

Chapter 5

Applying Data Triangulation to Explain Parenting Experiences in the African Diaspora

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated African diaspora parenting in the United States. Three different sources of data were analyzed: parents' focus group discussions, interviews from children and parents, and YouTube videos made by African immigrant children living in the United States. This study applied the thematic analysis methodology, and the results validate other studies that found that parenting is influenced by culture. The results also show that African immigrant parents in the United States use abstract yet multifaceted approaches to parenting, while their children acculturate faster but are also aware of their African cultural heritage. Overall, this chapter underscores the importance of triangulation in studying ethnic minority groups, not only in the way that it precludes lumping their stories together, but also how this method reduces bias and increases the relevance of data.

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding the African diaspora continues to receive the attention of scholars who study black people, identity, culture, transnationalism, migration, immigration, and globalization from different perspectives. Historians have observed that the African diaspora—although continuously in flux—consists of people who migrated either on a voluntary basis, due to war, political asylum, or through slavery to Europe and the Americas (including the Caribbean).

Members of a diaspora are a people who live away from an ancestral home but typically retain a collective memory of that place via histories, achievements, and cultures. They have an attachment to their homeland, typically personal, and will sometimes return (or perpetually plan to) or remain in solidarity with those who stayed behind (Brubaker, 2005; Butler, 2001; Cohen, 1997; Safran, 1991). According to Zeleza (2005), to be a diaspora is a process that requires a group that endeavors to stay connected to their culture even as they learn new ways of being in the host nation. Therefore, not all Africans who have dispersed qualify to be termed diaspora.

The African diaspora in the US consists of voluntary and involuntary arrivals. This means people both of African descent (through the forced movement of ancestors via the trans-Atlantic slave trade) as well as immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa south of the Sahara who have since migrated to the US (Arthur, 2016; Cohen, 1997; Shepperson, 1966; Takougang & Tidjani, 2009). Even in migration, however, there is typically a sense of displacement from one's origins. This is due to the minority status they are accorded by the host country even if they migrate in large numbers.

This chapter focuses specifically on African immigrants to the US from the 1980s onwards. According to Pew Research Center (PEW) (2018), from 2000 to 2016, the number of black immigrants to the United States have more than doubled from 574,000 to 1.6 million. Nigerians are leading followed by Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, and Somalia among blacks from sub-Saharan Africa.

These migrations are generally legal under US immigration laws for various types of visa authorized for family members, e.g., the US *Immigration and Nationality Act* (INA). Other Acts that facilitate migration from Africa include the *Refugee Act of 1980* and the diversity lottery program included in the *Immigration Act of 1990*. According to Zong and Batalova (2017), these new immigrants from Africa are diverse and typically comprise either high-skilled professionals or less-educated refugees. Immigrants from Anglophone African countries (such as Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya) tend to hold four year degrees, while those from war-torn countries (such as Liberia and Somalia) often have refugee status and typically do not have a college degree. Zong and Batalova (2017) also note that upon migration, African immigrants were more likely to live in poverty compared to native-born populations.

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