues. I would ask the same questions, with room for them to answer however they like, but I would get information on similar topics from all participants of the interview. The interview schedule (a general guide for an interview—was developed following Spradley’s *Ethnographic Interview* (1979). An earlier version of the interview schedule was first pilot tested with three Black African undergraduate students: two of them from the University of Melbourne and the third from the Victoria University of Technology. The pilot test provided information about the usefulness of the proposed questions in answering research questions, the appropriateness of the questions being phrased, and any missing questions. Questions for the next interview were derived from the interviewee’s responses in the prior interview. Several strategies were used in the interview for clarification, elaboration, and consciousness raising (when it was possible): repeating, rephrasing, probing, prompting and making comparisons to other immigrants’ experiences, to my personal experiences and to the literature.

The interviews are purposely structured to contain both open-ended and direct questions. The reason for data collection in the form of open-ended and direct questions during in-depth interviews allowed for the flexibility and openness needed to talk with respondents at length and to explore responses in great detail. The other reason for this kind of interview format was that some open-ended questions may not be answered by the respondents used in the pre-test for this study. For example, on the question “How do you feel about the issue of racism in Australia?” the answer might be “I do not pay that kind of thing any mind. I do not even let it bother me”. A more leading question will be later posed: “In what ways did you experience racism in this country?” The respondent would then describe an incident that happened to her/his self or a member of her/his household. I believe that without forging ahead with some of the direct questions, the information received would not have been
forthcoming. This is due to the tendency of people to dismiss or bury painful experiences, and I was anxious to know how they navigated these issues. Moreover, at other times the questions were misunderstood, so the direct format was used at different stages during the interview for this reason. Moreover, although some of the questions may appear redundant and/or repetitive, they were purposely inserted in different forms for cross-validation purposes.

In this manner, answers could be compared against each other to ensure their validity. Reasons for the need to restate some of the questions appeared in the pre-test for this study, when I noticed that later on in the interview, or when the respondents felt more ready, the same questions, rephrased, were answered more fully. It also appeared in the pre-test that events not remembered at first might later come to the fore. The first interview began with an overview consisting of demographic questions, then broad descriptive questions to elicit immigrants’ narratives and explanations of what they had experienced in the process of adaptation in their new homeland. Examples of these questions are “tell me about yourself”, “what is your immigration process”, and “tell me what it was like when you first came to Australia”. Positive and negative experiences, interactions with people outside her/his household, and changes in his/her household were identified. All interview questions (Appendix V) were guided by the theoretical framework, the critical social epistemology, and the critical ethnography methodology.

The development of the interview schedule was an evolving process. The length of an interview on the average, lasted one-and-a-half hours. All interviews were tape recorded with participants’ consent. Field notes (see Participant-Observation for details) were systematically kept after each visit. All data sets are kept in a locked file. Each participant was assigned a 4-digit ID number for labeling and identification. The first two digits were the respondent’s number. The third digit indicated the person’s gender (for example, 1 = female, 2 = male); the last digit was the person’s marital status (for example, 0 = married, 3 = single, 4 = divorce, 5 = widow). Identification numbers and participants’ identifiable information were maintained separately from the data. For the further analysis of the data, fictitious
first names were allocated in order to protect the identity of the respondents. Audio-tapes will also be erased two years after this study is completed. Both interview and survey data were managed and coded by Microsoft Word and Excel programs.

All interview data were prepared through a multi-stage process before they were coded. The first step was to transcribe the interviews from audio-tapes to paper. The second step was to create the English transcripts from the initial Amharic transcripts. I completed all translations using Microsoft Word. Difficulties encountered during the process were recorded for future consultation. The third step was to read through and refine the English transcripts. This was done by reconciling the initial Amharic transcript and the English transcripts created. Preliminary analysis and discussions with my PhD supervisors and colleagues also took place during this time. The fourth step was to revise the computer file of the English transcripts. This version of transcripts was used for in-depth analysis. Any translation mistakes or typographical errors found in the revised transcripts were corrected again. This re-revised English transcript is considered the final version for coding. Notes derived from the analysis process were entered as annotations (an explanatory or critical comment or notes that has been added to a text) for the selected narrative segments and codes. Field notes were most commonly left in hand written form but those used for quotes or annotations were typed in Microsoft Word. Open-ended questions on the DSEIHQ were also typed up in Microsoft Word for analysis while numerical data from DSEIHQ were coded in Microsoft Excel. The last section presents the data analysis process.

Riessman’s narrative analysis (1993) is the framework for analysing the interview data in this study. The intention of choosing this approach was not only to discover the narrativity of my participants’ stories, but also it was selected because of its analytic approach to the transcription process and to language. As such, language is a form of power and the medium of ideology (Thomas, 1993), and should not be seen as a transparent medium for communication (as it has been in content or constant

3 All personal names of participants that appear in the ensuing text of this thesis are fictional. In the interests of protecting the anonymity of the people depicted here, I have deliberately obfuscated or altered various descriptive details that I deem to be inconsequential for my analysis, but that nonetheless could potentially serve to identify particular persons.
comparative analysis) but an interpretive structure (Sandelowski, 1994). Thomas notes that, "How we 'hear' our data as they speak to us, and how we translate what we have heard into a set of messages for an audience, gives the researcher the power to define and transmit 'reality'" (Thomas, 1993: 45). DeVault (1990) suggests, similarly to Thomas, that the process of transcription emphasises the importance of capturing a participant's own words, but it also gives the researcher substantial power as editor, translator, and interpreter of those words before sending final write-ups to readers. Narrative analysis emphasises how the data were made (Riessman, 1993; Sandelowski, 1994), and seeks to unpack the structure of interview data (words, sentences, lines) to gain insight into human beings' lives, to reveal how respondents explain their situations in their life experiences, and to explore why something happened (Riessman, 1993; Sandelowski, 1991). What is said (the content) requires researcher's attention in analysis, but what is unsaid and how things are said are also significant for the analysis (Devault, 1990; Riessman, 1993). The use of narrative analysis is to examine both the language of my data and the language used to discuss the data.

There is no standard set of procedures for narrative analysis in comparison to some forms of qualitative analysis. Riessman's framework was used as a guide rather than a set of prescriptions to analyse data in this study. The first step is rough transcription and data reduction. During this step parts of the interviews important for the thesis were transcribed to paper with words, body language, emotional expression, features of talk such as pauses, repetitions, false starts and asides, and order of speaking. The notation system modelled after Mishler's work (1986) was developed for this study to mark the preserved common features (Appendix VII). Data reduction, on the other hand, is the close examination of the transcripts and the selection of portions (or narrative segments) for translation and detailed analysis. The decision about selection was based on: (1) relevance to the purpose and specific aims of the study, (2) level of analysis of this study, and (3) sequence, thematic, and structural coherence of the narratives. The last criterion preserved the narrative as a unit and prevented fragmentation into discrete thematic categories (Riessman, 1993). Parts about which I was uncertain at the time were kept for re-evaluation during the process of analysis. Key aspects of each interview were preserved after this step. The second step is re-
transcription. This means to re-transcribe the selected portions (in Step 1) into a form suitable for further analysis and interpretation.

Minor editing was made in the English transcripts to make the meaning of a statement clearer. Some of the editing was due to the speakers' verbal expression (e.g., excluding utterances and false starts), and some was due to language differences between Amharic and English (e.g., adding subjects, objects, pronouns, and conjunctions). Also in some cases, there were multiple narratives in one long response. Thus, each individual narrative was present in a new paragraph to signify its unit. The structure of narratives may also have been altered after the translation from Amharic to English. The rearrangement of the text would not be as meaningful as in Riessman's original approach. In accordance with Thomas and De Vault's comments about the researcher's authority in the process of transcript generation, I was very cautious while translating each interview. By no means would the English transcripts used for analysis be the same as if the interviews were done in English. I carefully chose words to convey the meanings as closely as possible. I also used Amharic transcripts as the supplemental data set to enhance the credibility of the interpretation.

Once re-transcription (Step 2) was completed, the transcripts were ready for in-depth analysis. To avoid the tendency to read a narrative only for content and the equally dangerous tendency to read it as evidence for a prior theory, Riessman suggests (1) beginning with the structure of the narrative: How is it organised? Why does a participant (or participants) develop the story this way in conversation with this interviewer? And (2) then he suggests examining the meanings encoded in the form of the talk that were linked to the specific aims of the study, conceptual framework, and methodology. Transcripts were carefully read word-by-word and sentence by sentence following these two suggestions. Substantive and methodological codes were written next to the highlighted narrative segments. Other analytical notes were also written next to the related narrative segments. The majority of the first level codes were descriptive in nature. Some of them (e.g., social support) came from the literature and as a consequence they were more abstract or analytical. There were ongoing comparisons of stories across immigrants, across household members in the
same household and across households, and codes were changed accordingly. I was close to thematic saturation after analysing half of the interviews. In other words, I was adding fewer and fewer codes with each newly analysed interview after that point. As the analysis progressed, codes gradually merged and became more abstract and analytical.

A code book was also developed to help me track changed code names and definitions over time. In actual practice, data gathering, transcription, translation, and analysis occurred concurrently. As I scrutinised transcripts, features of the talk or themes jumped out, stimulating my ideas for the next interview. Then as I interacted with my participants, analytic ideas changed, emerged or became clearer about previous analyses. Thus, the whole process was interactive and interpretive. Where it was deemed necessary, interviewees’ responses have been directly quoted or incorporated into the text to offer additional clarification or support interpretation (No responses have however been attributed to or identified with any particular individual).

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, interpretation of actions and events and meanings are constructed by socio-cultural context, social power and control. The same events can always be constructed in many different ways because the contexts and power relationships could change over time. Thus, interpretations of human experiences or narratives told by the narrator are not static. The language of validity and reliability derived from the positivist-empiricist paradigm is not appropriate to evaluate the methodological tenacity of this critical ethnographic study, as it is a study operating in a different paradigm. In general, validity was high since findings were derived directly from participants’ accounts of their lived experiences based on their understandings, perceptions and feelings, though I have discussed methodological issues and concerns on such matters in the final section of this chapter. Some questions in the interviews may appear to be redundant and/or repetitive; however they were purposely inserted in different form for cross-validation purposes. In this manner answers could be compared against each other to ensure their validity. Reasons for the need to restate some of the questions appeared
in the pre-test for this study. It also emerged in the pre-test that events which were not remembered at first later came to the fore.

According to Lincoln and Guba, credibility refers to having confidence and faith in the description or interpretation of human experience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). When the investigator's reconstructions are recognizable as adequate representations, credibility is increased. Several methods were used in this study to ensure credibility: (1) engaging in consultation or debriefing with my PhD supervisors (including my external supervisor) who have various characteristics, life experiences, professional training and expertise, (2) triangulation in data collection, (3) audio-taping interviews, (4) keeping notes, memos, and reflexive journal (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and (5) listening in ways that are personal, disciplined, and sensitive to differences (De Vault, 1990).

Likewise, dependability is a concern of stability and repeatability of the findings. Variation is anticipated because realities change as the phenomenon being studied changes over time, or as insights grow and analytic ideas emerge in the process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Moreover, variation occurs because “hearers and readers hear and read differently from each other, and differently from what speakers and writers may intend” (Gee, 1991 cited in Riessman, 1993). Dependability is established when others can clearly follow the decision trail and understand the logic used by the investigator. Recordings, written field notes, memos, reflexive journals, transcripts, code books, and write-ups were utilised in the audit trail.

A confirmability audit trail was also used to ascertain whether the findings were grounded in the data, to examine whether the methodological decisions were logical and analytical techniques were appropriate to evaluate the quality of interpretation and write-ups, and to look at the possibility of equally attractive alternatives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Riessman, 1993). Confirmability refers to the circumstance when theoretical claims are supported with evidence from participants' accounts and when alternative interpretations of the data are considered (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Riessman, 1993).
Similarly, pragmatic use, proposed by Riessman, refers to the extent to which a study becomes the basis for others' work (Riessman, 1993). Unlike other criteria, this one is future oriented and collective. The evidence of pragmatic use resides within the reader/user instead of the investigator of the study. But as the investigator of this study, I can provide information that allows others to determine the trustworthiness of my work by (1) describing how the interpretations were generated, (2) specifying how the successive transformation was accomplished, beginning with telling the stories, to listening, to transcribing, to analysing, and to ending in writing up the reports, and (3) finally making primary data available to other researchers (Riessman, 1993).

Last, reflexivity is a process of rigorous self-examination of how investigators' characteristics, epistemic and non-epistemic values, ideologies, and life experiences affect data gathering, analysis, and subsequent display of the data to an audience (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lowenberg, 1993; Thomas, 1993). The emphasis of reflexivity is not to generate "value-free" knowledge, but as stated by Thomas, to ask researchers to "become self-aware of the process and consequences of knowledge production by bringing the original act of knowledge back into consciousness" (Thomas, 1993: 46). Two important questions guided my critical reflexivity. The first question was how many points of view (i.e., biases, ideologies, background, racial, and social class) affected my work. Assessing these was made possible by reflexive notes, which were kept throughout the research process. The second question was where I was located in relation to participants, in terms of power and status (Campbell & Bunting, 1991; Fine & Sandstrom, 1988; Lowenberg, 1993). I consistently monitored my interactions with each participant, and instead of solely asking participants for their contribution to this research enterprise, I also disclosed my personal experiences to immigrants where it was appropriate.

Gaining access to the migrant communities is an extremely problematic endeavour for most social scientists. As an African from South of the Sahara, I had the advantage of an 'insider' status and perspective as long as I was not promoting African politics. At the same time, my African identity also afforded me a relatively easy entry into the African community, into establishing contacts, rapport, and
acquaintanceship with other Africans, and to win their cooperation and assistance in the field-work. Similarly, my African background and experiences as an immigrant provided me with a deeper understanding of how Black African communities conduct their lives, what their life experiences look like and how they perceive, evaluate and interpret their lives in Australia. Indeed, my experiential knowledge and insight into many facets of the socio-cultural lives of Black Africans was instrumental in the overall designing of the research project, its objectives and underlying hypothesis.

Even though it greatly afforded me advantages especially in terms of contacting respondents and seeking their consent and participation in the study, being a Black African myself did not forestall all difficulties in the data collection exercises. A number of other factors were identified which posed possible barriers to achieving a high level of reliability. Outstanding among them was the lack of trust evidenced by immigrants from the Moslem communities. The field-work began just a month after the invasion of Iraq by the US-led Coalition Forces, and in particular it was a time when the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) on suspicion of terrorist connections raided a number of Moslem residences. A high degree of scepticism on the part of the Moslem migrants of anyone viewed as an authority figure associated with the University of Melbourne and possibly with ASIO served as an obstacle for the researcher. Most were either frightened or worried by the situation. The case of my three informants from the University of Melbourne and the Victoria University of Technology would be an example. These students, who participated in the pilot test of both the interview and the survey questionnaire, and who had been a source of courage and support, declined and even tried to distance themselves, although after tireless effort I managed to at least resume our friendship.

As noted above, seventeen immigrants from the Moslem communities declined to participate, soon after the invasion of Iraq by the US-led Coalition forces. They all declined to participate after I had obtained verbal consent and/or contacted me to express their interest after they had read the flyer during the initial period of my field-work i.e., before the outbreak of the war. This should not be viewed as affecting the recruitment of respondents from the Black African Moslems communities, since this study is not trying to be representative of the Moslem population. This has no
significant effect since the study is to understand the impact of ‘race’ and class in their lived experiences. However, it affected the degree to which those who had already agreed to participate responded to specific questions. Two participants instructed me frequently to stop recording every time they did not feel comfortable about the questions. This distrust, fear and suspicion manifested itself in omission and/or distortion of information, contradictory responses, and a general reluctance to share impressions and experiences. Language barriers also served as obstacles for the research. As explained above, hiring and training interviews to collect data in multiple languages was not feasible for an unbudgeted and unfinanced study like this. In addition, lack of competency in additional languages prevented me from effectively conducting both the interview and the questionnaire in several African languages.

Problems were also encountered especially when a woman (spouse) was the first of a couple to be contacted. Being a man may have influenced the gender composition of the sample to the extent that there is a preponderance of men over women. For example, as noted above, some married women declined to participate in the study. Frequently, they would decline any participation and direct that her husband be interviewed instead. Some, as explained above, still refused even after it was explained to them that their own experiences were just as important as their husbands’. This reluctance may be attributed to the nature and roles or relationships in African cultures. It largely explains why there is a preponderance of men over women in the sample.

The Under-presentation of women in this study, while directly reflecting the nature of men-women relationships in African societies, is also due to their small numbers and

4 Within African societies, men/husbands are often considered the heads in most situations, and they are expected to make important decisions concerning the family, so perhaps some women felt that talking to or confiding in an outsider or “stranger” about important family issues was something that had to be handled, or at least endorsed, by the husband or male-head. It may also be that some women declined because they had only recently joined their husbands and so did not feel knowledgeable enough to provide the information sought. Some might have also refused because they would not feel comfortable discussing their experiences with me as a man. Still, with strict Moslem followers, women are not allowed to let an outsider man get access to the house, let alone to sit with him and discuss personal issues.
relatively recent migration to Melbourne or Australia. Examination of the DSEIHQ indicates that the men in this study have, on average, been in Melbourne for a longer time than the women: 39 and 17 years respectively. For these reasons many more men than women would be expected to volunteer their participation in this study. Indeed, most of the women who participated in the study indicated that they came to Australia to join their spouses who had earlier migrated to Australia. The interpretations and perceptions reported by participant women are reflective of those held by the Black African population in Melbourne and are not a result of the sex composition of the participants, since the study is of their experiences based on their class and ‘race’ and not on their experiences as women. Information gathered from my POs with a cross-section of the study population, confirms that sex differentials have no effect on the views, interpretations, and perceptions about the impact of ‘race’ and class on the lived experiences of Black Africans in Melbourne. This is because discussions with a cross-section of both sexes showed a commonality in views, interpretations and perceptions of their lived experiences in Melbourne, Australia. Thus the gender imbalance of the respondents has no significant effect since the aim of the study is to explore and examine the impact of race and class in the lived experiences of Black Africans.

**Participant Observation**

Useful first-hand data were also gathered through *participant observation* — a strategy by which I personally participated in and at the same time observed the social and communal behaviour of the study group in different settings. Participant Observation (henceforth - PO) served multiple functions. It was used as a means of conducting physical and social environmental assessment and for validating the data and the interpretation of data contextually. It was also used to generate new questions in keeping with the theoretical foundations and to examine hypotheses about immigrant adaptation and lived experiences (Jorgensen, 1989). Constant comparisons across what I learnt from my immigrant friends’/other immigrants’ experiences, from my personal experiences, from the literature, and from the field were made. As noted above, seventeen of the 97 Black African immigrants who participated in the survey questionnaire (DSEIHQ) also participated in the informal group discussion. They
actively engaged in the discussion by contributing and/or sharing their own experiences; thus observation of them is used in this study.

PO may occur in three areas: group context (in most cases member of families), extra-household/familial social events or functions, and programs and activities sponsored by and for the Black African community. Due to scheduling difficulties, only three instances of PO occurred in the shopping mall with members of families/households: Somali, Sudanese, Kenyan and Ugandan families; three pre-arranged dinners with families from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Angola. Five POs occurred during religious holiday festivals practised by the followers of the Ethiopian and Eritrean Coptic Orthodox Christians in Melbourne. Two of these religious festivals (Ethiopian Epiphany and Finding of the True Cross) occurred at the compound of

---

5 I was invited to four lunches and three dinners by seven interviewees to join their families, relatives and friends for meals. The three lunches occurred during my POs with the families/households of the Somali, Sudanese, and Ugandan participants at three different malls close to their residence. The fourth lunch was at participants’ home. Three dinners were pre-arranged. One wife told me, “You just come and have dinner with us”, when we were arranging the interview on the phone. I intended to politely decline. She said that they did not have many friends in the area, it was nice to have guests have meals with them. The husband (the interviewee) on his part followed his wife’s invitation and tried to encourage me “The only free time we have for the interview is during dinner time”. “You just come and have dinner with us while at the same time conduct the interview”. Three of the POs (the pre-arranged dinner) were conducted in a living room at the home of Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Angolan families/households in Eastern Outer Melbourne, Western Melbourne and Melton-Wyndham residential areas on April, September and November 2003 respectively. An Eritrean from Western Melbourne residential area invited me to celebrate Ethiopian/Eritrean Easter with his family, relatives and friends (husband, wife, their 2 children, a married couple and a single adult male) and conduct the interview. I was also invited to celebrate the Ethiopian New Year with a large Ethiopian family, their relatives and friends at their home in Eastern Outer Melbourne residential area (the wife, husband, their three children, and two married couples and a single adult female with her male friend) and to conduct the interview. The third pre-arranged dinner was with an Angolan family. I attended the dinner with his wife, his two children, two couples, a single adult woman and man and conduct the interview. The interviews were then followed by informal discussion. As it turned out, the interview in both places were scheduled 2 hours before the dinner. Other occasions were coincident. I was at their homes for the interview. Either I had just finished the interview or was halfway through the interview. Although it was valuable and honourable to be invited to have meals with the families, I struggled with each decision. On the one hand, I was able to collect more information through observation and conduct informal group discussion; on the other hand, the visit became many hours longer than I initially planned for the day.

6 The feast of Epiphany is the greatest festival of the year in Ethiopia falling about two weeks after the Ethiopian Christmas. It is a three-day festival (17, 18, 19 of January each year) commemorating the baptism of Christ in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. The night before, priests take the Tabot (which symbolises the Ark of the Covenant) of their respective
the Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox Church located in Maribyrnong. The two POs on Ethiopian Easter day and on Ethiopian New Year occurred during dinner time with churches/parish. Concealed by an ornamental cloth, the Ark of the Covenant is taken to a tent, close to a pool (in cities) otherwise, to a stream accompanied by much ringing of bells, blowing of trumpets and the burning of incense.

7 This is one of the important religious festivals in Ethiopia, commemorating the discovery of the cross upon which Empress Helen, mother of Constantine the Great, crucified Christ in the year 326. The original event took place on 19 March 326 A.D., but is celebrated on September 17 Ethiopian calendar (27 September Gregorian calendar) of each year, six months after the discovery of the True Cross. Unable to find the Holy Sepulchre, Empress Helena lit incense and prayed for assistance to guide her. The smoke drifted towards the direction of the buried cross. She dug and found three crosses; one of them was the True Cross used to crucify Jesus Christ. On the True Cross of Jesus, many miracles were attributed. Empress Helena then gave a piece of the True Cross to all churches, including the Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox Church. This piece was then brought to Ethiopia. According to the Ethiopian legend, when people got close to the piece of the True Cross it made them naked by its powerful light. As a result of this, a decision was made to bury it at the mountain of the remote monastery of Gishen Mariam, Wollo province. During this time of the year brilliant yellow daisies, popularly called Meskel flowers bloom on mountains, plains and meadows. The festival begins by panting a green tree on the eve of the day in town squares, or village market places. Every citizen of the Christian followers brings a pole topped with Meskel daisies to form the towering pyramid that will be a beacon of flame. Torches of tree branches tied up together are used to light the bundle called Demera. During the night those branches are gathered together and ignited. Dancing, feasting, merrymaking, bonfire and even gun salutes mark the occasion. The celebration of Meskel, therefore, signifies the presence of the True Cross at mountain Gishen Mariam monastery and also symbolises the events carried out by empress Helena.

8 Ethiopian Easter is celebrated after 55 days of severe Lent fasting. Orthodox Christians do not eat meat, dairy products or breakfast for the whole fasting period. Husband and wife do not sleep together, and they do not sleep on their bed, but on the floor. The first meal of the day is taken after 3:00pm, except on Saturdays and Sundays, where breakfast is allowed after followers return from church from the morning services (at 03:00 in the morning). On Easter Eve people go to church with candles, which are lit during a colourful Easter Mass service, which begins about 6:00 pm and ends around 3:30 am. Everyone goes home to break the fast with the meat of chicken or lamb slaughtered the previous night after 6:00pm. It is also a day of family and friend's re-union and a day of expressing good wishes with exchange of gifts. An invitation to a family Easter is the way to enjoy the day. When someone is invited, s/he does not consume a thing before they go because s/he will not be allowed to stop eating and drinking until late in the day, assuming they don't insist you take some home with you.

9 Ethiopia still retains the Julian Calender, named after Julius Caesar. Accordingly, the Ethiopian year is divided into 12 months of 30 days each and a 13th month of five or six days every four years (leap years). The calendar is seven years and eight months behind the Gregorian calendar. This discrepancy results from differences between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church as the date of the creation of the world. The year commences on 11 September in the Gregorian calendar or on the 12th in (Gregorian) Leap years. Thus, it is Meskerem (September) 01, 1998 according to the Ethiopian Calendar on September 11, 2005. This day is also celebrated to mark the commemoration of Saint John the Baptist. Days begin at sunrise; in contrast to the hours of the Gregorian calendar. Sunrise is always considered to be 1:00 (7 AM) by the Ethiopian Calendar.
Eritrean and Ethiopian families at their homes (Werribee and Chirnside Park respectively), while the fifth pre-arranged dinner took place on Ethiopian Christmas Day\(^{10}\) occurred at Blue Nile Restaurant (a community restaurant which has been in existence since late 1980s) with two families, their relatives and friends. Other POS all occurred at the immigrant’s home when I visited for an interview (see footnote 5 above).

On one occasion PO occurred at a public place as part of an extra-household/familial social event and lasted 10 hours. An intellectual couple (husband in his mid-50) and (wife in her mid-40), contacted me after they had read the flyer. Although both expressed their willingness to participate in the project, I did not allow both to participate since one of the criteria for the study was that only one immigrant/family member be included from each household/family. It did not take them long to decide who should be interviewed. They decided that the wife be interviewed, but the husband expressed his happiness to participate in the study. This was the only family where the wife rather than the husband participated in the interview. Three months after the interview with the wife, this couple invited me for a wedding ceremony, which occurred in Northern Middle Melbourne residential area. The husband is the uncle of the bridegroom and together with his wife were key organisers of the event. They advised me not to miss it: “Do not miss it. You will be able to meet several Black Africans.” I left Ormond College at 6:00 pm and reached the wedding place at 7:50 pm. Two of the organisers and myself roughly estimated the number of invited

\(^{10}\) The Ethiopian Christmas known as Ganna is celebrated on 6\(^{th}\) of January and 7\(^{th}\) in each Leap year. On Christmas Eve, a religious ceremony takes place in all the Coptic Orthodox churches throughout the country. The ceremonies are long and involve the whole congregation. Priests dance sedately, swaying side to side in time with their sistrums, while others gather around a drummer dancing, leaping and jumping, achieving an almost trance-like state. The ceremony begins sedately and builds up through the night into a crescendo, the music from the church being heard far and wide until the early hours of the morning. The day is largely a family affair; with the occasional game of Ganna (a traditional hockey-like game with sticks and balls made of wood) being played in the afternoon and attended by fathers, community and/or village leaders. The game in the countryside is mostly one village against the other village. A prize is then awarded to the winner of the game. According to the Ethiopian legend, the shepherds who were tending their flocks on the night that Jesus was born were playing the game. Like Easter, an invitation to a family, Christmas is the way to enjoy the day eating and drinking.
guests as between, 250 to 350 persons approximately of whom about 7% were white Australians, 9% North Africans and Middle Eastern background, and the remaining, about 84% were Black Africans. I stayed until the end of the program (i.e., 3:30 in the morning). I arrived back at Ormond College at 4:45 in the morning. From the time I left Ormond to the time I came back, I had spent over ten hours as part of the extra-household/familial social function.

The second longest visit lasted seven hours, observing and participating on a program of activities sponsored by and for the Black African community. An immigrant whom I was introduced to by the couples who participated in my studies sent me an invitation to attend a function organised by ‘The East African and Central Africa Communities Network’ (an umbrella organisation for East and Central African communities) held at the Kensington Community Recreation Centre, in Kensington, early January 2004. The chairman of the East African and Central Africa Communities Network’ had arranged transportation back to Ormond College, so I stayed up to the end of the program (that is from 6:00pm until 1:00am in the morning). Here various activities such as fashion parades featuring traditional and modern outfits of the region, cultural exhibition, traditional cuisines and music and art performance was presented. The hall was crowded, and according to my rough estimation, there were about thirty-five white Australians mostly representatives from DIMA, Victorian Police and sponsor organizations, and other invited guests, while the rest were friends and supporters of Africans.

Observation categories included household dynamics, household structure, and effect of the household, daily household activities, physical home environment, network contacts, and opinions about extra-household environments. Informal group discussions were conducted during the observation. Successful occasions for PO were in most cases prior to the interview, after the interview, and at lunch/dinner to which I was invited. In most cases, the interviews that occurred at the immigrant’s home when I visited were all more of a discussion type in which I passively observed and which provoked questions only when necessary.
The longest visit lasted over 10 hours. Field notes - an essential aspect of ethnographic research - were kept and analysed along with data derived from other methods (Bernard, 1994). Most notes were descriptive. They were from my observation, listening, and informal interviews. Part of the notes were methodological and dealt with techniques for data collection; other parts were analytical and laid out my ideas about how I thought the study phenomenon is constructed. The physical structure of the settings where the events took place, the time of the events, the characteristics of the people who were at the scene, and the purpose of the events were documented in the field notes as well.

**Survey Questionnaire**

As already noted, data were also collected through a survey questionnaire. One instrument — the DSEIHQ) was designed for this study to obtain a demographic, socio-economic, immigration and housing profile of each individual participant and the background for his/her immigration (Appendix VI). The DSEIHQ was also designed to give Black Africans the chance to express their feelings and personal interpretations in relation to their lived experiences in Australia. It was used for describing characteristics of participants (not for indexing or measuring any construct), generation of new questions for interviews, and triangulation. As noted above, the survey questionnaire also contained a judicious mix of closed and open-ended items. Since the study is exploratory and therefore more qualitative in its interpretation of the data, the open-ended questions were included in the survey questionnaire to give respondents unrestricted freedom to provide information on particular issues in detail. The qualitative information within the questionnaire provides invaluable insights into issues and processes that are not easily measured by traditional quantitative techniques and methodologies. They proved effective in that respondents gave spontaneous responses while at the same time they provided a check against any bias on the part of the interviewer. Because multiple choice questions tend to limit the range of responses to particular questions, all closed-ended questions also included an “other (specify)” category, which allowed respondents the chance to provide (additional) answers not included in the listed options.
The purpose of the quantitative component of this research is to facilitate the reader's comprehension of the stories that are presented in chapters 5, 6 and 7. As noted above the aim is not the making of valid generalisations about the study population. But in providing their profiles and characteristics, I will enable readers to know the participants and their lived experiences before readers move to the analysis. The data sets contain statistical information and description of a wide range of demographic, socio-economic, immigration and housing variables. This study examined the "individual immigrant" in a household as the unit of analysis. My focus is on variation in household structures to contextualise the individual immigrant experience. A household is defined here as a group of people not necessarily related by blood and who, for instance, share meals, housing space, and/or contribute to a common household fund for the group's sustenance; in other words, a household is defined on the basis of a housekeeping concept (ABS, 4130, 1997/98). Different types of households (e.g., female-headed, male-headed, single-parent, one-person households) were included in the study to ensure a representative sample. The DSEIHQ elicits information about the participant's year of arrival, city of residence, admission classification, and companionship during immigration, citizenship, gender, marital status, age, religion, education, occupation, and relationship with Australian society. It includes information about the immigrant's living situation, housing situation, household composition, social economic status both in Africa and Australia, annual income, social network, acculturation states (language, food and activities), household type, region of birth (in Africa), neighbourhood, and problems and difficulties with housing.

DSEIHQ was pilot-tested on four Black African undergraduate students before being used for the actual data collection. Two of the students were from the University of Melbourne, the third from the University of Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University, while the fourth one was from Victoria University of Technology. Basically, the idea was to help identify and rectify all inconsistencies and inadequacies as well as to forestall the misinterpretation of questions by participants and to check on the appropriateness and efficacy of the whole research instrument. As a result, some questions were re-phrased, clarified or dropped altogether and new ones added. A copy of the instrument (DSEIHO) was distributed
to participants at the end of the interview. Interview participants were asked to complete this instrument independently without asking other members. In most cases, I was present to assist them in answering questions. The length of time for completing the questionnaire ranged from 20 to 25 minutes.

On the advice of my supervisors, I sought more participants for the survey questionnaire of this study. Because of the availability of the Amharic transcripts in this study, there were many Eritreans and Ethiopians who expressed their interest in participating in the study. A large amount of data ideally requires a special computer software package to store, manage, and finally to analyse the data collected; and hiring an assistant investigator would also seem essential. However, due to lack of resources and financial means, hiring an assistant investigator and access to appropriate software was not possible. Similarly, verbatim transcription of the interviews was not feasible for the same reasons.

Quantitative data provided descriptive information on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, and immigration and housing-related issues of the participants. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data from the DSEIHQ. Data obtained from each participant through the DSEIHQ are summarised to give the Demographic, Socio-economic, Immigration and Housing Profile for the population. The participants' profiles were used as each immigrant's contextual information while conducting the narrative analysis of qualitative data. Responses on the DSEIHO were compared to interview data for confirmation and completion. Where necessary, descriptive statistics, frequency tabulations, and graphs are provided.
Methodological Challenges and Concerns

Experienced

In addition to the substantive issues discussed above in the interview section, methodological challenges experienced during the process deserve extended discussion. The first area of significance relates to the meaning and use of unexpected information from participants who were notified through snowball referrals. The second area is about how to handle power relations in interviews with immigrants and the value of family interviews. The third area is the implication of data analysis using narrative analysis for bilingual immigrant research.

Recruitment: Snowball Referral

Although a recruitment flyer written both in English and Amharic was used in order to guard against the possible exclusion of respondents, snowball referral was the main strategy used for recruitment in this study. There were three mechanisms: through my personal networks, through key Black African community agencies, and through immigrants already in the study. Indeed, immigrants already in the study were a very important referral source. The flyers distributed to migrant resource centres and other migrant/refugee support agencies, ethnic restaurants, schools, universities, stores, churches, and high-rise residential complexes contained a simple abstract of the study, the contact person, the contact phone number and the criteria for inclusion in the study. While waiting for cold-hits from these leaflets, I first contacted people whom I knew personally or through their friends to disseminate the information about the study. Through these connections, I became familiar with several Black African immigrants (some of whom agreed to participate in the pilot testings). However, recruitment through these mechanisms was fairly slow. The first referral came through months after I started the recruitment, and the number of referrals was low; the average number of referrals was two per month. There were two possible explanations for this poor recruitment. The first explanation was that little incentive was provided to immigrants to volunteer in this study. Participants were asked to spend their time talking about personal stories. The monetary reimbursement was not an appropriate incentive for them to participate. Rather, immigrants mostly operated on the basis of their altruism — such as helping a mature student to finish his school
qualifications and who also comes from Sub-Saharan Africa. Most participants did not even want to take the $15 stipend. The absence of incentive could possibly have resulted in slow or no response from prospective immigrants. The second explanation was related to the level of enthusiasm of referral sources. One of my referral sources was very committed. He actively recruited for this study and would contact me periodically for updates. The level of commitment of the rest of the referral sources was significantly lower. I had to be active in maintaining contact with them to remind them of the study. Despite these efforts, the study information was not as widely disseminated as anticipated.

The most effective referral mechanism was through immigrants already in the study. The avenues were initiated either by the immigrant or by me. Each referral source received either the English or the Amharic version flyers. The following participants of this study (in order to protect their anonymity, all participants are identified by fictitious first names) - Ms. Melanie, Mr. Teka, Mr Mesfin, Mr. Tutu and Mrs Chiluba - all kindly asked me at the end of their interviews whether I was still looking for more immigrants. The recruitment of Mr Mesfin was a result of Mr Tutu's assistance. If the immigrant did not ask, I would ask them whether they knew any eligible immigrant subjects. If they did and agreed to check with them for me, I then would leave them flyers to give these immigrants. Mr. Tutu was referred through Mrs Chiluba who contacted Mr. Tutu right after my request. In comparison with my personal networks, these immigrants had more contact with immigrants that had similar characteristics such as the year when they arrived. In other words, they were more likely to know immigrants that met the inclusion criteria. Moreover, the waiting period for referrals was shorter since immigrants could tell me whether they knew any suitable immigrants and even contact them right away. These two factors made this referral mechanism more effective than through my personal networks and the Black African community agencies and the flyers.

However, the use of snowball referral through participants raises a methodological issue. As indicated above, Mrs Chiluba referred Mr Tutu, and Mr Tutu referred Mr. Mesfin. Three of them in fact knew each other. In the interview of Mr Mesfin, some information to which Mr Mesfin alluded was about Mrs Chiluba. One example was
Mrs Chiluba’s job. Mrs Chiluba indicated on her DSEIHQ that she had a sessional teaching position in a University. But what she did not tell me was that she also has a casual job as a security guard for which Mr. Tutu and Mr Mesfin worked as security guards at one stage. Although Mr. Mesfin did not use names in his stories, there were clues suggesting to me that the referred person was Mrs Chiluba. Mr. Mesfin probably chose that particular story to tell because of his knowledge about my connection with Mrs Chiluba and her husband.

Interviews with immigrants

This unique and unexpected experience touches on the issues of power and ownership of information. Ong (1995) argues that the power of participants is not totally defined by researchers. Participants can exercise power in the production of knowledge by demanding a reciprocal relationship with the researchers or withholding information from the researchers. She further argues that although the power relationship between the researchers and the participants influences whether we (the researchers) can or will convey the truth (or truths), how participants decide to trust our authority with their truth is also a determinant. My experience with Mrs Chiluba supports Ong’s argument. Although there was no way to discover the real reasons (if Mrs Chiluba knew) for Mrs Chiluba withholding information, it was clear to me that she was the most cautious participant among them all. Thus, interviews can reveal some important information but only when reciprocal trust is achieved.

Despite the fact that I am a Black African and a student who typically is viewed as non-threatening, I could not persuade Mrs Chiluba to yield all of her stories. Mrs Chiluba appeared to be unsure what I would do with her stories. With the information accidentally learned from Mr. Mesfin, I wondered (and will continue to wonder) how my findings would have been different if Mrs Chiluba had yielded all of her stories. To respect her power, no aspect of the “hint” from Mr. Mesfin’s story was used in the writing. The information from Mr. Mesfin’s story did not affect the interpretation of the data dramatically. Yet, we should continue the dialogue about how to use this kind of information and how far we could or should probe once we obtain the information. There should be a balance between the researcher and the participant in terms of power relationships, truth, and ethics.
Data Analysis: Use of Narrative Analysis in Bilingual Immigrant Research

Riessman's narrative analysis was the most suitable model for the purpose of this study. As explained in Chapter 3, this kind of analysis was selected due to its analytical approach to the transcription process and language. Transcription is a selective arrangement that transforms a spoken language to a written text. The written text or the transcripts are "only partially representative of, but not isomorphic" with the interview (Sandelowski, 1994: 311). Language is not a transparent vehicle for communicating information. Nor is it a technical device to establish meanings. Stories from participants are "constructed, creatively authored, rhetorical, replete with assumptions, and interpretive" (Riessman, 1993: 5). As such, data preparation becomes a complex exercise. Narrative analysis requires not only that transcripts accurately represent what was said, but also how it was said. Transcription becomes even more complex when it involves more than two people in one interview and translation between two linguistically distinct languages. When I began the transcription process, I intended to preserve informational contexts of the interview, individuals' non-verbal communication (for example, pauses, false starts, and laugh), and the dynamics of the interview. As noted earlier in this chapter, I developed a notation system modelled on Mishler's work (1986) for the non-verbal communication.

The completion or interruption of one speaker's sentence may be an important clue to an immigrant's personal disposition. I thus planned to capture the dynamics of the interview by having each participant (including the interviewer) occupy a space next to each other on paper and matching the beginning and the end of each person's line to indicate speech patterns. The second part of the plan was quickly dispensed with due to technical difficulties. For instance, when there were too many people talking simultaneously, it was extremely difficult to capture all of the conversations within the given space. The Amharic transcripts were messy. Even if the transcripts were in English, word processing programs could not be able to capture the ideal transcripts (the speech situation), as it existed. Instead, the notation system was modified to
capture the dynamics of the interview. Notes were also inserted in sentences to preserve the features of interest that required more descriptions. When the Amharic transcripts began to be translated to English, the notation system was slightly modified again to differentiate the singular “you” and the plural “you.” In general, the modified system worked well with the transcription of this study.

Reisman’s steps of partitioning texts and re-arrangement (re-transcription) of texts were investigated methodologically during the translation phase. A narrative is not just a story or a telling. Narratives are held together by certain structures. They are “composed of a story comprised of actions, happenings, characters, settings, discourse or plot – the way the story is communicated” (Sandelowski, 1991: 162). However, once the translation occurs, structures of sentences and narratives start to shift. Beginnings and ends of narratives may be altered. False starts may no longer stay in the same location in the sentences. Overlapping talk or incompleteness may need justification in location to fit English grammar. The same story elements look like they have been plotted differently and become a different narrative. Riessman’s re-arrangement of texts becomes meaningless for this study.13 Eventually I decided only to adopt parts of her suggestions to examine the texts more closely. Experiences with narrative analysis have a broader implication for cross-cultural research when the source language is not English. When people hear or see the word “cross-cultural” research, translation often is the issue coming to mind. Since language is transparent, it is believed that a good translation (that is, conceptual equivalence is preserved) could transform the interview data from the source language to English. As long as the translation achieves conceptual equivalence, findings would be comparable regardless of the language version being selected.

During the translation, researchers once again have to decide what words or phrases to use and how to arrange and display the text in order to present the data in an understandable way to English readers. Moreover, different translators have different socio-cultural backgrounds that could well influence the words or phrases they select.

13 Riessman acknowledged that many narratives do not lend themselves to the partition strategy used in her book, and different readers may partition the same story in different ways. She also alluded to the limitation of this strategy for cross-cultural research when there are variations of story grammar.
for the same stretch of talk. As Sandelowski stated, “Once an interview is translated, the transcript itself typically takes on an independent reality” (Sandelowski 1994: 312). In other words, each version of transcript has its own reality. Indeed, neither the source language transcripts nor the English transcripts are a duplication of the interview. Even interview data themselves are not truly raw. They are products of a social interaction (that is, the interview) and re-presentation of interview experiences through narrative construction (Sandelowski, 1994). Shifting the focus to transcription and language would force researchers to have a clear sense of the purposes for their studies. The shift would also oblige researchers to recognise that there is an ethic implicit in the process because researchers are given great authority as editor, translator, and interpreter of participants’ words in the process (DeVault, 1990; Sandelowski, 1994).

In the next chapter, I will firstly present a socio-geographic synopsis of Africa, overview of the Australian immigration to Australia, then the discussion proceeds with an overview of Black African migration to Melbourne based on the results of the DSEIHQ setting the stage for the actual examination of Black Africans in Melbourne. The purpose of including the following chapter is to facilitate the reader’s comprehension of the stories that are presented in chapters 5, 6 and 7. As noted elsewhere, the aim is not for valid generalisations about the study population. Providing their profiles and characteristics is, however, to give readers an understanding of who the narrators are and/or where the stories came from before readers move to the analysis and findings.
Chapter Four

An Overview of African Immigration and Description of Participants

"To be a poor man is hard, but to be a poor ‘race’ in a land of dollars is the very bottom of hardships."

(W.E.B. DuBois, 1903: 8)

“I think with white Australians, there is a gap between Australians and us. A bit of gap - it is a barricade. It is not easy to cross that barricade.”

(Mr. Teka, participant of this study)

Introduction

The aim in this chapter is to contextualise the social, cultural, political and economic environments informing the previous experiences of participants in this study in order to facilitate the reader’s comprehension of the stories presented in chapters 5 and 6. The chapter is divided into four sections. Beginning with a socio-geographic survey of Africa, this introductory section gives a brief presentation of pre and post-migration of Africans outlining the socio-cultural, economic and political backgrounds of Sub-Saharan Africa. Section two provides a brief presentation of an overview of African migration to Australia exploring the sending societies in Africa, migration patterns and settlement patterns. Section three provides an overview of Black African migration to Melbourne based on the results of the DSEIHQ.
African Immigration to Australia – A Brief Overview

Sending Societies: Social, economic and political situations

Separated from Europe by the Mediterranean Sea, and lying astride the equator, between latitudes at 37° 21' North and 34° 51' South, Africa is the second largest and the most tropical of the continents. Its territorial expanse of 30 million square kilometres (Grove, 1993; Murray, 1981), representing a quarter (22.3%) of the world’s land area, also makes Africa the second largest continent - after Asia. With a population of 778 million people in 1998, this vast land mass is home to 12.5% of the world’s population and yet produces only 3.7% of global GDP (ECA, 1999). Though Africa is the second largest continent, its size is not its most significant characteristic. More important is its equatorial location, its northern and southern extremes almost equidistant from the equator. More than nine million square miles of Africa, or four-fifths of its area, lie between the two tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.

The United Nations has classified the fifty-eight1 countries and islands2 (Gordon, 2002) into five sub-regions - namely North Africa, East Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, and South Africa - based upon social and geographic characteristics (UN, 1966). These regions also display remarkable variations in size of population, in levels of urbanisation and in rates of growth of population. The spatial configuration of the continent reflects a juxtaposition of countries with small land areas and population (see Figure 4.1). Available evidence indicates that Africa has the highest and fastest population growth rate in the world which stands at 3 per cent per annum, accompanied by an average life expectancy of 53 years, which is the lowest of all developing regions (Batrouney, 1991).

---

1 Some sources put this figure at sixty-two (Clarke, 1989), others 54 (Arnold, 1993).
2 The figure of fifty-eight states actually includes a number of island states, which are more or less near Africa, and conventionally included in it, but whose history, resource endowment, present economic structure, and cultures distinguish them in various ways from Africa proper. These are Cape Verde (population 0.4 million), Madagascar (population 15.8 million), Mauritius (population 1.1 million), Sao Tome and Principe (population less than 100,000), and Seychelles (population 100,000). Seychelles and Mauritius have relatively high per capita income, based on tourism and also, in the case of Mauritius, on clothing exports.
While fifty-three of the fifty-eight states are independent, the remaining four are without independent status: Reunion has departmental status in the Republic of France; St. Helena is a dependent territory of Great Britain; although Western Sahara is a disputed territory, it is still recognised as Western Sahara by the United Nations; and Mayotte Island remains a French "territorial community" (Gordon, 2002). Seven of the independent countries that border the Mediterranean Sea and popularly known as the Maghreb states or African Arab states make up North Africa (one of the five sub-regions of the continent). The inhabitants of North Africa are predominantly of white racial stock – Arabs - who are descendants of people from the Middle East. The overwhelming majority of them are Muslims. This study, therefore, does not include this sub region. The arid region, the Sahara Desert – the largest desert in the world - serves as a geopolitical as well as a geographic barrier that limits the interest and influence of these heavily Muslim Arab Northern Africa states in the regions to the south of the Sahara (the black population or popularly known as Sub-Saharan African states). The forty-eight independent countries south of the Sahara are the home of the Black Africans. Four of the five sub-regions mentioned above - East Africa, West Africa, South Africa and Central Africa - are in sub-Saharan Africa.

With the exception of a few million people of European and Asian descent in the Republic of South Africa and much smaller numbers elsewhere, Black Africans inhabit this vast area of the continent. According to ECA (1996) and Ayittey (2005), Africa is rich in natural resources, and is a key producer of the world’s most important strategic minerals and metals including gold, diamonds, copper, platinum, uranium, manganese, zinc, chromium, nickel, bauxite and cobalt and manganese. Yet, its share of global export trade fell from 5.9% in 1980 to less than 2% at the end of the 1990s. The cash crops produced in Africa include coffee, cocoa, palm oil, cotton, tobacco, groundnuts, rubber and timber. And the countries with the most resources are often also the least developed.
Figure 4.1: Outline Political Map of Contemporary Africa

Adopted from the 2003 CIA World Factbook
During the colonial years, development was limited to the continent's primary sector, and a basic infrastructure was built to support this. Profits made on African soils were exported to the west, rather than being invested locally (see for example, Ayittey, 1998, 2005; Davidson, 1992; Rodney, 1972). This left Africa at the time of independence with highly specialised export commodities (cash crops), usually producing just one or two commodities for export. This was one of the major structural problems with Africa's participation in the international economy, as it created 'unequal exchange' between the African nations and the richer nations of the North and the rest of the world. Since there were no other major sources of economic activity with which to generate additional income, or to act as a substitute, African remained dependent on the richer countries buying their primary products. Consequently, in all countries unemployment, underemployment, inequality, deprivation, and indigence continue to create formidable barriers to development and self-improvement. Exploitation of African economies did not end with the nominal independence of Africa. Colonialism indeed had merely made way for a neo-colonialism, as stated by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of post-colonial Ghana:

The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State, which is subject to it, is, in theory, independent and has all the trappings of international sovereignty. In reality its economic system and thus its political system is directed from outside (Nkrumah, Kwame, 1965: ix).

A fragile economic base characterises most African countries. Agriculture remains the mainstay of the African economy with the majority of the people depending directly or indirectly on it for employment, income, and food for the population and raw materials for agro-based industries. Prices of raw materials and commodities, which account for 94 per cent of Africa's export, have crashed on the world market (Ayittey, 2005). Fluctuating world market prices coupled with uncontrollable climatic conditions frequently drive the prices of such primary products down. Public institutions have collapsed, health care has diminished, infrastructure has fallen into disrepair and poverty has deepened simply because poorly supported, inefficient and corrupt governments have been unable to manage their countries' overwhelming problems. Since the emergence of neo-liberal market economics as the hegemonic
ideology in Western countries from the 1980s onwards, International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank were given considerable influence over the formulation and implementation of public policy for debtor states. Known as structural adjustment programs (SAPs) (a reform model oriented towards 'small government' and the free market), this neo-liberal reorientation of economic policy became the compulsory medicine for virtually all sub-Saharan African economies (Freud, 1998).

Despite this prescriptive medicine from the World Bank and IMF or perhaps because of it - the general situation of the continent has deteriorated since the imposition of SAPs. The structural adjustment programme packages have insisted on reductions in spending on education, health and other services while about one-third of the earnings of most African nations goes into servicing foreign debt (Dostert, 1996; Ojo, 1999; Sparks, 1996). As a result, unemployment has grown in most African countries faster than the absorptive capacities of their economies. Crime, violence, riots, prostitution, and other social evils increased as it became more and more difficult for Sub-Saharan Africans to survive (Ojo, 1999).

John Ravenhill argues “any expectations that adjustment would bring a swift turn around in the continent’s economic conditions have been dashed – despite the occasional claims of the World Bank to the contrary” (Ravenhill, 1993: 47). In Sub-Saharan Africa, according to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA, 1999), 52% of people live on less than a $1 a day. In 1998 the average monthly expenditure was only $14 a person by the rural poor and $22 by the urban poor. While 43% of urban dwellers lived below the poverty line in 1997 ($47 per month per person), the situation was even worse for Africa’s rural areas, which suffer from a highly unequal distribution of expenditure. Bade Onimode, a Nigerian economist has been even more critical when he states:

Africa’s crisis and the IMF and World Bank Stabilization and Structural Adjustment Programs, have generated and exacerbated a serious decline in the African economy, and created the catastrophe of suffering facing the rural and urban poor, women, children, workers, peasants and other vulnerable social groups...a generation of
Africans has been lost and a second is under serious threat, while the marginalisation of Africa has accelerated alarmingly in most spheres (Onimode, 1992: 1).

In short, Africa has become the poorest region in the world. It has the lowest regional per capita income, which in 1998 was a meagre US$691, a year, or $58 a month (World Bank, 1999; ECA, 1999). Further, the proportion of poor countries continues to escalate. Of the thirty-eight ‘poorest among the poor countries’ of the world, (so designated by the United Nations in the 1980s), twenty-eight (about 73%) were in Africa (Ojo, 1999). As suppliers of primary products, African countries have been hit by the fall in primary commodity prices, while at the same time the cost of imports has risen dramatically. Consequently, whereas in the 1960s the region’s external debt amounted to less than US$3,000 million, over the next two decades indebtedness rose from $84,319 million in 1980 to $290 billion in 1992 or from 15 per cent to 90 per cent of Africa’s GNP [112 per cent for Sub-Saharan Africa] (Ojo, 1999); thus debt servicing drained massive resources from the region (Rodney, 1972).

Political leadership, derived from customary rules of life, was “primitive democracy”, not because Africa lacked sophistication but, rather, because it was in place “from the beginning” (Williams, 1987: 161-162). Its primary elements — consensus building and freedom of expressions/speech — comprised the heart of participatory democracy, an open system that included everyone in the decision-making process. Regardless of the form of political organization (states or stateless societies), the village served as the genesis of leadership, a configuration of various extended families or lineages, each with its own head, chosen according to its own rules (Ayittey, 1998: 85-86). Two important concepts of government were common to African societies. Martin White, speaking in the Gold Coast Legislative Council, argued that:

The African indigenous political arrangement shares with the imported British system of the Legislative Council the characteristics of (a) being government by discussion and (b) embodying the representative principle; both systems involve, in other words, the parliamentary principle of decisions arrived at by a majority after the fullest debate and discussion of different points of view expressed by duly accredited representatives of the people (cited in Ellas, 1963: 19).
With little or no regard for the history, customs and traditions of African peoples, the colonial powers disrupted and dismantled the Continent’s political system and leadership. In its place, a system based on graft, greed, individualism, exploitation and repression served to pervert African leadership to the point where, in essence, it ceased to exist (Davidson, 1992). Africa entered the modern era as a possession of European colonial powers, which cut up the continent like a cake, seeking to exploit its vast and rich natural resources as they built their own empires. The destiny of the Sub-Saharan African countries, where the participants of this study came from, continues to be shaped by that colonial legacy. The Colonial empires had drawn national boundaries that arbitrarily divided racial, tribal and ethnic communities, the root cause of civil strife, ethnic conflict, and religious rivalry in modern Africa (Davidson, 1992). Over most parts of the continent, dictatorship, autocracy, and despotism, deceptively garbing themselves with “democracy”, have generated many geopolitical upheavals, ethnic conflicts, and civil wars. According to the records of African Organisation Unity (OAU, 1998), 26 conflicts erupted in Africa between 1963 and 1998, affecting 474 million of Africans, or 61% of the population. Politically, the landscape in contemporary Africa is one of the most repressive and volatile in the world. Only in Africa is poverty increasing, and health and education worsening (Ayittey, 1998). In his article about Mozambique, David Plank echoed Bade Onimode when he defined the current phase of Africa within the global capitalist system as “re-colonisation” of the continent. He argues that:

Recent developments in Mozambique and elsewhere, suggests that the most likely successor to post-colonial sovereignty will be neo-colonial vassalage, in which the western powers assume direct and open-ended control over the administration, security and economic policies of “deteriorated states under the banner of the UN and various donors” (Plank, 1993: 429-30).

Verity Burgmann comments that “problems prompting migration — poverty, war, persecution and environmental degradation — have been exacerbated by unfair free-trade regimes and structural adjustment policies imposed on developing countries to extract repayment of debts owed the developing nations”. She observes too that “corporations are offered every protection and assistance to globetrot at the whim of profitability, yet workers migrating in response to market forces are obstructed and
vilified. Worse still is the situation of those who flee their home land in fear for their lives” (Burgmann, 2001: 21).

The economic hardships and political situations of the continent as a result of unfair free-trade regimes and structural adjustment policies, combined with other internal and external factors (such as, civil strife and ethnic conflict, religious rivalism, famine and drought, and deteriorating infrastructure), have contributed directly or indirectly to the emigration of Africans, men and women, skilled and unskilled, poor and rich, refugee/humanitarian and economic to the developed countries of Western Europe and North America, including Australia and New Zealand. Africa is a multi-national society, with a diversity of cultural, religious and nationality characteristics, and a diversity of languages and 'race's with different political issues. This diversity exists not only across the continent as a whole but also in individual countries. The cultural diversity of the continent is reflected in the fact that more than 2000 languages have been identified in Africa (Clarke, 1989; Gordon, 2002). Such linguistic diversity, rich as it is in cultural heritage of the African population, has important implications for intra- and inter-ethnic relations on the continent as well as for the settlement patterns and acculturation of Africans abroad. Yet there is a strong sense of ethno-cultural identification and pride among members of the various groups. This is not surprising in view of the fact that, although all ethnic groups share common social practices, each has its own unique culture, traditions, language, and history.

Typically, African societies are based on kinships and the network of relationships woven by descent and marriage. Africans have a social structure replete with a network of extensive familial and kinship relations. Social interaction is most informal and largely constructed through face-to-face contacts. Kinship terminologies such as brother, sister, mother, father, uncle, and aunt are used loosely to refer to both close and distant relatives, work colleagues, and other associates or even

3Grove [1993] puts this figure at 800, which might appear to be low.

4Among Africans, descent and inheritance are reckoned in various ways. The two most common are patrilineal and matrilineal. With the patrilineal system inheritance is from father to son whereas in matrilineal societies an individual’s maternal uncle exercise jural rights and responsibilities over her/him.
acquaintances. The factor of kinship or lineage is interwoven throughout people's lives and becomes quite evident in cases of trade and in the formation of temporary confederations during times of war (Gyekye, 1996). The unit of social organization is the family, not just a couple and their children, but the extended family embracing two or three generations including cousins. People belonging to the same clan with a common ancestor (even going back four or five generations) recognise certain ties and, especially if they occupy the same territory, will act in concert in certain circumstances. This kinship lineage system is the aspect of African society that most clearly distinguishes it from western society, in which kinship ties rarely stretch far outside the small-unit family (that is, the basic or nuclear family).

The African philosophy of respect for elders is based upon the assumption that, all other things being equal, those who were living in the world and experiencing life before others were born should possess greater knowledge; thus, age is one of the major factors in selecting leaders. New members of society are socialised into veneration of elders and their values (Assimeng, 1981). Africa is therefore a gerontocratic society, where age is not only respected and accorded dignity but is also a prerequisite for aspiration to political office. Even today, chiefs and the village elders, who also perform an array of politico-judicial functions as well as interpreting cultural traditions and practices, administer most towns and villages. Therefore, the elderly are revered and respected as the repository of wisdom, experience, insight, and knowledge. Although the nuclear family is becoming fashionable, the traditional family remains a core organising feature of African society. The traditional family is a social and administrative unit, with the lineage head being responsible for the welfare of the group.

Family ties and influences touch all major aspects of traditional social life. Each family member has a designated role and position in the family hierarchy that corresponds to the person's obligations, responsibilities, privileges, and authorities in the family. For instance, parents are expected to sacrifice personal needs in raising their children, in serving their children's interest, and in protecting their families. In turn, parents assume the right to demand obedience, support, respect, and appreciation from their children. In addition, status and authority are also distinguished according
to age, proximity of kinship, and gender. Traditionally, linear (grandparents, parents, and children) and collateral (unmarried sisters, unmarried brothers, and married brothers and their families) families live in the same household. However, because of modernisation, urbanisation, migration, or change in the socio-political system, an extended family may now live apart.

Like social systems elsewhere in the world, African societies are never static; it is in a state of flux. Forces such as industrialisation, modernisation, and urbanisation, above all globalisation, as well as increasing mobility and the general commercialisation of life are constantly affecting the transformation of hitherto homogeneous and autonomous groups into a composite of multi-ethnic communities. These changes are actually straining traditional African social linkages. The introduction of modern communication systems aided by the encroachment of a global culture has contributed meaningfully to the ongoing social metamorphosis (Grove, 1993; Opoku-Dapaah, 1993). However, the traditional extended family is still the reference point when an African person speaks of a family. Moreover, the age-based authority hierarchy and related practices (e.g., discipline of children by older relatives) endure and continue to be observed in everyday interactions. This relation-oriented values system contrasts with the individual-oriented Australian (Western) culture. This important difference creates an important cultural context for understanding the lived experiences of Black African immigrants in Melbourne.

Migration Patterns

The Black African immigrants who have settled in Australia have been driven by a similar variety of factors — political, economic, and, social. This is evidenced by the responses obtained when participants were questioned regarding the main reasons motivating them to leave their country of origin, and how they arrived at their decision. It is safe to say that the majority of participants based their decision on political and security reasons whereas the minority of participants cited economic and social stimuli such as leading a better life, securing better opportunities or seeking a better educational system. The image of Australia as a lucky country where one could get rich was mentioned with some frequency. One example is Mr. Nkrumah who,
while describing his former vocation as a senior high school teacher, alluded to political persecution at home which ultimately forced him and his wife to live clandestinely. In 1986, he escaped to a refugee camp in Africa alone, and his wife and children were able to join him in 1987 whereupon they were resettled to Australia in 1988 (see reasons for immigrating below for the types of migration categories under which Black Africans are admitted to Australia).

African migration often arises from constraints. Migrants leave their country not because they have decided after careful reflection that emigration is their best option for the future, but because violence and need force them to do so (Ricca, 1989; Wood, 1994). Migration for most Africans is not determined by weighing up the advantages and disadvantages before emigrating to Australia, but were motivated by forces out of their control. The vast bulk of international migration from Africa stays within the continent. However, it has been found that there are also very high rates of intercontinental migration. Despite the fact that this migration is often constrained by high transportation costs and the considerable barriers erected by most potential receiving countries to protect their borders against permanent settlement from Africa (Castles and Miller, 1993; Ricca, 1989), African immigrants are found in large numbers in many industrialised countries (Peil, 1995). Africa today generates significant outflows of intercontinental migrants. These flows were traditionally directed to former (Western European) colonial powers. These colonial associations facilitated early migrations to the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Belgium (Castillo, 1994). However, the implementation of more restrictive immigration policies and a long period of economic recession in Western Europe shifted African migration flows from Western Europe to the United States and Canada. The United States of America has received more Africans than any other country (Bigman, 1995).

In the 1980s and 1990s, Africa's increasingly violent political history and deteriorating economies were again pushing a lot of people to seek greener pastures. The most favoured destination for Black Africans still remained Europe, the United States and Canada. The Black Africans who were admitted to Australia through the auspices of the United Nations Refugee and Humanitarian Program were “pushed”; as one of the participants of this study, Mr Israel, commented: “We [Black Africans]
didn't select Australia”, Australia selected us”. African migrants who arrived in Australia from sub-Saharan Africa during this period came mostly from Ethiopia, Somalia, Eritrea, Sudan, Nigeria, Ghana, Uganda and Kenya. Most, according to Lawrence Udo-Ekpo, “are running from war, famine, revolution, political and religious persecution, and authoritarian regimes in their own countries. Many are young men and women, literate and with a fair command of English” (Udo-Ekpo, 1999: viii).

Although migration has diverse patterns and motivations, there are indications that historical and political ties with colonial powers may explain, at least in part, the migration dynamics of African populations to Australia. The vast continent of Africa with its diverse array of peoples has not had a close relationship with Australia. Neither Black Africans nor Australians anticipated such a migration because Australia was not a traditional destination for Black immigrants from Africa. Theoretically, as well as practically, Australia was regarded as a white nation. It was not possible for Black Africans to think of travelling, let alone migrating to Australia, due to the considerable barriers erected by Australia to protect her British heritage. The huge geographical distance, constrained further by high transportation costs, was another barrier. Except for the economic, political, cultural, social, historical and military link that existed between Australia and the white Africans, there was a lack of historical links between Africans and Australia.

Settlement Patterns

The history of black African migration and settlement in Australia dates back to the early 1970s when the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, better known as the White Australia Policy, was at last abandoned. In fact migration began during the short period of the policy of integration in the 1960s. During this period, black Africans began migrating to Australia in small numbers on government scholarships as international students. As there are no accurate data on the size of the population of Black African immigrants from the Sub-Sahara Africa in Australia, it is difficult to ascertain their proportion to Australia’s population. Two main factors help to account for the dearth of formal documentation on the experiences of the Black African
immigrant group in Australian society. First, Australian censuses and immigration statistics either ignored or, tended to lump Black Africans together with white Anglo Saxons or European Africans into one category - Africans. Yet, although novel and distinct in appearance, immigrants from Africa in Australia were almost all white Africans until the 1970s, except for the handful of Black Africans who arrived in Australia as international students during the mid-1960s. Second, Australian immigration has not favoured immigration by Black Africans as it has severely restricted their entry through various immigration regulations. Batrouney (1991) and Cox et al (1999) explained the Sub-Saharan African population in Australia as dominated by migration from South Africa and by former British colonists. Until 1976, black African residents in Australia were listed as ‘others’ in the official population documents. Separate figures were listed for South Africans, Rhodesians (the old colonial name for today’s Zimbabwe and Zambia), Kenyans, Mauritian and Egyptians. In 1981, a new category comprised people from Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia; but people who migrated from these were white Africans/Europeans and Asians from Uganda who were British passport holders (Frendo, 1987).

Cox et al (1999) believe that “at least 85 per cent of the South African immigrants have been white, together with perhaps 65 percent of those from Zimbabwe, and 60 per cent of those from Kenya” (Cox et al, 1999: 14). In the 1982-83 to 1994-95 period, it is estimated that a very small intake of 24,250 Black African immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa migrated to Australia (Cox et al, 1999). According to Batrouney (1991) and Cox et al (1999), the preponderance of African immigrants from the former British colonies is accounted for by factors such as English as a common language, the affinities and links that exist among former British colonies sharing common linguistic and cultural backgrounds with the dominant culture of Australia (that is the Anglo-Celtic). Due to social, political, ideological, cultural, historical and military ties, there was a strong support for the former apartheid South Africa by successive Australian governments (Viviani, 1992). It is believed that these similarities between the systems in these countries have facilitated white African (European descendents) migration to Australia.
Overall, most Africans in any of the ethno-cultural groups are drawn from the former English-speaking colonies of Africa; a smaller number originate from other African countries (see Table 4.3 below). It is certain that in the contemporary period, as noted above, Black Africans began to settle in Australia in the 1960s on government scholarships. Mr Adamu, one of the participants of this study and himself a recipient of an Australian international scholarship, reported in the interview that there were only six Black African immigrants living in Melbourne when he arrived in Melbourne in January 1965 to study in one of the universities in Melbourne. According to his recollection, three were from East Africa, two from West Africa and one from Southern Africa. All Black Africans who arrived in the early 1960s, according to Mr. Adamu, came as participants in the Colombo scholarship (for commonwealth countries) and International scholarship (for non-commonwealth countries) schemes that were offered by the Australian government at that time. Mr. Kedir, another interviewee who arrived to Melbourne in early 1970, suggests that the Black population from Sub-Saharan Africa had grown to 17 by 1971. The formal abandoning of the 'White Australia Policy' in 1973 saw not only the introduction of selection criteria that excluded 'race' as a factor (at least in theory) but also opened the door to increasing numbers of Asian, Middle Eastern, Caribbean, Latin American, and Black African immigrants. More than anytime in the country's history, in the post-1973 period, Australia began responding more cautiously in small numbers to refugee situations in Africa, and by late 1980s had admitted significant numbers from Sub-Saharan Africa. Australia began accepting refugees from Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana in a cautious and restricted program. According to Kate Walsh, "most of them [the refugees from Africa] were young, men, literate and from the African middle class" (Walsh, 2001:257).

Nevertheless, even after the 'non-discriminatory' immigration policy was introduced in Australia, migration from Sub-Saharan Africa was still dominated by white African migration, mostly from South Africa. Samuel Anyaogu’s paper (1988) reported that immigrants from South Africa, Mauritius and from former British colonies predominate to the virtual exclusion of blacks (Federation of Ethnic Communities' Council of Australia Report, 1988). The introduction of the first points system known as the Numerical Assessment Scheme that was introduced in 1979 had the effect of
restricting the entry of potential landed immigrants in the “independent category” from Sub-Saharan Africa. This has been progressively ‘fine-tuned’ in terms of the points allocated for various aspects (English language ability, education, recognised qualifications, working experiences, age, etc). In theory it is the personal attributes of individual applicants that determines the "from where" question and there is no quota system for countries of origin. However, the Numerical Assessment Scheme placed a major emphasis on English language ability, qualifications, education, economics or capital, employment history, skills and age, by which a potential migrant is awarded points for each factors gaining more weight. This system seriously curtailed entry of Black Africans to Australia and it is aggravated by the fact that until 1994 there were only three Australian immigration offices in the whole of Africa (Nairobi, Cairo and Lagos). Since the establishment of the Republic of South Africa, in 1994, an additional office was opened in Pretoria.

Having common linguistic and cultural backgrounds with the dominant culture of Australia has helped the white Africans (for example, to easily pass the 'point system', which disadvantages the Black Africans). At the same time, the immigration of skilled workers and business people advantages the affluent white Africans as opposed to Blacks. The favourable weighing of competence in English, capital, Australian education and work experience is a form of discrimination against migrants from non-English speaking countries and a mechanism of exclusion. In 1986/87, for example, 7,656 people (comprising 6.5% of Australia’s total immigration) migrated to Australia from sub-Saharan Africa. Over 80% of the immigrants from this group in the “independent category” came from the Republic of South Africa and Mauritius (Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs [DIMA], 2000). It can also be observed from the current census that the total immigration flow to Australia is dominated by migration from South Africa. Of the total 146,595 immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa to Australia, over 60% have come from South Africa alone (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001).
Table 4.2: Africans in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>23,903</td>
<td>23,874</td>
<td>47,777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>18,136</td>
<td>18,338</td>
<td>36,474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>11,879</td>
<td>11,881</td>
<td>23,760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>2,730</td>
<td>2,735</td>
<td>5,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>785</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>1,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>14,076</td>
<td>14,485</td>
<td>28,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>1,056</td>
<td>1,017</td>
<td>2,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>489</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>73,054</td>
<td>73,541</td>
<td>146,595</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


African Migration to Melbourne – Results from Survey Data

With a population of 3,366,542 persons, the Melbourne Metropolitan area in the State of Victoria, Australia, has had a substantial migrant population for many years. Over the last twenty years, however, the composition of this population has changed significantly as manifested by a new flow of Black Africans to Australia. Throughout the mid-1980s and early 1990s, the Black African population in Australia rose dramatically due to political and economic changes in Africa which allowed the population to get entry opportunities, mainly through the Humanitarian Program. This is evident in the recent development and establishment of small businesses like African restaurants, African grocery stores, African hair salons, as well as community churches operated by Black African immigrants. The current 2001 census data reveals a total population of 33,935 immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa living in the Melbourne metropolitan area, representing 0.17% of the total population of Australia (see Table 4.3).
However, since Australian census and immigration statistics tended to lump Black Africans together with white Anglo Saxon or European Africans, the research has not been able to distinguish in the official statistics between Black and White African immigrants in Australia. According to the best estimation, about 12,000 persons out of these 32,958 immigrants are thought to be Black Africans (Cox et al, 1999). The largest numbers from Sub-Saharan Africa (other than South Africa and Mauritius) to Australia have come from East African states. The ABS has reported that over 7,734 immigrants from East Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti, Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, and Somalia) are living in Melbourne. Yet according to ABS (2001), out of the 7,734 immigrants from East Africa living in Melbourne, 6,243 persons have come from the Horn of African states alone (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Sudan, and Somalia); about 3,000 of these are from Ethiopia and Eritrea (two of the core states of the Horn of Africa).

Data and information collected from the DSEIHQ and from the recent census of the ABS forms the basis of the following sections. Wherever necessary, information gathered from the interview schedule has also been provided. Where necessary, descriptive statistics (that is, frequency tabulations, measures of central tendency, variability and graphs) have been performed. The DSEIHQ is also designed to allow Black Africans the chance to express their feelings and personal interpretations in relation to their lived experiences in Melbourne. Responses on the DSEIHQ were compared to interview data for confirmation and completion. Most of the information is presented at the aggregate level for the purpose of preserving confidentiality. Information that is crucial for understanding and interpretation of particular stories is presented at the individual immigrant level and confidentiality is protected by each immigrant being given a fictitious first name.
Table 4.3: Africans in Melbourne (By Origin of Birth Place, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congo</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cote d'Ivoire</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of South Africa</td>
<td>6,910</td>
<td>7,267</td>
<td>14,177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>1,033</td>
<td>895</td>
<td>1,928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>3,930</td>
<td>4,108</td>
<td>8,038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.3 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reunion^a</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Tome &amp; Principe</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>1,138</td>
<td>1,165</td>
<td>2,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Helena^a</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan^b</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>1,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>16,863</td>
<td>17,072</td>
<td>33,935</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Are not independent states

^ For the purpose of this study, Sudan is included in the Sub-Saharan Africa.


Socio-Demographics Description

As indicated earlier, 97 immigrants have participated in this study. However, it is important to note that the total number of responses for each question might vary since not all participants answered or completed every question. In fact, in addition to the plain language statement, the consent form and the clarification note I put on top of the first page of the (DSEIHQ), it was also explained to them at each interview and while completing the DSEIIHQ questionnaire that whatever responses they provided were entirely voluntary and not obligatory.

National Origin of Participants

A geographic spread in terms of the national origins of the participants is identified in the DSEIHQ. With the exception of North Africa, all the rest of the four sub-regions are represented in this study. As shown in Table 4.4 below, most participants (82.5%), however, come from the Eastern part of Africa, while (2.1%) participants come from Central Africa. Thus, in Table 4.4, eighteen African countries, stretching
from the east across to the west, down to the centre and south, are represented in this study. The majority (96.9%) of participants have assumed Australian citizenship, while the remaining (3.1%) have Australian Permanent Residency.

Table 4.4: National Origin of Participants of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographical Region</th>
<th>East Africa</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>West Africa</th>
<th>Central Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>(26.8%)</td>
<td>Rep. of South Africa 2.1%</td>
<td>Ghana 4.1%</td>
<td>D.R. Congo 1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>Zimbabwe 2.1%</td>
<td>Nigeria 2.1%</td>
<td>Cameroon 1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>Zambia 2.1%</td>
<td>Liberia 1.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>Mozambique 1.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>Angola 1.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  | 82.5% | 8.2% | 7.2% | 2.1% |

Age-Sex Structure

Of the total participants a distinct minority (25.8%) were completed by women. With men making up 74.2% of total participants in the survey questionnaire, there is a men/women ratio of about two to one, which is notable for a few reasons. Immigrants seeking fortunes and life-enhancement opportunities in a new land tend to be young, healthy single men. Men tend to constitute a majority especially among the refugees, since the persons most likely to migrate to a new country "were young, men, literate and from the African middle class" (Walsh, 2001:257). Men also tend to be more adventurous than their female peers.

6 Unless otherwise stated, all data presented in this chapter is derived from the DSEIHQ.
Over all, participants were in their thirties. The participants have a mean age of 36.9 years. Table 4.5 shows the age-sex distribution of the participants. From this table, it can be seen that the bulk of the participants are in the early and young adult age categories. The largest proportion (40.2%), falls within the 35-44 category followed by the 25-34 group which makes up 38.1% of total participants. This further supports the fact of the age-selective nature of migration: that young adults dominate in most migratory streams over people in other age groups. Overall, almost 78.4% of participants are aged 25-44, a proportion that is more than twice as much as that (30.0%) noted for all Australians covered by the 2001 population census of Australia.

### Table 4.5: Age-Sex Distribution of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>15 - 24</th>
<th>25 - 34</th>
<th>35 - 44</th>
<th>45 - 54</th>
<th>55 - 64</th>
<th>65+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2 (8.0)</td>
<td>13 (52.0)</td>
<td>8 (32.0)</td>
<td>2 (8.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>25 (25.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4 (5.6)</td>
<td>24 (33.3)</td>
<td>31 (43.0)</td>
<td>9 (12.5)</td>
<td>4 (5.6)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>72 (74.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6 (6.1)</td>
<td>37 (38.2)</td>
<td>39 (40.3)</td>
<td>11 (11.3)</td>
<td>4 (4.1)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>97 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures in parentheses are row percentages.*

The age-sex distribution of the population is also displayed in Figure 4.2 showing the age distribution of participants. The age distribution of participants has an upright pyramid with a bulge at the younger groups. As described above, men tend to constitute a majority of the participants, the bulk of the participants being in the early and young adult age categories. Such a distribution of the African immigrant group in Melbourne is not surprising, since not only do younger persons have a higher propensity to migrate than older persons but also Australia's immigration policy "favours young, economically active people, unburdened by dependents, and suitable for immediate induction into the Australian workforce" (Richards, 1991: 13). This may have led to an increased number of young people among the study population.
For example, with the “points system” under which independent applicants are admitted to Australia, applicants below 18 years and above 44 years score nothing on the age factor. In contrast, while immigrants aged 18 to 44 years old could score points, those aged 18 to 29 years old could score up to the highest points on the age factor (DIMA, 2004). The study population is therefore very young. While there is no one aged 65 or more, only one person among all the participants is older than 60 years. Interestingly, except two women who are in the age range between 45 -54 years old, no other woman is aged above 44, showing that women are even younger than men in this study. This may be attributed the desire for Australian governments to offer migration places to women who are capable of reproducing, and thus assisting to redress Australia’s ageing population problem.

The Under-representation of women in this study, while directly reflecting the nature of men-women relationships in African societies, is also due to their small numbers and relatively recent migration to Melbourne or Australia. Examination of the DSEIHQ indicates that the men in this study have, on average, been in Melbourne for a longer time than the women: 39 and 17 years respectively. For these reasons many more men than women would be expected to volunteer their participation in this study. Indeed, most of the women who participated in the study indicated that they came to Australia to join their spouses who had earlier migrated to Australia. The interpretations and perceptions reported by participant women are reflective of those held by the Black African population in Melbourne and are not a result of the sex composition of the participants, since the study is to examine and analyse the impact of ‘race’ and class on their lived experiences in Australia. Information gathered from my POs with a cross-section of the study population, confirms that sex differentials have no effect on the views, interpretations, and perceptions about the impact of ‘race’ and class on the lived experiences of Black Africans in Melbourne. This is because discussions with a cross-section of both sexes showed a commonality in views, interpretations and perceptions of their lived/living experiences in Melbourne, Australia.
Marital Status

In terms of marital status, the majority (69.0%) of participants are married. While four participants are divorced, no participants in this study are widowed. As at 2001, as much as 31.6% of the Australian-born population aged 15 and over had never married (ABS, 2001). This compares with only (26.8%) of the study survey. In other words, young, black African immigrants in Australia are more prone to marry earlier than the Australian-born population. An interesting picture emerges when sex and marital status are examined. Among the male participants only 20.3% have never been married or are separated. The opposite is the case among the women. The majority of women not married or separated are in women-headed households (57.1%); that is, they are persons who have never been married or are single parents, having been divorced or separated from their husbands. However, due to lack of census data for the Black African population in Australia as a whole, the research has not been able to
compare the survey findings with census findings. The results are based on the findings of the DSEIHQ.

Immigration and Settlement Patterns of Participants

From the interview and DSEIHQ, it is evident that in the contemporary period, Black Africans began arriving in Melbourne in the 1960s - in the years immediately following the liberalisation of Australian immigration policy. Nevertheless, as explained in chapter 4, Black African immigration to Melbourne or Australia is essentially a post-1972 phenomenon, to be specific, a post “White Australia Policy” phenomenon. The DSEIHQ data fully reflect this situation. For our purposes, the immigration of participants to Melbourne has been divided into five periods (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Participant’s Year of Arrival to Melbourne

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This trend is also displayed in Figure 4.3 where it is shown that participants’ settlement in Melbourne is, indeed, a very recent phenomenon, increasing only in the last two decades, mostly on the basis of humanitarian/refugee applications. African immigrants began appearing in Melbourne in increasing numbers in the early 1980s. Except for three married couples and ten single men and women who moved to Melbourne from other states or from rural Victoria, the majority of the participants have never lived in Melbourne or Australia prior to immigration. Overall, participants have not been in Melbourne for long. By the time I conducted the interview and the survey, participants had at least 4.3 years of experience as immigrants in Australia. The graph (Figure 4.8) shows that the majority (55.7%) of participants have been in
Melbourne for about ten years. However, as noted above, there are some individuals who have been in Melbourne/Australia for a relatively long period: between seventeen and thirty-nine years. A characteristic feature of African immigration is that many of the participants did not come straight to Melbourne or Australia from their countries of origin.

**Figure 4.8: Participant's Year of Arrival in Melbourne**

Many of the participants had lived or transited in at least one other country before relocating in Australia. Countries lived before coming to Australia are New Zealand, the United States of America, United Kingdom, Belgium, the former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia and the oil rich states of the Middle East. The majority of the participants who migrated to Australia under humanitarian/refugee grounds had lived for years in refugee camps located in the neighbouring states of their home countries.
Reasons for migrating

The findings from the questionnaire suggest that Black African immigrants came to Australia through different immigration mechanisms. While 1.03 per cent of the participants migrated to Australia under the business category, eight per cent of participants are admitted through the skill category to seek economic and life-enhancement opportunities. One of them returned to Australia after an earlier short visit. He was granted permanent residence under the business program to open a clinic and work as a general medical practitioner. Five per cent of participants migrated to Australia from New Zealand on the special category program after they were granted New Zealand citizenship. They were admitted to New Zealand from Africa on the humanitarian program. Fifteen per cent of participants were family sponsored, through siblings who were granted Australian citizenship. Of the total sample of participants in this study, the highest proportion (40.2%) indicated that they originally came to Australia solely through the humanitarian program, four per cent of which were asylum seekers granted permanent residence after moving to Melbourne from another Australian city. The second highest proportion (27.8%) indicated that they originally came to Australia solely for the purpose of furthering their education or acquiring additional training, skills and experience – at various Melbourne higher educational institutions. This helps to explain why the majority of the participants have high levels of education. It is striking that those who initially came to seek economic and life-enhancement opportunities constitute only a minority. Surely, these findings support Batrouney’s (1991), Cox et al (1999) and Walsh’s (2001) findings that the majority of Africans came to Australia under the refugee and special humanitarian scheme and through the family reunion program.

It is possible to conjecture that Australia’s immigration policies have not particularly favoured independent applicants from Africa given the fact that, unlike immigrants from Asia, and Africans of European descent, Black Africans often lack the economic or financial security to secure them passage to Australia. It also seems plausible to think that prospective students who had been offered admission and funding by Australian institutions would be more readily admitted than other individuals without any such financial backing or employment prospects. Sloan and Kennedy (1992) indicate that some of the foreign students in Australian educational
institutions may later return to Australia as permanent immigrants, with temporary immigration for these people a part of the system or chain of migration. It is also noteworthy that more men than women came to Australia to secure better economic opportunities. Women frequently came for financial and marital reasons.

This means that some of the married men initially came without their spouses but sent for them later on. For example, at the time of the fieldwork, five married male participants in this study reported that their wives and children were still in Africa. Not surprisingly, the majority of the refugees come from East African countries where there is much political turmoil and civil unrest. Many of these people did not choose Australia as their final destination, as two participants of the interview commented earlier in the previous chapter. For the non-humanitarian entrants, however, prior contacts with and information obtained from friends and relatives already in Australia were very significant in participants' choice of Australia as country of final destination: 44.3% chose Australia/Melbourne as city/country of final destination. This attests to the role that chain migration plays in immigration and resettlement. 42.3% of participants of this study had relatives or friends living either in Melbourne or elsewhere in Australia when they arrived.

Reception on arrival

An immigrant's capacity to establish a network of host-society friendships is largely determined by the kind of reception they face upon entering the new society. If they are accepted not as newcomers but rather as unwelcome additions then it is not surprising that they would encounter a difficult situation establishing, let alone maintaining, connections with members of the host society (Danso, 1995). To examine the nuances of these issues, participants were asked to indicate the kind of reception they faced when they first came to Australia along an ordinal scale ranging from 1 (very friendly) to 5 (very unfriendly). The overwhelming majority (74.2%) agreed that they were received in a friendly or very friendly manner. While 9.3% could not give any definite answer, a significant minority (16.5%) at the other extreme alleged their reception was either unfriendly or, as Ms. Nazizi put it, a 'very cold' reception. Considering the high incidence of those who recorded a warm reception, also it would be expected that an equally high proportion of participants
agreed that they were able to interact and socialise with members of the host society. That is exactly what the data shows.

As many as 67% of participants said they are able to have such interaction with the host society. Again, when asked to rank (1+ "very low" and 5+ "very high") the levels at which these interactions are maintained, 49.5% of participants ranked these interactions as high. If these figures are anything to go by, then one could assume that interaction with the host society has largely contributed to participants' familiarisation with the character and workings of their new society. Some of the reasons given for being unable to interact include: “they [the host people] are ‘snobbish’” (Mr. Chissano), “because they [the host people] are not open to immigrants” (Mr. Israel), “I feel unaccepted and looked down upon because of my colour and accent” (Mr. Nega), “since they [the host people] could not understand my accent, they prefer to de-socialise or isolate me instead of trying to understand me or trying to find means for a better understanding” (Mr. Mtiku). On the other hand, it is important to recognise that many among the study population maintain only “superficial” interactions. In other words, the fact that the majority claimed their interactions with host-society friends, work-mates, and associates were at high levels should not necessarily be construed to mean these are close interactions geared towards culture learning (this will be discussed in more detail in chapter five and six).
Socio-Economic Features

Educational Attainment

Table 4.9 show how impressive is the educational achievements of Black African immigrants in Melbourne. All the participants have had at least some form of formal education. This also explains why the second largest proportion of them gave reasons relating to education for coming to Australia. It seems reasonable to expect that after their training some of them are admitted as permanent residents, as suggested by Sloan and Kennedy (1992). It is obvious that only two persons (2.1%) have not proceeded beyond the elementary school level, while over half (54.7%) of all the participants in this study have university education. With regards to the education variable, it is notable that men are educated to higher levels than women. However, it is only at the tertiary education level (certificate, diploma and above) that men exceed women by a considerable proportion; the ratio being 2:1. Women match the number of men in the number of people with high school and certificate level education. These gender disparities might stem from the socio-cultural practices in most African societies, which favour and emphasise male education much more than female education. After completion of their high school education in Australia, most women have attended certificate level education or vocational training so as to help them obtain a job. About half of the participants had only attended or taken English classes in community schools in Australia. Forty-seven per cent of the participants primarily spoke their first language at home in Melbourne; 42.3% participants also spoke their own languages and English at home; while 10.3% persons primarily spoke English language in their households.
Table 4.9: Participant’s Level of Educational Attainment, Melbourne

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Level of Education Achieved</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 8 or below</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed High School</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate or Specialty Training</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Certificate</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Degree (MA, PhD, MD)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>95</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Two male participants did not provide this information.

Occupational Characteristics and Adaptation

Since the employment status of immigrants and the type of job opportunities available to them have a profound impact on their adaptation, it is necessary to know the job market experiences of the participants. The labour market has always been a source of inequality as organization of production has always been hierarchical. Immigrants’ adaptation to their new society is by and large a function of their ability to enter and compete in the job and housing markets of the host society. Because of this and of necessity, only some issues of inequality in the labour market are mentioned here; namely, labour force participation (full-time and part-time employment) and income patterns.

Labour Force Participation

The employment status of the participants is presented in Table 4.10. From the table it can be seen that the employment rate or labour force participation rate (LFPR) is quite high (68.1%) among the participants: full-time (21.6%), part-time or casual (36.2%) and self-employed (10.3%). The unemployed (not including the students) constitute only 13.4% of total participants. While the group has relatively high employment rate, it should be noted that the majority of them, especially those in the private sector, are only in part-time and casual employment even though they are not

*In this study, the LFPR is taken as the percentage (rate) of the population aged 15 years and over who were in the labour force (either employed or unemployed) at the time of the study.*

124
going to school or taking courses. In terms of sex, employment rates are higher among men (70.8%) than they are among women (60.0%). Although Africans in Melbourne have high levels of schooling, which by itself should increase their chances to compete fully in the labour market, a good number of them are concentrated in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations. This finding validates the generalisations about the work-force role of NESB immigrant labour as over-represented in industries which employ high proportions of manual labour; in occupations rejected by indigenous workers; in jobs which offer low pay, poor working conditions, little security, and inferior status - "the '3-D' – dirty, dangerous and difficult jobs – and work for desperately low pay" (Stalker, 2001: 8). This is reflected in the occupational scale where participants are over-represented in manual occupations and under-represented in managerial, professional, and other non-manual occupations such as managerial and administrative or teaching positions.

Table 4.10: Employment Status Among Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>Self-employed</th>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>2 (8.0)</td>
<td>13 (52.0)</td>
<td>4 (16.0)</td>
<td>6 (24.0)</td>
<td>25 (25.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1 (1.4)</td>
<td>7 (9.7)</td>
<td>43 (59.7)</td>
<td>9 (12.5)</td>
<td>12 (16.7)</td>
<td>72 (74.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1 (1.0)</td>
<td>9 (9.3)</td>
<td>56 (57.7)</td>
<td>13 (13.4)</td>
<td>18 (18.6)</td>
<td>97 (100.0)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures in parentheses are row percentages.

At the time, according to the survey, the highest proportion of participants (over 71.0%) are concentrated in blue-collar occupations in manufacturing, health and community services, hospitality and retail trade industries - often as machine operators and production workers, service workers in food and beverage production and labourers in health and retail industries, restaurants and hotels. The fact is that, despite their high levels of educational attainment, many participants are unable to aspire to occupations that are commensurate with their qualifications and training. It
is not uncommon to find participants with post-graduate degrees working as taxi drivers, security guards, welders, book binders, store attendants, machine operators and production workers in the textile industries, cleaners and parking lot. The estimated mean weekly household income for the group is only about $494 (that is, $25,697 per year), which is far less than the ($879) average for Melbourne in 2001, or the $816 recorded for Australia in 2001 (ABS, 2004: 6523.0).

Unlike men, women are largely employees (in the private sector) where their jobs seem mostly insecure, because all except three respondents work on a part-time or casual basis. While none of the women are engaged in unskilled manual work, they are disproportionately concentrated in low-paid jobs working in the clothing and footwear industries, in food and beverage production, labourers in health, retail industries, restaurants and hotels, in smaller and medium sized, mostly non-unionised private sector workplaces and as store assistants and/or cashiers in supermarkets. It is also important to note that only three women are in either managerial or professional jobs as opposed to the eight for the men.

If the observed occupational profile of Black African immigrants in Melbourne does not relate to low educational attainments, then it must be a reflection of the structural constraints and obstacles that they face in the labour market due to their class and as a black racial minority group. Indeed, responses both from the interviews and the survey indicate that job and housing market discrimination are the most formidable difficulties that Africans generally encounter in Melbourne. It is therefore obvious that, strengthened by the forces of prejudice and exclusion, employment discrimination has incapacitated the majority of the participants of this study to convert whatever educational gains they might have achieved into socio-economic mobility. This has culminated in the concentration of most Black Africans in the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder.

There is considerable evidence of the concentration of Black Africans and other recent immigrants in blue-collar occupations in manufacturing and service industries as unskilled or semi-skilled manual workers in the Australian labour market. One
simple explanation for this unfortunate situation is the non-recognition of the educational qualification, skills and training or abilities of many immigrants, particularly those from Africa. The findings by Hawthorne (1994), and Pearce et al (1995), O'Loughlin and Watson (1997) and McConnochie et al (1988), Udo-Ekpo (1999), Cox et al (1999) and Batrouney (1991) reveal that prospective employers do not accept immigrants' educational qualifications and skills, simply because they are obtained in Africa or elsewhere in NESB countries. Even after taking refresher courses or upgrading their skills the educated and experienced among them still found it very hard to find jobs.

Studies have found that when Black applicants with the same qualifications as white applicants applied for job openings, they learned, in two out of five cases, that the opening no longer existed. In some instances, the same employer on the same day would interview white candidates and offer them the same position that was alleged to be non-existent (Francis et al, 1996). The same thing happens in the housing market because the two always reinforce each other (see the next section). It is therefore not surprising that participants reported having encountered similar situations in Melbourne.

**Income Patterns**

Income is one of the most important factors determining a person's or family's position in the class structure. In view of the constrained situation that participants face in the employment market in Melbourne, it is not surprising that many reported low or not-so-attractive household incomes. The estimated mean household annual gross income of participants in this study is about $25,697. The estimated median annual income for the group is $21,250. Some households earn not more than $10,000 in a year while a small minority earn $75,000 or more. As seen from Table 4.11, and graphically from Figure 4.12, 58.4% of all households earn a yearly income of less than $35,000, which falls far below the $45,708.00 average household income noted for Melbourne in 2001, and $42,432.00 for Australia in 2001. While the estimated

---

*For the sake of convenience the students in the participants who also double up as part-time workers are strictly categorised as students. They are, therefore, not included among the "employed" category.*
mean (or average) household annual gross income of participants is about $25,697 (about $494.17 per week); the estimated median annual income for the group is $21,250 (about $408.65 per week). This difference reflects the typically asymmetric distribution of income where a relatively small number of people have relatively very high household incomes, and a large number of people have relatively lower household incomes, as discussed above and as illustrated in table 4.11 and graph 4.12 below.

Both by Melbourne and Australian standards, most African families in Melbourne are living below the poverty line. According to a research report by the Melbourne University Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, four-person households whose family weekly income is less than $653.85 in December 2001 are deemed to be living below the poverty line (MUIAESR, 2002). Thirty-one per cent of participants have a gross individual income below $15,000 a year or $288.46 a week. These participants who fall within this income bracket are living below the poverty line. Another thirty-two per cent of this study has a gross individual income of $15,000 - $25,000 a year or $288.46 - $480.76 a week. These participants who fall within this income brackets are also living below the poverty line.

With an average household size of about four persons and a household weekly income of $494 most African families in Melbourne are therefore living below the poverty line. To say that for the study population wide income differentials exist between women and men is only to state the obvious. Men earn higher incomes than women (Table 4.11). For instance, of the three households which earn incomes of between $75000 and $100000 or above, none of them are women-headed. Similarly, only one of those who earn between $50,000 and $74,999 was a female participant. However, none of the households which earn less than $6,000 a year is female-headed. On average, participants found jobs within two-and-a-half years of their arrival in Melbourne.9 The majority (53.6%) found jobs within two-and-a-half years of initial

__9__ The computations presented here cover all participants of the questionnaire including those who were initially working (full-time, part-time, causal) but who, at the time of the questionnaire, were either unemployed or attending school.
arrival in Melbourne while about forty per cent secured theirs within three months. The remaining (20.6%) took over two-and-a-half years to find a job.

Table 4.11: Distribution of Gross Household Yearly Income of Participant’s by Sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>&lt; $6000</th>
<th>$6000-$9999</th>
<th>$10,000-$14,999</th>
<th>$15,000-$24,999</th>
<th>$25,000-$34,999</th>
<th>$35,000-$49,999</th>
<th>$45,000-$74,999</th>
<th>$75,000-$100,000</th>
<th>&gt; $100,000</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>89b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>&lt; $6000</th>
<th>$6000-$9999</th>
<th>$10,000-$14,999</th>
<th>$15,000-$24,999</th>
<th>$25,000-$34,999</th>
<th>$35,000-$49,999</th>
<th>$45,000-$74,999</th>
<th>$75,000-$100,000</th>
<th>&gt; $100,000</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>28.1%</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>89b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Eight respondents, one woman and seven men who are either unemployed or students did not provide this information.

Figures in parentheses are row percentages.

However, a high proportion (40.2%) indicated having encountered difficult or very difficult situations before getting their job. Contrary to this, more than half (54.6%) of participants admitted that they did not face any problems when searching for jobs. Five per cent of the participants reported that they found jobs soon after their graduation. Overall, it took participants between a week and six years to get a job upon initial arrival in Melbourne. Incidentally, the one person whom it took the six years to obtain employment was a refugee who initially arrived on humanitarian category but was a Master’s degree holder and who had worked as a professional in work requiring specialised training before arriving to Australia.
Housing

So far the analysis in the previous section has concentrated on the demographic, socio-economic and immigration aspects of the adaptation of Africans in Melbourne.\textsuperscript{10} This section describes access to housing and looks at specifically how access to housing is such a unique factor in its influence on the adaptation processes of Black African immigrants in Melbourne. Studies have shown that adaptation depends heavily on the ability of immigrants and their families to enter the housing labour markets and social interactions of host societies (Deane, 1990; Green, 1978; Jones, 1983). The ability or freedom of immigrants to establish contacts and interact with members of the host society opens up an important avenue for them to learn and internalise the social norms, behaviours, and practices of the host society. This greatly assists in accelerating their adjustment thereby facilitating their overall adaptation,

\textsuperscript{10} The variables of interest obtained from the DSEIHQ are fully listed in Appendix VIII.
and access to housing plays an indispensable role in all this (Danso, 1995). Immigrants realise that their successful adaptation to the new society is greatly dependent upon their ability to gain access to adequate and affordable housing. Together with employment, housing is one area where immigrants frequently encounter much discrimination – both overt and covert – in host societies (Carter and Jones, 1989). Immigrants therefore find that very intractable barriers are erected with respect to housing access by the forces of racism, discrimination, prejudice and xenophobia (Danso, 1995).

In the presence of discrimination in the receiving countries, landlords frequently refuse to rent to people whom they perceive to be “undesirable”. Like landlords, real estate agencies may also withhold information selectively, thus determining directly the number and types of vacancies and residential environments available or made known to different households. Likewise, buying a home of their own is generally out of the question for immigrants with a breadwinner in a lower-paid job and for those dependent on unemployment benefits (welfare recipients). The relatively disadvantaged position of immigrants has a crippling effect on their ability to compete for affordable or decent housing. To be able to meet rentals higher than normal they are usually forced to double up in crowded, less spacious rooms and for that matter in State Housing Commissions so as to pool resources. Immigrants themselves perceive that the facilitation of their adaptation and thus the attainment of good quality life is directly tied to their capacity to gain access to adequate and decent housing and employment (Smith et al, 1992). The outcome of this is the widespread maladaptation among immigrant groups and their “ghettoized” conditions in most immigrant-receiving countries such as Australia (Burnley et al, 1997; Kendig, and Paris, 1987; Smith et al, 1992).

Residential Distribution of Black Africans in Melbourne

Social divisions include education, income, occupation and even place of employment, and all these factors tend to be expressed geographically, so that people from affluent and poor areas rarely meet one another. Table 4.13 shows the Residential Distribution of participants in Melbourne, by statistical sub-divisions.
From this table, therefore, we can observe that participants in Melbourne are concentrated in the Western Melbourne, Greater Dandenong City, and in the North West and North East statistical sub-divisions.

Table 4.13: Residential Distribution of Participants in Melbourne, (by Statistical Sub-Divisions, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Subdivision</th>
<th># of Participants</th>
<th>% of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inner Melbourne</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Melbourne</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melton-Wyndham</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moreland City</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Middle Melbourne</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hume City</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Outer Melbourne</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Outer Melbourne</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Dandenong City</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Eastern Outer Melbourne</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>97</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey questionnaire on participants' residential location indicates that the highest proportion (40.2%) of participants live in the Western regions; (19.6%) in the Greater Dandenong City region, and (32.0%) in the North West and North East Regions. An insignificant number of the population group live in the more prosperous neighbourhoods of Inner Melbourne (6.1%), Eastern Outer Melbourne (2.1%), and South Eastern Outer Melbourne (1.0%). This distribution mirrored somewhat recent Black African immigrants' residential situations in the Melbourne metropolitan area. The environmental conditions of the immediate neighbourhood of immigrants affect their adaptation to the new society. The neighbourhood is usually a powerful determinant of immigrants' social lives – of the extent to which they socialise, of the kinds of people they associate with, and of the nature and quality of this interaction. All these have significant implications for their proper adaptation. Where and how one lives is an outward sign of an immigrant's place in the new society, an irrefutable label to themselves, their friends, and the world.
In order to examine its dynamic in the lives of Black Africans in Melbourne, data has been collected about housing tenure, for this is influential in immigrants’ adaptation. The DSEHQ data reveal that, for a combination of factors, most Africans in Melbourne have not been able to achieve this. Only 18.6% of the total participants are homeowners and for that matter with mortgages, with the overwhelming majority (81.4%) being renters. What this means is that while almost two-thirds (66.2%) of Australian households are currently owners of their homes (ABS, 2001), about less than two-fifths of that figure characterise the homeownership rate of Black Africans in Melbourne. In other words, for the vast majority of Africans, the ability to live in a private rental is a mirage, let alone the ability to buy into the Australian dream of homeownership.

The DSEHQ data confirm the findings of Batrouney (1991), Foster (1999) and Cox et al (1999) that, second to employment, housing was the major area where the Black African population in Melbourne perceived or actually did encounter racial discrimination. But “where discrimination in the housing market exists, certain minority groups may be restricted in their choice of location, which in turn can affect their homeownership rates” (Batrouney, 1991; Cox et al, 1999). Based on data gathered from the DSEIHQ, it is possible to say that in Melbourne, Africans are among those minority groups who are restricted in their housing choices because of the racial factor in housing market operations. In addition to racial factors, what effectively constricted any desire to go into homeownership by Africans in Melbourne is generally their lower class status (their low socio-economic status or poor economic position) as reflected in the low incomes they earn.

It was noted in the previous section that with an average household size of about four persons and a household weekly income of $494, most African families in Melbourne are therefore living below the poverty line. For the group as a whole, the ownership rate as noted above is only 18.6%, which explains why tenancy is the norm for Africans in Melbourne. Given their low purchasing power, most Africans have to dwell in below-average and inadequate housing in Melbourne. In a pernicious way, housing market discrimination constricts and limits immigrants’ housing options to
public housing units that are of obsolete architectural design and relatively poor quality in unsanitary neighbourhoods. As a result, over 58% of participants of this study live in the State Housing Commission, usually high-rise apartments. These high rise flats in Melbourne as elsewhere in Australia, "are not well suited for families with young children, they stigmatise; and they are relatively deviant because of their design, location, ownership and occupancy by presumably needy people" - unemployed and/or low income earning immigrants (Jones, 1983: 266). The number of immigrants in a household ranged from one to seven with a mode of four.

**Choices, constraints and discrimination in the search for housing**

Participants were asked to identify the problems that, as individuals, they faced when searching for housing. Secondly, they were asked to identify the problems and difficulties that Africans as a group face in the housing market and how these have affected their general lived experiences in Melbourne. Searching for and obtaining accommodation is of prime concern to every immigrant. In this particular sense, housing assumes more prominence than employment. The most frequently occurring responses related to weak economic position (their lower class status), discrimination, and denial of access to housing and equitable employment (see Tables 4.14, 4.16 and 4.18). Supporting this view, participants explained how these have largely circumscribed the upward mobility of many Africans in Melbourne. Most participants expressed deep concern about the (covert) discrimination encountered by Black minority groups in Australia.

Data were collected on the problems that participants faced when they first came to Melbourne. Figure 4.15 provides a graphical view of the difficulties that participants faced at the initial stages (see also Table 4.14). Of those reporting, the highest proportion (30.9%) indicated having faced problems getting a job. They are followed by those who reported difficulties getting housing (25.9%). Batrouney (1991), Cox et al (1999), and Udo-Ekpo (1999) found the same pattern for the Black Africans in Melbourne. Indeed, most of the complaints made by participants did indeed concern these two crucial areas: housing and employment in their initial period.
Table 4.14: Initial Difficulties Faced in Melbourne by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty Faced</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fourth</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining Employment</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44    (31.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtaining Housing</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39    (28.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language/Accent</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33    (23.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination/Harassment</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19    (13.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4     (2.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>139a  100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Column total exceeds 97 because some participants ranked more than one response.*

Figures in parentheses are column percentages.

As can be seen in Figure 4.15 below, a large proportion (23.7%) of the participants recorded difficulties in understanding Australian English accent as a big problem in their initial period. These people are most likely to face additional problems relating to communication and employment because of their lack of facility in the host-society language and particularly problems with Aussies' accents. Racial discrimination per se was identified as a problem by 13.7% of the participants reporting any difficulties in their initial period. Other problems in the initial stages include difficulties such as securing appropriate information, strange weather conditions and foods, unfamiliarity with transportation and locations, banking and other issues related with completely new environments.
Given that people’s experiences are never static, I wanted to know what changes or improvements had occurred in participants’ lives with respect to the problems they initially encountered in Melbourne. Table 4.16 and Figure 4.17 show the distribution of responses. Whatever changes participants have undergone could best be evaluated by comparing Figure 4.15 and 4.17. Overall, there has been some decline over time in the difficulties that participants faced. A majority (72.3% of participants) actually admitted that over time the initial difficulties they encountered have declined (while 18.8% expressed an opposing view, 8.9% could not be specific in their response). Participants attributed this to the increasing knowledge they have come to acquire about the operations of their new society. This fact notwithstanding, racial discrimination still remains a formidable problem for many Black Africans. Comparing Figures 4.15 and 4.17, it can be seen that racial discrimination and unemployment/low income/job insecurity are the only problems that have increased: racial discrimination almost doubling from 13.7% to 24.4%, and unemployment/low income/job insecurity together from 31.7% to 46.7%.
Table 4.16: Current Difficulties Faced in Melbourne by Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty Faced</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fourth</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment/Low Income</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35 (26.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination/Harassment</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32 (24.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Security</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22 (16.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language/Accent</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19 (14.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Access to Housing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18 (13.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (family breakdown)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 (3.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>88</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>131* 100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Column total exceeds 97 because some participants ranked more than one response.

Figures in parentheses are column percentages.

Most participants living in the State Housing Commission reported their chance to move out to a private house as dim and have no choice but to stay in public housing. They all reported low income as their first problem they faced at the time of the interview. Although levels of the initial problems faced have declined in most cases, the rising incidence of discrimination means that discrimination works both indirectly and directly to create other problems for Black Africans in Melbourne. This is why the reductions in the problems reported are not by wide margins. This is not to say that all Black Africans in Melbourne have been facing deterioration in their lives since coming to Melbourne; some have definitely fared better as discussed in the previous sections. Discrimination is very difficult to measure in studies using survey instruments, because its victims are less likely to report it. At best, they may underreport it to avoid long processes of accusations and legal tussles that will not necessarily guarantee them access to housing.

Notwithstanding, 18 participants of the 25 in the first rank under unemployment/low income and 12 participants of the 22 in the first rank under discrimination/harassment were living in State Housing Commission. As noted above, the desire and dream to gain access to adequate housing or the ability to live in a private housing is a mirage for these participants. Therefore, they reported unemployment or low income and
discrimination or harassment as top difficulties they faced currently instead of lack of access to housing.

**Figure 4.17: Current Difficulties Faced in Melbourne by Participants**

![Bar chart showing current difficulties faced by participants in Melbourne.](image)

Finally, data were collected on the situation that Africans as a group face in the housing market in Melbourne. This is because individuals and groups do not necessarily face the same situation nor do they adopt the same strategies in their adaptation encounters. Consequently, participants were asked to rank the difficulties that Africans as a group face in the housing market. They were then asked to explain how these problems have affected their lived experiences in Melbourne. The highest proportion (56.7%) had earlier indicated that the housing market operated fairly for immigrant groups in Melbourne.\(^\text{11}\)

\(^{11}\) This means that considered together, immigrant groups in Melbourne face a fair housing market; while at the same time there are differences in housing market experiences for the individual immigrant groups. 43.3% percent held the opposite view.
Table 4.18: Difficulties Faced by Africans as a Group in the Housing Market in Melbourne

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficulty Faced</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First</td>
<td>Second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination/Prejudice</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak economic Position</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language/Accent Barriers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusion/Access denial</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Column total exceeds 97 because some participants ranked more than one difficulty.

Figures in parentheses are column percentages.

Ironically, however, the highest proportion (74.5%) admitted that the housing market does not operate fairly for all immigrant groups in Melbourne and that Black Africans face more difficulties in finding decent housing than other immigrant groups. About 17.4% argued that both Black Africans and other minority groups face the same level of difficulties. A minority (8.1%), mostly homeowners, said neither Africans nor any other minority group faces problems in the housing market. For this group, their advantaged position as owners must have influenced their responses. This is quite surprising when the literature points out the discrimination that immigrant group in Australia face in housing and employment.

In Figure 4.19 (also Table 4.18), I find that discrimination and unemployment/lower income still constitutes the most formidable barrier faced by Black Africans in Melbourne. Thirty-six per cent of participants attributed the difficulties Black Africans face to discrimination, prejudice and stereotyping and 35.2% as a result of their poor/low income position or unemployment. Together, these have meant that Black Africans are denied access to housing or are excluded from certain neighbourhoods and hence are steered into others. I have stated above that the
majority of participants (78.4%) are in rental accommodation, of which over 58% live in the State Housing Commission, usually high-rise apartments.

I can assume that these immigrants living in the Public Housing Commission could not even meet their rent obligations without assistance from the public purse. They therefore relied solely on subsidised housing, which was the most common form of housing tenure among the group. Indeed, nearly 10% of participants have never been able to move away from public housing since coming to Melbourne. Discrimination as a result of ‘race’ and class in housing was identified as a real and prevalent problem in Australian society by almost all participants in this study. As noted earlier, this confirms that, almost a decade after the study of the Black Community in Melbourne by Batrouney (1991) that came up with similar findings, racial discrimination still persists against Black Africans in Melbourne.

According to one participant resident in the outer east, the moment one Black African family bought property in one neighbourhood there; one white family exclaimed “there goes the neighbourhood”. Black Africans tend to be denied access to housing particularly in the east and southeast and certain areas of inner Melbourne. It was reported that when participants answered to advertised vacancies and showed up for them, they were often told “we are sorry, but the unit was just rented out”, while the truth is quite contrary. The experience of Mr. Melaku in the housing market is a vivid memory. He was told by the real estate agency that the house he was interested in had been rented. Yet when he sent his white friend to check, his white friend found out that the house was still waiting for the ‘Mr preferred person’ [according to Melaku, the ‘Mr preferred person’ meant the white person]. This confirms that, almost a decade-and-a-half after the study of the Black African community in Melbourne by Trevor Batrouney (1991), Cox et al (1999), Udo-Ukpo (1999) and others which came out with similar findings, discrimination still persists against the Black Africans in Melbourne.
With the aim of facilitating the reader's comprehension of the stories that are presented in chapters 5, 6 and 7, this chapter has attempted to describe the demographic, socio-economic and immigration characteristics and housing conditions of Black African immigrants in Melbourne by recourse to the demographic and immigration profiles of the 97 immigrants that participated in answering the DSEIHQ. In particular, the last section has described the housing condition of the participants in relation to access to housing, initial difficulties and current difficulties faced in the Melbourne housing market. As noted, the purpose of the discussion is to provide readers with an understanding of who the narrators are/were and where the stories come from before turning to the analysis and the findings. The quantitative analysis is concerned with descriptive information on demographics, socio-economic characteristics, immigration and housing-related issues of the data. As a result, descriptive statistics (that is, frequency tabulations, measures of central tendency, variability and graphs) have been performed where necessary. The DSEIHQ is also designed to allow Black Africans the chance to express their feelings and personal interpretations in relation to their lived experiences in Melbourne.
A number of significant findings, some supporting the literature, have emerged from this study. One of these does confirm that Black African immigration to Melbourne is indeed of recent vintage and has not afforded the group much opportunity to settle down in its new society. Black Africans’ adaptation could thus be described as being at the rudimentary stage. However, like other newcomers in new socio-cultural environments, Black Africans are likely to encounter certain difficulties both as individuals and as a group as they begin their lives in their new homeland, Australia. Supporting other studies done in Australia (Batrouney, 1991; Cox, et al, 1999; Udo-Ekpo, 1999 for example), this study has shown that these difficulties are particularly acute in the housing, employment markets and language where discrimination has combined with other factors to confine the majority of Black African immigrants in Melbourne to inadequate as well as unaffordable housing conditions and to low and menial forms of employment.

As noted above in this chapter, a significant minority has nonetheless become firmly established in their own professions and small businesses. Although insignificant in number, today, we see

African lawyers, doctors, dentists, academics, managers, administrators, musicians, artists, and entertainers, as well as other self-employed men and women who have refused to be forced into low-paid jobs with poor working conditions. ... These are the lucky few, with long-term commitment to Australia. Their experiences are the exception, not the norm. They have made a place for themselves here: have internalised Australian values, established careers, started families, bought houses, and are still able to send money to parents and struggling relatives in Africa. Yet, most African migrants are not so lucky (Udo-Ekpo, 1999: xiv).

Through a traditional analysis of ethnographic anthropology, the patterns and processes of an ongoing adaptation of Black African immigrants in Melbourne is presented in the next chapter. Further, stories of participant immigrants based on what they said in the interview, along with the author’s participant-observation, is presented.
Chapter Five

The Adaptation processes of Black African Immigrants: Traditional analysis of ethnographic anthropology

I came to Australia in 1938 and ever since, eagerly wanted to become an equal Australian, - but somehow and somewhat I always felt left out. Deep inside I felt I did not belong in this country ... [my accent was not] classed as equal to accents from British and Irish Isles ... Yes, I failed! ...

A letter from a Croatian immigrant sent to Laksiri Jayasuriya

(Jayasuriya, 2003: 194)

Introduction

In this chapter, stories of participant immigrants are presented based on their interview responses, along with the author’s participant observations. These stories will then be situated in the broader historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political context of Australia to explore how this context constructed the immigrants’ lives. Since each story has its own context that cannot be reproduced in its entirety, descriptions such as age, gender, and household role of the speakers are deliberately included when citing their stories. In some cases, words or phrases that describe their non-verbal reactions at that moment and/or that explain how the conversation started are also included. As a result, parts of the context are re-produced for readers.

The manifestation of adaptation becomes apparent in various ways in the lives of immigrants in the host society. While adapting, individuals maintain a strong identification with their original culture, which immigrants rely on in varying degrees in the host society. Inherent in the processes of adaptation are acceptance or defence
mechanisms of the immigrant or group of immigrants trying to come to terms with the mainstream culture of the host country. The Black population in Melbourne, migrating from the multi-national diverse societies of Sub-Saharan Africa, attest to a mixing of racial identities. Although Australian society is also racially and culturally diverse, because of its stratification, racial groups do not mix as frequently or as well as is the case in Sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, Black Africans in Australia, despite the views they hold on racial relations, enter a different arena where they, as immigrants of black people, must find ways to come to terms with the new racial stratification patterns that are in place. Black African immigrants in Australia come from countries with diverse histories, political traditions, and economic prospects within the world system. But once in Australia, being placed in the undifferentiated category of NESB immigrants, they become united. As observed in Chapter Four and also discussed below in this chapter, for those who were professionals and experts in their home country, becoming an immigrant also becomes a journey across class lines — downwardly mobile from their previous lives as professionals, managers, experts, teachers, to blue-collar workers and/or service industry workers, such as taxi drivers and parking attendants. Although this downward movement is resisted, it is nonetheless ultimately imposed on them.

Profile of Black African Immigrants in Melbourne

As noted in Chapter Three, a total of 97 immigrants were surveyed, of whom 28 were interviewed in depth, while another seventeen of the 97 Black African immigrants who participated in the DSEIHQ also participated in the informal group discussions.\(^1\)

This chapter is based on data from all three data collection methods but mainly from the in-depth interviews and my various participant observations (which includes the informal group discussions). The interviews and the informal group discussions in this

\(^1\) The seventeen immigrants who participated both in the survey questionnaire and the informal group discussion are identified by fictitious first names as: Ms. Melanie's husband, Mr. Hailom, her son, Mr. Kibrom, and their three friends, Mr. Tekle, Mr. Ismail, and Mr. Fitsum; Mr. Nega's wife, Mrs. Sossina, his son, Mr. Zoble; Mr. Goshu, a friend, Mr. Aklog and Mrs. Hamelmal, brother and sister-in-law of Mr. Teka; Mrs. Zeyneb, older sister and sponsor of Ms. Fatuma; Mrs. Topia, wife of Mr. Mbeki; Mrs. Abadi and Ms. Cynthia, wife and daughter of Mr. Kabila; Mrs. Zehara, Mr. Kedir's sister-in-law; Ms. Ruth, a friend of Ms. Martha; and, Mr. Abraham, a close friend of Mr. Fasil.
study are with respondents who vary in terms of age, gender, marital status and nationality in much the same way as the survey participants – but they are all Black Africans. The geographic spread of those interviewed is identified in Table 5.1 below. The seventeen immigrants who participated in the informal group discussions had actively engaged in the discussion by sharing their own experiences, thus their observation is used in this study. As explained in Chapter Three and Four fictitious first names are allocated in order to protect their identity.

With the exception of North Africa, all of the African sub-regions are represented in this study; most participants (78.6%), however, come from the eastern part of Africa. The remaining 21.4% originate in Central Africa, Southern Africa and West Africa. As reported in Chapter Four, despite the imbalance in the geographical spread of national origin of the interviewees, the interpretations and perceptions reported by participants are indeed reflective of those held by the Black African population in Melbourne. The geographic composition of the participants, therefore, has no significant effect at all since the study is to understand the impact of race and class in their lived experiences. Although most of the interviewee participants of this study migrated directly from Sub-Saharan Africa, one had lived for a time in the USA, two in Western Europe, three in New Zealand, and three in the Gulf States prior to migrating to Australia. Of the twenty-eight interviewees, seven are women, while twenty-one of the interviewees are men. From Appendix VIII, it can be seen that all except two interviewees are over 25 years of age. Over all, 64.3% of participants are aged 25-44; with a mean age of 38.6 years, and a median age of 37.5 years, the group stands midway between the median age of the entire Australian population (35.8 years) in 2001. In terms of marital status, thirteen of the participants are married, twelve are single (never married) and four are divorced; none among the study is widowed.

In order to gain greater insight into their experience, the life of Black African immigrants is divided into three stages that emerged as recurring themes: (1) Deciding to emigrate and decisions for destination (motives for emigration), (2) preparing for emigration (describes the immigration process and the immigrants’ experiences while waiting for the visas), and (3) arriving and living in Melbourne/Australia. Although
this study intends to focus on their experiences in Australia, the first two stages are directly related to the earlier experiences and are therefore briefly discussed in this chapter. There may be some overlap in these two stages for some immigrants due to different immigration mechanisms. Last, ‘arriving and living in Melbourne/Australia’ describes areas that demand short-term and long-term adaptations for immigrants.

Deciding to emigrate and Destination Decisions

Manuel Gamio, in the *Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant* (1930), found that the form of the "reasons for migrating" stories were based on three recurrent themes: the Mexican revolution (political factors), the good money to be made (economic factors), and the friends and community members (those who were former Mexican migrants) who coaxed others to migrate (social factors). The Black African immigrants who have settled in Australia have also been driven by a similar variety of factors – political, economic, and, social. This is evidenced by the responses obtained when participants were questioned regarding the main reasons motivating them to leave their country of origin, and how they arrived at their decision. It is safe to say that the majority of participants based their decision on political and security reasons whereas the minority of participants cited economic and social stimuli such as leading a better life, securing better opportunities or seeking a better educational system. The image of Australia as a lucky country where one could get rich was mentioned with some frequency. One example is Mr. Nkrumah who, while describing his former vocation as a senior high school teacher, alluded to political persecution at home which ultimately forced him and his wife to live clandestinely. In 1986, he escaped to a refugee camp in Africa alone, and his wife and children were able to join him in 1987, whereupon they were resettled to Australia in 1988.

A number of male participants linked their decision to migrate to the threat of induction into the military. Mr. Tutu, who was another secondary school teacher living in the countryside, explained that he reluctantly left because men were being taken away by the military regime for conscription. And Ms. Ruth, a single mother (who attended the informal discussion during my participatory observation while interviewing Ms. Martha), attributed her decision to emigrate to her inability to earn enough to support herself and her mother. When it became increasingly difficult to
make ends meet, she made arrangements for her mother to live with her aunt (her mother’s sister) and moved to a refugee camp in a neighbouring state in 1982 at the age of 18 years old.

Seven participants arrived on student visas (two of them became asylum seekers soon after they finished their university program); two arrived from New Zealand in a special category program after they were granted New Zealand citizenship; three of the interviewees arrived through the skill category to seek economic and life-enhancement opportunities, while the remaining five were family sponsored. Participants of this study both in the interview and the DSEIHQ shed additional light into how the decision-making process to migrate was determined. From the interviews conducted, it became obvious that most decisions to migrate to the West concurred with Manuel Gamio’s conclusions explained in Chapter Two.

The major factors shaping the decision for the participants to emigrate were influenced by socio-economic-political turmoil. As noted in Chapter Four, there were three reasons that ultimately caused black African immigrants to resolve to emigrate. They include: (1) concern about the pressure experienced by intra and inter ethnic strife, civil wars and political turmoil, revolution and independence/liberation struggles; (2) worsening social and economic climate in their countries of birth (for example, living conditions deteriorating as a result of globalisation in their home countries), along with the interrelated pulls from perceived or reported economic opportunities in the West; and (3) coaxing from friends and relatives (who had already migrated to Australia). Considering the difficult living conditions and the political repression in many parts of Africa, migrating to the West was a clear decision for most Black African immigrants. The response of Mr. Melaku illustrates the economic issue.

Ayalew: Were you working in Africa prior to entering Australia?
Melaku: Yes, I started working when I was young as an automotive mechanic for a large motorcar garage. But sometimes one would have to venture out to see if there was more, or better work elsewhere. The money one earns there is usually spent day to day. There was not an opportunity to save money, to buy a house or a car; it is just to survive, just from hand to mouth.
As noted in Chapter Four, the estimated mean household annual gross income of participants of this study is about $25,697. The estimated median annual income for the group is approximately $21,250. As seen in Appendix VIII, five participants earn less than $10,000.00 in a year while two individuals earn $75,000.00 or more. Although the wages to be earned by immigrants in Melbourne/Australia may be paltry by Australian standards, they are significantly higher than those received in Africa and are high enough to support family members still in Africa. The funds one immigrant could send home, according to Mr. Melaku, were enough to support two families. The migration process for some participants began with relatives and friends who had previously migrated sending them a sponsorship form which eventually encouraged participants to begin the process of securing a visa to migrate to Australia. As Mr. Chissano explained:

I came to Australia because I have a lot of friends, who had arrived to the country before me, and they were already. And they would tell me that it is pretty in Australia, and there's a lot of work and all. But I could not come easily because I have to stay long waiting for the result as the immigration process takes long.

Stories of the wealth one could accrue and the freedom one could exercise in the West were major factors in the decision-making process for some. As Mr. Teka's brother, Mr. Aklog, stated during my participant observation session: “It is the money. Once you get used to having the money, it keeps you keeping working on. We have families and relatives who are dependent upon us and we have to keep working on to support them.” The remittances are a vital source for a better life for their loved ones at home in Africa; and such a glimpse at the Australian standard of living encouraged Black African immigrants to settle in Australia with their families and relatives. The Australian dollar wages of Black African immigrants' remittances not only provide deeply needed support to their immediate families in Africa but also provide support in building homes, buying land or capitalizing small businesses, as reported above by Mr. Melaku and Mr. Aklog.
Preparing for Emigration and Waiting for Visas

Preparing for emigration and waiting for visas was the second stage of the immigrant's journey. The preparation period is defined as the time when the immigrant seriously considered emigration and actively prepared for that process to the time when they would leave Africa. This period includes the immigration process and the immigrants' experiences while waiting for the visas. The Australian government with the cooperation of the United Nations for Higher Commissions (UNHCR) expedited the process and selection of immigrants from the refugee camps for the next stage of resettlement to Australia. But before going to interview centres organised by officers of the DIMA, applicants had to be registered as refugees by UNHCR. Regardless of their country of origin, almost all of the humanitarian category entrants arrived to the refugee camps by illegally crossing national borders, usually making the journey in groups of five to eight individuals.

Skilled visa and student visa applicants have never experienced camp life at refugee centres and their process of migrating to the West was through the proper channels, lodging an application in one of the offices of Australian Embassies, such as, Cairo, Nairobi, Abuja and, since mid 1990, Pretoria. The process for these immigrants was dispatched by any of these four Australian Embassies — the only embassies serving Australia's interest in the second largest continent of the world. Unlike the skilled visa and student visa applicants, applicants for a family visa not only had to travel to one of the Australian Embassies mentioned above to lodge their application, but also had to spend months if not years in these cities in order to process and follow up their applications.

The waiting period tended to be the most difficult aspect for most of the study participants. It was a period of uncertainty often made at great personal expense. Some waited in unfamiliar and dangerous camps. Many existed without housing or jobs while attempting to successfully pass through all stages of the process. In order to survive, most of the participants had to receive money from family and friends in Australia, New Zealand, or other countries in the West. The medical exams, interviews, and application processing required during the waiting period was at their own cost. However, medical and all other examinations coming under the Refugee or
Humanitarian Programme were administered freely by the Australian government to determine their fitness and health status.

Once the application process was complete, waiting for a visa was still not simple. Immigrants applying through the UNHCR in the refugee camps had the longest waiting period. Mr. Israel and his family waited for ten years in a refugee camp in the Sudan, while Ms Martha had the shortest waiting period of about two years. Mr. Kemal, Mr. Nega, Mr. Aregawi and their families, for instance, waited for over seven years to receive the resettlement visa from the Australian Department of Immigration. Those coming on skill visas waited for less than two years, and in the case of a student visa, the wait was less than one year. But while waiting, all were uncertain when they would be notified by DIMA, and they did not know whether they would be able to emigrate at all. As Mr. Israel stated:

> It is more than twenty years ago now, I think ... but [we] were not sure if we would be allowed to come because [they] have to check a lot of things, interviews by both UNHCR and DIMA. Before [moving into the country], [they] have routine checks such as a physical examination and other things. [We] heard people being declined to America [USA], Canada and Denmark and did not get to come either here.

Immigration policies of the Australian government contributed significantly to immigrants’ uncertainty. During a participant observation session, Mrs. Zeyineb recalled that she needed to hold three jobs in order to maintain the required income level and preserve her qualification as sponsor to Ms. Fatuma, her younger sister. The Australian government’s immigration policy expects immigrants to be self-sufficient, or supported by a sponsor, and not financially dependent on government assistance. Thus, most sponsors are relatives who must prove adequate income to DIMA. The application of Ms Fatuma, for instance, could have been denied if her sister had failed to prove her ability to keep Ms Fatuma from being the responsibility of government. High levels of uncertainty were involved for families under the family-based preference system. Despite the danger, uncertainty and long waiting, immigrants were at some point granted admission to Australia. It would be now that their adaptive processes would be necessary.
Arriving and Living in Melbourne/Australia

Prompt resolution of the immediate needs of new migrants would contribute to their adaptation to their new living circumstances; however this rarely happened. Specifically, the areas of housing, banking, schooling, transportation, grocery shopping and language or communication were the most important to newly-arrived Black African immigrants. Fewer than half (46.4%) of the interviewees had relatives or friends living in Melbourne. Of those who did know people already in Melbourne, these relatives and friends became a tremendous source of support. For instance, the relatives and friends would host the immigrants until their own housing was acquired. They would also help the immigrants open bank accounts, take them grocery shopping, help them enrol children in school, and help them learn about the public transportation. However, more than half (53.6%) of the interviewees had no acquaintances anywhere in Australia. Those interviewees with no acquaintances in Australia needed to rely entirely on voluntary sponsors organised by DIMA, such as church organizations and/or refugee/migrant support agencies. Once they were settled and became familiar with the roads, public transportation, routes to stores, banking routines and other amenities, immigrants usually had limited trouble with basic daily transactions. As Mr. Nega affirmed, “When [we] opened the accounts, friends all went with us. No other things afterwards. Because it is a fixed format, there are not many demands ... What is asked is all there ... What she or he asks is all very simple. Even if we experienced any problems, our relatives and/or friends were available for help”.

With the help of family and friends, or even social and community organizations, once these more immediate needs were met, and indeed, even while they were in the process of being met, the adaptive process continued.
Challenges Faced by Black African Immigrants in Melbourne

Many authors have identified four types of general experiences (one of which is a coping mechanism) that characterise immigration and that can potentially impede successful settlement and adaptation into a new environment, which apply here to the patterns and process of adaptation of these Black African Immigrants in Melbourne. Race and class are integral to the views and experiences of participants, but because of their importance as central themes of this study, race and class will be discussed in a separate chapter (Chapter Six). The four major types of general experiences and coping mechanism that were identified by the authors in the reviewed literature were also identified by the participants of this study as ones that demanded of them more time to learn, to become familiar, and to feel in control over. These same four major factors identified both in the literature and by Black African immigrants in Melbourne are, (1) adapting to a new physical environment (2) learning a new language/accrnet, (3) education, employment and occupational survival, and (4) social networks/social support systems (coping mechanisms). Each of these processes is discussed separately below and treated discretely; however, in actuality, most of them intersected and interacted to have a joint effect on participant immigrants’ lives.

Adapting to a New Environment: Loss and Novelty

Adaptation to physical or environmental changes involves the immigrant’s adjustment to the components of Australian physical or environmental conditions. It also includes the type of loss experienced. Loss refers to things taken away from and missed by immigrants due to emigration. Five types of loss were identified in immigrants’ stories. Food was the most commonly mentioned item. The second common loss was the loss of social networks and social support. Immigrants lost people with whom they could informally talk everyday and could turn to for help with their complaints and frustrations. Mothers who came alone with children talked about the loss of immediate support from their husbands, the same way, husbands who came alone talked about the loss of immediate support from their wives. As a result, they had to take on greater

responsibilities in Australia and made many decisions on their own. Although immigrants were rebuilding their social networks in Australia, it took them time. Lifestyle was the third kind of loss with which immigrants had to deal. The fourth kind of loss was the loss of a paid job. As Ms Genet described her early days in Australia, “In the past, when I was still working, like my boss or others, I could chat with them. Here no one was home.” And loss of independence was the fifth kind of loss. In the language section, I have described how immigrants with low English proficiency usually needed to rely on relatives and friends to manage many situations.

Likewise, novelty refers to immigrants’ low level of understanding of the physical environment, systems, cultures, and sources of the area to which they moved. It includes areas about which immigrants need to learn and their psychological reactions during the learning process. By and large immigrants are required to learn almost everything from the beginning in the new country (Aroian, 1993). Things can be as basic as grocery shopping or as complicated as the legal system. Knowledge deficits jeopardise the ability of immigrants to live satisfactorily. They also place immigrants at a disadvantage in employment and constrain their use of many of the services. Knowledge deficits can even make the simplest tasks become difficult (Aroian, 1993; Weitzman & Berry, 1992). Relatives, friends, and ethnic voluntary associations are sources of information and tangible support for newcomers (Aroian, 1992; Chrisman, 1981; Graves & Graves, 1974; Nah, 1993).

Initially, participants in this study encountered a low level of understanding of the new physical environment, systems, cultures, and resources. For 23 of the 28 interviewed participants, living in the West was a completely new experience. The phrase, “this is a new environment” was often used to refer to their lack of understanding of the physical environment, systems and cultures of the area to which they had moved. These hurdles in immigrant’s lives were at their greatest during the early resettlement period. Almost everything in their new physical world required learning, whether simple activities such as finding groceries, transportation, banking facilities and housing to more complex issues such as understanding the education system, health care system, political and legal system, and the dominant culture. As previously discussed, the immigrants could and did learn simple things in a few weeks and only
required occasional help. The complex systems, on the other hand, required months or years to learn and understand. Feeling nervous, worried and even fearful was inevitable in this stress-filled environment, and considering the concomitant problems with communication, difficulties in finding employment and/or housing difficulties, the stress escalated easily. But as the immigrants learned and understood more about the environment, the nervousness, worries and fears gradually diminished.

However, the immigrants sometimes paid a high price for adaptation. The most common accounts involved contact with telemarketing representatives or telephone companies, and deceptive mail marketing related to magazine subscriptions, music clubs and other consumer sales. Everyday they were deluged with advertisers and sales persons through the telephone and in their mailboxes. Not until a bill was received or until they talked to other more experienced immigrants would they completely understand the encounter. Mr. Israel outlined his experience with a telephone company. He stated:

Here you cannot give out our address carelessly, right? Your birthday cannot be given out carelessly, nor your ID number. To us, these things are very open and minor issues in Africa. You write your ID number in many places, who cares about your ID number. What is about your birthday for me? We only hide our birthdays for dating purpose so as not to be regarded old. This particularly happens with our women. Otherwise, you write birthday all the time. Here every time you want to do transaction, they ask you for pin number or password. I have forgotten them several times. How could I know I am dealing with a ghost? [the pin number and the password]. How could I know this was a complicated situation for learning? Don’t you think this is a very big trouble for us?

“Be careful at all times” was a repeated phrase in the interview. “Using money to buy experience” was the mentality used to cope with the anticipation of mistakes and feelings of frustration.

In comparison to wives who migrated with their husbands, the process of adaptation was more distressing for women that came alone to Australia. They were “lonelier”
and had to “take a huge responsibility” by themselves to support and look after their children. Mr. Yussuf confided me his mother’s circumstances who had been experiencing frustration and stress ever since she came alone with her children to Australia without their father. He further confided to me his fear that his mother’s loneliness and lack of independence might force her to go back home leaving him and his brothers alone by themselves. Novelty could become a source of family conflict too. As Mr. Onimode stated: “Once we leave Africa, the lived experiences, social experiences and working experiences basically are completely gone after all.” Likewise, parents became more cautious and selective about their children’s environment and the activities in which they could participate. This would sometimes create discord within the family.

What occurred in the Kabila family who migrated from rural Africa provides a suitable illustration. In the second year of their resettlement, the oldest daughter, Ms Cynthia, wanted to attend an evening year 12 graduation party organised by her schoolmates at the completion of her year 12 schooling. However, neither of her parents had ever heard of such a celebration and both were concerned about the late hour of the party. For her safety, the parents did not allow her to attend. Although this had occurred about six years prior to the time of the participant observation session, the disappointment of the daughter and tension between Mrs. Abadi, the mother, and the daughter was still evident. Mrs. Abadi stated that if it had happened in the fourth or fifth or sixth years of residence in Australia, they might have let her go because by then they would have “heard about it” and “understood it”. Further, had the parents been more knowledgeable about the environment, rather than being completely new, they would have understood, and the conflict would have been avoided.

The components of Australian physical or environmental conditions also include climate, population, housing situations and geographic proximity to necessary locations, or the lack thereof. The most commonly mentioned problem in this respect was geographic proximity, which also involves finding a means of transportation. Seven immigrants lived in rural Africa. Most towns and/or villages there were not large in size, and a person could rely on walking, or possibly in larger towns cycling to
get around; as Mr. Kabila said: “In Africa where I lived with my family, it is very convenient to buy stuff. You just need to walk, less than ten, or otherwise walk less than thirty minutes, you have everything you need to buy.” That was certainly not the case in Melbourne as Mr. Mbeki and his wife Mrs Topia declare:

Mr. Mbeki: In Africa, you cannot afford to buy a motorbike let alone a car; you will not get a loan for a car. You won’t. It is good enough to have a bike if at all.
Mrs. Topia: You cannot do that here! {laugh} You cannot just ride a bike. Everything is too far away and most employers require us to have our own cars!

Most of the interviewees reported that when seeking employment one of the conditions was to have your own transportation. Thus driving became a part of the Australian lifestyle that most immigrants had to incorporate into their daily routine. Learning to drive was a time consuming and expensive activity, and driving on highways was confusing and scary. Even those who used to drive in their home country had to reverse all their experience and instincts to adjust to driving on the left. Getting lost and spending extra time was a commonplace occurrence. Those who had never driven before usually showed higher degrees of distress from driving compared to those who had driven prior to entering Australia. Ms. Selaam said that she fortunately had friends around to help her in the beginning. Religion also became an important source of support to alleviate their stress; Mr. Kemal jokingly told me that he had to pray to Allah every time before he drove on the road. Another problem was to get used to trams and trains, particularly understanding the train/tram lines was distressing.

Immigrants not only needed to adapt to driving; they also needed to take weather into consideration. Most jokingly referred to Melbourne’s weather as crazy, a city with four seasons in one day. It was hard for them at first to adapt to the weather. Yet almost all of the immigrants reported that they adjusted well to the climate as well as to urbanisation. On the whole, this theme of physical changes was given little consideration by the immigrants, and it could be that given the length of time of their stay in Australia, which is from about four to thirty-nine years, they had ample time to make the change either somewhat, or completely, to their satisfaction.
Learning a New Language/Accent

The majority of Black African immigrants considered language accommodation and acquisition as the second priority for successful resettlement. Similarly, the research of Aroian (1990), Baker et al (1994), Nann (1982) and Sung (1985) concluded that adult immigrants need English proficiency for finding and securing satisfactory jobs, non-work related tasks for daily living and gaining acceptance by the larger society. Immigrants also need English proficiency for school performance, acceptance by school peers, and emotional adjustments (Aronowitz, 1984). Some immigrants may be able to read and understand written information but unable to speak adequate English, and vice versa. The impact of limited English proficiency on immigrants is significant.

There are three common ways to cope with the language problem. The first way is to ask help from kin or non-kin whose English is more proficient. The second way is to ask help from Australians to whom immigrants have access. The third way is to attend English classes that are available and suitable for immigrants’ busy schedules. Nevertheless, learning a new language is not merely memorising a new vocabulary. Language proficiency includes non-verbal communications such as gesture, and is inseparable from cultural values and norms (Lin et al, 1982; Nann, 1982). Learning a new language also means learning to be a part of a new social system. With constant effort, immigrants’ English proficiency is expected to increase over time, but accent and pronunciation may remain problematic if they arrive in Australia at an older age, even if they are degree holders. However, children often learn a new language faster than their parents or older relatives. They easily become interpreters and cultural brokers for their family (Gong, 1995).

English language studies are offered in most African schools. It is the official language in ex-British colonies and is used for instruction in all levels of schooling. It is also the medium of instruction for secondary schools and university levels in most non-Anglophone states. One might expect that the extent of exposure to the language throughout their curriculum and exposure through the media, along with the duration of their stay in Australia to be determining factors for English proficiency. While the extent to which interviewed participants said they face problems with the English
language, particularly the Australian accent is discussed in this section; Appendix VIII includes languages spoken at their home.

Lack of English proficiency and most particularly that of Australian accent\(^3\) created two obstacles both for new and old migrants. The first hurdle is that the previously valuable post secondary school and university diploma seemed to have lost its value through migration, thus relegating many of these immigrants with higher degrees to menial jobs for which they were clearly overqualified. Secondly, for economic advancement to occur for these educated Africans, further training was usually required. But additional training in Australia often included the need for linguistic proficiency on various levels. Struggling to gain such proficiency in the English language was an overwhelmingly common issue for many immigrants.

Government sponsored programs like English as a Second Language (henceforth - ESL) are offered in various locations throughout the country, assisting immigrants in making the transition from a non-English speaking country. Indeed, almost all immigrants participated in these education programs. However, they reported that the training they received was inadequate due to lack of funding and because of how the curriculum and classrooms were structured. One class contained students from various countries with different learning needs. Some participants in this study were more fluent in their speech compared to composition or grammar; while others felt they did relatively well in writing and comprehension but their ability to converse needed strengthening. Further, one class with one instructor was insufficient to fulfil all their learning needs.

\(^3\) Craig McGregor identifies three accents, (1) General Australian accent, mostly spoken by middle class Australians and which is fairly neutral accent to Australian ears. This accent is spoken by about 55% of Australians making it by far the most commonly heard accent in the country. It is the accent of the ordinary white-collar man in the street, the working woman in a middle-rank suburb ... (2) Broad Australian accent, the vowel sounds tend to be very broad and are spoken with a slow, marked glide; it is often a nasal accent; and people who use it often speak slowly and run their words and syllables together, or even sounds out entirely. (3) Cultivated accent, come from homes where the father is a professional or in a higher administrative occupation. Private schools are the stronghold of the cultivated accent (McGregor, 2001: 161).
Participants shared many other negative experiences related to language use in Australia. The Black African immigrants were feeling ill equipped for real life situations where having command of the English language is vital. Mr Mesfin confided to me that frustration, embarrassment, discrimination, nervousness, and handicap are common experiences resulting from his linguistic challenges. Likewise, Mr. Teka stated:

It is weird. Wasn’t that supposed to be very simple conversation? ... At least [you] should be able to understand two or three sentences ... Do-do-do-do {a series of rapid sound}, [you] do not understand it at all. It is very frustrating. It is hard (...)  

Or, as Mr. Chissano said:

English — I thought I was okay when I was in Africa. But it does not work here. Cannot speak. Listening — I perhaps can understand it sometimes. They do avoid me, because they cannot understand my accent nor they are willing to get used to my accent. They do avoid me, you know. They show us ‘why should we bother feeling and attitude’. You know, to me this is a form of exclusion, a form of racism. Also many words have different meanings here from what we learned in Africa. Certain words were more difficult than others to pronounce.

Mr. Teka told me with great frustration that although he has his BA and a postgraduate degree from Africa and Western European universities and his Masters degree from an Australian university and has lived in Australia for over twelve years, there were two vowels that he still had trouble pronouncing. His son who arrived in Australia at the age of ten teased him about the vowels. Mr. Kebede, who is now in his late thirties, has a white partner with whom he lives and she would occasionally teach him the proper [Australian] accent and pronunciations. However, he mentions that as a person becomes older, it becomes harder to make changes. He further explained:

---

4 This notation (...) indicates that the part of the interview was unclear on the tape (see Appendix VII for the full notation system of the interview data).
Although I live with my white Australian partner, I think because after all, at this age, to study or understand native's accent, memory is not that good ... [You] correct it and listen to it; a minute later, you still forget it. So I think coming here at this age, really, to adjust to [language], it is mentally exhausting. It takes a lot of efforts because everything is really not as good as it used to be.

Struggles with English comprehension and performance presented other hindrances to the immigrants' adaptation. A lack of independence was created, and a tendency toward social isolation occurred, most usually along the lines of race. Without good English, it was difficult for participants in this study to efficiently handle many situations or feel confident in their actions. They could no longer take care of situations as they were accustomed to doing in Africa, which generated a reliance on friends, relatives or sponsors for everyday transactions. It was a frustrating and inconvenient situation to which they had to adapt. It was only the few immigrants with good English proficiency who were able to live truly independently.

Difficulty with social interaction with members of the host society was another barrier, and this one tended to result in isolation, as was reported by Mr. Chissano above and discussed briefly in the next chapter. Immigrants spoke about several situations where they were reluctant to proceed because of their "accent" problem, or "poor" English skill. Answering phone calls was one example. Mr. Zoble, the 20 year old son of Mr Nega, arrived in Australia with his family when he was thirteen years old. During one of my participant observations, it was noted that Mr. Zoble was the person who would answer the phone at home because his English accent was better than the rest of the family members. In the household, they pushed one another to answer the phone or simply handed the phone to the son. While the stories were told as if they were jokes, it was not funny at the time. Mrs. Sossina, the wife of Mr. Nega, is quoted saying: "It is frustrating. It is very shameful that [you] needed to hand it over to others each time {laugh}." Avoiding contact with English-speaking neighbours was another example, as Ms Fatuma indicated:
Like my next door neighbour is a White Australian of the lower class [like me!], I sometimes saw him {laugh} pick up his mail and I was going to go too. I {laugh} would wait until he left, then I pick up our mail. There seems to have a kind of (...). Because you need to talk to him, you have to use English. And I do speak English well, but I found out they don’t understand my accent. You know, you just feel somehow you have difficulties to open your mouth.

Commenting on his son’s early days at school, Mr Nega said: “At that time, my son does not want to ask too much. He was afraid of creating hassles for others ... When he ask a lot of questions ... people would finally feel annoyed.” The youngest of all the interview participants, Mr. Abdi, recalled the ‘rules’ imposed on him during his secondary school years as “being alone, not irritating people, and not getting laughed at.”

I have mentioned above loss of independence as the fifth type of loss, which was another negative cause for immigrants with low English proficiency. As a result, immigrants usually needed to rely on relatives and friends to manage many situations. Mrs. Chiluba told me strongly about her loss of independence in the first years of her stay in Australia. She said:

When you first come, you do not know anything. People for sure would be very enthusiastic. But after you have been here for a while, really, everyone’s pressure is pretty high in Australia. They have their own lives. Right? Their schedules are quite tight, eh? Our attitude does not want to ask. No. It feels like {laugh}, oh, really it {brief pause} is a very, very big {brief pause} bother.

This “big bother” was the frustration at Mrs. Chiluba’s sense of dependence. For the Black African immigrants, language went beyond its basic function as a communication tool. It was also a basis for discrimination. Immigrants described some of their experiences as “disrespectful”, “nasty”, or “rude”. Mr. Yussuf talked about his humiliating experience in class. He said, “Your English is not good, in class some classmates would make up, make fun of you. When you have not good things, you
would be joked about. You do not understand it anyway.” He may not have understood each word that his classmates spoke, but the non-verbal reactions (“the entire class was laughing”) humiliated him.

From the interview, it is clear that twenty of the twenty-eight interviewees said that they face problems with not speaking fast enough, with feelings of self-consciousness because of their foreign accents, as well as difficulties with grammar and understanding of new words used only in Australia. The length of stay in Australia, even with an undergraduate and/or graduate level of education, did not always result in coping with the problem with English language and/or the Australian accent, as is the case with Mrs. Fatuma. She had lived in Australia for 18 years, has a BA degree in Australia and is an accountant by profession. She reported:

I still have some problems adapting to the way Australians speak. Their accent is so difficult to catch and listen. I would like them to talk a little slower so I could understand them better.

Ms. Melanie, who had her Masters degree and held an expert position overseas, completed her PhD in Australia and lived in Australia for 13 years, but she reported that it is often difficult to understand what Australian speakers are saying, especially through indirect communication, such as with microphones. She also explained that besides difficulties with speed, she also faces problems with new English vocabulary or slang. She explained that:

In the beginning, and even now it is hard sometimes to understand, you know (...); they [the Australian born] do not speak properly. You know, actually they are singing, they “eat” the words, so actually, sometimes I do not hear their words, it is hard. They speak too fast, they don’t even open their lips and at the end of the sentences they swallow the word and consequently the message is lost; the message is swallowed you know. Also, there are many new words I had never heard before, or that I could not find in the English dictionary so I have to study as a beginner.
Mr. Melaku further reported, he would like to lose his accent “so as not to be recognised as an immigrant all the time”, while all others, who have been here for five years and above, said their accent impedes their upward mobility. For example, Mr. Chiluba reported:

Although, it is humiliating and shameful to think of getting rid of one’s accent for the sake of fortune and upward mobility, I don’t mind of my dignity and respect, I would really love to get rid of my accent, because it is a problem to my survival here. No one knows here who I am and who I was, so I don’t care about being humiliated or being ashamed of losing my dignity and respect. But it is difficult to change it! It is too late (...). I have to be born again here or grow up here from childhood. As long as I talk directly to someone, I have no problems, but if I have to speak on the telephone, there is a problem. Sometimes I have to talk to a client, and people hear the accent and they are not interested. You see them going back. They are not even listening to what it is all about; they just shut me off. And since most colleagues at the work place do not understand my accent, they prefer not to associate with me, they do not want to bother, they don’t want to get used to my accent and prefer to ignore me. It’s hurting. It is really a problem. Isn’t it really a racist attitude?

Mr. Mitiku too said that he would also like to lose his accent so that it would not always be so readily apparent that he is an immigrant; a sentiment voiced by many of the other participants. In terms of grammar and the language, Mr. Israel said:

I really would like to improve my grammar, and I am reading as much as possible, even though I am busy to save money to help my family here and at home. I understand what people are saying, and they always compliment me on my effort and on the way I speak English, but for myself, I would really like to do more about upgrading my skills.

Mr. Adamu, who had completed his BA in Australia and worked for many years in Australia, says that he does not feel the need to study anymore, although he wishes that his accent were a little better:
Hey, in most occasions they understand what I am trying to say so that is good enough. Sometimes when I have to say something I get stuck with the accent but they know what I am trying to say. I speak better than a lot of foreigners who have been here several years before me; but what helped me most is that in most cases those Aussies I used to speak to were always willing to understand or get used to my accent rather than avoiding when they couldn’t understand me.

Mr. Nega, who completed postgraduate education and was an office bearer in the government back in Africa, says that he wishes his accent could improve, and that he does not have the chance to speak to many people, since he now works as a cleaner and process worker with few social contacts. In contrast, Mr. Tutu, an office worker with a college degree, who came directly from Africa, and Mr. Melaku, Mr. Aregawi and Ms. Genet, who came from New Zealand and completed their high school and who earned special training in New Zealand, say they do not face problems with the language, although at first they did. Ms. Genet observed the following:

I was shy to speak English in New Zealand at first, but since I was going to school everyday, it became easier, and now with my four years of staying in Melbourne I understand everything, although I still have a problem of being understood by the Australians due to my accent. You know Aussies and Kiwis have also differences and that is also another problem for people like me.

Participants associated English language with attaining employment. For many of the participants, fluency in the language is critical, otherwise employment opportunities are limited to self-employment, menial work, and labouring in under-qualified positions. For instance, Mr. Chissano was well educated in English, he has his MA degree, was taught in English and was even trained in Western Europe. Yet, he found only menial jobs that required long hours, low wages, and gruelling physical labour illustrating the discrimination that can result from lack of English proficiency and most particularly from his lack of an Australian accent.
Education, Employment and Occupational Survival

Economic survival becomes the foremost concern on immigrants' arrival in the new country (Aroian, 1990; Baker et al, 1994), yet immigrants often have difficulties finding a secure and satisfactory job. Those who have professional training and higher education levels may begin at a lower pay level in their occupational fields. For those who have less professional training and education, it is even harder for them to find a good paying job. It is not uncommon for them to take low wage jobs (Aroian, 1993; Lipson, 1992; Lipson & Omidian, 1997; Saran, 1987) that involve long hours of work, family cooperation by having all adult and adolescent members work, and even taking under-the-table work are ways to maximise family income for economic survival (Lipson & Omidian, 1997). In this section participants' overseas education and work experiences both in Africa and in Australia is discussed. From Appendix VIII, it can be seen changes in employment and occupation after migrating to Australia.

As most black African immigrants who participated in this study have completed their schooling overseas, educational credentials are among the variables, which weigh heavily on their quest for upward mobility in many of the professions. At the time of the interview, 64.3% of the interviewed participants had earned advanced educational degrees, 28.6% had completed secondary school or above, and only 7.1% had not completed secondary education. When considering their previous work in Africa, it can be seen that 60.7% held white-collar jobs, 21.4% were students, 14.3% held blue-collar jobs, and one (3.6%) had never worked. The white-collar work included seven professionals, two teachers, four who worked in some capacity in an office, and four in other white-collar jobs. Apart from the six students and one unemployed participant, the others were skilled technicians or labourers. None of these participants had worked in any other blue-collar occupations in Africa. They were employed in a variety of white-collar occupations occupying positions both in government and private enterprises as experts, professionals and managers or high school teachers and office administrators, while one ran and managed his own small business.

There was a correlation between the number with undergraduate degrees or above, (64.3%) and the number holding white-collar jobs (60.7%); in other words, the participants' education level tended to correspond to their employment situation in
Africa. However, the situation varies considerably when work in Australia is considered. The percentages changed significantly, with those holding white-collar jobs being cut by more than half to 28.6%. The number of those with blue-collar work (39.3% of the total) almost tripled, increasing by 275%, and the unemployed (now 14.3%) increased by 400%. After arrival in Australia, their employment situation was not commensurate with their educational background. More than half of the immigrants (60.7%) say they are currently in occupations with lower status than jobs they held before coming to Australia. While the group has a relatively high employment rate, it should be noted that the majority of them are only in part-time and casual employment even though they are not going to school or taking courses.

These immigrants who now held lower level jobs include four with postgraduate degrees, four with graduate diploma or certificates, three with BA degrees, one with an advanced diploma, five with special training and one who used to operate his own business with an elementary school background. The status of only two of the twenty-eight immigrants who had special training and who both worked in offices in Africa remained the same, although they were also enrolled as full-time students while working in part-time/casual jobs. Four participants (one part-time family support worker, one casual nurse assistant and two students) were either students or unemployed overseas and began paid work for the first time in Melbourne. In other words, the occupation of these four participants changed from that of students and unemployed to paid work, while the two either remained the same (unemployed) or changed from that of students and/or unemployed to office workers and/or from unemployed to cleaners and taxi drivers or production workers. Only four participants showed an upward mobility in their work. One high school teacher became a university lecturer, one skilled technician moved into a supervisory position at one of the nation's radio stations, and two students became social workers. One participant began practising his career as a medical practitioner after he moved in to Australia.

A review of the survey data attests to the fact that those who had professional or skilled jobs in Africa had a hard time finding work in their respective occupations in Australia. When the interview data are reviewed, it can be seen that out of the 18
participants with advanced educational achievement in Africa/Australia, 15 voiced problems with some aspect of the English language, particularly their accent. Again, as previously discussed, education per se does not guarantee mastery of the Australian accent, which also created difficulty in finding appropriate professional employment. Thus, participants experienced concerns about the loss of status and disappointment of not being able to find work that related to their previous vocations.

It was noted in Chapters Two and Four that in Australia, the education and educational credentials of NESB immigrants are not always accorded the same value as those of ESB immigrants. Mr. Chissano holds a Master's degree from Africa in his field of study. In Australia he started as a cleaner, and is now a cleaning supervisor. He reports that:

In terms of employment qualifications, your credentials are differently judged than they are in Africa or overseas. There is a big difference, because here they tell you that they do not know what it is you did exactly to give you the equivalent diploma. But once they understand your real educational background, you get a little more respect though. Sometimes they think you are stupid, but the moment they see you are better educated then they say: “Do you speak other languages too?” Or they say: “Say something, so I can hear what it sounds like. The point, however, is how to get to the system, how to get the job first.

The notion that schools in the more developed countries are better than those of the less developed countries logically would seem to have some validity, given the unequal access to resources for many of the countries. But as Hurn has stated:

Given that the schools in the LDCs [less developed countries] generally operate with less and poorer equipment, fewer well-trained teachers, and other consequences of having very limited resources, it is impressive that their level of productivity seems to equal that of schools in MDCs [more developed countries] (Hurn, 1985: 223).
Hurn also warns of culturally inappropriate tests to measure student achievement in less developed countries, and furthermore makes the point that "If one uses as one's criterion the proportionate gain from year to year, then schools in the LDCs seem to be as effective as those elsewhere" (Hurn, 1985: 223). Many of the participants contrasted the education system in their countries of origin with that of the west [Australia]. Overall, respondents judged their own education systems to be more rigorous, advanced, demanding of discipline, and focused on learning facts, particularly in the areas of geography and history or algebra and calculus. While some interviewees gave a good rating to their country's education system, many abhorred the lack of availability of schooling in the countryside, especially beyond the elementary school level. Those students who wished to continue, they reported, had to seek some sort of assistance so they could go to the nearest cities or secondary schools. It was only a few of them who had the opportunity to continue.

Jobs mean social networks and social connections; moreover, jobs mean a sense of achievement. Thus, the loss of a paid job to those immigrants who were in the work force before their arrival in Australia means the loss of these social networks and social connections and the loss of sense of achievement. Nineteen out of twenty-eight participants quit their jobs (because of their migration) and became jobless in Australia. Ms. Genet described her early days in Australia: "In the past, when I was still working, like my boss or others, I could chat with them. Here no one was home." Moreover, job means a sense of achievement, she continued, saying: "I have completely lost that sense and connections I had through my work".

Despite their education in Africa, most participants attended vocational/special training class or other government-funded short-term courses along with their English classes soon after they arrived. Eventually most of them found non-skilled casual/part-time jobs through job networks and local newspapers and friends. For example, Mr. Teka did not have language difficulties and had extensive experience working in his profession. After attending the vocational training class, he sent out more than 34 resumes to various advertised jobs. Unfortunately, he got no response. He jokingly told me: "Maybe my resume looks too fabulous Eh? So no one dared to
ask me for an interview” Given the reports on discrimination against non-Australian qualifications (HREOC, 1995; Hawthorne, 1994), one suspects Mr. Teka’s unsuccessful job search could be due to such discrimination. When asked if he had heard that people without an Australian diploma had more difficulties finding jobs, Mr. Aklog, the brother of Mr. Teka, responded in the affirmative, whereas Mr. Teka’s response was “I do not know! Maybe it depends on the individual or the nature of the work. If you only want to look for a cleaning or process job, I think it is very easy.” But that was not the kind of job for which he was seeking. He eventually decided to get a taxi driver’s licence, expecting that he would temporarily drive it until he obtained a job suitable and commensurate with his experience and education. He is today a self-employed contractor in the taxi industry.

It should be understood that a change to what is considered a lower occupational status did not necessarily mean lower income for the immigrants. Mr. Melaku and Mr. Aklog reported that what they earned in a week in Australia was comparable to what they earned in a month or more in Africa. Many of the participants reported that they appreciated that they were able to buy a wide range of grocery products, consumer goods, clothing, automobiles and electronic and mechanical appliances that make their home more pleasant, productive and efficient. In their home countries, they reported that such purchases were out of range for the average consumer. Generally, most participants in the study who are employed either as part-time, casual or fulltime employees reported that they could have never earned such high wages in Africa, even if they had higher status positions. The money earned here helped them to support their loved ones in Africa. Mrs. Nazizi, who was an office worker in Africa and earned her living in Australia by doing two different jobs - (process worker and occasionally a cleaner while doing part-time study) said:

Even though my position in Australia now is not so important, you know, I get more money, money, money here than in Africa; even if I had a better position there I would not make what I make now. Uuh, I tell you. That is why it is all right! I did cleaning, process working and other cheap works. I do not care. My mother recently died and I took care of her much better with the money I made here. I am able to look
after my remaining relatives in Africa although I am lacking personal achievement and personal fulfilment.

Mr. Kabila, who works occasionally as a casual cleaner and process worker, wishes that his work situation could change, and speaks nostalgically about the business he used to have in Africa:

Well, to be honest, my needs here, I just want to be independent, more independent to be my own person, to do whatever I want to do for myself. I would like to have something for myself; back in Africa I was independent. I had a little business of my own. I have worked here for five years, but still there was a void in my life, I feel I was missing something. What I was doing for my employer, I should have been doing for myself. I always wish to have my own restaurant over time that is always my wish.

The first job in Australia for Mr. Mitiku, an office administrator in Africa, was as a seasonal fruit picker. Needless to say, he had great difficulty making the early transition. He said that he took on that position because of strict necessity. He commented:

I tell you honestly. I would not do that kind of job back home. Back home I had a good job. I had my own house, I had my own garden, and it is not easy to have these things over here.

He now has a full-time job as a taxi driver; and although he feels it is not intellectually challenging, it is better suited to him than the fruit-picking job of his early years in Australia. Ms. Melanie spoke of herself and her husband's experience:

I was a professional employee in Africa, while my husband was a State Owned Enterprise Manager with a Management Degree. Our degrees and experiences from Africa were not acknowledged. Because of our English accent and our education obtained in Africa (...), we are not able to get the opportunity to have a job
commensurate with our education and work experiences. We can't go to school, because it is too time consuming to start over when we look at our age. We lost our status and degree here in Australia. We would like more recognition. We live a different lifestyle, and we feel like we lost our status, respect (...). I'm saddened by the loss ...

Mr. Teka arrived in Australia with certain expectations and mentality toward employment, only to find out the reality that awaited immigrants in the West. Mr. Aklog, his brother, spoke with a degree of resentment:

If you work hard enough, you will be successful – that's what we thought coming to the West like Australia and that was our burning motto, but because of systemic and structural barriers, this has not been true. In Africa, my brother used to be an irrigation expert. He did finish his studies in Africa and in former Western Europe. But if you don't graduate from schools in Australia, it is hard to compete with others who have received their education here even your expertise skill is more profound than theirs. Now, my brother works as a taxi driver. He works more than 10 hours, six days a week.

Likewise, Mr. Mesfin, illustrated the difficulties immigrants face when they first arrive in Australia, in particular in their attempt to get work. He said:

[My opinion] of Australia when I was back in Africa and at first when I arrived was that it was a perfect place to work and live; but my opinion later changed because I had to face realities and I learned how hard it is to find a job and to lead a secured life as a [foreign] adult.

Despite skills and expertise brought over with them to Australia such as professional, teaching, technical, and administrative skills, such immigrants found themselves limited to menial blue-collar jobs. They had to be willing to take these lower end jobs, of lower social status and income than they were accustomed to. These jobs required a minimal level of English proficiency and did not require high educational
accomplishments, skills or prior experience. In return, they received low pay accompanied by long hours and demanding physical labour. Generally speaking, there was a consensus that the participants' occupational decisions in Australia were based on practicality, and that the overriding goal was needing to earn sufficient income to meet their families' needs and commitments in their homelands, rather than achieving personal or professional fulfilment. But for many of the respondents who were forced to work outside their area of occupational training, the choice was not made without personal costs. All participants who were forced into downward mobility lamented their loss of job satisfaction, expressed frustration over being forced to do menial jobs and reported desperation over the severing of professional ties. Taking low-wage jobs in a capitalist country like Australia means joining the bottom of the class structure. Such change in class position entails further downward alteration in economic and political power, social status, life style, and access to resources.

Coping Mechanisms Among Black Africans in Melbourne

Social Support: Sources and Types

Immigrants have choices between drawing friendships exclusively or primarily from their own kinship or ethnic groups in the places where they live, or attempting to make friends with people whose culture differs from their own. The former seems the preferred choice among immigrants who settle in an ethno-culturally isolated community (Baker et al, 1994; Graves & Graves, 1974; Nah, 1993). Evidence suggests that the cause for this choice is because of discrimination and xenophobia, which has encouraged immigrants' choice of drawing friends exclusively from their own national groups. Studies have found that discriminatory or xenophobic attitudes toward immigrants make it problematic for immigrants to interact with people of the host society (Baker et al, 1994; Lipson & Omidian, 1997). Semons' study (1991) found that immigrant students were mistreated on campus, even in the presence of the teachers. Mistreatment occurred simply because the students were newcomers and spoke a language other than English. However, another cause for immigrants' choice of drawing friends exclusively from their own ethnic groups may be that shared customs, traditions, and language may lead to contact with their own people being
more meaningful than with people from other groups. With the possibility of discrimination or xenophobia from the host group, immigrants may consequently become socially far more isolated than they have previously been.

Social support refers to "forces or factors in the social environment that facilitates the survival of human beings" (Lin, 1986: 17). These include the intercultural forging of ties and networks of support, such as family and kinship, as well as friendship and employment networks. The support received by immigrants over the course of resettlement was classified into three types: information, aid, and affect (Lin, 1986; O'Reilly, 1988). The support the immigrants received that smoothed their resettlement in the new country is an example of one such network. Social support also refers to the process of building social networks in the new country and maintaining connections with old social networks outside the new country. Social support played a vital role during the process of immigrants' rebuilding their lives in their new homeland; because of the barriers posed by language, the immigrants had to rely on the available resources to get through the early stage of the resettlement. However, with the reduced social network size in Australia, the available resources were limited for Black African immigrants, and it was difficult for some participants to decide whether they should "bother" these people again or not. The loss of their established social network or social support was a common loss to participant immigrants. Although participant immigrants were rebuilding their social networks in Australia, it took them time.

According to participants in this study, there were seven main sources reported for Black African immigrants in Melbourne to rebuild their social networks and support. The first source was relatives or friends who helped them settle in Melbourne. These friends and relatives who lived in the Melbourne metropolitan area were commonly the first line of social support. It is noted in Appendix VIII, that 46.4% of the participants of this study had relatives or friends living in Melbourne/Australia. The immigrants relied almost solely on their help during the early resettlement. Likewise, the 53.6% of the participants of this study with no relatives or friends living in Melbourne/Australia also required help. Mr Israel and his family, for instance, did not know any one in the area. Therefore, colleagues as well as sponsors organised by DIMA, refugees/immigrants support agencies and religious organizations were
considered their first line of social support in the beginning of the resettlement process. As they met more people, new acquaintances became the second source of social networking and support. For instance, TAFE students and participants in English language classes described their language teachers as a helpful source because they were much more able to effectively communicate with English class immigrants. Some of the participants considered this as a good source for meeting people.

The third source was regular school, primarily for young persons at elementary and secondary schools. Secondary school children similarly had interaction with Australians at school but did not consider them as part of their social networks. However, there was a difference in the main source for those still in the English language class program and for those who were not in the English language class program. The former usually had friends from English language classes; the latter had friends both from the mainstream Australian society and from the NESB immigrant group. When they talked about their interactions with Australian peers, the comments tended to be negative. Mr. Yussuf described his interaction with Australian peers during his secondary school days, as “unless it is really necessary, you won’t talk to them”. When asked about after class interactions, he reported with sarcasm, “once school is over, who pays attention to you?” Similarly, Mr. Abdi, the youngest participant, also described no interactions with white Australians outside the classroom. Some immigrant children were able to interact with Australians, who were usually referred to as white Australians or European Australians, at least during school days. Avoidance was the most common coping mechanism used to preserve their dignity when interacting with European Australia speakers. However, these barriers were slowly torn down after immigrants lived in Australia for about three years. The self-reflection of Ms Martha, an immigrant of 1985, exemplified this mental change:

At that time when we saw white people, we would feel talking to them was like. (...). We would walk away to avoid them first. That is my mentality. It is like you are very afraid of talking to them because you are afraid of not being able to speak well to them ... The psychological barrier was huge. It was huge. Like now when I run into
newcomers, I would encourage them to relax and not to be afraid of embarrassment and not to walk away when they see white people to avoid them fearing the language barriers.

Ethnic restaurants and ethnic shops/stores were the fourth source of social support. For immigrants in this study, the primary function of ethnic restaurants and ethnic shops/stores was to provide familiar food supplies and to relieve the sense of loss from missing their homelands' food. At least two thirds of the immigrants mentioned shopping for groceries and dining at ethnic restaurants. Work was the fifth source of social support reported by participants. Immigrants who were working as professionals had more interactions with Australians; yet, their relationship did not extend beyond the office building or the institution/company interactions. For immigrants who did not have paid jobs, volunteer work at their ethnic communities and churches and mosques or at food banks helped them expand their social networks. Community churches and mosques were the sixth source of social networks and support. Immigrants all reported having regular contact with people they had met at church or mosques. As shown in Appendix VIII, all twenty-eight of the interviewees practised either Christianity or Islam both in Africa and in Australia. Nineteen of them reported that they met their friends through church and mosque gatherings. Ethnic churches like the Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox church and the Ethiopian Pentecost church were more culturally and linguistically suitable for Ethiopian and Eritrean immigrants who were Christian, since almost all the members of these churches are both Ethiopians and Eritreans. With the assistance of the Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox church and the Ethiopian Pentecost church immigrants from these countries were more likely to overcome obstacles resulting from the demands of language and socio-cultural variations. Since there is no Mosque built or run by Black African Moslem communities, Moslems from this region have to use the mosques run and built by Middle Eastern and Asian Moslems for worship. As can be seen, people with whom immigrants socialised were primarily their own ethnic groups or with persons of the same country of origin, speaking the same or common languages or sharing common beliefs or religion.

Mr Teka was one of the founders and until recently one of the leading members of the committee of the Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox Church in
Melbourne. The following responses from Mr. Teka and his sister-in-law, Mrs. Hamelmal, explains the role of the Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox Church in Melbourne for Ethiopian immigrants as well as for Eritrean immigrants of Coptic Orthodox Church followers:

Mr. Teka: ... If new immigrants can get a hold of churches, it will be very easy [for them].

Mrs. Hamelmal: {jump in} helps a lot.

Mr. Teka: It is very convenient. So many people from Ethiopia and Eritrea definitely look for their churches. Both Ethiopian and Eritreans are devoted Christian people. You know, Christianity was introduced in Ethiopia in 332 A.D.

Ayalew: Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox Church?

Mr. Teka: Yea, Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox Church. Foreign churches, [your] language is by no means good. They all look for Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox Church, and even those converted to foreign churches prefer to go to their Ethiopian counterpart church. They all look for Ethiopian churches of their own type. Churches are valuable in this place for our peoples who come without any source of help. Like sometimes, we don't know them. They are referred to us. We still help them. Take them to our home; invite them to lunch or dinner, which perhaps they might not have eaten African cuisine for quite sometimes. We take them to find schools, um, some ...

Mrs. Hamelmal: Take them to shopping centres, groceries and what else.

Mr. Teka: Telephone connection, power connection, opening bank account, or something else. If we don't know, we find others to help them and take them over there.

Mrs. Hamelmal: Like fixing things, or how to hunt jobs, the transport system and other vital things.

---

5 Apart from the Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox Church, Ethiopians as well as Eritreans have also established the Ethiopian Pentecost church. It is known as a 'foreign' church. Most followers were converted either while living in refugee camps in Africa, or after their arrival in Australia. Very few of the followers of this 'foreign' church, however, were converted while they were still in Ethiopia and Eritrea.
Among the participants, only nine immigrants indicated having friends whose background were not Black Africans. For instance, Ms. Melanie would socialise at lunchtime with some of her colleagues who are both European NESB immigrants and white Australians. Nevertheless, the majority of the immigrants did not consider white Australians as part of their social networks. Mr. Israel commented: “I do not know if you have heard that new immigrants like us in this country have very few chances to contact and interact with the white Australians”. Even when interactions did occur, immigrants usually described these as “superficial” and “distant.” Mr Teka, who had been in Australia for over twelve years and who migrated to Australia from Western Europe, actively participated in his children’s school activities, and in addition to his African language, he was also fluent in English and in one other European language in addition to his native language. He commented, “I think with white Australians, there is a gap between Australians and us. A bit of gap - it is a barricade. It is not easy to cross that barricade.”

In addition to the sources in Melbourne/Australia, comments from some immigrants and families during both the interview and the discussion suggested that their social network in Africa and elsewhere outside of Australia still continued to function as a source of social support. For instance, Ms. Martha’s brother, who flew over from New Zealand to visit, helped her practise driving for three months. He also helped her to open an ethnic restaurant in the western suburbs. While immigrants were slowly building new networks, they tried to maintain contact with the old ones. Ms. Melanie still had relatives and friends in Africa and elsewhere. And the development of computer technology made it possible to maintain social networks that existed previously in Africa much better than using the telephone or postal letters. The instant nature of the Internet made it possible for contacts in Africa to continue to be a viable source of social support. Thus, immigrants remained connected with the larger society. The following two quotations from interviews with Mr. Nkrumah and Mrs Melanie further illustrate the role of technology in social support.

Mr. Nkrumah: It is better than before. Once you get on the web, I can hear information about my country and the continent Africa. If you would like to listen to, um, the broadcasting of my country’s news, just get on the web, you can see all of
them. I could even check out my previous university on Internet. The university has a Web site. I could see what is new with faculties, departments. I can do all of that. As long as I want, I can get on the web to check it out. So I think the sense of isolation for professional immigrants who come [here] now is less severe [than those who are less educated].

Ms. Melanie: In terms of psychological stuff, I think, although my sisters and I {brief pause} or my friends are not living in the same area, in fact, long distance calls are very cheap in Australia than it is in Africa. It is very easy too. Um, then email but in English. So to me, basically in my heart I feel the distance between us is very short. Whenever things come up, I can find someone to talk to. Well, how can I explain this? {brief pause} Yeah, I do feel it is the best if we could be together. Because being together, you can have activities together. Like now, it is less likely to have activities with them. But {pause} um, I feel there are a lot of mutual mental supports.

As Ms. Melanie said, although she would be best supported if she and her relatives and friends could be together physically, it is not feasible. However, technological advances such as telephone, the Internet, and relatively cheap air travel therefore played a vital role in breaking down geographical boundaries, shortening the distance and keeping them in contact with social networks outside their residential area. Thus, although kin and friends in Africa were not physically present with immigrants in Melbourne, their support is present in immigrants’ lives.

As noted above the support received by immigrants over the course of resettlement was classified into: information, aid, and affect. The need for each type of social support for families varied due to language, loss, social network, and length of stay in Australia, immigrant configuration, and other immigrant characteristics. Information includes basic knowledge and advice about day-to-day living and specific knowledge about the Australian systems, cultural practice and job referrals. Direct and tangible assistance involving labour and a time commitment from another would be classified as aid. The third type of support, affect, is the intangible emotional support needed by the immigrants.
Through social networks immigrants received information support. Information was most commonly needed regarding schools, jobs and medication. For instance, when Ms. Selaam had just arrived, her son, who was two years old at the time, was sick. She was quite nervous because as a first time mother, she did not have any experience dealing with her child’s sickness. No extended family was available to provide any guidance, and neither she nor her husband was familiar with the medical system in the country. After receiving information from their neighbour who was an immigrant from the same region of Africa, they finally went to the neighbour’s doctor. In fact, they have retained this doctor since then as their family physician. As stated before, the family of Mr. Israel came to Australia without any acquaintance in Australia. It was harder for them to obtain the necessary information in a timely fashion after their son sprained his foot in the early resettlement period. Due to their lack of familiarity with the system, treatment was delayed. Finally they got information from a friend whom they met at their church and the long-standing injury was finally treated.

The second type of support is aid from others, which, as mentioned above, is both direct and tangible. This tangible assistance included temporary housing with others, transportation by others, help with translation, and material goods. Direct assistance for them included help with school registration, signing contracts, purchasing goods, basic living transactions (e.g., opening bank account, electricity account, and telephone line), children’s schoolwork, and emergency care. The following quotation from Mr. Israel illustrates the types of aid received from friends and shows the appreciation from an immigrant who was trying to settle in this new country.

Friends [both church and non-church friends] took us to do all of those. It’s all from them. So they really gave us a very big help. Like our current driving licence, too. They helped us. We only needed to give them the names and address. Also look at those electricity bills, phone bills, water bills, etc., when we moved in. They were very thoughtful, knew [those things]. They got our address and helped us apply. Yeah, so basically I did not, didn’t worry about these things.
Mr. Mbeki talked about the direct assistance in the form of emergency care that he received from a male friend whom he met at a second hand car auction.

[This friend] helped a lot. When we just came, we didn't know anyone. My mother happened to be in a critical condition. Then when she died, I [stressed] needed to go back with my wife. But the kids still needed to go to school. What could we do? So his, this friend's, house happens to be close to where we lived. So we left our kids in their house. That was his own idea. What great relief it was.

The last type of support immigrants received is affective support, which is an expression of caring, love, and respect, and a sense of intimacy. For instance, the sister-in-law of Mr. Kedir, Mrs. Zehara, would take the family out for dinner to an ethnic restaurant on weekends or tell them about special events in their suburb or festivals related to African communities. This type of support is also related to religion. Some immigrants were able to find places for religious practice like they had in Africa that helped maintain their spiritual life. Through each interaction, immigrants were able to share their happiness with friends and relatives and, at the same time, to "tell about the pain." In the loss and novelty section above, it is noted that the twenty-four year old Mr. Yussuf had reported that his mother cried and complained to him a lot in the first two years and sometimes even until today. He confided that it was because his mother did not have many friends in Melbourne with whom she could talk in order to process her pain and receive nurturing feedback that she lacked this particular type of support, affective support. About eight months after the interview with Mr. Yussuf, I met him at the University of Melbourne and he informed me that his mother had left Australia for home [Africa].

New and Old Social Networks and Relationships
Multiple factors are involved in the development of any new social relationship. A mutual degree of self-sufficiency, together with consideration of each other, taking time to become familiar, acceptance of each other, mutual trust and sharing of common interests are always important. But for an immigrant, coming into this new environment, the need for these aspects is accentuated, and additional factors such as
the language barrier and watching gossip in this close-knit group come into play. Mr. Fasil told me, "I think, living here, you have to learn to move your first step, then you will have the second step. Right?" However, after listening to stories from the other immigrants, it became evident that any of the factors mentioned above could interfere in the development of their relationships. Although families primarily socialised with other immigrant families of their country of origin, there were new expectations of which they had to be aware in order to sustain the relationship, and even the interaction with other Africans would be a learning experience for them.

Self-reliance and self-sufficiency were expected to be a part of their relationships. As Mr. Nkrumah commented: "[My] feeling of living here is that [P] each person has to have sense of self-awareness. [You] have to take more care of your business because each person has her/his own other things". Ms. Selaam stated: "Everyone has their own life [business] to worry about so that you still need to know how to live your life." Ms. Selaam jokingly told me about her conversation with other immigrants on an excursion trip of Moslem women. One of the other immigrants said: "Hey, we would better be careful! ... We mothers cannot wrestle and get injured. Once we did, the entire family is over." Ms. Selaam echoed, "Right! Even if you really have very good friends here, when you get injured, they will not be able to help. They have their own families to take care of! They have children to pick up!"

Second, it was crucial that the immigrants needed to maintain a high degree of sensitivity to other immigrants' situations. Black African immigrants are diverse in household configurations, class and family backgrounds, and reasons for emigration. Black African immigrants' levels of post-immigration distress are also very varied. All of the above can influence the immigrants' interactions with other Black African immigrants. They recognised the possibilities of meeting Black African immigrants who were completely different from those in their old social networks. To socialize, it was required that they change old attitudes and modify their usual responses. Mr. Nega's comment exemplified the situation:
Each person who comes here has a different background. Your ideas may not match with other's ... [You] need to open up your mind. Also some people may be in a situation like -- when he was in Africa, he was able to summon wind and rain. Coming here, there are a lot of people who have good abilities. In other words, we need to adjust our mindset. We need to look at others' performance. If they are good, we need to have decency to accept that others' performance is better than ours.

Mr Mesfin, who was a secondary school teacher in his homeland, learned this the hard way. He recalled the lesson that he learned in the first few months after his arrival. One day he saw Mr Paul Keating, the former prime minister and the current Prime Minister Mr John Howard who was then the Opposition leader. They were standing side by side peacefully, even amicably, during a debate on their respective policies during the Federal Government election. He quickly called his friend who is also from the same country of birth to share his excitement. Instead of being equally appreciative of the harmonious nature and democratic system of their new government in their new homeland, his friend could only see that “I am already miserable to death and you are very happy over here looking and appreciating the bourgeois democracy”. In addition to this, he received comments from other immigrants such as “you have a good life. You are lucky, some one has helped you set up things! And you are driving a taxi thanks to whoever helped you.” He was told that he could not understand the immigrants’ lives in Australia. After such repeated comments, Mr Mesfin became “more reluctant to say anything”. He learned to keep his happiness to himself so that he would not “bring worries to others”. “You can only listen to their complaints. Only comfort them,” he said. He learned to be sensitive to other immigrants’ differences, and developed new social behaviours to appropriately interact with other immigrants.

The immigrants became a close-knit group because they needed each other so much for support, so watching out for gossip was important. One of the women pinpointed this concern when she commented, “Friends are the most frightening! Once there is a news, it is circulated around and everyone knows about it”. Mr. Melaku understood the problem when he said:
I also have felt there are many kinds of people here for you to make friends with. BUT ... I focus on high quality. Because the Black African immigrants circle is very small, sometimes when there is a tiny bit of something ... I (stressed) am the person whom they can dump their problems on. They would tell me about their relationships with so and so. But when the words come to me, they stop here. I won't tell others.

However, not all immigrants were like Mr. Melaku in this matter, so some became wary of new contacts. Mrs. Chiluba says, "the less the better" because of jealousy and gossip, which she says prevails among immigrant women and can sometimes cause harm, whether intended or not. As such, immigrants had to learn to pick the right persons with whom to share their problems. At the same time, they had to watch for what they may say to others. The language barrier faced is the fourth facet involved in the development of new social relationships, particularly with people born in Australia. This has already been described thoroughly in the section devoted to linguistic changes. It is only reiterated here to emphasize its importance, and how it is a significant barrier preventing immigrants from engaging in social interaction with native speakers. Mrs. Fatuma said that in the first year in Australia, she met all of her friends in the English language classes. This was partially due to her class schedules but mostly due to the insecurity surrounding her language abilities. Again, isolation, or "staying alone" was a coping mechanism to prevent her from being teased.

Just as it takes time for immigrants to be accepted in the larger society, so is the case with the smaller social networks. Another barrier encountered was by immigrants was when they attempted to enter a new group, or clique. Mr. Yussuf, a secondary school student at the time of his arrival, experienced this problem. There were early-wave African immigrants at the high school he attended after his arrival. He described his relationship with them as "distant" and he felt this was because their English was good, and they were already comfortable in their own groups by the time he arrived at the school. He was eventually befriended by Eritreans and Sudanese (who communicate in Arabic) whom he met at one of his first English classes. Mr. Mitiku had similar experiences with his neighbours who were Australian-born Africans (ABAs) or who had migrated to Melbourne at an early age. He could not get into the group because "these people had been together since pre-schooling days and some
since elementary school”. It took quite some time for him to be recognised by the group. Ms. Genet also had African neighbours who had migrated to Australia with their parents at early ages with whom she initially could not become friends. Despite the fact that they shared the same ethnic cultural heritage and perhaps spoke the same language, being new hampered the development of new social relationships. Most participants in this study reported that these Australian-born Africans (ABAs) or Black Africans who had migrated to Melbourne/Australia at an early age could not speak their mother’s language well and most of the time they like to behave and act like Afro-Americans rather than trying to be themselves, as black Africans. Participants in this study believe that this also was another cause for misunderstanding.

The last factor and an important one for immigrants involved in the development and formation of new social relationships was being able to share common interests and behaviours that provide topics for conversation. Mr. Melaku argued that “what was talked about in Africa was different from what was talked about with these neighbours who are ABAs or those who had migrated to Melbourne at their early ages.” He further told me that for the same reason, he stopped meeting with this kind of Black African, despite "the church and community leaders’ and parents’ pressure on us to meet more of them, be tolerant and patient, so as to make them feel that they are part of us, part of Africa and part of our heritage". He continued:

Most young people in my suburb and around are Black Africans who migrated to Melbourne at their early age. There is no topic at all to talk about with them. Really the topics are different {sounds bothered}. I do not know the stuff they talked about and will not know or understand them. They also seem as if they have inferiority complex for not speaking our language well, for not understanding anything about Africa, its culture, history and heritage. They seem like they are in conflict with themselves. And to cover up their complex, they pretend to be Afro American. You know, I want to avoid them, but I could not because I have to be strong and patient to make them feel as my own, because they are part of me and I am part of them, whether I like it or not.
Mr. Nega and Mrs. Abadi, a husband and wife, described their attempt to give their youngest son a sense of his roots and his national identity. They noted that they were teaching him their native language as well as some of the typical folk dances and customs of his land so that he could participate with Black African children here in Melbourne so as to feel proud of himself and avoid acquiring an inferiority complex. Similarly, Mr. Israel’s family was in a similar situation. Together with his wife, he used to encourage their children to participate in the youth group of their neighbourhood. However, as reported by Mr Israel, his children were not willing to go because:

they have few ABAs and several teenagers who had migrated to Melbourne at their early ages. Their topics are different. They wanted to behave like Americans, and trying to speak more than the white Australians. They want to act and behave more white than the whites. My children think that they have complex problem, perhaps inferiority complex.

Literature on Black Africans, Mexicans, Central Americans and Caribbeans in the West often documented that immigrant children assimilate faster than their parents, and the parents worry about their children’s Americanisation (Gamio, 1930; Lipson & Omidian, 1997; Nah, 1993). Adult immigrants or parents may assimilate at the same rate as their children; yet, parents are more selective than their children in terms of what Australian culture should be adopted and what culture of origin should be retained. Findings of this study show a strong support for the literature. Mrs. Selaam jokingly referred to the accent of ABAs and those who migrated at an early age as “the dole bludger’s accent”. Ms. Selaam commented: “... in order to cover their complex, they prefer to behave and act as Afro-Americans, but they are not and could they could never be. They wanted to be regarded or known as Black Americans, but we all know them, they are not.” Mrs. Chiluba did express concerns about their daughters’ requests of being like their Australia peers. However, because Mrs. Chiluba was aware of the “racially” related isolation and discrimination in Australia, they were willing to compromise to some extent. She did not necessarily like her daughter to follow entirely Australian cultural practices, but she knew her opposition to Australianisation could make their daughters’ lives even more different in the group at school and subject to isolation.
Although immigrants formed friendships with each other, and some had relatives in Australia, they usually had friends of other ethnicities as well. Mr. Yussuf reports that his friends are immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, mostly East Africans, and that his family in Melbourne take up most of his spare time, so that there is not much time left to socialise. But to Mr. Fasil, things are different. He explained that his weekday life revolves around his work and home, while on weekends and on holidays, around the church and immigrants from Africa. He also said that his neighbours are middle class white Australians and he considers them as friends. Likewise, the neighbours of Ms. Melanie are of various ethnicities - black Africans as well as Greeks, Yugoslavians, Latin Americans, Eastern Europeans and Middle Easterners and lower middle-class white Australians - and she also considers them friends. Mr. Adamu has so many friends that he says it is impossible to keep up with them. He says that his friends, like Ms. Melanie, are from Greece, Yugoslavia, Latin America and Eastern Europe, but mostly his friends are East Africans, Indigenous peoples (Aborigines) and white Australians and he said of his social life: "I do not even have time for the many people I came to know. When I come home from work, I have to visit one after the other; they pull me from one direction to the other; so I am not lonely at all."

Most participants also agree that their friends help them overcome the absence of the extended family they had in Africa. Mr. Aregawi explained that: "sometimes it is so helpful to have friends, because we could help each other to get work or to come together when we want to. Twice I got jobs because friends referred me to other people when I was laid off." Mr Yussuf and Mr. Abdi reported that, because they came at a very young age and developed friendships while in school, they have many friends of various nationalities. Most immigrants form friendships with those who are or have also been immigrants themselves. Mr. Kedir, Mr. Chissano, Mr. Israel, and Ms. Selaam stated that they have friends of all kinds except white Australians and Asians. When they were asked why they do not have Asian friends, their answers were similar to Mr. Israel's, who explained:

I do not associate with Australians and Asians. I was always among Africans. Australians won't understand our way of living. Immigrants from Africa understand better. We share the same kind of music, food. I do not like the hip-hop thing, our
music and culture is different; if we had the same kind of music, we might have
socialised more with them. Here they teach you sex, drinks, and immorality. Asians
they are very selfish. They do not care about others. They are too close to themselves.
When you work with Asians, they tend to speak their own language, and you feel
kind of alienated, such are the only problems I had with Asians.

Mr. Israel continued:

My friends are Black Africans, Orthodox Egyptians, Greek orthodox, and
Yugoslavians (Orthodox Serbians). They are sympathetic to me, understand and
listen to my problems.

Ayalew: And why not white Australians?

Mr. Israel: No. The friends I have are all in the cleaning jobs, process work and
production works. You don’t find them [the white Australians] in these types of
works. I don’t see much white Australians doing the type of jobs I work. But in
Africa, I had friends who are artists, you know, writers, musicians, doctors, and
engineers but now I am not there, and it is very hard to make friends in this country
because people are so afraid and snobbish. But due to my Orthodox Christianity I
have lots of contact with South European Orthodox Christianity followers.

The recurring themes in the discussion of social network and support systems are the
friendships with non-Black African immigrants, networking for employment and a
sense of isolation. The isolation immigrants experience is due to language and
particularly accent barriers, the absence of the extended family structure and the
larger number of friends who are living either in Africa or outside of Australia.
Friendships with people other than Africans are a means of further alleviating the
cultural isolation many of the immigrants find themselves in, and the new friendships
appear to be welcome to most of them.

The previous patterns (friendships and support system) give an indication of the
acculturation patterns of the respondents, while the desire of participants on returning
to Africa gives an indication of a particular strategy, the myth of return, which is in
most cases placed at the end of the immigrant’s productive years. The issue of returning to their country of origin was an issue for all of the interviewee immigrants addressed. When participants were asked if, given the overall situation that they face in Melbourne, they would want to go back home to their countries of origin, almost all frequently answered that over the long term, yes, but for now there were no such plans. It is difficult to determine when this “long-term” plan will be set in motion but such an attitude has very strong implications for their overall adaptation to conditions in their new homeland. Only three did not wish to return. The reasons for returning range from a fear of getting old in Australia and being sent to a nursing home, to where no body cares for you unless you have paid a huge amount of fees into a private nursing company. They said at home you are taken care with affection, love and respect as an elder. Of those three who do not wish to return, Mr Adamu, for example, is reported as saying:

I can not, I have been here too long. I am 62 years old, then I would have to go right now. What will I find there? I will always love to visit. I am married and have two children in their thirties. I have a house. I love my country, I guess, it is more money related and stuff; one wants to make more money or wants to have a better life than dealing with power issues.

Summary

The responses of the twenty-eight interviewees and discussion participants of this study provide insight into the adaptive processes of immigrants. From their desire to flee the political and economic upheaval in their native country and better their lives, they withstood the period of uncertainty while waiting to be granted admittance into Australia, left the homes that they knew, and emigrated. Once here, however, there were certainly many hurdles to overcome. What they knew in Africa hardly applied in this new environment, and adjustment to the new country had to be made. Even the English language that many thought they knew and understood did not apply, and became a huge barrier for them. Multiplying the hardship, and making the adjustment period even more difficult, was the fact that their education and professional achievements were largely unrecognized. Fortunately, they were able to develop the
social support necessary for their survival, and have been able to make the changes within themselves to facilitate their adaptive process. Their adaptation was a process that has not finished. But with certain systems around them, as well as within them, they have adjusted to the changes in the environment and the social systems. It has been demonstrated that they have changed languages, changed occupations and changed themselves in order to adapt to this new home.

As the issues of race and class are important in the lives of immigrants in Australia, the following chapters will address this aspect of the experience of Black African immigrants who participated in the study.
Chapter Six

‘Race’, Class and Life of Black African Immigrants in Australia: Critical analysis of ethnography

I learned how to blend in, how to be just like everybody else. In the process, I lost myself. I forgot the absolute comfort and security I felt when I sat at my mother’s feet while she braided my hair. I lost the sense of pride I used to feel when I thought about all that my people have accomplished over years ... Recently though, I’ve begun to realise that the past I’ve given up has left a black hole in my self, my identity. I have begun to understand that I’m cheating myself, as well as others, if I don’t share my culture, if I don’t celebrate my heritage, if I don’t stop homogenising. I have to begin reclaiming and stop apologising for who I am.

(Ms. Ruth, participants of this study)

Introduction

This chapter addresses the issues of ‘race’ and class as they are perceived and viewed by Black African immigrants, particularly the influence of these issues on their lives in Melbourne, Australia. The chapter is divided into three sections: (1) an alternative interpretation of the participants’ stories from a broader historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political context, and (2) interpersonal versus institutional discrimination, and (3) the issues of ‘race’ and class as they affect the overall adaptation of Black African immigrants in Australia. The alternative interpretation presented in the first section uses a critical ethnographical approach that goes beyond describing, “what is” to explore how “what is” has come to be due to deeper structural characteristics such as ideologies and social control. Findings presented in this chapter also illustrate how immigrants’ lives are constructed and affected by the nature of the host society.
'Race' and class are central to understanding the adaptation of Black African immigrants in Australia. As such, the second section of this chapter will investigate how these two factors intersect to create identifiable patterns of adaptation. Four major patterns of adaptation will be discussed, to illustrate how the categories of 'race' and class overlap. These are: (1) connections with the host society (2) placement in racial categories (3) rapport with other minority groups and (4) experiences with racial discrimination. While each of the sections of the chapter will be discussed separately and is presented in a linear fashion, in actuality, most of them intersected and interacted to have a joint effect on participant immigrants’ lives.

**External Factors**

In a broad sense, the analysis in this section creates an alternative understanding of non-white, non-Protestant and non-English speaking immigrants' lived experiences in a "racially" conscious capitalist society. Immigrants' lives are constructed by the external context in which their lives are embedded. Immigration policy, class, Western imperialism, and Australian capitalism are the four contexts revealed from the analysis of the participant’s stories.

**Immigration Policy**

As the literature discussed in previous chapters reveals, immigration policy has a profound impact on immigrants’ class locations in their new home and the class structure of the host nation. From the outset, the immigration system affects immigrants’ positions in the Australian class structure. Immigrants admitted under humanitarian or family visa categories are more like to experience downward class mobility between their home country and Australia than those admitted under employment or business visa categories. The state regulates the incorporation of immigrant labour in three important ways. First, the state institutes a formal standard of exclusion/inclusion, defining who is eligible for entry into the territorial boundaries of the nation. Second, the state adjudicates who is included into the symbolic boundaries of the nation with the regulation of access to citizenship rights. Third, the state determines how migrants are allocated and incorporated into specific positions in the relations of production and the organisation of the labour market (Satzewich,
1991: 35). The immigration laws determine the quantity and composition of immigrant labour, as well as the admissibility criteria and the legal/political status of immigrant's labour.

Class Locations of Immigrants

Wright argues that class locations refer to locations within class relations, not classes themselves (Wright, 2000: 20). The class location of an immigrant is determined by including the class location of each participant member in a household who holds a paid job, and contributes to the household income and expense. Work-study jobs held by students that generate money only for their personal allowance are not included in the figures. The following two class maps are based on Wright's elaborated class typology (detailed in Chapter Two). Clearly, the participants' class location in Africa differed significantly from Australia. I will use the following two figures to illustrate their class locations in both their class location in Africa and Australia for discussion.

Most of the participants changed class locations after moving to Australia. Some of them moved out of the paid labour force once in Australia, some of them moved down or to non-skilled positions, and still five participants began paid work for the first time in their lives. Four interviewed participants moved out of the paid labour force and became unemployed. Nine of the interviewed participants were not employed at the time of the interview (they were either students or unemployed). Thus they appeared on the class map with their direct class locations (non-skilled workers) in Australia. Mr. Israel and Mr. Kabila moved from being small employers to being non-skilled workers although they were unemployed at the time of the interview. Mr. Teka was the exception that moved from expert manager to self-employed or from middle class to petty bourgeoisie position. Ms Martha moved from student to nursing assistant, thus she moved into the class map after coming to Australia. Likewise, Mr. Aklog, the younger brother of Mr Teka, Mr. Abdi and Mr. Yussuf (the two youngest participants of this study) also moved into the class map after moving to Australia. The comparison between Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2 indicates that immigrants admitted through humanitarian and/or family reunion or through student visas had a greater change in class location than immigrants admitted
through employment and business visa categories. This suggests that to some extent, Australian immigration policy pre-determines immigrants' class locations in Australia through its control over the conditions under which immigrants arrive.

As discussed in the previous chapter, applications for humanitarian and family reunion visas usually take years to process. Mr. Goshu's story during one of my Pos illustrates a typical process of getting entry under this category:

If one looks at the process for resettlement, Australians do not want you to come easily to Australia [lp] [fs] [p]. Like me, basically it was applied after my wife had sent me sponsorship. But it took [bp] may be two years or more for her to settle, working day and night at three different jobs so as to save money and to began the process. Then you start to apply. It takes another few years, right? The usual case is that I have to stay in Egypt, so I could be close to the Australian embassy to follow my application. I was reunited with my wife and children after ten years. You know the major reason for the break of my family was this long delay and separation.

By the time Mr Goshu received his residency, he was already in his early 40s. Similarly, three immigrants sponsored by siblings waited for over 7 years. When they received the visa approvals, they were all in their 40s. Being 40 means a flatter language learning curve, and that hurts an immigrant's ability to get work in Australia. Immigrants are therefore in a vulnerable position competing for better jobs.

Mr. Kebede commented:

Given my age, and my English is not very good, to find a job, of course, if I just want to find a job, do not care what kind of job, they said it should be very easy. But I feel that I do not seem [pause] to be able to do that kind, um, more manual labour jobs because we are kind of used to sitting by the office desk. I cannot say what is going to be in the future. The employers when you are older they don't want you but they don't tell you the true reason.
Sixteen of the interview participants participated in non-skilled jobs during their initial years in Melbourne, and at the time of the interview were in occupations with lower status than jobs they held in Africa. Taxi driver, security guard, cleaning supervisor, welder, bookbinder, nurse assistant, assistant clergy, and community development officer were the current jobs held by participants. It was a big shift for Mr. Onimode and Mr. Tutu who changed class location from qualified professional to bookbinder and assistant clergy, respectively. It was a big shift also for Mr. Israel and Mr. Kabila who changed class location from small employers to non-skilled workers and at the time of the interview to unemployed status. Likewise, it was a big shift for Mr. Kedir who changed class location from a qualified trade as well as petty bourgeoisie (owner of a small tea shop in rural Africa) to a welder and security guard. However, seven of the twenty-eight participants had never been employed in Africa (they were either students or unemployed) and five of these seven began paid work for the first time in Melbourne. Thus these five participants who began paid work for the first time in Melbourne appeared on the class map with their direct class locations (two social workers, a family support worker, a nurse assistant, and a tutor/PhD student) in Australia.

In comparison, the class location change was less drastic for immigrants admitted through skilled and business visa categories. For instance, Mr. Abraham and Mr. Fasil, both stayed in the same class locations. However, Mr. Teka, whose class location changed after immigration, tried his best to make money. He stated:

As long as there is a chance, I do not let it slip away. But it is not easy to find a job. Huh. Because I know grammatically my English is good even better than some Aussies, the problem is my accent. Australians do still not regard my accent as good enough. I am still trying to imitate their accent and 'improve' it.

At the time of the interview, he was not only working as a self-employed full-time taxi driver, but also employed taxi drivers. This was very different from the position he held in Africa, where he was an expert manager employed by the government. The class location of Mr Teka changed after immigration. Constrained by the Australian
accent and/or limited English proficiency and also lack of an Australian education and Australian experiences, it was difficult for most participants to find a comparable job in Australia. Mr. Teka said: “Unless you go for those manual labour jobs, you basically can not find a good job.”

Reproduction of the Australian Class Structure

Maintenance of the Australian class structure is a tangential outcome of Australian immigration policy. The connection between migration and reproduction of the class structure is seen most obviously by the degree to which immigrants provide labour power in areas of the economy where supply would not otherwise meet employer demand; but also in some circumstances by providing capital and entrepreneurship. As discussed in Chapter Two, each class location is composed of three dimensions: the relation to the means of production, the relation to authority within production, and the possession of skills. To keep the class system alive and functioning efficiently, jobs in each location have to be filled and the person in the position needs to perform her/his role with respect to those dimensions. Nineteen interview participants (and 70 of the total participants of this study) had a location within the Australian class structure through their employment. In other words, the Australian capitalist class system had an additional nineteen (or 70) workers in the labour market to fill the jobs in different class locations, and thus benefited from the profits generated from these immigrant’s labour and skills.

Immigrants participate in three different ways that help reproduce the Australian class structure: investment, creation of middle class and/or supervisory positions, and through placement in working-class jobs. The case of Mr. Fasil and Mr. Abraham is an example of investment. For example, Mr. Abraham had worked in the hairdressing business in the West for about eight years before he migrated to Australia on skilled visa category while Mr. Fasil was granted permanent residency through business migration category. The expectations were to (1) bring capital to the country (2) create more middle-class or working class jobs and (3) generate profits for the country. Mr. Abraham came to open a hairdressing saloon with his wife, while Mr. Fasil came to open a solo medical practice. Mr. Abraham provides jobs that are
necessary for the current class structure of the country. Though a small capitalist, Mr. Abraham was entitled to the privilege and power that capitalists might have to some extent, but at the same time, produced jobs for "workers" who are the other fundamental players in Australian class structure.

The second way migration helps maintain the Australian class structure is through the provision of middle-class supervisory positions. Ms. Melanie was a leader of an African community organization and a co-ordinator of an employment and training agency, which assists immigrants in finding work in Australia. With Ms. Melanie's assistance, the system was able to fill up empty positions with people and consequently retain its structure. Mr Adamu was a supervisor at a national radio supervising a staff of more than ten people. He was promoted, supervising more staff and executing more responsible duties. Mr. Adamu not only occupied a middle-class position that enhanced profits for the owners of the company but also had the authority to create other middle-class and working-class jobs.

The final way migration reproduces the Australian class structure is through the supply of new people to perform in working-class jobs. Twenty-four of the interviewees of this study took non-skilled and low-paid jobs in production factories, restaurants, grocery stores, security companies, cleaning companies and service industries in the first few years of their arrival, and two of the fourteen took semi-skilled and skilled worker jobs in the publishing industry and in an auto-mechanic shop. They became a part of the main force that keeps the Australian class structure alive by selling their labour or skills to the capitalists. Although immigrants came to Australia through different preference systems, they all brought labour, skills, or capital to the country; and acquired locations in the Australian class system. Immigrants admitted through the family reunion, humanitarian and, to some extent, through study visas mainly clustered in the non-skilled and semi-skilled worker positions, whereas immigrants admitted through employment schemes and the business category had widespread locations from capitalist to skilled manager to non-skilled worker. All became additional forces for the country to sustain the current class structure.
Class

Like other industrialised countries, the Australian class system can be roughly divided into three types of class - capitalist class, middle class, and working class - but with each of these able to be sub-divided into further categories (as described in Chapter Two and above in this chapter). According to Baxter et al, the Australian class system is structured into six categories: employers, petite bourgeoisie, expert managers, managers, experts, non-manual workers and manual workers (cited in Najman and Western, 2000: 72). In relation to the issue of class and the intersection of ‘race’ and class, two themes emerged from the stories of participants.

Workplace conflicts

Workplace conflicts can occur among people within the same class or across classes. There were four of these incidents reported by participants: two were cross-class location conflicts and two were intra-class location conflicts.

Cross-class location conflicts

The two cross-class location conflicts occurred between non-skilled supervisors and non-skilled workers. The first incident was between Mr. Kemal and his team leader at the factory where he was employed as a process worker before he became unemployed. He said:

This team leader is younger, more ... How to say this? This person [p] was [p] less mature. The level of maturity was not enough. He pushed us around. For instance, this thing was made by everyone. He would keep saying that I (stressed) did not make it right. It had been twice. I have one rule: twice can be forgotten, but for the third time, cannot just let it go. The third time he said that thing was my work, I made it, kept nagging about it. Yaa, yaa, yaaaaa, kept talking and talking. I, I was not going to argue with him. I went up to the front to talk to the supervisor [in English] ... also, you know? One of our friends was also badly treated by him. The stuff was thrown. He could not reach it so he threw it over. Did not care about the background of him (i.e., the friend). He was an English teacher in his homeland! [I] he was very angry at his behaviour, you know. So we all told him [p], “That is alright. Let us wait and see
for a while”. Let us see what he would do. At the end, I had to talk about it, to tell the supervisor.

Mr. Nega was the other participant who received unfair treatment when he used to work at a factory. He quit his job, because “his supervisor was not nice”. He described what happened to him:

The supervisor (in English) was young [bp]. In his early 30s. He was in charge of those people like me. Those who worked under him were all older and many of them knew no English, if at all few English. Any way, it is good this way that you don’t know English so he can tell you what to do, you just follow what he says and will not go against him. So that was not very good. My English of course was better than the supervisor (in English), because I had obtained my Bachelor Degree in Africa. He (the supervisor) did not let people talk during work hours with persons who do not work in that area, like his boss (in English). One time one of his bosses came to our working area and began to chat with me and with others who were close to me. We did not know he was a boss (in English) to our supervisor (in English). The boss (in English) was surprised by my English and articulation of issues and by my mature attitude. He looked at me and felt I am pretty good and said, “come to teach them English in the future”. Our immediate supervisor (in English) was watching the situation from behind and was not happy about it. He was very much afraid that I would tell the boss (in English) about the bad things our young supervisor (in English) had done, about his inability and/or incapability. So the second day he told me, “You do not need to come tomorrow.” I left right away.

Mr. Kemal and Mr. Nega, for example, were victims of class exploitation. Their non-skilled supervisors exercised the delegated power from the owners (capitalists) to oppress workers like Mr. Kemal and Mr Nega.

Intra-class location conflicts
The intra-class location conflicts were reported by Ms. Selaam, Mr. Abdi and Mr. Yussuf. They reported disturbing experiences at a fast food restaurant, production factory, and supermarket store (respectively) where they worked. Before she was employed as a social worker two months before her interview for this study; Ms
Selaam worked at a fast food restaurant. She encountered a conflict with another male employee:

One time I was at work-study. I felt [p] I do not know ... maybe it is also related to being there first or second. At that time, English of course was not a problem to me. Also unlike Australians, [you] must have an accent. They would ask you to work. They did not do all of the work but asked I to do the work. Reporting to the boss {in English}, in fact, was not useful because [p] talking is one thing, they still ask you to work ... there comes customers, right? Standing right in front of him, he could have served {in English} the customer. But he said, "OK, Salaam can serve you". He asked that customer to come over. Then he is male and I am female, right? Usually if I was in Africa, I feel boys usually would help girls do work more or less. For instance, help with cleaning restrooms or something. But I needed to clean restrooms, mop tables, and everything. I had to do everything. Then ... of course it is not to group boys and girls, but I feel you should do what you are supposed to do. You cannot push them over to others.

Ayalew: So you had rules saying who should have done what?

Ms. Selaam: Yes, there were right, right. But boss {in English} was not there so that this other white Australian worker could push you around, boss did not know.

Unlike the stories told earlier by Mr. Kemal and Mr. Nega, the exploitation occurred within the working class (by another unskilled worker, her peer). It was not a problem related to delegated capitalist class power. Where did the power come from? Was it seniority, accent, gender, class, or racial differences? Obviously there is no easy answer. The answer is most likely a combination of all or some of these factors. Perhaps the intersections of all of them provided the circumstances producing this example of exploitation and oppression.

The other intra-class conflict came from the interview with Mr. Abdi and Mr. Yussuf, who started to work in a production factory and supermarket store, respectively. When they both started to work, each sensed hostility from co-workers. Mr Yussuf, who worked in a supermarket store about six months prior to the interview, described it in the following way:
Although there is nothing between you and her/him, maybe it is their personalities or what, some people reject newcomers more [than others]. When I just started, I would feel, “Eh? How come I run into one or two who do not seem friendly to me”? … At the beginning … I also had an idea that it might be because I come from Africa and am a black. Because Australians and the media all have an idea that we from Africa are poorer and backward. They say that we really need the money and could work anything for that, because we are poor and need to support relatives back in Africa. So they would say things implicitly like “you” {plural} basically come here to …” Because s/he sees us all work part-time and casual and with two or more jobs and sometimes we call in to take time off. But we also try to tell her/him, “I also need money today”. They are also workers and low-income earners but they are white Australians … Yeah. Maybe it is others impression that all white people in Australia are very rich. But I know there are low income earning white Australian working hard to get money, to grow up and get rich are also exploited just like me but there are also lazy white Australians who prefer to live on dole rather than working like me.

Mr. Yussuf’s experience was about competition for economic opportunities within the working class. He, similar to Ms. Selaam above, had multiple explanations for the perceived treatment. However, unlike the previous case, his co-workers’ verbal responses somehow convinced him that stereotypical attitudes toward African immigrants was the reason for the rejection.

The majority of respondents could not talk about their experiences with the actual employers (or owners) because they rarely, if ever, met those who owned the businesses in which they worked. It was the immediate supervisor with whom the immigrants directly interacted and at times had negative experiences. The participants rarely had any relations, positive or negative, with employers because they simply did not come into contact with them, unless by accident such as the case was for Mr. Nega whose contact described under “cross-class conflicts” resulted in jealousy by his immediate supervisor and caused him to get fired.
'Race' and Class: Intersections

This section considers the way in which class and 'race' intersect to have a major impact on immigrants' lives. Examples were provided by Mr. Abraham and Ms. Melanie. As mentioned above, Mr. Abraham owned a hairdressing salon with a staff of seven. Two of his employees are white and the rest are Africans. He talked about being an owner of a successful business in a white dominant country. He stated:

I feel that Aussies quite envy self-employed {in English} people. It does not matter what is the size of the business. I feel they Australians, they perhaps also dream about being able to be an owner some day. Most of them just do not know how. They feel that we foreigners can open our own business; they feel quite envious especially when they knew I am an African [p]. Quite envious. For my business, there are more Black African employees, right? Then bosses are Black Africans [referring to himself and his wife]. I feel that naturally Aussies would feel that they want to accommodate us more. So I do not feel there is any major difficulty because they are the power-less group in my business. Naturally [we] would think to have them accommodate us more.

His experience speaks of the value of being an owner of a successful business in Australian white society and the mitigating effect of his superior class location on attitudes towards him as a Black African immigrant. The power white Australians typically have through racism was challenged within the world of his small business. To begin with, the Black African workers outnumbered the white Australians, and most significantly, Mr. Abraham had capitalist class power over his white Australian employees. Due to class factors, the power relationship between black Africans and white Australians was reversed in Mr. Abraham's small business.

Ms. Melanie's experience at work is the other example of class and 'race' intersection. Unlike Mr. Abraham's situation, 'race' was the more dominant factor in Ms. Melanie's case. As stated before, Ms. Melanie was a co-ordinating manager of two departments at one of the nation's employment organisations. There were occasions when Ms. Melanie was angry with the Australian staff. She did not say
much about those situations but attributed them to cultural differences. However, the
description from Mr. Hailom, her husband and Mr. Kibrom, her 21 year-old son
during one of my POs presented another picture:

Mr. Kibrom: When she [Ms. Melanie] comes home, she would start to vent [the
problems] out. [I] She comes here basically to supervise Australian employees under
her supervision. Mom {in English} is a quick-tempered person but Aussies are all the
slow kind ... She would say this person was such and such. She would tell father {in
English}. She often says why Aussies are so [bp] so [bp] cruel {in English, with a
low volume} [I]! Mom is used to the system in Africa. When both Mom and Dad {in
English} were in Africa, and in Dubai, they were in a top-level managerial position.
But [now] both supervise different people. Mom {in English} dare not, sometime she
dare not say much because she is afraid [bp] because this is Australia {reluctant to
continue}...

Mr. Hailom: White.

Mr. Kibrom: {follow Mr. Hailom} White's place, she is afraid if she says too much,
they will all [bp], you know; come to oppress her or something. It will not be good for
her.

Her husband's and her son's comments suggested that Ms. Melanie had a sense of
insecurity. Although Ms. Melanie had the delegated capitalist class power at work, the
fact she is a non-white supervisor working in a white dominated environment made
her feel powerless. She had to carefully monitor her behaviour at work in order to
avoid any potential antagonism directed towards her. Mr. Yussuf's and Ms. Selaam's
experiences reported above is another example of how 'race' and class had intersected
each other.
Imperialism
This section describes the influence of European/Western economic, political and cultural global domination and intellectual production on the racial/ethnic relationships that immigrants experience in Western countries, including Australia. It considers the impact of stereotypes and prejudice — an outcome of western imperialism - towards marginal racial groups and discrimination against NESB immigrants.

Stereotypes and Prejudice
To stereotype is to construct preconceived images about a socially defined category of people. Prejudice is an unfavourable attitude towards a socially defined category of people (Pincus & Ehrlich, 1994). For example, participants were often targets of derogatory names. However, racist terms and stereotypes used by white Australians were not limited to Black African immigrants. Immigrants of Southern and Eastern Europe, non-African black or coloured peoples and Asian immigrants were also targeted through the use of nouns such as ‘wog’, “wag’, ‘ding’, ‘wop’, ‘slopehead’ or ‘slant-eyes’, ‘nigger’ and ‘coon’ (Markus, 1985; Collins, 1988;).

The racial/ethnic groups that most susceptible to racial stereotyping were the Chinese, Pacific Islanders, Southern and Eastern Europeans, Indians, Lebanese, Vietnamese, Japanese and Koreans. Nor were the participants in this study immune from displaying prejudicial attitudes towards other non-white immigrant groups. Mr. Mbeki, for example, embarrassedly admitted his unfavourable attitude towards Asians. After he expanded his story, it became clear to me that his stereotypical image of, and prejudice towards, Asians was constructed from Western perspectives on the East acquired in his high school and college years in Africa. He stated:

[p] If with Orientals living in Australia, I only hang with Indians who always maintain and respect their culture, otherwise, with Africans. Because I feel I [l] do have a little bit discrimination against people from other countries [l], {embarrassed tone} especially Vietnamese. Like everyone is in the pub {in English}, there is a corner full of Asians. Then when they are talking, they are very loud. {false start}
also I had a good impression of Vietnamese and Chinese at the first place when I was in high school. The protracted war their people waged, their ardent love for their freedom and independence, their heroic struggle against imperialism and colonialism and then those who had luxurious and comfort lives betrayed the resistance fighters and left their country for the West. They were collaborators of aggressors and colonialists. They exposed their motherland, the patriots and run away with all fortunes they looted while they were in power. And also after what had happened to Japan by US Imperialist aggressors, the Japanese later became subservient and a puppet nation to US imperialism. They are smart, smart ones. I have never had good feelings and respect towards those who expose their country for foreign aggressors and run away.

Ayalew: Hmm, hmm. You would feel that you look down them.

Mr. Mbeki: [jump in] because their country [Vietnam] is not different from Sub-Saharan African countries in degree or level of development. My country is better than theirs. They are still like most under developed. And yet they had been here [in Australia] longer than us ... Besides, it is said that most of them arrive on humanitarian/refugee basis ...

The identities of developing and developed countries are another extension or product of the imperialists' practice of “othering”. In Chapter Two, I discussed how Edward Said (1979) and Tzvetan Todorov (1984) draw our attention to the notion of the socially constructed “other” by European/Western imperialists. Likewise, Lawrence Grossberg (1997) referred to this process in order to explain the European colonial conquest of the rest of the globe. ‘Race’ has become the underlying logic of Eurocentrism where the images of Europe are viewed as the most technologically advanced, sophisticated and rational centres. The rest of the globe is thought to have been inhabited by savages stuck in their traditional, primitive, backward and irrational cultures.

Most Black African immigrants of Mr Mbeki’s generation learned or knew about these socially constructed concepts after they were translated into African languages and imported to Africa by way of “Western/European education”. With the exception of the Republic of South Africa, most sub-Saharan Africans countries are labelled as
developing countries. The comment made by Mr. Mbeki, "because their country is not different from most Sub-Saharan African countries in degree or level of development. My country is much better than theirs", signifies the pride of being from a better-developed country – Zimbabwe.

In addition to ‘othering”, Mr. Mbeki refreshed his memory of the anti-imperialist and colonialist struggle by the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America. His comment, “the protracted war, their ardent love for their freedom and independence, resistance fighters ...” also signifies the pride of being a person from a country that heroically fought against colonialism and imperialism for freedom and independence – a proud, freedom and peace loving people. Mr. Yussuf also talked about his “bias” against Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese and Koreans. He described his image of these people as “like to bargain for price”, “good at math’ “speaking a bunch of things with a very heavy accent,” “their English is not pleasant to ear,” and “like to hang out together”. He acknowledged his personal stereotypes without any hesitation. He explained:

We basically do not have much positive feeling towards these people, to me personally. Because when we look at the history, we Africans did not make any friends with the people from these countries. Right? Then they [p] all had some kind of caste system, right? Anyway fundamentally I do not have any good impression of them. In fact I have never had friends from these countries. I [stressed] do not know what these people are really like.

Mr. Yussuf’s prejudice can be understood in the context of orientalism, which is described by Said (1979) as “a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) “the Occident”. It lives on “academically through its doctrines and theses about the orient and the Oriental” (Said, 1979: 2). It lives on in a very large mass of reading included in the formal and informal education in Africa. Mr. Yussuf’s understanding of the caste system in India and the role of Gypsies in Europe came from this body of knowledge produced and codified by intellectuals of the Occident about the Orient.
The last form of stereotype and prejudice mentioned by participants was directed towards second generation Southern and Eastern Europeans. Mr. Melaku told me about his experience of being teased by a second generation Southern and Eastern European immigrants at his workplace. I asked him, "Did you know what they were saying to you?" Melaku said, "not very well. But anyway, I knew approximately what he meant. Those second generation of Southern and Eastern European persons [p] what can they say!" His last comment about Southern and Eastern Europeans stunned me. His tone of voice suggested a sense of belittlement. Unlike Mr. Mbeki and Mr. Yussuf, Mr. Melaku did not show any sign of awareness of his negative attitude towards Southern and Eastern Europeans. Ms. Martha also told me about her partner's mother strong reaction ("Why did you ask an Arab?") when her boy-friend's mother knew Ms Martha had asked a Lebanese neighbour to help her move items from her car to her high rise complex. He happened to be standing in the parking lot when Ms Martha parked her car. Her partner's mother was very negative as well about Arabs as well as blacks.

Likewise, white Australians' or Europeans' images of and attitudes toward blacks, Asians, Arabs and Moslems were constructed out of an imperialist and colonialist context. Almost all whites learn about blacks and/or about Moslems or Arabs from the media, their parents, movies, television shows, and books. The portrait of blacks and Moslem or Arabs in these sources has been heavily influenced by racism, which is a product of European/Western imperialism, heavily inflected by Christian religion. In other words, most people’s perceptions of blacks and Moslems or Arabs are already biased because of the racism involved in their public construction by a racist white society like Australia. These people’s (Anglo-Celtics Australians or Australians of European descendants) opinions and attitudes towards blacks, Asians, Arabs and/or Moslem are reflections of the knowledge source from which they acquired their understanding of blacks, Asians, Arabs and Moslems.
Australian Capitalism

The norms, values, and practices defined by the Australian capitalist system impact upon immigrants and their families in everyday life, such as the marketing culture, insurance, and credit. This study will discuss the marketing and credit culture in Australia since these affect Black African immigrants. Although marketing, insurance and credit have long existed in capitalist societies, they become, however, a more daily phenomenon in contemporary capitalist societies and particularly since the introduction of the neo-classical market economy and the deregulation of the capitalist economy from the early 1980s.

Marketing Culture

Marketing culture in this study refers to the degree to which the norms and practices of businesses for selling products and marketing profits for owners of businesses affect immigrants and their families. It is a consumption-based economic system (rather than a production-based system). This in turn has a series of effects on a range of groups, in particular, for Black African immigrants who become so surfeited with ‘stuff’, and which forces them to question the very notion of consumption and the fundamental purpose of companies. As poor and needs-driven consumers, participants of this study perceive a huge disconnection between what consumers want and what companies are doing. Surprisingly, many immigrants complained about their contacts with sales representatives in the interview. These immigrants, as all Australians do, received multiple phone calls, letters, or in-person visits for various product sales and donations. In short, participants of this study believe that companies are arrogantly trying to impose their own values on the local markets. The following two quotations exemplify immigrants’ distress resulting from the Australian marketing culture.

Mr Melaku: At the beginning when we came, we received a huge package of Reader Digest’s promotions with a free copy sent to my mailbox, we did not know what this would entail later. Inside the package, there was a huge amount of money and many other prizes to be won. By congratulating me a letter inside the package tell me that I have succeeded the first two levels of the drawings and I am now in the final stage of the competition and thus asked me to complete the papers and sent back to them. The funny thing is that, I did never participate in the first two draws before. However, the way the promotion are prepared and organised was very deceiving and tempting so I
was eager to fill and send. Then every month it says congratulations you are now in the last stage, but that last stage does not finish. It goes on and on every month and at the end of the year they send you the bill, which you have not participated. We indeed had no clue the first time. We didn’t know at all! We knew about all these later on.

Mr. Aregawi: It is the same when last time they (referring to two immigrant friends) bought the CD. You have to buy a number of CDs; then this CD will only cost few dollars. It is very cheap. So we said okay, okay, okay. It is all them [laugh]. But they keep sending you [CDs]. Non-stop. You now are in trouble. You need to return it every time you receive. We finally learned that there are many things like this. Ordering magazines is the same. They knock on your door all the time. Ask you to order, ask you for donation. Many of this type of problem had repeated.

Although most African countries have now followed the capitalist path of development, the economic structures and cultures of African countries are different from that of the west, which emphasises individualism, democracy and free market. Thus, these immigrants had different cultural knowledge and understanding about and concepts of promotions and product sales. The adaptation of immigrants that had no access to information and knowledge on how business and sales work in Australia occurred on a trial and error basis. Immigrants that had relatives or friends in the area to which they moved may have been better off with the information and assistance at the beginning. Yet in many ways, they were in the same boat as immigrants without relatives or friends in the area. Immigrants all need to live independently; the telemarketing calls ring everyday. “You can not do anything about it if they, in the future, want to keep bugging you on that. There are charges against some wrong doings all the time in Australia. Lawsuits are everywhere. The law once you gave your consent does not care whether you are newcomer or not. It is very annoying,” said Mr. Melaku. Immigrants were concerned and worried about being cheated and having financial or even legal complications. When the situation was complicated with English proficiency, the level of frustration and worries was even higher, as Ms. Genet said:
I have a personal feeling. I feel if you are not careful, you can get cheated very often because your English is not very good. Let us take telephone as an example. They often call you, “Oh, do you want to change your phone company? If you change, you can have such and such rates.” It sounds good. All right we changed ... sometimes we did not even know how we are switched. Oh! Later on [we] found out, as long as you say certain things, it means you will be switched. Then you do not know there are many problems until you get the phone bill.

Since language was the reason for miscommunication I asked Mr Aregawi, whether his two friends were asked to answer the phones or to deal with these people because they were fluent in English. Mr. Aregawi responded:

They are not very capable because they perhaps do not understand either. It is not because of the language problem, but [they] tell you this condition and that condition. This stuff is complicated. [They] understand the language but others – they cannot know. They can’t. They {raising his voice} sounded (...) very good, very good! It turns out to be a rip-off after all {harsh, blaming tone}.

Black African immigrants recognised the limitation of new arrivals in the household to deal with the “complexity” alone and retained that responsibility as a part of their duty as guiding roles. After a few lessons, members of households came up with strategies or solutions to keep their sanity and protect themselves. One strategy was to say no to everything and stick with whatever they had at the time. Mr. Aklog said to me:

Now whenever there is a call about changing [long distance] phone company, we surely tell them no [I] ... we feel this is the best way. He tells you many, many advantages ... we have discovered switching back and forth is not an easy thing. There are many hidden problems associated that we do not know. So we feel that if we do not need to do it, then we avoid it.

Mr. Teka: If you do not send them {i.e., CDs} back, they will charge you, sue you, or something. It is very bothersome. So it makes it easy – just do not want any of it.

Mrs. Hamelmal: Right.
Although the products are portrayed as “benefiting consumers” or “saving consumers’ money,” immigrants and their families refuse to further participate in this profit-making process. They are willing to pay more to avoid psychological and legal complications and unnecessary stress and frustrations. The second reported strategy was taught by friends or relatives who had knowledge about the Australian marketing culture. Immigrants and their families would tell the caller that they do not speak English. Some of them even purposely stressed a foreign accent and used improper grammar, which they demonstrated in their interview. The purpose of this practice was to stop the caller from further explaining the product(s). It was also a strategy to discourage the callers from calling back again. Immigrants reported that this strategy worked sometimes, but not all the time. Some callers would take their few English responses as being able to speak English and refused to discontinue the call. The third strategy was adjusting personal perceptions. Mr. Israel said to me, “You immigrate to a place, you more or less need to pay some tuition [1]. You need to pay some price, to use to buy experience.” In other words, he used re-phrasing to deal with frustrations out of his on-going trial and error. “Be careful” was the phrase that these participants used throughout the interview.

Credit

The regulation and practices of credit in Australia affects immigrants and their families as business and/or transactions are conducted depending on your credit ability and financial strength. Credit history check is used to assess the potential of the prospective applicants for profit making for owners of businesses. A good credit history means a good potential for making profits from this prospective customer. This kind of customer is labelled as good, reliable, honest and trustworthy. Therefore, it is good to approve such a person’s application to open an account for telephone, housing rent, banking and any important and basic aspects such as water and power. The "buy-now, pay-later" approach that helps fuel the Australian economy does not work for minority groups, in particular, for most Black African immigrants.
As described in Chapter Five, immigrants when they first arrive in Australia were surprised and confused when real estate agents, telephone companies, power and water supply companies and banks asked them about credit history and requested their authorisation for clearance checking. Most participants are confronted with this problem in the first few years of arrival when they ask for telephone line connection, housing and power supply. Most participants of this study, Mr. Abdi for example, reported that their application was declined when they apply for telephone connection; or when they want to apply for a house rent, Mr. Melaku for instance, due to their lack of credit ‘worthiness’ or ‘credibility’, because they were casual workers. Others such as Mr. Yussuf were able to be connected only for local calls and his phone was barred for international and domestic distance calls. Mr. Abdi was forced to buy phone cards and go to the public phone to talk with his relatives in Africa. During a rainy day or evening, Mr. Abdi would ask his neighbors (from his home country) and use their phone and would pay them when they get the bill. Likewise, Mr. Yussuf buys a phone card and uses his home phone to get a local line and make a call to Africa. ‘Worthiness’ or ‘credibility’ according to participants’ perception and understanding implies having a secured and permanent full-time employment or being a wealthy person or someone known by the community and/or the public without taking into consideration the client’s character or personality. Only six participants were lucky enough to avoid the investigation and were able to be connected. However, they should be considered as unusual cases. The other encounter with credit history was when immigrants were getting loans for houses or applying for credit cards. Banks turned down eleven immigrants, because their source of income was only social welfare or dependent on casual work. They said the system in Australia works only for the rich and for those who have the secured and full-time permanent jobs. In general, the information the credit institution gathered in most cases restricts allowing only the compilation of negative, as opposed to both positive and negative, information.
Institutional versus Interpersonal Discrimination

As explained in Chapter Two, racism in its interpersonal form is no less insidious or damaging than institutionalised racism to those who are its direct targets. Structural racism has a major impact on the life chances of the subordinate group as a whole but interpersonal racism is how ‘race’ is felt: the words, thoughts and actions that make it clear to both actors (the racist and the immigrant) about their respective places in society. In Chapter One, it was noted that Batrouney (1991) and Cox et al (1999) and in a more detailed manner, Udo-Ekpo (1999) have devoted a section of their studies on discrimination against Black African immigrants in Melbourne and Australia and have reported that Black Africans were the subject of racial discrimination. In this study, eleven incidents of discrimination were identified in immigrant’s stories. They were mostly associated with two signifiers of “the other”: racial background and language/accent. Most of them occurred at the individual level but some at the institutional level.

Individual discrimination or Racism as an Interpersonal Affair

More than one third of the incidents of interpersonal racism discussed by participants were demeaning actions such as avoiding eye contact, mocking the accented English, teasing, and providing rude service. Mrs. Chiluba told me that when she had just arrived in Australia, some people in her workplace would “trick” her because she spoke little English. They would purposely make jokes using unclear English. Once she got out of English classes, she was more capable of avoiding these “tricks” and accepted by her co-workers. She argued this was because “they know that I am not in English class, and they know that I do understand whatever they say against me.” However, her friends in the English class continued to receive racist treatment and were separated from their co-workers.

The stories told by the family of Mr. Nega are also good examples of the role racism plays in the participants’ lives. One story told was about Mr. Nega’s contact with the government staff and the other story was the visit of their son, Mr. Zoble, to a Gym facility close to their suburb. The following are the selected quotes for both stories:
Ayalew: Although you {plural} do not have many experiences with non-African groups, do you think, for example, have you or member of your {plural} household or family or friends been

Mrs. Abadi: you mean discriminated?

Ayalew: by others because you are {plural} Africans or blacks, or due to other reasons?

Mr. Nega: Yes. There should have been. Because your language is not good, people got annoyed. I just had one experience lately. I called a governmental agency. I could not understand and asked the person to please repeat it. His attitude turned bad.

Mrs. Abadi: [You} still can run into few people that talk to you very impolitely. He [her son] asked, “Could I visit this swimming pool,” the facility. As soon as the person saw he was Africans, he said, “yeah, you could. Pay six dollars first.” This is an intentional insult.

Mr. Nega: {jump in} But other whites were treated fairly nicely.

Mrs. Abadi: Yeah! he treated whites very nice. You can see it.

Mr. Nega: I think there is a little bit.

Mrs. Abadi: We do not know until he [their son] came back and told us.

Mr. Nega: {jump in} the first time we went, that woman was very impolite too. Very nasty.

Although these two incidents happened prior to the interview, Mr. Nega and Mrs. Abadi were still slightly emotional when describing the situations. When I asked them about the actions they would take in that kind of situation, Mrs. Abadi’s response was “forget about it and leave.” Mr. Nega’s response was that he would continue to politely ask about the situation. “To me, it is a matter of explaining,” he said. Their responses were similar to other participants when they talked about their experiences.

As noted in Chapter Four, discrimination is very difficult to measure in studies using survey instruments, because its victims are less likely to report it. At best, they may under-report it to avoid long processes of accusations and legal tussles that will not necessarily guarantee them access to housing. Participants of this study were asked if they would file a complaint about unfair treatment in efforts to get housing, or if they were treated unfairly by the police, or on the job. The majority of the participants
replied in the negative. If they lodged a complaint about negative treatment, the fear of reprisal was very real and would result in dismissal. According to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2002) the most frequent reason given by respondents who had experienced racism, abuse or violence who did not report was that they did not think anything useful would come of it or they did not want to make trouble for themselves or their family or were afraid of reprisals. Of those who complained, 70% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the outcome of the report.

Other incidents were more serious, but the most severe form of discrimination was the crime against children known to Ms. Selaam. She said:

Like one of my friends’ children, he was in the secondary school at that time. Some of them went to play soccer after school (in English). There were few immigrants’ children from Middle East and Africa among them. When they finished and went to pick up their backpacks, they found that their backpacks disappeared ... They knew [p] who did it. Two whites. White student. But even they knew that, they dared not to point it out because they felt that they are the racial minority in that school. They are afraid of provoking their revenge.

These reported experiences were consistent with the extensive review by Krieger et al (1993) on racism and “racial” minority’s lived experiences, discussed in Chapter Two. Unlike the studies reviewed by Krieger and her colleagues, Black African immigrants are distinct from the mainstream not only by accented English and ethnic background but also by their physical features (their blackness). Therefore, they are even more vulnerable to discrimination because they have more characteristics that reinforce their identity of “otherness”. Mr Israel’s account is a general one when he said:

In Australia, they despise us and look us low. They think that we are greasy and dirty and they do not consider us worthy to associate with them. In some places we cannot even feel comfort and confident. Racial discrimination exists because there are Australians who believe themselves superior and pure ‘race’.
The depiction of Africans as eager and willing to subject themselves to exploitation, for substandard wages and in working conditions below the threshold of human endurance, provides a rationale for super-exploitation at the hands of Australian employers. The depiction (attitude or belief) that African immigrants are better suited physically for the most menial and low-status, low-paid jobs available provides a legitimation for the inferior social status of Black African immigrants stuck in the lowest orders of Australian industries. Nonetheless, despite the power of such stereotypes, with further experience working in Australia, African immigrants lose their dependency on families and government benefits, and thus become relatively decisive and self-reliant individuals.

Ayalew: Were Africans accepted into the community? How would you characterise relations between Africans, Anglos-Celtics, Asians, Middle Easterners and others?

Mr Tutu: They related real well. And I do not know if it was because of the type of people that they were or the particular job they have or the type of neighbourhood they live. The community really took to them because they were so well, uh I do not want to say the word [p], because I do not know if it was ... that was in order, but they were just quite amenable to what they saw. Everything was new and everything was just awesome to them. And then they could ... No haggling, no nothing, and everybody I communicated with commented that they were so polite and so friendly and so, uh [p]. Just great guys.

Other immigrants also focused more on the interactions amongst Black Africans outside of their own home countries. The high degree of isolation was evident in the interview but mention of the racist acts they might have faced was largely absent.

Ms. Genet said:

Our circles are basically Black Africans. Their circles are basically immigrants from their own countries of origin. Those guys that come in groups and families. They pretty much everybody kind of gravitates toward their own. But there is a whole lot more interaction now outside of our own country of birth. Among all of us, the Black Africans in general. In other words, the circles have intersected but their still is we tend to gravitate to whatever county we might come from.
The high degree of social isolation is corroborated by all three immigrant's testimony above; in addition, the three participants above concurred about the general contours of intra-'race' relations in their new society. The situation clarifies how 'race' is deployed as a power struggle to define the subordinate in ways that justify their unequal access to resources and social institutions. Australian employers and managers used 'race' as a line of division within class blocs to ensure themselves of a steady and cheap supply of immigrant labour. When asked specifically about the racism they experienced as a Black immigrant in the country, respondents downplayed any negative experiences with the white society or they stated that they had little or no contact with the white communities in which they were working or living. Contact with Anglo-Celtic Australians was extremely limited for most immigrants interviewed. During one of my participatory observations in a remote suburb that were organised by Ms. Melanie and her husband Mr Hailom, an interesting discussion ensued when four immigrants who participated in the discussion together were asked about their exposure to racial discrimination:

Ayalew: So can you tell me the racism you experienced during your stay here? You know, what were your experiences relating to the communities that they had gone into ... that were predominantly white?

Mr. Tekle: I didn’t have problems with them. When we went into the stores to buy things, they treated us fine

Mr. Ismail: I have always had good foremen. If you treat yourself bad, you will be treated badly.

Ayalew: And you?

Mr. Fitsum: when I see someone that has a Black skin and facial appearance, and I say “You are from Africa” and they say, [in English] “Oh no, no, no I am not,” or “I don’t speak anything else except English but for sure they are from Africa, and for that matter from part of my own sub-region and yet they don’t speak their mother’s language.

Mr. Hailom: But now they act like they are from here, pretending as white Australians and sometimes as Afro-Americans, but they are black Africans who arrived at their early ages, are always immigrants. They think the language, the hip-hop music and the Aussie accent can make them Australian or Afro-American; they
The discussion of the racism they might have dealt with was diverted into how the four men saw racism within the African Australian community. The participants stated that those Africans who were subjects of racism somehow deserved it because of their bad behaviour. But within the Black African community, those who assimilated were viewed as either internalising racist views about what it was to be an African by saying they don’t speak a language other than Australian style English or else they were acting quite presumptuous about their place in Australian society. For all four men, they knew their place in Australia and that was strictly as immigrant “others” regardless of obtaining the paper that granted them Australian citizenship. The four men never acted “like they were from here” (i.e., Australia). This was the case even though the four men were Australian citizens. In the ensuing discussion, ‘race’ was interpreted as the second-generation losing its culture and its language. Language was viewed by the four men as crucial to their culture and denial of one’s African roots, by pretending to be more white and/or acting like Afro-American blacks (in a similar way acting like a pocho, explained in Chapter Two). The majority of migration scholars assume that assimilation is both a normative ideal and an empirical inevitability. In Chapter Two, it was noted that the assimilation and cultural pluralist positions both view American culture as a melting pot. It is ironic that what these men perceived as racism is what most migration scholars refer to as assimilation.

When members of particular groups subjectively assess their position as located completely outside of the melting pot, the issues of citizenship and racialisation radically question the entire metaphor. The Black Africans, who discussed the issue of racism as African-Australian assimilation, were in effect questioning the notion of an Australian culture and the place of Africans in that culture. For these men mentioned above, assimilation is the embodiment of the Anglo-Celtic racism that is directed toward the Black African population. According to participants of this study, to be Australian is to be white, for that matter they stressed to be Anglo-Celtic and Anglican/Protestant and not even other Europeans. Their place would always be as
immigrants ("others") in Australia, regardless of their citizenship status and stay in the country, their fluent Australian accent or regardless of, as Mr. Hailom commented, "their rap/hip hop music skill or talent". The assimilation position, which argues all immigrants will conform to the established (most often in the Australian case, white, Anglo-Celtic and most often Anglican) or the "Australian middle class" ways of living, is precisely the cultural model that these men above abhor.

Responses from the interviews indicated that even though Africans in Melbourne may have appropriated or even internalised some of the cultural practices of their new society, they still hold dear many aspects of their original culture because, according to participants, these identify them as a people with a rich and civilised cultural heritage that cannot be allowed to be eroded away. Although participants in this study claim they are able to interact freely with the host society, they still maintain close interaction with members of their own ethnic group and the larger African communities. Some actually confine all their interactions to within the African community, particularly to their own ethnic communities. Ms Ruth, who had lived in Australia for over twenty-one years, explains her feelings and concerns:

Ever since I came to Australia from Ethiopia at the age of 11, I've felt an enormous pressure to leave my culture behind in order to survive. Being Ethiopian in those days meant being made fun by classmates who did not understand that the smell clinging to my clothes was not body odour but the food of my country, the food of my mother and her mother before her. I learnt fast not to wear my hair in braids and to hide my pain behind laughter when people teased me about skinny kids with big stomachs and said, "Hey, do your people still live in huts? Do you have fridges? How long did you stay without food before coming to Australia?" I learned how to blend in, how to be just like everybody else. In the process, I lost myself. I forgot the absolute comfort and security I felt when I sat at my mother's feet while she braided my hair. I lost the sense of pride I used to feel when I thought about all that my people have accomplished over years since the reign of Queen of Sheba or her son, King Menelik the 1st. Recently though, I've began to realise that the past I've given up has left a black hole in my self, my identity. I have began to understand that I'm cheating myself, as well as others, if I don't share my culture, if I don't celebrate my heritage,
if I don’t stop homogenising, I have to begin reclaiming and stop apologising for who I am.

Similarly Ms Selaam also explained that:

In order to appreciate, and perhaps involve in other cultures, one has to be well versed and be proud in her/his own culture. Once the base is well established, building on it with different elements is not much an issue; and those who preach us ‘be like the Romans when you are in Rome’ is nothing else but staunch defenders and perpetrators of assimilation.

But unlike others, Mr. Abraham has his own view in this regard:

For those Africans who are born here in Australia, it might be better to consider themselves culturally as Australians and then study their heritage to give them some sort of balance and stability in dealing with others. Whereas those who came here in their early ages and later, might want to appreciate first their cultural background and then adapt to the new environment.

Mr. Tutu considers himself a proud Black African and has a child living in Africa. Mr. Tutu has taken the racial and ethnic issues to heart as these are played out in Australia in the media, in the schools and in the society in general, and the issue of his children’s education concerns him the most. He said that:

I know that if I bring my child here, he will have problems when going through adolescence, I would like him to have an identity and I want him to be treated with respect. And he will never have it here, you know, so that’s why I have to make a decision for him; I don’t want him to go through that, through that crisis of being disrespected and having to worry about that. I don’t want him to build an inferiority complex. I wanted him to be proud of his root and identity first.
The discussion then went on to an explanation of where the areas of conflict with immigrants lie. Mr. Tutu also said that:

Mr. Tutu: Australia is the only country in the world where I am always reminded that I am Black, and I've travelled a lot. Because of the way this society is, I found out Australia to be racist society, it is based on feelings and perceptions rather than on fact.

Ayalew: Well, let me ask you this, with all of the problems you have with discrimination by both whites and non-whites in Australia, if you had to choose between a white and Black, which one would you marry?

Mr. Tutu: I have my wife and a child back in Africa, but if I was single, of course the black woman.

Mr. Malaku said that there is more interracial relationship in New Zealand, where he lived for over four years, and that the racial climate there is not as bad as in Australia. But the two countries are the same “with racial discrimination, employment, friction, hate, although in New Zealand it is more hidden under the ground than here”; he sees the differences only in degree and in the better social services which are in place in New Zealand. Mr. Chissano realises the problems in others’ lives but has not experienced any discrimination against him by white Australians.

**Institutional discrimination**

According to Healy et al (1994), “Structures such as laws, policies and administrative practices can work to keep people apart and help for racist attitudes” (cited in Udo-Ekpo, 1999: 13). These attitudes can take root in schools, institutions and in the media and perpetuate racism; such attitudes are still prominent in Australia today (in Udo-Ekpo, 1999: 13). The organising feature of the institutionalised racism that Black immigrants faced was the marked degree of segregation that they experienced. Whether the locale is the workplace, the community or the neighbourhood, the common theme of their experience was the high degree of social isolation. Coupled with the interpersonal acts of racism, which have been detailed in the previous
section, institutional racism provided an effective system for restricting immigrants to the most menial and low-status, low-paid, jobs available in Australia.

There were two incidents of institutional discrimination: one relating to discrimination in the recognition of qualifications received outside of Australia and the other relating to discrimination in education services like the English class programs at school. The former was elaborated by Mrs. Chiluba when she talked about her struggle to gain recognition for her pre-immigration qualifications. She said:

I also went to community school {in English} to study again! ... The company I went recognised ... They look at your, look at your diploma earned here. They do not care your diploma from Africa or anywhere outside of Australia. It is useless [I]. They do not even look at that. They only look at the one from here. Like my classmates, some of them went to find a job. They looked at their diploma. She said as long as you have this diploma, you could find low level like nursing assistant jobs very easily.

Her experience was not uncommon. Australia has had a long and chequered history in relation to the recognition of NESB qualifications (Iredale, 1987, 1988; Castles et al, 1989; Mitchell et al, 1990). Historically, Australian labour unions and professional bodies have maintained a policy of controlling overseas trained immigrants' access to suitable work. Hawthorne (1994), Pearce et al (1995), O'Loughlin and Watson (1997), McConnachie et al (1988), Udo-Ekpo (1999), Cox et al (1999) and Batrouney (1991) have reported that prospective employers would not accept immigrants' educational qualifications and skills simply because they are obtained in Africa or elsewhere in a NESB countries. Most participants were polite about the length of time it can take for professional migrants to gain work suited to their qualifications as Mrs. Chiluba reported:

One of the problems is that Australian employers want to talk to local referees before hiring staff but our referees live overseas. Problems of distance and language complicate the process when all your work experience is overseas.
The other institutional discrimination encountered by participants in this research was associated with English programs at schools in Australia. These programs are intended to promote immigrant's language proficiency. However, these programs perpetuate the identity of "otherness" and reinforce immigrant's subordinate marginal positions. This is best illustrated by the story presented above about Mrs Chiluba's encounter with individual discrimination. Once she got out of English class, she was free from demeaning treatment and accepted by most of her co-workers because "they know that I am not in English class program". By contrast, her friends in English class program continued to receive discriminatory treatment and were separated from the mainstream group. What her English class friends experienced was a consequence derived from the context constructed by English class program for these students' identity; that is, as new comers to the nation and/or the "others".

In addition, high school students who participated in this study commented about their experiences in their English classes. They suggested that the English class program could be a mechanism for producing future citizens who have lower levels of competence to perform roles valued by the dominant culture. The first problem was the test that NESB immigrants have to take when attending schools in Australia. The process is to determine English class placement. Ms. Selaam talked about her frustration with the test when she arrived in Australia. She said:

I felt from the beginning, they [officials] just feel you have to be in English class and then they give you a test. Of course, that test only has few parts ... for example; you are given a segment of audiotape and asked to say aloud what you heard. You just come here; you are not possible to understand it one hundred percent. You also need to say it. They simply ignored immigrant's abilities in reading and grammar. They all ignore them.

This failure to recognise the difference between oral, aural and written comprehension of English isolates immigrants and excludes them from society's resources or aspects of them, such as education, employment, housing and political and legal
representation. In their exasperation with the supervisor, the participants in one of the
group discussions commented: “They think that if you don’t speak English, then you
don’t think, they think you are ignorant” declared Mr. Goshu, and then wanting to
impress upon me Mr. Nega said again, “Really, they believe we can not think!” Mr.
Aklog elaborated the critique further:

The bosses themselves do not know how to do the work – they have to ask us. I had a
supervisor while I was working in the farm in rural Victoria, Australian-born Asian,
and he spoke perfect English – well, he did not know any other language other than
English, and my Asian colleagues who worked with me in the farm used to tell us
that the supervisor is an ABC [Australian-born Chinese].

Mr Goshu responded with a knowing chuckle, and pointed out that “Speaking English
does not keep you from being a damned fool!” with renewed indignation. Mrs.
Sossina resumed the critique:

They can get people who know how to speak English, who even know to read and
write English very well! That does not make them intelligent, and it does not make
them intelligent for the job, and it does not mean they know how to work ... anyway,
some of the bosses themselves do not even know how to read, like my young
supervisor – you could bring him this piece of paper, he would look at it and he does
not know.

Udo-Ekpo has summarised Black African situation in Australia in the following way:

To the Africans, racism comes in the form of racial taunts and an endless series of
trivial encounters inflected by negative assumptions about their racial origin, their
culture, work ethics, and their place in Australian society ... They are difficult to
understand without some first-hand experience. For the overwhelming majority of
Africans in Australia, racism is being called a ‘nigger’. It is being treated like an
outcast because of your colour; it is going into a shop and having your bag searched
because of the erroneous assumption that, being black, you are probably a shoplifter
it is not being taken seriously as a qualified professional just because you are
different; it is not getting a job for which you are qualified and seeing it readvertised;
it is passing someone on the street and realising that the muttered word was an
obscenity you were meant to hear; it is being falsely accused of serious
misdemeanour in the workplace, given 'special treatment' and hounded out of your
job, just to be humiliated. It is being refused rental accommodation on the pretext that
your presence will attract 'socially undesirable' elements to the neighbourhood (Udo-

‘Race’ and Class in the Adaptation Process of Black
Africans in Australia

Four major adaptation patterns will be discussed in this section. These patterns of
adaptation are: (1) Connections with members of the host society (2) placement in
racial categories and the immigrant’s reactions to this placement (3) rapport with
members of non-Black Africans minority groups and (4) experiences with racial
discrimination.

Connection with host society

To examine the nuances of connections with members of the host society, participants
were asked to indicate the kind of reception they faced when they first came to
Australia along an ordinal scale ranging from 1 (very friendly) to 5 (very unfriendly).
It is important to remember that the majority of participants agreed that they were
received in a friendly or very friendly manner. Considering the high incidence of
warm reception accorded to participants, it was expected that an equally high
proportion of participants of the DSEIHQ survey would agree that they are able to
interact and socialise with members of the host society. The figures in Chapter Four
also illustrates that interaction with the host society contributes to participants’
familiarisation with the character and workings of their new society. However, while
a significant number of participants gave reasons for being unable to interact with the
host society; it is also important to recognise that many among the study population
were able to maintain only “superficial” interactions. In other words, the fact that the
majority of participants claimed they had extensive interactions with host-society
friends, work-mates, and associates cannot be automatically correlated with close interactions geared towards culture learning.

The reasons given by those who indicated that they are not fully able to interact and identify with the host society are of analytical significance. While some among them frankly admitted that their lack of interaction and identification is simply a product of their own introvertive and insular nature (because they are often not predisposed to interacting with Europeans in general), many pointed out that Black Africans do not seem to be welcomed or accepted in Melbourne and that they are excluded from full participation in the general life of Australian society. According to Mr. Onimode:

This society is very much prejudiced against Black in general; they always stereotype and discriminate against 'people of colour'. What nags at me is that they underrate and insult the intelligence and capacity of Blacks to succeed or excel. Most white people think that Blacks are stupid, lazy, women hunters, street fighters, and all those negative things. But how can you know people's abilities without giving them the opportunity to prove their worth? It is a difficult thing to be a minority and a Black in this country.

Mr. Kabila, whose hopes and aspiration for a better life in Australia obviously seem to have been shattered, bitterly complained that:

For some inexplicable reason white Australians are fearful and distrustful of all Black people and so tend to implicate and associate them with almost every bad incident – implying that Blacks are 'problems' or 'trouble-makers'. When there is an incident where a Black person is involved, they blow it out of proportion, especially the media. The prejudice, stereotyping. And skin colour stigmatisation that Blacks face in Australia is too much, but then it is so subtle that you could hardly detect it.

In general, participants were of the opinion that it is the host society that excludes and distances itself from Africans (Blacks) and not the other way round. In excluding others, the host society creates a set of difficulties which impact negatively on the
adaptation process of certain groups of immigrants, especially Blacks. For instance, Ms. Selaam bemoaned the situation where:

The police are constantly picking on Blacks and making them the object of police harassment in Melbourne. They think that Blacks are not good people. The situation we Blacks face in this country is a difficult one indeed.

In terms of adaptation, this can have a psychological effect on people. It therefore came as no surprise when some of the participants indicated their dissatisfaction with Melbourne society; they initially had an image of Australia as an egalitarian society where people had equal chances of competing and improving their social, economic and material circumstances, which quickly became clouded by barriers and intimidation. Mr. Teka stated that, “Despite the peace and material wealth that Australia enjoys, not all people (ethnic groups) share in these because it appears that in this land of abundant opportunities for self-advancement and equality, some are more equal than others”. However, when participants were asked if, given the overall situation that they face in Melbourne, they would want to go back home to their countries of origin, almost all answered in the affirmative in relation to long-term plans, but for now they had no such plans. It is difficult to determine when this “long-term” plan will be set in motion but such an attitude has very strong implications for their overall adaptation to conditions in their new homeland. Identification with the host society is a strong impetus that naturally spurs on adaptation. Otherwise, the tendency is to distance one’s self. In which case, the new society becomes even more inaccessible and there is no desire to feel at home there.
Placement in Racial Categories

Most participants are placed in the wrong racial/nationality categories, and have commented that they were annoyed with the wrong placement of their racial categories. Ms. Selaam, for instance, commented that:

Well, I get upset most of the time, because I think you cannot judge people by appearances or you cannot generalise that being African as only South Africa. And I tell them that I am not from there. And then they would ask me where am I from if I am not from South Africa. And they will tell me that I am from Caribbean and sometimes from South Pacific. They only know you are from the Caribbean, or the Pacific, that is it. That is why they say you are Jamaican or Haitian, or Papua New Guinean. I try to explain to them, so they know about my continent and where I come from. So I get upset, because I tell them I am from Africa. I try to explain eh, you know, where Africa is, because nobody knows that Africa is not only South Africa. They don't know Africa is a continent composed of more than fifty-four countries. Eh, they don't know that South Africa is only one of the fifty-four countries of Africa. Makes me upset.

Mr. Melaku was definitely not pleased to be called South African. He argued that:

Mr. Melaku: They usually think I am Caribbean or the Pacific Islands, and when I told them I am neither Caribbean nor Pacific Islander but African, they think I am South African,

Ayalew: How do you feel about this?

Mr. Melaku: I do not like that, because they think I am from Caribbean or the Pacific Islands. They think my culture is Caribbean or Pacific Islander. A guy in the work place told him I am Ethiopian when he asked me where I am from. He asked me "How could you be light-skinned with straight hair, and narrow nose?" He does not believe me. They think Africa is only South Africa, that irritates me too, you know.

Ayalew: You are not happy with the label of Caribbean, Pacific or South African?

Mr. Melaku: They tried to pigeonhole me, for example, they think everything I do is not African but perhaps from Caribbean or the Pacific style. Not the African style.
Whenever people, even so called broad minded, and the good and kind white Australians make African jokes, they say to me: “Oh. I’m sorry”.

Although participants in this study are all Black Africans from sub-Saharan Africa, they do not have the same skin colour. Black Africans from some parts of Ethiopia, some parts of Eritrea, and from the Islands of Seychelles, Mauritius, Djibouti and Somali are light skinned, and are not regarded by Australians as Black Africans. When an Ethiopian or a person from Somalia is asked where s/he is from and the reply is “I am from Africa” in most cases, Australians would not take their word as true because their perception is that all Black Africans have the same skin colour and physical features. For example, the people in the community where Mr. Teka lives think he is Caribbean or Middle Eastern, although he is a Black African. He said that: “The people in my community think I am either Caribbean, and I do not have problems with them. But I am hurt for being misplaced.”

Rapport with non-Black Africans including white Australians

While rapport with Anglo-Celtic society is an important part of adaptation, participants’ rapport with other immigrants outside of their native land also illustrates adaptation processes. Mr. Melaku explained that colour of skin does not determine the goodness of a person and said: “My friends are Yugoslav, Italians, Greeks, Arabs and Africans.” His sentiment is voiced by sixteen other participants who do not have a preferred racial category, but still work or otherwise socialise with any racial groups, as long as they like the character of the person. While seventeen participants do not have problems with inter-ethnic relations, eleven of the participants interviewed reported they have problems with Asians (Vietnamese, Chinese, Koreans, Taiwanese, and Japanese). According to Ms. Genet, “Asians in general are a little bit different, and they are a little bit more prejudiced than the other groups. They are too close to each other.” She added that the refusal of Asians to speak English in the presence of co-workers, who do not understand their language, is a form of prejudice. She also feels that there is an attitude of exclusion when Asians realise that others are not Asian, they are very close to their own nationals.
Most participants in this study stated that they worked in the same workplace with other ethnic groups, but as Mr. Israel stated:

Mr. Israel: I worked with others such as Blacks, Asians, and Middle Easterners.

Ayalew: Did you ever talk with them or get to know them?

Mr. Israel: No, they worked together and we worked together, no mixing. They lived away from us too. I did not talk with them.

Mr. Melaku reported that he gets along with all ethnicities “beautifully,” and for that matter only mentions problems with Asians because:

They are very selfish you know, and they only care for other Asians. They do more for each other, but would not help someone else from outside their racial groups.

Mr. Nega also says of Asians that:

I have nothing against the individual person, but as a group they are exclusionists. They do not consider other people; they do not consider that you do not speak their language. They have to leave their language behind when they are with other people, and they do not do that. For example, in the workplace, they speak their language while I am with them, I tell them that I do not speak Asian, and ask them to speak in a common language and their attitude changes, as if they do not want to help me, you know!!

Ms Martha said that her expectations of whites were not met and said:

I was disappointed with my partner’s mother, who herself is a Jewish migrant because yes, she believes her son should not fall in love for a black woman. She tried several times to influence him not seeing me because I am a black and for that matter a woman living in a high rise apartment. My partner had
difficult times as a result of the pressure of his mother’s interference between our relationships. When I become aware of the situation, I felt humiliated and disgraced and instructed him not to see me anymore. But since his love to me was genuine he told his mother to respect me or to stop seeing him. Now she realised he is from his heart and began respecting and treating me as her daughter-in-law. But I know that was not from her heart.

Like Ms. Martha, Mr. Aregawi complained about second generation Southern and Eastern Europeans’ attitudes of superiority against people of colour. At times, they feel superior to the offspring of the Anglo-Celtic Australians. Most participants mentioned the discrimination indigenous Australians suffer, as well as their anger. This was especially the case for Mr. Adamu, who is married to an Australian woman and has had children with her. He has given much thought to the historical reasons for the racial problems of indigenous Australians.

Experiences with racial discrimination

This discussion of racial discrimination considers racial discrimination or tolerance in employment, as well as the immigrant’s reaction to this treatment; and friendliness and openness or otherwise of whites and other immigrant groups towards Black Africans. Despite the many problems coloured peoples in Australia face with discrimination, not all racial discrimination is experienced in the same ways by victims as discussed in the literature. Nor are all victims aware of the socio-historical context of racial discrimination in Australia. Likewise, Ms. Melanie’s experience may also not be aware of the history of immigrants’ experience in Australia in terms of how they are stratified in the country and how they experience this stratification. This means that Ms. Melanie’s emotional involvement with the issue of discrimination and racism is readily apparent and forthcoming, rather than being more subtle and nuanced in her reactions. For example, Ms. Melanie is aware of the low income of the blue-collar immigrant workers in Australia, although she does not link this disparity with either ‘race’ or class. She only says, “blue collar workers ... have to work hard and long hours for minimum wages,” and that “I admire immigrants ... because they have to struggle hard to let ends meet.” Ms. Melanie does not mention discrimination
in the case of non-Anglo-Celtic Europeans, as her consideration of 'race' appears to focus solely on relations between Blacks and other non-white immigrants rather than between all immigrants and whites.

Conversely, Ms Selaam reported the problems, which erupted in Footscray in the wake of a Somali-born young man who was subjected to racist abuse and beaten unconscious at Footscray Police Station. Hundreds of people from all 'race's, including white Australians, marched through Footscray in early October 2003 and rallied at the Footscray police station. The Sunday Age reported the incident commented above by Ms. Selaam:

... the white skullcap the young Somali wore attracted two transit police officers after he boarded a train at Flemington station on Tuesday, 7 October 2003 while he was on his way to TAFE science classes at Victoria University talking about him and followed him from one platform to another at North Melbourne station where they demanded to see his ticket and wrongly accused him of theft after they noticed he had in his pocket a friend's driver's license. He said he "did not come to Australia to get this sort of brutal treatment" If the police are doing this, how can you feel safe?" ... in the police station where he was called a 'stupid Osma' and "stupid Negro" and repeatedly kicked by an unknown number of officers until he lost consciousness. After he was forcibly ejected from the building, he received first aid at the University before being taken by ambulance to Western Hospital where he was treated for a dislocated thumb and bruised ribs. (The Sunday Age, December 7, 2003, p. 8)

The situation upset several Black Africans including Ms Selaam. She said that:

The most important issue I feel I had to face [in Australia] is to understand the culture of this country ... I have a feeling that discrimination still exists and that is why I believe the government both at federal and state governments level have implemented Equal Employment Opportunity Act. Otherwise, if there was no discrimination in the first place in the society there was no need of implementing the Act into the Australian law. But racism is deep rooted I guess.
Mrs. Chiluba suggested that:

The racial climate in Melbourne resulted in being treated differently than the rest of other immigrants ... If they have a black they will treat them (...) a little bit worse than they will treat the Japanese or the Chinese; in a negative way, o.k. they are just prejudiced... well I go both sides, you know, and sometimes I say the Blacks are right, sometimes the whites are right; I am in the middle. Sometimes I identify with both sides.

Mrs. Chiluba, although not pleased with the attitude of those black Africans who arrived when they were very young, nevertheless does not equate their attitude towards her with discrimination. When questioned about the ways she experienced discrimination in Australia, Mrs Chiluba said, “I do not have any experience of racial discrimination against me.” But she admits that “As I said above, I met a couple of other immigrants, and they told me they do not get treated that well. Yeah, they got more problems with the whites than [they do with the] Asians or others”.

Neither Ms. Melanie nor Mrs. Chiluba attributes attitudes directed against them as discrimination, but readily point out discrimination when directed against other people of colour, even when other Blacks are involved. The question then arises as to whether Mrs. Chiluba understands what discrimination actually entails. Yet she was capable of describing the existence of prejudice of one ethnic group against the other in Africa, where ethnicities are known to discriminate against each other for control of power and resources (for example she mentioned conflicts in Rwanda along ethnic lines). Despite the fact that Mrs. Chiluba said she had never had problems, the instances of Australian-born Greeks and Italians who did not treat her well because they see themselves as superior to her are clearly acts of discrimination, however subtle in degree. When she was asked why the children of Southern and Eastern European immigrants whose parents had suffered discrimination, act against immigrants of her kind, she reported that this situation was a matter of
simply [inferiority] complex. Since their parents had passed a very difficult days they want to compensate by pretending themselves as Anglo-Celtics for they are white and have no accent. In other words, they have to find some one to compensate or cover their complex. That is it, no other reason, but as I said [inferiority] complex.

Mr Mesfin says that the treatment of him by whites depends on

...the way you approach them, you talk, you walk, you smile, you face, they are not going push you out, they just going talk to you. I have no problems with whites, you know, maybe because I have been out in the public working and you know, we get along pretty well.

However, Mr Mesfin admits that occasionally painful things happen in his place of employment. For example he said that:

Well, you know, sometimes, at work, something would happen, like they would have eh, shoplifting, the white co-worker would say: “Look, one of your kind has just stolen something, and yet that person is not my kind. We do not know whether the person is black, we never see the person, but it is taken for granted that a shoplifter is a black” You know, it made me mad. They think blacks are thieves or all thieves are blacks ... So now when it happened, when the actual thief is caught and is a white person, I would make it my duty to say: Look, that thief whom we are seeing is your kind. Then I felt bad, really bad about it, you know, because I am encouraging and promoting racism. I felt guilty and bad. It is [racism] very bad and it is getting worse, there is no way it is getting better.

Mr. Aregawi describes how he experienced discrimination on the job when he was employed as a sales man in a department store. He stated that:

... you can feel that way, [that you are discriminated against], because I was working with four other different persons over there. It could be the language, but I was OK thanks to my effort, my English had improved a lot; but I don’t know but they call the white one back more than me and more than the other three [coloured] persons. The white somebody that was a part-time. We the three of us have been full-time. We had
stayed longer that the white one and we had been with seniority rights. That is the way I feel, I felt I am being discriminated by my employers. I felt I am excluded. Now, for that moment you feel, it is painful, you can't avoid it, you are a human being; but after a while, I am a very adjusting person. I just take it the way it is. I don't get into a fight and argument and whatsoever you know.

Mr. Aregawi feels discriminated against, more because of his status as an immigrant than as a Black African, and feels that most whites are kind to him, but that some “... discriminate a lot against others, especially if you are a coloured immigrant ... I mean you feel it, the way they treat you, because they think they are better than you”. During one of the group discussions held for this study, Mr Goshu referred to the practice of management at work as:

Well, I don't know, maybe it is discrimination — but you can be working here for years, and then some white guy will bring along a brother or cousin or whatever, and that person immediately got into some cleaner job, while the rest of us are still doing the dirtiest jobs. My friend has been here for 4 years, I am here 3 years — we have more seniority, but still make less money than others on their first day of work, just because they speak English; we know they [the bosses] pay them more, even when they don't know anything about the job.

Mr. Kedir said that in his case, “I feel the discrimination, because they just label you, even though they do not know about you, they, they just label you from the beginning”. He said that from his experience with discrimination he has learnt to “always listen to what they say and they teach, I do not know, they do not like Blacks.” Although the discrimination is not directed at him, he still feels the pain of their remarks on others, but he does not complain of discrimination in other instances outside of the work situation.

Mr. Mesfin was proud to be a minority, an immigrant and a Black African and said that in regard to discrimination he is unsure whether attitudes he had encountered have to do with his racial background. He said that:
In terms of school I have had a lot of privileges being a minority or from a racial background. A lot of opportunities and support and a lot of help that I probably would not have had if I were not a minority. I am grateful for that. In other words, my being an immigrant had privileged me.

‘Race’ and class have also figured positively in Mr. Onimode’s life in Melbourne. He remarked:

You want to know something? I am going to tell you straight from the heart; people always treat me nicely. My son said: “Pa, people always treat you nicely.” I said to him: “My son, you smile at people, they will smile at you.” It all depends on your attitude. God gave colours so he made different colours, but all are one on the image of God (...). My problem is only with the second and third generation Greeks, Italians, Yugoslavians and Croatians, Eastern Europeans and Asians. As to regard to whites, I have no problem except the white in the lowest stratum like what they call them the dole bludgers, the unions and the middle class peoples as well. These people do not like immigrants in general. They think that their life has been affected by the coming of immigrants to Australia. They think immigrants will steal the country. They feel they are the only true Australians.

He added that the treatment he gets now is far better than in the earlier days of his stay in Australia. He said that Asians, as well as whites and blacks, discriminate against him. He argued that:

They (whites, blacks and Asians) want their own books; how God is black or coloured ... they teach their kids racism, it is good to teach your child to be proud; but it is too much. But both the blacks and the Asians had painful experience, they experienced a lot, maybe that is the reason for their attitude.
Of whites Mr. Onimode added:

I do not agree with how whites think. Sometimes they smile and laugh with you but ... when they are with their own people, you know how they feel about other people. They give you a smile on the street, when they pass by you, it is a false smile, stemmed out of suspicion, fear and mistrust, a sign of protection if she is a woman who is passing you by. I do not like artificial smile if it is not from one’s heart.

Ms. Selaam, is aware of the problems of other people of colour. She describes her looks as “fortunate.” She stated that:

I feel fortunate [to look the way I look] because my ‘race’ is ambiguous enough that both coloured and whites of all sorts accept me. I like having such a varied heritage. I am thought of as exotic looking and charming woman, and get lots of attention and admiration. I never see myself as minority or as foreigner or immigrant as they call us here. Since I became a citizen of Australia, I regarded myself not as a black Australian, not as the immigrant Australian, but the Australian, the same way the mainstream Australian look themselves. But they don’t want me to feel that way. What has changed since I came here is that I am much more aware of ‘race’, and how ingrained racism is here.

Ms Selaam further commented “the big or upper class and/or proper white [the Anglo-Celtics] have not discriminated against me in Australia”, but instead “they have been kind to me at my place of employment. I have been invited dinner several times”. Mr Melaku too has respect and admiration for the upper class of proper white [the Anglo-Celtics]. He said “I have come to believe Aussies as friendly, supportive and kind, although that support and friendship soon will be terminated and the relationship turn to the opposite when they are criticised, because of their defensive attitude”. This is similar to Mr Israel and Mr Kemal who claimed the good and kind employers or as ‘luck’ as we will see below in the discussion with Mr Kemal, Mr Israel and others. It is also similar to Hage’s assertion that Whites place themselves in the position of having to decide whether to be tolerant, to be accepting, to be open to
diversity, and that they can, at any moment, withdraw this tolerance: they can become intolerant, intercepting, and closed off when they wish so; or that the ‘Good white nationalists (who are regarded as supportive, kind here in this study) would in actual term change themselves and act as the ‘Evil white Nationalists’ and are actually become more similar than they are different (Hage, 1998: 232).

Unlike other participants, Mr Fasil’s life does not seem to be configured negatively by ‘race’ and class. He responded to questions about racial discrimination by saying:

I don’t know; as far as I know, I didn’t ... I told you; I work with whites [Anglo-Celts], middle class whites ...Ehh ... discrimination, that, well, uhh, as far as I uhh ... have never really experienced that, I can say.

Ms. Fatuma commented that:

People always seem to hate someone in the world. They are always looking for a black sheep. I had felt this even in Canada. Here in Australia too. Things don’t get well, and it’s the immigrants who are blamed. But they should not forget that Australia was built up by immigrants (others). They never dare to either appreciate or name specific groups.

Mr. Nkrumah also feels that, “... there’s a lot of racism going on and they just look at you from the outside, not from the inside, for who you are. In terms of discrimination, like Mr. Fasil and Mr. Abrham, Mr. Kebede (whose partner is a white Aussie woman) also has not experienced any problems in Australia, but is aware of the problems other racial groups face. When he was asked how he was treated when he worked as a social worker, he said that:

... I had a fantastic employer, a woman, and white one. I had nothing to complain about, I was just like a family. The difference between me and other immigrants is that they have to be fortunate, because there are whites that are very good to their
employees and then there are those who really want to treat their employees like slaves. Mine is a fantastic Aussie white woman.

When I repeated the question on racial discrimination to Mrs Chiluba her responses suggest that her experiences seem to be limited to isolated incidents when she went shopping. She said that:

... I don't know if it's discrimination, may be it was fear. But you love children, right, in Africa children are seen as angels or saints, so you see a little boy who maybe laughing at something, and looks at you smiling and you want to touch the child, and the mother pulls the child away. Maybe it's fear and suspicion, or may be she thinks we are dirty, I don't know.

Finally, I will discuss the dominant language invoked by participants (sense of being “lucky”) to explain the overwhelmingly positive subjective evaluations by participants. Most respondents in this study did not express a negative evaluation of their lived experiences. The consistent answer I got when participants were asked if they were mistreated by employers was an emphatic, ‘No’.

Ayalew: did you ever have difficulties or problems with employers?

Mr. Melaku: Oh no ... no, no, no, no, no.

Previously in the chapter, it is noted that Mr. Kebede had expressed the same sentiment regarding his “fantastic employer.” Mr. Kemal who was working in a factory performing process work when he first arrived to Australia reported a less emphatic response:

The employer would pick us up from train station to where the work would be done and when the work was done the employer would take us back to the train station on his way home. We were three of us. I was lucky, I ... with a good employer, a good Christian. He was Australian, white man. He saw that I did not have nice clothes and
he bought me good clothes from second hand shop. So I put it on because he gave it to me. A gift from a good Christian employer. And if I had known to speak English, I would have requested to stay with him but I did not know and quit the job after two months.

If immigrants seemed to exhibit dissatisfied attitudes, there certainly would be a strong basis for this belief based on the description of their experiences as we have seen. But a commonly immigrants when evaluating their experiences were positive as they attributed their particular circumstances to luck. Mr. Israel, who worked for a farmer in the early years of his arrival described:

The employer [the owner] was responsible for the workers and all the time they were there. It was lucky for us that we got a very nice farmer. He took eight of us, all men. We were all from Ethiopia, Sudan and Eritrea and Uganda. We worked picking apples and fruits. Since none of us knew that type of work, the boss went to show us how we should do it. He told us how we should stand so that our backs would not hurt so much. Heck, our backs hurt anyway. By evening time we could not straighten ourselves. And how everybody laughed! Yes, there was so much laughter and teasing. We were all laughing and poking fun with each other; but the money was at last very good, very good payment from a good Aussie employer.

Most I interviewed expressed that their specific experiences were bearable because they too were extremely lucky. The good relations that Mr. Kemal had with the good Christian employer and the lucky Mr. Israel who has a nice employer or the fantastic white woman employer Mr Kebede has, were all attributed to their luck of happening upon a good-natured employer. Similarly, when Mr Kemal was asked if he was mistreated, he replied:

I have no reason to say this, or that, I will simply tell the truth. I have always had good luck, I do not know why. I always had work, and the people have always treated me well. I can not say that I have been treated bad.
When asked about the housing and other social conditions, Mr Isreal and Mr Kedir told me they were very good. When pressed for more detailed responses, Mr Israel and others provided the details of the specific aspects of the total racial segregation they experienced, their insertion and maintenance into the bottom levels of the capitalist labour process and the deplorable working conditions, and a set of lived experiences that could best be described as managed and controlled. Above in this chapter and the previous one I have described what Mr Israel and others have provided. The inevitable question here is why? Why do the participants speak favourably of their experiences only to contradict themselves in the process of recollecting the details of their lived experiences? This will be discussed in the next Chapter.

Summary

It has been shown in this chapter that 'race' is a key factor in the lives of the Black African immigrants. Many immigrants were targets of discrimination due to their 'race', both in its interpersonal form as well as in its institutional form. Even Ms. Melanie, in her supervisory class location, was unable to exert her designated authority amongst her workers due to fear of reprisal based on her 'race'. And for most of the immigrants who enter Australia at a lower class location than held in Africa as a result of immigration policy, class has combined with 'race' and caused more difficulties for them as they have attempted to adapt to their lives in Australia. Gender and religion may also have had an impact on Ms. Melanie's and Ms. Selaam's experiences. However, this area has not been explored as the aim of this study is to investigate the effect of 'race' and class in the participant's lived experiences. Despite the obvious accounts of racism, discrimination and prejudice described by the immigrants, it was interesting to be presented with an almost uniform and absolute denial of being a recipient of these attitudes. Even more interesting was that their consideration of discrimination was largely limited to how they may have discriminated against others.
In the next chapter, I will discuss both interpretations of immigrants' stories and the implications for their lived experiences. The final chapter on interpretation, deals with the issues through deeper comparisons and explanations of the issues immigrants deal with, why they choose certain managing strategies over others, why discrimination is denied, and what the prospects are for immigrants, given their background and the social climate that prevails in Australia. Recommendations and ideas for future research will also be discussed.
Chapter Seven

Conclusions

I am surprised at their [Australians] advanced technology and educational system. I greatly admire at the abundant availability of food, consumer goods, clothing, and automobiles and of the electronic and mechanical appliances that make the workplace and the home more productive and efficient. I am also surprised at the freedom, religious tolerance and their democratic system and at the diversity of the nation. Yet I am very much appalled by crime, violence, drugs, the homeless, sexual morality, lack of respect for elderly and the parents, and more than anything else, I decry by racism, bias, stereotype and prejudice Australians have towards peoples of like my colour and also at their individualistic and at their ignorance of other cultures and countries.

(Mr. Melaku, participant of this study)

Introduction

The purpose of this critical ethnography research was to explore and examine the dynamic of ‘race’ and class in the everyday lives of Black African immigrants in Melbourne – what it means to them, in the historical, socio-cultural, economic and political context of Australia – and how these two factors affect their lives. This study’s consideration of the history of immigration in Australia has drawn out a central contradiction underlying Australian society. Because the country’s population was too small to provide cheap labour, it had to import immigrants throughout its history. But the presence of these immigrants has posed a fundamental problem in that Australian nationhood was constructed as ‘white’, Anglo-Celtic and Anglican. A key question, then, has been how to incorporate these racial ‘others’ whose labour is so central to the Australian economy. The central contradiction explored continues today and is evident in the racialised treatment of immigrants of colour and their incorporation into the Australian economy as low-skilled workers.
This chapter addresses the specific experiences of Black African immigrants in Australia as a result of ‘race’ and class and includes the discussion of the existing studies of African immigrants. Looking at the intersections of ‘race’ and class in their lived experiences is the unique contribution of the study. The task is to analyse the impact of ‘race’ and class rather than to enumerate cultural characteristics or supposed characteristics. The chapter is organised into six sections. The first section elaborates on the findings revealed from the quantitative analysis provided in Chapter Four. The second section constitutes the comparison and contrast between my findings the traditional analysis and the literature; focusing initially on areas of ongoing adaptation and secondly on the social and psychological adjustments made by immigrants in those areas of ongoing adaptations. The third section elaborates on the findings revealed by the critical analysis of ethnography; and the comparison and contrast between my findings and the literature on immigration policy, class, Western imperialism and Australian capitalism are discussed. The fourth section provides an overall interpretation of the study as a whole. The first four sections are the different perspectives in which I analyse the data. These sections will locate my findings within the current immigration literature to explore their similarities and differences to provide possible explanations for the differences. The fifth section discusses the issue of being ‘the lucky’. Following this section, questions are raised and discussed about the implications of this study. The last section includes recommendations for future research and provides concluding remarks. There are many directions for further research. I only selected a few areas or ideas to focus on in this section. This chapter expands upon the dialogues and interpretation of the findings and critically analyse.

Findings of the Quantitative Analysis

As newly arrived actors in the adaptation process the adaptation of Black African immigrants in Melbourne could be described as being at the rudimentary or embryonic stage. Like other newcomers in new socio-cultural environments, Black Africans encounter certain difficulties both as individuals and as a group as a result of their racial backgrounds and class factors as they begin their lives in Australia. Supporting other studies done on Australia (e.g. Batrouney, 1991; Cox et al, 1999; Udo-Ekpo, 1999; Lorraine Majka 1997; Nsubuga and Domock; 2001), this study has
shown that these difficulties are particularly acute in the housing and employment markets where discrimination has combined with other factors to confine the majority of Black African households in Melbourne to inadequate and unsuitable as well as unaffordable housing conditions and manual jobs. Yet, because housing market and employment discrimination is so subtle and covert, it is difficult to identify and quantify.

For a select group of Black African immigrants (who almost invariably tend to be the self-employed, professionals, and homeowners), their situation and experiences are atypical. Most Black African immigrants are renters (State Housing Commission), blue-collar workers. The study did find that the difficulties that new arrivals in Melbourne face at the initial stages of their resettlement tend to decline with time. As length of residence in Melbourne increases, immigrants become better acquainted with the operations, character and behaviour of their new society. They are therefore more likely to be able to respond to the challenges encountered upon arrival in Australia, as they are now able to access needed information, services, and resources with some measure of ease or success. At the same time, however, most of these immigrants actually experience deterioration in their socio-economic and housing circumstances as length of residency progresses. This has been amply confirmed for a significant proportion of the Black African population in Melbourne. As explained in this study, racial discrimination (both perceived and actual) still remains a formidable barrier in accessing adequate and affordable housing for many Africans in Melbourne. Similarly, it has also contributed to the low socio-economic standing of Black Africans when compared to the general population of Melbourne. Of all the difficulties that respondents encountered when they first came to Melbourne, only discrimination continues to increase and pose a hindrance for Africans in their new homeland. In Figure 4.19 (also Table 4.18) in Chapter Four, it was shown that discrimination still constitutes the most formidable barrier faced by Black Africans in Melbourne. Since it pervades all aspects of society, discrimination has combined with class to create multiple problems for Black Africans in Melbourne.

The study leads to a conclusion that differential rates of access to housing and employment markets have led to different strategies and experiences by the individual
immigrants and sub-groups within the larger Black African population in Melbourne. Differences in income earnings, socio-economic circumstances and settlement histories have meant that a few individual households have been able to adapt to requirements of the mainstream. While others are also in the process of doing so, for the vast majority of their members the whole process seems to be proceeding in the reverse direction. Over time, the housing conditions and employment status of these households have either stagnated or actually taken a downward turn forcing Black immigrants to remain in the public housing. The majority of the participants are either living below the poverty line or they are in need of basic housing or both. More importantly, the experiences and encounters of the Black African population in Melbourne documented in this study establishes the grounds to speculate that recent immigrant groups as well as newcomers to Australia (from developing countries whose racial and cultural backgrounds are different from that of European-Australians) are much more likely to face various forms of difficulties as they begin their lives in their new country. Factors relating to the background characteristics of the immigrants themselves, but most especially those emanating from the receiving society, (notably discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping and exclusion) have led to this pattern of unequal access to resources.

Black Africans in Melbourne are employed in jobs that are on the whole below the skills indicated by their educational qualifications. If the observed occupational profile of Black African immigrants in Melbourne does not relate to low educational attainments, then it must be a reflection of structural constraints. Indeed, responses from the interviews, survey questionnaire and the POs indicate that job and housing market discrimination is one of the formidable difficulties that Africans generally encounter in Melbourne as a result of ‘race’ and class. This has culminated in the concentration of most Africans in the lower rungs of the socio-economic ladder. Discrimination is so real; but its implicit nature in housing and employment markets makes it the most difficult to solve. This is a result of the immigrants’ skin-colour, their ascriptive characteristics and low income/weak economic positions. The most obvious types of discrimination are those that are overt – outright refusal to sell or rent to certain categories of persons; but the lived experiences of Black African
immigrants is that discrimination is impossible to rectify within the current policy framework.

A minority within the Black African community has certainly not shared in the economic dilemma confronting the rest of its members. For this sub-group their adaptation has largely proceeded free from institutional or structural barriers. Hence, they have found their bearings and fitted into the social, economic, and occupational structure of their new society, thereby achieving considerable success. However, this has eluded the vast majority of Black African immigrants. From the evidence gathered in this study, it could be justifiably argued that, as a minority group whose immigration to Melbourne is a recent process, Africans are yet to become fully integrated into the occupational and economic set up of their new society. This is in spite of the seeming success that a few individuals among them have achieved.

Although the analysis thus far has shown that the demographic, socio-economic, immigration profile and housing characteristics of the sample largely reflect those of the African immigrant group in Australia, these findings from the occupational and employment profile of respondents somehow deviate from the observed trend. It seems quite difficult to explain why this is so for the African group in Melbourne. One may only surmise that it has to do with the peculiar characteristics of and constraints imposed on them by the socio-cultural, economic, and political context of Australia. The results from the present study provide a basis on which to formulate certain broad conclusions, which may be equally applicable to the Black African community in Melbourne and those in other Australian cities. One may also speculate that these conclusions and resettlement histories do not differ markedly from those of Black Africans in other Australian cities. As such the results of this research are significant to policy decision-making on immigrant settlement in Australian society.
Findings of the Traditional Analysis and the Literature

In Chapter Five, Life of Black African Immigrants: Traditional Analysis, it was shown how Black African immigrants came to frame their everyday life as immigrants in Australia. In this chapter, it was argued that the lives of Black African immigrants could be divided into three stages: the initial phase of deciding to emigrate and choosing a preferred destination (motives for emigration), followed by preparing for emigration and waiting for visas, and finally, arriving and living in Melbourne/Australia.

There were two kinds of adaptations that immigrants experienced after they resettled in Australia. The first kind was the immediate survival, which refers to things that immigrants needed to solve soon after their arrival in Australia. They were, for instance, housing and banking issues, school enrolments for children, grocery shopping, and telephone and power connections. The second part of the adaptation process were the ongoing concerns of every day life that usually take immigrants months and/or years to learn, to become familiar with, and to feel comfort with. This is the kind of adaptation process typically documented in the immigration literature. Three aspects of the ongoing adaptation process discussed in Chapter Five were physical/environmental changes (loss and novelty); linguistic changes; education, employment and occupational survival; and one significant coping mechanism identified, which was social networks/social support systems. Immigrants go through many kinds of social and psychological adjustments to changes in these areas. As indicated in Chapter Five, the experiences of these immigrants were different from each other to some extent due to their individual characteristics and the extra-household contexts in which they were involved. For instance, immigrants who had lived in New Zealand, Western Europe and the USA before coming to Australia were very comfortable with the physical environment and driving on the highway. However, immigrants who were new to Australia, and to the Western life in general, were distressed by these changes of environment. Mothers who came alone with their children felt greater distress than those who came with their husbands because the
former assume most of the parental responsibilities in Australia with limited support from their husbands who were thousands of miles away.

**Areas of adaptation in Australia**

Findings of this research on the ongoing adaptation processes concur broadly with those of the existing literature (for example, Aroian, 1990, 1993; Desai and Subramanian, 2000; Graves and Graves, 1974; Lipson and Omidian, 1997; Nah, 1993). Immigrants in this study on average had been in Australia for more than four and half years, and thus feelings of distress in relation to the change of physical environment may be still salient. Therefore, immigrants were more likely to talk about this particular area in the interview. However, consistent with the literature, immigrants considered occupation and language as the top priorities for a successful adaptation in the new country. Language is an important skill or tool of communication, social interactions, daily transactions, and learning. The level of language proficiency determines the types of jobs immigrants can seek. When language and novelty were present at the same time, the interconnection between them created extra challenges for immigrants. For instance, it became more cumbersome for immigrants with greater difficulties in English and new to Australia to deal with day-to-day business. They had to always wait for relatives or friends who also lived in Melbourne or surrounding areas to complete the tasks. Also these immigrants are at a greater disadvantage in finding jobs comparable with to those in the home country.

In addition to novelty, language and occupational accommodation, findings on social networks are also in keeping with those in the research literature. Immigrants have to rebuild social networks in the host country. Other research suggests that immigrants seem to prefer drawing their friendships primarily from their own kinship or ethnic groups in places where they live during the early stage of resettlement (Graves & Graves, 1974; Nah, 1993). The findings of this study indicate that Black African religious groups and relatives or friends who helped these immigrants settle in the area were the main sources of new networks. Most of the participants primarily socialised with migrants from their own country or with migrants from other African countries. As suggested in Chapter Two, language and discriminatory attitudes
towards immigrants in Australia should be considered as an explanation of why immigrants in Australia tend to draw friendships from their own ethnic groups. The findings of this study support this hypothesis, as the language barrier appears to be one reason why black African immigrants did not include the host group as one source of their social network. Immigrants' negative experiences with the host group and lack of interest from the host group in making friends with the immigrants could have also contributed to their choices. As described in the Language section and in the Social Network and Social Support section in Chapter Five, some of the participants experienced demeaning responses from the host group. Some students were even exploited by white Australian peers in their school classes. The unfriendly environment of the host country can very well be an important factor pushing immigrants away from the host group. Moreover, among the immigrants who participated in this study, only a very small number of immigrants indicated having friends whose backgrounds were not African. Australia has never been friendly to the culturally, physically, and demographically different groups who have migrated to the country (as noted in Chapter One and Chapter Two). Racism has been the driving force behind this intolerance of Australians. Contemporary practices of hostility and bigotry may be less explicit nowadays than in the past, but they continue to exist in subtle ways. Lack of interest of the host group in making friends with these Black African immigrants might exemplify one kind of subtle racist reaction against non-white immigrants.

While it was difficult for immigrants to build relationships with members of the host group, findings of this study also show that, regardless of similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds, building relationships with people with the same ethnic background among coloured peoples was not easy either. Rules and expectations that immigrants needed to follow also contributed to a slow, initial adaptation. For instance, immigrants were expected to be self-reliant and self-sufficient and not to expect much from others. They had to be more sensitive to other immigrants' situations than they were in Africa. Because the community was small, it became more important to watch for gossip in Australia than when they were still in Africa. Rumours could easily shadow the image of the immigrant and isolate the immigrant from the community. Immigrants mostly are not prepared for these eventualities.
They do not know that they even have to change their approaches and expectations when interacting with other immigrants from their home countries. This finding is important. It suggests that, in comparison to the host group, immigrants are at a higher risk of isolation. On one hand, they face rejection from the host group. On the other hand, they face the pressure from their own ethnic community to follow specific rules, otherwise they may not be able to build or maintain the relationships with other immigrants from their own ethnic community.

**Findings of the Critical Analysis and the Literature**

Unlike Chapter Five, the findings presented in Chapter Six are very different from those presented in the existing immigration literature. Influenced by a critical social theory epistemology, my analysis creates an alternative understanding of Black African immigrants' lives in Australia by locating their stories in the broader historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political context. My analysis creates an alternative understanding of non-white, non-Protestant and non-English speaking immigrants' lived experiences in a racially conscious capitalist society. In Chapter Six, the research findings were contextualised by the external pressure of immigration policy, class, Western imperialism, and Australian capitalism. The immigration policy section analyses how the Australian immigration policy context relates to immigrants' class locations and the reproduction of the Australian class structure. The class section addresses how class both conflicts and intersects with 'race'. This was then contextualised by the way Western imperialism contributes to racial/ethnic stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination. And finally, the Australian capitalism section describes the circumstances when the norms, values, and practices prevalent within the Australian capitalist system affect immigrants' everyday lives. Findings of the critical analysis contextualise many of the experiences described in Chapter Five and thus give an alternative reading of Black African immigration processes. These contextual factors also problematise the accuracy of current theories on 'race' and class in understanding and explaining the lived experiences of immigrants in Australia.
Immigration policy

Occupational demotion is commonly experienced by immigrants. Findings of the critical analysis suggest that the relationship between language skills and occupational selection in immigrants is not as transparent as we think. Both variables are shaped by a hidden background: Australian immigration policy. There are six main preference systems used by Australia to select immigrants. These preference systems can be divided between family kinship (which is the basis for family-sponsored system) and skills where capital power, work skills, work experience and language skills are determinants for business or employment-based migration. Furthermore, there are different priorities ranked within each preference system on the basis of the distance of the kinship, marriage status, citizenship of the sponsor, and types of skills. The lower the priority is, the longer the application needs to wait. The priority and waiting period can affect the characteristics of immigrant families (e.g., age, ability to learn a new language) and therefore their occupational outcomes in the new country. In other words, the Australian preference system itself has already defined who and when a person can come through its multi-tier system. Language skills, one important factor for immigrants to find good jobs, are not an automatic characteristic that comes with immigrants. Instead, language skills of immigrants are somewhat pre-determined by immigration policy.

As illustrated in Chapter Six, many of the participants changed their class locations. Some moved out of the paid labour force of Australia, and some moved down to non-skilled positions. Immigrants admitted through humanitarian and family-based preference had a greater change in class locations than immigrants admitted through employment. The change of class locations of these immigrants is not surprising, given immigrants admitted through family-based and humanitarian preference waited in most cases for more than seven years. While they were waiting for approval to migrate, immigrants’ ability to learn a new language was declining due to age. Although they still had work skills suitable for class locations other than non-skilled immigrants, they were at a disadvantage in finding comparable jobs because of the language barrier. Facing the pressure of economic survival, some immigrants took any kind of job available to them. Some immigrants left their wives and/or husbands and/or children in Africa and had to take care of the families by sending money to
them. Thus, occupational accommodation described in Chapters Four and Five was indeed shaped by this broader context of Australian immigration policy.

Findings of this study also suggest that immigrants are an important source for maintaining the Australian class system and economy. As indicated in Chapter Six, these immigrants made contributions to the class system through three means: investment, taking lower-class supervisory positions, and taking working-class positions. The majority of them took non-skilled jobs, in part, because these jobs are easy to find since they are the least desirable jobs for the host group. Partly it was also because these jobs require limited language skills and that are not preferred at all by Australians. Castles and Kosack have argued that immigrants are welcome in Western European societies because they are “structurally necessary for the national economies” (Castles and Kosack, 1985: 6). They are brought into advanced capitalist countries to fill the slots that are the least desirable and have been deserted by white Australians because of inferior pay and poor working conditions. Evidently, most of these Black African immigrants became what Castles and Kosack term ‘structural necessities’. Immigrants in Australia are also structurally necessary for economy, because they help the nation reproduce its class structure. They are especially important for the bottom of the class structure. A large number of Black African immigrants are expected to cluster at the bottom of the class structure, similar to the pattern observed with the sample in this study and studies with other immigrant groups.

Class

With the influence of Marxist class analysis, I started this study with an interest in understanding how class influenced immigrants’ lived experiences. Unexpectedly, the data was not easily suited to this task. More questions and fewer answers were derived from this study than expected. As discussed in Chapter Two, capitalists and workers are the fundamental locations in the capitalist class structure. The focus (or argument made by scholars such as Krieger et al) has been on the exploitation of workers by employers and the inequalities in wealth, power, health care and housing access generated from this exploitation. Evidence in the stories of these Black African
immigrants was weak in supporting a classical Marxist class analysis. Stories from the immigrants showed that class conflicts were more likely to occur at the interpersonal level; between un-skilled supervisors and workers or among workers rather than between a capitalist and a worker. The complexity of class goes beyond what the classic class analysis has addressed. The elaborated class typology developed by Erik Olin Wright (2000) was a more suitable framework for analysing the data gathered for this research. Wright's framework was useful for understanding why, for instance, Mr Kemal, Mr Nega and other co-workers were able to be exploited by their un-skilled supervisors.

Wright (2000) suggests three forms of exploitation within the modern class structure: capitalist exploitation, managerial exploitation, and expertise exploitation. Mr Kemal was accused of a poor job performance by his un-skilled supervisor. Mr Nega was asked not to come back to his work place by his un-skilled supervisor, because he violated the supervisor's personal rules. What Mr Kemal and Mr Nega experienced was managerial exploitation from the un-skilled supervisors. Managers and supervisors are like workers being controlled by capitalists and exploited within production; at the same time, they are like capitalists who engage in the practice of domination within production. The latter is possible because managers and supervisors have the delegated capitalist class power within the production process. Thus, although capitalists were not mentioned in the reported stories, domination and exploitation from capitalists was alive at the workplace where these immigrants worked in a modified form through managers or supervisors. The expansion of exploitation raises more concerns when studying immigrants' lived experiences. As argued in the previous section, immigration policy quietly determines immigrants' characteristics and occupational accommodation. Immigrants admitted through means other than business immigration or skilled employment visa categories, were at a greater disadvantage in finding jobs outside the un-skilled workers class location - the class location with the least power in the class structure. I would further argue that when family-sponsored and humanitarian/refugee-based immigrants have limited capital resources and are limited in language proficiency, Australian work skills and experiences and Australian education systems create barriers which result in most
Black African immigrants clustering in un-skilled worker class locations and, as a consequence are victims of multiple forms of exploitation.

The comparison between Mr Abraham and Mr Kemal is a good example. Mr Kemal migrated with the least capital resources among all the immigrants. In contrast, Mr Abraham came to Australia with strong capital resources. Mr Abraham was the only one fluent in English and having specialised professional skills. Both of them were eager to find a job, but because of the disproportionate distribution of capital resources, Mr Kemal exhibited the highest stress and frustration in the adaptation process and only had choices of non-skilled jobs. Unlike Mr. Fasil, Mrs Melanie applied for middle-class jobs and did spend time on a PhD degree program with a hope of getting a job with her qualification. Although Mr Chissano was still limited to non-skilled jobs, in comparison to Mr Melaku, he had more leeway in choosing jobs and employment status. Mr Melaku could even spend more time improving his language skills before he searched for better jobs. Thus limited capital resources, language skills, and work skills constrain immigrants’ opportunities of being employed in other than non-skilled worker positions. Non-skilled jobs are usually low paying.

Wright’s elaborated class typology is a plausible framework to extend our understanding of the relationship between class and immigrants’ lived experiences. As discussed in Chapter Two, Wright’s 12-class location matrix and its simplified version are referred to as the "basic" models, because they do not have the capacity to solve all class-related issues or research questions. For instance, this matrix does not include people not in the paid labour force (such as people in the welfare system or in the domestic economy). Nor is this matrix developed to examine the class of a household or those working ‘under the table’ (cash-in-hand) or those exploited and oppressed workers not protected by unions (the casuals and on the calls). His framework also falls short of explaining the intra-class location conflicts and ‘race’-class intersection shown in my data. Findings of this study suggest that there are other forms of exploitation occurring simultaneously with the exploitation from class.
However, it was not possible to fully investigate all these intersections, because as Bannerji points out:

> Somehow, we know almost instinctively that these oppressions, separately named as sexism, racism, and class exploitation, are intimately connected ... It was a challenge to think through a problem which exists within such a wide scope (Bannerji, 1995: 121-122).

**Western imperialism**

This study started with an interest in exploring how ‘race’ and racism has framed Black African immigrants’ everyday lives, because most evidence suggests that ‘race’ and racism are the major factors affecting non-whites’ everyday life in Australia. However, after analysing the stories of Black African immigrants, I realised that racism was too narrow a concept to explain these experiences. Rather, Western imperialism — the parent of racism (Williams et al, 1994) - was a much more suitable framework to use. Even though the effect of Western imperialism may be most explicit in the white Australians and Black African interactions, it was also present in the Black African and other non-white Australian interactions. As discussed in Chapter Six, stereotypes or prejudices towards Asians were captured in some of the interviews. These stereotypes and prejudices existed in the persons’ mind after their immigration, indicating the existence of a force that affects racial/ethnic stereotypes or prejudice at the global international level. Being a black African myself, my personal experiences have led me to believe that products of Western imperialism, (mainly books, movies, television shows and toys from the West) and its ideological and commercial driven media outlets are the sources of this racism. Western imperialists’ perspectives and interpretations of other countries and cultures are expressed through the media and those products. Tatum describes racism as “smog in the air” that everyone in the US breathes in everyday (Tatum, 1999:6). Through a wide dissemination, Africans absorb those perspectives and interpretations through formal education and informal information exchanges. In an invisible way, Western values, norms, and cultures become the representative of humanity. They become the standard that Africans use to evaluate themselves. They also are used as the standard
by Africans to evaluate other nations and their people’s behaviours. This is reflected in how Mr Mbeki described his stereotype and prejudice towards Asians. The label of “developing country” was attached to othering; consequently, the other people and culture become inferior.

Findings of this study problematise how social scientists have conceptualised and understood interracial relationships. Living in a country full of stereotype racial images, everyone internalises the information and develops some understanding about their racial group as well as other racial groups. Tatum argues that while asking why a group of Black teenagers often sit together in the school cafeteria, we need to understand that “in a racially mixed settings, racial grouping is a developmental process in response to an environmental stressor, racism. Joining with one’s peers for support in the face of stress is a positive coping strategy” (Tatum, 1999: 62). Some participants in this study reported experiencing discrimination at social contexts or at schools. As described in Chapters Four, Five and Six, many participants had negative experiences with white Australians. These immigrants preferred to make friends with immigrants from their own country or with other Black Africans outside of their country. Pieces of evidence appear to support the use of racism to understand interracial relationships. However, findings on pre-immigration racial/ethnic stereotypes and prejudices suggest that the socialisation pattern of immigrants and of the Australian-born may be influenced by different sources. Perhaps immigrants choose one racial/ethnic group over the other because of the influence of Western imperialism. In contrast, the Australian-born may choose one racial group over the other because of the influence of racism in Australia. When the racism of immigrants and white Australians is treated as the same, we miss the opportunities to explore and understand the subtlety of racial issues in Australia. More powerful domination – Western imperialism, a domination that occurs across national borders and sustains its worldwide status through intellectual products and political and economic hegemony - may in fact play a greater role than home-grown Australian ethnocentrism.

In addition, findings suggest that, despite the common racial background, accented English makes immigrants more vulnerable to discrimination than their Australian-born co-ethnics. Accented English is like the signature of immigrants who come from
other places to Australia. Once immigrants speak, they can quickly be identified and separated from their Australian-born co-ethnics. Non-white Australians are considered as the other by the dominant white Australians. However, when compared to immigrants, non Anglo-Celtic white Australians are perceived more like us to the dominant Anglo-Celtic Australian than the Black or coloured immigrants. Language becomes a marker for defining social boundaries between immigrants and the host group. The story told by Mrs. Chiluba about differential treatments towards students in an ESL class and those who are out of an ESL class exemplifies that kind of behaviour. Language also becomes a marker for determining the host groups’ attitudes toward immigrants. Mr. Nega’s experience with the disrespectful, rude government staff during the phone contact is a reflection of this. As discussed in Chapter Two, immigrants have been portrayed as “competitors” for jobs and resources. They are considered as others who create problems for the host countries. Generally when the nation’s economy deteriorates, the hostility towards immigrants increases, and more discriminatory policies are put in place to bar immigrants (the other) from having equal access to certain resources. Both immigrants and racial minorities in Australia are oppressed in Australia; yet they are not equally oppressed because immigrants are viewed as others to the host group. Accented English makes them more distinct from the host group, easily identifiable and therefore more prone to discrimination and a sense of exclusion.

Australian capitalism

In comparison to immigration policy, class, and Western imperialism, the influence of capitalism was the most “visible” to these immigrants. They appeared to be more aware of how their experiences were affected by the Australian economic structure. Marketing culture and credit were the two types of capitalist practices most commonly addressed by participants in this study. With language barrier, novelty, and limited social networks and support, these immigrants were lost in the massive amount of information, product sales, advertisement and promotion materials and option. They were not confident in their decisions, and trial-and-error was the most commonly cited coping mechanism. Some participants were very emotional when speaking about their experiences and described those experiences as the most difficult parts of their adaptation. I was amazed by the intensity of their frustration,
dissatisfaction, and worry. It was even stronger than how they felt about their experiences of discrimination.

Companies controlled by corporate owners have a tremendous power over various services such as education, health, power, telephone and water services. The base for their decision is cost-effectiveness and profit. For example, various kinds of housing packages by financial companies that people received are designed based on that criterion. Marketing culture and credit also entangled immigrant’s lives. We cannot better understand the everyday life of Australian people (including immigrants) and the problems of Australian system until we start to include capitalism in the discussion.

**Interpretation**

The participants in this study who live in different parts of Melbourne do not generally know each other, but the study points to similarities of experiences in the patterns of their adaptation process unique to this group of immigrants in Melbourne. This section focuses on the interpretation of the patterns that emerged.

The experiences of Black African immigrants in Australia point to the initial need for employment and self-sufficiency. This is evident in their immediate search for and acceptance of employment upon arrival, even if this employment is below the level the immigrants were accustomed to in Africa and elsewhere before their arrival in Australia. This attempt at making a living and managing on their own is also evident in the discussions of some of the immigrants for a need to upgrade their English language skills and to return to school for more education when money and time allow. However, the immigrants are in some cases not fully aware of the educational options available that demand fewer financial sacrifices (for example, community programs). Some were aware of the alternatives, but would rather wait for a chance to attend formal educational institutions.
Furthermore, the immigrant's previous educational background was in most cases considered deficient; this undervaluation of credentials from NESB countries in Australia is a common occurrence. Moreover, the change of language and the 'race' and class stratification that occurs in Australia serve as challenges that the immigrants need to overcome to reach the level of success they desire. Immigrants, in other words, are eager to succeed in Australia, and success is defined by them as having a good and decent job that pays enough to live on and having their own house. This determination to economically manage is part of other patterns in the lives of the immigrants framed around a proactive stance in terms of their identity: an identity based on feelings of independence, pursuing their education and constructing social lives, and generally being willing to pursue their rights and stand up for themselves. Immigrants adjust their social interaction to fit various circumstances such as work, neighbourhood, school, church and the mosque, and they have varying degrees of self-awareness.

Immigrants are constantly using experiences from Africa as a reference point as to how they manage their lives in Australia, and they are selective in what they preserve in terms of cultural aspects, which adds a level of complexity to their adaptation process. How they relate to other groups in Australia thus depends on the choices they make in accepting or rejecting the culture of other racial categories including the mainstream culture of Australia; some of them include immigrants from other racial categories in their lives, some distance themselves. The extent of their relationships with other Black African immigrants is, however, a more ambivalent one. Most participants mention the need for the presence and support of their friends and relatives, as well as other people of colour they have met in Australia. At the same time, there is ambivalence evident when they discuss meeting and associating with other Black African immigrants. The fear is that such associations could cause gossip or that the encounter may bring them in contact with people they would not have associated with under different circumstances.

This ambivalence about other Black Africans is also evident in the pattern of isolation which emerges and which is evident in the lives of most of the immigrants. Some of
them are concerned with the class level of other immigrants, as they would like to continue the class-based social relationships such as they had in Africa. Class in this study includes social status and income levels. However, the immigrant’s interpretation of class is vastly different. Black African immigrants look at class as a way of behaviour, where one behaves properly or improperly. An example is that the class status of a disproportionate number of immigrants who were in white collar positions in Africa or elsewhere outside of Australia declined as they are now often in blue-collar jobs. However, given that their income increased over African earnings, the actual status difference represented by different occupations has not noticeably affected the way they view themselves in terms of class.

There is a noticeable presence of small, self-contained groups where the immigrants refer to “our group” or “their group” in their discussions of other Black Africans outside of their countries. The social divisions of colour and class are represented in this context. Some of the immigrants explain that these groups carefully keep apart during the rare various Black African social events. Thus, colour and status distinctions are present and used in Australia. These issues tend to become somewhat blurred under the weight of the isolation the immigrants experience, and they simultaneously need to associate with people with whom they can culturally identify. Most of the participants mentioned the need for Black African organisations and other means of meeting each other. Individualised networking for friendships, employment and social events among the immigrants are the viable alternatives. The experience of racism, as institutionalised in Australia, was only experienced as the immigrants migrated to the country. In contrast to the Black Africans, the indigenous Australians have lived in their own homeland under difficult circumstances and may discern discrimination and racism, more clearly than Black African immigrants. The response of anger on the part of indigenous Australians towards whites is one Black Africans do not have. This difference in response serves to alienate people of colour among themselves as they become divided on these issues. In many instances, the misplacements of Black Africans’ racial categories; the tension they feel in their associations with Middle Easterners, Latin Americans, Central Americans, Pacific Islanders, Asians, and even Southern and Eastern Europeans, and their perceptions of
racist practices in Australia, are new experiences which leave them ambivalent and unclear about how to deal with these issues.

The area of work determines the exposure of immigrants to other racial categories and thus to other cultural patterns. This means that Black African immigrants who work in white-collar jobs have more contact with the wider society than immigrants who work only in blue-collar jobs in isolated, suburban areas. Immigrants who are more isolated also experience less racial tension and discrimination because of this lack of interaction. In situations where the contact is more frequent, the reverse is true, as is the case for some of the immigrants who are employed in office settings or white-collar jobs. Typically, those who have lived in the West (such as those who came to Australia from New Zealand, the USA and former Western European countries) are more aware of the dynamics of ‘race’ and class issues, because they have been exposed to these issues before coming to Australia. As a consequence of globalisation, a tremendous influx of immigrants from non-English speaking backgrounds has enlarged the scope for tension between white Australians and immigrants. Competing demands for housing, employment and other social and economic issues inform these encounters. Adjusting to these issues also means dealing with the racism and discrimination, which informs these tensions.

Some of the participants voiced complaints about acts of discrimination by Whites against other people of colour and exclude themselves as people of colour from the problems regarding discrimination and/or racism. This is because the respondents generally face fewer problems, especially when they identify themselves as immigrants. In some cases, the attitudes that are directed towards Indigenous Australians by the white Australians is sometimes also directed towards Black African immigrants. Another reason for not wanting to deal with issues of ‘race’ is that immigrants rely on the mainstream and other ethnicities like the Southern and Eastern European immigrants for their employment and other social and economic needs, and an admission of being discriminated against might cause them anxiety as they need the interaction with others to manage their lives. Moreover, treating racial discrimination towards themselves as a chance occurrence lessens the sense of
rejection and/or alienation in the host country. However, the issue of immigrants' level of awareness with 'race' poses some problems. Very few of the participants in this study say that they would take legal or other action if their civil rights were violated. Most, who are intimidated by the legal process, would rather that justice be served by a divine intervention. However, the unwillingness to fight for their rights in some cases leaves the immigrants vulnerable to exploitation in the workplace and to discrimination in housing, education, health, employment and other areas. To deny that discrimination has occurred means that these problems go unaddressed.

What we can learn from this study is that adaptation is different for people coming from numerically small immigrant groups than it is for immigrants who are present in larger groups, because of the different managing strategies, which occur in the smaller populations. Another lesson learnt is that immigrants of colour in Australia are often arbitrarily grouped together, despite their differences. There are distinct differences between immigrants from different continents, and the ethnic divide makes itself felt in ways that cause immigrants of colour in many cases to reject other immigrants of colour. Immigrants from Africa are not going to be accepted by Australian people as Australian responses to their immigration are structured by the system of 'race' in Australia. Black Africans born in Australia will always be known as the 'immigrant' regardless of their long stay in the country and their high degree of assimilation to the mainstream culture.

Moreover, the fear of gossip makes Black Africans hesitant to seek out or organise culture-based groups, however small. Another vital point is that lack of financial tension in the lives of only few of the participants mean that these few immigrants are less susceptible to and better able to manage racial encounters in Australia. A low income, a fragile economic base and racial categorisation have created a complex web of difficulties that have tarnished even an aspiration to have access to private housing rental in areas of their choices and preferences. In effect, Black African immigrants' general adaptation to their new society does not seem to have been facilitated.
The Sense of being the Lucky

The detailed responses to certain aspects of participants' lived experiences have confirmed the findings of the established academic literature on immigrants. When asked about the housing and other social conditions, Mr Isreal and Mr Kedir told me they were very good. Yet Mr Israel and others also provided details of the racial segregation they experienced, their insertion and maintenance into the bottom levels of the capitalist labour process with deplorable working conditions, and a set of lived experiences that could best be described as managed and controlled. The inevitable question here is why do the participants speak favourably of their experiences only to contradict themselves in the process of recollecting the details of their lived experiences?

The social location of me as an interviewer is extremely relevant since respondents crafted their answers based upon what they believe I wanted to hear. As discussed in detail in Chapter Three, my authoritative status as a Melbourne University representative and more particularly my status as a resident tutor of the largest residential and the most prestigious elite college in the country (most participants of this study perceive Ormond College as the top elite college which shoulders the responsibility of producing young Australians who would perpetuate the Anglo-Celtic domination and maintain the status quo) could also affect what answers are induced. A few months after the interview, I met Mr. Teka at a community restaurant and began chatting about the project. I confided to him about my financial problems in undertaking this study and he replied "how on earth you will have financial problems while you are a resident tutor of Ormond College". He seriously advised me not to repeat this to other participants. They don't believe you. Your integrity will be questioned and you will lose their trust."

Another factor identified which posed possible barriers to achieving a high level of reliability among participants' responses might be the lack of trust evidenced by immigrants from Moslem communities. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the fieldwork began just a month after the invasion of Iraq by the US-led Coalition forces. A high degree of scepticism on the part of the Moslem migrants of anyone viewed as
an authority figure associated with the University of Melbourne or with a resident tutor of an elite college might be directly or indirectly perceived as having connection with ASIO, which might have served as a potential obstacle for an effective research relationship.

Everyday lives of Black Africans are so dominated that they do not expect they have an ability to actively resist and still remain employed. This is not to say that resistance did not happen when they felt they were being overworked, underpaid, or treated poorly in general. The prevailing stereotype of Africans as docile, undemanding and incapable of organising themselves to press for better working conditions and for a better job does not hold true, considering the extent to which the working atmosphere is instituted with the interests of the capitalists. Secondly, Black Africans have effectively been excluded by Australian labour unions, as jobs easily available to them are casual or part-time and as such they are usually not able to join a union. Of the participants involved in this research, none stated that they are member of any labour union. When asked if this is the case because of lack of interest on their part, all stated that the unions do not approve of them as members of the working class. To join a union, they believe one has to be a permanent employee. They believe this is a form of discrimination on the part of the Australian labour movement as historically it has been against immigrants (as discussed in Chapter Two).

As a minority group working under the regime of casual and part-time employment, they are quite powerless in their bargaining positions. They have to survive: that is a necessity not a choice. So if immigrants were intimidated or threatened, most did not see it as a viable option to report such practices. Quite simply, if immigrants wanted to continue working, they met the expectations of remaining silent until the job was finished, even if they had complaints. Employers have not always been able to procure and retain labour under the normal operations of the capitalist labour-market mechanisms. Therefore, non-market sanctions – legal and political coercion – have been required to retain labour in these jobs. Immigrants, therefore, were expected to endure conditions not of their own choosing. Their characteristics become associated with the characteristics of the jobs, which become identified as ‘immigrants jobs’.
Thus as Berger and Mohr argue, Black African immigrants are immortal: “Immortal because continually interchangeable. They are not born; they are not brought up; they do not age; they do not get tired; they do not die. They have a single function — to work” (Berger & Mohr, 1975: 64). The cheapness of their labour is their only ‘asset’ to support themselves and relatives left in Africa.

Implication for the Social Sciences

The substantive findings of this study have significant implications for political science, sociology and other social sciences. First, this study provides an analysis of Black African immigrants’ lived experiences and adaptation responses. These immigrants shared similar struggles with other immigrant groups from other waves of migration. At the same time, they have unique experiences due to immigration status, their family and household characteristics, their African culture, and the immigration period. What this suggests is that we may be able to generalise some of the current body of knowledge to all immigrant groups, but we have to do it with great sensitivity to group differences. The critical social theory epistemology signifies the complexity of immigrants’ lived experiences. It aids in uncovering larger dimensions that affect immigrants’ lives but are usually invisible or misrepresented due to ideological biases. Immigrants struggle with day-to-day survival and are immersed in their lived experiences. It may be difficult for them to “analytically” understand how their lives change. In addition, limited language proficiency and no access to post-colonial discourse keep them from “consciously” realising how their lives have been shaped by the historical, sociocultural, economic, and political structure of the host country. What immigrants yield in the interview “do not mirror a world ‘out there’” (Riessman, 1993: 5-6). A description of what immigrants reveal in the data has its value in knowledge creation and practice. However, knowledge created from this conventional approach is limited in scope and usefulness. Most importantly, it can be a source of support for a victim-blaming ideology (McLeroy et al, 1988), and drive us away from the “upstream, where real problems lie” (Butterfiled, 1990: 2).

With a critical social theory epistemology, immigration policy no longer hides in the background. Likewise, class, Western imperialism, and capitalism become visible to
us. Marginalisation, exploitation, and discrimination experienced by immigrants can be seen and better understood. We are equipped to see beyond the description of immigrants’ lived experiences and to generate strategies to tackle those social conditions that are beyond the control of immigrants yet make a tremendous contribution to their lives. This study extends our understanding of class-and-'race'-related exploitation and oppression in Australia. There is an increasing body of knowledge created by social sciences disciplines that critically examines the 'race', class, and gender based systems of oppression and humans’ experiences. Among these three most profound systems, class receives the least attention. Studies that investigate class relations (Funkhouser & Moser, 1990; Kreiger et al., 1993) are based on the traditional class analysis where the only classes referred to are the capitalist class and the working class. However, exploitation was found within the working class in this study. With regard to racism, white Australians, NESB immigrants, particularly Southern and Eastern Europeans, Asians, Middle Easterners, Black Africans and the Indigenous Australians, are usually the focus. Yet, findings of this study suggest that Black African immigrants (the oppressed) received mistreatment from both Anglo-Celtic Australians (the dominant group) and other non-Anglo-Celtic and non-English speaking Europeans (formerly oppressed groups).

Paradoxically, Black African immigrants also had stereotypes and prejudice towards Asians and Black peoples (Black Africans who are born in Australia or migrated to Australia at their early ages) which is a carry-over from their lives in Africa. In Chapter One and Chapter Two, I have discussed the way racial oppression refers to a system of unequal power that is not merely reducible to the ideas or beliefs or attitudes that anyone might express. In this way, therefore, the articulation of the hegemonic racism toward other immigrant groups (such as Asians) by Black African immigrants or vice versa, who are themselves racially oppressed, cannot be so simply disparaged as "racist". In short, the stereotypes and prejudices towards Asians by Black Africans and Asians’ tendency to exclude Black Africans as reported in this study seem to be rooted in a lack of knowledge and ignorance rather than racism or bigotry. 'Race' and class relations are much more complicated than what we have understood. The fast changing technology continues to bring more immigrants (workers) and their relatives to Australia. Wealth is re-allocated, and that changes the
class structure. We need to search for or create other frameworks to facilitate our understanding of these two complex socio-cultural phenomena.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research is a glimpse into the adaptation process of Black African immigrants after they resettle in Australia. Findings of this study suggest that the first twenty-four months are the most critical period; however, the areas that require adaptation from an individual adult immigrant gradually decline after five years in the new country (Aroian, 1992). The product of critical ethnography is expected to emancipate and enlighten members of the oppressed so that they become aware of how the broader social structure is connected with their lives. A similar design with a different sample of immigrants could provide comparative data. For instance, a different sample of Black African immigrants in New South Wales or in other Australian states may clarify and/or reveal more information. A sample of Black African immigrants from Sydney which also has a large number of Black African immigrants, may provide comparative data to further explore the effects of immigration policy and the economic structure of the host society. Untangling the differences is important given that the Black African community was important for immigrants' adaptation, thus differences in community formation may influence these adaptation processes.

Thus, one future study could use this theoretical sampling technique to investigate Black African immigrants from the areas without an established Black African community. Moreover, comparative data collected from Black Africans across different classes may further our understanding of the relations between class and immigrant life. Data could also be collected from different immigrant groups from different classes to examine the intersectionality of 'race' and class. Both designs also provide chances to further examine the implication of Wright's class typology. Immigrants' occupational safety and health is also a missing area of research in the immigrant's working conditions, despite the fact that immigrants are known for working multiple, casual and part-time menial, labour intensive jobs and their long hours of work. With limited language skills, limited information about the system, and financial pressure, immigrants are at risk of work-related injuries, physical and
mental illness, and exploitation. Of interest would be how immigrants understand threats to their life and conditions in the work environment and the possible protective strategies and how do employers ensure that their employees who are culturally and linguistically different understand job safety preventive strategies? Moreover, class conflicts, racial/ethnic conflicts, and language and racial/ethnic discrimination found in this study are work-related social problems. Little is known about how these social problems affect immigrants' well-being, safety, and work performance and in return their adaptation process. Neither do we know about the relationship between occupational safety/well-being and immigrants' well-being.

Additional research on how class, Western imperialism, and capitalism affect immigrant experiences is also needed. As discussed in the first section, Wright's elaborated class typology is a plausible framework to extend our understanding of the relationship between class and immigrants' well-being. However, his framework must continue to be tested against other sample groups. Western imperialism also deserves our attention. It does not appear to be a framework broad enough to maximise the racial experiences that Black African immigrants encounter, as they naturally have a unique skin colour but are also culturally, physically, facially or racially different from all other NESB immigrants as described in Chapter One. Western imperialism, on the other hand, is a plausible concept through which to explore the subtlety of racial issues in Australia. We need to continue to explore this with more data to examine its implications.

An additional, significant area for future research is the education system. Immigrant children spend many hours at school, adapting to a new education system and new school environments. Their ability to build social relationships is challenged by these changes. And thus, the educational system may not be supportive for immigrant children's adaptation to the new environment. In some cases, schools reinforce discrimination and promote immigrant children's marginal positions. This study only collected data from immigrants and their children to understand the school experiences. Future research could use the school as the unit of analysis and include
perspectives of educators, school staff, and schoolmates from the host population, immigrant children, and parents to further explore this subject.

The combination of all these factors in the adaptation process of Black African immigrants leads to the conclusion that there is a direct relationship between access to housing, employment market, language/accents, and immigrant adaptation. For those immigrants from racial minorities that are severely constrained in the housing and employment market, this linkage may be attenuated by the provision of adequate and affordable housing. Thus, I argue that there is a need for greater cognisance of this relationship in housing and employment policy formulation and implementation.

Problems of cultural misunderstanding, especially between landlords and minority tenants, employers, schools, and the media, tend to reinforce stereotypes, prejudice, and exclusion and reduce, for example, the willingness of some landlords to rent to, and employers to employ racially different immigrants. These contribute significantly to the housing and employment crisis that many immigrant-group members face. Understanding of each other's cultural background and behaviour will be effective in forestalling all these problems, which will also help to make immigrants an asset rather than a burden in the receiving society. In this regard, I recommend that proper and well-programmed methods and strategies for educating the general population on the need to appreciate and tolerate each other's cultures will be instrumental in creating a peaceful living environment for all categories of peoples in Australian society. Especially for the host population, accepting 'new Australians' (who are racially and culturally diverse such as the Black African population) as Australians and not as foreigners or others will help produce similar results. That is the foundation upon which Australian multicultural policy rests.

Since a sizable number of Black Africans are admitted into Australia as refugees, the circumstances surrounding the emigration of this category of immigrants often renders them more fragile, vulnerable and susceptible to a number of negative adaptation influences. Taking account of all these factors will help to promote their adaptation into their new society. If differential treatment or discrimination will also be dealt with more seriously, the barriers and difficulties that many immigrant groups
face in Australian society will also be eliminated, or at least minimised. The level of commitment and identification with Australian society by these new Australians will be increased as a result. When these are effectively acted upon, not only would racially and culturally different immigrants contribute to the cultural diversity and enrichment of Australian society, but their economic and human resources could be beneficially tapped for the overall economic development of Australia.

**Conclusion**

This critical ethnography provides a crucial analysis of Black African immigrants' adaptation processes in the historical, socio-cultural, economic, and political structure of Melbourne, Australia. Two kinds of interpretations emerged from my analysis of the data. Immigrant characteristics and Black African culture explained some of the data. But the complexity of these immigrants' lives cannot be understood only with these two kinds of variables. This study brings immigration policy, class, Western imperialism, and capitalism out of the hidden background and incorporates them into the discussion of immigrants' adaptation responses. Many problems about the traditional approaches to analysing class, 'race', and immigrant conditions of well-being were discovered. Evidently, we need alternative approaches to capture the subtlety of class and 'race' and to enhance our insights of immigrants' lives and adaptation process.

This study also exposed significant methodological implications for cross-cultural immigrant research. With technological advance, one might expect to see more changes in global demographics. However, the effects of technological advance do not stop there. Distribution of economic and political power, economic and class structure, opportunities for participating in the workforce, access to services, well-being, and social relations are all affected. This study demonstrates how a critical social theory approach can push the frontier of our understanding of immigrants' adaptation process. There are problems unsolved and questions unanswered in this study. Only when more of us engage in this type of study, can we then have fruitful conversations to find solutions and answers.
Bibliography


——— (1992), *Sources of social support and conflicts for Polish immigrants*, *Qualitative Health Research*, 2(2), 178-207.


——— (1999), *The Great Divide*, Sydney: Duffy and Snellgrove


——— (1985), *The Politics of Production: factory regimes under capitalism and


274


Cox, D., Cooper, B., Adepoju, M, (1999), *The Settlement of Black Africans in Australia*, Melbourne: La Trobe University, Department of Social work and Social Policy.


Deane, G. D. (1990), 'Mobility and Adjustment: Paths to the resolution of residential Stress', *Demography* 27(1), 65-79.


New York: Oxford University Press.


Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia [FECCA] (1988), Annual Reports.


Georgiev, Velislaw (1990), 'Profile of the African Community in Melbourne', Department of Social Security, Melbourne.


Goldberg, David Theo, (1990), Anatomy of Racism, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.


Gong, E. J., Jr. (1995, December 8), 'Immigrants' children carry big responsibilities: Their English is critical to families', The Seattle Times.


278


Handlin, Oscar (1951), *The Uprooted*, Boston: Little and Brown.


Hawthorne, Lesleyanne (1994), *Labour Market Barriers for Immigrant Engineers in Australia*, Canberra: AGPS.


Jayasuriya, Laksiri (1984), 'Into the Mainstream', *Australian Society*, 1 March


Lowenberg, J.S. (1993), 'Interpretive research methodology: Broadening the dialogue', *Advances in Nursing Science*, 16(2), 57-69.


——— (1974), *The Great White Walls are Built: Restrictive immigration to North America and Australasia*, 1836-1888, Canberra: Australian Institute of
International Affairs in association with Australian National University Press.


[List of references]
Allen & Unwin.


Sloan, Judith and Sean Kennedy (1992), *Temporary movements of people to and from Australia*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service


Tatum, Beverly D. (1999), *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria? And other conversation about race*, New York: Basic Books


Thomas, William I. and Florian Znaniecki [1918-1920], *The Polish Peasant in Europe*


Viviani, Nancy (1992), 'The abolition of the white Australia policy: the immigration Reform movement revisited', *School of Modern Asian Studies, Centre for the Study of Australian-Asian Relations*, Brisbane: Griffith University.


Washington Post and Associated Press (1996), 'House passes get-tough measures on

Watson, Ian (1996), ‘Opening the Glass Door: Overseas-Born Managers in Australia’, Canberra: AGPS.


Wright, Erik Olin (1976), *Class, crisis, and the state*, London: NLB.


Appendix 1: Flyer

(Printed on University of Melbourne Letterhead)

Dear African immigrants!!

A research study exploring and examining impacts of race and class on the lived experiences and adaptation process of indigenous (black) African immigrants in Australia is being undertaken at the University of Melbourne. The project has been approved by the University of Melbourne's Human Research Ethics Committee.

If you:

- Are indigenous (black) African,
- Are 21-60 years old,
- Have emigrated from Sub-Saharan Africa,
- Have lived in Australia for three years or longer.

You are invited to participate in the study. If you are interested to participate or knowing more about the study, please call Ayalew Mergia on 9344 1230, Mobile (0401 6888 98). To cover transport costs, each participant will receive 15 dollars for each interview.

I greatly appreciate you helping black African immigrants in identifying their problems in Australia and also helping me in my study.

Sincerely,

Ayalew Mergia
Appendix 2: Telephone Script for Recruitment

Appendix 2.1: To Immigrants who contacted the investigator
Hello, my name is Ayalew Mergia. I am pursuing my doctorate in the University of Melbourne, Department of Political Science. Thank you for calling about my study. The study is to understand what is like for indigenous African immigrants in Australia and how they adapt to moving and living in Australia. I am interested in learning about your lived experiences at home, in your neighbourhood, at work, at school after you move to Australia. They may be good or bad. I am also interested in what you have done to keep you going, and any concerns in your life. I would talk to you and attend some events or activities with you and/or your friends for a few times. Also there will be three questionnaires that I would like to ask you to fill out. Your and your family's experiences and participation are very valuable. I hope you and your friends can participate in my study. If you do not have time or are not interested in participating, feel free to say no.
Appendix 2.2: To immigrants being contacted by the investigator through the referral

Hello, my name is Ayalew Mergia. I am pursuing my doctorate in the University of Melbourne, Department of Political Science. ____________ (name of the person who makes the referral) gave me your phone number to contact you. I am calling today to invite you to participate in my doctorate study.

The study is to understand what is like for indigenous African immigrants in Australia and how they adapt to moving and living in Australia. I am interested in learning about your lived experiences at home, in your neighbourhood, at work, at school after you move to Australia. They may be good or bad. I am also interested in what you have done to keep you going, and any concerns in your life.

I would talk to you and attend some events or activities with you and/or your friends for a few times. Also there will be three questionnaires that I would like to ask you to fill out. Your and your family's experiences and participation are very valuable. I hope you and your friends can participate in my study. If you do not have time or are not interested in participating, feel free to say no.
Dear Participant,

My name is Ayalew Mergia. I am an immigrant from Sub-Sahara Africa and a PhD research student at the Department of Political Science, the University of Melbourne. You are invited to participate in a research project "Indigenous African Immigrants in Australia: an exploratory analysis of the impacts of race and class on their lived experiences and adaptation processes". The study is to understand what is like for indigenous African immigrants in Australia and how they adapt to moving and living in Australia. I am interested in learning about your lived experiences at home, in your neighbourhood, at work, at school after you move to Australia. I am also interested in what you have done to keep you going, and any concerns in your life. What I learnt from you will be valuable information in understanding how race and class affect the lived experiences and adaptation processes of 'black' African immigrants; and to enable to understand how immigrants persevered under circumstances that have profoundly influenced their subjective evaluations about their place in the Australian society.

To cover the cost of transport, each participant will receive 15 dollars for each interview. If you agree to participate, I will interview you for about two hours. The interview will be tape-recorded and transcribed to ensure an accurate record is kept. You will be provided with a copy of the transcript, so that you can verify that the information is correct. You will also be asked to complete questionnaires at the end of our interviews. The time to fill the questionnaire is between 20 minutes to 30 minutes. The maximum time required for both the interview and the questionnaire is between
two hours to two and half hours duration. Also I would like to attend some events or activities such as school events, religious events with you and your friends or families. So I will have chances to see what you and your friends do together in everyday life. We will pick the activities together and decide how long I will be with you on the trip. You can refuse this request if you do not want me to attend.

Unless you give specific permission, no public use of the findings will be made. I intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. Each person's identity will be kept confidential by assigning an ID number, and removing names from the data. Only I know full names and have access to the names and the corresponding numbers. Beside myself, only my principal supervisor will have access to the numbered data. The tapes and questionnaires will be kept in a locked file for five years and then destroyed. All necessary precautions will be taken to ensure that the comments you make cannot be linked to you in any way. When the research is published, all information that might identify you to others will be taken out to guarantee your anonymity. The only known risk to you for participating in this study is that you might experience some distress from recalling your lived experiences. You are free to stop the interview or not to respond to the questions. To talk to someone about a particular issue at any time during the process, please feel free to contact one of the following resources: South Eastern Region Migrant Resources Centre- (03) 9706-8933; and Women’s Information and Referral Exchange — FREECALL, 18001136570.

Please be advised that your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either my supervisors or myself: Professor Verity Burgmann, ph: (03) 8344-7943, fax: (03) 8344-7906, e-mail: vnb@unimelb.edu.au and/or Professor Mark Considine, ph: (03) 8344-6569, fax:(03) 8344-7906, e-mail: markl@unimelb.edu.au Should you decide to participate in this study, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by signing the accompanying consent form and return it to me during our meeting before I ask any question. I will contact you to arrange a mutually convenient date and time. Your participation and assistance in this project is greatly
appreciated and you will be kept informed of its progress and results. Your participation is valuable. Should you have any concerns about the conduct of this research project, please contact: The Executive Officer, Human Research Ethics, The University of Melbourne on ph: (03) 8344-2073; fax: (03) 9347-6739. In anticipation of your response, I greatly appreciate you helping me in my study.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Yours faithfully,

Ayalew Mergia

PhD Research Student
Department of Political Science
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE
Ph: (03) 9344 1230
Fax: (03) 8344 7906
Email: a.mergia@pgrad.unimelb.edu.au
Appendix 4: Consent Form

(Printed on University of Melbourne Letterhead)
Department of Political Science
THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Consent form for persons participating in research projects

PROJECT TITLE: "Indigenous African Immigrants in Australia: an exploratory analysis of the impact of race and class on their lived experiences and adaptation processes"

Name of investigators: Ayalew Mergia (03-9344 1230); Professor Verity Burgmann (03-8344 7943); Professor Mark Considine (03-8344 6569)

I hereby consent to participate as a subject of human research project in the project named above, and understand that the purpose of the study as explained to me is:

That the study is part of the requirement for completing the investigator's doctoral degree at the University of Melbourne.

That the study is to understand the lived experiences and adaptation processes of 'black' African immigrants in Australia.
To explore and investigate the impact of class and race on the lived experiences of 'black' African immigrants in Australia.

I acknowledge that:

The aims, methods, and anticipated benefits, and possible risks/hazards of the research study, have been explained to me,
Any possible effects of the interview have been explained to me to my satisfaction,
I voluntarily and freely give my consent to my participation in the proposed project,
I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied,
The interview will be tape recorded and transcribed,
Any information that I provide will not be made public in any form that could reveal my identity to an outside party,

I understand that results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals and academic conferences,

Individual results will not be released to any person except at my request and on my authorisation,

The information I provide during the interview will be coded and my name and address kept separately from it,

I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide during the interview will be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements.

Signature                    Date
Appendix 4 (The Amharic Version)

(printed on university of Melbourne letterhead)

ানালাই সোলুজ র'দ্ডি ডেমাম লামাতাত যেফলেত

প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন: “আধুনিক আচারের প্রাথমিক পর্যালোচনা (race) সীমার পরে শেষ হবে যদি আমরা আমাদের প্রচলিত প্রচার বিশেষ উপস্থাপন করি তাহলে তখন শেষ হবে।”

প্রশ্ন নম্বর:

প্রচ্ছাড় সোলুজ আচার: অ থামা সোলুজ (03 9344 1230) তেলন।

প্রচ্ছাড় সোলুজ (03 8344 7943) অ থামা সোলুজ (03 8344 6569)

আধুনিক আচার নির্দেশার জন্য আমরা নির্দিষ্ট ভাবে প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন লেখার উদ্দেশ্যে: প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন আলোচনার জন্য নির্দিষ্ট ভাবে প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন নির্দিষ্ট ভাবে প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন নির্দিষ্ট ভাবে প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন নির্দিষ্ট ভাবে প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন 

প্রথম:

প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন আচার, লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার 


d) প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন আচার, বিশ্লেষণে যেরূপ তথ্য আলোচনা এলাম হিসেবে প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন নির্দিষ্ট ভাবে প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন নির্দিষ্ট ভাবে প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন নির্দিষ্ট ভাবে প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন নির্দিষ্ট ভাবে প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন 


d) প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন অ। থামা সোলুজ (03 8344 7943)

প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন (03 9344 1230) অ থামা সোলুজ (03 8344 6569) 

নামে:

d) প্রচ্ছাড় লায়িন আচার, লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার লেখার 

304
1. የለመለከቱም የสูงสุดትትናሰጠ ወስጠት ጋር ይከፍሉናቸውን፣
2. የወንድ ወስኖ እንጎጆች፣ ወቅታቸውን ወቅታቸው ሥራ ከወንድ ይሰራኝ፣
   የሆነ ከተማው እስባት መጠን እንጎጆች መከረ እንጎጆች
   ቦታልልል፣
3. የሚጥሩ መስጆ እምሩ ብሔሪ እንጎጆች ያስከተሉኝ ከስጠቃኝኝ ከስጠቃኝኝ
   እስካፋት ወራሽት ሥርወ እንጎጆች፣ እንጎጆች እስካፋት እስካፋት ከስጠቃኝኝ የስጠቃኝኝ ከስጠቃኝኝ ቦታልልል፣
4. የሚስራ ሊጀንдал ወቅታቸው ሥራወጥ ሐት መስጆ ሥርወ ከስጠቃኝኝ ቦታልልል፣
5. ያላዩ እግወስክስክትኝ ወቅታቸው ወቅታቸው እንጎጆች ቦታልልል፣
Appendix 5: Interview (List of Questions)

1. Tell me about you and your household or family (or who is in your household or could you first introduce me yourself.

2. Thinking back, prior to your arrival in Australia what would you say were your main reasons/motivations for coming to Australia. Probing questions:
   - Were they to do with family/relatives/friends in Australia?
   - Were they for better way of life/advance economically?
   - Were they to do with work, better/more suitable job (your work or your spouse/partner’s or children’s work)?
   - Were they to do with political, religious, ethnic problems?
   - Were they for the future of your children, or other?
   - Were they to do with studies/pursuing further education?

3. Having once made the decision to migrate, how did you apply? What is your immigration process? Probing questions:
   - Why did you choose Australia?
   - When and how did the process to migrate start?
   - How long did you have to wait for the actual journey?
   - Can you identify any aspects of the application and selection process? for example, were there any concessions, more or less favourable treatment, or discrimination, or delaying?

4. What did you think Australia would be like, before you came to the country?
   - What was/were your aspirations before your coming to Australia?
   - What was your initial impression of Australia before your arrival?

5. And what was it like when you first came to Australia? Probing questions:
   - How did you feel about Australia when you first arrived?
   - What do you like least about Australia?
   - What do you like most about Australia?
   - What was your initial impression of Australia when you first arrive?
   - Issues you faced in settling into life in Australia?

6. Did your opinion of Australia change or did it remain the same the more you stay longer in Australia? Probe for both positive/good and negative/bad experiences:
   - What was the best thing that ever happened to you in Australia?
   - What are the things that helped you most, so far in this country?
- What are/were the most difficult things for you to get used to in Australia?
- What was the worst thing that ever happened to you in Australia?
- And how did you approach the issues or manage them
7. In what ways do you feel your thinking has changed in the time you have lived in Australia? And how much freedom and control over your own life did you have in Australia?
8. What does you and/or your family generally do during the week and the weekends?
  - With whom and where?
  - Changes in schedules or interactions?
9. What kind of peoples are living in your neighborhood (occupation, income, race/ethnicity, family composition?)
  - Why and how did you or your family pick this neighborhood?
  - Loan? [if yes, ask them to elaborate the experience]
10. What is the relationship between you/your family and the neighbors?
  - What are typical interactions between you/your family and your neighbor(s)?
11. Where do you feel you fit in, in terms of class? (e.g., working class, middle class, upper middle class, capitalist class). How does this differ from your original homeland?
12. What is the most profound way - positive or negative - in which class issues in Australia have affected you?
13. How do you feel about the work atmosphere in Australia, in other words, about your place of Employment? Difficulties or problems you have faced in your work place?
14. Did you ever have difficulties or problems with employers in the factories or with growers?
15. When you go shopping, dining, banking, to doctors, to schools, to agencies, or at work, on the phone etc., how have they treated you? [need to find out how many contacts with these situations they have had so far).
16. Have you noticed any incidents that were uneasy for you or puzzling to you during the interaction of being there? (or incidents that seem weird to you or people are rude to you)
  - Explanations for the experiences
  - Actions taken by the immigrant or her/his family
17. Have you ever experienced not being able to find accommodation suitable for your needs? How? And When? Where? Why did you think this happens to you?
18. Do you or Black Africans have an equal access to housing? Have you ever changed dwelling or neighborhood? Why?
19. What do you think are the difficulties Black Africans face in the housing market? And why?
20. Have you ever experienced difficulties with transport and 'getting around'?
21. If you were treated unfairly in efforts to get housing, or if you were treated unfairly by the police, or on your job, would you file a complaint? Why? Why not?
22. You are indigenous African/Black person; how do you feel you are treated in Australia as a member of a so-called minority and black group?
23. How do you feel about your own "racial" and ethnic heritage in Australia?
24. Do you feel fortunate to look the way you look in terms of your 'racial' category? Why? Why not?
25. How would you characterise relations between black Africans, indigenous peoples (Aborigines), Pacific Islanders, Asians, Middle Easterners, Latin Americans, The Caribbeans, Anglo-Celtic, non- Anglo-Celtic Europeans such as the Greeks, Italians and Eastern Europeans and/or other groups you may wish to mention?
26. How do you get along with: whites, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Middle Easterners, Latin Americans, The Caribbeans, Anglo-Celtic, non- Anglo-Celtic Europeans such as the Greeks, Italians and Eastern Europeans and/or other groups you may wish to mention? (This question will be broken down and asked separately for each category).
27. Are you able to interact (freely) with members of the host society, i.e., the Anglo-Celtic community? Have you or other Black Africans you know been accepted into the community of whites?
28. What ethnic groups do your friends belong to? What countries are they from?
29. What ethnic group do you fear trouble from the most, in Australia? Why? And what ethnic group do you admire most? Why?
30. What is the most profound way - positive or negative - in which racial issues in Australia have affected you?
31. In what ways did you experiences racism in this country?
Can you tell me about the racism you experienced during your stay in Australia?
Have you ever suffered from racist comments?
Which form of discrimination is mostly a problem to you? And how often?
Did you expect of experiencing any form of discrimination before coming to Australia?

32. How has the racial climate in Australia and in the area(s) where you live or have lived or work/worked affected you?
33. Did you or do you have any problems to the way Australians speak or with native’s English accent?
34. Would you like to get rid of some or all of your African Accent?
35. Has your religious feeling changed after coming to Australia?
36. What are your needs as indigenous/Black African immigrant in Australia?
37. How satisfied are you with your life, work performance, and your progress today?
38. Do you think that all immigrants are getting equal/good treatment in Australia? Why? Why not?
39. What is the most important issue/difficulties/problems you encountered when you first came to Australia?
40. What is the most important issue/difficulties/problems you feel is facing you as a Black African in Australia today?
41. To what extent do you expect to maintain the ways of your cultural background, when you are living in Australia?
42. And how important it will be for you to follow the practices, culture and traditions of main stream Australia (Anglo-Celtic) when you live in Australia? To what extent do you expect to adopt Australian ways of doing things?
43. What are your views on politics, and on the media in Australia? Do you believe immigrant’s images are portrayed positively by the media? Why? Why not?
44. Would you ever go back to settle in Africa? Why? Why not?
45. What was for you the most important issue we talked about?
Appendix 5 (the Amharic Version)

9. ከጋዳን ከርሆ ግር የጋዳን ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራከሩ ያስቀ(*)(${\mathbb{Z}}$) በሚከራከሩ

8. የጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን የጋዳን ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራከሩ (${\mathbb{Q}}$) በሚከራከሩ

• የጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራከሩ ያስቀ${\mathbb{Z}}$ በሚከራከሩ
• የጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራከሩ ያስቀ${\mathbb{Q}}$ በሚከራከሩ
• የጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራከሩ ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$ በሚከራከሩ

7. ለጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Z}}$ በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Q}}$

• የጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$ በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$

6. ለጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Z}}$ በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Q}}$

• የጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$ በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$

5. ለጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Z}}$ በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Q}}$

• የጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$ በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$

4. ለጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Z}}$ በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Q}}$

• የጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$ በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$

3. ለጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸውን በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Z}}$ በሚከራ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Q}}$

• የጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸ餍 በሚケーキ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$ በሚケーキ Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$

2. ለጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸ餍 በሚCake Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Z}}$ በሚCake Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Q}}$

• የጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸ餍 በሚCake Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$ በሚCake Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$

1. ለጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸ餍 በሚCake Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Z}}$ በሚCake Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{Q}}$

• የጋዳን ከርሆ ያስተካቾቸ menn በሚCake Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$ በሚCake Kare ያስቀ${\mathbb{R}}$

310
Appendix 6: Demographic, Socio-economic, Immigration and Housing Questionnaire (DSEIHQ)

This questionnaire asks for information about your personal details and household background. The information helps me know more about you and your family background. You do not need to answer all the questions, but will help my study if you answer all. You can skip any questions that make you uneasy or are unknown to you. If you have any questions about the questionnaire please let me know. I will be happy to explain it to you. Thank you for taking the time and making the effort to fill out this questionnaire.

You are asked to reply to each question by one of the following means:

- By writing a short statement;
- By placing a circle around a number or a word;
- By ranking from 1st to the last;
- By filling the blank line to indicate your answer.

Your participation is very much appreciated.

ID # _______________ Date _______________

1. Residential Address (Optional):

_________________________________________________________________________________
Suburb: __________________________ Post Code: ____________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________
Telephone Number: __________________________

2. For how long have you been in Melbourne now? ______ Years ______ Months

3. If Melbourne is not your first place of residence, when did you arrive in Australia:

Year _____, Month _____

4. Your sex/gender: 1) Female 2) Male

5. Age

1. 15-24 years 2. 25-34 years
2. 35-44 years 4. 45-54 years
3. 55-64 years 6. 65 years and above
6 Marital Status

1. Single/never married
2. Married
3. Divorced
4. Separated
5. Widowed

7 Which part/sub-region of Africa are you born?

1. East Africa
2. West Africa
3. Central Africa
4. South Africa

8 Did you come straight from your home country? 1) Yes 2) No

9. If "No" list the last three or four countries you lived before coming to Australia and indicate length of stay:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Lived</th>
<th>Length of Stay</th>
<th>Reasons for Leaving that Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. You were admitted in Australia based on which visa category:

1. Family (please circle: spouse/fiancées, parent(s), sibling(s), child/children)
2. Skill (skilled- Australian sponsored, Independent, employer nomination scheme, business skills, distinguished talents)
3. Special Eligibility Category
4. Humanitarian program (refugee, special humanitarian, special assistance)
5. Student Visa
6. Political Asylum
7. Other (Tourist visa etc.)

11. What is your current residence status in Australia?

1. Australian citizen
2. Permanent Resident

12. Would you say that your current residential status helped you to adapt well to conditions in Melbourne? 1) Yes 2) No 3) Not sure

13. If "Yes", how well or in what particular respect has your adaptation been?
14. If "no", why is this so for you?

15. Why do you choose to come to Melbourne? If you have moved from another Australian city (Circle all that apply here)
   1. to seek better employment
   2. to join spouse/relative
   3. to further education/training; acquire skills
   4. Humanitarian program (refugee, special humanitarian, special assistance
   5. to seek political asylum
   6. other (specify):

16. What kind of reception did you face when you first came to Melbourne?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Difficulties/Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Friendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cannot specify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unfriendly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Very unfriendly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. List by ranking the most difficult problems you encountered when you first came to Melbourne. The most difficult as 1, then 2, etc. (Please choose all that apply here)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Difficulties/Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulties in getting access to housing/accommodation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulties in getting job/Unemployment, low income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulties in learning English and/or understanding native's accent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discrimination/Harassment by members of host society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non of the above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. Indicate by ranking the most difficult problems that you are still facing. The most difficult as 1, then 2, 3, etc. (please choose all that apply here)

   _____ Insufficient/low income/Unemployment
   _____ Job insecurity; frequent dismissals from jobs
Problem with native’s accent
Lack of access to housing; confinement to bad housing conditions
Racial discrimination and harassment from members of host society
None of the above
Other (specify): 

19. Did you ever speak English before coming to Australia?
1) No
2) Yes

20. How would you rate your level of English now? (Circle)
a) not at all   b) not well   c) well   d) very well
e) excellent

21. Educational Status in Africa or elsewhere
1) No formal education; did not go to school
2) No formal education: can read and write
3) Elementary school   some   completed
4) Vocational school:   some   completed
5) Secondary School:   some   completed
6) Undergraduate study:   some   completed
7) Master’s:   some   completed
8) Ph.D.:   some   completed

22. Educational Status in Australia:
1) No education in Australia
2) English class only
3) Year 8 or below
4) Some secondary school
5) Completed secondary school
6) Specialised training or Certificate level
7) Advanced Diploma & Diploma Level
8) Bachelor Degree
9) Graduate diploma or Graduate Certificate
10) Master’s
11) Ph.D.

23. If married, is your spouse living with you in Melbourne?
1. Yes
2. No
3. Not applicable

24. Who did you come to Australia with? (mark as many as apply)
1) alone
5) sibling(s)
2) spouse  
6) relatives (aunt, uncle, cousin, 
grandparent)

3) child/children  
7) others:____________________

4) parent(s)

25. How many children do you have?__________
26. How many of them were born in Australia?__________
27. How many of your children are staying with you now?__________

28. Your current religious practice is:
   1) None  
   2) Orthodox Christianity  
   3) Catholicism
   4) Protestantism  
   5) Moslem  
   6) Judaism
   7) Traditional practice  
   8) Other (specify)

29. Does your current religious practice differ from what it was prior to your coming 
to Australia? 1) No  2) Yes: My previous religion was__________

30. Which of the following categories best describes the paid work you have done 
before you arrived in Australia? (circle the appropriate number):
   1) never did paid work
   2) mainly unskilled or semi-skilled labour and related works
   3) mainly as a qualified trades person or technician
   4) clerical or office work
   5) manager of a small business/ a shop/ a small family farm
   6) manager of a large business/company/organisation/large farm property
   7) government official/public servant/civil servant
   8) a professional in work requiring some university or specialised training
   9) a professional in work requiring a high level of university or 
specialised training
   10) home or house wife

31. What was your employment status before you arrived in Australia? (circle the 
appropriate number):
   1) Full-time (5 and a half days/week)  
   4) self-employed
   2) Part-time (less than 5 and half days week)  
   5) never employed
   3) Hourly  
   6) retired

32. How soon after your arrival were you able to get a job?______________

317
33. Your current occupation and employment status in Australia. Please describe what you do.

Occupation: ____________________________________________________________

1) Employment status:
   1) Full-time (5 and a half days/week) 5) self-employed
   2) Part-time, casual (less than 5 and half day a week) 6) never employed
   3) Hourly 7) retired
   4) Professional 8) Student

34. How do you evaluate the appropriateness or the inappropriateness of your current job compared with your experiences and skills/qualifications/education?

1) appropriate 2) inappropriate (if inappropriate, what do you think is the main reasons) ____________________________________________________________

35. How satisfied are you with the present job? _____________________________

36. Have you ever changed jobs? 1. Yes 2. No

37. If "Yes", why? (Circle all that apply here).
   1. Because of discrimination against people of lower social status/class in workplace
   2. Because of discrimination against minority employees in workplace
   3. Previous job was very insecure and/or lowly paid
   4. Labour exploitation by employer/lack of job satisfaction
   5. Contract expired
   6. Company was closed down
   7. Other (specify) ______________________________________________________

38. If "No", why? _______________________________________________________

39. If you face any problems in your workplace list up to four the most difficult or persistent:
   1. _________________________________________________________________
   2. _________________________________________________________________
   3. _________________________________________________________________
   4. _________________________________________________________________

40. Are these problems peculiar to you as an African?
   1. Yes 2. No 3. Cannot tell
41. If your answer is "No" or "Yes", give reasons why you say so.

42. Please provide the following information about members of your household apart from yourself (Write and tick in the appropriate form)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship to</th>
<th>Age (in yrs)</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children: 1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

43. What would you say constitute/s discrimination or unfair treatment against racial minorities in Australia and in your workplace? Give three or more of the most frequent ones:

44. How do you describe your or your family's relationship to Australian society?

45. Are you able to contact (freely) with members of the host society, that is, people who are Europeans?
1. Yes  
2. No  
3. Cannot tell exactly

46. If "No", please explain why?
47. If "Yes", describe your level of social interaction with the host society, i.e., Europeans:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Cannot tell</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Very high</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

48. What kind of role do you have in Australian society? 

49. In your view does the general housing market in Melbourne operate favourably/fairly for immigrants especially as regards their access to housing?

1) Yes 2) No 3) Can not tell

50. "No", why do you think this is so? 

51. Describe the access to housing of Black Africans as compared to that of other immigrant or minority groups in Melbourne?
- Indigenous Africans face much more difficulty than other immigrant groups
- Indigenous Africans face much less difficulty than other immigrant groups
- Both indigenous Africans and other immigrant groups face the same level of difficulties
- Neither indigenous Africans nor other immigrant groups face any difficulties in accessing housing
- Cannot tell exactly

52. What do you think are some of the difficulties that indigenous Africans as a group face in the housing market in Melbourne? **Rank in order the three or four most formidable of the problems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Difficulties/Problems Being Encountered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language barriers/Accent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak economic position/low income status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discrimination/prejudice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exclusion/Access denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53. How many bedrooms has your dwelling? 

54. Circle the number which best describes your dwelling:

1. fully owned
2. being purchased
3. being rented
4. other (specify) ________________________________

55. Have you ever changed dwelling?
   1. Yes (how many times: __________)  2. No

56. If "Yes", from the table below identify by ranking order all the causes for your change of dwellings.
   _____ racist and discriminatory behaviour of landlords/neighbours
   _____ because of inaccessible to transport and other amenities/isolated or bad location
   _____ because of prevalence of crime/bad or anti-social practices etc
   _____ because of eviction/sale of house/upgrading
   _____ proximity to work/school
   _____ High rent and frequently-increasing rentals
   _____ need for adequate housing space
   _____ desire to own house/property
   other (specify) ________________________________

57. If "No", why? ________________________________

58. If your dwelling is being rented, who is it rented from?
   1) state housing commission
   2) private landlord not in the same household
   3) real estate agent
   4) community or co-operative housing
   5) other (specify) ________________________________

59. How much does your household pay for your dwelling?
   1) ________________ (per week)
   2) ________________ (per fortnight)
   3) ________________ (per month)

60. What is your main source of income? ________________________________

61. What was your household income before taxes last year? It includes money from all sources including wages/salaries from all family members, social security, retirement, help from relatives/friend/social services, investments, etc.
   1) under $6,000  2) $6,000 - $9,999  3) $10,000 - $14,999  4) $15,000 - $24,999  5) $25,000 - $34,999  6) $35,000 - $49,999  7) $50,000 - $74,999  8) $75,000 - $99,999

321
3) $10,000 - $14,999   6) $35,000 - $49,999   9) $1,000,000 or more

62. How many people in your household were supported with this income? Please write in the number: ________ What are their occupations or what do they do to make money?

Family Member: ____________ Occupation of this person: ____________
Family Member: ____________ Occupation of this person: ____________
Family Member: ____________ Occupation of this person: ____________

63. What kind of peoples are living in your neighbourhood? Please describe their class status:

1. White middle class suburban
2. White middle class urban
3. White middle/lower middle class urban
4. Mixed ‘racial’ lower class urban

64. Please describe your economic/class status:

A. In Africa or elsewhere:
   1. Upper class
   2. Upper middle class
   3. Middle class
   4. Small employer
   5. Petty bourgeoisie
   6. Lower class
   7. Unemployed

B. In Australia:
   1. Upper middle class
   2. Middle class
   3. Small employer
   4. Petty bourgeoisie
   5. Lower class
   6. Unemployed

65. Do you need to send money back to Africa or to support others who are still in Africa?

1) No
2) Yes (they are ____________________________ )

66. What is the main language in which you have been educated? ________________

67. What language(s) is/are used in your household?

1) Primary: ______________________
2) Secondary: _____________________
3) Others: ________________________

68. Did you have relatives/friends in Australia before your arrival to this country?

1. Yes: (Resident in ________________________ )
2. No

69. What holidays do you or your household usually celebrate in Australia? Who does the family celebrate with?

(1) African Holidays
(2) With whom?
(1) Australian Holiday
(2) With whom?
Appendix 6 (The Amharic Version)

مثال: لأستاذ: أ.د.XYZ

لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kõrvaldav materjal</th>
<th>Ülevaade</th>
<th>Paigaldamine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. Mida on mõju saanud kohaliku õppekooli uuringute jaoks? (väljakaalutükki, sõnad ja mugavus)

II. Millised on selle õppekooli erinevad eelised ja haavatud viljakus aspektid?

III. Millised on mõned eelised ja haavatud aspektid, mis on seotud õppekooliga?
=mysql

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>የcaracterísticas/መረጃ</th>
<th>የከን-------------&lt;/plications/መረጃ ያለውን ከፍተኛ ያለውን ከፍተኛ</th>
<th>የከን&lt;/plications/መረጃ ያለውን ከፍተኛ ያለውን ከፍተኛ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>የከን&lt;/plications/መረጃ ያለውን ከፍተኛ ያለውን ከፍተኛ ያለውን ከፍተኛ</td>
<td>የከን&lt;/plications/መረጃ ያለውን ከፍተኛ ያለውን ከፍተኛ ያለውን ከፍተኛ</td>
<td>ያለውን ከፍተኛ ያለውን ከፍተኛ ያለውን ከፍተኛ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ይታሰብ ይታسة
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Столбец 1</th>
<th>Столбец 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Задания

1. **Задача 1:** Напишите ответ на вопрос. **Ответ:**

2. **Задача 2:** Напишите ответ на вопрос. **Ответ:**

3. **Задача 3:** Напишите ответ на вопрос. **Ответ:**

### Задания по теме

4. **Задача 4:** Напишите ответ на вопрос. **Ответ:**

5. **Задача 5:** Напишите ответ на вопрос. **Ответ:**

6. **Задача 6:** Напишите ответ на вопрос. **Ответ:**

### Дополнительные материалы

7. **Материал 7:** Напишите ответ на вопрос. **Ответ:**

8. **Материал 8:** Напишите ответ на вопрос. **Ответ:**

### Индивидуальные задания

9. **Задача 9:** Напишите ответ на вопрос. **Ответ:**

### Общие замечания

10. **Замечание 10:** Напишите ответ на вопрос. **Ответ:**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ሥራቸው ውጤ</th>
<th>ውጤ</th>
<th>ውጤ</th>
<th>ውጤ</th>
<th>ውጤ</th>
<th>ውጤ</th>
<th>ውጤ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>የጾ/ጪት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>የጪ</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>የጪ</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>የጪ</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>የጪ</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>የጪ</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>የጪ</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
<td>ይታት</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

328
P4-"ICT/a0(lSttltoT

Ka

gr,y'l.

PsnsP 7R41: Pht11114- (accent)

*lC

R11°9 Ph,tw°Z 2,149°1 714'•B'

rm.

9°lisr.

Ph.tbk9'/Agfl-A°14-5' ,P41(111 `PV
hhv1M.m./ht1°iatm• AAaDgclit4. n-hHtP434 NIA
AA

tlgA Mai.?
P. 1taoTG.P 11.11' -1-n°9°Zm.1 VPC MIMS. VIA ya hALT mA9° 71-i1;
g. nr'ir xRfi A ym.
. Ph.G1c (1.+/-1111-AT
ô, htLG•! yR PlP}
AA
fm..111-1?
Paps'G,P (119'1/4ni69'7t
)
g. hA41Ch•9°
h9')
,4fl+9°rtr
9%, a° An9' hP') hupf ll004'SPC ,Pf11RR9'fil 9°t1i.,P-itT
((Km, TIC â%4i B4i tlt ... mH+ n(191t1.)::
P(b-k (1rt(11-/V1-i 11€1.1:-tm./h1V1(1.m. n°ZJAKCiii 411.t L 9'/b Ry n°gi- (racist and discriminatory behaviour)
a°`PCS 44•1RA (isolated) na°tPYR+1,1f17C+ h a q
hR,Pd•i miYA ih 1-1nG,4-A1t°ZnHn+
Vi.tmalrh,V14' n00.4111ii (L* naD7Sm•
hr'G•/ h4-9°UC+ 11,4-na01,ck
PaDtld.b\ h4,07. 0 9y4
hÇIA' h.L-A=. nP1.ti.m. tLG-g h 4Ri
(1.111(L'i h11-P` fi1taD,PH•S nti 9° hÇA Altl6ltm.
. PaDTL,S' (14-9'

1bAi
.

a°Aetso hA+PCh-9°

lt9°l?
330


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$100,000</th>
<th>$149,999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>$199,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>$249,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>$299,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$300,000</td>
<td>$349,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$350,000</td>
<td>$399,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$449,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$450,000</td>
<td>$499,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td>$549,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$550,000</td>
<td>$599,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$600,000</td>
<td>$649,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$650,000</td>
<td>$699,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$700,000</td>
<td>$749,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$750,000</td>
<td>$799,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$800,000</td>
<td>$849,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$850,000</td>
<td>$899,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$900,000</td>
<td>$949,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$950,000</td>
<td>$999,999</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dismeet alsagashus: 10 000 (15 000) 25 000 (28 000) 50 000 (58 000) 100 000 (120 000) 200 000 (240 000) 400 000 (480 000) 800 000 (880 000) 1 000 000 (1 200 000) 2 000 000 (2 400 000) 4 000 000 (4 800 000) 8 000 000 (8 800 000) 10 000 000 (12 000 000) 20 000 000 (24 000 000) 40 000 000 (48 000 000) 80 000 000 (88 000 000) 100 000 000 (120 000 000) 200 000 000 (240 000 000) 400 000 000 (480 000 000) 800 000 000 (880 000 000) 1 000 000 000 (1 200 000 000) 2 000 000 000 (2 400 000 000) 4 000 000 000 (4 800 000 000) 8 000 000 000 (8 800 000 000) 10 000 000 000 (12 000 000 000) 20 000 000 000 (24 000 000 000) 40 000 000 000 (48 000 000 000) 80 000 000 000 (88 000 000 000) 100 000 000 000 (120 000 000 000) 200 000 000 000 (240 000 000 000) 400 000 000 000 (480 000 000 000) 800 000 000 000 (880 000 000 000) 1 000 000 000 000 (1 200 000 000 000)
Appendix 7: Notation System for Interview Data

[=] two people are talking at the same time

> the person jumps right into the conversation

[l] laughing

[p] pause

[bp] brief pause

[lp] long pause

[fs] false start

[pl] plural “you”

(...) unclear on the tape

... incomplete sentence

{} in English in the interview

[ ] additional notes or additional parts that are included to complete the sentence
due to linguistic differences between Amharic and English

CAP stressed by the speaker
Appendix 8: Participant Households’ by Various Demographic and Socio-economic Variables at the Aggregate Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Interviewed Participants</th>
<th>Non-interviewed Participants</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency (n)</td>
<td>Percentage (%)</td>
<td>Frequency (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of Arrival</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-1981</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-1985</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1990</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1995</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-2001</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 or above</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of Birth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Africa</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78.6%</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Africa</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Africa</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Africa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>92.8%</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/Relatives in Australia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 8 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Interviewed Participants</th>
<th>Non-interviewed Participants</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency (n)</td>
<td>Percentage (%)</td>
<td>Frequency (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeowner</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Rental</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Commission</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Headship</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents with children</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents without children</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Parent</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single without children</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more adults</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Household Language Use</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native African Language</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native African and English</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8 or below</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate or Specialty Training</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma or Advanced Diploma</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Certificate/Graduate Diploma</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Degree (MA, PhD, MD)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Appendix 8 continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Interviewed Participants</th>
<th>Non-interviewed Participants</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income ($)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $6,000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$6,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 - $14,999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 - $24,999</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 - $34,999</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $74,999</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 or above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labour Force Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for Job</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Class Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty Bourgeoisie</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Employer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-skilled</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student/unemployed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

336
(Appendix 8 continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Interviewed Participants</th>
<th>Non-interviewed Participants</th>
<th>Total Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency (n)</td>
<td>Percentage (%)</td>
<td>Frequency (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Australia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petty Bourgeoisie</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Employer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-skilled</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.6%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Middle Class Suburban</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Middle Class Urban</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Middle/Lower Middle Class Urban</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed &quot;Racial&quot; Lower Class Urban</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>64.4%</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican Christianity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox Christianity</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholicism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestantism/Lutheranism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christianity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moslem</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Australia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican Christianity</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthodox Christianity</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholicism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestantism/Lutheranism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christianity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moslem</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39.3%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Two male respondents did not provide this information.

*Eight respondents (one female and seven male) did not provide this information.
Appendix 9: Primary source (Interview and group discussion participants and participatory observations).

A. Interviews

Mr. Abdi, on 21 October 2003 at his home located in Western Melbourne.
Mr. Adamu, on 07 October 2003 at his home located in Eastern Outer Melbourne.
Mr. Aregawi, on 14 July 2003 at Frank Raleigh meeting room, Ormond College.
Mrs. Chiluba, on 03 October 2003 at her office located in Inner Melbourne.
Mr. Chissano, on 02 March 2003 at his home located in Melton-Wyndham.
Mr. Fasil, on 10 July 2003 at his home located in South Moreland City.
Ms. Fatuma, on 27 October 2003 at her home in Western Melbourne.
Ms. Genet, on 21 July 2003 at Frank Raleigh meeting room, Ormond College.
Mr. Israel, on 15 July 2003 at Frank Raleigh meeting room, Ormond College.
Mr. Kabila, on 11 April 2003 at Frank Raleigh meeting room, Ormond College.
Mr. Kedir, on 21 November 2003 at his home located in Inner Melbourne.
Mr. Kebede, on 12 July 2003 at her office located in Western Melbourne.
Mr. Kemal, on 21 September 2003 at Frank Raleigh meeting room.
Ms. Martha, on 21 December 2003 at his home in Western Melbourne.
Mr. Mbeki, on 29 December 2003 at his home located in Greater Dandenong City.
Mr. Melaku, on 19 July 2003 at Frank Raleigh meeting room, Ormond College.
Ms. Melanie, on 18 December 2003 at her home located in Western Melbourne.
Mr. Mesfin, on 08 June 2003 at Frank Raleigh meeting room, Ormond College.
Mr. Mitiku, on 13 December 2003 at the Flemington Community School.
Ms. Nazizi, on 10 June 2003 at one of the interview rooms in Inner Western Region Migrant Resource Centre Footscray.
Mr. Nega, on 29 March 2003 at his home located in Western Melbourne.
Mr. Nkrumah, on 14 April 2003 at his home located in South Eastern Outer Melbourne.
Mr. Okoth, on 03 June 2003 at Frank Raleigh meeting room, Ormond College.
Mr. Onimode, on 19 July 2003 at the Flemington Community School.
Ms. Selaam, on 21 November 2003 at her office located in Western Melbourne.
Mr. Teka, on 30 September 2003 at his home located in Eastern Outer Melbourne.
Mr. Tutu, on 14 October 2003 at Frank Raleigh meeting room, Ormond College.
Mr. Yesuf, on 15 February 2003 at his home located in Western Melbourne.
B. Discussion participants

Mr. Hailom, Mr. Kibrom, Mr. Tekle, Mr. Ismael and Mr. Fitsum, on 18 December 2003 held in Western Melbourne.

Mrs. Sossina and Mr. Zoble, on 29 March 2003 held in Western Melbourne.

Mr. Aklog, Mrs. Hamelmal and Mr. Goshu and Mr. Abraham, on 30 September 2003 held in Eastern Outer Melbourne.

Mrs. Zeyneb, on 27 October 2003 held in Western Melbourne.

Mrs. Topia, on 29 December 2003 held in Greater Dandenong City.

Mrs. Abadi and Ms. Cynthia, on 11 April 2003 held in Western Melbourne.

Mrs. Zehara, on 21 November 2003 held in Inner Melbourne.

Ms. Ruth, on 21 December 2003 held in Western Melbourne Statistical Sub-Division.

C. Participant Observations

Three lunches at Footscray Mall, Carlton Mall and Werribee Mall on 15 February 2003, 03 June 2003 and 10 June 2003, with families/households living in Western Melbourne, Inner Western Region and Western Melbourne respectively.

One lunch on 21 July 2003, at the home of a family/household living in Western Melbourne.

Three dinners at the homes of families/households living in Eastern Outer Melbourne, Western Melbourne and Melton-Wyndham on Ethiopian/Eritrean Easter Day, Ethiopian/Eritrean New Year Day and Angolan Independence Day respectively.

Two religious holiday festivals on Ethiopian Epiphany and on the Finding of the True Cross inside the compound of the Ethiopian Coptic Orthodox Church located in Maribyrnong.

Two religious holiday festivals on Ethiopian/Eritrean Easter Day and on Ethiopian/Eritrean New Year Day - dinner time with Eritrean and Ethiopian families at their homes in Western Melbourne and Eastern Outer Melbourne respectively.

One religious holiday festival on Ethiopian/Eritrean Christmas Day dinner time at Blue Nile Restaurant with a family/household living in South Moreland City.

A wedding ceremony held at Northern Middle Melbourne on 04 January 2004.

A program of activities at the Kensington Community Recreation Centre, on 10 January 2004.
Author/s:
Mergia, Ayalew

Title:
Black African immigrants in Australia: an exploratory analysis of the impacts of race and class on their lived experiences and adaptation processes

Date:
2005

Citation:

Publication Status:
Unpublished

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/37582

File Description:
Black African immigrants in Australia: an exploratory analysis of the impacts of race and class on their lived experiences and adaptation processes

Terms and Conditions:
Terms and Conditions: Copyright in works deposited in Minerva Access is retained by the copyright owner. The work may not be altered without permission from the copyright owner. Readers may only download, print and save electronic copies of whole works for their own personal non-commercial use. Any use that exceeds these limits requires permission from the copyright owner. Attribution is essential when quoting or paraphrasing from these works.