A NEW PAN-AFRICANISM: DIASPORA AFRICAN TRANSNATIONAL ENTREPRENEURS AND PHILANTHROPY BETWEEN GHANA AND ATLANTA, USA

By

MICHELLE LEANNE EDWARDS

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2008
In loving memory of Lawrence McGaugh and Greene McGaugh.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project would not have been possible without the support of many people. First and foremost, I want to give thanks to God for guiding me through this process. Many thanks go to my committee members: Dr. Brenda Chalfin who read my numerous revisions and helped make some sense of the confusion, Dr. Faye Harrison for her encouragement and belief in me, Dr. Poynor for his long talks and words of wisdom, and Dr. Kane for his patience and guidance.

I would also like to acknowledge the University of Florida Anthropology Department (Zora Neale Hurston Fellowship 2003-2006), University of Florida Warrington College of Business (Center for International Business Education and Research grant), and the United States Department of Education Fulbright-Hays Doctorial Dissertation Abroad for providing me with the financial means to complete my graduate course work and this dissertation project.

Special thanks go to my wonderful parents, Dr. Michael and Sheila Edwards, who endured this long process with me always offering their support and love. Thanks also go to my cousin Tanya Thomas and good friends Veronica McClain, Danyell Wilson, and Georgette Garlick for opening up their homes to me when I needed a place to stay, food to eat, a shoulder to cry on, and a friend to laugh at all my jokes. Lastly, I would like to thank Milicent, Sam, Bianca, the African American Association of Ghana, and the many people I met during my stay in Ghana that watched over me and supported throughout that time period.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1  PROJECT SUMMARY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a New Portrait of the Black American Entrepreneur</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unique History of Black American Entrepreneurs in Understanding the</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation of Transnational Enterprises in Ghana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Evolving Role of Black American Ethnic Networks and Business Associations</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora African Transnational Entrepreneurs and Philanthropy between Ghana and Atlanta, USA</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-African Philanthropy</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora African Identity Formation, Social Capital, and Business Networks</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Benefits of Diaspora African Vertically Integrated Firms</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan-African Global Cities Network</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Methodology and Results</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Selection</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Instruments and Data Collection</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant-Observation and Interviews</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Network Approach</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-sited Ethnographic Field Research</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodological Considerations</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergent Ideas and New Perspective Revealed in the Case Studies</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2  ENTREPRENEURAL ALLIANCES: GETTING STARTED AND GETTING CONNECTED</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora Africans in Ghana: The Ties That Bind</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flexibility of Diaspora African Identity in Everyday Business</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returnees</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transients</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora Africans</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora Africans with Ghanaian Spouses</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora African Religious Groups</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital, Social Structures, and Network Typology</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kinship Networks ................................................................. 64
Local Affiliation Networks .................................................. 66
Religious Network ............................................................... 69
Transnational Networks ....................................................... 71
Challenges Faced by Diaspora African Entrepreneurs ............. 75
Cultural Differences ............................................................ 75
Communication Issues .......................................................... 80
Banking and Lending Institutions ........................................... 82
Trust .............................................................................. 85
Land Ownership ................................................................. 86
Labor ........................................................................... 89
Gender Issues .................................................................. 90
Marketing ..................................................................... 91
Conclusion ................................................................... 93

3 DOING BUSINESS IN GHANA: PROCESSING HERE AND SELLING ELSEWHERE ........................................................................................................... 97
African American Trading Company, Jewell Spice Division .... 97
Doing Business Here and Exporting There ......................... 98
Globalization, Ghana’s Trade and Investment Programs ....... 99
Globalization of Industry ....................................................... 104
Local Affiliation Networks, Jewell Spice Company ............ 105
Banks ........................................................................ 106
Friends, Jewell’s Rat Pack .................................................. 107
Employees .................................................................. 108
Farmers ...................................................................... 110
Customs Agents ............................................................... 111
Transnational Networks, Jewell Spice Company .................. 113
Development Agencies ...................................................... 113
Professional Organizations .................................................. 115
Multinational Corporations .................................................. 117
Black American Consumers .................................................. 119
Neo-Colonialism and the Vertically Integrate Firm and the Push and Pull of Globalization ................................................................. 122

4 TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS: IS IT JUST A BUSINESS OR IS IT PHILANTHROPY? ................................................................. 125
North Scale Education and Research Institute .................... 125
Kinship Networks, North Scale Education and Research Institute .................................................. 127
Pan-African Philanthropy and Local Affiliation and Religious Networks, North Scale Education and Research Institute ................................. 131
Working with Church Organizations and Transitioning into Ghana ........................................... 132
Farmers ..................................................................... 134
Pan-African Philanthropy and Transnational Networks, North Scale Education and Research Institute .................................................................. 138
| Professional Organizations | ........................................................................................................ | 138 |
| Non-Governmental Organizations | .......................................................................................................... | 139 |
| Black American Ethnic Organizations | ........................................................................................................ | 142 |
| Cultural Brokering, Marketing a Pan-African Philanthropy | ........................................................................................................ | 144 |

| 5 GLOBALIZING COMMUNITIES THROUGH TRANS-ATLANTIC CONNECTIONS | 149 |
| African Hebrew Israelites African Edenic Enterprises | ........................................................................................................ | 149 |
| African Hebrew Israelite Movement | ........................................................................................................ | 151 |
| Redemptive Business Ideology, Transnational and Religious Networks | ........................................................................................................ | 155 |
| Pan-African Philanthropy, Atlanta’s Soul Vegetarian Complex | ........................................................................................................ | 158 |
| Marketing Yah-based Culture to Black Americans | ........................................................................................................ | 161 |
| The Paradoxical Relationship between Redemptive Enterprises and Global Consumerism | ........................................................................................................ | 165 |
| African Hebrew Israelite, Vertically Integrated Firms from Atlanta to Ghana | ........................................................................................................ | 169 |
| African Hebrew Israelite Movement in Ghana | ........................................................................................................ | 170 |
| African Edenic Enterprises in Ghana | ........................................................................................................ | 172 |
| Local Affiliation Networks | ........................................................................................................ | 174 |
| Conclusion | ........................................................................................................ | 183 |

| 6 CONCLUSION | ........................................................................................................ | 186 |
| Findings and Theoretical Insights | ........................................................................................................ | 186 |
| Diaspora African Identity Formation and Social Capital | ........................................................................................................ | 187 |
| Diaspora African Networks | ........................................................................................................ | 191 |
| Diaspora African Philanthropy | ........................................................................................................ | 192 |
| Pan-African Global Cities Network | ........................................................................................................ | 193 |
| Diaspora African Economic Activities and Transcending Notions of African Development | ........................................................................................................ | 193 |
| Conclusion | ........................................................................................................ | 196 |
| Missionary Groups | ........................................................................................................ | 197 |
| Diaspora African Transnational Communities | ........................................................................................................ | 198 |
| Pan-African Health and Healing Practices | ........................................................................................................ | 201 |
| Multinational Corporations and Global Trends in Outsourcing | ........................................................................................................ | 202 |

APPENDIX

<p>| A SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE | ........................................................................................................ | 207 |
| LIST OF REFERENCES | ........................................................................................................ | 212 |
| BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH | ........................................................................................................ | 227 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-1</td>
<td>Sample business typology</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>The Six Social Structures of Social Capital</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-2</td>
<td>Social capital in Ghana: Advantage and disadvantages</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Overcoming business challenges</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-1</td>
<td>Jewell Spice Company composite</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-2</td>
<td>North Scale Education and Research Institute Company composite</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-3</td>
<td>The African Hebrew Israelite’s African edenic enterprises composite</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Caption</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>American born African Hebrew Rabbi Kohain</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-2</td>
<td>Janet Butler is the President of the African American Association of Ghana. She is also the owner of a telecommunications company in Ghana.</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Dr. Manns performs a back realignment for a client at one of his Chiropractic and Wellness Centers</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>African Hebrew Israelite wedding in Ghana.</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>The Kunta Kinte Orthopedic Hospital, which is currently under construction in Mamapong, Ghana, is the brainchild of Dorothy Lowe.</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-6</td>
<td>Dr. Marcu Manns leads an employee training session at the Chiropractic Health and Wellness Center.</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-7</td>
<td>One African Guest House and Restaurant, located in Elmina</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-1</td>
<td>Inside the spice manufacturing plant operated by the African American Trading Company Incorporated, Jewell Spice Division.</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-2</td>
<td>The Jewell Spice Company’s manufacturing plant is located in Ghana’s trade zone area in Tema.</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-3</td>
<td>Andre Jewell, age 37, is the owner of the Jewell Spice Company.</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>Packaging room at the Jewell Spice plant. The area is also equipped with several freeze dryers, weights, and an assembly line conveyor belt.</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>Andre Jewell shows off his state of the art American Spice Trade Association (ASTA) approved dehydration equipment.</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>Assembly line conveyor belt.</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-7</td>
<td>Andre Jewell shows some samples of his product. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-1</td>
<td>North Scale Education and Research Institute’s line of Harbinger herbal supplements.</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-2</td>
<td>Kali Sichen-Andoh-Andoh, also known as Mama Kali, and husband Dr. Kweku Andoh, are the owners of North Scale Education and Research Institute.</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-3</td>
<td>Local farmers getting ready to clear the land and plant moringa trees at the Northscale Education and Research Institute’s farm, located near Elmina.</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moringa oleifera is also called “Nebedaye”, which means “never die,” in many African languages, the plant promises relief from the devastating diseases that are rampant in the African and Black American community.

Dr. Andoh conducting a nature tour at the North Scale Education and Research Institute’s botanical garden in Atlanta, GA.

The African Hebrew Israelite Soul Vegetarian Complex located in Atlanta’s West End, Georgia.

Roomah is a member of the African Hebrew Israelite community. She is the manager of Boutique Africa in Atlanta, Georgia.

Examples of the many clothing styles found in Boutique Africa.

Soy processing equipment is designed for production of foodstuffs made from soybean (e.g., soy milk, soy residue, cheese, and yogurts).

Soy factory equipment includes a soy ice cream and tofu sausage machine.

Inside the African Hebrew Israelite soy factory, located in Tema, Ghana.

Minister El’lel, the AHI’s Minister of Building and Construction, stands in front of the health park which is currently under renovation.

AHI resort features an outdoor track and field, aerobics center, health food store, and Asasse Pa vegetarian restaurant.

Members of the African American Association of Ghana, receive a tour from Dr. Erieka Benet at the opening of the Diaspora African Forum building which is located in Cantonments, Ghana.

Member of the African American Association of Ghana browse items in the Diaspora African Forum gift shop.
Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

A NEW PAN-AFRICANISM: DIASPORA AFRICAN TRANSNATIONAL
ENTREPRENUERS AND PHILANTHROPHY BETWEEN GHANA AND ATLANTA, USA

By
Michelle LeAnne Edwards

December 2008

Chair: Brenda Chalfin
Major: Anthropology

It has been argued that African immigrants in the US remain generally divided from their Black American counterparts regarding issues of racial, economic, and political solidarity in the US. Multi-sited research reveals that this prevailing view concerning the lack of communication between Africans and Black Americans is over emphasize in the literature. Focusing on entrepreneurs, consumers, and small-businesses in Atlanta, Georgia and several cities in Ghana; this study examines explore and understand the growing economic linkages that exist between Black American and Ghanaian communities. The study specifically examines small to medium scale businesses that Black Americans, otherwise known as Diaspora Africans, start, which are dependent upon Ghana and US transnational relationships. These relationships are an increasingly common phenomenon in the globalizing city of Atlanta and they are also common in other American cities with large African and Black American populations.

Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs are investing their hard earned cash, taking advantage of new business opportunities, and becoming more involved in the Ghana’s economic development. For Diaspora Africans living in Ghana and engaged in transnational entrepreneurship, their enterprising interests require them to become cultural and economic
brokers in order to conduct business across multiple nation-states. Identity formation and social capital becomes critical in understanding how Diaspora African entrepreneurs navigate through transnational social fields. This study sheds light on the active involvement of African and Black American populations in transnational economies as well as reveals their role in forging new diaspora communities, identities, and modes of Pan-Africanism.

Pursuing a profit is the ultimate objective for many Diaspora African entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, aspects of their business organization exist to fulfill a larger social purpose, blurring the distinction between the for-profit and nonprofit business worlds. A new 21st century Pan-Africanism calls attention to networks of mutual aid and support between African and African descendant populations from around the world. While many Diaspora African entrepreneurs support a Pan-African agenda, there are some aspects of their business organization, such as the vertically integrated enterprises, that contradict this endeavor. In order to make a profit some Diaspora Africans have sought to impose their own ideology of post colonial development based on the premise of economic self-determination. The complex nature of their business networks and collaborations with numerous entities, including multinational corporations, religious groups, and non-profit organizations, may develop into a form of Black economic neo-colonialism in Africa. This study uncovers new insights into the complexities of these transnational relationships.
CHAPTER 1
PROJECT SUMMARY

Introduction

It has been argued that African immigrants in the US remain generally divided from their Black American counterparts regarding issues of racial, economic, and political solidarity in the US. Multi-sited research reveals that this prevailing view concerning the lack of communication between Africans and Black Americans is over emphasized in the literature. Focusing on entrepreneurs, consumers, and small-businesses in Atlanta, Georgia and several cities in Ghana, this study investigates the growing economic linkages that exist between Black American and Ghanaian communities. The study specifically examines small to medium scale businesses started by Black Americans, which are dependent upon Ghana and US transnational relationships. These relationships are an increasingly common phenomenon in the globalizing city of Atlanta, and they are also common in other American cities with large African and Black American populations.

Today, much of the literature concerning Ghana’s post-colonial development focuses on how the country benefits from the economic and social remittances sent from Ghanaian migrants living abroad or returning to the country to establish businesses (Kearny 1986; Piel 1995; and Akurang-Parry 2002). Seeking an alternative approach to investigate the country’s post-colonial development, I focus on the business activities of the Black American entrepreneurs living in Ghana. The term Diaspora African is used to refer to the participant in this study. They are investing their hard earned cash, taking advantage of new business opportunities, and becoming more involved in the country’s economic development.

Diaspora Africans living in Ghana and engaged in transnational entrepreneurship are required to become cultural and economic brokers in order to conduct business across the
boundaries of multiple nation-states. I argue that identity formation and social capital becomes critical in understanding how Diaspora African entrepreneurs establish networks and conduct business within transnational social fields. This study will shed light on the active involvement of African and Black American populations in transnational economies as well as reveal their role in forging new diaspora communities, identities, and modes of Pan-Africanism.

While pursuing profits is the ultimate objective for many Diaspora African entrepreneurs, many aspects of their business organization exist to fulfill a larger social purpose, blurring the distinction between the for-profit and nonprofit business worlds. A new 21st century Pan-Africanism calls attention to networks of mutual aid and support between African and African descendant populations around the world (Drake 1993). Not since the historic series of Pan-African conferences, which began in 1909, has there been a largely identifiable macro-scale political movement between continental Africans and Diaspora communities. Pan-African historic political movements frequently incorporated economic projects to advance self-determination. As a form of Diaspora African transnational advocacy, Pan-African frameworks remain a strategic agenda used to address a litany of economic, political, religious, and social welfare issues that affects both Ghanaian and Black American communities. Drawing attention to Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs with agriculturally based business, I explain the revival of agricultural traditions as a form of Pan-African philanthropy in Ghana. Likewise entrepreneurs that sell agricultural commodities to Blacks in the US use their business as a way to promote an African-based health and healing paradigm within Black communities.

---

1 Drake makes the distinction between political Pan-Africanism by capitalizing the letter P, and other forms of pan-Africanism (e.g. cultural and economic) by using a lower case p. The lower case pan-Africanism consists of symbolic affirmations of African identity by ordinary people in Africa itself and the diaspora. While the capitalized Pan-Africanism entails an organized resistance against global imperialisms and racisms, and solidarity among African peoples. Oftentimes this form of Pan-Africanism is invoked in the name of race (racial Pan-Africanism) or in the name of the continent (continental Pan-Africanism); invocations that are not always compatible (Altbach 2003:146).
Many Diaspora African entrepreneurs support a Pan-African agenda; however there are some aspects of their business organization that contradict this endeavor. In order to make a profit some Diaspora Africans have sought to impose their own ideology of post colonial development. Their business networks and collaborations with entities, including multinational corporations, religious groups, and non-profit organizations, may develop into a form of Black economic neo-colonialism. This study uncovers new insights into the complexities of these transnational relationships, especially as they relate to the establishment of vertically integrated firms in the US and Ghana. The formation of Diaspora African vertically integrated business operations and philanthropic networks can be found in global cities, like Atlanta, USA, and in globalizing cities, like Tema, Elmina, and Cape Coast, Ghana, where Black Americans and Africans coalesce. This study also uncovers a largely unrecognized engine of economic accumulation and global interconnection occurring in American and African cities. In its entirety this study answers the following set of research questions:

1. How does “transnational entrepreneurship” become a viable economic strategy for Diaspora Africans, a group that is generally perceived as economically marginalized in global and/or globalizing cities like Atlanta?
2. How do Diaspora Africans organize immigrant and/or transnational businesses in Ghana?
3. How do these new transnational networks and old African Diaspora ties affect the strategies of the entrepreneurial class in this part of the world?
4. What strategies do Diaspora African entrepreneurs use to develop and enhance the marketability and economic sustainability of agricultural based industries between the US and Ghana?
5. What role do business owners have in transforming Black American cultural connections to Africa into economic ones?
6. How do these businesses both emerge out of and foster transnational relationships linking entrepreneurs on both sides of the Atlantic?
7. How do vertically integrated transnational enterprises blur the distinction between for-profit business and Pan-African philanthropy?

St. Clair Drake uses the lower case p to distinguish economic pan-Africanism from its political forms. The Diaspora African economic activities that are discussed in this study include a philanthropic component that supports a larger Pan-African political agenda. Therefore, I used the capitalized P to refer to the economic and philanthropic Pan-Africanism that is promulgated by Diaspora African entrepreneurs.
Given all that has been written about diasporas, globalization, and transnationalism in the African world, there is much to be learned in terms of the relationship that different segments of old and new African Diaspora communities have with one another. This dissertation, which focuses on business networks and philanthropic activities of Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs, delves into this very issue. Since the epistemological (i.e. Pan-African) framework that is advanced in this study transcends the field of anthropology this dissertation incorporates a number of interdisciplinary perspectives that draw on African Studies, African American Studies, Sociology, and Political Science. The participants in this study come from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds. Within this group of participants is a messianic-nationalist religious community of African Hebrew Israelites (AHI) of Jerusalem. Where applicable this study also obtains insights from the field of Religious Studies and Judaic Studies.

The literature review that follows takes into consideration a review of some of the prevailing theories concerning Black entrepreneurship and the establishment of immigrant business in the US. The aim is to provide a useful operational definition of entrepreneurship that describes the business activities of the individuals discussed throughout this dissertation. In addition, the purpose of the literature review is to explain the utility of a Pan-African framework to explore the phenomena of Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurship and Pan-African philanthropy in Ghana. The last section in this introductory chapter discusses the research methodology utilized in the project and the new ideas that emerged from the three case studies presented in the remaining chapters.
Creating a New Portrait of the Black American Entrepreneur

I am a woman who came from the cotton fields of the South. From there I was promoted to the washtub. From there I was promoted to the cook kitchen. And from there I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing hair goods and preparations....I have built my own factory on my own ground. - Madam C.J. Walker, National Negro Business League Convention, July 1912.

My experiences have been, from the very beginning, cultural and creative. And my business has been a way of exposing the culture, exposing the artists so that the world could hear and see them. - Russell Simmons, founder of the Def Jam record label, September 2001.

In the past, entrepreneurs like Madam C.J. Walker recognized the value of business ownership, the ability to turn a profit, and the importance of having control over one’s labor. Likewise, contemporary entrepreneurs like Russell Simmons emphasize the role of innovation, developing new markets and the importance of social responsibility by creating more opportunities for minority business owners. Both of these Black entrepreneurs, albeit from different eras, have had a significant impact on not only the Black consumer base in America but also on other parts of the world. Madam Walker’s advances in Black hair care had long-lasting ramifications on how Black women around the world styled their hair (Walker 2000; Bundles 2002; and Patton 2006). Simmons brought Black hip-hop culture into the American mainstream. Today hip-hop is a cultural phenomenon that is being copied, re-interpreted, and mass-produced in various parts of the world (Condry 2006 and Osumare 2007).

Both Simmons and Madam Walker were advocates of various social, political, and philanthropic causes. Madam Walker used her personal wealth to help promote and expand

---

3 Madam C.J. Walker, the creator of a popular line of African-American hair care products is the America's first self-made American woman millionaire.

4 Russell Simmons is an African American entrepreneur. Simmons is the co-founder, with Rick Rubin, of the pioneering hip-hop label Def Jam. He is also the founder of another label, Russell Simmons Music Group, and creator of the clothing fashion line Phat Farm. Simmons is the third richest hip hop entrepreneur, having a net-worth estimate of $340 million.
economic opportunities for others. Her company afforded thousands of Black women the opportunity to work as commissioned sales agents. For many of them, their job at Walker’s company was an alternative to domestic labor. Likewise, Russell Simmons founded organizations such as the Rush Philanthropic Arts Foundation and the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN). HSAN, for instance, was developed to harness the cultural relevance of hip-hop music as a catalyst for educational advocacy and other societal concerns fundamental to the well-being of at-risk youth throughout the United States. The correlation between economic autonomy and social responsibility is not unique among Black entrepreneurs. Indeed, Madam Walker and Russell Simons are just a two exemplars of Black self deterministic ideology. Both represent continuity in this brand of thinking, which began around the antebellum period and reached its zenith during the civil rights movement.

This study is concerned with the formation of Black immigrant businesses in Ghana. Understanding the complicated history of Black entrepreneurship in the US becomes critical to this analysis. I use this history to foreground my own theorization concerning a new Pan-African philanthropy, the identity formation and social capital of Diaspora Africans, the formation of vertically integrated firm process between the US and Ghana, and the emergence of a Pan-African global cities network.

**The Unique History of Black American Entrepreneurs in Understanding the Formation of Transnational Enterprises in Ghana**

Economic autonomy and self-determination by means of entrepreneurship have long been recognized as an important mechanism for survival and upward mobility among immigrant groups. As early as the early 1900s Georg’s Simmel (1907) used the term “strangers” to define immigrant groups. He maintained that certain ethnic groups were not part of the established host society; hence, some who were denied access to land and other factors of production came to
perform the role of merchants. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904) Max Weber expresses similar sentiments; he believed that certain ethnic groups were forced into economic activity due to their exclusion from the nation-state.

Most discussions about Black entrepreneurs are the result of comparative studies that explain why Black entrepreneurs are less successful than US immigrant groups. However, what is missing from these explanations is the lack of historical depth that accounts for the forms of institutional racism that are specific to the Black community. In not addressing the literature on Black American history these perspectives do not comprehensively take into account the unique history of earlier African arrival in the US in comparison to other immigrant or diaspora groups.

Most immigrants (i.e. voluntary settlers) came to the US either to flee violence, war, or political persecution; to seek economic security or survival; or to join with family members already here in the US (Passar 1980; Foner 1987; Lessenger 1996; Carter 1997; and Levitt 2001). Though this is characteristic of the more recent waves of African immigrants (Arthur 2000) most Black Americans are the descendants of captive Africans who survived slavery within the boundaries of the present United States. Hence Black Americans conceptualize their migration to Ghana as a part of historical return movements of Blacks in the diaspora to their original homeland.

Secondly, unlike most European immigrant groups throughout most of US history, Black Americans have remained segregated from mainstream America in most areas of life. Not surprisingly, early studies of Black American entrepreneurship draw attention to the importance of Black business development and the problems associated with the formation of Black enterprises (Du Bois 1898; Milton 1913; Harris 1923; and Pierce 1947). As time went by, insular business development remained a focal point of both African and European American
enclaves during the first decades of the twentieth century, but after World War II, the country’s social landscape began to change dramatically (Weems, 2002: 45). Accelerated intermarriage among various European ethnic groups blurred earlier cultural distinctiveness that enabled European ethnic groups to assimilate into US society. Since there were no corresponding increases in intermarriage across racial lines for Black Americans during the post-World War II period, Blacks became increasingly marginalized (ibid: 45).

As a result, Black entrepreneurs built businesses in minority markets because White consumers did not want to buy products or receive services from Black business owners. The basic reasoning for creating separate business institutions was the presumption that Blacks could never get fair or equal consideration in institutions created for Whites. Proponents of the economic detour theory posit that Jim Crow laws and general practices of race exclusion, including violence, were employed to limit the opportunities for Blacks in American society (Stuart 1969; Sibley 1991; Butler 1991; Feagin and Imani 1994 and Sibley et. al. 2004). For example, the Black Codes of 1865 imposed severe restrictions on freed slaves such as prohibiting their right to vote, forbidding them to sit on juries, limiting their right to testify against White men, carrying weapons in public places and working in certain occupations. These policies of exclusion and racial discrimination have had long lasting effect on the growth and trajectory of Black businesses.

Entrepreneurs possess qualities such as being risk takers, innovators, or results driven (Schumpeter 1911; McClelland 1961; Kilby 1971; and March and Mannari 1986). The structural factors, as mentioned above, have limited the business opportunities for many Black Americans. As a result, many Blacks possess these same entrepreneurial qualities but this does not mean that will become successful entrepreneurs. It is problematic to compare the entrepreneurial
experiences of Black Americans with other euro-immigrant groups without considering those differentials in structural constraints. The next section provides a better operational definition for Black entrepreneurship that takes into consideration these structural constraints.

The Evolving Role of Black American Ethnic Networks and Business Associations

In a 2004 *New York Times* article, Elizabeth Olsen suggests the, “African-Americans often do not have the personal wealth to use or borrow against, and lack a network of contacts to help them overcome the hurdles of getting a business off the ground.” Yet, notwithstanding the troubled history of Black entrepreneurship in America, the number of Black businesses continues to grow. Data from the U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, the U.S. Census Bureau and the Corporation for Enterprise Development (2005) indicate that Black-owned businesses are the fastest growing segment of new businesses, growing 45 percent between 1997- 2002.5 There are numerous reasons that may have attributed to the recent growth in Black businesses. Olsen (2004) argues that as Blacks join the numbers of those being downsized by corporations, more and more have found that entrepreneurship is a viable option for them. Blacks, especially professionals in high tech and medical industries, do not want to go through the corporate menagerie again. Many of the participants in this study indicated a weariness of corporate American, hence confirming Olsen’s assertion. In addition, this study considers a number of other causations to explain the increase in Black business enterprise.

---

5 New York had the most Black-owned firms, followed by California, Florida, Georgia, and Texas. Currently, the 1.2 million Black-owned businesses in the United States employ more than 756,000 people and generate nearly $89 billion in business revenues. It is important to consider these numbers in their relative context of the general growth of White and minority owned business. Blacks represent 12.5 percent of the American population (US Census 2000); however, black firms are only 4 percent of all businesses in America and generate only 1 percent of the business revenues (U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy, the U.S. Census Bureau and the Corporation for Enterprise Development). As a result, the per-capita black income gap is not becoming smaller; black poverty remains three times that of White poverty, and black family wealth is a tenth of White family wealth (ibid). Hence Black business is still on the bottom in every important statistic.
Previously Blacks have had to rely on their own set of ethnic and business organizations, banks, and trade schools to sustain and augment business practices. Today, they are members of professional business organizations that excluded their membership in the past. Blacks participate in these mainstream organizations while simultaneously strengthening their own set of parallel ethnic business networks. For example, the mission of organizations like the National Black Chambers of Commerce, founded in 1993, is to economically empower and sustain African American communities through entrepreneurship and capitalistic activity within the United States and via interaction with the Black Diaspora (Black Chambers of Commerce 2008). Unlike the other mainstream organization, these ethnic organizations foster the philosophy of disadvantaged/minority recruitment in the areas of business. Black American self-deterministic philanthropy is rooted in this shared experience of oppression and is motivated on the premises of racial uplift. Members from these organizations also come together as volunteers for community activities, and are particularly involved with mentoring programs for young African Americans.6

Entrepreneurs in this study are defined as follows: an entrepreneur is an individual who starts and/or operates a business that includes identifying opportunities in the market and taking risks with a view of being rewarded with profits. In this study some entrepreneurs are innovators of business enterprise meaning that they have recognized opportunities to introduce a new product, a new process or an improved organization. These individuals have raised the necessary money, assembled the factors for production, and organized an operation to exploit new business opportunities.6

---

6 For example, the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE) teaches the fundamentals of business to more than 4,000 low-income children a year. The NAACP recently launched its $1 million Reginald F. Lewis Youth Entrepreneurial Institute, which helps young entrepreneurs write and implement business plans. Under the slogan, “It’s dough money, not dope money,” Champs Cookies Youth Entrepreneurship Society trains 60 African-American children a year how to manufacture and market their edible products in the nation’s capital (The NAACP Reginald F. Lewis Youth Entrepreneurial Institute 2008).
opportunities, which necessitates the use of a broad range of networks. As the earlier examples of Madam CJ Walker and Russell Simmons suggest, economic self-determination still remains a core feature that characterizes Black American entrepreneurship. Moreover this self-determination, or what I refer to as Pan-African philanthropy, plays a central role in explaining Diaspora African transnational business networks and philanthropic activities that takes place between Ghana and Atlanta, USA.

**Diaspora African Transnational Entrepreneurs and Philanthropy between Ghana and Atlanta, USA**

People engaging in philanthropy are motivated by a desire to improve the material, social, and spiritual welfare of humanity, especially through charitable activities. People mistakenly believe that the term applies mainly to wealthy persons, and sometimes to a trust created by a wealthy person for a specific cause. However, the term covers a broad range of activities, such as corporate fundraising, community or faith-based charitable giving, and volunteerism.

Scholars have argued that the impetus of Black philanthropy is racial uplift (Standfield 1993 and Sweet 1996). Fairfax (1995) points out, that there exists a duality in Black American life, as being both African and American, which resulted from the unfair treatment of Blacks as second-class citizens in America. As a result, Black philanthropy has taken a different conceptual trajectory than White Americans. Black philanthropy has been described as a communal enterprise whose members care for each other (Hall-Russell and Kasberg 1997). This contrasts with the traditional view of philanthropy in that, rather than as a means for assisting the poor, the former emphasizes giving as a means for helping one another survive in a world that is unfair. Other defining characteristics of Black Americans philanthropy “consists of advice,
experience, knowledge, food material, money or any time or talent, and resources that can be shared with other individuals, the local community or cause” (Hall-Russell and Kasberg 1997:3).

Jacqueline Copeland-Carson (2005) suggests that Black philanthropy is a limiting term, because it usually refers exclusively to the humanitarian efforts of Blacks born in the US. Citing the changes in America’s African Diaspora demographics, she asserts that the term does not take into consideration the humanitarian efforts of immigrant groups from various countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. Both immigrant groups and non-immigrant Blacks experience racial discrimination in the Americas derived in part from their shared African ancestry; therefore Copeland argues that the changing demographics of Black communities in the US provides new opportunities to strengthen the interracial philanthropy of Black American and African immigrant populations. This newer form of philanthropy also includes the types of social and economic remittances that immigrants that settle into the US are sending money back to their homelands. These remittances benefit their friends, relatives, and communities there.

Pan-African Philanthropy

I suggest that the term Pan-African philanthropy also be used to refer to the type of philanthropy that is promoted by Black American entrepreneurs in Ghana. This form of philanthropy still consists of cooperative endeavors, which are based on an ideology of self-reliance and racial up-lift. Furthermore, I have expanded the notion to include the type of economic networked activities that requires the participation of African Diaspora communities on both sides of the Atlantic. Pan-African philanthropy is founded on the ideology of cultural, educational, and economic enlightenment of diasporas and homeland peoples; however this type of philanthropy supports an alternative view of post colonial development in Ghana. This alternative view of development is based on the self-determination of the African Diaspora and African community and the related principle of helping one another. It relies less on help from
Western-based institutions, such as non-governmental organizations and development agencies i.e., International Monetary Fund or the World Bank, and former colonial powers.

This specific form of Pan-African self-determination fosters economic growth and prosperity of Black American and Ghanaian communities thereby creating a strong economic base that nurtures, empowers and supports the on-going success of these two communities. My research points to a revival of Pan-Africanism within the context of transnationalism. Transnationalism is a theoretical framework use to understand identity formation when people (1) occupy two or more “nationalities” at once, based on a view of the migrant as “transmigrant”; (2) are part of a social system whose networks are based in two or more nation-states; and (3) maintain activities, identities, and statuses in several locations (Glick-Schiller et al. 1992: 15).

Cynthia Lucas-Hewitt (2006) argues that the transnational movement of Pan-Africanism can adopt effective “brain-circulation” strategies for African socioeconomic development. Lucas-Hewitt defines brain circulation as a newly developing sociological framework for modeling the best practices of transnational communities promoting development in semi-peripheral and peripheral countries (ibid: 99-100). According to her, the basic requirements for brain circulation are (1) a large transnational community with focused assistance to help it attain advanced training in a high value-added rising industry; and (2) maintenance of identification with the homeland through instilling knowledge of its history, and through promotion of cultural events and interaction (ibid: 106). This study reveals how Black Americans are contributing to Ghana’s brain-circulation or what Emmanuel Akyeampong (2002) calls the brain gain.

Lucas-Hewitt’s criterion applies to the Diaspora African community living in Ghana. The participants in this study view their participation in both Ghana and US affairs as part and parcel of belonging to a larger imagined political community (Anderson 1991). Black American
transnational entrepreneurs use their networks to bring the country new technologies, highly skilled workers, and new industries. Through organizations like the African American Association of Ghana (AAAG) and the Diaspora Forum, they also promote cultural events in the country.

This Pan-African approach to development consists of networks that involve philanthropy, the transfer of new technology and information, and it incorporates an ideology that is based on self-reliance. Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs continue to be invested in the racial and identity politics of the US. This study demonstrates the influence that the Black American Diaspora community has in rallying international/global support to transform economic and societal outcomes in the US and Ghana. Similarly, this form of transnationalism requires a strong economic base in order to support a Pan-African agenda. Though this study focuses primarily on the business activities of Diaspora African entrepreneurs, this economic base consists of large network of producers, consumers, and social, business, and religious organizations on both sides of the Atlantic.

**Transnational Entrepreneurship**

In the past, the pattern of Black business development has been characterized by a lack of participation outside US markets. Black enterprises were largely concentrated in Black urban neighborhoods and communities (Silverman 1999). Though the traditional pattern of Black business development still holds true; Black entrepreneurs continue to adapt an all-inclusive outlook and seek business opportunities beyond the boundaries of the US. Most of the current literature on the Black American economic relationship with Ghana focuses on the cultural and historical connections that make the country a popular tourist destination for members of the African Diaspora community (Brunner 1996; Ebron 1999; and Hasty 2003). However, Diaspora Africans are investing more than just their tourist dollars in Ghana. It is here, that the
literature on immigrant or migrant business provides some interesting parallels to understanding the formation of Diaspora African business in Ghana.

For example, return migrant micro-enterprises are businesses established by migrants returning to the home country that also rely on their contacts in the United States or host country (Margolis 1994; Landolt 2001; and Portes et.al 2002). Alejandro Portes, Luis Guarnizo, and William Haller (2002) use the term transnational entrepreneurs to describe the business activities of return migrant enterprise. The success of these types of enterprises depends on regular contact between foreign countries and the entrepreneurs’ country of origin (ibid: 284). It is for these reasons that I also use the term transnational entrepreneurs to describe the business activities of participants in this study. Aspects of their business organization rely on extensive network activities between the home and host country.

For most transnational entrepreneurs the home country is regarded as one’s place of birth; however, for Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs the idea of a home country/homeland includes a longer history that also comprises the return movements of Blacks to Africa. Indeed Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs draw upon this idea of “Africa as homeland” to assert their membership claims, and in some instances citizenship claims, to justify their involvement in Ghana’s economic affairs. In this regard their philanthropic activities function in a similar fashion to other return migrants and/or transnational community development activities.

Diaspora African enterprises in Ghana have yet to have a significant impact in the overall development of Ghana’s economy, however this study points to a number of trends:

1. The impact of the return migration of Diaspora African entrepreneurs has in facilitating the development of agro-industry in Ghana.
2. The contributions of Diaspora Africans in developing and sustaining community projects in Ghana and the US.
3. Their increasing involvement of Diaspora Africans with a broad range of local, international and transnational constituencies.
Diaspora African Identity Formation, Social Capital, and Business Networks

In providing a critique of Diaspora Studies, Glick-Schiller (2005) argues that Diaspora Studies, by and large, are concerned with nation-state based identities; the population being scrutinized is understood to be a nation that has been dispersed from its homeland or desires its own homeland. Furthermore, these bounded concepts of Diaspora identities may shroud social and political processes and relations of power including the exercise of systems of imperialism (ibid: 443). In most cases her assessment of Diaspora Studies holds true, but it is my belief that the concept of diaspora identities when understood within a broader framework of pan-African identities does just the opposite. By virtue of their place of birth one can assume that Black-American identity and culture assumes a pre-eminence in relations to other African Diaspora cultures globally. Arguably this puts Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs from the US in a unique position in terms of the amount of power they yield and the number of resources they have access to in comparison to other African descendant populations.

In order to fully understand these types of power relations Glick-Schiller suggest that the researcher’s unit of analysis must be the social field, which she defines as “a series of networks of networks” (ibid: 442). Moreover, I would add that what is also essential in investigating these networks is to discern how individuals strategically draw upon diaspora identities to influence specific economic, social and political outcomes. This becomes more apparent if the researcher can demonstrate how transnational entrepreneurs use their social capital and assume the role of cultural and economic broker in the business world.

I define cultural brokering as the act of bridging, linking, or mediating between groups or persons of different cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change. For Diaspora Africans this cultural mediation exists at what Jennifer Hasty (2003) calls the trans-Africanist intersection. In other words they have the flexibility to culturally adapt
between Africa (Ghana), the US (the West), and various pan-African identities and/or various Afro-diasporic or ethno-national identities (Black American, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Brazilian, etc). In a similar fashion, Obiagele Lake (1995) uses the term Diaspora African to explain the identity formation of Black repatriates in Ghana. Diaspora Africans feel a strong attachment to their places of birth, but they are also in the process of forming connections and new identities in Africa. Lake argues that,

This spectrum includes considering themselves to be Africans; thinking of their identity only in terms of the Diaspora, but recognizing their African heritage; and emphasizing the interplay of (at least) two identities, one gaining prominence over the other depending on the circumstances at hand (ibid:31-32.

Inherent in the term Diaspora African is the idea that the diaspora (and not their country of origin, e.g. the US, Jamaica, or Brazil) represents a primordial identity for Black Americans. By placing the emphasis on a diaspora identity Blacks living in Ghana are better able to establish membership claims to a broader pan-African constituency without having to relinquish their ties to US. Given that the term “Diaspora African” presupposes a number of pan-African identities, both American and African, in contrast to Glick Schiller, I would argue that the Diasporas Studies does open up the possibility to look into “relations of power” within a Pan-African framework. Especially in regards to how transnational entrepreneurs draw upon these flexible pan-African or diaspora identities in order to achieve economic ends and meet philanthropic needs.7 Severing as the go between Black consumers, small-scale shop owners in the US, and multinational corporations, Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs advocate on the behalf of Ghanaian producers and Black consumers by promoting an ideology of self-reliance. Depending on the circumstance, Black transnational entrepreneurs may choose to draw from a

---

7 Throughout this study I use the term, pan-African identity and diaspora identity interchangeably.
variety pan-African identities and perspectives to appeal to consumers tastes or recruit help from a host of local and international economic players.

As cultural brokers Diaspora African networks encapsulate a number of trans-Atlantic alliances that includes kinfolk, religious groups, historical Black colleges, non-profit organizations, and US multinational corporations. Networks allow for the provision of information and resources that offer a competitive advantage (e.g. privileged access to information about products, markets, sources of labor or capital, production technology and efficient management organization). Diaspora Africans believe that the success of their business depends heavily on the establishment of social relationships and ties to the Ghanaian community more so than upon the country’s trade policies and investment programs.

Ghana’s trade polices reflect the pervasiveness of globalization and neoliberal orthodoxy propagated in the name of development. Recently privatization has been promoted as an economic reform strategy for countries dependent on foreign aid. The move towards privatization is a condition for assistance from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Appiah-Kubi 2001: 197). For certain, there has been much discussion on the negative consequences of globalization on many of the world’s poorest countries. In Ghana, structural adjustment programs have been named as the cause for a loss in earning power leading to increases in hunger, infant mortality, and illiteracy (Libby 1976; Price 1984; and Boafo-Arthur 2003). In so much as free-trade and the globalization of industry has increased manufacturing productivity in developing countries, it has also facilitated an increase of economic practices like outsourcing by multinational corporations (Udofia 1984, Blim 1992, and Boafo-Arthur 2003). The global restructuring of capital has also precipitated a transnational division of labor that has resulted in the concentration of low wage industries in developing countries, like Ghana, and
highly skilled technological jobs in industrialized nations, like the US (Castells 1986; Harvey 1989; and Amin 1990).

As financial intermediaries Diaspora Africans are economic brokers between a host of local and international entities. The multi-sited ethnography presented in Chapters Three, Four, and Five of localized and transnational Diaspora African business activities in Ghana and the US can bring forth new insights into larger scale global process and power relationship or what Richard Falk (1999) calls the globalization from above.8

It is because of their knowledge of both US (foreign) and Ghanaian (domestic) systems that Diaspora Africans have a distinctive advantage over their Ghanaian competitors. Consequently, they are in a better position to use their social capital to solicit the cooperation of a number of economic players. As economic brokers seeking to take advantage of new business opportunities, they work hard to acquire resources and establish business networks in order to infiltrate Ghana’s market. This is especially important for Diaspora African business for which export is the primarily objective and it is most evident among transnational entrepreneurs that separate aspects of their processing and management operations in two locations. This process, which I refer to as to as vertically integration, requires Diasporas Africans to penetrate Ghanaian markets by means of some kind of merger with a domestic enterprise, labor force, or local organization. Multinational corporations use a similar strategy to infiltrate Africa’s markets; however, this may be a transitory stage for many multinational corporations. “Once the parent corporation expands the horizon for the subsidiary’s operations beyond sales in the domestic market, its primary concern focuses on how to integrate the subsidiary most effectively into its

8 According to Falk (1999) globalization from above represents: the globalization of production, markets and finance; the global restructuring of corporations and work; the development of new technologies like the Internet; a radically changed role for the state; the dominance of neoliberal ideology; large-scale tourism and poverty-induced immigration; worldwide media domination by the culture of corporate globalism; and a neo-colonialism that has concentrated control of poor countries in the hands of First World investors.
worldwide operations” (Appiah-Kubi 2001: 363). In an effort to increase profits, opening up new markets and improve productivity, Diaspora African businesses often become the subsidiary companies of multinational’s worldwide operations. Moreover, their businesses compete with Ghanaian controlled enterprises in securing contracts with multinational companies.

Diaspora African entrepreneurs’ symbiotic relationships with multinational corporations and local institutions in Ghana have been utilized to help their businesses meet international manufacturing standards. Yet, in many ways these transnational networks also help to perpetuate a vicious cycle of labor exploitation and economic dependency. One of the pitfalls of working with multinational corporations is that, by and large, local partners eventually become a hindrance because their loyalty is to the profits and dividends of the domestic subsidiary, not to the profits and dividends of the multinational corporate system or parent company. The multinational corporations will often buy out or force out the local independent partners or stockholders (Appiah-Kubi 2001: 363). Despite the risks associated with collaborating with multinational corporations are establishing vertically integrated firms they remain confident that their businesses will do more good than harm.

Diaspora African entrepreneurs have personalized interests in the Ghanaian community that in many cases runs deeper than those of most foreign investors. The economic terrain through which Diaspora Africans entrepreneurs navigate is at the intersection of for-profit business and Pan-African philanthropy. This latter distinction has captivated the interest of Ghanaian government officials. Ghana has sought to capitalize on these old African Diaspora ties by encouraging Blacks to return “home” and help contribute to the country’s economic development. For example, in 2001 Ghana’s parliament passed the “Right to Abode” legislation, which allows any person of African descent in the Diaspora to live and work in Ghana.
indefinitely. This policy hopes to offer a practical solution to reverse the country’s brain drain by encouraging the brain gain of Diaspora Africans. In subsequent chapters, further explanation is provided to understand how Diaspora African entrepreneurs attempt to reconcile the opposing paradigms of Pan-African philanthropy and neo-colonialism. It exposes the irony through which Diaspora Africans both reject the detrimental aspects of globalization in Ghana, and yet still benefit from the globalization process and policies through the establishment of vertically integrated firms.\(^9\)

**Strategic Benefits of Diaspora African Vertically Integrated Firms**

Vertically integrated companies are united through a hierarchy and share a common owner. It is the process in which several steps in the production and/or distribution of a product or service are controlled by a single company or entity, in order to increase that company’s power in the marketplace (Porter 1980: 300).\(^10\)

There are a number of strategic benefits that can be derived from coordinating business activities through vertically integrated firm style business organization and partnering with multinational corporations. Multinational corporations benefit from their collaborations with Diaspora African entrepreneurs because they can purchase commodities in bulk, which contributes to cheaper costs and increased profitability for their company. By integrating with Diaspora African businesses multinational corporations can increase manufacturing production,

\(^9\)Despite the criticisms leveled at globalization, some have argued that many of the development policies enacted in Ghana were successful in stabilizing the economy (Toye 1991). Both sides of this debate bring up valid points. However, many of these discussions have focused their attention on micro-credit entrepreneurial programs sponsored by development agencies like USAID or a propos the impositions of large scale multinational corporations.

\(^10\)The degree to which a firm owns its upstream suppliers (or selling firm) and its downstream firm (buying firm) determines how vertically integrated it is (ibid: 302). There is no such thing as a completely integrated or a non-integrated firm. The term quasi-integration is commonly used to refer to the relationship between vertically related businesses that have a combination of long-term contracts and full ownership (ibid: 321).
making it cheaper for the company to control its inputs and outputs.\textsuperscript{11} Diaspora African entrepreneurs also benefit from the vertical (or quasi) integration with global corporations. Partaking in these types of business collaborations Diaspora African entrepreneurs gain considerable advantages over domestic competitors. For instance, it is common for multinational corporations wanting to increase productivity to acquire more advanced machinery for their Diaspora African business partners. Also, in many cases entrepreneurs can reduce the cost of marketing since most multinational corporations carry out much of their marketing in-house.

Ideally, their partnerships with multinational corporations encourage the development of other industrial projects in Ghana. It has been argued that the growth of professional and service jobs is conditioned by their role in supporting industrial production (Scott 1988). As the entrepreneur’s firm grows, there is greater potential for their employees to specialize in particular tasks (e.g. marketing, human resource management, and finance). Hence, Diaspora African entrepreneurs’ employees will acquire a higher level of expertise, experience and qualifications compared to individuals working in similar industries.

Given the context through which an increase in exporting and manufacturing capabilities is seen as contributing to the growth of Ghana’s economy, Diaspora Africans can benefit from the bargaining power that multinational corporations exert on government officials. For example, as the business or industry grows, multinational corporations may persuade government officials to provide better transport systems and communication links to improve accessibility to industrial and rural areas. Inevitably because Diaspora African entrepreneurs are

\textsuperscript{11} In addition to the economies of integration (which includes economies of: combined operations, internal control and coordination, information, avoiding the market, and stable relationships) other benefits in vertical integration include: tapping into or sharing of new technology; assuring a supply and/or demand; offsetting bargaining power and input cost distortions; enhancing the ability to differentiate; elevating entry and mobility barriers; entering a higher-return business; and defending against foreclosure (1984: 302-208).
the ones responsible for organizing local affiliation networks, between port and rural areas, they benefit from the improvement in transport and communications systems.

It should be noted that not all Diaspora African business are vertically integrated with multinational corporations, rather aspects of their business are independently owned and operated in multiple places. Still by emphasizing the social networks that accompany the development of vertical integrated firms this study demonstrates how Diaspora African entrepreneurs are changing urban business practices in Ghana. Furthermore their involvement with multinational corporations also helps to enlarge or alter the participation of Ghanaians within the global market. An anthropological inquiry of industry considers the social arrangements of persons and the cultural systems of meaningful symbols, values, and attitudes that integrate individuals as they participate in the industrial process of production (Holzberg and Giovanni 1981: 188). Holzberg and Giovanni claim that:

Some would define industry primarily in terms of the factory-based mechanized fabrication of raw materials into intermediate components or finished products, downplaying the relevance of social characteristics. However, it entails more than materials, tools, technology, machines, or buildings necessary for the manufacture of goods and consumer durables (1981: 188).

The anthropological construct of industry is a critical component to this analysis, especially as it relates to entrepreneurship and the organization of vertically integrated businesses. As the number of specialized industrial establishments in Ghana grows; the density of social and economic inter-linkages between sites of production and destinations of export increases. This latter point is especially important in reference to Robin Cohen’s (1997) five features of globalization, which also interface the study of diasporas and transnationalism. My research contributes to this larger discussion in the following ways:

12 Robin Cohen’s (1997) outlines five features of globalization theory, which also interface in the study of both diasporas and transnationalism. His five features are: (1) the formation of global cities; (2) understanding the
1. It offers an alternative approach to examine new African Diaspora relationships by examining the role of globalization via the re-organization of an African/Black transnational labor force and the emergence of newer from of Black neo-colonialism.

2. It points to the significance of the vertically integrated firms that are established by Diaspora African entrepreneurs in furthering ideas of Pan-African philanthropy via economic self-determination.


**Pan-African Global Cities Network**

A number of scholars describing the formation of global cities explain the importance of these cities to the global economy (Friedmann and Wolfe 1982; Friedmann 1986 and 2001; and Sassen 1992). Saskia Sassen (1991 and 2002) see global cities as command points, which have a significant role in the formation of cross-border dynamics through which these cities and the growing number of other global cities begin to form strategic transnational networks. Arguably, one can question the significance of Ghana’s cities within a global cities framework, especially in comparison to African mega cities such as Lagos, Cairo, or Johannesburg. However, in lieu of the recent courtship that the government is undertaking to get Diaspora Africans to invest in Ghana, its cities deserve our attention in furthering the importance of Africa’s globalizing cities within a Pan-African framework.

Ghana has had a prominent role in Black American political involvement in Africa. For example, Kwame Nkrumah, the country’s first elected president, attended Lincoln University, a historically Black college in Pennsylvania and saw in African Americans a key to developing his country. The modern civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s operated on the philosophy that social and political equality, and economic self-sufficiency would be achieved within an American social context. Participants in the movement claimed the rights of full citizenship for relationships between international division of labor, the flow of global capital and trade, and international migration; (3) forms of international migration and travel that emphasize contractual relationships; (4) transnationalism and challenges to the nation-state and; (5) the creation of cosmopolitan and local cultures (ibid: 157, 165-67).
all Americans. During that time period many prominent Black Americans moved to Ghana. Offering their professional and trade skills, they remained invested in the country’s reconstruction.\textsuperscript{13} To Nkrumah the struggle for civil rights in the diaspora and the struggles for independence from colonial rule in Africa were inextricably linked. Both of these struggles were expressions of the desire of Black people everywhere to regain their freedom. Ghana continues to hold a special interest for Black Americans.

Currently, the country attracts more African American visitors, close to 10,000 each year, than any other nation on the continent (Mensah 2004). Ghana is home to approximately 1,000 African Americans, many of who are currently working in Ghana (Mensah 2004). The creation of ethnic associations like Sankofa African American Association of Ghana (AAAG) and the Diaspora Africa Forum encourages the collaborations between Black American and Ghana communities. Marketing itself as West Africa’s Gateway, Ghana has attracted the attention of many Black entrepreneurs looking to invest in Africa. In 2004 \textit{AOL Black Voices} a premiere online magazine for the Black American community published an article urging its readers to invest in Ghana. The author of the article, Ayeko Vinton, gave five reasons to invest in Ghana: (1) The country’s relatively stable political environment, (2) its booming stock exchange, (3) the rich cultural and environmental setting, (4) the affordable labor, and (5) the potential for outsourcing.

More specifically this study examines the role of Tema, Cape Coast and Elmina as critical sites of Diaspora African vertical integration business organization. Ashley Dawson and Brent Hays-Edwards (2004) have suggested that the rise of global cities and networked cities is

\textsuperscript{13} For a more comprehensive history of African American political movements in Ghana, see \textit{African Americans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era}, \textit{(The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture)}, by Kevin Gaines (2005).
closely linked with the “new imperialism” or neo-colonialism of economic globalization (ibid: 2). Capitalizing on the historic connections that Black Americans have to Ghana, Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs are following the same imperial maps that former colonial powers used in an effort to acquire a cheap labor force and to exploit and extract raw materials. What is of interest to this study is the growing importance of Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs, working in solidarity across US and African cities. They are building collaborative partnerships among Black urban leaders from every political, business and educational sector in propagating Pan-African ideas and agendas. By exploiting their international ties and resources Diaspora Africans have developed their own transnational social fields between Ghana and the US. Atlanta, like other US cities with large African descendent populations, has a significant role within a Pan-African global cities network.

New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago are US global cities that are most often cited in the literature (Abu-Lughold 1999). If global cities are the communication hubs through which agents carry out a range of economic, cultural and political functions that ultimately link up to other cities (nodes) within a hierarchical global network (Castells 1996), then I would argue that the city of Atlanta has a specific role as a command center of Diaspora African trans-Atlantic network activity. Atlanta shares many of the characteristics of a global city. Global cities are strategic geographic locales where global processes are created, facilitated and enacted. The activities within these cities have a direct and tangible effect on global affairs through more than just socio-economic means, with influence in terms of culture or politics. A global city, by and large, is home to or participates in various forms of international affairs. Atlanta was home to the 1996 Olympics.

In an effort to make Atlanta a prime locale for foreign trade and investment, the city enacted a four-year development plan, the New Century Economic Development Plan (EDP), in 2004. Like other global cities, Atlanta has a growing population of 5 million, making it the 9th largest city in the US. Today, Atlanta has enjoyed being a top migration city for a number of years. The city attracts Fortune 500 companies (#3 in the nation) and college educated young professionals (#1 in the nation). Global cities are home to, or have subsidiaries of large international financial institutions and global headquarters. Twenty-four of Georgia’s top trading partners are developing countries where the World Bank has lending programs. In terms of global trade, the state is led by the seaport in Savannah as well as Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport and the seaport in Brunswick, has been growing rapidly for years, primarily fueled by Asian trade. Georgia is now the 10th-largest customs district in the nation (World City statistics, 2007).

Global cities also have global media outlets and world-renowned cultural and academic institutions that draw patrons from around the globe. The global television network CNN, was founded in Atlanta by media tycoon Ted Turner. Atlanta has a reputation for being a hot spot for Black music; in fact the hip-hop industries most influential entertainers and entrepreneurs, like Jermaine Dupri, Kenneth “Babyface” Edmonds, Ludacris, TI and countless others, call the city home.  

Atlanta is home to many historical Black colleges and cultural centers such as the High Museum of Art and the Woodruff Art Center and has a very large and active Akan community that is intimately connected to these institutions. For example in March 2007 the Ghana

---

community held a week of events (e.g. Ghana @ 50) to celebrate Ghana’s golden jubilee.\textsuperscript{16} As the site of Ghana’s first trade and investment exposition in the U.S., in July 2004, as well as part of a broader Expo Africa in October 2005 the city is becoming a breeding ground of collaborations between Black American and Ghanaian entrepreneurs.

Hosting trade shows, founding churches and cultural associations, and gaining recognition from civic leaders and institutions, Ghanaians represent one of the most visible African groups. In metro Atlanta alone there are 18 Ghanaian churches that sponsor development projects in Ghana and numerous social and cultural events in Atlanta. Another prominent group in Atlanta is the African Hebrew Israelites. The group is well known for its numerous businesses throughout Atlanta. The most notable enterprises are the Soul Vegetarian restaurant, Boutique Afrika, Return to Relaxation Spa, Eternity Juice Bar, and the Wisdom Hut book store. The African Hebrew Israelites also have a network of transnational business relationships with their sister community in Ghana. Some examples include the Asasse Pa Health and Wellness Resort, Asasse Pa Restaurant, and their soy products factory.

Renowned scholar and activist W.E.B. Du Bois (1908) prophetically praised Atlanta as the future of Black economic activity. After the Civil War the city experienced a growth in manufacturing industry. He deemed the city the promised future for Black Americans; he recognized its potential to become home to Black institutions of higher learning. Atlanta, one of

\textsuperscript{16}The Ghana @ 50 celebrations are held in Ghana, as well as in other Ghanaian communities in other parts of the world) to commemorate the country’s 50 years of independence. Ghana was the first African country south of the Sahara to gain independence from the British, March 6, 1957. According to Mr. Robert Andoh, chairman of the event, “the significance of the venue is to showcase the long term relationship between Civil Rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King and the first president of Ghana Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (Osei-Asibey, 2007). Dr. Martin Luther King met with Nkrumah during the Independence celebration in 1957; both were prominent leaders among the African and African American community. Dr. King is one of many black leaders (W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, George Padmore, etc.) to visit Ghana. It is for this reason that many blacks recognize the importance of Ghana in black history. Subsequently, the events held in Atlanta were televised on Ghana TV throughout the jubilee year.
the incubators of the Civil Rights Movement, is the currently the cradle for a host of historic Black businesses. Black Americans regard it as a city teeming with promise and opportunity, especially for young professionally trained Black Americans. Atlanta is home to a large number of highly skilled professionals and a sizeable Black middle class. Blacks in Atlanta donate their time and money to numerous philanthropic organizations, such as the Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta, National Foundation of Black Philanthropy, Council of Negro Women, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and Black United Fund Inc. As a leading city in Black philanthropic, political, and economic activity, Atlanta has many of the institutions in place that help support trans-Atlantic relationships. Hence for Diaspora Africans, Atlanta is a city that is not only capable of carrying out business directives but it is also a city that can help generate philanthropic programs that link Black communities in the US to Ghana.

**Research Methodology and Results**

The fieldwork for this dissertation project covered a fourteen month period. The Atlanta portion of the study was funded through the University of Florida’s Warrington College of Business Center for International Business Education and Research (UF-CIBER). This grant covered expenses for 5 months of field research in Atlanta, Georgia. An additional nine months of field research was funded by a US Department of Education, Fulbright-Hays Doctorial Dissertation Research Abroad grant. During this time, qualitative research methods were used to collect the personal information for approximately forty-seven participants. This group of entrepreneurs consists of twenty-one African-Americans, twelve African Hebrew Israelites (who were mainly Black American), and fourteen Ghanaian entrepreneurs. It should be noted that this number only reflects the number of actual business owners and does not include informal interviews conducted with employees, customers, and relatives that took place during participant observations.
Participant Selection

In this study, an entrepreneur is operationally defined as the proprietor of a firm or the otherwise self-employed. Respondents were chosen as the result of their responses to initial questions that asked for their principal occupation and place of employment. Subsets of transnational entrepreneurs were then selected based on the following criteria (1) that they traveled abroad at least twice a year for business and, (2) that the success of their business depended on regular contact between Ghana and the US.

The composition of the Black American participants treated in this study consists of entrepreneurs with businesses located either in Ghana or in the US. Some of these participants are Black expatriates who moved to Ghana in the 1950s and 1960s during the civil rights era, while others include a more recent wave of immigrants who arrived from the 1980s onward. The African Hebrew Israelite (AHI) participants consist of both Ghanaian and Black American that self identify as a Hebraic or Judaic group. Subsequently much scholarship concerning the Hebrew Israelite community has focused on the Black American constituency of this group. This study emphasizes the relationship between American-born AHI s and their Ghanaian-born counterparts. Combined, the participants’ constituted a diverse group of individuals with a variety of businesses.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

The general demographics of the participants were taking during the first interview. A questionnaire (see Appendix A, Sample Interview Guide) was designed to collect participant data about their migration/immigration and work history, level of formal educational attainment, informal education and training skills, business and social organizational involvement, in

---

17 It is important to note that although many of these businesses are physically located in either Ghana or the US, some business activities (for example banking or marketing) takes place in both locations or in cyberspace.
addition to their vital statistics (e.g. marital status, ethnicity, gender, and age composition). During interviews informants were asked a series of open-ended questions about the organization and operations of their businesses. The Sample Interview Guide (Appendix A) focused on a core set of questions that related to the theoretical issues under examination. Questions were oriented towards issues concerning the business goals of each group of entrepreneurs (e.g. Ghanaian or Black American), the role of race and ethnicity in their businesses, the types of business networks they had access to, and the organization of their businesses (e.g. business size, profits margin, investments, start-up capital). Table 1-1, Sample Business Typology, contains information about the types of business under consideration for this study.

**Participant-Observation and Interviews**

In addition, participant-observation and additional unstructured follow-up interviews were conducted. Over the course of this study, I participated in training workshops, had informal conversations with employees and customers, observed the construction of business and public projects, and attended various social functions and association meetings. In Chapter Two this information was utilized: (1) to explain the impetus for Diaspora African migration to Ghana; (2) to discover the types of networks they used to operate their business and; (3) to understand the types of social relationships that facilitate these collaborative processes. Here emphasis is placed on intergroup differences, including access to group resources and networks (such as kinship, local affiliation, transnational and religious networks).

Participant observation and interview revealed that entrepreneurs are relying on networks that help them to overcome business challenges especially as it pertains to: (1) attaining finances to increase productivity; (1) acquiring labor; (2) advertizing and developing new markets, and (3) making use of information and manufacturing technologies that augment the formation of vertically integrated business processes in Ghana and the US. The case studies presented in
subsequent chapters includes a more detailed analysis of networking activities of Diaspora Africans entrepreneurs.

**Social Network Approach**

A social capital or social network approach, commonly used to explain the push-factors of international migration, basically assumes that migrants are attracted by the fact that other migrants from the same ethnic group have already settled in the receiving society, thus allowing for the occurrence of networks of recruitment (Massey et al. 1998). The field of transnationalism studies has incorporated the social capital concept, borrowing Bourdieu’s idea of power relations, in explaining social remittances (Levitt 2001) and transnational social fields (Glick Schiller and Fouron 1999). Nina Glick Schiller (1995) defines social networks as an, egocentric set of ongoing social relationships or a network of networks that stretch across the borders of nation-state (ibid: 442). Since most of the participants in this study are connected by more than one kind of relationship a multi-sited approach was chosen to emphasize the networked activities and interconnections of the two locales.

As social network approach becomes critical in understanding how Diaspora African entrepreneurs navigate through transnational social fields, or “networks of networks” to organize business. In addition, the analysis that derived from the social network approach is used to map out relationships and the communications or resources that flow between Diaspora Africans, communities, professional and social organizations, computers or other entities. This approach

---

18 Pierre Bourdieu defined social capital as the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (Jerkins 1992). Pierre Bourdieu (1987) makes the distinction between three forms of capital: economic, cultural and social. For Bourdieu, “social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network….The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of capital… possessed by a given agent, or even by the whole set of agents to whom he is connected (Bourdieu 1986: 248-249).” His basic concern was to explore the processes making for unequal access to resources and differentials in power - and the ways in which these fed into class formation and the creation of elites.
revealed that Diaspora Africans are overcoming business challenges in Ghana by forging alliances between a host of business and personal constituencies. Interviews and other ethnographic field research reveals and substantiate the complexity of shared values that result in the formation of Diaspora African vertically integrated businesses.

**Multi-sited Ethnographic Field Research**

Ethnographic field research is concerned with the day to day interactions within a community. It involves the ethnographer participating, in people’s lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions—in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research. Mapping out the networks of transnational entrepreneurs, multi-sited research revealed the importance of Ghana and US as critical sites of Diaspora African business and philanthropic activities.

The information generated from the questionnaires, interviews, and participant-observation, combined with the social network analysis was used to create the multi-sited ethnography that is discussed in the remaining chapters. Multi-sited ethnography emphasizes changes in local cultures within the contemporary world system, the historical political economy of colonialism, nation-state building projects, and transnational movements (Marcus 1995). Drawing upon the African Diaspora historical and contemporary African Diaspora relationship multi-sited field research was used to document the multiple strains of Pan-African global coalition building that exists between Ghanaian and Black American communities.

Black entrepreneurship, a strategy of self-reliance, is the mechanism through which I explore the Diaspora Africans’ vision of economic development and cultural enlightenment in the US and Ghana. The three case studies on the Diaspora African owned businesses, Jewell Spice Division (Chapter Three), the North Scale Education and Research Institute (Chapter Four)
and the African Hebrew Israelites’ enterprises (Chapter Five), presented in subsequent chapters look at how Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs’ social investment pays off financially.

**Methodological Considerations**

According to George Marcus multi-sited ethnography poses three sets of methodological anxieties for anthropologist that concerns testing the limits of ethnography, attenuating the power of fieldwork, and the loss of the subaltern (Marcus 1995: 99). Given these methodological anxieties, I want to briefly discuss my fieldwork experience, particularly from the perspective a Black American anthropologist who has been put in the position of working on the outside of my culture and the field of anthropology.

When I initially began fieldwork in Atlanta, Georgia, my objective was to study the business activities of Ghanaian transnational entrepreneurs specializing in African cultural commodities. After I had completed fieldwork in Atlanta, I planned to visit Ghana and follow up on their networking activity there. Then one day I stumbled upon the Soul Vegetarian Complex in Atlanta’s West End. Given their openness to talk about their ideology and the sheer number of businesses’ that they owned I found myself spending a large amount of time with the AHI’s. I would later discover that they also had a community in Ghana, which comprised both Ghanaian and Black Americans AHIs.

After completing my research in Atlanta I made arrangements to work with the AHI community in Ghana. Once I had arrived in Ghana I discovered that most of their businesses were still undergoing construction. Therefore much of the data that I collected from the group came from the research conducted at the soy factory in Tema, the Asasse Pa restaurant in Accra, and the health park in Elmina. As a point of comparison, I conducted field research with Ghanaians and other Diaspora Africans transnational entrepreneurs. Even though the case studies focused on the agency of Diaspora Africans entrepreneurs, I must point out that their
Ghanaians counterparts are not silent actors in this study. Due to the paucity of research on Diaspora Africans I felt it was important that their voices be heard within the confines of this dissertation. Therefore in Chapter Six I propose future areas research that can used to augment this study.

Networking through organizations like AAAG I was introduced to a small community of Diaspora Africans that possessed different worldviews, came to Ghana for a variety of reasons, and entered certain businesses for a particular reason. Many of them were eager to talk about their businesses and experiences in Ghana. However, there were a few individuals who did not want to take part of this study. These individuals were dissatisfied with how they had been portrayed in the local and global media outlets and by other researchers. They felt that scholars had focused too much attention on the cultural differences and the tensions that existed between Ghanaians and Diaspora Africans. Even those who participated in the project seemed pleased that I was not there to discuss tourism or cultural heritage. They were keen to offer up a different outlook on the Diaspora African community that was not bounded by essentialist notions of Black identity. Diaspora Africans are not the naïve Black American tourists that are most often depicted in scholarly research. They consist of people, some of whom had lived in Ghana for over twenty years, who possess a wealth of cultural knowledge. Few scholars have considered these subaltern voices.

In this regard, I do believe that being a Black American helped to ease my way into the Diaspora African community. My own personal experiences in Ghana served as template for my own line of questioning about cultural differences, gender issues, identity formation, and so forth. In a similar way, my being a Christian, a lover of meat, and a product of a Western educational system, all of which are frowned upon by the AHIs, influenced how I structured my
line of questioning with the group. Given the AHI’s ideology, I expected to find some striking differences between their business activities in comparisons to other Diaspora Africans. Yet my experiences with communities on both sides of Atlantic helped me to reposition the group within a larger Pan-African framework, thus finding more commonalities that existed between the AHIs and other Diaspora Africans.

Obiagele Lake (2005) points out that, “the cultural and political dismembering of African communities on either side of the Atlantic by Europeans constitutes a bond that transgresses geographic and temporal boundaries” (ibid: 3). Her point is largely dismissed among many Africianists, who are overly critical and often dismissive of the sentiments that Diaspora Africans have with regards to Africa. However, if one considers the innovative ways that Diaspora Africans are contributing to Ghana’s post-colonial development, we see how the idea of “Africa as the original homeland” plays an important role in forming 21st century Pan-African movements.

George Fraser spoke on the topic of Diaspora African Economic Empowerment in America at the 2006 State of the Black Union. During his speech Fraser referenced the African proverb, “when spiders unite they can tie up a lion”. He suggested that a Euro-centric value of individualism has permeated Black American society and taken Blacks away from the notion that “It takes a village to raise a child”. In his speech he proposed that the 21st century movement of Black America should include building business networks and establishing relationships between Blacks in America, Africans and other African Diaspora communities. Focusing on the emergence of the new Pan-African transnationalism that is taking place between Ghana and the US, this study demonstrates the innovative ways that Diaspora Africans are building business networks and establishing these relationships. The following chapters reveal
that African and Black Americans continue to play an important role in each other’s future not only in Africa but in the US as well.

**Emergent Ideas and New Perspective Revealed in the Case Studies**

The three case studies revealed that Diaspora African entrepreneurs possess a combination of network typologies and moved to Ghana for a variety of reasons. For example, Andre Jewell, the co-owner of the Jewell Spice Company, is a self-described Virginia businessman. He specifically came to Ghana to take advantage of business opportunities. Jewell’s business relies on assortment of local affiliation and transnational networks. Kali Sichen-Andoh, owner of the North Scale Education and Research Institute (NERSI), came to Ghana to start a business with her Ghanaian husband. Using a combination of kinship, local affiliation, and transnational networks, the couple also uses their business to fulfill a larger social purpose. Although groups like the Rastafarians and the Nation of Islam are highly visible religious groups in Ghana, this study specifically investigates the communally owned enterprises of the African Hebrew Israelite (AHI) community to Ghana. The final case study reveals the expansiveness of African Hebrew Israelite (AHI) religious and transnational networks.

The case studies revealed the emergence of Diaspora African vertically integrated firms. Vertically integrated firms consists of an ownership style that separates business processes in the US and Ghana. Multi-sited research revealed that the procurement and production processes took place in Ghana, whereas marketing and selling activities took place in the US. Networks that facilitate vertically integrate processes followed a similar path that neo-colonialism has taken, where African countries are countries of raw material extraction and Western countries, like the US, are the destinations for the finished products.

Together the case studies constitute a broad range of entrepreneurial strategies and varying degrees of vertically integrated firm styles. The Jewell Spice Company currently
conducts all of its manufacturing and exporting processes in Ghana. Currently, the Jewell Spice Company is a division of African American Trade Company, Inc. (AATCI), which is located in Virginia. The AATCI imports spices from Ghana and sells them to US consumers, many of which are Black Americans. The company recently secured a deal with the US based McCormick Spice Company, which has one of its largest packaging plants in Atlanta. As a new subsidiary company of a multinational corporation, the Jewell Spice Division will eventually outsource its marketing under the McCormick name.

The NERSI specializes in herbal remedies. The Andoh’s own several farms throughout Ghana. The company gets the raw materials used to make their products in Ghana. They ship the raw materials to their parent company in the US to be process and sold. The AHIs’ edenic enterprises constitute a variety of businesses ventures that includes vegan restaurants, soy, rice, and candy factories, multi-media production studios, clothing stores, travel agencies, hair-braiding shops, spas, and day care centers. More importantly these US based enterprises are intricately linked to other AHI communities outside the US, into countries like Israel, Ghana, Benin, England, Saint Croix, and Jamaica. Like the first two case studies, the AHI enterprises production processes take place in Ghana (and in some instances in the US), however; the group sells its products in Ghana and the US.

The case studies revealed that in addition to making money, another objective of Diaspora African entrepreneurs is to build their own morals and values into their businesses. Hence, the case studies demonstrate a range of commitment to a new Pan-African philanthropy. Each of these case studies underscores the involvement of Diaspora Africans in Ghana’s agricultural industries as way to contribute to the country’s economic development. Similar to the historical formation of Black philanthropy, farming has been used as a strategy of racial up-
lift and economic self-determination. For instance, since the 1880s, Southern rural progressives, like Booker T. Washington, urged rural Black Americans to look for internal solutions to fight poverty, illiteracy, paternalism, injustice, and violence. Landowning farmers and entrepreneurs reorganized rural society by founding fraternal societies and building schools, churches, and businesses to cater to the black clientele. They welcomed the help of private philanthropy to accomplish their mission. Within the communities they built, landowning farmers, stable tenants, and sharecroppers that could find support, education, and culture (Reid 2003: 263).

The case studies revealed that revitalization of rural farming practices is a plausible strategy for Ghana’s economic development. Indeed, one of the many reasons given to explain urban poverty in Africa is the fact that there are a severely limited number of jobs available especially in rapidly growing urban areas (Tarver, 1996). Therefore, many Diaspora African entrepreneurs working in the agricultural industry view their businesses as a way to help develop Ghana’s rural sector and build the national economy. In diversifying and cultivating the skills sets of their employees Diaspora African entrepreneurs envision an African workforce that can compete on the international level and is knowledgeable of the new agricultural technologies.

Diaspora Africans are also marketing a Pan-African philanthropy as a form of cultural enlightenment by promoting an African-based traditional and healing model to Black American consumers. Among Diaspora African entrepreneurs Ghana’s agricultural commodities are becoming a part of a larger global network of alternative health related industries. According to the Columbia Encyclopedia (2008),

In the United States in the 1960s and 70s, there occurred an enormous expanding interest in folk remedies, herbal medicines, vitamins, and so-called health foods and organic foods free of chemical pesticides and other pollutants. As a result the production of such foods became a growing business enterprise. A new surge in the sales of herbal remedies to treat minor ailments and enhance health took place in the 1990s.
Seeking profits, the Jewell Spice Company and the AHIs have taken advantage of the market trends and hope to satiate US consumer demand for organically grown and natural food products. However, in meeting the growing demand for organic and vegan products the AHI’s Yah-based message, which targets the Black American consumer, is oftentimes lost in favor of making a profit and selling to a diverse group of American consumers.

The NERSI is benefiting the growing interests of Black Americans in herbal remedies. Unlike modern remedies, folk medicine relies heavily on the use of herbs and botanicals to treat physical ailments. In addition, Black American folk medicine incorporates spiritually inclined principles that have been informed by west and central African traditions, or from Caribbean traditions, like those from Haiti (Snow 1974). This study revealed that Diasporas Africans in the health-related business promote differing health beliefs and attitude about various medical conditions, but there are some commonalities that exist between diasporic and continental traditions. (1) They usually attributed the poor health of Black Americans to an external locus (e.g., slavery, the dominance of Western based health models and religious ideology). (2) Many of them expressed a belief in a higher sense of fate and destiny for African peoples. (3) Moreover, they believed that faith and spirituality are sources of strength for African peoples, and thus exhibited a respect for African traditional health practices and knowledge.

In summary, multi-sited research was used to document the different Pan-African philanthropic strategies of Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs that were derived from the three case studies. The Jewell Spice Company case study exposed the tensions that arise from the company’s involvement with multinational corporations and his farm-based approach to economic development in Ghana. Taking a more Western-based model of health, the company’s markets its organic products to health conscious US consumers. By focusing on the Black
American consumer base and support what I call the “For Us By Us” or FUBU mantra, Jewell has created another outlet for Ghanaian farmer’s agriculture products. The company also trains its factory workers on the latest spice technology equipment providing them with the skills needed to compete globally with other agricultural base industries.

The NERSI case study revealed a revival of African-based health and healing practices among Black Americans. NERSI Pan-African philanthropy consists of the cultural enlightenment of Black Americans about African traditional healing practices. In order to achieve this, Kali Sichen-Andoh and Dr. Kweku Andoh developed a line of Harbinger Herbal supplements. Educating their consumers using a Pan-African marketing strategy the couple educates Black consumers about their African-based folk medicine heritage. In this case study farming also serves as a form of philanthropy in both Ghanaian and Black American communities.

The AHI case study revealed the on-going success of Black separatists groups in Africa. The groups’ involvement in building alternative economies founded upon the principals of Yah-base culture has culminated in a belief system that dictates what can be sold and how cultural commodities are interpreted. Hence this groups’ form of Pan-African philanthropy emphasizes the importance of farming through a number of community service projects. It also propagates return to Yah-based in Ghanaian and African American communities.
Table 1-1. Sample business typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Business</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>*African Hebrew Israelite (AHI)</th>
<th>Ghanaian</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail (includes clothing African cultural products, apparel, foodstuff, and ethnic beauty aids)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookstore</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbal Remedy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality/Hotel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Tourism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty Saloon/Barber Shop</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/Radio</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaire Survey
Diaspora Africans in Ghana: The Ties That Bind

Ghanaians, even those that are my friends, call us immigrants. This is funny to me, because I don’t think of myself that way, but we are. I think what Diaspora Africans realize over time is that in the end we are all homeless Americans. - Janet Butler, president African American Association of Ghana.

Figure 2-1. American born African Hebrew Rabbi Kohain repatriated to Ghana 12 years ago where he met his wife Mable. Both are co-owners of the hotel and restaurant establishment Mable’s Table, located in Elmina, Ghana. The couple is known for hosting monthly social events for other Black repatriates in the Cape Coast and Elmina area. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.

Diaspora Africans feel a personal connection to Ghana, however; being a foreigner still presents unique challenges for those that are seeking to do business there. With this in mind, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss: (1) who these people are and what influenced their decision
to live in Ghana (2) and the organization of their social networks and business enterprises. The concept of social capital is utilized to understand how these networks are created and the intensity in which Diaspora Africans exploit these resources. I explain how they expand their business networks by forging alliances between a host of business and personal constituencies. Here, emphasis is placed on intergroup differences, including access to group resources and networks, such as, kinship, local affiliation, transnational and religious networks. (3) Lastly, I examine how Diaspora African entrepreneurs overcome challenges associated with operating and establishing a business in Ghana. Ethnographic field research reveals and substantiates the complexity of shared values that undergird the formation of Black transnational businesses in Ghana.

**The Flexibility of Diaspora African Identity in Everyday Business**

Diaspora Africans consider their tenure in Ghana a worthwhile investment not only in terms of business development but in their personal and spiritual growth. Building on Obiagele Lake’s (1995) analysis this study explores how pan-African identities and relationships operate on a day to day basis in relation to Diaspora African business organization.

Diaspora Africans, like most immigrant groups residing in any host country, face difficulties in adapting to life in the host country. It is not surprising that the types of networks they have in place helps Diaspora Africans overcome some of the everyday challenges, such as cultural difference, communication issue, and gender issues, which occur at the workplace and in their personal lives. For example, many repatriates that are married to Ghanaians rely on their family networks for things, such as, child rearing, acquiring land, and integrating into the larger Ghanaian community. Furthermore, Lake suggests that unmarried repatriates or repatriate couples (non-Ghanaian couples) have a more difficult time acquiring land, getting loans from banks, and even adjusting to cultural norms (ibid: 30). One of her informants lamented that
returnees find it difficult to start a business in Ghana because they lack access to land (ibid: 27). According to the Ghana Investment and Promotion Center (2007), land is generally owned by individuals, families, and clans in the community; property is passed down from generation to generation. Foreigners need to obtain permission from the family in order to rent or own land. Hence, the variety of customary arrangements, combined with some inconsistencies in the procedures for deed and title registration, makes it difficult, though not impossible, for potential investors to acquire large parcels of land for large-scale economic activities (GIPC 2007).

Apart from the variety of setbacks that Black entrepreneurs encounter, my research indicates Diaspora Africans are developing new approaches to overcome problems associated with obtaining land, labor, and capital. As I mentioned previously, knowing why people have migrated to Ghana provides some insights into determining the types of resources they have available to them in starting up a new business. Moreover it gives a broader picture as to how these personalized networks serve to augment specific forms of localized and transnational business relationships. Diaspora Africans from various parts of the globe, migrate to Ghana for a variety of reasons. They constitute a diverse group of individuals from various cultural, religious, educational, and occupational backgrounds. Interestingly, the majority of the Black Americans in Ghana live there because they are married to Ghanaians and they have made the decision to reside in the home country of their spouses.

Janet Butler, president of the African American Association of Ghana (AAAG), believes that this latter reason surprises most people because they assume that most Diaspora Africans live there to discover their cultural roots. According to her, this latter group of individuals, which she calls returnees, is the second largest group of Blacks living in the country. She says that, “these are people who change their names to African ones and affiliate themselves with
villages”. But there is also a subset of this group of returnees that are tourist. Butler explains that, “these people don’t want to necessarily live in Ghana, but they want to experience the same things that most returnees do, in terms of reconnecting with their African heritage.”

Figure 2-2. Janet Butler, picture above, is the President of the African American Association of Ghana. She is also the owner of a telecommunications company in Ghana. Butler and her husband repatriated to Ghana 7 years ago. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.

In the analysis that follows, I combine some of the sentiments expressed by Janet Butler about the types of Blacks residing in Ghana with the insights of Lake. The first two categories of Diaspora Africans are the groups that are most often discussed within the literature. The result of this has meant that scholars have been unable to accurately capture the heterogeneity that makes up this population. In not acknowledging the broader spectrum of pan-African identities that exists among Diaspora Africans scholars are unable to account for the cultural logic that takes place on the local level that could potentially inform our analysis of global processes.
Returnees

Lake uses the term returnees to describe Diaspora Africans who self-identify with a pan-African identity rather than assuming a national identity. I argue that the term returnee is too broad a category to explain the diverse perspectives that influence the identity formation of Diaspora Africans living in Ghana versus Diaspora Africans that visit the country as tourist. My use of returnee is more closely aligned with Paulla Ebron’s notion of tourists as pilgrims. For Ebron “the pilgrimage (tour) helps to create an identity that is reunited with the African past” (1999: 923). Meaning that returnees’ identity formation is informed by a brief snap-shot of what traditional African life is like in Ghana. More than likely this snap-shot is contrived to evoke nostalgic sentiments of an African homeland and/or African identity. The term returnee is used to refer to people, primarily tourists, searching for their roots and cultural connections to Africa.

Transients

The second grouping of Diaspora Africans, which I refer to as transients, includes people that work for non-profit organizations, are participants in foreign exchange programs, or arrive in the country as a part of a missionary group. These people reside in Ghana temporarily, but for an extended period of time. Many Black Americans’ first forays to Africa are through these educational and service oriented programs. As evidenced by the Melvin Webb example some of these individuals may decide to remain in Ghana permanently. Transients tends not be as involved in local organizations like AAAG. In fact the majority of AAAG’s membership is made up of professionals. As Janet Butler put it these are individuals that “were tired of working in corporate America, and bumping their heads on the glass ceiling”. Most of the group’s members move to Ghana because they wanted to live someplace where they felt their skills would be appreciated. Butler exclaims, “Most of our members came to make a contribution to
the world in a meaningful way. We see Ghana as a place where the color of our skin would not hold us back”.

**Diaspora Africans**

Individuals that make the decision to live in Ghana on a permanent basis are called Diaspora Africans. As, indicated in Chapter One, Lake (1995) maintains that Diaspora Africans feel a strong attachment to their places of birth but are also in the process of forming connections and new identities in Africa. For them the decision to “return” to Africa is not necessarily based on any specific political ideology. Many of them still self-identify as African American and they consider themselves as belonging to Africa as much as indigenous Africans.\(^{19}\)

Consequently, for those who do return on a permanent basis, the decision to migrate is not always easy. Oftentimes it takes multiple trips to establish permanent settlement, let alone to establish a business. In fact it should be further noted that the categories covered in this chapter are not stagnant. People occupy these positions throughout several stages of their lives. For example, Janet Butler’s decision to move to Ghana took several years to come to fruition. Her first introduction to the African continent began as yearly vacations to countries throughout Africa. Then at some point she and her husband, who is also a Black American, joined the Peace Corps. Later, the couple relocated to Nigeria because Janet was offered a high level management position with Proctor and Gamble.

Watching the development of my children while living in Nigeria sealed the decision for us to live in Africa. The experience left our children with strong sense of self esteem because they were surrounded by people that loved, corrected, and looked out for them. They saw themselves as citizens of the world versus somebody’s national problem. My children do not define themselves in the African American box, which was an eye opener to my husband and me.

---

\(^{19}\) Within this category of Diaspora Africans Lake also indentifies a small number of individuals that she refers to as “citizens of the world.” This subset of Diaspora Africans de-emphasizes pan-African connections and focus on class identity within a global community (ibid: 27-28).
The couple lived in Nigeria for five years before returning to the US where they spent the next three years working, saving their money, and planning for their return to Africa. After accepting a job offer to work at Ghana Telecom, Janet and her family finally moved to Ghana. Butler saw their settlement in Ghana as an ideal place to raise their children. Janet is now delighted to inform me that her son, who is now a freshman in college, is a member of the African Student Association at the University of Massachusetts. Two years ago Butler established a telecommunications company in Accra.

Butler life story typifies the experience of many Diaspora Africans that are successful in making Ghana their home. Interestingly enough, Butler self-identifies as a Black American, however; her son, a second generation American immigrant, returns to the US and self-identifies as “African” and not Black American. Unfortunately during the time of Butler’s interview her son was attending college in the US. When I asked her what he thought of other African American studies she, says, “He doesn’t really relate to African Americans, he thinks they’re unaware of what is happening in other parts of the world.” Ironically this is a typecast that the global community has of all Americans.

**Diaspora Africans with Ghanaian Spouses**

The fourth grouping includes Diaspora Africans with Ghanaian spouses. Lake points out, “that although each Diaspora African’s experience in Ghana is unique, all repatriates have adjusted in varying degrees to Ghanaian customs and infrastructure, and have integrated into Ghanaian social structures” (ibid: 32). When it comes to marriage, integrating into any family is an obvious task, but it is particularly compounded when one is confronted by a complex set of cultural and moral norms that they do not initially fully comprehend. One of my female informants decided to move to Ghana because her husband wanted to take over his family
business. She says it took some time to gain acceptance by her mother-in-law, but adds that that could happen to anyone. Like Butler, she enjoys living in Ghana and raising her children there.

**Diaspora African Religious Groups**

Scholars have recognized the significance of long-distance religious and kinship trade networks throughout West Africa and their development into areas outside of Africa (Meillassoux 1971; Carter 1997; and Stoller 2002), while others have even emphasized the role of spirituality and/or religious movements as interface between Africa and her Diaspora (Dolvo 2002 and Van Dijk 2003). The return movements of Black American religious groups to Africa have a long history. This analysis recognizes the importance of Diaspora African religious groups living in Ghana. Although groups like the Rastafarians and the Nation of Islam are highly visible religious groups in Ghana, this study specifically investigates the relationship of the African Hebrew Israelite (AHI) community to Ghana. According to Atur Ismail, the director of the Hebrew Israelite Foundation in Ghana, the Hebrew Israelites have been in Ghana since 1976. Despite the group’s small numbers (50 Ghanaian-born members living in the Medina suburb), the intensification of these religious networks used to organized business activities adds credence to the complexity of Diaspora African ties to Ghana.

Based on the previous discussion we can explicate a correlation between Diaspora African identity formation and the role that social capital plays in the formation of kinship, local affiliation, religious, and transnational networks.

---

20 Ghana has always held attractions for the AHI. In the book *Hebrewisms of West Africa, from Nile to Niger* (1930) J.J. Williams traces the retention of Hebrew tradition with the Ashanti. Many AHI do not consider themselves as belonging to a religious group. AHI use the Old Testament as a prophetic text, rather than a religious text, to justify their claim to be the descendants of the ancient Israelites. I place them in the religious group category in accordance to the established literature that discusses this group in association with other religious groups, namely, Rastafarians and the Nation of Islam.
Social Capital, Social Structures, and Network Typology

Thus far this chapter has explained what prompted Diaspora Africans to move to Ghana. The remaining part of this chapter (and dissertation) looks at how these networks help Diaspora Africans entrepreneurs succeed at “doing business” in Ghana. By learning new ways of doing things and transferring knowledge, Diaspora Africans promote a shared vision of economic possibilities based on self-reliance.

The central premise of social capital is that social networks have value. For James Coleman (1990) social capital is tantamount to a “stock” of trust. It is the by-product of purposeful action intended to achieve a specific goal. At the same time there also exists an emotional attachment to a group or society, hence the cooperation among the individuals involved in these social networks not only help them to achieve a goal, but benefit the public for the greater good.

Based on James Coleman’s (1990) analysis I use social capital to refer to the collective value of numerous types of social networks (e.g. who people know) and the inclinations that arise from them that requires people to do things for each other (e.g. reciprocity). Social capital allows individuals to gain access to otherwise unavailable resources through cooperative action in pursuit of individual goals. Coleman asserts that there are six social structures around which social capital functions. These six social structures consist of the: (1) mutually acknowledged obligations and expectations that provide incentives to invest, (2) information potential, (3)

---

21 Criticisms of social capital stresses the concept’s disregard of social change, its ahistorical and acultural basis, its attempt at establishing rational choice theory and its lack of measurability (Portes and Landolt 1994; Foley and Edwards 1999; and Levi 1996). They point to the role of globalization as eroding the role of social capital within civil society. They argue that within the context a new, more open economy, globalization has caused people to lose a sense of the local. The result is the erosion of the social ‘glue’ (or social capital) of trust, mutual responsibility and civic engagement, therefore; traditional notions of citizenship and participation in associations, neighborhoods and wider political processes, are unraveling. Although the scenario may not be either as simple or as unrelentingly negative as some would have us believe the central issue is that, in this less certain, more open and less secure world, the instincts and institutions of civil society assume a new significance and value.
appropriable social organizations, (4) norms and sanctions, (5) authority relations that consist of the transfer of “rights of control” from group members to one individual, and (6) intentional organizations. Table 2-1, *The Six Social Structures of Social Capital*, summarizes how Diaspora African networks function through Coleman’s six social structures.

**Kinship Networks**

Kinship networks which are largely based on “reciprocity or mutual aid” among family members (1) *provide incentives for family members to invest* in various aspects of their kinfolks’ personal and public life. Obiagele Lake conducted her research in the mid to late 1980s. Based on the results of her research she concluded that the numerical preponderance of Diaspora African women over men is striking (1995: 9). She further explains that because Ghanaian men are at the top of the social hierarchy, they have in place greater access to family land, jobs, and familial networks that provides greater opportunities to accumulate wealth. Diaspora African women would have a difficult time going it alone without the support of their Ghanaian spouses (ibid: 9). One of my female informants, Teresa, is the owner of an educational tourism agency. Teresa’s husband is Ghanaian. The couple has lived in Ghana for the past 18 years. Teresa maintains that she did not have some of the same difficulties that other repatriates do in terms of finding a location for her business. Her father-in-law owns the building where her business is located and offered her the space as a favor. In this instance her kinship networks played a large role in securing a location her business.

Lake’s research indicates that Diaspora African men are at a significant disadvantage because they cannot derive the benefits of kinship networks that Ghanaian men possess. This is why you will find fewer Diaspora African men living in Ghana (ibid: 8). Despite their lack of kinship networks, Diaspora African men that succeed in making a living in Ghana do eventually marry (in most cases much younger) Ghanaian women. Unlike their male counter-parts, who
had met their wives in Ghana; most Diaspora African women had met their husband in the US. Moreover, the majority of Diaspora African women that are married to a Ghanaian had never visited Ghana until after they were married. Lake makes an interesting observation about the significance of the Ghanaian kinship system. She suggests that “due to the fact that the extended family is prevalent in Ghana, Diaspora Africans are immediately immersed into wider kinship networks (1995: 32)”. Citing William Safran (1991:89-90) Lake further maintains, “that these new alliances are no more perfect than they are for wholly indigenous families, but nevertheless important in contrast to claims that Diaspora Africans attempts to reunite have failed” (1995: 32). Hence, Lake’s observation gives credence to the 21st century Pan-African agenda.

I believe that Diaspora Africans have integrated into Ghanaian society more than Lake presupposes even into areas that extend beyond the traditional kinship relationship. Part of this can be attributed to the renewed interest in Ghana as a popular tourist destination among middle-class Black Americans. Tourism has opened up more opportunities for Blacks and Ghanaians to intermingle with one another in Ghana and in the US. The Ghana’s growing reputation as a good place to conduct business has also attracted the attention of Black American entrepreneurs. Likewise, Ghanaian immigrants in search of work, businesses, and educational opportunities in the US have also resulted in the further integration of these two African Diaspora communities.\footnote{According to 2000 US Census Bureau there are approximately 60,000 Ghanaians living in the US (other estimates are as high as 300,000).} Indeed, whether it is Ghanaians in US participating in Black History Month celebrations or Black Americans visiting Ghana as tourists, international migration has increased the opportunities for Blacks Americans and Ghanaians from all walks of life to interact with one another on a continual basis.
Consequently, in Ghana the association of African American as tourists (and the global entertainment industry) has influenced Ghanaians perceptions of Black Americans. As one of my informants explains, “They [Ghanaians] have put us in a box and stamp the letters A-T-M on the top! Now, do not get me wrong, it is accurate to say that those of us [Black Americans] that do live here are financially better off than most Ghanaians”. However the most common misperception that Ghanaians have of us is that we are rich.” This particular entrepreneur’s children attend the school of some very wealthy Ghanaians. My informant is also quick to point out, “I know that if I drop my child off or pick my children up from their friend’s house, I need not get out my car. I have experience that side of elitism here in Ghana as well, though this situation does not happen often”.

Coincidently, I spoke with a Ghanian who attended college in the US. He lived in the US for 12 year before returning to Ghana to start a business. I asked him what surprised him most about the US. He said he was surprised that black people were poor. My two informants’ statements reveal some of the stereotypes that Ghanaians and Black Americans have of one another. In both instances, each of my informants was surprised to confront the reality of such imaginings. The irony being that middle class Diaspora Africans are usually the ones fighting the perceptions that Blacks are poor, but when they come to Ghana they are assumed to be rich. Likewise, the Ghanian that moves to US and assumes that all Americans are rich, including Black Americans, sees that there are poor people in America. Through these waves of migrations and opportunities for travel, both groups are slowly separating fact from fiction gathering a more nuance understanding of one another.

**Local Affiliation Networks**

Networks help provide individuals (2) access to privileged information. Diaspora Africans rely on various forms of social capital to assert their membership claims to kinship,
local affiliation, religious, and transnational networks. This requires a new set of skills, which include learning how to interact with foreign clients, knowing pricing structures and market information, and understanding how to effectively infiltrate Ghanaian, and in some instances US, markets.

The growing number of Diaspora Africans living and visiting Ghana has made it easier for Black Americans that are interested in either doing business or living in Ghana. Over time Diaspora Africans have developed their own sets of local affiliation networks that are specific to their personal interests and business needs. Local affiliation networks cover a small geographic area. They function primarily as informational networks used for learning about jobs and business opportunities. In addition, these networks consist of friends and acquaintances; professional and business organizations; and banking and lending institutions. For example the AAAG functions as the interface between Diaspora Africans and the Ghanaian community. I had the opportunity to talk with one of the original founders of the AAAG. She revealed that the organization was originally formed as a support group for married African American women that had moved to Ghana to join their Ghanaian husband’s. Each month these women would come together to socialize and to discuss a variety of topics, among them the challenges of child-rearing within the extended family system, homesickness, and hot political issues in the US. Over the organization’s 48 year history, the focus of the AAAG changed from a support group for African American women in Ghana to an all-inclusive support group of male and female Diaspora Africans from various parts of the world.

AAAG not only functions as a community organization, it also serves as an important business network (3) or an appropriable social organization, for Diaspora Africans. Some of the most successful Black entrepreneurs have parlayed their AAAG affiliations to promote
numerous business and philanthropic causes. For example, Dr. Marcus Manns, African American chiropractor and founder of the Chiropractic and Wellness Centers, has a network consisting of local affiliations with AAAG and with numerous government officials. Dr. Manns explains that, “I have patient-client relationship with most of Ghana’s ministers and government officials. The Minister of Health is my patient and a good friend. Currently we are in negotiations to develop a program that will improve the health status of Ghanaians, especially in rural communities”.

Figure 2-3. Dr. Manns performs a back realignment for a client at one of his Chiropractic and Wellness Centers. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.

Making the most of his affiliations, Dr. Manns helped to create one of the most popular golfing events in Ghana: The African America Classic. Dr. Manns and three of his friends (two African Americans and one Ghanaian) designed this annual event to strengthen and help build
relationships through golf. According to Manns, “The goal of the event is to promote African American business professionals in Ghana. We want to genuinely create an atmosphere that builds relationships and promotes understanding of diverse people and cultures.” The African America Classic is considered a very prestigious event that attracts the attention of Diaspora African and Ghana’s business and social elites, including high ranking government offices and even foreign dignitaries.

**Religious Network**

Figure 2-4. Photograph of an African Hebrew Israelite wedding in Ghana. The wedding is a double wedding ceremony conducted by Kogain Yehuda (African American). The couple pictured in the left side of the photograph is Acote Ehranah Baht Isreal (bride) and Ank Yahneeve ben Elyakeeman (groom). I met the groom conducting research among AHI community in Atlanta, Georgia. He is also the owner of the Wisdom Hut bookstore in Atlanta. His wife is a member of the Ghanaian AHI sect. She is also the daughter of AHI soy factory manager Atur Shmeal. Yahneeve met his wife in Ghana. Their courtship took place over the course of several years. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.
Establishing an assortment of network types is thought to foster the conditions for collaboration, coordination and cooperation to create collective goods. This study takes into consideration the religious networks of the AHI community. These networks, (4) *consists of norms and sanctions* that benefit the group’s collective good even if they do not benefit an individual member. Dense co-ethnic ties based on affiliations to a specific religious group, common language, lifestyle, and involvement in religious institutions provide a firm basis for economic cooperation and for creating business and social networks for reciprocity. The AHI group emerged from a movement known as the Ethiopian Hebrews in 1966 under the leadership of Rahbee Ben Ammi. Ben Ammi taught that American Blacks were direct descendents of the Biblical Hebrew leaders, that is, sons and daughters of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who were themselves Black. One of the underlying distinctions between some of the groups is the acceptance of Ben Ammi as, the messiah. However because there is much overlap in cultural and spiritual practices, media and academic sources often refer to them as “Black Hebrews” in general.23

The AHIs’ business organization follows a pattern of (5) *authority relations that consist of the transfer of rights of control from group members to a few individuals/community leaders* that serve as a guide to economic decision-making. The AHI have established small communities in various parts of the globe, including the US, Israel, Jamaica, England, Ghana, and Benin. There are now about 3,000 AHI living in Dimona, Israel, with another 20,000 in

---

23 Scholars like Kevin Arvch (1982), Elias Jones (1988) and Fran Markowitz (1996) have given an in-depth examination of the groups’ ideology. Elmo Dolvo (2002) describes their ideology “as rooted in the quest for an authentic African-American cultural and spiritual identity [that] traces its roots through Africa to Hebrew origins (ibid: 9). In 1976, some African Israelites entered Ghana through Liberia. The group settled in Medina a suburb of Accra. The community now has 50 members scattered throughout Ghana. The current director is Richard Simmons, aka Atur Ismail. The movement is known by several names such as the Hebrew Israelite Foundation of Ghana, African Edenic Israelite Foundation, The African Hebrew Israelites, The Endemic Heritage, the Israelite Community of Ghana, and The African/Edenic Diaspora (Dispersion) Community. Members do not live in a community in Ghana as they do in Israel. But they practice the ethic basis of communal living through sharing and social solidarity (ibid: 10).”
American cities such as Chicago, Atlanta, Cleveland, St Louis, Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas, Philadelphia, and Detroit. Many American-born AHIs rely on their social capital to assert their membership claims to transnational and local networks in Ghana. They use these religious networks to obtain commodities, art, cosmetics, and clothing, for their US-based enterprises. For American-born AHIs this networks opens up opportunities for entry into job niches reserved for Ghanaians. The Ghana Investment and Promotion Center (2007) stipulates that enterprises reserved for Ghanaians include: the sale of anything whatsoever in a market, petty trading, hawking or selling from a kiosk at any place. In addition, the operation of taxi service and car hire service, as well as, all aspects of pool betting business and lotteries, except football pools and the operation of beauty salons and barber shops, are reserved for Ghanaians. However since AHI business are collectively owned and operated, many American-born AHIs can participate in some of these enterprises via their relationships with Ghanaian-born AHIs. For Ghanaian-born AHIs their affiliations to the group make available a new set of strategies for them to effectively infiltrate international markets. This includes importing a spectrum of equipment, such as computers to colonoscopy equipment, from various AHI communities dispersed around the world. These trans-Atlantic relationships may give them a much needed edge among local business competitors.

Transnational Networks

Transnational networks constitute another set of resources used by Diaspora African entrepreneurs. These networks utilize information and communication technologies as a data resource to facilitate transnational exchange. They also provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge, techniques, crafts and artisanal methods between transnational development partners to facilitate new product development/diversification. It is not uncommon for Diaspora African entrepreneurs to build collaboration with a diverse group of overseas contacts. In its entirety
these types of networks may include non-profit organizations, multinational corporations, or industry and trade organizations.

Most Diaspora African business networks constitute a form of (6) intentional organization that can be used by an individual for specific goals or purposes. As Janet Butler explains, “I eventually left my management job to establish a business because I had to make a living and support my family. I came here to offer my skills and expertise and to train a new cadre of business people. I take my work here seriously. I’m not here just to provide jobs.” Her business serves a dual purpose, which is to generate a means to financially support her family and to ensure that her employees have the skills to compete in the international work place. The majority of Diaspora Africans entrepreneurs living in Ghana support a number of philanthropic missions.

Not surprisingly much of this philanthropy helps to sustain trans-Atlantic partnerships between Ghana and the US. Transnational networks include resources that were originally intended for a single purpose but are appropriated for another. Therefore these networks can be used to establish new entities. It is important to recognize that although employees and investors benefit directly from the success of these entities, it also benefits individuals that may not be directly involved. Given the complexity of Diaspora African identities, the goals of Diaspora Africans vary. A few examples of these goals range from the individual who came to pursue job opportunities or came to establish a business in Ghana to those who made the decision to come here to join their spouses and raise families to those who came to do mission work or propagate their religious beliefs. Ghanaians benefit from the jobs created Diaspora African businesses. Globally consumers benefit from the diversification of products and services made available to them.
Earlier I characterized Dr. Marcus Manns’ networks as exemplar of local affiliation networks. However, in addition to those networks, Dr. Manns has established transnational networks with chiropractic schools in the US. Ultimately, Dr. Manns plans to use these particular sets of connections to organize the training of a new generation of Ghanaian chiropractors. He has befriended several presidents from very reputable chiropractic colleges in the US who are eager to work with government officials to establish chiropractic schools across the country. Before Dr. Manns can accomplish this he must first develop a curriculum for chiropractic training programs. Currently Dr. Manns is training his Ghanaian staff as Chiropractic Assistant. Through these training sessions Dr. Manns hopes to develop a curriculum that is compatible with Ghanaian lifestyle practices. He is also collaborating with chiropractic school officials and chiropractic practitioners in the US and government officials in the US to raise the funds to build schools. All the players involved have something to gain from these collaborations. The field of chiropracy gains international credibility. The chiropractic schools in the US plan to offer scholarships to Ghanaian students to study in the US. Stipulations of the scholarships are that students must come back to Ghana and teach in the schools Dr. Manns plans to establish.

Pan-African self-determination, a feature of Diaspora African entrepreneurs, involves becoming a cultural broker through whom social relations are created not only with clients but also with potential business partners/suppliers and employees. This is not to say that miscommunications and myths, from both sides of the water, have often created unnecessary conflicts between Black Americans and continental Africans. What this study demonstrates is that Diaspora African entrepreneurs are becoming increasingly more flexible when it comes to dealing with the ambiguity of working among a variety of socio-economic players. Typically,
whether these interactions are with Ghanaians or with Americans business partners Diaspora Africans are very effective brokers in either context.

Diaspora African social capital comes with both positive and negative consequences. Table 2-2, Social Capital in Ghana: The Advantage and Disadvantages, provides an overview of both the positive and negative consequences of each type of Diaspora African group. For example, one of the benefits of having religious affiliated networks with the AHIs is that all of their enterprises are collectively owned. The AHIs provide financial support to those interested in establishing a business. Entrepreneurs have a readily available labor force that consists of other AHIs. In fact, people from the community are assigned job responsibilities based on their interests, skills sets, and qualifications. They often rotate jobs on a continuous basis or as needed. Lastly, because the AHI practices a communal lifestyle the profits generated from their businesses do not go to the manager of the business but are redistributed to members in the AHI community. Therefore, everyone benefits from a business operation, even if they do not work at that specific establishment. Yatneal Israel, the manager of the AHI complex in Atlanta explains:

Everything in our organization is owned collectively. It is because of this that I can say I own a tofu factory, two restaurants, and a health resort in Ghana. In fact we are shipping this [colonoscopy], equipment to our health spa in El Mina because our managers of the health spa here no longer need it.

These are just a few of the issues that affect AHI entrepreneurs. All Diaspora African entrepreneurs have experienced some difficulty in establishing trust with locals and Ghanaian business partners. Since they are foreigners, many have a hard time acquiring land and adjusting to local customs. Diaspora Africans with Ghanaian spouses may feel overburdened by kinship obligations. If Diaspora Africans are unable to meet their familial obligations and expectations their relationship with their spouse’s family can become strained, which can have an adverse affect on their business. For example, they may be denied access to family land or other family
resources. In the discussion that follows, I draw attention to some of the more common problems shared by all Diaspora African entrepreneurs. Further explanation is also provided to explain how they have overcome these issues.

**Challenges Faced by Diaspora African Entrepreneurs**

Diaspora Africans come to live out “the American dream” in Africa. However, they often face difficulties in making these dreams come to fruition. When respondents were asked if they encounter barriers and/or difficulty in establishing their businesses, they came up with numerous answers. The following is a brief summary of the issues that they identified as some of the most difficult business challenges. This analysis is based on answers generated from an interview guide that was prepared in advance (see Appendix A, *Sample Interview Guide*).

**Cultural Differences**

Not surprisingly, cultural differences can pose many problems for Diaspora African entrepreneurs trying to adjust to life in a foreign country and to a new business environment. As cultural brokers Diaspora Africans must become skilled at dealing with people from multiple ethnic groups and cultures backgrounds that are different from their own. Diaspora African entrepreneurs who are familiar with the cultural norms in Ghana admit that they still have experienced some difficulty meeting employee expectations. My discussion with Diaspora Africans revealed that a number of cultural differences arise especially with regards to the employer-employee relationship. Within the US business settings employers typically provide their employees with a salary, health care benefits, vacation and sick days, and social security. In addition to meeting these basic employee expectations the participants disclosed that within the Ghanaian business environment they were regularly asked to make financial contributions towards their employees’ children’s education, for funerals, weddings, and engagements.
In this regard the participants said that many of their employees expected them to provide them with extra income, in addition to the salary that they were already receiving. This was a major cultural difference within the workplace. My participant observations verified these assertions. On various occasions I observed workers asking for time off to attend funerals, sometimes asking their employers to attend the funerals as well or to make donations for funerals expenses.

One of my Diaspora African entrepreneurs maintains that this difference in the work culture exists because of the importance that social relationships have in Ghana. Hence Diaspora Africans believe that they are doubly-embedded in the social relationships at the workplace which extends into areas of their employees’ private social life. Whereas in the US business context there is a separation between your employees’ work life and home life; in Ghana this distinction is blurred resulting in the employers having additional obligations to their employees. One of my informants indicated that their involvement in their employees’ life at times make it difficult to fire someone. She exclaims,

You’ve invested all this time and energy in making contributions to the funerals, celebrating marriages, giving their children graduation gifts, etcetera. In this regard you are not just firing one person. You are severing the social relationships and obligations that come with that person.

In addition to indicating that their exists some cultural differences in terms of the expectations and obligations that employees have of their employers, Diaspora Africans also have unrealistic expectations for their employees. For example, within the US business paradigm employees are expected to make it to work on time, to provide good customer service, to willingly learn new or different tasks and to take accountability for their mistakes. Many of the issues concerning time have to do with the participants’ American concept of time versus the Ghanaians concept of time. In Ghana, the emphasis is not placed on being on time rather it is
more important that one shows up for the work. Many entrepreneurs mentioned the irony of the term “CP time” (otherwise known as Colored People time), which is a term commonly used among Black Americans. CP time is stereotype based on the premise Black Americans are incapable of punctuality and are chronically tardy in both arriving at and beginning events and functions. One of my informants jokingly said, “I am used to CP time, but we [African Americans] use a different term here we called it, ‘Ghana Time’. As an African American, I can tolerate people coming ten to fifteen minutes late, but ten to fifteen minutes here is more like one to two hours ‘Ghana Time’”. Entrepreneurs believe much time is wasted when employees are chronically late. They usually have to recap information for late arrivals. By and large, most entrepreneurs mentioned that the poor transportation system in Ghana is often the culprit of employee tardiness. The general consensus is that they will not reprimand an employee if he/she is less than thirty minutes late.

The concept of what is considered customer service in Ghana also conflicts with US concepts of service and time. For instance, if you own a restaurant, good customer service is based on how quickly the food is served and prepared. Providing good customer service is one of the American business concepts that Diaspora Africans refuse to change; it is especially important in a country where much of their business marketing strategies consists of word of mouth referrals. To overcome this issue, Diaspora Africans are attempting to make the customer feel special by inculcating into their staff the disposition to behave as if the customer were right, even when they are not. Some Diaspora Africans, especially those in the hospitality and tourism industry, use training sessions as way to introduce a US framework for customer service. In fact one of my entrepreneurs, a hotel owner, brought in a PR consultant from the US to train his staff.
Not all Diaspora Africans have the luxury of hiring a PR consultant. They do most of this training on the job. Imakus, proprietor of the hotel One Africa in Elmina, remarks,

I came here one day and saw one of the workers arguing and shaking his finger in a customer’s face. Later, I explained to him, “If there’s something that you can’t deal with, just say to the customer, ‘Excuse me, while I go and get my manager’”. I told him that I could show him a way to deal with the same situation differently because there are going to be times when the customer is wrong and is being difficult. However the customer is paying you for your services so you have to try to make things right. Then I patted him on the back and said, “But on the other hand, if they are just downright disrespectful to you, by all means come and get me. I don’t have a problem asking people to leave”.

In regards to a willingness to learn new or different tasks and regarding accountability for their mistakes, Diaspora African entrepreneurs believe that it was hard to get their employees to see the business as their business. Many have introduced programs, such as guest surveys, employee evaluations, and training sessions to ensure that employees are accountable for their actions. Brenda is the Director for the Kunte Kinte Orthopedic Hospital (KKOH), owned by another Diaspora African, Dorothy Lowe. Brenda is planning to implement a system of accountability for her employees. For example, at KKOH an increase in salary depends on the employees’ evaluation and assessments for the year. There is also an employee orientation that lasts two weeks. At the orientation employees are required to sign their employee handbook. Brenda had previously worked at another hospital in Ghana. She decided to implement a system of accountability for KKOH employees based on her experience of being treated and other people being treated in Ghanaian hospitals. Her frustration stems from the lack of customer service in hospitals. She hopes that employee orientation will help to eliminate these problems.
Figure 2-5. The Kunta Kinte Orthopedic Hospital, which is currently under construction in Mamapong, Ghana, is the brainchild of Dorothy Lowe. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.
Communication Issues

Communication problems are at the heart of many workplace problems and the end result is loss of trust, teamwork and productivity. Ghana is an Anglophone country; however, some Ghanaians are more fluent in their indigenous languages than they are in English. As a result cross-cultural communication takes time, especially in view of the fact that few Diaspora Africans have learned indigenous languages. The majority did, however, adapt to non-verbal behaviors and styles of communication, such as avoiding eye contact. Other adaptations and strategies include speaking slowly, making employees repeat instructions, utilizing videos or other forms of media to introduce and express new ideas, and building a shared technical and occupational vocabulary with workers.

Figure 2-6. I had the opportunity to participate in an employee training session at the Chiropractic Health and Wellness Center. Dr. Marcus Manns (seated on the far right) talks to an employee during break time. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.
For example, during an employee training session Dr. Marcus Manns, franchise owner of the Chiropractic Health and Wellness Centers throughout Ghana, showed videos to his employees in order to demonstrate how to communicate effectively with patients to assess their needs. For Manns communication between his employees and clients has been a challenge. Throughout his presentation, he kept asking his employees to repeat back what he was saying. Most of Manns’ employees learned English as second language. He has learned to adapt his speech, e.g., talking slower, changing the tone in his speech pattern, and repeating information, to make sure his employees truly understand what he is saying.

The majority of the Diaspora Africans business personnel consist entirely of Ghanaians, however; there were a number of instances where entrepreneurs hired individuals from outside the country. Dr. Marcus Manns hires both Ghana and Americans. His staff consists primarily of American chiropractic doctors who are responsible for providing health and wellness services to his Ghanaian clients. At times they assist Dr. Manns in the numerous training seminars for his Ghanaian staff members. Due to the fact that chiropracy is a new field in the county and that there is no formal degree programs in the field, Dr. Manns spends much of his time training and familiarizing his employees in health and lifestyle counseling, massage therapy, and the philosophical principals to chiropractic care. After his employees have completed their training they are promoted as Chiropractic Assistants, and from there to higher level positions within the company. Manns conducts a number of out-patient services in rural areas. Manns and the American chiropractors are usually accompanied by a Ghanaian Chiropractic Assistant to the rural areas. The Chiropractic Assistants have a dual role as both assistant and cultural brokers between American chiropractor and Ghanaian patients. Sometimes problems often arise in cases where there is not direct translations between English and indigenous languages. The
Chiropractic Assistant assists the American doctors in conveying difficult health or scientific terms to customers in their local indigenous languages. Since Mann’s ultimate goal is to set up chiropractic schools throughout Ghana his staff will make up the first generations of chiropractics doctors in the country. The Chiropractic Assistant will play a major role in developing terms, concepts, and health-related philosophies that are specific to community needs.

**Banking and Lending Institutions**

Having good credit and building credit is important for anyone, but it can be especially important for newly incorporated businesses. When I asked participants how they financed their businesses in Ghana, the overwhelming majority disclosed that they used their personal savings as start-up capital. The reliance on personal savings as start-up capital is also characteristic of the establishment of Black enterprises in the US. Generally speaking, Black Americans often do not have personal wealth to use or borrow against, and they often lack a network of contacts to help them overcome the hurdles of getting a business off the ground. The laws regulating the establishment of foreign business enterprise in Ghana serve to compound the issues for Diaspora Africans. According to the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act, 1994 (Act 478), a minimum equity capital of US$10,000 is required from any foreign investor who intends to enter into a joint venture partnership with a Ghanaian in any area of economic activity, except trading. In trading, the minimum equity capital requirement is US$300,000.

A small number of the participants received financial support through collaborative projects with developing agencies or by establishing their own non-profit organization. For example, Dorothy Lowe’s KKOH was financed through a combination of her brother’s personal saving and private donations from individuals in the US. The hospital has a 501(c)(3) classification. Section 501(c)(3) is a US tax law provision granting exemption from the federal
income tax to various charitable, non-profit, religious, and educational organizations. The KKOH uses overseas funds, which are tax deductible for the donor, to support whatever needs arise at the hospital.

Banking and lending institutions have been identified as a crucial factor in business development for Diaspora African entrepreneurs. Answers generated through survey indicated that once the business was established Diaspora Africans were able to receive loans from Ghanaian banks. Some believed that the financial system and the banking systems here are not conducive to helping new entrepreneurs because interest rates high and run on a short term basis. The interest rates in Ghana are as high as thirty percent. The longest lending term you can get is three years. The average term for a loan is a year to eighteen months. It is because of these high interest rates that Diaspora Africans, like AHI hotel owner Rabbi Kohain, assert that lending institutions here function more as a business partner rather than a lending institution.

Diaspora Africans unanimously agreed that there are wonderful business opportunities in Ghana, but in terms of raising capital to start a business or raising capital to increase and expand one’s business, Diaspora African usually had sources coming from both the US and Ghana. Once entrepreneurs have established a good relationship with the local banks and lending institutions, they are confronted with the problems that accompany the banking system in Ghana. “Time is money” is a popular slogan in the US-based business community. The Ghana banking systems have yet to benefit from advances in information technology that expedite financial transactions by making the transfer of money from the customer’s bank to the business occur instantaneously. Hotel owner Imakus said, “We only take cash. My husband and I have a checking and saving account here in Ghana. But, most people here do not use credit cards so we haven’t explored that option.”
Although most entrepreneurs prefer to receive cash payments, there are some benefits to making electronic payment services available to consumers. For instance, Internet banking enables business owners and customers to make transactions with the help of a computer. If you are selling to consumers, accepting credit cards will allow you to expand your customer base and provide a more convenient method of payment than cash or checks. Credit card swipe services allow entrepreneurs to process credit card information electronically and instantaneously. This also eliminates the use of carbon copies. Accepting credit cards allows funds to be transferred to one’s bank account in less than a week. This can be a welcome relief for businesses that experience a tight cash flow. It is because of these benefits that many Diaspora Africans still rely on US based banking institutions to conduct business transactions. Joel Bates owner of the Silicon Hotel in Kumasi also substantiates this. He says, “I’m on the Internet daily. We deal back and forth on the Internet so I can keep track of things in the US even if I am not there. I mean without the Internet, I’d be hard pressed to still be in business with my partners.”

Mona Boyd and her Ghanaian husband are the owners of Ghana Land Tours and an Avis Car Rental Company in Accra. In the company’s first year, Boyd’s sales totaled $40,000. She brought in $1.3 million in 2006. Boyd has a personal bank in Ghana. Given the fact that Boyd’s company has such large financial earnings and most of her clients pay by credit, the company contracts through a credit card processing company in the US. They have a website where clients can make reservations and pay on-line. Most places in Ghana do not have the capabilities to take credit cards giving the Ghana Land Tours an added advantage, especially with domestic competitors. With the upgrade in new technology the company is able to give their customers, usually foreigners, payment options that are relatively unavailable in Ghana. As an added
advantage the company has a one person call center in Ghana and a toll free and direct US number for customers to ask questions are make reservations by phone.

Trust

Diaspora African entrepreneurs rely on trust to conduct business in Ghana. Answers to survey questions among the participants suggested that trust is critical in organizing informal and formal business relations. In a country where relationships of trust and reciprocity are highly valued, Diaspora Africans have several obstacles to overcome in order to build trust. As foreigners, many entrepreneurs initially lack the necessary networks and referral sources needed to establish a trustworthy relationship. Unanimously, the participants emphasized the fact that they all had to spend a lot of time to deepen the social relationships between themselves and their employees and potential clients. It is in this regard that social networks are used to help facilitate coordination and communication and increase the efficiency in which information about the trustworthiness of individuals and groups can flow. As I stated earlier, initially when Diaspora Africans come to Ghana they may lack the networks needed to gain entry into the Ghanaian business environment. Despite the fact Diaspora African have money to start business they often found it difficult to recruit clients. Many, like Janet Butler, owner of a telecommunications service provider, started out by doing work gratis to develop a clientele base for their business. Since many of parents at her children’s school were well connected people she also decided to get involved with the Parent Teacher’s Association. She elaborates:

I would tell them that, “I would be happy to talk to you or to a group about how to do a project plan.” Building these relationships took over 2 years. Most foreigners don’t have that kind of staying power. Unfortunately, I see so many returnees come to Ghana that are terribly disappointed, almost devastated, because they weren’t embraced as the prodigal child returning home.

Establishing trust is especially important given that there is a perception among many Ghanaians that Diaspora Africans are untrustworthy. Since many Diaspora African
entrepreneurs see their tenure in Ghana as a way for them help develop the country, oftentimes it is difficult for them to adjust to the idea that most Ghanaians see them as foreigners. Given their business interests, Ghanaians frequently misconstrue their intentions as imperialistic. Janet Butler remarks, “There’s like this hysteria about us [Black Americans] that we’re dubious and that we’re going to come and take over.” Many Diaspora African entrepreneurs are very sensitive to these stereotypes. Again their Ghanaian employees usually functions as a cultural broker on their behalf. Diaspora African will send one of their employees to initiate a working relationship with a potential client. For instance, Butler hired a Ghanaian as a Finance and Accounting Manager, who is responsible for establishing relationships for the company with the local banks. Once trust is established Butler, as well as other Diaspora African business owners begins negotiating directly with the local banks and/or business partners.

**Land Ownership**

Traditional forms of land ownership in Ghana have posed many problems for foreign investors who want to set-up businesses in Ghana. According to the Ghana Investment and Promotion Center (2007), there are four types of land ownership in Ghana: (1) government land, (2) vested land, (3) customary/stool land, and (4) family/private land. Non-Ghanaians can acquire a lease for residential, commercial, industrial or agricultural land for 99 years, which is subject to renewal from any of the four landowners mentioned above. When I asked the participants about their experiences with Ghana’s land tenured system, there was an equal mixture of both positive and negative experiences. Generally, it was believed that many Ghanaians go through the same problems in the system that any foreigner would go through in country. However, Black Americans come out of a different land tenure system where the land owning process is very straight-forward (e.g., one owner and one buyer/renter). Since the
number of actors participating in the process is small, Diaspora Africans are used to a negotiation process that is less complicated and takes a lot less time.

In Ghana land ownership seems complicated to foreigners. Buyers/Renters might be dealing with an owner who has a legitimate claim and interest in property; however he may not be the only owner of the land. In other words, entrepreneurs might be doing business with someone who has the connection with the family or is a part of the family. Buyers/Renters may mistakenly believe that they have cut a deal with the primary owner, but unless you have engaged the whole family, all the players, you have not consummated the deal. There have been instances where Diaspora Africans (as well as Ghanaians) have found this out late in the process. In some case they have been unable to recover the money from the previous negotiations. Diaspora Africans that are married to Ghanaians generally reported having an easier time figuring out the land tenure system in Ghana, in comparison to unmarried Diaspora or Diaspora African couples, because they had help from friends and family. In most situations where the process has been successful it has required the assistance of a very honest Ghanaian. As of one my informants maintains, “This person can essentially take you by the hand and walk you through the process in order to minimize your experiences or frustrations”.

I encountered a few cases where Diaspora Africans either purchased family land or received family land as a gift from elders in the community. For example, Imakus and husband are owners of the One Africa Guest House and Restaurant in Elmina. The couple moved to Ghana in 1990. Imakus first visited the country in 1987. At the time Imakus and her husband owned a travel agency, car rental service, and limousine service in the US. As Imakus explained, “selling travel is my business”. She and a business partner came to Ghana in the hope of establishing a tourism business. Unfortunately they were unsuccessful in getting people
interested in the business plan. She eventually gave up on the idea. Then one day a man approached her in her travel agency. He told her he was a chief. Imakus recalls, “He said, ‘I’m a chief in Africa, and I live in Ghana’. I remember saying, ‘yeah, right and my name is Pocahontas’! Of course, I said this out of my own ignorance about Ghana and its chieftaincy system”. Eventually, the chief became a good friend of Imakus and her husband. The couple traveled back and forth together for a couple years visiting their friend before the decided to move to Ghana. Then in 1989, her husband, affectionately known as One Africa, was made a chief in the village of their friend. Imakus maintains that, “because my husband was a chief, he was offered a parcel of land along the ocean as a gift”. As this exemplar demonstrates Diaspora Africans Imakus and One Africa were able to benefit from local affiliation networks with a local chief.

Figure 2-7. Pictured above are chalets at the One African Guest House and Restaurant, which is located in Elmina, Ghana. According to One African owner Imakus, the chalets are simulated to look like traditional huts. They were purposefully constructed that way in order to create the appearance of an African village life. However, once the visitor steps inside the chalet, it contains all the comforts of urban life. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.
Labor

When I asked the entrepreneurs about the types of credentials that are most desirable for potential employees, I generated a variety of responses. Hands down, entrepreneurs agreed that personal attributes, such as being responsible, being trustworthy, being a good listener and being able to follow directions, were more important than educational background. Entrepreneur Mona Boyd makes an interesting observation. She maintains that there plenty of educated Ghanaians, but because job opportunities are limited, they may not have had the chance to cultivate job-related skills sets. It is for this reason that she looks at people more in terms of if they can follow instructions rather than looking for specific skills or educational requirements. However, most of the people that work in Boyd’s tourism agency are college educated and have spent considerable time abroad.

Entrepreneurs, particularly in the hotel and hospitality industry, also developed close business relationship with area colleges and universities so as to augment their labor force with professionally trained college students. For example, Diaspora African hotel owners in the Cape Coast vicinity often provide internship opportunities for students enrolled in the University of Cape Coast hospitality and tourism program. It was also common for entrepreneurs to bring highly skilled technical workers from other countries as part of their support or training staffs. Entrepreneurs in the tourism industry mentioned that fluency in English or other foreign languages, such as French or German, are also highly desirable skills. In Boyd’s company she has a Ghanaian employee that speaks French fluently. According to Boyd, the woman was born in Paris and lived a considerable amount of time in Paris before moving to Ghana. Boyd also hired a Nigerian woman that lived in the US for several years. She has also hired a Black American staff member. Given that most of the company’s clientele are from the US and Ghana, Boyd believes that having a multi-lingual staff that is familiar with the cultural nuances of her
clients is a considerable advantage for her company. Her staff has a better understanding of their clients’ expectations for customer service. They are also better equipped in anticipating the types of concerns that the clients may have any questions that may need answered.

**Gender Issues**

Historically, women entrepreneurs have had to struggle to find ways to be effective in the US. Today there are laws that help protect women from gender discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace. In Ghana, a country where female authority and credibility in the workplace are not considered the norm, my female informants unanimously viewed gender issues as an obstacle in managing and establishing business relationships. Participants believed that sexism operates differently in the Ghana business environment than in it does in the US. As one of my informants explained, “In the US women are typically perceived as physically and emotionally weak. Women are not perceived as being weak in Ghana; rather they are viewed as inconsequential and not intelligent”.

I asked my female participants, what these challenges are. How have they sought to overcome these obstacles? I also asked if they have implemented policies in their workplace to handle these issues effectively and fairly. Answers to these questions varied from instituting a no-tolerance policy in the workplace and firing any employees that failed to live up to the policy, having informal sexual harassment discussions (especially with female employees) with regards to sexual harassment, to having male employees serve as a proxy in meetings and negotiations. Janet Butler had this to say about her experience in Ghana:

Since I started my telecommunications company I have made the effort to reach out and hire women. My marketing group consists of very young attractive ladies. From time to time, they do have problems with clients. They get a lot of “just call me after five pm”, kind of thing from male clients. But you know we fix that very easily. I say to my female employees, “Call “Romeo” and tell them that your boss wants to meet with him and talk about the business”. That nips it in the bud pretty easily, because they are not going to go there with me. In this society the hierarchy goes age, marriage, children, education, and
position. If you throw the foreign thing in there, I feel confident that I can walk in with my gray hair and talk to “Romeo”. I know he will not mess with me!

Furthermore, female participants were surprised to confront gender issues with their Ghanaian female counterparts. One participant maintained that they tended to have the most difficulty in dealing with Ghanaian women. She recalls an incident with a female manager of another company that refuses to talk to her directly. The woman insists on talking to one of her chairmen instead of speaking directly with her. When I asked her why she thought the woman reacted this way? My informant says, “I think for her somehow talking to another woman belittles her and undermines her position at her workplace.” My female informants believed the reason underlying some of this resentment is that Ghanaian women believe that Diaspora African women benefit from being a foreigner. Diaspora African women by and large partially agreed with this assessment of them. They did concede, however, that they had an easier time getting where they are at because of the opportunities afforded to women in the US. But as one Diaspora African woman, a CEO of a company elucidates, “I am highly educated. I have money, own beach property, drive a nice car, and send my kids to the best private schools in the country. In this regard, I’m treated the same as any well-to-do Ghanaian woman, but I don’t deal with the same kind of sexism as my house girl.” Due to the fact that the Diaspora African women taking part in this study are from the upper and middle classes, how they experience sexism was tied to their social economic class.

Marketing

Marketing is the single biggest factor that determines the success or failure of any business. I asked the participants about the best marketing strategy to use in Ghana. The overwhelming majority agreed that it is operating through word of mouth and good customer service. Generally, people do business with people in whom they have confidence. Because
most word of mouth recommendations are generally perceived as incentive-free, consumers feel that they can trust the source providing the information. One way that Diaspora Africans market their products and services through word of mouth is by becoming highly visible and active within the community. This includes joining various social organizations and business associations or offering services pro bono in order to boast their company’s philanthropic credibility.

Because of the limited number of media outlets in Ghana to make the public aware of business activities, many entrepreneurs are turning to the Internet as a marketing tool. There are several advantages to Internet advertising. Advertising in a newspaper, on the radio, or on television can be expensive. An ad in an Internet directory is generally free, and entrepreneurs can include links directing customers to their websites for more information. Many of the participants have built websites specifically for their businesses. However, it was not uncommon for entrepreneurs to advertise on Ghana’s US embassy website and other online business forums, and to use other radio, television, and media outlets. Another benefit of Internet marketing is that one can provide customers with a wealth of information. People routinely search for goods and services with their computers in lieu of the yellow pages. This is especially important for entrepreneurs in the hospitality or tourism industry because most of their customers live abroad. In searching for a hotel, they may not want to make expensive international phone calls to have their questions answered.

Hotel owner Rabbi Kohain says he does most of his marketing through word of mouth, but he also places advertisements on his website. Rabbi Kohain has plans to build an expansion (a new guest house) to his hotel and is making preparations for a massive marketing campaign that will take place over the entire year. He says, “I’d like to say our success has been the result
of good service and customer satisfaction. But with this new expansion underway I place advertisements in the national and international newspapers, radio, and magazines”.

Joel Bates named his hotel Silicon Hotel after Silicon Valley in California; like Rabbi Kohain, Bates also advertises through word of mouth and the Internet. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology University (KNUST) is located directly across the street from the Silicon Hotel. Despite the fact that KNUST also has a hotel on the premise Bates says that there is not a lot of competition between the two hotels. In fact Bates has worked in collaboration with university on a number of occasions. He explains that because his hotel has nicer facilities when the university wants to put on something elaborate, they will have an affair at his hotel. In many ways Bates marketing activities are tied into KNUST system even though the Silicon Hotel is a completely separate entity. Bates parlayed his local affiliation networks with individual at the KNUST to attract clients.

**Conclusion**

Diaspora Africans face many challenges when it comes to establishing and maintaining a business in Ghana. The most common challenges are overcoming cultural differences, communication issues, problems associated with local banking and lending institutions, establishing trust with employees and clients, acquiring land, gender issues, and developing a good marketing strategy. (Chart 2-3. *Establishing Business and Overcoming Obstacles*, is based on the themes discussed in the previous section.) The sustainability of kinship, local affiliation, transnational and religious networks embody past success at collaboration and serve as cultural templates for future collaboration for Black Americans interested in establishing a business in Ghana. Furthermore, Diaspora Africans success in adapting to Ghanaian culture plays a role in changing the nature of urban business practices in Ghana.
Indeed, many of the networks summarized throughout this chapter reflect the economic conditions, cultural values, social relationships and political linkages that enhance the interdependence of Ghanaian and Black American communities. In the remaining chapters I provide an in-depth analysis on the formation of business networks of Diaspora African entrepreneurs.

Table 2-1. The Six Social Structures of Social Capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 Social Structures</th>
<th>Network Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mutually acknowledged Obligations and expectations</td>
<td>Kinship and Religious Networks: These relationships come with additional social obligations to the extended family or religious group. Familial and religious ties open up employment and business opportunities for many Diaspora Africans living in Ghana. Additional benefits including assistance in child-rearing, acquiring land, and acculturation into Ghanaian society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Information potential</td>
<td>Kinship, Religious, Local Affiliation, and Transnational Networks: All these networks have information potential. This includes informal relationships with friends and family as well as formal relationships with local banks and lending institutions, government agencies and non-profit organizations and other cultural, ethnic, religious, and transnational organizations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Appropriable social organization</td>
<td>Local Affiliation Networks: Appropriable social organization, like the African American Association of Ghana, helps new Diaspora Africans to adapt to Ghanaian society. Entrepreneurs often use their affiliations to local organizations to meet others with similar interests. Ultimately some of these networks develop into other business partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Norms and sanctions</td>
<td>Religious Networks: The norms and sanctions of the African Hebrew Israelite (AHI) networks mandate that the profits generated from their communally run businesses are re-distributed to members in the AHI community. Profits are also used to support the groups’ numerous missions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Authority relations</td>
<td>Local Affiliation, Kinship, Religious, and Transnational Networks: As cultural brokers Diaspora African entrepreneurs can become arbiters of authority relations between local affiliation and transnational entities. In some cases these rights of control and authority relationships are used to arbitrate vertically integrated business processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Intentional organizations</td>
<td>Transnational Networks: Most transnational networks are formed intentionally. These networks provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge, techniques, crafts and artisanal methods between transnational partners to facilitate new product development or diversification. Consumers benefit from improved services, while employees and investors benefit financially and professionally from the establishment of these business enterprises.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from James Coleman (2008)
## Table 2-2. Social capital in Ghana: Advantage and disadvantages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repatriates Characteristics</th>
<th>Network types</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transients</td>
<td>Local affiliation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have more freedom to explore joint business ventures, including incorporating new approaches to the production, distribution and marketing of commodities and services.</td>
<td>Difficulty establishing trust with locals. Harder time acquiring land and adjusting to local customs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora Africans</td>
<td>Local affiliation Transnational</td>
<td>Have easier access to certain business resources, e.g. acquiring information, land, and labor in Ghana. The combined networks of both the repatriate and their Ghanaian spouses increase their opportunity to expand business operations outside Ghana.</td>
<td>Kinship networks are largely informal. Much of the relationship is built on issues of trust and kinship solidarity. Diaspora Africans can be burdened with kinship obligations. Likewise, if trust or the kinship bond is severed, it can have an adverse affect on the business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora Africans with Ghanaian spouses</td>
<td>Kinship Local affiliation Transnational</td>
<td>All businesses are communally owned by the AHI. Businesses are already equipped with an established and renewable labor force.</td>
<td>Individuality is not accepted; business must be approved by high ranking AHI officials. Inherent risk of being stigmatized for religious beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returnees</td>
<td>Local affiliation</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaspora African Religious groups</td>
<td>Religious Kinship Local affiliation Transnational</td>
<td>These networks function primarily as informational networks, e.g., marketing, learning about jobs and business opportunities in Ghana. They also consist of a broad range of constituencies from friends and acquaintances to professional and business organizations to banking and lending institutions.</td>
<td>These networks encourage reciprocity and mutual aid among family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Networks</td>
<td></td>
<td>Networks are based on the affiliation to a specific religious group. They also function as networks of reciprocity and mutual aid.</td>
<td>Networks provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge, techniques, crafts and artisanal methods between transnational development partners to facilitate new product development/diversification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational Networks</td>
<td></td>
<td>These networks utilize information and communication technologies as a data resource to facilitate transnational exchange. Networks provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge, techniques, crafts and artisanal methods between transnational development partners to facilitate new product development/diversification.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Michelle Edwards (2007)
Table 2-3. Overcoming business challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Problems</th>
<th>Adjustments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Differences</td>
<td>Adapting a US business model in Ghana</td>
<td>Compromising the US work ethic paradigms. This includes granting days off for funerals and hometown celebrations and contributing time and fiscal resources beyond salary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Issues</td>
<td>Language barriers</td>
<td>Communicating expectations for employees. Explaining the consequences of not adhering to employee expectations. Hiring an intermediary to translate business directives to the employee in his or her native language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking and Lending Institutions</td>
<td>Slower banking system. Delays in receiving loans, getting loans approvals, etc.</td>
<td>More personalize relationship with lending institution. Using personal savings to develop business. Creating a non-profit. Most entrepreneurs utilize US banks for specific business operations (online reservations, credit cards transactions, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Many Ghanaians see African Americans as untrustworthy and vice versa.</td>
<td>Offering services pro bono.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>Difficulty obtaining land ownership titles.</td>
<td>Three solutions: rent land, receive land gifts from a chief, or acquire access to property through kinship networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>Employee retention and getting employees with the necessary skills to do the job.</td>
<td>Providing written contracts for employees. Importing outside labor force to train employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender Issues (for women)</td>
<td>Women are not taken as seriously, especially young and single women as their male counterparts.</td>
<td>Becoming more assertive. This includes being a role model for female employees and standing up for them as needed. Training staff on sex discrimination policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing/Advertisement</td>
<td>Limited number of media outlets to make the public aware of business activities.</td>
<td>Locally advertise through word of mouth and providing good customer service. Advertising to an international market through websites.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Questionnaire Survey.
I went to college for business management and marketing, but I’m an entrepreneur from the heart. I’m a salesman. – Andre Jewell, an entrepreneur and General Manager of the Jewell Spice Division.

Figure 3-1. Inside the spice manufacturing plant operated by the African American Trading Company Incorporated, Jewell Spice Division. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.

**African American Trading Company, Jewell Spice Division**

The case study presented in this chapter specifically focuses on the business activities of Andre Jewell, the co-owner of the African American Trading Company and manager of its Jewell Spice Division. Ronald B. Jewell founded the African American Trading Company
Incorporated (AATCI) in 1990. The Jewell Spice Company is located in one of the Ghana Trade Zones (GTZ) in Tema, Ghana. Marketing itself as an importer of Ghanaian spices and agricultural produce, the company’s narrative explains, that “agribusiness is the largest industry in this fertile, tropical nation accounting for more than 50% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 60% of the employment (Jewell Spice Company 2007)”! During a tour of the company’s spice manufacturing plant’s facilities, Andre Jewell explains the ambitious goals of the AATIC, as a company focused upon agricultural business trade between Ghana and the United States. AATIC is working closely with the State of Virginia to establish a new distribution center in Surry County, Virginia, as the hub for all import/export services to and from Ghana and the United States. Paradoxically, as the company’s name suggests, the AATIC is an extension of trans-Atlantic trade relationships between the older Diaspora populations and Africa.

This chapter delves into the government’s role in enticing foreign entrepreneurs’ to invest in the country’s economic development. More specifically, I look into how Diaspora Africans transnational entrepreneurs, like Andre Jewell, hope to benefit from Ghana’s trade and investment policies that regulate importing, exporting, and other manufacturing activities in the country. In this exemplar I examine Andre Jewell’s role as cultural broker between Ghanaian farmers and suppliers, non-profit organizations, American consumers, and multinational corporations.

**Doing Business Here and Exporting There**

In the past, Diaspora Africans have occupied a unique position in Ghana’s vision of economic development. Building on the concepts introduced in Chapter Two, I investigate how transnational entrepreneurs are structuring their business in regards to acquiring human labor and the tools, equipment, buildings and technologies used in industrial production. Focusing on the agricultural sector, I reveal how Ghana is becoming a critical site of Diaspora African vertically
integrated firm processes. Lastly, while a Pan-African agenda envisions a different form of post-colonial development for Africa; at times this vision inadvertently supports an alternative form of Black American neo-imperialism. This chapter points to the complexity of this issue by exploring the connection that Diaspora African business have with multinational corporations. Calling attention to the business activities of Diaspora Africans, I argue that they are formulating an alternative approach to Ghana’s development. In particular, I expose their role as cultural brokers between domestic entrepreneurs and multinational corporations. Further explanation is provided to understand how Diaspora African entrepreneurs attempt to reconcile these opposing paradigms, e.g. Pan-African self-determination vis-à-vis neo-colonialism.

Globalization, Ghana’s Trade and Investment Programs

Globalization, generally associated with developments in information technology and transportation that facilitate the movement of capital, people, and ideas from around the world at a faster rate, is often broken down into three distinct eras. The first era of globalization is associated with the gold standard, imperialism, and laissez-faire policies in the 19th century, and grew with industrialization (Stone et al. 2000: 2). It was during this time period that Ghana’s state owned operations, originally established by the colonial administrators to provide socio-economic services (e.g. public utilities, such as water electricity, postal services) to urban areas, were created (Appiah-Kubi 2001). The first era ended with the fall of the gold standard and the Great Depression in the 1930s. Industrialization was seen as key to progress for underdeveloped countries in the 1950s (Rostow 1960); hence under the Nkrumah administration the number of state-owned enterprise increased rapidly. By the 1960’s the government had established a range of stated-owned commercial enterprises ranging from banking to manufacturing operations, air transport, publishing, pharmaceuticals and mining (Asante 1987 and Anin 1991).
The second era of globalization is associated with the attack on Keynesian programs in the 1970s and 1980, which favored the direct intervention of the government in the domestic economy. “During the 1970s the view - that “neo-colonialism” equals underdevelopment – emerged as the new orthodoxy among Africanists, replacing the earlier 1960s academic dogma of easy growth and development through the diffusion of Western capital and technology (Price 1994:164).” African governments embraced structural adjustment policies promoted by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which reduced the role of the state in economic activities and encouraged the sale of public enterprises.

Privatization in developing countries emerged as a policy issue amidst the debt crises and worsening fiscal budget performances of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Since then privatization has been promoted in most countries as part of economic reform strategies, and as a condition for assistance from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Appiah-Kubi 2001: 197).

The third era of globalization is also associated with neoliberal polices and political finance organization, e.g. the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and International Monetary Fund (IMF), that primarily regulate international trade (Stone et. al. 2000: 2-3). The GATT and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) were enacted to remove restrictions of free trade, reduced the costs associated with trade, and to ratify and/or reduce tariffs and barriers to trade (Nash 1989; McMichael 1998; and Smart and Smart 2003).

According to the World Bank and other western financial institutions, by the 1990’s Ghana’s economy had become much more stable, and production was better off than it had been a decade earlier. Exports were up, government deficits had been reduced, and inflation was down (La Verle 1994). Despite these improvements Ghana remains heavily dependent on international financial aid and technical assistance. For instance, in 2002 the government accepted debt relief
under the Heavily Indebted Poor Country Program and in 2006, the country received reprieve from the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative.

There are several factors that have contributed to Ghana’s economic problems. Robert Price (1994) believes that a number of them can be attributed to external factors:

More specifically, the international capitalist system and its constituent institutions (multinational corporations, World Bank, IMF, and the like), from which African countries have been unable and unwilling to extricate themselves, in symbiotic relationship with the ruling group within African states (usually conceptualized as the petty or bureaucratic bourgeoisie) is seen as ultimately responsible for the economic disaster that has befallen countries such as Ghana (1994:164).

Moreover, there is a growing concern among development planners who warn that unless the entire African continent diversifies the range of products it produces and exports, it will be further marginalized in the global economy (Naylor, 2000). Traditionally, Ghana’s industries have faltered because its economy has remained dependent on a narrow range of primary products (Price 1984 and Mikell 1989).

In an effort both to build its private sector and to diversify its export products, the government formed the Ghana Investment Promotion Center (GIPC). The GIPC, a government agency re-established under the 1994 GIPC Act, encourages and promotes investment in Ghana’s economy and coordinates and monitors all investment activities under Act 478.24 According to the GIPC website (2007), “in order to make Ghana a middle-income country by 2020, the GIPC adapted the Ghana Trade and Investment Gateway Program (GHATIG) in 1998. The World Bank gave 50 million US dollars in support of the program (GIPC 2007).
2020, the country will need to diversify the economy away from reliance on gold and cocoa, which together account for over 70% of export earnings.”

The focus on commodities other than gold and cocoa represents a much needed shift in trade policies. Case in point, since World War II, there has been a steady decline in the prices of gold and cocoa relative to the prices of manufactured goods. According to an Oxfam Country Profile Report for Ghana, without the capacity to export manufactured goods, Ghana has been fighting a losing battle to get adequate prices for its gold and cocoa (Naylor, 2000). Through the establishment of the Ghana free trade zones (GTZ), Ghana is attempting to build up an industrial base and seeks to encourage foreign expertise to use Ghana as an access point for land-locked countries to the north. The Ghana Free Zones Program is a government sponsored program that is private sector driven. The aim of the program is to promote the processing and manufacturing of goods in Ghana for export to West Africa and outside the continent. The GTZs are located in Tema, Ghana. The city is the primary industrial center in Ghana and home to the country’s largest port. The majority of the country’s industries, which include aluminum smelters, oil refineries, cocoa processing plants, and cement plants, are headquartered in Tema.

---

25 The internationally accepted definition of a middle-income country is highly elastic, ranging from the lower limits of an average income of $750 per capita per annum (as measured by the prevailing methods of calculation) to as much as $3,000 per head per annum. In the current 2005 practice of the World Bank, countries are categorized into two classes: considered wealthy enough and therefore have to borrow on the quasi-commercial terms of the Bank itself, and lower income countries that are permitted to borrow on the concessionary terms of the Bank’s International Development Association (IDA), soft-window, branch. Leaving aside certain technical overlaps, the World Bank’s cut-off line between poorer –IDA and middle income – International Bank for Reconstruction and Development borrowers currently translates into countries with per capita national income above $2,000 per annum and those with less. In other words, the World Bank continues to support many countries in the lower segments of middle-income status with concessionary development loans even though they have passed the conventional threshold of middle-income status. On this scale, Ghana will be already on the fringes of stable middle-income status when it moves to the level of $1,000 per capita per annum, and would be comfortably installed among the majority of progressive developing countries where the per capita income has risen above $1,500 per annum (International Monetary Fund Country Report 2006: v).
Increasingly, there are a growing number of Diaspora Africans who hope to benefit from Ghana’s trade and investment programs. Already, a small number of them have businesses that fall under many of these trade and investment programs. Since most of these businesses were created within the past few years, the long-term effects of these polices on Diaspora African business have yet to be determined. For now, the majority of Diaspora Africans who have businesses in the GTZs indicated that they have yet to see any real advantages of the GTZs. Much of their problem, with the policies is associated with the bureaucracy surrounding exporting and importing processing procedures. This is especially true in terms of the amount of time spent getting things accomplished. Diaspora Africans believe that the success of their
business depends heavily on the establishment of social relationships and ties to the Ghanaian community more so than upon these trade policies programs. It is in this regard the ethnography of localized Diaspora African business activities in Ghana can bring forth new insights into larger scale global process or what Richard Falk (1999) calls the “globalization from above”.

Globalization of Industry

Globalization from above represents: the globalization of production, markets and finance; the global restructuring of corporations and work; the development of new technologies like the Internet; a radically changed role for the state; the dominance of neoliberal ideology; large-scale tourism and poverty-induced immigration; worldwide media domination by the culture of corporate globalism; and a neo-imperialism that has concentrated control of poor countries in the hands of First World investors (Falk 1999). In so much as free-trade and the globalization of industry have increased manufacturing productivity in developing countries, they have also facilitated an increase of economic practices like outsourcing by multinational corporations (Udofia 1984, Blim 1992, and Boafo-Arthur 2003). The global restructuring of capital has also precipitated a transnational division of labor that has resulted in the concentration of low wage industries in developing countries, like Ghana, and highly skilled technological jobs in industrialized nations, like the US (Castells 1986; Harvey 1989; and Amin 1990).

Multinational corporations have an advantage over local business in the host African country even though that “domestic firms may possess the special skills, special contacts, and special methods of exploiting local market imperfections that foreign investors need to become successfully established” (Appiah-Kubi 2001: 363). Generally speaking a multinational corporation is a corporation that invests in other countries for a variety of reasons, e.g., to have access to a foreign market, to secure foreign sources of supply, or to have the benefit of lower-cost production or lower taxes (Gilpin 1975: 9). The headquarters of the corporation is located
in the capitalist metropolitan center staffed by managers and directors who are the indigenes of the multinational corporation’s parent country (Udofia 1984: 356). In discussing the strategies that multinational corporations use to infiltrate African markets Kojo Appiah-Kubi explains:

Foreigners will have a strong inducement to penetrate the host country by means of some kind of merger with a domestic enterprise (Franco 1971). However, this may be a transitory stage for many multinational corporations. Once the parent corporation expands the horizon for the subsidiary’s operations beyond sales in the domestic market, its primary concern focuses on how to integrate the subsidiary most effectively into its worldwide operations (Appiah-Kubi 2001: 363).

It is due to their knowledge of both US (foreign) and Ghanaian (domestic) systems that Diaspora Africans have a distinct advantage over their Ghanaian competitors because they have the ability to use their social capital and assume the role of cultural broker. This social capital gives them an added advantage in acquiring resources and creating transnational ties from Ghana to the US to expand business opportunities. This is especially important for Diaspora African business where export is the primarily objective of many of these businesses.

**Local Affiliation Networks, Jewell Spice Company**

Andre Jewell, age thirty-seven, was born in Washington DC and grew up in Northern Virginia. He has been living in Ghana the past twelve years. Jewell’s entrepreneurial origins began as a young college student selling yams locally in New York City. Fast-forward several years, when his father, Ronald Jewell, who has been visiting Ghana for the past 34 years, invites him to come to Ghana for a joint business venture. Initially, his father wanted to buy a chocolate factory and start a candy bar business. After deciding that the factory was too cumbersome to purchase, they decided to invest their monies elsewhere. Since cocoa was the dominate agro-industry in Ghana, the father-and-son team decided to enter the spice industry – an industry that was less developed and having fewer competitors. Jewell remarks that when he and his father arrived in Ghana they noticed that people were doing a lot of farming. While investigating the
practicality for operating a spice business, they learned that farmers were not making a lot of money doing produce oriented farming. In addition to making large profit, Jewells says, “We saw the business as a way to help out Ghanaian farmers by purchasing their harvest on a regular basis. Our company could process the raw materials at factory and we would sell the spices all over the world.” In this regard Jewell and he father conceived their business as way to help out local farmers, while turning a profit.

Figure 3-3. At age 37 Andre Jewell, is the owner of the Jewell Spice Company. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.

Banks

It took a considerable amount of time to get the business up and running. With the ultimate goal of exporting in mind, the problem for Jewell was that there were not any large scale spice manufacturing plants available in the country. Hence, the Jewell Spice Company was initially financed through the Jewell family’s personal savings. But as the need for the company
to expand grew, Andre had to look for additional financial support and decided to apply for a small business loan. In Chapter Two, I discuss the difficulty that foreigners have in establishing trust with local business owners, partners, and clients. Indeed many entrepreneurs initially lack the necessary networks and referral sources needed to establish a trustworthy relationship. Not surprisingly in order to expand his business Jewell had to develop a good personal relationship with the local bankers. In effort to get to know his bankers, Jewell says he adapted the mind-set of his grandfather, who he describes as a true Virginia businessman. He elaborates: “a Virginia businessman goes out into the field all day. Then at night he goes to the Governor’s house and compliments him on his wine and food. Because social relationships are so important, you also have to establish a solid relationship with your bankers”. Due to the instability in the economy, Jewell maintains that the bankers have to know you on a personal level before they will even consider approving a loan. It is because of this that his relationship with his bankers in the US differs from those that are in Ghana. US banks simply run a credit check to determine if your company poses any financial risk. This will determine whether or not they approve the loan.

**Friends, Jewell’s Rat Pack**

Andre Jewell moved to Ghana at age twenty-five. At the time his friends and associates consisted of what he affectionately referred to as the “rat pack” of Ghana. Jewell maintains, “this included all kinds of rich Ghanaians. Since many of them were educated in the US, we all shared similar interests, and gravitated to each other”. Ultimately, these earlier friendships would develop into business partnerships. For example, Jewell tells me that he wants to purchase a 3800 acre farm in the eastern region. A trusted friend who is from the area is helping him secure the land for the farm. Currently, Jewell relies on his personal relationships with farmers dispersed throughout Ghana to supply the raw materials needed for spice production. If Jewell is successful in obtaining his farm, the company will have complete ownership and
control of its supply chains; making the firm vertically integrated. Currently his most valued employees are his friends. However, many of his newer employees are friends of friends. To further complicate matters, since the company’s operations are based in the harvest season the number of employees at the manufacturing plant varies from a permanent staff of eleven to thirty-two, employees when operating at full capacity.

**Employees**

Similar to the sentiments of other Diaspora African entrepreneurs, Jewell has also had a hard time maintain a reliable labor force. Unfortunately, the company has experienced a fairly high employee turn-over rate, especially in the early phases of its development. Part of this stems from cultural differences related to employer/employee expectations (e.g., coming to work on time and spending a large amount of time training employees to use new equipment). Another part of this can be attributed to the fact that his business operates on a seasonal basis, making it difficult to recruit the same employees on a continuous basis. During the first year of operation agricultural commodities were at a price level where the supply exceeded the demand. As a result the company was forced to lay off workers. Jewells says: “our profits fluctuated. We made $500,000. Then things began to slow down”.

Despite the issues that plagued his first year of business Jewell says he is lucky to have a good permanent staff. Eventually things got better and by the end of the first year the company was able to pay top dollar for its employees. Another strategy Jewell uses to increase employee retention rates is to provide employees with health insurance. In fact, while I was visiting with Jewell, he noticed that one of his employees was not looking well. He sent the man home and told him he would find someone to cover for him. Jewell maintains that when situations like this occur, he usually follows up with his employees with a phone call to make sure that they are feeling better. Jewell works hard to develop a family-type culture inside his company. In a few
instances, when an employee has been really sick, Jewell or another employee will get the person’s groceries or medicines, and run errands for the person as needed. It is because of situations like this that Jewells says he runs his business like a family corporation, which is why he is willing to pay top dollar for his employees. In explaining his family corporations Jewell says:

Once the business takes off, I might look to hire professionals from the outside. But for now everything is managed from the inside up, just like a corporation. A proper sustainable corporation always hires from the inside. Since we are a family corporation, we don’t bring in people from the outside that haven’t been around to see the company grow.

Jewell’s distinction of the family corporation versus the family business is central to the vertically integrated firm concept. Business is an activity performed for profit, but as I noted earlier Jewell and his father conceived their business as a way to make a profit and help out local farmers by providing them an outlet to sell their products. Corporations are owned by their stockholders (shareholders) who share in profits and losses generated through the firm’s operations. They exist as virtual or fictitious persons, granting limited protection to the actual people involved in the business of the corporation. In treating his employees like shareholders Jewell’s family corporation concept has stimulated an atmosphere of familial obligations within the company. As a result the company’s employees have a personal stake in seeing the company succeed. Knowing that he wanted to create this family-corporation style business it took Jewell a while to find his permanent employees. He explains, “Once I get the product here, I feel very confident about meeting my needs, because I know my most trusted employees are capable of doing the job”.

Moreover, because the company hires from the inside up there are additional incentives for employees to work harder in order to move up within the company, obtain higher pay, and receive stock options. These considerations working in tandem with poor economic and
employment conditions that persist in Ghana further help motivate Jewell’s employees. This is especially true for the Jewell Spice Company’s college educated employees that discover after they have graduated from college that their employment prospects are limited. Six of his employees are college education. A few of these individuals, also known as “the rat pack,” he met when he first came to Ghana. Still keeping in touch with these individual Jewell eventually offered some of them jobs. Jewell explains: “faced with the limited job opportunities in the cities many of them decided to go back to their villages. Armed with the knowledge that they acquired from school they were interested in figuring out a way to use it in the community”. As a result, when told them that he was building his manufacturing plant they expressed an interest in his business and asked if they could help out. Jewell asked them to talk to the farmers from their communities about the company on his behalf. Jewell hired his friends as suppliers, over time they helped to establish networks between the spice company and the farmers.

**Farmers**

Jewell maintains that dealing with suppliers is one thing; however dealing with farmers is an altogether different matter. His “rat pack” associations, especially with Ghanaians that are from the regions that the company acquires most of their raw materials for spice processing, have been transformed into local affiliation networks. Jewell’s cultivation of local affiliation networks enables him to by-pass some of the difficulties faced by Diaspora African entrepreneurs. This includes overcoming cultural differences, language barriers and trust issues that foreign entrepreneurs encounter in the early stages of business development. Jewell’s contacts provide an entry into agro-industry. However, he is quick to point out that not all of the farmers were enthusiastic about doing business with the company. Despite the fact that his Ghanaian suppliers initially served as the intermediary between Jewell and the farmers, it did not completely eliminate other business challenges. Since many of the farmers were steadily losing
money over the years they were justifiably suspicious of the agricultural export industry and Jewell’s intentions. He thinks it is very important for the farmers to visit the factory so they understand that they have an outlet for their product. He does this knowing that a lot of them are selling to him because they don’t have anyone else to buy their products. Jewell says that, “All the farmers that have seen the processing plant have been so happy. One of the first things they’ve said is we needed this plant ten years ago”.

Jewell explains that he hesitated to bring some farmers to the factory. “I fear most of them will think, they can charge me even more money because I am a big company, which has actually happened”. It is common place for farmers, even those that he repeatedly conducted business with, to renege on verbal agreement right in the middle of a transaction. It was because of these bad experiences that Jewell decided to oversee the negotiation processes from start to finish. Jewell laments the fact that he had to personally weed out the good farmers from the bad ones. Diaspora Africans, like Jewell, not only have to contend with gaining trust from Ghanaians, but they must earn trust as well.

Once a negotiated deal has been settled between Jewell and the farmers, he has to transport the products from the rural areas to the GTZs. Again trust becomes a very important component at this stage, especially if the circumstance arises that Jewell cannot personally pick up the products. The Jewell Spice Division has three refrigerated trucks. His permanent employees transport the products to the processing plant as needed.

**Customs Agents**

With his entire regional network in place, Jewell has also been fortunate enough to befriend several clearing agents that help to expedite the exporting process. The company has four main clearing agents located in the GTZs. Jewell considers two of the four agents close friends. He says he has purposely limited the number of customs agents with whom he works.
When it comes to trust, Jewell says, that “there is a learning curve for foreigners”. For example, it is a well-known fact among Diaspora Africans and Ghanaians that in order to get things done in Ghana one may be asked to pay extra money to an individual who also is being paid to provide a service.

Jewell’s cautious attitude makes sense if you take into account a report by the global civil society agency Transparency International Organization. The Transparency International’s Global Corruption Barometer 2005 reveals that corruption is perceived to have an impact on the business environment in Ghana. In fact, respondents believe that corruption affects the business environment as much as it affects political life. Surveys reveal that the Customs, Excise and Prevent Service (CEPS), responsible for the collection of taxes levied on imports, exports and some locally manufactured goods, has a reputation of being one of the most corrupt public agencies in Ghana. The majority of households that have been in contact with CEPS pay unofficial payments to CEPS officials. Companies report that large bribes are paid to custom officials. Delay in customs procedures creates the opportunity for officials to request unofficial payments. Small companies have indicated that custom officials take advantage of complex procedures to demand unofficial payments. In general, firms consider the Customs, Excise and Prevent Service (CEPS) to be very dishonest. Jewell says it is a double-edge sword when it comes to establishing business relationship in Ghana. “You deal with a variety of people, and like any other place some people having more integrity than others.” He advises that entrepreneurs looking to get involved in any export business should take their time getting to know people. It is also important that foreigners study the culture of business before jumping into any working business partnership in Ghana.
Transnational Networks, Jewell Spice Company

Despite the institutional corruption that persists in Ghana, Jewell remains optimistic about future business prospects including the efforts being made to diversify the country’s export industries. Jewell, like many other Diaspora African entrepreneurs, has looked outside the country for additional support. He says, “That is the millennium challenge.” In terms of exports, the Jewell Spice Company deals primarily with companies/consumers in the US, Europe, China, and Japan. The company also falls under the African Growth Opportunity Act (AGOA), which offers tangible incentives for African countries to continue their efforts to open their economies and build free markets. Ultimately, Jewell would like to expand upon this opportunity “to talk with the powers that be, along with our basic team of suppliers, and some of the corporate connections I have abroad so we can organize pools of money for the farmers.”

Development Agencies

Currently the Jewell Spice Division has a network that consists of approximately 2,000 farmers that supplies the company with a number of agricultural products. It took Jewell a year and a half just to get those networks in place. Jewell believes that because many of the farmers do not understand the business side of the agricultural industry, they are in dire need of extra income. Since he buys from them in bulk, he is currently in talks with USAID’s Western HUB to create a finance project to make funds available to farmers. Eventually he would like to get the World Bank and Ghana AID involved in the project as well. Jewell is adamant that the company does not want the money for their business. They plan to use the money to supply contracts to the farmers. Jewell exclaims, “We got the marketing. We have the manufacturing

---

26 Ghana received a Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) grant in 2006, which aims to assist in transforming Ghana's agricultural export sector.
process, and the ability to deliver. Now we want to ensure that the farmers will get compensated on consistent and continual basis”.

Of course none of this can be made possible if the farmers’ foodstuff is not made available to the global marketplace. Andre Jewell gave me a tour of his manufacturing plant. As he proudly showed off his new facility he explained that he still has his old dryers (used for the dehydration process), “but everything else that is downstairs is state of the art”. In fact, the new facility has the capacity to produce seventy million pounds of spices a year. He plans to continue to keep building. In the near future, he would like to add at least two or three more dehydration plants. The dehydration plant will be used to refine cooking oil and other natural oils, like Shea butter. His hard work and good relationships with the local banks was only part of the process in getting his latest facility up and running. As the business grew Jewell began to search for financial assistance elsewhere.

Figure 3-4. Pictured above is the packaging room at the Jewell Spice plant. The area is also equipped with several freeze dryers, weights, and an assembly line conveyor belt. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.
The completion of the Jewell Spice manufacturing plant was made possible, through a half loan from the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID). Considering the number of development agencies working in Ghana, and throughout Africa for that matter, it is not surprising that African Americans have also secured working relationships with development agencies. Initially, Jewell saved the money and built his first processing plant in his garage. He sold his spices locally to all the restaurants and hotels in the area. According to Jewell he built his first spice processing plant out of necessity. He did so in order to prove to his bankers that the operation was feasible. Once the business was up and running and needed to expand its production, he needed to prove that the company could meet hygienic standards and produce quality food. In order to achieve the mass-scale production that Jewell envisioned, he acquired a half loan to build the current manufacturing plant from the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID).27

Professional Organizations

Jewell’s transnational networks are comprised of more than just his involvement with development agencies. The spice company is also a member of the American Spice Trade Association (ASTA), which is a trade association that represents the US spice industry. The

---

27 The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization made up of large oil producing nations, which include Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela, Qatar, Indonesia, Libya, Algeria, Nigeria, Ecuador, and Angola. Although OPEC is known for its contributions to energy and fuel efficiency projects, its international development fund provides resources for numerous projects outside of the scope of OPEC.

As of 2007, the OFID gave approximately 98 million US dollars of aid to Ghana; six million US dollars went towards the agricultural industry. In Making a Difference, The OPEC Fund and the Fight Against Poverty (McKechnie 2007), the contributors make note that “of the 2.4 billion people employed in agriculture in developing countries, about one billion get most of their income from producing commodities for export” (ibid: 5). In this regard, OFID has been closely associated with two multilateral institutions of great relevance in the developing world: International Fund for Agricultural Development and the Common Fund for Commodities (CFC). The CFC is an intergovernmental financial institution established within the framework of the United Nations. The CFC, based in Amsterdam, was set up in 1989 to work towards achieving stable conditions in commodity trade by addressing inequalities in supply and demand. The broad aim is to enhance the socio-economic development of commodity producers and aid their development as a whole (ibid: 5).
ASTA (2007) works to ensure that industries adhere to clean safe spice manufacturing standards; the association also determines public policy on behalf of the global industry. The association was founded in 1907 and represents the interests of approximately 175 members, including companies that grow, dehydrate, and process spices. In addition ASTA’s members consist of U.S.-based agents, brokers and importers, and companies based outside of the U.S. that grow spices and ship them to the U.S. and other companies associated with the U.S. spice industry. ASTA members manufacture and market the majority of spices sold in the U.S. at retail and grocery stores. As a member, Jewell worked with the Food and Drug Administration to pass the basic hygienic standards needed to import to the US. This was an extremely important step in setting up his business operation, since the only place you can buy Jewell Spices products is on the Internet. Having the backing of the US Food and Drug Administration gives his consumers a sense of security knowing that these products meet US food hygienic standards.

Figure 3-5. Andre Jewell shows off his state of the art American Spice Trade Association (ASTA) approved dehydration equipment. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.
Again Jewell’s ability to function successfully as cultural broker between Ghanaian farmers, both African American and global consumers, and international and transnational organizations like ASTA and OPEC has helped his business expand in innovative ways. Diaspora Africans utilize their social capital to create joint business ventures between the US and Ghana. The results of this collaboration incorporate new approaches to manufacturing standards, distribution processes and open up a larger market for Ghana’s domestic agricultural products. For example, one of the benefits of vertical integration (or quasi-integration) is the ability to tap into technologies used by vertically related businesses (Porter 1980). In some cases, it can provide close familiarity with technology in upstream or downstream businesses that is crucial to the success of the base business (ibid: 305). Through its partnership with ASTA, the Jewell Spice Division has been able to acquire the most advanced ASTA approved technology. Indeed once the company was able to gain access to these new technologies, it was then able to seek out other partnerships. Jewell’s company is currently negotiating with the US-based McCormick & Company Inc. The company is interested in carrying the entire line Jewell Spice products under their label.

**Multinational Corporations**

The McCormick & Company Inc, founded in 1889, is the world’s largest spice company. The company headquartered in Hunt Valley, Maryland, has several processing and packaging plants scattered throughout the US. The three largest plants are located in Atlanta, San Fernando, and Indianapolis. According to Jewell, instead of exporting his products directly to US consumers, his factory will ship directly to one of McCormick’s US-based labeling and packaging plants. Since it is possible to book a direct flight from Accra to Atlanta, it is a high probability that Jewell Spice Company will ship their spices directly to the packaging plant in Atlanta. McCormick’s subsidiary businesses can also be found in England, Canada, France,
Mexico, Australia, India, and Egypt. The Jewell Spice Company is the first company in Africa to secure a contract with the international spice distributor. Jewell says it took the company 7 years to pass their vital sanitary levels test. The company’s hard work eventually paid off. Last year McCormick gave the Jewell Spice Division the opportunity to be part of their mentoring program. Jewell says that in the mentoring program McCormick is going to teach the Jewell Spice Company everything there is to know about the spice business. While McCormick professionals are mentoring Jewell’s employees, they will also purchase products directly from his company.

Only time will tell the impact that this quasi-integration between Jewell Spice Division and McCormick will have on the spice industry in Ghana. For now, Andre Jewell has good
reasons to be optimistic about his business and local affiliation networks in Ghana and the transnational networks that connect him to broader markets outside the country. The company exports traditional foodstuffs like cayenne pepper, thyme, rosemary, onions, ginger, tomatoes, and black pepper (made from pepper corn). The processing plant also has the capacity to freeze dry and dehydrate sugar-loaf pineapple, cayenne pineapples, bananas, and mangos to ensure the freshness of the product upon arrival. The company’s website boasts that:

We offer zesty cayenne pepper spice in ground or whole pepper form. Approximately twelve peppers are in our two-ounce package of whole peppers. This reddish powder has a pronounced flavor and a sharp after “bite” that will awaken even the sleepiest of palettes. Our powdered red pepper could be your “secret” ingredient in your next, award-winning homemade barbecue sauce (Jewell Spice website: 2007).

The ability to export a finished product has given him an edge over local competitors, especially since much of the country’s agro-industry is devoted to exporting cocoa whereas agro-products, such as, bananas, mangos, peppers, and pineapples, are sold domestically. The company exports most of its products and its marketing campaign targets a global consumer base. Having the ability to export alleviates competition with other agro-business that sale similar products domestically. For example, the Jewell Spice division has a line of products that appeal to a variety of health conscientious consumers. The company sells 100% organically grown products and markets its products as healthy alternatives to chemically treated agricultural produce.

**Black American Consumers**

The company’s marketing campaign is that it targets the Black American consumer base. Black Americans are notorious for having some of the highest rates of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes in the US; therefore, Jewell has strategically targeted his company’s advertising campaign towards this community in an effort to promote healthy eating habits. Similarly, the name African American Trading Company, appeals to Pan-African ideas
of self-determination. Following under the rubrics of Black supporting Black-owned businesses, it is a concept of economic empowerment that involves buying from community based companies to help these businesses grow. These practices are meant to lead to more jobs for Blacks and keep wealth within the African American community. The company name not only fosters a sense of supporting Black-owned business, but by emphasizing Ghana as an agricultural site, it reinforces the Diaspora connections of Black Americans to “Africa”. It also reinforces African American philanthropic involvement in Africa because the business helps to provide job opportunities and training for Ghanaians. Jewell’s company benefits, because he is able to capitalize on his ties to the Black American community. He also benefits from his close relationship with his employees and farmers.

It is through the latter relationship that the Jewell Spice Division can sell its products at a slightly lower price than comparable retail sites offering organically grown products. According to Jewell, he is able to sell his products at a lower price because his company has virtually no competing spice exporters in Ghana. He says, that “commodity production for the most part has stopped in Ghana. The country imports everything”. For example, when Andre first started his business he only sold black pepper because there was no one in the country buying it locally. It was for this reason that he began exporting it to the US, China, and Europe. Arguably, Jewell’s farmers benefit from his transnational networks. As a cultural broker between the farmers and international consumers, Jewell explains that his company allows the Ghanaian farmers to concentrate their farming. “The farmer knows that I can sell their products to people in US, China, and Europe. My networks of farmers know that they can always sell to me because I have contracts with this person and that person”.

120
With the pending McCormick deal in place, I asked Jewell what is in store for him next. Ever the entrepreneur, he says he would like to expand his business and branch off into something else. He has his eyes set on the healthcare and herbal remedy business. Nowadays the company has begun harvesting medicinal plants, like grain of paradise, *voacanga africana*, and griffonia seeds. According to Jewell,

\[
\text{The health industry is big. Grain of paradise is an herb that the *Washington Post* describes as one of the best pain combinations, inflammation reducer. We’re the first facility in Ghana with the standards in place and the technology to process it. We also processed the *voacanga africana* root bark, close relative of *tabernanthe iboga*, last year for the first time. *Voacanaga africana* is effective in the treatment of withdrawal symptoms and craving in drug addicts. I sent samples of this plant to several drug companies and they loved it.}
\]

![Figure 3-7. Andre Jewell shows some samples of his product. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.](image)

The company is cultivating the griffonia seed which is used to make 5-HTP. 5-HTP is primarily used to treat depression and is also effective as a weight-loss aid. 5-HTP is sometimes used to treat mild pain, insomnia, Fibromyalgia, and chronic tension headache. 5-HTP has been
used to treat, insomnia, anxiety, suicide, migraines, PMS, obsessive/compulsive behavior, stress, obesity, and addiction. All of these conditions are symptoms of low levels of serotonin. Many of the new prescription drugs that have become available since the absence of L-Tryptophan (a nutritional supplement found in antidepressant medications) are designed to regulate brain serotonin levels (called Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors or SSRIs). Drugs such as Prozac, Paxil, Zoloft and Effexor work by selective enhancement of serotonin levels, and Dexfenfluramine (Redux) suppresses appetite by mimicking serotonin activity in the brain. If Jewell is successful in establishing vertically integrated business networks to pharmaceutical companies, the Jewell Spice Division may play a leading role in boasting Ghana’s agro-industry.

**Neo-Colonialism and the Vertically Integrate Firm and the Push and Pull of Globalization**

Most of the Jewell Spice Company’s manufacturing, processing, and labor activities take place in Ghana. Andre Jewell has a large network of local affiliation networks of farmers, suppliers, bankers, export agents and Ghana’s “rat pack.” Also, the company’s transnational networks link it to international development agencies (e.g., OPEC), US companies (e.g., McCormick) and US-based business organizations (e.g., ASTA). The latter networks function primarily as resources for external financing and as means to enhance mentoring and training partnerships with larger companies within the same industry. These networks, in their entirety, help make Ghana’s agricultural products available to a large global consumer base. If successful, this could energize others to invest in Ghana’s agro-industry.

In this third era of globalization, marginalized people are becoming especially angry at the motives of multinational corporations, and corporate-led globalization is being met with increasing protest and resistance (Escobar 1992). In this example the connection of imperialism, with economics clearly associates neo-colonialism, the political, cultural and territorial expansion of the Western authority with multinational corporations (Appiah-Kuba 2001).
Diaspora African entrepreneurs’ symbiotic relationships with multinational corporations and local institutions in Ghana have been utilized to help their businesses meet international manufacturing standards. But in many ways these transnational networks also help to perpetuate a vicious cycle of labor exploitation and economic dependency. One of the pitfalls of working with multinational corporations is that, by and large, local partners eventually become a hindrance (because their loyalty is to the profits and dividends of the domestic subsidiary, not to the profits and dividends of the multinational corporate system as a whole) to the parent company. The multi-corporations will buy out or force out independent stockholders (Appiah-Kubi 2001: 363).

Many scholars have also pointed out the impact that the Black American entrepreneurs have in marketing Afrocentric products to multinational corporations. For instance, Stoller points out that, “many Black-owned companies are forming joint-venture with majority-owned corporations to underwrite their production, marketing and distribution efforts (Wilkison, 1996: 72; also cited by Stoller 2002:73)”. His analysis addresses concerns over copyright infringements of material cultural forms; however, what this example brings up is another host of other copyright issues, especially as it relates to globalization of pharmaceuticals regulations – the most extensively regulated of all consumer products. Until recently, drug regulation was virtually synonymous with national sovereignty. Firms were required to conduct separate tests, submit separate applications, and meet distinctive criteria to enter each national market (Vogel 1998). This issue of copyright infringements is outside of the scope of this project; however, Jewell’s involvement with the pharmaceutical industry points to another area research for future research.
While this study acknowledges the fact that some of the business decisions of Diaspora African help to perpetuate the cycle of neo-colonialism; it also values the fact the Diaspora African entrepreneurs do not view the formation of their businesses in this regard. Case in point, if Andre Jewell continues to advocate on the behalf of his famers and employees within his family corporation management frameworks then he is endorsing an alternative discourse for Ghana’s economic development. In other words, despite the fact the Jewell is critical of some of the unfair business practices of the multinational corporations; he still wants to see globalization proceed in Ghana, albeit under different rules. As Arturo Escobar asserts, “to think about alternatives to development thus requires a theoretical-practical transformation of the notions of development, modernity and the economy (Escobar 1992: 22). Arguably the Pan-African agenda that Diaspora African entrepreneurs are crafting envisions a different form of post-colonial development for Africa. Since many of these investors have personal interests in the Ghanaian community, their symbiotic relationship with multinational corporations and local institutions in Ghana have been utilized to help their businesses meet international manufacturing standards. In considering this point of view, Diaspora Africans entrepreneurs also bring in outside (and local) knowledge workers and experts to conduct training programs. In diversifying and cultivating the skills sets of their employees Diaspora African entrepreneurs envision an African workforce that can compete on the international level.

In the Chapter Four, I specifically look at Diaspora African vertical integrated processes on both sides of the Atlantic. I focus on the transnational networks of the North Scale Education and Research Institute which connect the cities of Elmina, Tema, and Atlanta.
CHAPTER 4
TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS: IS IT JUST A BUSINESS OR IS IT PHILANTHROPY?

You know what Colin Powell said? He said, the only thing that’s standing in the way of one world government and the new world order is the farmer; because the farmer is the most independent person in the world. Everybody sits at the feet of the farmer. If I can only get that concept over to the young people in Africa, that their wealth lies in the land, not in record making, movie making, and computers! – Mama Kali, co-owner of the North Scale Institute.

Figure 4-1. North Scale Institute’s line of Harbinger herbal supplements. The company has farms scattered throughout Ghana. The company’s processing plant is headquartered in College Park, a suburb of Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.

North Scale Education and Research Institute

Previously, I explained how Diaspora African owned companies are forming joint-ventures with global corporations. In introducing the concept of the vertically integrated firm, I argued that in many ways these businesses contribute to processes associated with corporate neo-
colonialism in Ghana. Despite these potential downfalls, Chapter Three also exposes another trend, Diaspora African entrepreneurs are aware of the role that global corporations play in exploiting African land and labor. Thus, many remain pro-active in ensuring that their cooperation with global corporations does not have negative consequences in Ghana. This chapter contains a detailed account of the businesses activities of the North Scale Education and Research Institute (NSERI). I investigate how Diaspora African Kali Sichen-Andoh and her Ghanaian husband Dr. Andoh assume the role of cultural brokers with a vast network of kinship, local affiliation, and transnational business relationships. Specifically, I look at vertical integrated processes of NSERI in the cities of Elmina, Tema, and Atlanta; therefore, this chapter serves to illuminate many of the themes brought forth through the global cities literature and the discussion of Black American philanthropy.

Since Atlanta has earned a reputation as a city of Black political mobilization and social activities, this chapter looks into the philanthropic activities that accompany Diaspora African business organization in Ghana via Atlanta. This case study explains how Dr. Andoh and Mama Kali have combined their knowledge of African traditional medicine within a Western-based scientific paradigm of nutrition to devise a marketing strategy and health nutritional programs that target Black Americans. They use their knowledge of African traditional medicine as a form of philanthropic outreach to the Black American and African Diaspora community.

The North Scale Education and Research Institute (NSERI) is located in Atlanta. Founded in 1982, NSERI is an educational and research organization designed to help preserve and safeguard the plants and medical wisdom of Africa. Over the years, the company has developed a line of herbal products based on the research findings of Dr. A. Kweku Andoh. Together Andoh and his wife, Diaspora African, Kali Sichen-Andoh, are the proprietors of
NSERI. In the analysis that follows I discuss the kinship networks, local affiliation networks and transnational networks that characterize the NSERI business organizational structure.

**Kinship Networks, North Scale Education and Research Institute**

Dr. Andoh is a British educated botanist and a Fellow of the Linnaean Society of London. Today, he is one of the world’s foremost botanists specializing in African plants. Andoh, a descendant of a long line of botanists, herbalists and traditional healers was born and raised in Elmina, Ghana. In fact, his father, Dr. J.E. Andoh, helped to introduce thousands of rain forest species previously unknown to the field of Western botanical science. As a teenager Dr. Andoh worked at the Ghana Forestry Department. At age twenty-two he pioneered the development of the Botanic Gardens at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology at Kumasi. It was during this time that he gained respect from the local elders in the community. Dr Andoh was later selected by the British Parliament to receive advanced education and training at the Royal Botanical Kew Gardens. In the years that followed, he continued to conduct research and horticultural expansion projects in southern Africa. In the mid-1970s, he travelled to the US and married Kali Sichen-Andoh. There he continued to conduct private research projects and developed several plant-related businesses.

Kali Sichen-Andoh is a nutritionist and Program Coordinator at the NSERI. Sichen-Andoh is Black American, born in North Carolina in 1945. In 1977 she received a BA degree from California State University (CSU) in nutrition and studied extensively in traditional oriental medicine until 1982. As a student at CSU, she developed the first USDA approved nutrition program to address attention deficit disorder among young children. Sichen-Andoh has been living and/or traveling in Ghana and the US for the past twenty years. Mama Kali and her husband have also been developing landscaping and plant-related businesses since 1978.
I visited Mama Kali at one of their farms in Elmina. Over the past 18 years the business has undergone several changes to get to where it is today. The business originally started in San Francisco, California, where the couple began growing plants in their back yard. Every weekend they would sell plants from their yard. Because there was a major transportation line in front of their house, people were constantly walking by purchasing the beautiful and exotic plants they had for sale. It was right after Mama Kali’s husband wrote the book *The Science and Romance of Selected Herbs Used in Medicine and Religious Ceremonies* (1984) that people really developed an interest in their African plants. As Mama Kali explains, “nobody had ever read about these exotic African plants. They starting asking questions like, ‘what are they?’ Or ‘I would like some of these plants, how can I get them?’”. This happened about fifteen years ago, according to her this was when the couple became an informational source to the public about African medicinal plants. Initially Mama Kali began to travel back and forth between Ghana and the US with her husband to visit his family in Elmina, but eventually they began coming to the country for business purposes.

Sichen-Andoh, who is also known by locals in the Elmina area as Mama Kali, met her husband in San Francisco. The couple has been married over thirty years. They have two daughters and five grandchildren living in Georgia. Interestingly, it was their two daughters’ desire to live in Atlanta and to attend a historical Black college that influenced their decision to move to Georgia. College Park, an Atlanta suburb, would eventually become the location of the NSERI botanical gardens. Mama Kali recalls: “with our daughters off to college, we decided Georgia would be a good place to settle down. The land was more affordable, than it was in San Francisco, and we could be closer to our daughters”. After selling their business in San Francisco, the couple purchased five acres of land with multiple dwellings.
Over the years the couple has researched and written many publications relating to botany, ethno-botany, nutrition and health, women’s health, traditional religions and African belief systems. They have travelled extensively throughout Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the US. Mama Kali has accompanied her husband on many botanical expeditions in Ghana often working as his secretary and field assistant. This husband and wife duo has successfully amalgamated their educational and occupational backgrounds to optimize their business organization and enhance productivity. For example, since Mama Kali is trained in traditional Oriental medicines the Andohs’ also incorporate aspect of this traditional health paradigm in their business.

The couple, whose business operates on both sides of the Atlantic, decided that the one of them would manage in the US and the other in Ghana. Mama Kali chose to stay in Ghana. She prefers staying in Ghana because, “it is fulfilling our needs; to supply the raw materials for the herbs that we manufacture, produce and sell in the States under our Harbinger Herbal Nutrients line”. On the other hand, Dr. Andoh runs the business in Atlanta. He is responsible for selling and marketing their products to their US based clients. Since most of their business clientele resides in the US, I believe that Dr. Andoh, being Ghanaian, lends a sense of authenticity and credence in terms of marketing African products to a Black American consumer base. But, as Mama Kali points out, “You would think that he would be the one in Ghana and I would be over there [in the US]. But I was so tired of being in America, and I needed so much to do this kind of work in Africa that I begged to be able to come over here and live here on a more permanent basis.”

Peggy Levitt points out, “ordinary people, at the local level, are also cultural carriers and creators (2001: 55).” Mama Kail and Dr. Andoh believe that their business fulfills a social
purpose. Hence, the collaboration between Diaspora African Mama Kali and her Ghanaian husband, Dr. Andoh, has yielded some interesting results in terms of their philosophical approach to running their business. The most recent business collaboration for the Andohs is the NSERI. Based on Dr. Andoh’s research and Mama Kali’s background in nutrition and traditional oriental medicine, they have developed a line of herbal products called Harbinger Herbal Nutrients. The NSERI functions as a research organization concerned with ethno-botany, ethno-pharmacology, and alternative healing strategies. But more importantly the NSERI is the result of the couple’s knowledge of ethno-botany, traditional medicines, and Western nutritional sciences. In marketing their products within the broader framework of African traditional paradigms the couple socially remits these ideas to Black American consumers.

Like the Jewell Spice exemplar, the formation of the NSERI adds further insights into the role of economic incorporation and cooperation within the African Diaspora. However, it is important to point out some difference between the Jewell Spice Division and NERSI. Due to the fact that Andre Jewell does not own farmland in Ghana, he has had to create an extensive localized network that consists of farmers, suppliers, and exporters. The Andohs own several farms throughout Ghana; hence, their relationship to the farmers differs from that of the Jewell Spice Division. According to Mama Kali, because her husband is Ghanaian, it has made acquiring land and establishing relationships with local banks a lot easier. Dr. Andoh is not only well respected by the local elders and members in the Elmina community, but he is also a chief. It is due to her husband’s social capital and/or kinship networks in Ghana that Mama Kali has been fortunate enough to by-pass a great deal of the bureaucracy that many Diaspora Africans encounter when establishing businesses in Ghana. Nevertheless, since Mama Kali is the one that
interacts with the farmers on a day-to-day basis, her business experience in Ghana is not entirely devoid of problems.

Drawing from participant observations with Mama Kali and farmers, I discuss some of these issues in more detail in the section that follows.

Figure 4-2. Kali Sichen-Andoh-Andoh, also known as Mama Kali, and husband Dr. Kweku Andoh, are the owners of North Scale Institute. Mama Kali, pictured above, gives me a tour of their moringa farm, located near Elmina, Ghana. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.

Pan-African Philanthropy and Local Affiliation and Religious Networks, North Scale Education and Research Institute

Before getting into discussion of Mama Kali’s affiliations with local farmers I want to first introduce some background information on how and why the Andohs decided to establish their moringa farm in Elmina.
Working with Church Organizations and Transitioning into Ghana

Dr. Andoh is often consulted by a variety of different groups that range from NGOs to business people in the agricultural industry to pharmaceutical, insecticide, and health food companies. In 1990, Andoh was asked to conduct research on a plant called *moringa oleifera*, also called *nebedaye*, by the Church World Service (CWS). CWS was founded in 1946. It is the relief, development, and refugee assistance ministry of thirty-five Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations in the United States. The organization has partnerships with indigenous organizations in more than eighty countries. Dr. Andoh’s job was to research the pros and cons of the plant and present his findings to the organization. The research took place in Senegal. Mama Kali accompanied her husband and assisted him in locating the plant and discovering its properties.

Dr. Andoh’s findings have been corroborated by other scientific studies conducted at universities around the world.\(^{28}\) He ascertained that moringa is effective in treating the following numerous conditions: blindness, candidiasis (thrust or yeast infections), cancer, chronic fatigue, diabetes, diuretic, epilepsy, gastrointestinal motility, hepatitis, HIV-AIDS, hypertension, lupus, malnutrition, prostate enlargement and prostate cancer, rheumatism, tumors, and ulcers (gastric and skin). Moringa also works as an anti-diarrhea, anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, anti-spasmodic (muscle cramping), and as a means of birth control. It can also be used in water purification. After conducting the research on the plant for CWS, the couple was asked to start a pilot program using the plant to treat malnutrition in women, infants and children. They conducted a two year study in Senegal, using the plant as a supplement to the diets of their participants. Shortly after the trial study began, the Andohs quickly realized the benefits of the

\(^{28}\) Scientific studies that confirm Dr. Andoh’s research finding include Makkar and Baker (1991), Nadabigengesere, Narasiah, Talbot (2000) and Fayhe (2005)
plant. High in protein, the leaves of moringa can substitute for meat, soy bean products or dairy products. The leaves have a complete complement of amino acids, the complete protein that is needed in human nutrition for good health.

In early February of 2001, Dr. Andoh flew to Senegal with a delegation of Church World Service fundraisers, contributors and representatives from several American based NGOs, to examine firsthand the positive effects that moringa was having on the pilot group. Mama Kali exclaims,

It works like magic! Within the first two weeks of the study we saw a drastic change in the health condition of children that were near starvation. By week three, my husband and I decided there and then that we would start our own moringa farm. My husband came to Ghana to prepare some land in order to plant the tree. Straight from Senegal and I went back to Ghana. That was the beginning of our work with Meringa and we started supplying it to Church World Services.

Figure 4-3. Local farmers getting ready to clear the land and plant moringa trees at the NSERI farm, located near Elmina. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.
Farmers

During a visit at the Andoh’s twenty acre farm in Elmina, we discussed her experience working with farmers. The following narrative is an excerpt from my field notes from participant observations taken at that time.

It’s 6:15 in the morning. I am feeling a bit under weather, and just realized I’ve over slept by 30 minutes. I’m supposed to be at Mama Kali’s house in twenty minutes. She has invited me to spend the day with her at her farm. Having visited her at her home yesterday, I know that she is not always an advocate of “Ghana time”. Mama Kali has a maternal way about her that makes you feel terribly guilty if you disappoint her in the slightest way. I can just picture her standing outside her doorway as I approach her house. She is shaking her head, making that tsking sound that Black women often make when you’ve done something wrong. Then she says, “You’re late”. Yes after only spending a couple of hours with her last night, I know I am in for a line of questioning, if I’m late. With that imagine embedded in my mind, I rush to get ready.

But before I head out the door, I have to say good bye to Imakus. She and her husband are the co-owners of One Africa. One Africa is the name of the hotel that I am staying at in Elmina. I find Imakus, and tell her I am on my way to meet Mama Kali. She tells me to give Mama Kali her regards, but not before chastising me about leaving the hotel without having any breakfast. I find myself apologizing to her profusely. Meanwhile I’m thinking how pleased my mother would be to know that I have mothers everywhere in Ghana! Thankfully, Mama Kali house is conveniently located in an area that she affectionately calls Diaspora Road. She calls it that because of the larger number of Diaspora Africans living in the area. Most of the people situated on Diaspora Road, including Imakus and her husband, are from the US; however there are a few people in the area from Jamaica and Brazil.

I literally jump a fence to get to Mama Kali’s house. I see her standing on her porch. She is taking to her employee Paul as he loads the car. I looked at my watch and I am relieved that I made it to her house on time. I know we have lots to do today. We have to pick up Melvin Webb, the owner of Asher Water Industries Limited at the bus station before heading over to the farm. It was happenstance that brought us all here to visit with Mama Kali. Melvin, Mama Kali, and I all met at an African American Association of Ghana (AAAG) meeting. I was intrigued by that fact she owns a business and manages several farms in Ghana. Melvin, the owner of a water treatment facility in Atlanta, Georgia, does consulting work in Ghana; he also has an office in Tema. Melvin was excited to talk to Mama Kali about the potential uses of moringa as a water purifier. Hence it was from that initial encountering at AAAG that we all made plans to visit Mama Kali.

I order to maintain the confidentiality of Mama Kali’s employee I am using the pseudo-name Paul.
Next she invites me inside her home for a quick breakfast. During breakfast, she tells me that Paul is a student at the University of Cape Coast. He has been working for her and her husband for a couple of years. He assists Mama Kali on a variety of projects that range from running basic errands, driving her around town, to washing her car. She points out that his most important job is to help her at the farm. Paul is fluent in English and several indigenous languages spoken throughout Ghana. As with most Diaspora Africans Mama Kali does not speak any of the local languages. Many of her employees have a primary level education and their efficiency in English varies. Paul plays a significant role in her day-to-day business interactions with the local farmers.

Paul joins us for breakfast. I tell him about my research and I ask him about his work with the Andohs. Paul says he was brought up in a farming community, while working for the Andohs he has learned more about the business side of agro-industry. Overall he has enjoyed working with the Andohs. I ask him if he sees any difference between working for a Ghanaian versus Black American. He says business is business no matter who you work for; it does not matter if the person is Black American or Ghanaian. But there is a difference in management styles between the two groups, especially in regards to social interactions. Mama Kali and Paul share this example. When Mama Kali is not managing the farm, Paul works as her driver. While in the process of running errands, Mama Kali will stop at a restaurant to get something to eat. Oftentimes, she invites Paul to eat dinner with her. Mama Kali explains that many well-to-do Ghanaians cannot understand why she would consider eating dinner with the "help" and in a public place (and without her husband for that matter). She says, from their perspective it is unusual to have dinner with someone not in the same social class. In many regards, people consider her interactions with Paul inappropriate. On the other hand, from the US perspective, Mama Kali sees it as extending a friendly courtesy to an employee by taking them out to lunch during the workday.

After breakfast, we head out to the car. There is an elderly man standing outside with his wife. The man looks ill. The wife asks Mama Kali if she can take him to the hospital. The couple does not have transportation so she agrees to take them to the hospital. On the way to the hospital, she tells me that they are from a neighboring small village. The elderly man has been sick for quite some time; Mama Kali has been helping the wife take care of him. Mama Kali and Dr. Andoh are frequently called upon to help people in the community. For instance, Mama Kali has a well at her home. She says it is commonplace for people in the community to ask for water. In light of the recent water shortage, it has become burdensome for her to give water away. At a recent town meeting she proposed that a well be dug to bring in a fresh water supply to the community. She offered to pay for half of the construction cost provided that the town covers the rest of the cost. Due to her generosity over the years, the locals have come to call her Mama Kali.

We drop the couple at the hospital. Running late, we rush to pick up Melvin Webb before finally heading off to the farm. We get off on a stretch of dirt road in what appears to be the middle of nowhere. Mama Kali tells us that we will have to walk through the forest some ways before we get to the farm. During the walk she stops to points out the local vegetation and discusses the potential of cultivating indigenous crops for export. We finally reach our destination. Mama looks distressed. Apparently, the workers have not
cleared the land for the next phase of moringa planting. We are soon greeted by three farmers. From the expressions on their faces they give the impression that they are anticipating the look I so dreaded from Mama Kali earlier today when I thought I was running late. There is a bit of discussion that takes place in Akan and English. Mama Kali explaining her disappointment and the farmers telling her why the land has not been cleared.

Mama Kali is very apologetic to me and Melvin. She says she needs to sit down and discuss the situation with the farmers before giving us a tour of the property. I ask her if I can sit in on the discussion. She agrees. As soon as we sit down in a make shift room conversation ensues. Mama Kali is speaking in English, the farmers are speaking Akan, and Paul is translating back and forth between English and Akan speakers. In summary, Mama Kali demands to know why the land has not been cleared. The farmers say that they had to attend a funeral in the village. Attendance at funerals is expected from everyone in the village. They explain how important it was for them to attend the funeral. They had to for fear that no one would attend their funeral when they pass away. Since funeral celebrations typically last several days, they were unable to come to the work over the weekend. Paul at some point chimes in to corroborate their story. He says a funeral was held for a very important person from their village over the weekend.

Mama Kali tells them that she understands that they had to attend to this important social obligation over the weekend. She does not expect them to come to work if they have to attend a funeral, as this is stated in their employee contracts. However, she goes on to argue that they should have been at work Tuesday and judging from the state of things, there has not been much work done since she visited last week. The farmers tell her that they had a community service activity in their village on Tuesday. So again they could not come to work. Mama Kali lets out a deep sigh, and says ok; no one came to work over the weekend and Monday and Tuesday. Tell me what you did on Wednesday. They say they came to work and proceed to point out the areas where they completed their most recent work.

Mama Kali says she is still dissatisfied; she believes more work could have been done on Wednesday. They explain they were short some workers on that day. She tells the supervisory farmer to give her a list of the names of people that did not show up to work. She says she is going to stop by later this evening. She expects to see some major progress with the land clearing project. She instructs the supervising foreman to explain to the absentee employees that they will receive a pay cut for not coming to work on Wednesday. Mama Kali is frustrated because the land should have been cleared weeks ago.

Making our way back to the car, Mama Kali voice sounds exasperated. She says she is happy that her husband, who is currently in the US, will be coming back to Ghana in a couple of weeks. She believes that because he is Ghanaian man they respect his authority and take directives from him a lot better. She says a lot of the problems she has with her farmers stem from her being a woman. People in the US, for the most, respect your authority because you are their boss regardless if your are male or female. She says she is constantly having to assert herself more, so that her employees know that she is serious. It is also difficult to run a business here because of other cultural differences. In the US for
example, if someone dies, only family members and close friends attend the funeral. Here the whole village is required to be in attendance even if they do not personally know the person that has expired. She says there are days that I go without getting anything done. Mama Kali explicates that this is the third group of farmers that she has had to hire. At first, she tried to hire farmers without a contract, but she soon realized that without a contract people showed up to work whenever they felt like it. Or if they did show up they did not express any urgency in getting the job done. Now she puts a clause in the contract, that you will not get paid until the job is satisfactorily completed.

In Chapter Two I outlined some of the advantages and disadvantages of social capital. One of the benefits of kinship networks is that the couple has greater access to certain business resources, e.g. acquiring information, land, and labor in Ghana. Despite these benefits, problems, as the excerpt above illustrates, still occur. The NSERI kinship and local affiliation networks are multi-faceted and operate on several levels.

1. Through her kinship ties to husband, and hence, to the community, Mama Kali is asked to fulfill many social obligations that are required of her husband. At times this necessitates putting her business plans aside in order to assist the people that come to her for help.

2. Mama Kali’s local affiliation networks consist of local famers and other Diaspora Africans. More importantly, employees like Paul, become significant social actors within her network. Having Paul as an interpreter enhances her social capital; and makes her more efficient in communicating directives to her farmers. Even though Mama Kali has an interpreter, she still has to be more assertive than she is accustomed to being in dealing with her employees in order to compensate for gender differences.

3. Her Diaspora African local affiliation networks consist of the people that live on Diaspora Road and AAAG. While the majority of her interactions are not business related, they do have the potential to open up potential business partnerships. For instance, if Melvin Webb decides to use moringa as part of his water sanitation projects, NSERI more than likely, would be his supplier.

The combined networks of both Diaspora Africans and their Ghanaian spouses increase their opportunity to expand business operations outside Ghana. This exemplar also provides a nuance picture of the social relationships between Diaspora Africans and the Ghanaian community. Here we see the type of tensions that arise, such as the instance where Mama Kali explains how Ghanaians misinterprets her relationship with Paul, as Diaspora Africans adjust to a different set of social norms and cultural difference that are different from their own.
In this next section I take a look at some of NSERI’s transnational networks. The analysis included in this section discusses the role that transnational affiliations have with regards to NSERI’s business organization and expansion. Lastly, the analysis further elucidates the impact that these transnational affiliations have on both Ghanaian and African American communities.

**Pan-African Philanthropy and Transnational Networks, North Scale Education and Research Institute**

Products are cultivated they are shipped off from the port in Tema to the NSERI in Atlanta.\(^{30}\) Once they are in the US they will be packaged and processed into a line of products that make up the Harbinger Herbal Nutrients line. As the name indicates, these products predict a healthy life for the person using the products. The product is distributed by the All African Healing Arts Society (AAHAS).

**Professional Organizations**

The AAHAS is an organization that helps people gain a broad understanding of health and wellness from an indigenous perspective. NSERI is a member of the Complementary Alternative Medical Association. The purpose of this organization is to help educate US consumers, health practitioners and policy-makers about alternative medicine. Because a large part of the NSERI marketing campaign consists of word of mouth referral and Internet marketing, membership in organizations like the AAHAS and the Complementary Alternative Medical Associations is used as a referral source to build consumer confidence. The Andohs have developed private botanical gardens and nature trails on a twenty acre estate in Atlanta.

---

\(^{30}\) Over the years NSERI has developed personal relationships with customs and exports agents in the Tema ports, in many regards their liaisons function in a similar fashion as the Jewell Spice exemplar.
They use it as a teaching resource for local and international students, researchers and visitors from around the world. Mama Kali says,

We have customers in all parts of the world including Europe, Asia, North American, and the Caribbean, but the majority of our customers are African Americans. Although we advocate health and nutrition for all humanity, we concentrate our effort primarily on our community because, as a people we need it most.

Figure 4-4. Ghanaian farmers participating in the GENESIS program. Photograph courtesy, North Scale Education and Research Institute (2006).

Non-Governmental Organizations

Dr. Andoh and his wife Kali Sichen-Andoh-Andoh have initiated a youth program called GENESIS. GENESIS is an acronym for Growing Energy and Nutrition for Environmental Stability and Investments in our Society. It is a non-governmental organization that uses ethnobotany to build new social structures in African societies on the continent and throughout the African Diaspora. Ethnobotany is the study of the relationship between people of different
cultures, the plants that grow around them, and how they use these plants for food, medicine, and household goods. According to the Andohs the program is a “back to nature movement” whose philosophy is that self-sufficiency and survival of African nations, including Africans in the Americas, will be determined by their ability to provide for their own basic needs, by building economies based on the natural environment. The Andohs’ back to nature movement is consistent with the pan-African self-determination thinking of W.E.B. Du Bois and St. Clair Drake in terms of its emphasis on the self-sufficiency of African nations and Blacks in the Americas. The movement in some regards is also a continuation of Booker T. Washington’s values. Washington believed in education, in the crafts, and in the cultivation of industrial and farming skills among African-Americans.

According to Mama Kali, the GENESIS youth initiative is encouraging the next generation of farmers, botanists, ethno-botanists, nutritionists, health providers, and naturalists. The project teaches youth the importance of farming and taking care of the environment. The Andohs are in the process of formulating GENESIS programs in five countries including Ghana, Ethiopia, South Africa, Kenya and Haiti. In June 2005, NSERI joined efforts with Morehouse College, a historically Black college located in Atlanta, on a GENESIS Project in Haiti. The program participants consisted of Dr. Andoh and Morehouse students. During the program the participants learn about plant taxonomy, the nutritional properties of plants, types of rare and emergent new useful species, and seed planting, re-potting, and fruit tree planting. The GENESIS group, along with help of local organizations such as Haiti Yéle, planted over 1,000 trees at three sites.\(^31\) In addition to using their personal financial savings to establish their

---

\(^31\) Yéle Haiti is a foundation started by Grammy-Award winning musician, producer and social entrepreneur Wyclef Jean. Yéle’s mission is to use the potent combination of music and development to create small-scale, manageable and replicable projects to contribute to Haiti’s long-term progress.
business, they also received financial contribution from the various organizations, like CWS and AAAHS with whom they have collaborated and formed relationships with over the years. For this particular project Andoh’s GENESIS fundraising activities included asking supporters to purchase tee shirts to help pay for student travel expenses to Haiti.

Figure 4-5. Moringa oleifera is also called “Nebedaye,” which means “never die,” in many African languages. The plant promises relief from the devastating diseases that are rampant in the African and African American community. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.

The Andohs have recently collaborated on a project with The Global Initiative for the Advancement of Nutritional Therapy (GIANT). GIANT is an American-based international 501(c)3 non-profit organization. It is the creation of Ambassador Andrew Young. The Mission of GIANT is to promote and facilitate the adoption of nutrition-based therapeutic approaches for populations around the world and to support and encourage basic and clinical research related to
nutritional therapy. Through its support and participation in scientific symposia and other forums, GIANT is working to educate and raise awareness about the critical role of nutrition in health and wellness. GIANT promotes low cost, comprehensive, culturally appropriate and sustainable approaches to addressing the nutritional needs of people all over the world. Many of the Harbinger Nutrient Products formulas are based on ancient African rain forest herbal remedies. Using ethno-botany, the Andohs are working with GIANT in using moringa in an effort to promote nutrition as a basic and integral component of comprehensive HIV management.

**Black American Ethnic Organizations**

The National Black Farmers Association (NBFA) is another organization working with the Andohs. The NBFA is a non-profit organization founded in 1995 by Dr. John Boyd Jr. Dr. Boyd is the owner of a 300 acre poultry farm in Virginia. He almost lost his farm and his livelihood because of the discriminatory practices of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) between the years 1986-1997. He decided to create NBFA to combat the discriminatory challenges that many Black farmers have to encounter. The organization currently provides outreach and assistance to over 800,000 Black farmers throughout the United States and around the world (Wood and Gilbert 2000). In Chapter One, I mentioned that historically Blacks have had to rely on their own set of ethnic and business organizations, banks, and trade schools to sustain and augment business practices. The Andoh’s involvement with NBFA, CWS, and GIANT is one example of how Diaspora Africans continue to participate in mainstream organizations, while simultaneously strengthening their own set of parallel ethnic business networks.

In 2004, the Andohs began collaborating on projects with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives (FSC). Dr. Andoh completed a plant inventory project in Alabama to assess the
non-timber forest products available on the 660 acre training facility of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives. He conducted the scientific research at the University in Alabama to find out uses for the plants. This included looking up scientific data about each of these plants to create a plant inventory for the training facility. The plant inventory will be used to assist Black farmers in finding new markets for agricultural products. Self-determination is a core feature of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives. A farmers’ marketing cooperative is a business organization owned by farmers to sell their products collectively. It allows producers to accomplish functions they could not achieve on their own. Most agricultural producers have relatively little power or influence with large agribusinesses or food companies that purchase their commodities. Joining with other producers in a cooperative can give them greater power in the marketplace. In addition, cooperatives can give producers more control over their products as they make their way to consumers by allowing them to bypass one or more middlemen in the market channel. Farmers capture more of the returns that would otherwise go to others.

The organization’s mission is two-fold: (1) the FSC strives toward the development of self-supporting communities with programs that increase income and enhance other opportunities; and (2) it assists in land retention and development, especially for African Americans, but essentially for all family farmers (Federation of Southern Cooperative, 2007). According to the FSC mission statement, the organization achieves this with an active and democratic involvement in poor areas across the South through education and outreach strategies that support low-income people in molding their communities to become more humane and livable. They also assist in the development of cooperatives and credit unions as a collective strategy to create economic self-sufficiency (Federation of Southern Cooperative, 2007). Many of the ideas promoted by the FSC are consistent with the Andoh’s back to nature movement.
One of the herbal supplements the NSERI advocates the use of is *tabernanthe iboga.* The NSERI promotes the supplement as a drug to reduce withdrawal symptoms for drug addicts. It has demonstrated substantial success in treating such symptoms. NSERI markets the supplement as:

[The] gift of the African ancestors to the descendants in the Diaspora... it is a plant that heals the human Spirit. Drug addiction is closely linked to despair, unhappiness and lack of self-esteem, the basis of mental illness within the African American community. This

---

**Cultural Brokering, Marketing a Pan-African Philanthropy**

The United States Food and Drug Administration has not yet approved the use of *ibogaine* in the treatment of drug addiction, however, clinical trials have been conducted in the USA, Europe and Africa.
herbal decoction works directly on the medulla oblongata, where habits are formed in the brain (NERSI 2007).

Both Dr. Andoh and Mama Kali have used their knowledge of African traditional medicine and nutrition to devise a marketing strategy that targets Black Americans. For example, in a television interview with the University of South Carolina TV (2005) Dr. Andoh asserts,

I have come to learn that African Americans as a group suffer from many anomalies, such as, of course, you know the stress factor that is involved in the general population as a whole, and then coupled with the fact that we have neglected to eat some of our own food, you see, and as a biologist, let me say that if you do not eat your own food, or some of the food that is part of your genetic makeup, what will happen is that your system will break down.

African Americans as a rule must begin now to look at some of the [African] cultural foods to include some of them in your natural diet, to overcome high blood pressure and diabetes and many of these debilitating diseases. This is my work. So my work is connecting the people back to the soil and back to the nature, and back to the food that is part and parcel of our cultural heritage. - Taken from a transcript of 2005, Radio interview with UNC-TV on the topic of Alternative Remedies for Health.

Dr. Andoh gives lectures on ethno-botany and has traveled throughout the US, stopping in major US cities like Houston, Detroit, Cleveland, and Atlanta. Mama Kali explains that they have not visited many of the cities in the Mid-West but that they do have a lot of customers there. In addition to word of mouth referrals, they also utilize the radio, Internet, videos books, and cassette tapes to promote their business. The Adohs have developed a 12 step healing system based on this system. In addition to taking the nutritional supplements, healthy eating habits and prayer are also promoted. Hand-in-hand with the healthcare consumerism movement is a trend in the use of alternative medicine. In attempts to improve their health and/or combat illness, approximately four of ten Americans would have used alternative therapy in 2004 (Barrett 2003).

A person searching for an alternative medical choice on the Internet browser can purchase a wide array of projects such as Wisa Blend, a product that contains a West African
blend of natural antibiotics and herbs that are generally used to spice foods especially soups.

Wisa Blend is also said to be good for colds and the flu. Or you can purchase Cat’s Claw a potent immune regulator used by indigenous people for tumors and cancerous growths, digestive disorders and skin disorders. It is this combination of Western science and nutrition and African medicine that contributes to the success of the Andohs’ business. Nowhere is the proliferation of pan-African themes more evident than their web advertisements. An excerpt from a web advertisement reads:

Plants and people have more in common than meets the eye. Every living entity on earth requires air, water and sunshine. Plants extract additional life force from the earth; humans take most of our sustenance second-hand from the plant world. Like plants, people require certain elements specific to their particular make up. African rain forest plants do not thrive in the cold climates of Europe and America. Medicinal plants from tropical environs do not produce the healing alkaloids if the plants are grown outside of their natural habitats.

It is my contention that many ailments that affect mostly African Americans can be directly traced to nutritional deficiencies. African Americans do not eat foods indigenous to their ancestral lands, the original home of their “gene pool.”

One nutrient, dietary thiocyanate, common in foods indigenous to the African diet, can be directly associated with "disease" reactions in African people in America. The most commonly known of these thiocyanate deficient “diseases” is sickle cell anemia. Other indigenous people who suffer disproportionately from diabetes and hypertension, as much as African Americans, are the aboriginal peoples of Australia and the Native American Indians. They have experienced a great change in diet from their natural traditional foods because of the loss of their lands and cultures.

It is well known that Asians who come to America begin to suffer from diseases uncommon to their birthplace. Those who adhere closely to their traditional diets when they emigrate, remain healthier than those who adopt the American meat based diet. It is possible for African Americans to adopt a diet rich in thiocyanate.

In many urban areas of the United States, African and Caribbean foods can be found. Many health food stores carry foods rich in thiocyanate. Following is a short list of foods to increase your dietary thiocyanate: Butter beans, lentils, black-eye peas, garbanzo beans (chick peas), millet, buckwheat, sorghum, pigeon peas, African yam, African cassava, lima beans, cow peas, peanuts, ground nuts, and plantains (North Scale Institute 2006)
Pan-African self-determination ideology, the ability to fulfill a social purpose while pursuing a financial profit, blurs the distinction between for-profit and nonprofit business. Though the term African Diaspora is not mentioned in the advertisement, the concept is strategically used to emphasize the unique history that characterizes the forced migration of African population to the host country. The advertisement begins by emphasizing the importance of organically grown food products, specifically those found in Africa. In calling attention to the uniqueness of African American history the advertisement draws comparisons to Asian emigrant groups. The ad argues that due to the relative recent migration of Asian people to the US Asians have retained knowledge of their homeland culture, and indigenous foods. It is because of this that Asian populations remain one of the healthier ethnic groups living in the US. In its effort to attract African American consumers, the advertisement suggests that the nutritional deficiencies in African American populations can be contributed to the lack of ancestral-African foods in the diet. Hence, the NSERI’s line of Harbinger products specifically benefits the African Diaspora community because it contains the nutrients contained in the ancestral diet. As an additive, the advertisement also contains a list of African, African-American, and Caribbean traditional food items that provide a good source of thiocyanate.

As cultural brokers, Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs are in a unique position. They connect the global Black community by numerous economic and social networks and offer products and services that appeal to this community while simultaneously meeting the economic and humanitarian needs of both communities. The meaning and value placed on cultural products varies within the African Diaspora; therefore, entrepreneurs must be self-conscious about “Black” identity, culture, and heritage. The flows of cultural commodities and
economic networks attest to the resilience of Pan-African self-determination which is a defining characteristic of Diaspora African businesses.

With increasing concern among African descendant populations over health disparities, many Ghanaian and African Americans are seeking alternative methods for maintaining wellness. Many of these healing practices consist of alternative medicines and lifestyle choices that combine several aspects of African traditional healing practices and draw from non-traditional medical paradigms from around the world. The enterprising activities that accompany the “business of healing and wellness” are as globally diversified as the clientele which they serve. Diasporas Africans in the health-related business promote differing health beliefs and attitude about various medical conditions. Yet there were some commonalities that existed among Diaspora Africans entrepreneurs specializing in traditional health and folk remedies.

1. They usually attributed the poor health of Black Americans to an external locus (e.g., slavery, the dominance of Western based health models and religious ideology).
2. They expressed a belief in a higher sense of fate and destiny for African peoples.
3. They believed that faith and spirituality are sources of strength and exhibited a respect for African traditional health practices and knowledge.

In the chapter that follows I look more closely at the role that religious ideology plays in marketing health to the Black Americans and Ghanaians. Taking into consideration the economic conditions, cultural values, social relationships and political linkages that undergird the increasing interdependence of Ghanaian and African American communities, I also explain how small to mid-size African Hebrew Israelite businesses selling Africa made or Africa styled goods and services transform African-American cultural connections to Africa into economic ones.
CHAPTER 5
GLOBALIZING COMMUNITIES THROUGH TRANS-ATLANTIC CONNECTIONS

McDonalds is a successful company because they control every aspect of their production. From the potato farms to the dairy farms and the beef farms, they own the entire chain. We’re not trying to replicate McDonalds, but when you look at the thoroughness and the depth of the organization, we operate along the same lines. We want to be able to produce everything. But our redemptive enterprises are a direct reflection as to how we worship the creator. Our businesses are designed to save and redeem our people. – Yatneal, Manager of the Soul Vegetarian Complex, Atlanta.

Figure 5-1. The African Hebrew Israelite Soul Vegetarian Complex is located in Atlanta’s West End, Georgia. The Soul Vegetarian Complex signage looks similar to the hand painted advertisements found throughout Ghana. Photo taken by Michelle Edwards.

African Hebrew Israelites African Edenic Enterprises

AHI entrepreneurs constitute a small, yet distinct segment of the African Diaspora population that occupies a unique place in the business world. Taking into consideration the
economic conditions, cultural values, social relationships and political linkages that undergirds the increasing interdependence of Ghanaian and African American communities I explain how small to mid-size AHI businesses selling African made or African styled goods and services transform African-American cultural connections to Africa into economic ones. A central aspect of this research analysis also explores their role in the commoditization and distribution of African cultural commodities in Atlanta’s West End community. In order to demonstrate how transnational religious networks are contributing to the cultural economy of the African Diaspora, I have divided the chapter into four main discussions.

First, I will provide background information on the AHI movement. Second, using a Pan-African perspective as an alternative approach to the analysis of African material culture, I consider what commodities, products, and services are being circulated into Atlanta’s West End. Third, I demonstrate how the religious networks, based on reciprocal relationships that transverse the AHI communities, foster the development of industries in Ghana. And while the focus of every entrepreneur is to build wealth and generate profit, AHI entrepreneurs are mindful of the larger mission of serving the needs and bringing value to the lives of others, including the partners, clients, employees, families and communities impacted by their businesses. Fourth, this analysis also demonstrates how AHI business activities reinforce the group’s worldview of what is referred to as Yah-based culture.

The AHIAs have developed a system of reciprocal networks in which commodities and cultural commodities are exchanged between AHI communities.33 Bob White points out that, “a

---

33 Throughout this chapter I use the terms material culture, commodity, and cultural commodity. Material culture is the objects/artifacts created by a particular group or society that are a reflection of that society’s worldview in terms of their beliefs, values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions (Kopytoff 1986). A commodity is an item with an inherent use-value and exchange-value (Simmel 1978[1907] Appadurai 1986, and Stone et.al, 2000). The person that purchases the item determines its meaning or use-value. The exchange-value refers to the sales price given to a commodity. The exchange of something else is usually in the form of money, but can be anything to which an exchange or sell value is ascribed.
cultural commodity differs from other product commodities because at some level they embody the cultural identity of the producer and it is often on this basis that an object is sold” (White, 2000: 47). Taking White’s point into consideration, the following is a summary of the AHI movement. This information will help us to better understand the AHI’s ideology and explains how AHI entrepreneurs ascribe meaning to an assortment of cultural commodities.

Figure 5-2. Roomah is a member of the African Hebrew Israelite community in Atlanta, Georgia. She is the manager of Boutique Africa. Roomah is holding a children’s outfit made of kente cloth. The store specializes in African clothing, art and jewelry. Boutique Africa also sells the AHI’s line of African edenic beauty products. Photo taken by Michelle Edwards.

**African Hebrew Israelite Movement**

During my visit with the AHI community in Atlanta, I spoke with Yatneal Israel, manager of the Soul Vegetarian restaurant, about the movement. Yatneal is considered a man of
balance or an elevated person of responsibility in the community. Although he is not part of the group’s overall leadership, he is responsible for executing the daily operation of the group’s Soul Vegetarian complex in Atlanta’s West End. According to him, in 1966 Ben Ammi Ben-Israel, the spiritual leader and founder of the AHI movement, received a vision. He envisioned that Black peoples were the descendents of the lost tribe or children of Israel. Using biblical scripture Ben Ammi ascertained that the lost children of Israel were expelled from Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. The group then migrated for more than 1,000 years before reaching West Africa and later the United States as slaves. According to the teachings of Ben Ammi, the cruel chapters of their history were part of God’s plan. As the appointed spiritual leader of the Israelites, Ben Ammi was left with the responsibility of bringing the lost tribe of Israel back home. Yatneal maintains that once Ben Ammi made the connection that Black Americans are Hebrews, they as a people were able to identify that the people of the Bible were historically African edenic. Edenic is a term that AHI used to refer to Eden or the birth place of civilization, which according to their belief system is Israel.

It is because of this association of the AHIs to Israel that Fran Markowitz (1996) describes their divine geography under the construct of Israel as Africa and Africa as Israel. Markowitz explains:

The African Hebrew Israeliite Community centered in the dusty desert town of Dimona, Israel challenges this conventional wisdom by providing proof positive that Israel belongs not to Asia but to Africa. They announce through their ceremonies and in books written by their leaders that the term “Middle East” is a capricious geographical label with no historical or Biblical connection to Israel (ibid: 193).

In 1969 Ben Ammi and a small group of AHIs “returned” to Israel and established their headquarters in Dimona. , there are approximately 2,500 AHI emigrants and indigenously born

34 Ben Amin, formerly known as Ben Carter, is Chicago native born in 1939 and author of God, the Black Man, and Truth (1990).
youth residing in Israel (Kindomofyah 2007). The AHI connects their religious beliefs with the ideal of achieving cultural independence and political or even territorial self-determination (Baer and Singer, 1981:11). Hans Baer and Merrill Singer (1981) explain that their ideology is consistent with other Black messianic-nationalist sects in the US.\(^{35}\) The core features of messianic-nationalism include the: (1) acceptance of a belief in a glorious Black history and subsequent “fall” from grace; (2) adoption of various rituals and symbols from established millenarian religious traditions; (3) messianic anticipation of divine retribution against the White oppressor; (4) assertion of Black sovereignty through the development of various nationalist symbols and interest in territorial separation or emigration; and (5) rejection of certain social patterns in the Black community, including family instability of female-headed households, and male marginality (ibid: 11-12).

The AHIs appropriate a combination of African material culture and symbols and Hebrew religious rituals. For example, the community priesthood officiate weddings. They perform Sabbath services and circumcisions for male children on the 8th day in accordance to Hebraic law. Baer and Singer also point out that the group has a tendency to construct counter-cultures, which tend to reject many of the values and goals of larger society while at the same time developing utopian communities (ibid: 12).

During the 1960s the Black consciousness movement called for Blacks to liberate themselves psychologically. The reasoning behind this was the idea that Black people had internalized ideas of inferiority and dependency as the result of racism and apartheid. A return to Africa was advocated so that Blacks could reconnect to their cultural and spiritual roots. One of the principal tenants of the Black consciousness movement was the perceived dependence of

\(^{35}\) Hans Baer and Merrill Singer (1981) developed a four cell typology of Black religious groups in the United States, which includes established, messianic-nationalist, conversionist, and thaumaturgical/manipulation sects.
Blacks on White liberals to speak for them. It was believed that once Black people had come to believe that they had the right and power to stand up for themselves, they would then be able to take power in their own hands. The AHI association with back to Africa movements is consistent with other religious and cultural movements of that time period. Yatneal asserts that this is the reason why the AHIs initially repatriated to Liberia in 1967 before going to Israel in 1969. Yatneal further maintains, that

The AHI community really is a movement. Just like during the sixties when all of a sudden we started talking about Black power. We started having a consciousness amongst our people being African, wearing dashikis, afros, and cultural clothing. We had a movement because everything that America has promised us has not worked.

In 1967 the AHIs repatriated to Liberia and became a part of one of the largest return movements to Africa in US history. According to Yatneal, the AHI went to Liberia for 3 years. During that time they came together as a people and learned to share common things, such as food, shelter, and clothing. While in Liberia the group had to figure out how make a living. It was during this time that they started to develop their own business from a communal perspective.36

Characteristic of most communal settlements, the AHI maintain an ordered structure, with Ben Ammi sitting at the head of a council of 12 princes who oversee the spiritual development of the kibbutz or communal living. Another 12 ministers officiate in regards to the daily affairs in economics, education, sports and recreation, information and so forth. After establishing three second communal settlements in Dimona, Mitzpe Ramon, and Arad Israel, the

36 Merrill Singer points out that while in Liberia, “the group attempted to set up a communal farm, but encountered many problems with disease, accidents, inclement weather, unfamiliar conditions, and insufficient resources and skills. As a result, a number of disaffections occurred and several leaders sought an alternative location for group residence. Ultimately, several scouts were sent to Israel. Based on the positive reports they sent back to Liberia, the group undertook a second migration. By the end of 1970, the Black Hebrew Nation was centered in three Negev Desert development towns in the southern part of Israel (Singer 1988: 181).”
group continued to establish missionary posts in the US, other African countries, Europe and South America (Singer 1988).37

Redemptive Business Ideology, Transnational and Religious Networks

Today the AHI has communities in a number of U.S. cities, including Atlanta, Houston, Cleveland, Chicago, St. Louis, Charleston, and Washington DC. Yatneal estimates that there are approximately 20,000 AHIs dispersed throughout the US. They derive their income from what they refer to as redemptive enterprises. According AHI’s Kingdomofyah website (2003), these institutions are more than businesses:

They are a direction that will lead our people back unto the ways of Yah. The captivity [of enslaved Blacks] has given our people an affinity for the culture of other nations rather than their own. In righteousness, we have crafted these institutions to serve the needs and desires of those seeking truth and life.

Together these enterprises constitute a variety of business ventures that includes vegan restaurants, soy, rice, and candy factories, multi-media production studios, clothing stores, travel agencies, hair-braiding shops, spas, and day care centers. More importantly, these US-based enterprises are intricately linked to other AHI communities outside the US, in countries such as Israel, Ghana, Benin, England, Saint Croix, and Jamaica.

The AHIs desire to recreate a new society where Black people have control over their communities, economies, and political life. For early Black American emigrationists, physical separation from American space was to be maintained indefinitely (Smith 1998). However globalization—the growing integration of economies, cultures, and societies around the world through advancement telecommunications and information technology—has made the idea of complete separation both geographically and culturally from American/Western influence.

37 The AHI have had a long and difficult history with the Israeli government. In 2003 the group was granted resident status by the Israel’s Interior Ministry. As permanent residents, members will be able to serve in the Israeli army and establish their own residential communities. For more information on the AHI plight in Israel see Soul Citizenship: The Black Hebrews and the State of Israel by Fran Markowitz, Sara Helman, and Dafna Shir-Vertesh (2003).
problematic. In realizing that the idea of complete separation is virtually impossible the AHI have devised mechanisms both to maintain their spirituality and benefit from globalization processes. My research suggests the strategic formation of transnational/religious communities based on reciprocal networks of trans-Atlantic trade and commerce has contributed to the ongoing success of Black separatists groups like the AHIs. Their involvement in building alternative economies founded upon the principle of self-determination has culminated in a belief system that dictates what can be sold and how cultural commodities are interpreted.

The development of AHI transnational networks is a continuation of a largely overlooked form of exchange and co-operation within the context of 21st century African Diaspora relationships. Coincidentally, these networks are designed to establish cities in the US and Israel as centres of expertise capable of carrying out transnational business directives and organization. These networks also help disseminate information pilot health and nutrition initiatives, foster community development programs, and propagate AHI worldviews throughout the African Diaspora world. With this in mind, the following analysis is intended to demonstrate how AHI transnational networks constitute a complex system of reciprocity rather than a series of spontaneous interactions in which producers, traders and consumers are alienated from one another. Their participation and ownership in production processes gives them the authority to ascribe new meanings to objects circulating between African and Diaspora African communities. In turn, AHI entrepreneurs synthesise this knowledge and pass it on to as broad consumer base as possible. US global cities like Atlanta, Georgia play an important role in the cooperation of transnational business activities.

Taking into consideration that African commodities are ascribed new meanings in various contexts I explore how the symbolic meaning of African cultural products reflects the
concerns and aspirations of AHI entrepreneurs. The group’s lives are predicated upon the notion of Yah-culture. The concept of Yah-culture or divine culture is crucial in understanding the AHI’s valuation of certain commodities.

Divine culture is the perpetual trademark that secures the identity of a righteous people and secures the existence of our eternal, living Yah. - Ben Ammi, spiritual leader and founder of the African Hebrew Israelite movement.

Yah-based culture is founded upon the laws of the commandments and the prophecies of Ben Ammi that govern the group’s interactions with family, friends, and people outside of the community. AHIs understand their relationship to Israel in reference to the mass forced expulsion of Africans resulting from the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

Employing the discourse of diaspora, these Black Hebrews returned to the Holy Land. Yet unlike postmodern cultural theorists and proponents of post-national political models, they refuse to celebrate hybridity over purity (Bhabha 1994b; Clifford 1994; Gilroy 1993, 2000), contingent and fragmented identities over those of nation (Hall 1996; Vertovec 1997), and reflexive self-awareness over a master narrative of belonging (Boyarin and Boyarin 1993; Said 1990). AHI understand diaspora, and, particularly, the Black diaspora, as disastrous (Markowitz et al, 2003: 304).

AHI explain the captivity of Black peoples as punishment for disobeying Yah’s commandments. The group justifies their expulsion and subsequent return movements to Israel through the scripture of Jeremiah 23:7-8. In accordance with the prophetic return of the children of Israel the group must undergo a process of redemption. This redemption is a part of the convalescence from the effects of slavery and nearly having lost total knowledge of our [African Hebrew] identity and heritage (African Hebrew Israelite of Jerusalem 2003).

The AHI observe Jewish customs such as Passover, Shavuot Yom Kippur and Succoth, combined with several aspects of African cultural practices. The group practices polygamy which they regard as an African cultural norm for marriage. They also preach against family planning as a European tool to control the demography of Africa (Dolvo 2002: 22). Yatneal describes the community as a community of one: “If we do something here within the Atlanta
community, then our money is sent to different places around the world to support our various missions.” Other important elements of the community’s self expression are their names, manner of dress, diet, social ethics, and knowledge of the Hebrew language. For instance, the AHIs adopt Hebrew names, which are seen as theological and reflecting the spirit that the individual possesses; they are called by their former names in secular life (ibid: 21). Conservative cotton clothing and head coverings are worn by all followers, and a vegan diet of organic foods is eaten, in order to maximize health and as a rejection of imposed Western culture.

The AHIs’ African edenic enterprises are an extension of Yah-based culture. These enterprises are connected through an extensive transnational/religious network. The following discussion explains how these enterprises meet several agendas for the AHI community. African Hebrew Israeliite entrepreneurs (1) teach people/consumers about the AHI lifestyle, (2) educate people about their African heritage, and (3) provide an economic means for the community to organize and develop projects around the world.

**Pan-African Philanthropy, Atlanta’s Soul Vegetarian Complex**

Atlanta goes by several unofficial titles, e.g. the Big Peach, the ATL, the capital of the New South, and the Black Mecca. Atlanta’s West End neighborhood is pivotal in terms of the city being known by its latest distinction. The area is one of Atlanta’s most socially and culturally diverse communities. Before the West End area of Atlanta was developed to what it is today, it began as a Newnan Road, a crossroads that connected the towns of Decatur and Lawrenceville. From 1894 to 1930 the area prospered. Many wealthy Atlantans built large estates. Eventually Gordon Street became the area’s commercial district.

---

38 For more detailed history about the city of Atlanta see, *Metropolitan Frontiers: A Short History of Atlanta* (Roth and Ambrose, 1996) and *Atlanta, A City of Neighborhoods* (Thompson and Isbel, 1994).
By the 1930s the area was on the decline. The West End Businessman Association, originally founded in the 1920s, pushed a series of modernization projects in from the 1930s - 1970s. The old business district was demolished and replaced with the West End Mall development, and Gordon Street would eventually become Interstate 20. In 1973 a MARTA transportation station was built across from the mall. This station is home to the Atlanta University Center which consists of Spelman College, Morehouse College, Morris Brown College and Clark Atlanta University. Each of these schools is among the most prestigious HBCUs, i.e. Historically Black Colleges and Universities, in the US. Also, during this time period the area experienced “White flight” and the movement of African Americans into the community. By 1976, the West End was eighty-six percent African American.

By the 2000s another series of urban revitalization projects had been established, among them the Sky Lofts and the renovation of some of the historic homes took place. The Sky Lofts brought many young professionals into the area. The area still remains one of Atlanta’s most socially and culturally diverse communities. In addition to the Atlanta University Center, other popular tourist destinations include Wren’s Nest, home of Joel Chandler Harris, the author of the Uncle Remus series; Hammond’s House, which is the only independent public museum in Atlanta dedicated exclusively to the collection and study of fine arts of the African Diaspora; and the West End Performing Arts Center, a neighborhood arts center dedicated to bringing performing and visual arts programming to the West End. Perhaps the defining characteristic of the West End is its wide array of religious institutions, from the West Hunter Street Baptist Church, to the Shrine of the Black Madonna Cultural Center and Bookstore of the Pan-African Orthodox Christian Church to the Soul Vegetarian Complex owned by the AHI community. The AHIs have been a staple in West End for over 30 years.
Many of AHI enterprises are located in primarily urban communities. Previously, the term “urban” was used to describe people or things associated with the inner city, an area populated after World War II by large numbers of Blacks and Hispanics. However, the racial composition of the “urban” market and its significance to the general market has changed dramatically in the past two decades (King 2001). Advertising agencies have accelerated globalization by increasingly treating people everywhere the same way, so much so that the homogenization of communities, by brand name stores, clothing, and advertising, has dulled people’s sense of place (Kanter 1996). In many regards, the AHI’s return to Yah-based culture rejects the homogenization of global cultural forms, but at the same time the group participates in the larger global mass-marketing campaigns that also perpetuate components of mainstream ideas and images.

According to the online magazine Ecommerce (King 2001), today’s urban market is more often defined as a “mindset,” which is not limited by geographic or racial boundaries. It is a consumer group with more than $890 billion in spending power that can influence mainstream culture both here and abroad. Characteristics shared by this consumer group include a penchant for Hip Hop and R&B music, and a high level of monthly spending on beauty products and apparel. Within the Black American community this would also include preferences for wigs and ethnic beauty supplies, inner-city sportswear, jewelry, and cultural apparel, as well as electronics, and ethnic food stuff. The abundance of the types of businesses that supply these preferences is evident in the numerous braids shops, ethnic grocery stores, and music stores that permeate urban neighborhoods.

The Atlanta-based Soul Vegetarian Complex is part of a 19,000 square-foot compound located on Ralph Abernathy Boulevard. Inside the compound are a number of businesses that
include the Soul Vegetarian Restaurant, the Eternity Juice Bar, Boutique Africa, The Royal Crown Barber Shop, Braids Unlimited, and the Wisdom Hut Bookstore. Other additions to the complex include the Return to Royalty Banquet Hall, the Holistic Cleansing Center, a computer center, and a state of the art video production center.

**Marketing Yah-based Culture to Black Americans**

I spoke with Roomah, an entrepreneur and manager of the clothing store Boutique Africa. She explains that their cultural doctrine mandates that they can only wear clothing made of natural fabrics; hence Boutique Africa only specializes in clothing made up of 100% natural fabric. Boutique Africa became a part of the AHI West End business complex 6 years ago. The store came about because there was a need within the growing AHI community for a place to purchase organic African style clothing. AHIs are identifiable throughout the West End community by their natural hairstyles and the traditional African clothing they wear. Their outward expression of African identity is seen as a way of putting European garment factories one step down and denouncing European ways (Dolvo 2002). Boutique Africa and other businesses located inside the West End Complex are communally owned and operated. The businesses also provide employment opportunities for members in the community. Hence, whenever a person in the community leaves a management position, someone within the community is always recruited to take over the position.

While Roomah is giving me a tour of her store, she explains that the majority of clothes you see in Boutique Africa come primarily from AHI communities. The sewing group in Israel is called the Gahn HaCigon Clothing Manufactures, and the other is Bible International located in Ghana. These enterprises were created to provide clothing for AHIs and to provide products for the Boutique Africa stores in each of those communities. The group has clothing designers in
Israel and Ghana that create their own designs. In explaining the difference in clothing styles, Roomah says:

The clothing from Israel is more messianic garments; they have a lot more embroidery on them. The garments that come out of Ghana are the batik, the brocades, and the linens. They have their own distinct way in which they do all their embroidery. Most of their embroidery is around the seams and on the front.

Roomah goes on to explain that there are also several clothing designers within the West End community. They mail their designs to the sewing factories abroad to be manufactured. The finished product is shipped back to the various Boutique Africa stores throughout the US. In addition, Roomah or another manager in charge of one of the other Boutique Africa stores will travel to sewing communities and select items to be shipped to their stores.

Figure 5-3. Examples of the many clothing styles found in Boutique Africa. The image illustrates both male (l) and women (r) clothing styles respectively. Photos taken by Michelle Edwards.
Many times, the boutique owners or a member of Ghana-based community will commission Ghanaian carvers that are not affiliated with the group, to create masks, drums, and sculptures to sell in their shops. At one point during my interview with Roomah, a customer comes in to ask her about one of the outfits displayed in her shop window. As part of her marketing tactic, she engages a Black American customer in a conversation. She explains to the customer, that all the clothing in the store is made of natural fibers. She goes on to say that all the clothing comes directly from Africa:

Today you see a lot of our people wearing very revealing clothing. That style is influenced by a European perspective. African clothing is very modest, because we’ve always had a royalty to our clothing as Africans. Black people being brought here out of Africa have lost our African sensibilities and have adopted the American/European tradition. As you can see our men’s shirts come down to the thigh. The women’s dresses cover the cleavage area. The clothing is loose around the hip area. That is traditional African culture.

As the customer begins to show more interest in what Roomah is explaining, she invites the customer to examine the group’s line of African edenic products. Roomah explains to the customer why they call the product edenic:

You see this one is called the messianic oil. It’s a moisturizer that we make in our community in Israel. It’s made of olive oil, sesame oil, wheat germ oil, cocoa butter oil, sage butter, almond oil, and peach tree oil. These are all essential oils that you read about in the Bible. This one has lavender oil and palm oil, which are all really rich oils. This moisturizer here is very good for your skin. It makes your skin feel suppler because our moisturizers are made of all natural products; unlike the man made oils that you find in stores today. Our products are made from the trees of life. We believe that Yah formed the human body from the earth. Therefore our moisturizers and lotions include these different natural elements because our bodies are more receptive to these types of oils.

Roomah eventually leads the customer to a jewelry case. At some point she explains to her the significance of waist beads. She shows the customer the wooden carvings displayed throughout the store.

Waist beads are a part of African tradition, especially in Ghana. When a little girl is born, they put beads around her waist. They help shape her waist. As she gets older, the bead is replaced with a bigger one. As you can see from the many African statues that we have here many are decorated with waist beads.
After the customer makes her purchase she tells them about some of the upcoming events and activities sponsored by the AHIs coinciding with Black History Month. In total, Roomah’s interaction with the customer lasts approximately forty minutes. Drawing upon her knowledge of Yah-based ideology Roomah has met all of her objectives. This consisted of making the sale; promulgating the AHI ideology and educating the consumer on aspects of African-Judaic heritage. Moreover, Roomah is successful in marketing the authenticity of her product, under what I refer to as the FUBU mantra otherwise known as “For Us By Us”.\footnote{FUBU was one of the first hip hop clothing manufacturers owned by Black Americans. The acronym FUBU stood for “For Us By Us”, the ‘Us’ referring to Black Americans.}

During my visit with Roomah, several customers visited the store. I notice that she was adept at judging the reactions of her customers as she “marketed” the AHI community. If the customer seemed interested, she focused more on the edenic characteristics of her products. However, if the customer appeared uncomfortable or disinterested in this discussion she relied on the FUBU mantra to make the sale. And while the Yah-based mantra fits closely to what Paul Stoller (2002) describes as the marketing of Afrocentricity, the latter mantra fits more closely to a Pan-African self-determination interpretation, that is, built upon the premise that Black Americans should support Black-owned businesses. The organization of Diaspora African businesses also challenges previous assumptions that African Americans are unaware of the origins of the African commodities than presupposed. Black Americans, like many Americans, are becoming more conscientious consumers. Unquestionably, the increasing consciousness of Black consumers can be contributed to the location of West End Soul Vegetarian complex. The complex is situated among a host of messianic-nationalist religious sects, historically Black colleges, and cultural institutions that are typically well-informed about consumer issues.
Over the years, messianic-nationalist religious sects, like the AHI, have pursued an alternative social and political footing in America. Most often, they have sought to achieve this through spatial separation from White America, and with a more ideologically radical version of coupling separatist activities with millenialist expectations of a reconfiguration of the racial balance of power (Smith 1998). While this agenda is still a feature that characterized the AHI movement, the integration of the world’s technological, economical, political, and cultural systems, i.e. globalization, has made this virtually impossible.

**The Paradoxical Relationship between Redemptive Enterprises and Global Consumerism**

The AHIs have a paradoxical relationship in terms of both their rejection and acceptance of global consumerism which is evident in their marketing campaigns. One of the best examples of this is the evolution of the group’s chain of Soul Vegetarian Restaurants. The establishment of this business is in accordance to Yah-based culture in which illness is treated organically using basically herbs and roots (Dolvo: 11), and converts must adhere to a strict vegan/vegetarian diet. Yatneal exclaims, “There are other Black vegetarian restaurants, but nothing that has quite the flare, the flavor, and the zeal of Soul Vegetarian because our food is designed to be for the [Black/African] people. It’s designed to teach them about eating healthy and how to have everlasting life”. The flare of the Soul Vegetarian food products is what attracts many of the patrons, which consists of a diverse clientele that includes both Black and White Americans, as well as a large number of Africans and peoples from the Caribbean, to the restaurant.

Patrons of the restaurant can select from an eclectic mix of vegan/vegetarian foods that are a composition of African American, African, Caribbean, Asian, and American based culinary traditions. Naming becomes an important component of AHI marketing. Just like the names of stores like Boutique Africa and the Eternity Juice Bar is a reflection of Yah-based culture, their
food products also reflect a pride in African American history and heritage. Hence, customers can partake of the Marcus Garvey Burger, Tubman Special, or the Liberian Burger. The promotion of the regenerative diet all connects back to the idea of redemption. As Roomah reiterates:

Money is not our first agenda. The creation of our enterprises is a way for us to educate the people in order to redeem them from products that are harmful. For example, we sale edenic soap because we know that the soap that our people are using is harmful. The AHI sells regenerative food to redeem the body and mind. Once everything in your body gets unclogged of the things that are not good for you, consumers are encouraged to switch to a regenerative diet. We promote a combination of a regenerative diet and redemptive products so our people can have a vibrant and everlasting life. So when you come to have a drink at our juice bar you can order our famous ginger root drink of Everlasting Life!

Ginger has a long history as a pungent spice for cooking and as an herbal remedy for upset stomach, motion sickness, and loss of appetite. Yatneal also informs me that the group is now developing seventeen different flavors of ginger root drink. The AHI’s ginger root products are marketed as an organic dietary supplement. He says, if you really want a kick, put a little bit of cayenne pepper in there. Warm it up, shake it up, and then drink it. It will definitely take care of a cold, but if you drink it on a regular basis, then it becomes a preventative health”. Since the group’s inception, they have been extremely business savvy in marketing its products to a wider market. Coinciding with the increasing popularity of its Soul Vegetarian Restaurants, the group has developed *The New Soul Vegetarian Cookbook* (Asiel, 2005) which consists of a compilation of their most popular menu items. Some of these dishes include Zucchini Bread, Ground Nut Soup, Chickpea Loaf, Black-eyed Pea Patties, Alive Kale Salad, Sunflower Seed Spread, Apple Nut Cake, and Strawberry Shortcake.

The group has created a series of books and videos that document the history of the AHI movement and its various development projects taking place around the world. They recently established a travelling museum that utilizes a variety of reference materials and books that
support their claims to Israel. In addition, they have exploited many popular media outlets, like YouTube, to televise their divine education classes. You can listen to their Kingdom of Yah (KOY) Internet radio show, which broadcasts their divine music 24 hours a day from Dimona, Israel. Community blogs are posted from around the world and AHI news is updated regularly online on the Kingdom News Network. Multi-media projects serve an important role in spreading the group’s message and as a means to recruit new members into the community.

Before Yatneal became the manager of the West End Complex, he worked as a software engineer. He now uses his knowledge of multi-media to promote a number of AHI business endeavors. In fact, he created his own DVD called *Strong Africa through African Americans*. His DVD, as well as the AHI’s other multi-media projects that include a line of DVDs and audio CDs can be purchased on-line through their Kingdomofyah website (2007) and through their Wisdom Hut Bookstores. The global appeal of AHI’s rap group Messianic Sons or the New Jerusalem Fire Choir helps the group tap into a young urban consumer group that has a desire for Hip Hop and R&B music. Most of the advertisements for the group emphasize the group’s belief in Yah-based culture. In marketing their divine music, the Kindomofyah website boosts,

> In our desire to create a holy and sanctified environment that would promote and reflect the spirit of the Holy One of Israel, continual efforts have been made to separate ourselves from the degenerate anti-Yah sound of the world. There is a constantly evolving set of guidelines established to assist the Saints in maintaining the highest expression of Divine Culture through sound.

The AHIs’ decision to market and sell its products online is a good move, especially when taking into consideration these seven facts about urban consumers: (1) online urban consumers have adopted the Internet as their primary medium; (2) Blackplanet.com is tops in terms of average minutes per user; (3) city sites are popular among urban consumers,

---

40 Launched in 1999, Blackplanet.com is an online niche social-networking site targeted especially for the African American community. It is currently the 5th highest trafficked social-networking site according to Hitwise and the
particularly large-city newspapers, city information and alternative news; (4) beauty and
discounted travel sites are among the most popular ecommerce sites; (5) More than fifty percent
of urban Internet users expect to spend over $100 online this year; (6) the average online urban
consumer expects to spend $590 online this year; (7) by the end of 2001, more than eighty
percent of urban market consumers will have cell phones or intend to purchase one; and (7)
About ten percent of urban consumers have high-speed Internet access at home. Electronic
commerce, the ability to buy or sell products over electronic systems, plays a key role in catering
to an urban consumer base.

United States consumers are expected to increase their spending at online retail stores
from $877 per consumer in 2005 to $1,512 per consumer by 2009 (EMarketer 2006). With
promising figures like these, E-commerce constitutes a new phase in marketing African edenic
commodities to a mainstream audience. This is an interesting development within the AHI
movement given that the group is often criticized for being racist due to their oppositional views
of mainstream European culture. Kopytoff (1986) and Appadurai (1990) point out that the
globalization of commodities and their circulation through various technological and economic
spheres has resulted in the homogenization of many cultural commodities. The growth of the
Internet has brought with it a proliferation of information of varying quality, but more
importantly the burden is placed on the consumer to evaluate the information that these websites
offer.

The AHI sells the majority of their products, such as books, videos, and CDs, on the
group’s Kingdomofyah website. However, in 2006 the group also began selling its vegan dishes
online through a separate Soul Vegetarian Store (2006). And although the Kingdomofyah

only niche social-networking site in the top 5, behind the likes of MySpace and Facebook. The website provides the
most up-to-the-minute information about fashion, health, and music to members.
website contains links to the Soul Vegetarian on-line store, there are no links that lead the consumer back to the Kingdomofyah website. Ironically, from a marketing stand point, by creating a separate outlet to sell its vegetarian products, the group has distanced itself from its Yah-based principles to make a profit. Here the unsuspecting consumer searching for vegan sees a more subdued message which reads,

We envision a world where there are no more swollen bellies or sad faces, where people are spiritually, physically and mentally healthy. Through our products, Soul Vegetarian promotes regeneration of the environment from the inside out, encouraging foods that are in harmony with the earth, where all life and all living creatures are cherished, and not sacrificed for our nutritional needs. Food is the vital ingredient, the foundation upon which we co-create this new world where there is peace with our environment, with nature, and amongst us (Soul Vegetarian Store 2006).

Yatneal says the group plans to distribute a line of Soul Vegetarian frozen food products to grocery stores throughout the US. A sample of these foods includes Divine Blueberry-Lemon Cheesecake, Heavenly Sweet Potato Pie, and Savory Broccoli Quiche (See Figure 5-8). The move to sell Soul Vegetarian products in US convenience stores is another example in which global consumer interest undermines the group’s Yah-based message. Therefore, as more African edenic products slowly begin to enter US groceries, the Yah-based marketing tactic and FUBU mantra will likely play a decreasing role in the marketing strategy. But more importantly, the money generated from the sale of these products ultimately goes back into the AHI community; thus providing the group with the financial means to perpetuate the groups’ ideology in many US urban communities, like Atlanta’s West End.

**African Hebrew Israelite, Vertically Integrated Firms from Atlanta to Ghana**

The AHI have the production processes in place to facilitate the move from selling products locally to offering them to a larger constituency of consumers. Many of their food products are soy based; therefore, the group’s soy processing plants in the US and Ghana are an
extension of AHI’s development scheme. In the section that follows I specifically examine the creation of AHI enterprises in Ghana which points to a number of trends:

1. The development of Diaspora African vertically integrated firms which utilize local affiliation, kinship, religious, and transnational networks to conduct business activities on both sides of the Atlantic.
2. The interdependency of the Ghanaian and American AHI business community, in which Ghana is the site where production and manufacturing processes take place, whereas the US becomes the destination of these commodities.
3. The proliferation of Yah-based culture through the selective commoditization of certain products, such as food and clothing, helps to blur the distinction between for-profit and non-profit business organization.

African Hebrew Israelite Movement in Ghana

The AHIs are adept at finding resources to support their ideological convictions. They often cite Joseph Williams’ book *Hebrewism of West Africa from the Nile to the Niger with Jews* (1930) to explain their connection to Ghana. The book traces the diffusion of Hebrew customs throughout West Africa. Williams identifies Hebrewism among the Akan people of West Africa. As the result of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, the enslaved Akan were transported to Jamaica. Williams’ study not only establishes a connection between the Akan and the ancient Hebrews but Akan’s roots in Jamaica as well. Elmo Dolvo also explains ethnic groups like the Ga and Ewe claim migration from the Middle East in order to establish Hebraic connections to Israel.

Often such claims proffer traditional religion as legitimate heir to Christian tradition in the quest for enculturation of Christianity in Africa. An example is the claim that the Ga ethnic group has Hebraic roots and this is manifested for instance in the Homowo festival, which is reminiscent of Passover (Dolvo 2002: 15).\(^41\)

---

\(^41\) According to Ga oral tradition, a severe famine broke out among the people during their migration to present day Accra. Homowo is 14 day harvest festival that recounts the migration of the Gas and reveals their agricultural success in their new settlement (A.B. Quartey-Papafio 1920). Bruce-Meyer elaborates on the connection of homowo to Passover. He writes, “The religion of the Gas like that of other ancient peoples, centered round its annual festivals. The consecration of the Sakúmo Gabatśu, representing the Feast of Tabernacles of the ancient Jews, the eating of the Kpokpoi, or Kō (festival dish), in the month of August, and the Homowo festival meeting whereon oaths of good-will and friendship are renewed; the sprinkling of the doorposts with Nšùmọ or Akpadé, indicative of the blood of the Paschal Lamb used by the Jews at their Exodus from Africa, represent the eating of the Passover and the purifying of self for a journey—a journey through the coming year (1921:71).”
During an informal conversation at the Wisdom Hut, located at the Soul Vegetarian Complex in Atlanta, the manager showed me a copy of *Hebrewism of West Africa from the Nile to the Niger with Jews* (1930) that was for sale. After discussing the content of the book at length, he suggested that I read it before meeting with Atur Ismail in Ghana. The Ghanaian-born director of the AHI community is also the manager of the group’s soy factory plant in Tema. According to Atur, the AHI community was established in 1976. Numbering at approximately 50 members, most reside in the Medina suburb located outside of Accra. The AHI have encountered some initial problems in developing a good relationship with local government officials and Ghanaian religious leaders. For example, in 1983 Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) orchestrated the deportation of the group’s Black American members. Dolvo explains that the political motivations surrounding the group’s deportation are unclear. However, he suggests that the group was accused of deliberately neglecting to renew their visas (ibid: 12).

In addition, the group’s conflict with the Independent African churches stemming from their teachings against fund-raising and the acceptance of donations undermines further the community’s alliance with Independent African churches. Also the group’s lack of spirit filled worship, a hallmark of African religious services, further alienates the group from other religious groups in Ghana (ibid: 14). In explaining the AHI’s lack of success in propagating its ideology in Ghana, Dolvo points out that the driving force behind the movement in the US resulted from a reaction to racism and inequalities that characterized Black life during the 1960s. The context of the US-based movement is not applicable within the African context. Among the AHI’s Ghanaian sect, Christianity is seen as a surrogate for the racial suppression and corruption of Africans and their culture. Therefore, they see themselves as the revivalists of an authentic
African Hebrew culture (Dolvo 2002: 12-13). My interactions with Atur and members of the community in Ghana support Dolvo’s assertions. Interestingly enough, it was the head of the Atlanta mission that brought Atur into the AHI fold. Atur, a former Catholic, explains to me that

The head of the Atlanta mission is what I see as my personal savior, because without him, I would have been somewhere else, I would have been sick or dead right now. He taught me the African perspective of the Bible and explained our presence in the Holy Land, Israel. The Hebrew Israelites raised my consciousness. I was able to find myself in the scriptures and become a part of it spiritually and know that we were the original people of Israel.

Despite the group’s small number, the community thrives. It also appears that the initial friction between the AHI and the government appears to be subsiding. For instance, the social-cultural ideas espoused by the movement also seem to coincide with the country’s national cultural policy (Dolvo 2002). “Their dress culture for instance meets the aspiration of the government…. In fact in 1995 the government tried to ban the importation of second-hand clothing but was unsuccessful due to the income levels that make it difficult for many to acquire new clothing in African styles” (ibid: 12). The aim of the government was to protect the garment industry in Ghana by promoting a cultural policy. Earlier in 1992 one of the themes of the Pan African Historical and Theater Festival (PANAFEST) was how to promote the African cultural way of dressing and make it international (ibid: 12-13).

**African Edenic Enterprises in Ghana**

The AHI clothing factory in Ghana is called Bible International. Given the relatively small number of textile factories located in Ghana, one would think that the AHI would have established a textile processing plant in Ghana. This is not the case because procuring the raw materials needed to make the garments is an arduous process. The process is not very cost effective; hence, the AHI import their fabric from their garment manufacturing plant in Israel. Once the fabric is imported to Bible International, women in the community sew the garment into a refined cultural commodity. Bible International is owned by a Ghanaian-born AHI woman
who lives in Atlanta. She is one of the intermediaries who travels between the US, Israel, and Ghana. Due to the flood of imported African-style textiles and garments in Ghana, the Bible International products are not produced primarily for export. As Roomah intimated earlier, all the businesses established by the AHI are created to meet the needs of the community. Bible International constitutes just one chain in the large network of vertically integrated enterprises.

Atur Ismail has many ties with the communities located throughout Africa and abroad. Over the years Atur has visited other communities and has close personal relationships with members in Israel, Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Liberia. For example, Atur lived among the AHI group in Liberia. He resided there for seven years. He worked as a primary school teacher in one of AHI’s schools. Atur left Liberia and returned to Ghana before civil war broke out in that country in 1989. During the 1990s Atur served as headmaster at the AHI primary school in Ghana. Atur explains that his work as a former headmaster equipped him with the skills needed to manage people and situations. It is based on these qualifications that he was eventually selected to become the soy factory’s general manager. Throughout the course of his multi-sited work experience, Atur has developed close relationships with other communities over the years. Eventually Atur generated enough social capital to be elevated to his current position. Coincidentally, it was the members from the Atlanta community that designated Atur to be my contact from the Ghanaian sect.

According to Atur the soy factory came about as the ideal way of sharing with the people in Ghana. The group wanted to find a way for people to acquire a diet rich in protein and calcium without having to slaughter animals. Soy products have a significant role in the redemptive diet. Since the method of processing soy into tofu is a relatively laborious process,
the group has aggressively sought to tap into the most advanced technologies that are used in soy processing.

Atur gave me a tour of the soy factory. During the tour he introduced me to the staff and explained to me the basis of soy processing (See figure 5-4). The group purchases the soybeans from farmers located in the Northern region in Ghana. Once the beans are brought to the factory, the soy beans are washed, picked, cleaned, and soaked in containers. A coagulant is added to curdle the soymilk. Next the soybean juice is pumped into curding vats. The curds are pressed with hand-turned screw presses in cheesecloth-lined stainless steel boxes. The tofu blocks are washed in vats of water where they firm up and are stored until they are ready to be processed further.

The AHIs manufacture several soy based-products. The most popular products are their soy ice cream and tofu sausage (See figure 5-5). Thus far, the soy factory does not have the capacity to export its products abroad; however, the group hopes to export its tofu products in the future. Once the products are ready for distribution, the customers can buy soy products directly from the factory. Street vendors also sell tofu kabobs and soy ice cream in open markets and at their chain of Assase Pa restaurants (See figure 5-6).

Local Affiliation Networks

The AHIs’s three Assase Pa (or the Earth is Good) restaurants that are located in Accra, Tema, and Cape Coast. The restaurants in Tema and Cape Coast were undergoing renovations during my visit; however, I did spend considerable time at the Assase Pa in Accra. Customers have their choice of a variety of vegan style local cuisine, among them vegetable fried rice, ground nut soup, fufu, vegetarian spring rolls, and seasonal fruits. The restaurants serve a diverse clientele that includes local Ghanaians, AHIs, Rastafarians, and tourists. I met numerous people working for non-profit organizations, like the Peace Corps, and AHIs from the US, Israel
and Benin. It is due to this influx of international visitors that the Assase Pa has items like spaghetti served with tofu chunks, soy burgers, and my personal favorite, vegetarian pizza, on the menu.

In addition to the soy beans, the AHI also purchase fruits and vegetables from local farmers and vendors to serve in their restaurants. Atur tells me that the group has purchased land in the Central Region to do their own organic farming. They plan to use the land for an organic farming project called the “Restoration Village Project”. The project is a residential youth agricultural training village. There will be approximately 150 to 200 youth from the ages of 18 to 35 that would live on the premises. The AHI will assist youth in developing their farm skills as well as teach them the business aspect of the agricultural industry. Atur adds that it will take considerable time to get the project going. Ultimately the AHIs would like to take the idea of the Restoration Village Project and make it an industrial and economic reality for the people. In addition to the soy factory, the group has a rice mill and a flour mill. They have contracted a number of local farmers to grow rice specifically for the mills. Ghanaian farmers play a significant role in the AHI’s local affiliation networks.

In terms of marketing their commodities, the FUBU mantra also holds true within the Ghanaian context. However, in this instance the AHIs marketing strategy emphasizes the superiority of the organically grown foods in Ghana over imported foods. One of my informants asserts that,

Ghana’s locally grown rice is a far more superior product than the rice the country imports. The imported rice has been stripped of its nutrients in order to increase its shelf life. Our organically grown rice has a better taste. Most of our development projects discourage migration to the urban areas, where unemployment rates are extremely high. Our projects offer the youth other employment opportunities. We would like to help Ghanaian farmers find open markets for their products. This way they can earn a respectable living in the countryside.
In emphasizing the superiority of Ghanaian produce, the group rejects the mainstream acceptance of imported products and supports the idea of self-determination or self-sufficiency.

Figure 5-4. Soy processing equipment is designed for production of foodstuffs made from soybean (e.g., soy milk, soy residue, cheese, and yogurts). Atur demonstrates the use of a hand turned screw presses. Photos taken by Michelle Edwards
In a 2005 BBC News broadcast, Ben Ammi, expressed similar sentiments. He argued that, “Africans are eating polished White rice from America instead of locally grown brown rice, because we’ve been fooled into thinking that anything white is good and everything brown is inferior, that’s the problem.” In drawing further contrast between the AHI’s sects in Ghana and the US, within the US context the AHI’s opposition to mainstream culture is based on the racial inequalities that persist among Black and White Americans. In Ghana, the group’s ideology is in opposition to Western neo-imperialism, which is seen as the culprit of Africa’s underdevelopment. The Yah-based beliefs espoused by the AHI are the founding principles that give credence to their philanthropic causes in Ghana, especially in the areas of health and nutrition.
The health practices and organic agriculture program of the community have drawn visitors from around the world, especially government officials from Africa. The group has an NGO called the Hebrew Israelite Community Development Agency that constructed wells in rural communities in 1997. In 1996 the group had a Vegetarian Trade Fair that was dubbed the ‘First Ghana Vegetarian Food Fair’ and organized under the theme, ‘Chop better, Live Longer’. The Sister’s Conference in July 1998 was a program that focused on women’s health and was designed to promote family values (Dolvo, 2000: 11).

In 2006, Ghana’s Ministry of Health summoned a team from Dimona, Israel to assist in the development of a health and nutrition program. In 2007 the group began a series of small
pilot programs based on the regenerative diet that advocates the use of soy base products as part of the staple diet. The group has a team of physicians and experts, from Israel and Ghana that travel to various districts in Ghana. They spend about a week to ten days in the rural areas. During that time the group’s experts bring the chiefs and queen mothers, opinion leaders, teachers, nurses, and midwives together to partake in the health and nutrition programs. The programs administered by the African Hebrew Development Agency are designed to teach community leaders on how to prepare food without meat or the use of meat-based products. I had the opportunity to speak with members of the AHI health experts. Minister El Ahoo explains, that

Since the individuals that we bring together have clout within their district, they become the agents of change. For example, if a mid-wife attends our course she can tell her patients, that after they have given birth what types of foods their infant should eat. Or she can tell women in the community not to add too much cooking oil, reduce the amount of salt they use to season their food, and make sure to include plenty of locally grown fruits and vegetables to the family diet.

The AHI experts teach people about eating the proper foods, encourage people to reduce or eliminate meat from their diets, and ask them to significantly increase their water intake. Minister El Ahoo, an American born AHI, believes that as the group continues to champion this cause, Ghana will have a healthier population. Considering the high amount of protein that soybean has and the protein deficiencies that effect people in Ghana, especially children, a significant part of the program incorporates the use of soy as a part of the staple diet. This requires teaching people how to make soy based dishes in a way that replicates the taste and texture of the foods that they are accustomed to eating. As Minister El Ahoo explains,

It’s not like they are tasting something different or choosing their meals differently. They are just eliminating meat or reducing the amount of meat in their diet in order to live a healthier or longer life. Another benefit of soy is that it can be grown locally; it is a more cost-effective product than meat.
The cost-effectiveness of the programs has been a major selling point to Ghana’s Ministry of Health. Members of the African Hebrew Development Agency maintain that the regenerative diet helps to prevent sicknesses and eliminates diseases. They assert that in the future Ghanaians will not have to worry about paying medical bills or going to the hospital. Furthermore, the program is considerably cheaper in comparison to state-mandated vaccinations programs. Tovleeyah, an American-born AHI health expert says,

"The program will be more expensive at first, because farmers are not growing enough fruits and vegetables in the rural areas. We would like to see rural communities more self-sufficient. The Village Restoration Project will have a significant role in getting people back to farming."

Recently, the group submitted a proposal through the Ghana’s Department of Health and Education to do a soy pilot program in primarily schools. The program is designed to provide school children with soy milk as part of a larger scale health and nutrition program. If the program is approved, the soy factory will be used to provide tofu products to local schools. Hence the soy factory further fulfills its social or redemptive purpose by providing and increasing the amount of protein intake among Ghanaian school children.

In addition to advocating a proper diet, the AHI also advocate exercise as another component to healthy living. The group is building another redemptive enterprise, a health park, in Cape Coast. I spoke with Minister El’lel, the AHI’s Minister of Building and Maintenance, about the health park (See Figure 5-12). Minister El’lel, a Black American originally from Chicago, is responsible for the physical construction of all the major building and development projects sponsored by the community. During his tenure as the Minister of Building and Maintenance, he has supervised the construction of numerous schools, hospitals, and fresh water well digging projects in Israel and Africa. Most recently, he completed “The Village of Peace” project in Benin, West Africa. The group set up clean running water, built an auditorium that
seats 1,000 people, and constructed a tofu factory. They have also established an organic agriculture program. Thus far, the group has planted 14,000 fruit trees and continues to emphasize the importance of farming in Benin. The AHI development projects also provide apprenticeship and work opportunities for African-born Hebrew Israelites with carpentry, art and other trade skills. In fact, a number of the construction workers at the health park in Cape Coast came were members of the AHI’s community in Benin.

Figure 5-7. Minister El’lel, the AHI’s Minister of Building and Construction, stands in front of the health park which is currently under renovation. Photo taken by Michelle Edwards.

The health park (See figures 5-7 and 5-8) is projected to be completed in 2008. As Minister El’lel gives me a tour of the construction site, we discuss the use of the facility. According to him, the health park is a place where people and families can participate in
different facets of healthy living. In addition to the renovation of the Assase Pa restaurant, the health park will be equipped with an outdoor track and field, an aerobic center, a health food store, and a health spa. He says:

We are going to call the space the Beauty of Sarah, named after Sarah in the Bible. Even at the age of 90 years old, she was a very beautiful woman. She was so beautiful that her husband Abraham feared even letting people know that she was his wife. It is for this reason we refer to that particular building as the Beauty of Sarah because once you involve yourself with the activities in that particular building, you will find yourself feeling very healthy. People can also come here to get a massage, manicure, and pedicure, take an aerobics class and do everything pertaining to health and beauty at the Beauty of Sarah building.

Figure 5-8. AHI resort features an outdoor track and field, aerobics center, health food store, and Asasse Pa vegetarian restaurant. Visitor can also partake in a relaxation and spa treatments at the Beauty of Sarah. Photos taken by Michelle Edwards.

The spa will contain a colonic irrigation health treatment facility. The majority of the medical equipment inside the facility was imported by other AHI communities. Case in point, while I was conducting research with the community in Atlanta, the group was already in the process of shipping colonoscopy equipment to Cape Coast health spa. Minister El’lel says that
in the future, the group plans to build an Internet café across the street that will be open to the public. According to Yatnael, Manager of Soul Vegetarian, the Atlanta-based community also plans to send computers for the future Internet café as well. It is these transnational networks of reciprocity that has contributed to the group’s continual growth and successes.

**Conclusion**

AHIs’ businesses are founded upon the principle of Yah-based culture; however, the group shares similarities to other Diaspora African enterprises that are discussed in detail throughout this dissertation. As I stated previously, Africa’s economic woes are the result of uneven relationships between the economically dominant parts of the world and the economically weak parts of the world. The AHI’s transnational enterprises, like other Diaspora African businesses, in many ways perpetuate this cycle insomuch that these businesses rely on Ghanaian labor to process materials that are then redistributed to the West, where Black American consumers have a desire for these products. In the AHI exemplar it should be noted Black American AHIs occupy the highest positions within the group’s social hierarchy; hence, the AHI’s networks are designed to establish cities in the US and Israel as hubs of expertise. The city of Atlanta plays a particular role in carrying out transnational business directives and organization among the AHI community.

As I have demonstrated, the formation of African edenic enterprises blurs the distinction between for-profit and non-profit organization. The AHI sect in Atlanta’s West End uses a Pan-African approach to marketing cultural commodities. Black Americans consumers, like many Americans, are conscientious consumers, and they take pride in their African heritage. In this regard, African edenic enterprises meet several agendas for the AHI community. They: (1) teach people/consumers about the AHI lifestyle, (2) educate Black peoples about their African
heritage, and (3) provide an economic means for the community to organize and develop projects
around the world.

In Ghana, the AHI have used their social capital to influence national policy to the point
at which the country’s Ministry of Health helps propagate the group’s ideology. An article in the
Ghana News Agency summarizes the AHI’s development mission in Ghana (2007),

Officials from the African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem, said problems militating against
the rapid development of the continent were spiritual and that its redemption depended on
her return to God (Yah) and his commandments. Mr. Yaw Poku Dankwa, Director of
Information of the Ghana Extension of the African Hebrews, speaking on the topic
‘European Models: Source of Africa’s Predicament’, underscored the need for a
redemptive development model for the 21st century that would halt the present trend of
deploitable conditions of her people. The lecture, titled “Africa in Search for a New
Development Model for the 21st century”, was organized by the African Hebrew Israelites
of Jerusalem, to formally “introduce the community to the Ghanaian public and share its
redemptive message for Africa according to the prophetic plan of Yah.”

Mr. Dankwa said the Bretton Woods institutions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF)
and the World Bank were founded to rule the world with an elite cream of intelligentsia.
This movement, according to Mr. Dankwa, evolved over the years into various political
forms and systems, and eventually established financial wings of the IMF and the World
Bank. Mr. Dankwa wondered why Africa continued to wallow in poverty despite its
enormous human and natural resources and blamed colonialism for making African
countries producers of cash crops, and ensuring her economic survival rather than
development. He said the results of the pursuit of democracy were rampant disrespect for
family and authority, individualism adding that “Democracy is a divisive factor that creates
a booming market for sin, with an alarming moral degeneration.”

Mr. Dankwa said Europe had no success story, and the slow pace of development in Africa
was her chastisement for the blind copying of European models of development. He,
therefore, advocated the Dimona Development Model, based on righteousness, communal
interdependence where each would be his brother’s keeper. Likewise Dr Ben Yehuda,
Minister of Information of the African Hebrews in Jerusalem, stressed a new way of
thinking, “a higher elevated consciousness” to build a rightful relationship with God, based
upon His Word.”

AHIs, like other Diaspora African business owners, offer an alternative vision for
Ghana’s economic development. The group specifically offers what they see as a redemptive
development model. This model represents an implementation of many Pan-African ideas. One
of the principal tenants of the Black consciousness movement was the perceived dependence of
Blacks on White liberals to speak for them. It was believed that once Black people had come to believe that they had the right and power to stand up for themselves, they would then be able to take power into their own hands. The AHI spiritually-based redemptive model constitutes one of many 21st century models of Pan-African self-determination. The AHIs suggests an alternative to Ghana’s reliance on economic aid from former colonial powers and international development agencies. In many ways, the AHI are no different from other African religious groups in Ghana. However, their “gospel of prosperity” is based on economic self-determination rather than on prayer. The group’s ability to provide job opportunities for its members may be the impetus that increases its membership.
CHAPTER 6
CONCLUSION

Findings and Theoretical Insights

In Chapter One, I defined entrepreneurs as innovators of business enterprise. They recognize opportunities to introduce new products, new processes or improve the profitability of organizations. In addition, they are capable of raising the necessary capital, assembling the factors for production, and orchestrating operational strategies to exploit new business opportunities. In Chapter One I introduced the concept of Pan-African philanthropy and I discussed the identity formation and social capital of Diaspora Africans. I also discussed the formation of the Pan-African global cities network between Atlanta and cities in Ghana.

In Chapter Two, I summarized the types of social networks to which Diaspora Africans have access in establishing their businesses. I examined the types of business issues and challenges that they encounter in order to develop and sustain their businesses. Foremost among those issues are the following: cultural differences, communication issues, problems associated with local banking and lending institutions, establishing trust with employee and clients, acquiring land, gender issues specifically those affecting Diaspora African women, and developing a good marketing strategy.

In Chapters Three, Four, and Five, I placed emphasis on examining the variety of social and contractual arrangements from which Diaspora Africans draw in organizing the necessary modes of production, labor, and marketing mechanism needed for the establishment of vertically integrated firms. In this final chapter, I will present some of the major theoretical insights discussed throughout the dissertation. This chapter concludes with suggestions for future research. Tables 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3, contain company composites for the Jewell Spice Company,
North Scale Education and Research Institute (NSERI), and the African Hebrew Israelite’s (AHI) African edenic enterprises.

**Diaspora African Identity Formation and Social Capital**

Inherent in the term Diaspora African is the idea that the diaspora (and not their country of origin or ethnic identity) represents a primordial identity for Black Americans. I argued that by placing the emphasis on a diaspora identity Blacks living in Ghana are better able to establish membership claims to a broader pan-African constituency without having to relinquish their ties to US. Moreover, I explain how they parlayed their diaspora or Pan-African identity into a form of social capital. In Chapter One, I argued that researchers should re-consider the term diaspora identity within a broader configuration of pan-African identities. Hence, throughout this study I use the term diaspora and pan-African identities interchangeably. However, I want to flesh out the potential contrast that can be made between the two concepts that can help benefit future studies about Diaspora African groups that are not from the US.

Traditionally, diaspora identities by and large, are concerned with nation-state based identities; the population being scrutinized is understood to be a nation that has been dispersed from its homeland or desires its own homeland (Glick Schiller 2005). For example, the ethnic consciousness of black Americans resulted from the systematic discrimination which inhibited them from completely assimilating into US mainstream life. It is through a shared history of trauma and second-class citizenship that has helped to shape black identity in America (Eyerman 2001) hence the diaspora identity of Black Americans is encapsulating in thinking of oneself as being both an African and an American.

Similarly scholars have used the term long-distance nationalism (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001) as a useful concept to describe the nationalist belonging of African descendant populations
residing in apparent states (i.e. governments that cannot support its citizens). However, the concept does little to explain the push-factors that inform their decisions to migrate to Africa, or to what many would consider apparent states. Based on the fact that Diaspora Africans who are from the US, a former colonial power, one can assume that Black-American culture, for the most part, assumes a pre-eminence in relations to other black cultures globally. Blacks benefit from the US imperial/neocolonial hegemony. Arguably this puts Black American Diaspora Africans in a unique position in terms of the amount of power they yield and the number of resources they have access to in comparison to other African descendant populations.

There are other studies that explain the development of Black entrepreneurship in Africa in association with Black neo-colonialism or coinciding with the development of Black capitalism in Africa (Daily 2002; Iheduru 2002; and Walker 2002). This study recognizes aspects of business organization that is changing urban business practices. In Chapter Three I explained that Diaspora African transnational symbiotic relationships with multinational corporations and local institutions in Ghana have been utilized to help their businesses meet international manufacturing standards. Chapter Three demonstrated that one way multinationals corporations can infiltrate markets is by integrating aspects of their businesses with smaller enterprises. The Jewell Spice Company exemplar demonstrated that success as a transnational business operator depends less on size than on other factors such as being able to discern and take advantage of available opportunities. This includes building up a thorough understanding of the business social and cultural environment, and gaining a familiarity with local and transnational business rules, regulations and conventions. Vertical integration helped companies, like the Jewell Spice Company benefit from economies of integration. For example, the Jewell Spice Company’s
quasi-integration with the McCormick Company has helped the company tap into new technologies.

The NERSI acquires the raw materials used to make its products in Ghana. They ship the raw materials to their parent company in Atlanta to be processed and sold. Hence, NERI’s vertically integrated networks also follow an established economic pattern of globalization, or neo-colonialism. The AHI’s networks also follow these same economic circuits. The group’s conflict with the African Independent Churches in Ghana could pose more problems in the future. Moreover, the group’s influence with Ghanaian government officials may also be seen as another attempt to elevate the status of Africa in the eyes of the West. In this regard, Black American Hebrew Israelites “conceived missions not only as a way to redeem Africa but as a way to enhance black status within America” (Campbell 1975).

The economic and socio-political impact of multinational corporations and globalization on underdeveloped countries has been the subject of intense debate and controversy leading to charges of exploitation and neo-colonialism. In the past, Diaspora African settlers have, perhaps unwittingly, played a role in entrenching and reproducing European and American geopolitical and economic interests on the continent (e.g. Liberia and Sierra Leone). Research on Black neo-colonialism fails to consider the self-deterministic philosophy that characterizes the formation of Black American entrepreneurship. Diaspora African entrepreneurs are quick to recognize that multinational companies will be making increasingly large investments in Africa, especially in the extractive sectors. This study revealed that despite the problems associated with globalization Diaspora Africans, like Andrew Jewell; view their involvement with multinational corporations as efficient engines of change; as a way to reduce poverty by connecting local business with world markets and bringing access to credit and technology. Similarly, the
participation of Diaspora Africans, like the Andoh’s from the NSERI and the AHI’s, appropriate tools from vertical integration that allow them to intervene in Ghanaian development in innovative ways. In this way they both accommodate and resist the involvement of Western intuitions at the same time. Still scholars must consider:

- Whether or not Diaspora Africans are substituting one form of paternalistic neocolonialism, which involves the belief, held by a neo-colonial power that their colonial subjects benefit from their occupation, for another?

  Pan-African identities are not concerned with nation state identities; rather, it is concerned with racially based identities. These racially-based identities open up the possibility for Black Americans to self-identify with a multitude of African ethnic identities. Pan-African identities are a strategic ideological position that can be used to generate support for philanthropic projects. As Copeland-Carson (2005) points out, both immigrant groups and non-immigrant Blacks experience racial discrimination in the Americas derived in part from their shared African ancestry; therefore, Copeland argues that the changing demographics of Black communities in the US provides new opportunities to strengthen the interracial philanthropy of Black American and African immigrant populations. For example, the proliferation of the AHI’s Yah-based culture through the selective commoditization of certain African products, such as food and clothing, helps to blur the distinction between for-profit and non-profit business organization. In addition to making money, another objective of AHIs entrepreneurs is to build their own morals and values (e.g. Yah-based culture) into their businesses. They teach people/consumers about the AHI lifestyle, educate Black peoples about their African heritage, and provide an economic means for the community to organize and develop projects around the world. The group’s ability to provide job opportunities for its Ghanaian members may be the impetus that increases its membership.
**Diaspora African Networks**

Diaspora African entrepreneurs rely on various forms of social capital to assert their membership claims to kinship, local affiliation, religious, and transnational networks. This requires a new set of skills, which include learning how to interact with foreign clients, and knowing pricing structures and market information, to effectively infiltrate Ghanaian, and in some instances US, markets. Interestingly, the majority of the Black Americans in Ghana live there because they are married to Ghanaians and they have made the decision to reside in the home country of their spouses. Hence, the study examined the relevance that kinship networks have in helping Diaspora Africans establish businesses in Ghana. Local affiliation networks served as informational circuits that were used in marketing and learning about jobs and business opportunities. In the Jewell Spice case study I demonstrated how Andre Jewell used these networks, which consist of friends and acquaintances; professional and business organizations; and banking and lending institutions to manage his businesses. In the African Hebrew Israelite (AHI) case study religious networks formed the basis for economic cooperation between the groups’ numerous transnational communities. In each of the case study we saw that it was not uncommon for Diaspora African entrepreneurs to build collaborations with a diverse group of overseas contacts. In its entirety these types of networks may include non-profit organizations, multi-national corporations, or industry and trade organizations. The NSERI case study revealed the use of transnational philanthropic networks in mounting community development programs on both sides of the Atlantic. The development of Diaspora African networks is a continuation of a largely overlooked form of exchange and co-operation within the context of 21st century African Diaspora relationships.
Diaspora African Philanthropy

The history of Black philanthropy shows that Blacks are seeking to make a difference in the daily lives of other Black Americans. In many cases, their philanthropy has been a response to: discrimination, slavery, segregation, and in the past inequality in education and the workplace. This study disclosed the types of philanthropic causes that accompany Diaspora African transnational business organization in the areas of agricultural development and African traditional medicines. Pan-African philanthropy was the term used to explain the economic networked activities that require the participation of African Diaspora communities on both sides of the Atlantic. The concept is founded on the ideology of cultural, educational, and economic enlightenment of diasporas and homeland peoples; however this type of philanthropy supports an alternative view of post colonial development.

Based on an ideology of self-reliance and racial uplift this alternative to post colonial development relies less on help from Western-based institutions, such as non-governmental organizations, development agencies, and former colonial powers. This study also point to the contributions of Diaspora Africans in developing and sustaining community projects in Ghana and the US. It still remains to be seen if Pan-African philanthropy takes on a similarly trajectory in other areas of the world. Future research is needed to determine if Diaspora African entrepreneurial and business practices that are global in scope link the Afro-Atlantic to Asia, Europe, or South America. Questions to consider are:

- To what extent are American-born Diaspora African entrepreneurs agents of economic change in African in comparison to other Black Atlantic agents?
- To what extent are the philanthropic activities of African transnational entrepreneurs similar or different from the Pan-African philanthropy promoted by Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs?
- To what extent do agricultural businesses support a Pan-African agenda versus other business, such as tourism, educational service providers, and art dealers?
Given Ghana’s prominent role in Black American history, to what extent is Ghana a site of Diaspora African economic activity in comparison to other African countries?

How do Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs compare to other ethnic groups, such as Chinese or Jewish expatriates?

**Pan-African Global Cities Network**

Even though Diaspora Africans living in Ghana are small in number, they have the social capital (e.g. the ability to accumulate a diverse number of networks) to yield some big results. This is especially true in terms of mobilizing humanitarian efforts in Diaspora communities. This study revealed the growing importance of Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs, working in solidarity with Ghanaian and Black American communities across US and African cities. They are building collaborative partnerships among Black urban leaders from every political, business and educational sector in propagating Pan-African ideas and agendas. By exploiting their international ties and resources Diaspora Africans have developed their own transnational social fields between Ghana and the US. Atlanta, like other US cities with large African descendent populations, has a significant role within a Pan-African global cities network.

Furthermore these networks are designed to establish cities in the US as centres of expertise that are capable of carrying out Diaspora African transnational business directives between Ghana and the US. This study revealed that the cities of Tema, Cape Coast, and Elmina are critical sites of Diaspora African vertical integration business organization in Ghana.

However future research should consider:

- Does a similar model of vertically integrated firms occur in other global cities?
- Does Atlanta serve as the only transnational node for other West African cities?

**Diaspora African Economic Activities and Transcending Notions of African Development**

The literature on Black entrepreneurs underscores their entrepreneurial deficiencies relative to a standard set by other minority entrepreneurs, e.g., middle-man minorities (e.g., Jews,
Chinese etc.). I have argued that it is problematic to compare the entrepreneurial experiences of Black Americans with other euro-immigrant groups without considering differentials in structural constraints, such as racial discrimination and lack of capital. Previously Blacks have had to rely on their own set of ethnic and business organizations, banks, and trade schools to sustain and augment business practices. Today, they are members of professional business organizations that excluded their membership in the past. Blacks participate in these mainstream organizations while simultaneously strengthening their own set of parallel ethnic business networks. Unlike the other mainstream organization, these ethnic organizations foster the philosophy of disadvantaged/minority recruitment in the areas of business. Black American self-deterministic philanthropy is rooted in this shared experience of oppression and is motivated on the premises of racial uplift. Members from these organizations also come together as volunteers for community activities, and are particularly involved with mentoring programs for young African Americans.

This study points to a continuation of economic self-determination philosophy that is coinciding with the emergence of Diaspora African transnationalism. Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs continue to be invested in the racial and identity politics of the US. This study demonstrates the influence that the Black American Diaspora community has in rallying international/global support to transform economic and societal outcomes in the US and Ghana. Similarly, this form of transnationalism requires a strong economic base in order to support a Pan-African agenda. Contrary to so much of the literature that points to Africa’s disaffection, marginality, and lack of success in the global economic arena, the case studies highlight the creativity and optimism involved in contributing to Ghana’s economic development.
One of the many reasons given to explain urban poverty in Africa is the fact that there are a severely limited number of jobs available especially in rapidly growing urban areas (Tarver, 1996). Therefore, many Diaspora African entrepreneurs working in the agricultural industry view their businesses as a way to help develop Ghana’s rural sector and build the national economy. Diaspora African economic activity hopes to breaks new ground by countering features of African economic development that are considered problematic. In the past Black American landowning farmers and entrepreneurs reorganized rural society by founding fraternal societies and building schools, churches, and businesses to cater to the black clientele. They welcomed the help of private philanthropy to accomplish their mission. Within the communities they built, landowning farmers, stable tenants, and sharecroppers could find support, education, and culture (Reid 2003: 263). In this study A Pan-African approach to development consists of networks that involve philanthropy, the transfer of new technology and information, and it incorporates an ideology that is based on self-reliance. The case studies revealed that the revitalization of rural farming practices is a plausible strategy for Ghana’s economic development.

The Pan-African philanthropy of the Jewell Spice Company, the NERSI, and the AHI African edenic enterprises focused on the development of agricultural industry as a viable economic industry in Ghana. By focusing on the Black American consumer base and supporting what I called the FUBU mantra, Diaspora Africans businesses have provided markets for Ghanaian farmers to sell their products. They have created new economic opportunities for farmers in the rural areas. For example, the Jewell Spice Company trained its factory workers on the latest spice technology equipment and provided them with the skills they needed to compete globally with other agricultural base industries.
In the NERSI case study farming also served as a form of philanthropy in both Ghanaian and Black American communities. For example the GENESIS program, sponsored by the North Scale Institute, is a “back to nature movement” whose philosophy is focused on the self-sufficiency and survival of African nations, including Africans in the Americas. The NERSI’s back to nature movement counteracts the problems associated with urban poverty in Ghana by providing economic solutions, (e.g. farming opportunities) to Ghanaians in rural areas. In emphasizing the superiority of Ghana’s agricultural products, the AHI’s rejected the mainstream acceptance of imported products and like NERSI supported the idea of self-determination or self-sufficiency. The AHI’s form of Pan-African philanthropy emphasized the importance of farming through a number of community service projects, such as, The Restoration Village Project. The project is a residential youth agricultural training village that will assist youth in developing their farm skills as well as teach them the business aspect of the agricultural industry.

Further research is needed to continue to expand theorization on alternative to Africa’s development. A larger sample size could be used to emphasize the agency of both Africans and Diaspora Africans in overcome social issues that affect African and African Diaspora communities.

**Conclusion**

It is important to recognize that history has shown that at times a Pan-African agenda has been difficult to achieve. Oftentimes, cultural differences between Africans on the continent and those in the Diaspora often misdirect even the most benevolent of intentions, especially in organizing large scale Pan-African movements. In using ethnography to look carefully at local processes, this study elucidates how Diaspora African entrepreneurs envision themselves within the context of a broader transnational movement and Pan-African agenda. Still, more research is needed to investigate the different strategies that other Diaspora African groups and African are
using to promote their own versions of post-colonial development. The following discussion provides some new directions for future research.

Missionary Groups

According to the Center of Philanthropy and Civil City (2003) “there is an overriding belief among African American that service to God is linked to service to humanity” (Joseph 1995: 81-82). In many cases Black messianic groups like the AHIs are slowly becoming a substitute or alternative to Western non-governmental organizations. The AHIs are not the only messianic or religious group collaborating with the Ghanaian government officials. The Joseph Project, sponsored under the auspices of the US-based Joseph Alliance Incorporated, is the name of a series of activities, actions and interactions being organized by Ghana to re-establish the “African Nation as a nation of all its peoples, capable of delivering on the promise of God to Africa and the African peoples (Joseph Project 2007).

The project, using Ghana’s 50th anniversary of its independence, which coincided, with the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, reached out to Africans in the diaspora encouraging them to return to the motherland and help in its development. The project builds upon the Pan African foundations laid by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah and his outreach to Africans in the Diaspora (ibid). The organization also sponsors annual cultural events, such as, Emancipation Day to attract Black tourists and collaborates on a variety of philanthropic causes with the Joseph Alliance Inc. The Alliance takes its name from the story of the Biblical Joseph who was sold into slavery (coincidentally to the Egyptians). The Joseph Alliance is a non-profit Christian mission organization, located in an Atlanta suburb. The organization helps to provide logistical support and fundraising guidance to help individuals interested in pursuing short-term missionary work. In 2006, the organization raised enough money “to help lift sixteen widows and mothers of young children out of their own pit of despair and poverty by providing all
sixteen women with the start-up capital to launch their own businesses” (Joseph Alliance 2007). The ministry intends to continue to provide funds for training and development of these new entrepreneurs.

Due to renewed interest of scholars in examining the effects of globalization of African religions (Meyer 1998b; van Dijk 2003; and Pellow 2008) a re-examination of the globalizing missionary activities of Black Americans will help to augment these studies. Future research should consider:

- What new strategies are Black American religious and ideological groups using to create Black Nationalist projects in Africa?
- How do other religious movements, such as the Rastafari and the Nation of Islam movement, hope to see the globalization process succeed in Africa?

Diaspora African Transnational Communities

Figure 6-1. Members of the African American Association of Ghana, receive a tour from Dr. Ericka Bennet (pictured in blue) at the opening of the Diaspora African Forum building which is located in Cantonments, Ghana. Bennet is the Interim Chairperson of the Diaspora African Forum, and was the Convener of Accra in 2004. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.
In Chapter One I explained how Ghana is looking towards Black Americans to contribute to the country’s economic development. One organization that hopes to create economic, political, and cultural relationships between Ghana and the older Diaspora is the Diaspora African Forum. The Diaspora African Forum is head-quartered in Cantonments, Ghana. It is a local affiliation group with a transnational constituency that hopes to build partnerships between Ghana and the older Diasporas. I spoke with Dr. Erieka Bennet, the Diaspora African Interim Chairperson, whom I met at an African American Association of Ghana (AAAG) meeting. According to Bennet, the African Diaspora Nation is within the top 10 richest nations in the world. Black Americans in particular are going there and bringing with them a broad range of professional skills, talent and knowledge. She says, “Diaspora Africans now add to that knowledge an African holistic connection to the land, the language, the culture, the governing bodies, and the civil society. We will make a powerful partner with our brothers and sisters at home.”

As Dr. Bennet intimated, the Diaspora African Forum advocates a Pan-African agenda that unifies all people of African ancestry. In addition the Forum hopes to obtain a political role in Africa. The organization’s website states that,

We exist to invite and encourage the full participation of Africans in the Diaspora in the building of the African Union, in its capacity as an important part of the Continent. We will provide the vital linkage for Diaspora Africans to become involved in Africa’s development as well as reap the fruits of African unity (Diaspora Forum, 2007).

More research is needed to explore the activities and the involvement that organizations, like the Diaspora African Forum, the AAAG and TransAfrica. Questions to consider include:

- What role do these organizations have in changing the perceptions that Ghanaians or other African peoples have of the Diaspora African community?
- What type of philanthropic causes do they support?

42 Dr. Bennett gave a similar speech as the Convener of Accra 2004.
What role do these organizations have in advocating for legal issues, such as, the right to abode, land ownership issues, and business and trade regulations that affect them?

Figure 6-2. Member of the African American Association of Ghana browse items in the Diaspora African Forum gift shop. The building opened in 2007 and sits adjacent to the Du Bois Center. The site will most certainly become a popular tourist destination for returnees. Photograph taken by Michelle Edwards.

There are a number of Black-owned non-profit organizations in Ghana that support cultural and educational exchange programs, creating farm cooperatives, and building schools, hospitals, and technology centers. The FIHANKRA International Land Ownership project is an example of collaboration between Ghanaian and Diaspora Africans in land acquisition projects. The organization, a self-proclaimed Pan-African movement, promotes the re-integration of Africa with its Diaspora: “It is a movement guided by theory but grounded in practice. And, as such, FIHANKRA is committed to the reconstruction of Africa and the unification of her peoples” (FIHANKRA, 2007). Fihankra, which translates into “they left without saying goodbye,” initiated a township development project in 1997. The township is called Ya Fa Ogynmu.
The organization sees the collaboration as a win-win situation. “Ghana gets the benefit of the expertise, money and resources of these intrepid, African Americans and these homesteaders get their own piece of the motherland to develop as a legacy for future generations” (FIHANKRA, 2007). The organization also promotes spiritual, cultural and economic development by assisting Africans throughout the Diaspora in the process of cultural re-identification and exchange; acquiring land and facilitating the cultural and economic planning and development of model communities in Africa, by promoting trade, tourism, and investment, and advocating on the behalf of African people on issues affecting the common good. Fihankra Development Limited is a registered company that was created by FIHANKRA International, with its headquarters in Ghana and representatives in the US. The company is building a model community of homes, infrastructures and institutional facilities including a mall, education facilities, a post office, and accounting firms. Still in its early stage of development the site provides a breeding ground for potential research, especially in terms of how the community in Fihankra is reshaping the urban landscape in Africa.

**Pan-African Health and Healing Practices**

More research is needed to understand the mechanism of Diaspora philanthropy, which not only consists of private donations and community services activities, but also in propagating spiritual and cultural ideology. For example, Chapter Five explained how African edenic or redemptive enterprises meet several agendas for the AHI community: they (1) are an expression of Yah-based culture in terms of their personal redemption and the redemption of others; teach people/consumers about the AHI lifestyle; (2) educate people about their African heritage, and (3) provide an economic means for the community to organize and develop projects around the world. The group also runs several community programs in the Atlanta, West End area. Future
research could yield some interesting comparisons in regards to the variation of Pan-African philanthropic activities in Atlanta and in Ghana.

Thus far, my research has discussed how the African Hebrew Israelite Development Agency uses cultural based solutions to develop community project in Ghanaian’s rural areas. Further research should study the impact that the African Hebrew Israelite Development is having in African communities, specifically in the areas of agricultural and industrial development. This line of research should consider the impact that AHI’s health programs have in local schools and in the rural areas.

This study reveals that among Diaspora African entrepreneurs Ghana’s agricultural commodities are becoming a part of a larger global network of alternative health related industries. Whether it is acupuncture, homeopathy, or herbs, many of these alternative medicines have roots in Africa. This study explains how Mama Kali and Dr. Andoh used their business, cultural and scientific competencies to teach African traditional health practices to Black Americans. NERSI’s Pan-African philanthropy fosters the cultural enlightenment of Black Americans about African traditional healing practices. In addition to selling African traditional medicines the NERSI provides courses to people interested in ethno botany and alternative medicines. Future research on the NERSI should explain:

- How the use of African folk medicine is used to help maintain a sense of Pan-African identity in the Black American community?

**Multinational Corporations and Global Trends in Outsourcing**

More research is needed to look at how Pan-African philanthropic projects are being used to help enhance the skills of Ghanaian and Black American framers, contractors, architects and suppliers. Questions to consider are:
• What types of skills and knowledge are being transferred between African and its Diaspora groups?
• What results from collaborations with multinational corporations?
• While collaborations help to provide solutions to relevant social issues, do they pose more problems by creating a cycle of dependency among African groups?

More research is needed to study the long-term effects of the collaborations between transnational entrepreneurs and multinational corporations. For instance, in dealing with multinational corporations:

• Does the social responsibility that Diaspora Africans have to African communities truly benefit African communities or only the multinational corporation?
• Are Diaspora Africans in a position to prevent the negative consequences associated with the role of multinational corporations in developing countries? Or will they succumb to rules and regulations imposed on their business by the multinational corporation and their government?

Lastly, it should be noted that Diaspora Africans are not the only ones in Ghana seeking collaborations with multinational corporations. I found a number of Ghanaians, many of whom had lived abroad and returned to Ghana, with businesses that were created to meet the growing need of foreign companies seeking to outsource certain business activities, such as medical transcription, help-desk operator, and data entry jobs. There is a lot of research that focuses on outsourcing in countries like China and India; however, Ghana, as well as other African countries, is the new frontier for outsourcing activities. In this regard, another area of research to be explored should explain how Ghanaian entrepreneurs use their social capital to create business collaborations with multinational corporations. Other lines of inquiry should ask:

• Are there any comparisons to be made between Ghanaian and Diaspora African transnational entrepreneurs’ involvement with multinational corporations?
• What forms of technology, skills, and ideas are being transferred?
• Ghanaian transnational entrepreneurs feel pressure to contribute back to their home country, however, do they feel the same level of committee in seeing the Black American community succeed? Does this change how they perceived their relationship with multinational corporations?
• Does the Ghanaian strategy of Pan-African philanthropy differ from other Diaspora African groups? If yes, then what form does it take place?
Table 6.1. Jewell Spice Company composite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Type</th>
<th>1. The company specializes in organic food products.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Networks              | 1. Andre Jewell has a large network of local affiliation networks of farmers, suppliers, bankers, export agents, African American Association of Ghana (AAAG), and Ghana’s “rat pack.” The company’s transnational networks link it to international development agencies (e.g., OPEC), US companies (e.g., McCormick) and US-based business organizations (e.g., American Spice Trade Association).  
2. These networks function primarily as resources for external financing and as means to enhance mentoring and training partnerships with larger companies within the same industry. |
| Vertically Integrated enterprise | 1. The company is vertically integrated with a multinational corporation. The company’s manufacturing, processing, and labor activities take place in Ghana. In the future, the company will outsource its marketing under the McCormick name and send its products to label and processing factories in US cities, like Atlanta, GA, Huntsvalley, MD, and New Orleans, LA. The company sells products to American consumers, but specifically targets Black consumers. |
| Pitfalls of vertical integration | 1. Vertical integration with multi-national corporations falls into an established economic pattern of globalization, or neo-colonialism. Partaking in these types of business collaborations Diaspora African entrepreneurs gain considerable advantages over domestic competitors. For instance, it is common for multinational corporations wanting to increase productivity to acquire more advanced machinery for their Diaspora African business partners. Also, in many cases entrepreneurs can reduce the cost of marketing since most multinational corporations carry out much of their marketing in-house. |
| Pan-African Philanthropy | 1. The Jewell Spice is primarily objective is to make a profit. Its second objective is to provide new outlet for Ghanaian farmers to sell their products. The company will use its McCormick networks to make Ghana’s agricultural products available to a large global consumer base. If successful, this could energize others to invest in Ghana’s agro-industry. The company will use its McCormick networks to diversify and cultivate the skills sets of its employees. Andrew Jewell envisions an African workforce that can compete on the international level. |

Michelle Edwards (2007)
Table 6-2. North Scale Education and Research Institute Company composite

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>North Scale Education and Research Institute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Networks</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vertically Integrated enterprise</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pitfalls of vertical integration</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pan-African Philanthropy</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Michelle Edwards (2007)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6-3. The African Hebrew Israelite’s African edenic enterprises composite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Type</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vertically Integrated enterprise</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pitfalls of vertical integration</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Pan-African Philanthropy**    | 1. The AHIs Pan-African philanthropy suggests an alternative to Ghana’s reliance on economic aid from former colonial powers and international development agencies. In addition to making money, another objective of AHIs entrepreneurs is to build their own morals and values (e.g. Yah-based culture) into their businesses. They teach people/consumers about the AHI lifestyle, educate Black peoples about their African heritage, and provide an economic means for the community to organize and develop projects around the world.  
2. The African Hebrew Israelite Community Development Agency working in collaboration with Ghana’s Ministry of Health began a series of small pilot programs based on the regenerative diet that advocates the use of soy base products as part of the staple diet. |

Michelle Edwards (2007)
APPENDIX A
SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Semi-structured interviews or conversational interviews will be used to collect vital statistics regarding the nature of their business and personal background information. Each participant will be asked to provide information regarding his or her:

- Age
- Marital status
- Number of children
- Education level (none, primarily, middle school, secondary, post-secondary)
- Training (self-taught, apprentices, formally trained)
- Work history
- Self-identification (African-American, Ghanaian, ethnic group affiliation)
- Number of years living in the US
- Number of years living in Ghana
- Migration/Travel history
- Travel history related to business activities
- Business type (e.g. specializes in tailoring, ethnic foods, jewelry)
- Longevity of the business (number of mo/hrs.)
- Number of business owned
- Number of attempts at starting a new business
- Number of jobs currently held

A series of semi-structured interviews with each participant will be conducted to capture the array of business types and organization with respect to cultural products. This information will be used to compile survey data that will be generated from the following questions:

Business organization
- Why did you decide to start your own business?
- How did your business get started (e.g. loans, savings, and investments)?
• How long have you been in business?
• What types of products do you sell?
• Why did you choose to enter this particular retail niche?
• Do you own your own shop or do you rent a booth space?
• If you own a store, do you rent out booth spaces? What is the constituency of your renters (i.e. where are they from, what is the duration of their rental agreement, and what types of products do they sell)
• If you rent a booth space(s), what are the terms of your rental agreement? How did you make these arrangements?
• What is the number of paid employees at your business? What qualified them for the position?
• Is your business a family business? If so, what is your relationship to your employees?
• Do you use several traders or wholesale buyers to purchase and/or supply your products?
• What is the organization structure of your business (e.g. who does what? How is the work responsibilities delegated? Who is in charge? How are employees trained? How is pricing determined?)
• How essential is travel to your business. If travel is essential, how often do you travel back and forth between Ghana and the US? How is business travel arranged?
• How did you establish the transnational and regional networks for your business (e.g. was your business established through kinship networks, business association, or ethnic group association)?
• What forms of technology have you implemented to develop and or expand your business (web-site, cell-phones, and packaging or manufacturing instruments)? What types of investments or re-investments have you made into your business?
• What types of investments have others made into your business?

Developing markets/Marketing
• What are their most popular items sold?
• Who buys them and why? Describe your consumer base. What are their consumption habits or buying preferences?
• Why did you choose to start a business in Atlanta?
Why did you select this particular location (street address, neighborhood) for your business?

What mechanism do you use to advertise your business (e.g. word of mouth, newspapers, Internet, and radio)?

What strategies do you use to make a sell or promote your product?

Does your strategy change based on the perceived interests of the client (e.g. tourist, collector, art connoisseur etc.).

Do you travel to flee markets, business expos, arts and crafts fairs, or cultural events to sell your products? If so, do you travel there personally or do you send an employee/representative on your behalf?

Do you belong to any business organizations or cultural associations? If so, what are they? Why did you join them?

Has your involvement in this organization impacted your business?

Source of supply

What products and/or goods and services do you sell at your shop?

Do you use several traders or wholesale buyers to purchase and/or supply your products?

Describe the nature/organization of your regional or transnational supply chains?

What forms of information technology do you use to contact your suppliers?

What forms of information technology do you use to order your supplies?

What forms of technology do you use to procure (import/export) your supplies? This includes the use of shipping and trucking companies, company car, etc.

Methods of production

Do you manufacture your own products? If so, how did you learn this skill?

What types of raw materials do you use? Where do you get these materials from?

What type(s) of objects do you produce?

What forms of technology do you use to create these objects?

Do you currently have or ever had an apprentice(s) working for/with you? If, so what is the number of apprentices at your business? What are they apprenticing for (e.g. business
training, art training)? How is knowledge and information transferred between you and your apprentice(s)?

- What innovations have you made with respect to your product, if any to make it unique (e.g. new materials, styles and names and/or introducing new kinds of products)?
- What innovations have you made with respect to the production of your product (e.g. use of technology, variation of a traditional technique)?
- What marketing strategies do you use? This includes sell technique, display of products, use of music, etc.

If applicable, I will also conduct informal interviews and participant observation with their clients in order to investigate the consumption patterns of the business owner's clientele. The participants will be asked the following questions:

- What item did you buy?
- Why did you purchase this item (special events, aesthetic value, or gift)?
- Were you planning to buy this item when you came to this store?
- Do you come here often? If so, how often? What types of products do you buy from here?
- Do you know anyone that works here? If so, how do you know them (relative, friend, associate, etc.)?
- Are you from the Atlanta area? How did you hear about this store?
- If you are not from Atlanta, how did you hear about this store? Why did you decide to visit?

Interviews will be used to understand the underlying values driving the production and sell of African cultural commodities and determine the cultural and economic dimensions that influence its production. Additional questions to be asked of the participants are as follows:

- How has living in or traveling between the US and Ghana impacted your business?
- How have your business and or transnational networks evolved over the years?
- What new business opportunities have open up because of your travels?
- What skills (e.g. language, customs) have you developed to navigate and/or adapt to different economic, socio-cultural and context?
How have you strategically mobilize or used material culture, including ideas, history, language, images, and objects, in the creation of your business? How have you used these ideas to market yourself and your product?

What are the pros and cons of being a business owner? As an owner of a transnational business how difficult was it for you to create and establish your networks? Infiltrate markets, acquire a business locale, operation license, and or secure your retail niche?

How has living or traveling between the US and Ghana shaped your identity, influenced your ideas of personal success, goals, and economic aspirations?

How has living or traveling between the US and Ghana changed your perception, attitude, and behavior towards other Africans and/or African-American
LIST OF REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Michelle Edwards was born in Kansas City, KS in 1977. She attended elementary school in Kansas then moved to Gardner, MA with her parents and three siblings. After graduating from Gardner High School in 1995, she returned to Kansas to pursue her B.A degrees in Anthropology and African and African Studies. In 2000 Michelle fulfilled a life-long dream by securing an internship at the Smithsonian Institute National Gallery of Art. She continued her education at the University of Kansas and received a M.A degree in Historical Administration and Museum Studies in 2002. In 2003, she decided to return to school to pursue a PhD degree in Anthropology at the University of Florida (UF).

Throughout the course of her graduate career Michelle has achieved a number of accomplishments that contributed to her academic success. She is the recipient of the UF Department of Anthropology’s Zora Neale Huston Fellowship in 2003-2006. She participated in the Foreign Language and Areas Studies Summer Fellowship program sponsored through the UF Center for African Studies in 2004. In 2005 she was named the Del Jones Student Award winner for the Society of Applied Anthropology Annual Meeting in 2005. Her dissertation research was funded through grants provided by the US Department of Education’s Fulbright-Hays Doctorial Dissertation Abroad program (2006-2007), and the UF Warrington College of Business’ Center for International Business Education and Research (2006-2007).