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Acculturation and Marital Stability Among Nigerian Immigrant Couples in the United States

Anselm I. Nwaorgu

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ABSTRACT

ACCULTURATION AND MARITAL STABILITY
AMONG NIGERIAN IMMIGRANT COUPLES IN THE UNITED STATES

By Anselm I. Nwaorgu

With the growing immigrant population in the United States, there is increased concern in the mental health field as to how these immigrant groups are being impacted by acculturation. This study investigated the effects of acculturation on Nigerian Ibo immigrant couples who live in the New York, New Jersey, Washington D. C. metropolitan area. Quantitative analyses on binational data gathered from Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria and Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States were used to compare males and females across the two groups on measures of constraint commitment, personal dedication, gender role expectations, and dyadic adjustment.

Four hypotheses were tested in this study. Hypothesis one predicted that males and females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria would score significantly higher on constraint commitment than males and females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States. The second hypothesis predicted effects in the direction of hypothesis one when the two groups are measured on personal dedication in marriage. Hypothesis three predicted that when measured on gender role expectations, Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States would exhibit less crystallized gender roles than Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria. The fourth hypothesis predicted that Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria would score significantly higher on dyadic adjustment than Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States.

For the independent variable, the investigator assigned study participants into two groups: Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria as group one and Nigerian Ibo couples in the
United States as group two. Each group was further categorized along gender lines. The
dependent variables consisted of quantitative scores on constraint commitment, personal
dedication, traditional and egalitarian gender role expectations, and dyadic adjustment.

Test findings supported the hypotheses tested with hypothesis three producing an
interaction effect. Females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States were far
more egalitarian than males in this group and than males and females among Nigerian Ibo
couples in Nigeria.

Research outcome suggests acculturation effects among Nigerian Ibo couples in
the United States in the area of gender role expectations, constraint commitment, personal
dedication, and overall dyadic adjustment. Study findings also questioned any
international survey of values that claims to reveal indigenous societal values if they do
not take acculturative influences into account.
ACCULTURATION AND MARITAL STABILITY AMONG NIGERIAN IMMIGRANT COUPLES IN THE UNITED STATES

BY

ANSELM I. NWAORUGU

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Seton Hall University

1999
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DEDICATION

To my parents and to my brothers and sisters and with their support

I dedicate this dissertation to Mrs. Isabel Jean Perkins who has relentlessly and with unequivocal commitment has extended herself beyond the limits of friendship in order to ensure that this doctoral work was completed successfully. Jean, you provided solution to problems, listened to my frustrations, encouraged me through word and deed to step beyond every obstacle as I journeyed through this program. With this dedication, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to you for everything you have done for me.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Over the past 20 years, major political, social and economic changes all over the world have dramatically increased the wave of international migrations to the United States (Turner, 1991; Westermeyer, 1989). This increase has been attributed to: (a) Family re-unification provisions in the immigration law of the United States which makes it possible for immigrants to apply for and reunite with family members; (b) the rise of international labor circulation as large numbers of male and female workers move to the United States primarily for income, work, and educational goals often with a view of returning home once they have gained training and financial stability, or for retirement; and (c) an increase in the number of political refugees who, because of the forced nature of their migration, retain plans of returning to their country of origin long into the future (Turner, 1991). Whichever push-pull factor may be responsible for migration, evidence abounds in the literature that migration and the consequent acculturation is a stressful process.

Numerous studies have investigated the effect of acculturation on mental health. Outcomes from these studies have shown that immigrant families are at risk for various psychiatric disorders and social maladjustment (Faris & Dunham, 1960; Golding & Burnham, 1990; Van Deusen, 1982; Westermeyer, 1989). For one, the demands of the host culture might be quite different in many respects from the culture of origin and the life style might be totally at odds with previous experiences in the native country (Ozbay,
Furnham and Bochner (1986) in their analysis of immigrant experience used the term “culture shock” to refer to the idea that entering a new culture is potentially a confusing and disorienting experience. Cervantes, Salgado de Snyder, and Padilla (1989) observed that immigrants to the United States experience the stressful effects of exposure to an unfamiliar and sometimes hostile environment. Zwingman (1978) called the migration experience a phenomenon of “uprooting disorder” with identifiable psychological symptoms of alienation, nostalgia, depression, and sense of helplessness. Other studies have shown that, when people undergo the trauma of migration and consequent acculturation, the continuity of experience in the migrants’ previous sociocultural context is ruptured, and, as a consequence, countless family changes take place (Ben-David & Lavee, 1994; Sluzki, 1979).

A lot of studies on immigrant groups (Cf. Bernal, 1982; Elkoly, 1966; Fitzpatrick, 1976; Soto, 1983; Sue, 1981; Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980; Wakil, Siddique, & Wakil, 1981) have centered mostly on organizational changes, ideological shifts, and emotional stresses associated with acculturation. Only very few studies have focused the impact of acculturation on dyadic relationships (Ben-David & Lavee, 1994). Moreover, very little is known about Nigerian immigrant couples in the United States, and a recent literature search revealed no published studies on the impact of acculturation on Nigerian immigrant couples. This lack of information is significant considering the number of Nigerian immigrants in the United States.

According to the 1990 U. S. Census, there are about 91,000 legal immigrant Nigerians in the United States, most of who live in the major cities. This count greatly under-represents the actual population of Nigerian immigrants and their spouses in the
United States because it excludes a sizable number who are illegal aliens or who have a nonimmigrant visa (i.e., visitors, students). Moreover, the number of Nigerian immigrants to the United States has increased steadily since the count of this census because of the mass exodus of Nigerian couples and their dependents out of Nigeria to United States. In fact, by 1991, a study estimated that one out of every four Africans in the United States was Nigerian (Butty, 1991).

Delimitation of the Study

Nigeria as a Nation

Nigeria is situated on the West Coast of Africa and occupies about 356,700 square miles. It is the richest, most populous country in Africa, with a population of over 118.6 million people (Otite, 1991). Nigeria became a single country through the January 1, 1941 amalgamation of the Colony and Protectorate of Southern Nigeria with the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria by the British. Most of Nigerians reside in rural villages, although there are several modern cities. Nigeria gained its political independence in 1960. Since then, the country has experienced ethnic problems, a civil war and several coups leading to successive military governments and dictatorships. The country’s political and economic instability may be partially responsible for the massive exodus of the population and for many Nigerians’ unwillingness to return to their country after completing their education in the United States (Nwadiora, 1996).

Nigerian Demographic Makeup

Generally, Nigeria is thought to comprise about 200 to 250 different ethnic groups, each with its own language, history, and customs. There are three major groupings: the Hausa, the Yoruba, and the Ibos.
The Hausas are the largest group in the Northern region, and a majority of this population is Muslim. Other large groups in the North include the Fulani, Kanuri, and Tiv. The Yorubas are the largest group Southwest of the Niger River, otherwise called the Western region. The Ibos form the largest group in the Southeast, otherwise called the eastern region. They live in large family groups or villages. Most of them became Christians following the colonization of Nigeria (Otite, 1991).

While these three groups share many cultural values, they are also culturally diverse. Many have argued that the three groups that comprise Nigeria are indeed three nations that were amalgamated by the British into one nation, a situation that has been an impediment to various attempts at nationhood. This study will primarily focus on the Ibo, the dominant group in the eastern region of Nigeria. The couples who are to be studied in this research are Nigerian Ibo couples living in Nigeria and Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States.

Although there are no statistical figures with regard to the number of Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States, an informal sample of this population in the New York/New Jersey area from member registrations in different native town meetings, organizations, and churches showed that only about 20% or 80 of the 400 Nigerian Ibos who were sampled were single. Considering the fact that New York and New Jersey are among the metropolitan areas with very large population of Nigerian Ibo immigrants, it is possible to speculate that the majority of Nigerian Ibo immigrants in the United States are married.

Research has shown that different cultural contexts lead to the development of unique worldviews, beliefs, values, assumptions, modes of social conduct, behavior, and expectations (Carter, 1990), and these world views are the values most impacted by
acculturation (Berry, 1992; Berry, Minde, & Mok, 1987). Nigerian immigrant Ibo couples are products of a culture whose organizing principles, pride and shame issues, family organization, and gender-role expectations contrast significantly with those of the United States. This will be discussed at length in the literature review chapter. At the core of this comparison is that Nigerian culture is collectivist and communitarian (Iroegbu, 1990, 1994; Mbiti, 1969) while the United States culture is individualist (Segal, 1991; Triandis, 1985, 1992; Triandis et al., 1986). The differences between these two cultural orientations are well documented (Hofstede, 1980; Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck, 1961; Triandis, 1985; Triandis et al., 1986). Studies have shown that acculturation can aggravate conflict and tension among couples (Ben-David & Lavee, 1994; Dreman, 1997), and may lead to higher risk of marriage dissolution (Edwards & Fuller, 1992; Carver & Teachman, 1993). According to Berry (1992), the greater the dissimilarity with the host culture, the greater the acculturative stress. While it is relevant to raise the question as to how acculturation impacts immigrant groups, this study will specify this question relative to Nigerian Ibo immigrant couples in the United States.

Theoretical Rational for the Study

The theoretical foundation for hypotheses in this study between acculturation and its effect on marital stability for Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States is drawn from two perspectives: (a) Theories about marital dissolution and (b) theories about acculturation effects.

Theory on Marital Dissolution

A good number of attempts have been made to formulate explanations of marital dissolution. Levinger (1965, 1976) postulated that marital strength stems from the
interaction between attractions (affectional rewards, socioeconomic rewards), barriers (felt obligations, moral proscriptions, external pressure), and alternatives (a person’s perception of how he/she might fare outside of marriage) to a marital relationship. A decrease in the marriage’s attractiveness and/or an increase in the weakness of its barriers to leaving it are said to impel individuals toward dissolution. Another factor is the presence of a more positive assessment of alternatives, e.g., offer for a new job or graduating from college. Nye (1978) developed a new formulation that is very similar to this by suggesting that marital stability is determined by the amount of positive affect toward the spouse, constraints against its dissolution, and the perceived unattractiveness of alternatives to the marriage. Lewis and Spanier (1979) used the same constructs to describe the relationship between marital quality and stability. Alternative attractions and external pressures to the marriage serve as contingencies mediating the relationship between marital quality and stability.

On the other hand, Edwards and Saunders (1981) proposed a model of the dissolution decision involving the effect of decreased barriers and increased alternatives upon commitment. They hypothesized linear and generally unidirectional relationships among the components of their model. Their proposition five stipulates that, once the barriers to divorce are overcome in a psychological sense and a viable alternative to the relationship has been perceived, the “goodness of marital outcomes” is reassessed. Then the person will begin to devalue the rewards in his/her marriage relative to the cost of staying in it. Devaluation of one’s reward-cost ratio is said to have ramifications for marriage. In their proposition six, they stated that “the higher the comparison level of alternatives and the lower the goodness of marital outcome, the lower the level of
commitment to the marriage” (p. 385). In clarifying their proposition, these authors maintain that,

if a person has become aware of attractive alternatives and reassessed his or her marital outcome, the sense of attachment or identity with that relationship is likely to decrease. One’s loyalty to the spouse, involvement in the marriage, and sense of belonging begin to decline. (Edwards & Saunders, 1981, p. 286)

This leads logically to their final proposition that the lower the level of commitment to the marriage, the more likely the dissolution decision.

Many authors have therefore hypothesized that commitment is perhaps the major determinant of marital stability (Beach & Broderick, 1983, Johnson, 1982, 1985; Lund, 1985, Rusbult, 1980, 1983; Stanley & Markman, 1992). According to Stanley and Markman (1992), commitment can be understood as encompassing two related constructs: personal dedication and constraint commitment. Personal dedication involves the “desire of an individual to maintain or improve the quality of his or her relationship for the joint benefit of the participants” (p. 595). Constraint commitment, on the other hand, refers to either external or internal pressure that forces individuals to maintain relationships regardless of their personal dedication to them. Constraint commitment “favors relationship stability by making termination of a relationship more economically, socially, personally, or psychologically costly” (p. 596). If commitment is taken as the bond that holds a couple together, it is possible to speculate that higher constraint and personal dedication factors in marital commitment translate into higher marital stability.
Theory on Acculturation Effect

Investigators point to the process of acculturation as one that generally decreases barriers and increases alternatives regarding relationship commitment, a process that is more likely to lead to dissolution decisions. Berry (1992) viewed acculturation as a process that brings about cultural changes which include the alteration of traditional institutions and the replacement of these with imported ones, a change that is said to weaken both traditional family values and normative consensus regarding social life. This is because these cultural changes tend to lead to greater individualism and less effective social control. They are therefore, assumed to be positively related to the rate of marital disruption (Trovato, 1986).

Berry (1992) also argued that the degree of shedding of one's cultural values due because of acculturation and the replacement thereafter with new norms are affected by many variables arising from the acculturative milieu. Some of these variables include: (a) The emphasis on individualism and self-assertion versus communitarianism and submission, (b) the open job market in the United States which offers immigrant females more opportunity for financial independence and which frees them from economic dependence on males (Bee, 1996; Blumstein & Schartz, 1983; Kuyas, 1982), (c) the judicial system in the United States which is much more disposed toward granting divorce to a couple (Skolnick, 1997) with the woman much more likely to gain custody of her children (Golini and Silvestrini, 1997), and (d) the equality of gender roles espoused by United States society which challenges the prerogatives of patriarchy (Butatao, 1984; Connell, 1984; Whitefore, 1978).
These values are said to be moderated by the degree of benefits experienced in the original culture relative to the opportunities in the acculturative arena (Dressler, Mata, Chavez, & Viteri, 1986). Consequently, a couple, for example, may experience differential adjustment in the acculturative place since some of the benefits accrued by one gender in the original culture may be compromised in the new setting. Researchers have identified the area of gender roles as one possible area of such differential adjustment whereby females tend to acculturate faster than males and tend toward more egalitarian roles (Ginorio, 1979) while males tend to retain as long as possible their traditional privileges based upon patriarchy (Abadan-Unat, 1982).

Put together, these theories lead to some possible conclusions. First, acculturation can have a mitigating effect on the traditional social structure that empower marital constraints, increase alternatives to relationships, and consequently lower the level of commitment to marriage. Second, couples who migrate from a patriarchal society where gender roles are segregated and unequal to another society where equalitarian and egalitarian roles are more the norm are likely to experience differential adjustment relative to gender roles. This is because such a change may entail the loss of benefits for one gender and accruing benefits for another.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact of acculturation on the stability of marriages among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States.

Hypotheses

Considering that constraint commitment is a major determinant of marital stability in that it makes termination of relationships more economically, socially, personally, or
psychological costly, and considering also that with migration, the traditional social institution that reinforces the normative quality of these constraints is to a large extent absent, it is hypothesized that:

H1. There will be significant differences in mean scores between Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States and Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria when measured on constraint commitment. Specifically, females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria will score higher than females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States and males among Nigerian couples in Nigeria will score higher than males among Nigerian couples in the United States.

Another aspect of commitment in marital relationships is personal dedication on the part of the spouses. Studies have found a positive relationship between personal dedication and constraint commitment (Stanley & Markman, 1996) to the effect that low constraint commitment is associated with low personal dedication. It is, therefore, hypothesized that:

H2. The mean score for Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States will significantly differ from the mean score for Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria on a measured of personal dedication. Specifically, females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States will score lower on this measure than females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria and males among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States will score lower than males among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria.

The area of gender roles is expected to be an area of differential adjustment for Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States. Acculturation studies have shown that, for most women from traditional societies, the acceptance of the Western orientation toward
egalitarianism is often preferable because it challenges traditional women's roles and the inequalities inherent in them (Levine, 1982). The expectation, therefore, is that Nigerian Ibo couples living in Nigeria will have more crystallized gender roles than Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States. Thus, if scores are derived from a measure of gender-role expectations in which each subject receives a traditional score and an egalitarian score, the comparison of mean vectors on these scores for males and females in each group will show a basic difference. Males and females among Nigerian couples in Nigeria will not differ significantly in their scores indicating more crystallized gender roles while Nigerian couples in the United States will significantly differ in their scores thus indicating less crystallized gender roles. It is, therefore, hypothesized that,

H3: for Nigerian Ibo couples who live in the United States, the vector of means on the traditional and egalitarian scores on a measure of gender roles expectation for the female population will be significantly different from the vector of means on the traditional and egalitarian scores for the male population on the same measure.

Considering the observed relationship between constraint commitment, personal dedication and marital stability (Stanley & Markman, 1996) and the impact on couples of differential adjustment to gender roles, it is further hypothesized that,

H4 When measured on overall dyadic adjustment, mean scores for Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States will differ significantly from the mean scores for Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria. The direction of this difference will be negative.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study can be evaluated from different perspectives. First, much of the research that has been done to examine the relationship between migration
and the propensity to divorce has been based on survey or census data collected only in the host country (Ben-David & Lavee, 1994; Partida, 1996; Sandhu, 1994). Such data lacks the information necessary to directly examine acculturation effects. Without nonimmigrants as a comparison group, the extent to which acculturation affects behavior cannot be directly assessed. Recognizing this problem, Massey (1992) has argued that new approaches are required to study the outcome of immigrant groups. The present study is an attempt at a new approach: to use binational data to evaluate the effect of acculturation on marital stability.

The second area of potential impact from this study stems from the lack of any research on the population that is being examined in this investigation. While studies have been done on the impact of migration and acculturation on immigrant families, no studies have been done on the impact of acculturation on Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States. Researchers have shown that migration can aggravate conflict and tension among couples (Ben-David & Lavee, 1994; Dreman, 1997). It can lead to higher risk of marriage dissolution (Edwards & Fuller, 1992; Carver & Teachman, 1993). It can create an imbalance in the traditional power structure between couples (Espin, 1987; Jane, 1990; Torres-Matrullo, 1980) which has been shown to lead to family dysfunction (Shon & Ja, 1996) and high divorce rate (Goldscheider, 1997; Levine, 1982; Morokvasic, 1984).

What this work attempts to do is to evaluate whether these acculturative effects are also applicable to Nigerian immigrant Ibo couples in the United States.

Thirdly, there are clinical implications for this study. Research has indicated that, when immigrant couples come to therapy, their problems are in many ways compounded by migration and acculturation effects. According to Levenback and Lewak (1995),
immigration can cause a family crisis because it affects the structure, hierarchies, and values of the family as a system. "The therapist who relates only to presenting symptoms and ignores the context of the immigration crisis may lose credibility with patients and miss important therapeutic opportunities" (p. 379). It is hoped that understanding the effects of acculturation on Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States can help guide a therapist to develop strategies when intervening with these couples, especially where acculturative stress may be a contributing factor to marital distress.

Summary

Migration and subsequently acculturation are stressful events that involve changes on many levels in the lives of couples and their families. They rupture the continuity of life as lived in the immigrant couples' previous sociocultural context resulting in changed attitudes and gender relations relative to norms that reinforce commitment and dedication to marital stability. Transformations of this nature have been associated with higher risks of marriage dissolution among immigrant couples (Edwards & Fuller, 1992). Important to this research, therefore, is the delineation of the effect of acculturation on marital stability among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States.
Chapter II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Research on the psychology of social change and acculturation shows that many psychological characteristics become altered as individuals experience changes in their sociocultural milieus (Berry, 1992). Such changes can be as a result of social changes that are taking place from within a society (Georgas, 1988, 1989, 1991, 1993), or they may result from contact with other cultures (Feldman, Mont-Raynaud, & Rosenthal, 1992). The second instance, duly called acculturation experience, has been identified by earlier anthropologists as a cultural-level phenomenon, (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, 1936) defined as culture change resulting from contact between two autonomous cultural groups.

While in principle changes occur in both groups, Georgas, Berry, Shaw, Christakopoulou, and Mylonas (1996) have pointed out that, in practice, more change occurs in the nondominant group. Such changes have been identified as economic changes that move people away from traditional pursuits and norms towards new forms of employment and empowerment, alteration in social relationships including intergroup and interpersonal relations, and cultural changes that involve the alteration of traditional institutions and the replacement of these with imported ones (Berry, 1992). As a result of these changes, immigrant family structures and intrafamily relations may come into conflict with family norms that are common in the host country (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993).
Acculturation has also been identified as an individual-level phenomenon and has been referenced as psychological acculturation (Graves, 1967). At this level, acculturation refers to changes in an individual whose cultural group is collectively experiencing acculturation (Berry, 1992). These include changes in values, attitudes, abilities and motives, personal identity, ethnic identity, intergroup attitudes and lifestyle preferences (Berry, 1980; Berry, Kin, Minde, and Mok, 1987). The process that brings about these changes involves learning behaviors from the new culture and shedding features of one's original culture. According to Berry (1992), these two processes usually involve conflict and often result in new forms of behavior that challenge normative values which existed in the original culture. The extent of this conflict depends on how radically different the immigrant culture is from the family norms that characterize the host culture (Berry, 1992).

The twentieth century brought radical sociocultural transformations in Western societies that blossomed into a distinct cultural reality different from the cultures of many immigrant groups in the United States. In order to understand how immigrants, and, more so, Nigerian immigrant couples are impacted by their acculturative experience in the United States, it will be necessary to understand how the culture of the United States came to be so distinct and different from the traditional cultures of these immigrant populations.

In terms of methodology, this literature review will be done under four sections. The first section is focused on the sociocultural sources of family change in the United States. In the second section, the effects of these sociocultural changes on family values and couple relationships in the United States are outlined. Third, the impact of these
sociocultural changes on immigrant couples in the United States is considered. The fourth section is devoted to looking at the Nigerian Ibo culture and Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States.

Sociocultural Sources of Family Change

In The United States

The past four decades have been identified as a period when family life in the industrialized nations underwent dramatic changes. According to the literature, these family changes are consequent upon long-term changes in the larger society that began in the early decades of the 19th century. Notable was the shift from preindustrial family-based economy to the urban, industrial way of life, with its separation of work and family (Edgar, 1997; Skolnick, 1997). This transition will be discussed under three headings: (1) separation between family and work, (2) the industrial family unit as a nuclear family, and (3) the post-industrial family.

Separation Between Family and Work

Prior to the 1920s, the family in the United States functioned as a unit in which men, women, and children combined their various skills, property, and other resources, and produced through work enough to meet their combined needs while caring for one another (Edgar, 1997). Within these families were tradeoffs and negotiations, inequalities and inequities that were usually in the favor of males.

Beginning from the early years of the twentieth century, the family as a locus of reciprocity and mutual interdependence began to shift. The continual obligations due extended kin and community diminished in importance as the government, unions, and corporate America replaced kinship support (Weiner, 1997). Severed from the vast
demands of kinship, and as the upper-middle-class cultural and economic values became the model for all those aspiring to climb the United States ladder of success, the nuclear family began to serve as an “ever expanding and ever more commodities-dependent consumer population.” (Weiner, 1997, p. 103).

**The Industrial Family: A Nuclear Unit.**

With the replacement of extended kin with government, union and corporate agencies, the values and form of what a proper family should be were redefined. “Family values, to be seriously inculcated, had to be understood as a natural expression of the needs and concerns of individual families” (Weiner, 1997, p.104). These assumptions, according to Weiner (1997), were rooted in three pervasive ideals of the United States.

First, there was the interpretation of the United States’ history that stressed the frontier-breaking cowboy qualities of individualism and self-reliance. Second, there was a perception that the United States should be homogenous, a melting pot erasing differences between people from different background and classes. Third, there was a shift in economics that encouraged families to increase their purchasing power even when such consumption undermined other kin and community obligations. These ideals found structure in three sociocultural movements: (a) Americanization, (b) Fordism, and (c) domestic market expansion oversees.

**Americanism**

Immigration history shows that before the 1880’s, the majority of immigrants to the United States were northern Europeans of Protestant background. This wave changed by the end of the century whereby most immigrants hailed from Southern or Eastern Europe. The new immigrants were said to be darker complected, more religiously diverse,
and often poorer than their predecessors (Carlson, 1975). They were perceived as "more foreign" and were thought to be unskilled, undisciplined workers, and therefore a potential threat to an increasingly stable work force in the United States (Weiner, 1998).

The consequent move therefore, was to socialize these immigrants into behaviors deemed appropriate in United States (Berkson, 1969; Gavit, 1992; Stansell, 1987), "to institutionalize the mechanisms whereby immigrants would be transformed into good Americans" (Weiner, 1997, p. 105). Berkson (1975) and Stansell (1987) described how the cultural canons taught that a proper American was one who could speak English (preferably without an accent), had an education, was a citizen, and demonstrated a wish to endorse, even imitate, the lifestyles of the rich and influential. Immigrants had to become members of the national culture.

Weiner (1997) has argued that part of this inculcation was to "shrink the size of immigrant families, and rearrange older relationships of economic cooperation among family members and between family groups that often blended their incomes to survive" (p. 106). In its place, the nuclear model of the family was to be instituted as the ideal. This model of the family which, according to Weiner, served the upper class who "tried to keep the family unit self-contained and self-fulfilled, dedicated to personal happiness, privacy, consumption, and the proper raising of children" (p. 106). Concomitantly, department stores, women's self-help magazines, and increased advertising aimed at women, the primary buyers in most elite families, also became more prominent (Stansell, 1987).

Consequent upon this emphasis on self-sufficiency and independence was that family structure gradually shifted from obligations to extended kin and moved toward
independent, geographically isolated households with men as breadwinners and women as responsible for domestic spending and family well-being (Coontz, 1988; Lipsitz, 1986; Stansell, 1987). It was this move that instituted the Victorian domesticity that came to characterize the middle-class United States’ family.

**Fordism**

The Americanization movement is said to have begun to lose momentum after World War I as people began to criticize its vicious insistence on homogeneity. Allied to this was the rise of labor unions as desperate conditions forced workers to organize for better wages, job security, and safer working conditions (Weiner, 1997). With the introduction of the assembly line by Ford in 1914, a whole new approach to scientific production started, whereby factory work became a series of piecemeal tasks, rather than a collective effort, resulting in a new process of domestic consumption (Harvey, 1992).

Ford introduced a $5.00, 8-hour working day that resulted in a combination of higher wages and lowered working hours intended to create good consumers, not just good workers. According to Gramsci (1971), Fordism implied changes “inseparable from specific mode of living and of thinking and feeling life” (p. 43). It created a commodified culture based on purchasing power and increased leisure time. It gave rise to a new worker, a new family dynamic that fostered a family structure which was private, separate, and based on purchased commodities. All these radical changes, according to Weiner (1997), combined to,

transform the nuclear family into a unit that could afford to indulge in luxuries unheard of by immigrant forebears, at the same time separating families from each other in ways equally unimaginined by previous
generations...the long-term support and symbols of identity, such as land
and other possessions, were greatly diminished or even eradicated. Without
the need for access to external material or emotional support, the family
completed its focus inward, meeting the larger world as continually spending
consumers while becoming the site of an intensely atomized acquisitiveness.
(p. 107)

By the end of 1950s, nuclear family members now relied on each other almost
exclusively for intimacy and nurturance whereas their connection to the larger world was
increasingly dependent on the marketplace (Weiner, 1997). This completed the
atomization of the United States’ family.

**Domestic Market Expansion overseas**

The next phase of radical change came around the 1960s, when large industrial
corporations in search of greater profits moved their operations overseas because of cheap
labor. As a result, the job market in the United States tumbled and many blue-collar
workers lost their jobs (Weiner, 1997). Consequently, poor women who had always been
in the work force were joined by middle-class women as inflation and a weakened dollar
made two wages necessary to maintain a consuming lifestyle (Weiner, 1997). The entrance
of this new class of women into the labor force brought dramatic changes in normative
family patterns.

**The Post Industrial Family**

The Americanization strategy and Fordism occasioned the movement of fathers
and work out of the home. This disrupted existing patterns of daily family life as well as
cultural blueprints for gender and generational roles (Ryan, 1981). It created a
breadwinner-housewife model of the nuclear family whereby the wife and mother was the nurturing center of the family and the home, while the father and husband was the breadwinner (Edgar, 1997).

With the entrance of women into the work force, this "Victorian domesticity" was challenged (Bernard 1972; Davis, 1988). Empowered by the values of individualism, independence, and assertiveness prevalent in the United States, particularly in attitudes toward authority, sexuality, and freedom of individual choice (Shon and Ja, 1996), women waged a war that culminated in the victory of the woman's-suffrage movement, the first wave of women's liberation. This brought increased assertiveness on the part of women and resulted in the creation of a more symmetrical family, undoing the sharp dichotomy between roles that characterized the breadwinner-housewife pattern (Bernard, 1972).

Studies have shown that employed women took on a variety of innovative behaviors by being part of a new social network that offered jobs, income, and information. These behaviors were reported to have altered their family lives as well as their own (Whiteford, 1978). According to Goldscheider (1997), "our current gender arrangements mean that long-lasting husband-wife relationships have to transform repeatedly, and we have been reaping the disruptive consequences of such transformation in rising divorce rates" (p.76). Skolnick (1997) has noted that the trends are remarkable across North America and Western Europe:

- a divorce revolution, a sexual revolution, couples marrying later, a drop in fertility rates, an increase in single-parent families, an increase in the
number of women working outside of the home, and an increase in the
diversity of family forms. (p. 167)

Weiner (1997) has also alluded to the destruction of the extended kin system that
once served as the source of social support and emotional giving (Weiner, 1997). Dreman
(1997) has argued that the accelerating rates of stress and violence in the family are a
reflection of the strain between work and family, the evolving gender conflicts, and the
ambiguity in parental roles, e.g., the biological versus the socializing parent.

It is evident from the above review that the sociocultural transformation of the
family in the United States brought many changes in the functioning of families and in
interpersonal relationships. These changes included but are not limited to (1) psychological
gentrification, (2) self-determination and autonomy, (3) changes in marital relationship,
and (4) changes in social and extended kin network. These changes constitute the cultural
climate that immigrant couples battle with as they acculturate and situate themselves
within their host country.

Psychological Gentrification

Skolnick (1991) has identified a set of psychocultural changes that accompanied
the sweeping transformation of the family in the Western society, notably, education and
the democratization of personhood.

Education

In the United States, like the rest of the West, rising levels of education and related
changes have been linked to a complex set of shifts in personal and political attitudes.
There is a more psychological approach to life involving greater introspectiveness, a
yearning for warmth and intimacy in family, and other relationships (Veroff, Douvan, &
Kulka, 1981). There is also evidence of an increasing preference on the part of both men
and women for a more companionate ideal of marriage and a more democratic partner
relationship and family configuration (Skolnick, 1997). Allied with this is a rapid rise in
the general expectations and aspirations for what one can and should get out of romantic
relationships (Berscheid & Campbell, 1981). These changes emphasize postmaterialist
values of self-expression, tolerance, equality, and a concern for the quality of life
(Inglehart, 1990) and is embedded with the tendency to challenge rather than accept
society.

Democratization of personhood

Clecak (1983) has noted that part of the psychological change accompanying the
transformation of family life in the United States and Western Europe is the right
revolution or the democratization of personhood. Central to this concept is the claiming
of political and cultural rights by disadvantage groups from racial minorities to women and
children. Consequently, men, for example, now have less permission to be mindlessly
hedonistic than in the past; they can now take fewer of what used to be called liberties
with women. There are more stringent standards for consent in sexual matters, and
husbands can now be sued for raping their wives.

Self-determination and Autonomy

Allied with the democratization of personhood is the fact that family values of
community, belonging, and family-related status have been usurped by individualism,
autonomy, and the pursuit of career-related prestige (Dreman, 1997). “Indeed, the very
essence of family life is being questioned” (Dreman, 1997, p.4). Sue, Ivey, and Pedersen
(1996) have observed that decision-making and responsibility now rest with the individual
and not with the family. The family is more or less an aggregate of individuals. Dumon (1997) noted that these changes have led to the increased independence and autonomy of youth, the dissociation of marriage from childbearing, “which actually reflects the dissociation between the institution of marriage and family” (p.186). Also involved is the dissociation of couplehood from parenting “to the effect that lone parenthood has been recognized as an institutionalized form”(p. 186). Consequent upon this, according to Dumon, is that both parenthood and partnership have become autonomous processes resulting in an increase in the preponderance of unwed motherhood, cohabitation, and other alternate lifestyles like same-sex marriages.

Changes in Marital Relationship

Researchers have argued that the transformation in family life caused by a woman fulfilling a work, as well as a family role, has led to an increased societal concern for a whole range of phenomena. According to Dreman (1997), some of these concerns center on marital adjustment and marital stability in general. Simpson and Worchel (1993) have observed that given the rise in dual-career families, coupled with recent reductions in the amount of available leisure time, individuals are experiencing more stress in their daily lives than ever before. This is said to have “placed a tremendous strain on dyadic relationships, heightening the potential for dissension and strife” (p.2).

For Skolnick (1997), the rise in dual-career families has brought about increased opportunity cost of pregnancy and child rearing and the reduction of women’s economic dependence on men, thereby making it easier for women to leave unhappy marriages. Other researchers have also pointed to access to education, employment and independent income as having enhanced women’s freedom to enter or leave marriage by reducing the
relative value of the resources gained through marriage (Lapidus, 1988; Imbrogno & Imbrogno, 1989). According to Vannoy and Philliber (1992), early research (cf., Axelzon 1963; Nye and Hoffman, 1963; Bradbanc, 1964) showed that when the wife is employed, poorer marital adjustment is experienced, particularly, by the husband. Some of the research done more recently also shows that female employment is generally associated with a higher risk of marriage or union dissolution (Edwards and Fuller, 1992; Carver and Teachman, 1993). Dreman (1997) explained this in terms of the increasingly higher family demands which are made on both men and women in the labor force, “thereby aggravating the difficulties of combining occupational and family roles and causing conflict and tension in their families.” (p. 88). He further observed that the commitment of married women to a professional career could have a profound influence on their marriage and family life “since women in such occupations are likely to view work as a second primary role beside that of the family” (p. 88).

Some of the notable changes in the area of marital relationships involve: (a) Changes in the balance of authority, (b) changes in gender roles, (c) effects on marital commitment, and (d) changed notions of divorce.

Changes in the Balance of Authority

The change in power relationships in families following the cultural transformations in the United States can be seen as a transition from a system of command to a system of negotiation. Authority is no longer taken for granted, decisions taken have to be explained, and the process of making that decision is through negotiation (Dumont, 1997).

In their United States survey, Blood and Wolfe (1960) found that men's mean authority scores increased with higher levels of education, income, or occupational status,
which were then conceptualized as resources which give individuals leverage in marital decision-making and interaction. A woman's employment was also seen as a crucial resource affecting her relative power within the family. Results showed that the more often women worked outside their homes, the more often the husband's authority is low, and in cases where the wife had either higher education or higher income than her husband, her power in personal decisions increased.

More recent studies have also found effects along these lines indicating a relationship between women's higher economic resources and increase in women's status and power relative to men, and the tendency toward egalitarianism in the family (Bee, 1996; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Kuyas, 1982). Employment is thus thought of as a resource that permits women to increase their decision making power in the family and thus reducing the constraint of dependence on men. Dumon (1997) has pointed out that the full participation of wives or mothers in all aspects of public life secures economic independence and increases their bargaining power inside the family.

Change in Gender Roles

Espin (1987) has noted that the influence of modern cultural values and the higher socio-economic power of women "results in the contention and resistance to patriarchy and a demand that traditional division of labor within the family and household be subject to marked shifts in the kind and manner of task allocations" (p. 85). Task allocation, which in the 1950s, tended to be gender-specific, now has turned into the idea of interchangeability of tasks and roles (Dumon, 1997). Levine (1982) noted that, within Western society, men and women are expected to play interchangeable roles. There is limited land ownership and inheritance in the western world, so that the economic base of
sex-role differentiation is strongly mitigated. Traditional role segregation is, therefore, seen as discriminatory and oppressive while egalitarian roles are upheld as ideal. Equality is, therefore, emphasized rather than complementarily. Kelley and Thibaut (1997) have observed that greater equality, however, can exacerbate overt conflict, particularly when neither partner in a relationship is highly dependent on its continuation.

On the emotional level, Dumon (1997) described the concept of a new father as the one who is allowed by society to reveal human traits such as emotions, tenderness, and to perform formerly typical “female” tasks such as nurturance and caregiving. As he stated, “...young fathers tend to play roles for which their fathers hardly can serve as role models.” (p. 194). Attached to this concept of a new father, according to Dumon, is the concept of a new husband which is loaded with emphasis on romance and romantic relationships.

**Effects on Marital Commitment**

Commitment has long been recognized as a significant factor in the development and continued stability of close personal relationships and even more so in the context of marriage, which is characterized by an interpersonal, social, and legal complexities (Adams & Jones, 1997). Ferguson (1993) has reported that happily married couples indicated that commitment is one of the most important factors contributing to the success of their marriages. Commitment in this case refers to an individual’s desire or intention to maintain his or her marital relationship (Jayroe, 1979; Johnson, 1973; Ward, 1977). This intention derives from satisfaction with, or attachment to, one’s spouse (Rusbult, 1983; Stanley, 1986; Swensen & Trahaug, 1985) and is accompanied by feelings of loyalty, devotion, and dedication (Johnson, 1991; Quinn, 1982).
Alternatively, researchers have also used commitment to account for couples who remain together despite relationships that have become less satisfying (Strube & Barbour, 1983). In this case, the intention to maintain one's marriage may be based on a sense of obligation (Johnson, 1973; Stanley, 1986) accompanied by feelings of sacrifice (Broderick, 1981) or even entrapment (Johnson, 1991; Strube & Barbour, 1983).

Some of the consequences of the radical sociocultural transformation in the United States are the increased opportunities and alternatives for both men and women. This has brought reduced economic, social, personal, and psychological constraints on marital commitment (Dreman, 1997; Jane, 1990; Kibria, 1990; Lamphere, 1987; Levine, 1982; Pessar, 1984, 1986; Thomas, 1995; Torres-Matullo, 1980).

According to Stanley and Markman (1992), commitment is comprised of two independent but related constructs: (i) personal dedication and (ii) constraint commitment. Johnson (1991) has argued for a third construct, moral commitment, which is based on normative reasons and distinct conceptually from constraint commitment. But this has been argued to be part of constraint commitment in marriage (Stanley and Markman, 1992).

**Personal Dedication:** Personal dedication refers to "the desire of an individual to maintain or improve the quality of his or her relationship because of the features of the relationship that are rewarding, pleasurable, and valuable (Stanley & Markman, 1992; Adams & Jones, 1997). This type of commitment is associated with relationship-maintenance behaviors (Rusbult & Verette, 1991; Stafford & Canary, 1991) and the devaluing of alternative relationships (Johnson & Rusbult, 1989) and may be predictive of meeting one's spouse's needs at the expense of one's own (Vanderkooy-Vos, 1988). It is
evidenced by the desire to invest in the relationship, to improve it, to invest in it, and to link personal goals to it. It is related to the priority level that the relationship holds in a person's hierarchy of activities (Stanley & Markman, 1992).

One mitigating factor to personal dedication is the availability of better and more favorable alternatives to a present relationship. With higher education, higher income, desire to engage in professional careers and the availability of alternate lifestyles and partners, the opportunity cost for personal dedication becomes low. Edwards and Saunders (1981) have argued that,

if a person has become aware of attractive alternatives and reassessed his or her marital outcomes, the sense of attachment or identity with that relationship is likely to decrease. One's loyalty to the spouse, involvement in the marriage, and sense of belonging begin to decline (p. 386).

According to Adams and Jones (1997), when a relationship becomes relatively less satisfying, and one or both partners no longer desire to maintain it, the partners' awareness context shifts, and they begin to consider other reasons for staying in the relationship. Such reasons are said to be the structural components around the relationship that form barriers against its dissolution. This is referred to as constraint commitment.

**Constraint commitment**: Constraint commitment refers to "forces that constrain individuals to maintain relationships regardless of their personal dedication to them" (Stanley & Markman, 1992, p. 595-596). It is the notion of commitment as a constraining force. Adams and Jones (1997) described it as a spouse's intention to remain married to avoid consequences of marital dissolution, for example, disapproval of family and friends, the expense of
termination procedures, ... the loss of investment in the relationship...

concern for dependent children or out of the belief that they could not find
an alternative partner. (p. 1178)

Constraint commitment favors marital stability by making termination of a
relationship more economically, socially, personally, or psychologically costly.

Consequently, when these structures are diminished, marital commitment is mitigated.

Tied to the sociocultural transformation in the United States is the increase in the
economic independence of women from male domination (Lapidus, 1988; Imbrogno &
Imbrogno, 1989). There were also associated changes like the dissociation between the
institutions of marriage and family, the dissociation of coupleship and parenthood, and the
societal depoliticization of divorce. Tied to these were the democratization of
personhood with decision-making residing in the individual self, the dissolution of the
extended kin network with its traditional structures that constrain marital stability, and the
more liberal attitude of the Western European church toward marital dissolution
(Commaille, 1983; Dumon, 1997).

These changes have drastically reduced constraints on marital dissolution, thus
making it much easier to come to a divorce decision. Edwards and Saunders (1981) have
proposed that once the barriers to divorce are overcome in a psychological sense and
available alternatives to the relationship have been perceived, the 'goodness of marital
outcomes' will continually be reassessed. According to Adams and Spernkle (1990), a
situation where marital constraints are minimal, attractive alternatives are available, and
there is freedom to leave, marital dissolution would be high.
**Changed Notions of Divorce**

Many authors have linked the transformation of the family in the United States with its related changes with higher rates of divorce. Research has shown that in contrast to the 1950s, divorce, rather than death, has become the major cause of marital dissolution in postmodern time (Dumon, 1997). According to Commaille (1983), the late 1960s marked the time when the institutionalized aspects of divorce changed from a fault to a no-fault divorce procedure, the main basis becoming the irreconcilable disruption of the marital bond. With this, came the shift from seeing divorce as family disorganization to divorce as family reorganization, a process that has resulted in the pluriformity of family forms (Dumon, 1997).

The concept of no-fault divorce brought related changes such as the notion of “friendly divorce, referring to civilized forms in which partners or divorcees-to-be, divorcees or ex-or former partners, are relating, or are expected to relate” (Dumon, 1997, p. 188). Dumon (1997) has argued that the notion of friendly divorce was not to imply that divorce should not create problems for individuals, but rather, it was a way of deproblematizing divorce on the societal level, making it an accepted phenomenon.

Divorce no longer carried a shameful stigma, but became part of an accepted process of the turnover of partners. Some of the consequences of this are said to be evident in the nature of stepfamilies, resulting from divorce rather than death whereby a stepparent often competes with a living biological parent in the child’s upbringing. Notable in this case is the diminished status of fathers who are often nonresidential parents with limited visitation rights or, in the extreme cases, with no rights of visitation or even knowledge of their children (Golini and Silvestrini, 1997). These changes have introduced new dimensions
that radically question normative values of more traditional societies, the cultural ethos that is the reality of many immigrants to the United States and more so of Nigerian immigrant couples.

Changes in Social and Extended Kinship Network

Weiner (1997) has argued that the capitalist's transformation of traditional families with their extended kin system into the nuclear family as a unit of domestic consumption had drastic consequences on the extended family and community relations. In the past, the family as an extended social network system was characterized by considerable economic cooperation that was necessary for survival. But with the increased consumption of foreign products and labor, female employment, and related developments, the traditional family values became eroded as reflected in decreased marriage and fertility rates, as well as increased divorce rates. "Hence, the nuclear family that had created strong dependence on market forces that subsequently failed, also resulted in discouraged dependence on extended kin and neighbor ties, that throughout history have proven effective in time of need" (Dreman, 1997, p. 7).

Summary

This section elaborated on the sources of the sociocultural transformation of the family in the United States and the various consequences attendant upon these changes relative to couple relationships. These changes have created new cultural parameters that constitute the acculturative environment for immigrants who come to the United States. In many and different ways, this cultural environment differs from the cultural milieus that many immigrants bring to the acculturative arena. The dance between two cultures is what creates acculturative stress.
The Impact of the Sociocultural Changes in the United States

On Immigrant Couples

Any intercultural encounter entails changes and, as was earlier noted, these changes are mostly experienced in the non-dominant culture. Values, attitudes, motives, personal identity, ethnic identity, intergroup attitudes and lifestyle preferences become affected as they are challenged by the reality of the new cultural milieu. Usually, this encounter involves learning behaviors from the new culture and shedding features of one's original culture. It is a process that is known to weaken both traditional family values and normative consensus regarding social life because it leads to greater individualism and less effective social control (Berry, 1992).

For the purposes of this research, three areas of culture conflict for immigrant couples in the United States will be discussed. These are: (a) Changes in gender role expectations, (b) changes in social-kin network, and (c) changes in the emotional support system.

Changes in Gender Role Expectation

Jane (1990) has observed that individual behavior is typically organized according to more or less general sets of social expectations. Expectations that are situationally and/or interactionally specific are known as role expectations. Role expectation defines who one is, and what is expected of one, under given circumstances. According to Bee (1996), gender-roles are culturally defined, and they shift as the culture shifts.

The acculturation literature is consistent in its finding that immigrants experience radical alterations in the structure of their family systems as they acculturate and that significant gender role transformations accompany this change (Espin, 1987; Butatao,
1984; Connel 1984; Gaves 1984; Kibria, 1993, 1990; Lamphere, 1987; Morokvasic 1984; Pessar, 1984, 1986; Safa, 1981; Uba, 1994; Yao, 1985). Some of these studies have linked such gender role changes to shifts in the material circumstances that underlie household subsistence and the differential involvement of men and women in the wage market (Kibria, 1990; Lamphere, 1987; Pessar, 1984, 1986).

Research results imply that one of the greatest difficulties for immigrants is the diminished value of their professionalism. They are forced to settle for menial low-paying jobs because of limited education, lack of English skills, illegal immigration status, or professional training not being recognized by the United States (Thomas, 1995). It is not uncommon to find immigrants trained as medical doctors in their counties of origin working as nurses' aides or driving taxis because of restrictions regarding board examinations or lack of professional acceptance because of accent or other reasons. On the other hand, female-dominated industries like domestic aides, nurse's aide, and health care aide have been on the rise, thus affording immigrant women greater opportunity for employment (Gopaul-McNicol, 1993). Thomas (1995) has observed that "it is frequently necessary for immigrant parents to obtain several jobs in order to support the family which tends to have a negative effect on family life" (p. 136). In some instances where men are unable to find employment, former homemakers may have to enter the workplace (Westermeyer, 1989) assuming the role of the "bread winner" of the family. In this situation, husbands tend to become resentful of their wives' apparent new independence and the challenges to their patriarchal authority (Espin, 1987).

Research by feminist scholars has also suggested that the increase in immigrant women's economic contribution to the family economy concomitant with immigrant men's
declining economic resources account for the diminution of male dominance in the family and the consequent challenge of traditional power structures of patriarchal authority (Kibria 1990; Lamphere, 1987; Pessar, 1984, 1986, Thomas, 1995). This theory resonates with the view that culture-based conflict develops as a result of migration when newly encountered patterns of gender roles combine with greater access to paid employment for women with new economic, social, and emotional options creating an imbalance in the traditional power structure of the family (Espin, 1987; Jane, 1990; Torres-Matrullo, 1980). Even when the women are not gainfully employed, they are the ones that are connected and deal with the various institutions with which their children are involved.

Kibria (1990, 1993) described a study in which Vietnamese women who migrated to the United States experience an expansion in their household activities, giving them greater access to resources and power relative to their husbands. They were reported to be responsible for interacting with large, complex bureaucracies in the utility industry as well as in public and private health care. These new opportunities, according to Kibria (1993) provided these women not only with increased responsibility but also with increased control over the household’s social and economic resources.

Shon and Ja (1996) have observed that for immigrant couples, dysfunction often occurs when roles change or shift. One reason for this is that the failure to fulfill a particular traditional role, or the shift into a different role, may present problems that these immigrant couples may have difficulty resolving.

For the wife, a passive, accepting, and nurturing role is expected. She is expected to continue child rearing and providing for the emotional needs of her family. Unfortunately, because of the economic needs of the family, the
immigrant wife may assume the role of a significant breadwinner, thereby encroaching upon her husband's primary role. Unless the husband can accept this change and integrate his wife's new role, conflicts will occur.

(p. 220)

On the part of the husband, the demand on him to share his primary role may also lead to conflict and dysfunction within the family.

If he cannot accept shared responsibility, he may feel that his wife is undermining his authority. Furthermore, he may feel inadequate when pressing his demand for obedience and respect from his children and wife because he feels he cannot fulfill the traditional requirements of the husband's and father's role. (Shon and Ja, 1996, p. 220)

Morokvasic (1984) has also described a study in which it was found that changing role expectations placed on migrant women in Dakar, particularly as a consequence of changes in family structure, were inherently stressful.

There is evidence, however, that the employment of women and their greater striving for equality does not necessarily transform family roles (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Blumberg, 1984, 1991; Blumstein and Schwartz, 1983; Rouse, 1989; Thorne, 1982; Tilly and Scott, 1987; Wolfe, 1990). In his writings, Abadan-Unat (1982) reported that migration does not inevitably enlarge the horizons of women in terms of participating more in decision-making and sharing authority with the husband. Kibria (1990) in his study of the Vietnamese immigrants found that the greater equality experience by these women has not resulted in the restructuring of gender roles in Vietnamese American families. In his landmark study of women and Chicano families, Zavella (1987) found that
their employment and jobs were defined as an extension of their household responsibilities and did not fundamentally transform family roles.

Researchers have tried to assess how the transformation in gender-role expectation can bring about conflict in the marital dyad. Among the factors that have been suggested are reliance on traditional problem-solving skills and the differential adjustment of immigrant men and women to gender role changes.

**Reliance on traditional problem-solving skills**

Shon and Ja (1996) have observed that an important factor in an immigrant family’s ability to withstand the pressure of cultural transition is each member’s strength in incorporating a system or strategy of defense that has withstood prior threats. Unfortunately, adult members of the family who have previously developed good adaptive responses to their native cultural environment may find that those mechanisms no longer work well in the new environment. The general tendency among immigrants is to adhere to traditional methods of solving problems, such as, reliance on hierarchical authority, male domination, and separation between material and emotional giving (Shon & Ja, 1996). This will generally be ineffective in the light of the fact that with migration, the expectations of men and women radically change and alternate sex-role expectations emerge, emphasizing equality, egalitarianism and increased spousal participation in decision-making (Levine, 1982). As Whiteford (1978) has noted, migration is a “liberating” process resulting in an approach to sexual equality.

**Differential adjustment to gender-role changes**

Immigrant studies have shown that individuals participate in and experience acculturation to varying degrees. According to Berry (1992), stressors may result from
this varying experience of acculturation. "For some people, acculturative changes may be perceived as stressors, while for others they may be benign or even be seen as opportunities" (p. 77). According to migration literature, the demand for role negotiations challenges cultural expectations that affect the potential for benefit from certain kinds of relationships and roles that are likely to be different for men and women. Such benefits, it is proposed, may be differentially effective, since those traditionally accrued by one gender may be compromised in the new setting (Dressler et al., 1986). It has, therefore, been suggested that migration stressors will derive from efforts to maintain culturally determined role expectations in a different and rapidly changing social, political, and economic environment, especially if the couple differs in their perceptions of the need for adjustment (Jane, 1990).

Ginorio (1979) has observed that, although the pace of acculturation tends to be slower for females in all other aspects, they tend to acculturate faster than males when it comes to gender roles. On the contrary, the "dominant pattern for husbands and fathers still seems to be to retain as long as possible their traditional privileges based upon inequality within the family and to attempt to transmit these values through socialization" (Abadan-Unat, 1982, p. 226). Espin (1987) has suggested that, for immigrant men, the "home culture may become idealized and its values, characteristics, and customs may become symbols of the stable parts of personal identity and probably the strongest defense against any sense of identity loss that might be engendered by acculturation" (p. 493).

Unfortunately, research has shown that attempts to preserve "old ways" tend to increase gender-role conflicts among couples (Espin, 1987). Levine (1982) maintained that "For those men who can adapt, social changes due to migration poses no source of
marital distress. But for those who insist on traditional roles for their wives, a societal 
striving for women's equality becomes a personal struggle for freedom in the home 
resulting in inevitable conflict” (p.339). Related studies have noted that couples with 
crystallized gender roles (i.e., either both traditional or both egalitarian) experience far less 
distress in their marriages than couples who differ in their role orientations (Juni & 
Grimm, 1994; Zammichiti, Gilroy, & Sherman, 1988). Consequently, immigrant couples 
who exhibit differential adjustment to role expectations are likely to experience greater 
marital distress than those that are more crystallized in their role expectations.

Changes in Kin Social Network

According to Sluzki (1992), the social structure is what defines one's social niche 
and contributes substantially to one's own recognition of personhood. It provides 
emotional support (climate of understanding) for its members, cognitive guidance and 
advice (role models, information sharing, clarification of expectations), social regulation 
and the control of deviance (Shaefer, Coyne, and Lazarus, 1981, Sluzki, 1992). It is 
comprised of norms and values that define the range of behaviors and kinds of interactions 
permissible within a culture for specified classes of individuals (Dressler, 1991).

The effectiveness of any social structure in enforcing its values depends on a 
number of variables. According to Sluzki (1992), these include the number of persons in 
the network systems, its distribution (how many in which circle and sector), density 
(connectedness among members), the types of functions present and lacking, the 
network's sociocultural and demographic homogeneity/heterogeneity, and its dispersion 
(geographic distance among members). Berry (1992) has argued that the degree to which 
the traditional social structure is present in the acculturative arena determines the extent to
which traditional gender roles are challenged. If the social structure is to a larger extent absent, it loses its power to enforce norms that regulate life and social interactions.

A major consequence of migration is the restricted access to kin social networks available to the immigrant family (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992). This is what Ticho (1971) referred to as the loss of the "average expectable environment" which includes everyday patterns of relationships, obligations, networks, and the behaviors that are considered normal. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986), changes associated with this loss affects the sociocultural nature of traditional family ecologies and impact the marital dyad. Studies have shown that the break from familiar sociocultural, economic and other support structures are major sources of stress for immigrants (Day & Haji, 1986; Hayes & Lin, 1994; Ozbay, 1994; Pedersen, 1991; Vega, Kolody & Valle, 1988). According to Pinderhughes (1989), these families experience stress and are vulnerable to malfunction in values and beliefs, boundary formation and environmental interface, rules, role relationships, communication patterns, and self-differentiation in family members and in the marital dyad.

In his study of Gecekondu immigrants, Fisek (1982) reported that the weakening of the traditional norms because of migration increased the tendency toward egalitarianism and role redefinition among these immigrants and that this was "not without its price in conflict." (p. 299). The study showed that Gecekondu immigrant families suffered from the lack of traditional controls, such as powerful older authority figures and consensually supported role expectations. Intra-family conflicts experienced by these immigrants were attributed to changed role expectations, reduced family size and differing functional and
relationship demands among family members because of the absence of the traditional extended network.

**Changes on the Emotional Support System**

The loss of the native social network is also the loss of the social structure that provides emotional support outside of the core family unit. Such a loss has been tied to intimacy problems among immigrant couples. According to Sluzki (1992), part of the lengthy process of socialization by immigrants corresponds to the complex social task of establishing a new network that may fulfill interpersonal needs. In describing "fictive kin" Sluzki (1979) underscored the fact that, when compared to the familial kin left behind, the new network has a narrower repertoire of functions and is less multidimensional and reciprocal. Within such a network, more expectations are centered in fewer relationships that can lead to decompensation both on the interpersonal and individual levels.

In his study of Indian immigrants in the United States, Dasgupta (1992) reported that many of these families felt that the "absence of kin and friends has caused strain in marital relations because the spouses are too dependent on each other for happiness and companionship and thus make too many expressive demands on each other" (p. 468). Sluzki (1992) has equally argued, that with migration, the couple's relationship frequently become overloaded as one spouse (or both) expects the other to fulfill functions previously met by other members of the traditional network. "The spouse is habitually expected to becomes a crucial source of emotional support even when, in fact, that function was previously met effectively by friends or other family members"(p. 361). The problem, as Sluzki (1992) described it, is that a spouse may see the unmet need as incompetence, betrayal, or abandonment by the other partner. On the other hand, the
other partner, equally in need, may experience not only his or her own share of unmet needs, overload, and abandonment, but the problem is also compounded by the partner’s complaints and misunderstanding.

The result is a vicious cycle of strain within the relationship: when any member of the couple reacts to what she or he perceives as unfair overload, or unduly reproaches by ‘closing up,’ that behavior ‘justifies’ in the eyes of the other her or his previous complaint, thus completing a self-fulfilling prophecy. (Sluzki, 1992, p. 361)

**Summary**

This section involved reviewing how immigrant couples are impacted as they adapt to the cultural reality of the United States. Effects such as changes in gender-role expectations, lack of social structures with extended kin network, and stress on the emotional support systems were explored. Negative consequences abound as immigrant couples negotiate adaptation to host country. The remaining part of this chapter will be focused specifically on the cultural reality of Nigerian Ibo couples and how these couples are impacted by their acculturative experience in the United States.

**Nigerian Cultural Reality**

And the Nigerian Ibo Couple in the United States

The intensity of acculturative stress has been related to the level of dissimilarity between the immigrant culture and the host culture. The greater the dissimilarity with the host culture, the greater the acculturative stress in the immigrant couple (Berry, 1986). This is significant in the light of the contrast between the culture of the United States and the native cultural reality of immigrant Nigerian Ibo couples. Consequently any attempt to
understand how acculturation affects Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States would need to factor in the cultural reality from which these couples come.

Nigerian Ibo couples come from a social structure that is community-oriented and based on an extended family system with a high degree of social stratification. Hierarchical family roles are strictly defined, and male dominance in decision-making is sacrosanct. An elaboration of some of these structures will help clarify the conflict that Nigerian Ibo couples who live in the United States may experience in the process of acculturation.

**Community vs. Individualism**

One of the consequences of the cultural transformation that swept over North America is that family values of community, belonging, and family-related status were usurped by individualism, autonomy, and the pursuit of career-related prestige (Dreman, 1997). Rugged individualism and self-differentiation understood as the autonomous self, became the definition of healthy personality. This idea runs contrary to the collectivist and communal aspect of the Nigerian Ibo cultural reality.

For Nigerian Ibos, the family is an extremely important point of reference as a microcosm of cultural heritage and identity. Primacy of the male as the head of the family is sacrosanct. Therefore, except for a few pockets of matrilineage and double descents, traditional Ibo families are patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal (Merc, 1976; Iroegbu, 1994).

The family involves an extensive network of extended families and kin group. According to Iroegbu (1994), communion with each other is the life-pillar of the Nigerian-Ibo society. From the nuclear family, via the extended family to the village and the entire kindred, life is seen and lived as one. No one can make it alone. The possibility of an
individual's existence is found, not in the self, as an individual, but in the self as community. Life, therefore, is life-in-community, life-with-others. The fundamental principle of life is not the Descartian "I think, therefore I am". Rather, for the Nigerian Ibo, and indeed for most Africans (Mbiti, 1969), the logic of life is captured in this Ashante Chananian proverb: "I am because we are; without we I am not, and since we are, therefore I am." One exists in community or one does not exist at all. To act to the detriment of the community is to be set outside the community. In the face of life-conflicts between the individual and the community, the community superecedes the individual. An Ibo dictum holds that "it is better for one man to die for the community in lieu of the community dying for one man." The reason is that the community can survive without a particular individual, but the individual cannot survive without the community. Thus, in existential conflicts, the individual must submit to the community.

With migration and consequent acculturation to the cultural reality of the United States, this sense of community is gradually eroded, as rugged individualism becomes the gateway to success. Pedersen (1987, 1988) has noted that the United States society's emphasis on individualism may translate into individual competition for status, recognition, and achievement. Decision-making and responsibility rest with the individual, and individuation is seen as the foundation for problem-solving (Sue, Ivey, & Pedersen, 1996). Without the constraints of communal consideration, the pursuit of individual achievement becomes solely propelled by individual interest. Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States may find themselves vulnerable to overfunctioning as they struggle to find a balance between their new-found individualism and the culturally entrenched sense of "we" when making decisions about their marriages. Edwards and Saunders (1981) have
argued that when decreased barriers and increased alternatives are simultaneously present, individuals will begin to devalue the rewards in their marriages relative to the cost of staying in it. “One’s loyalty to the spouse, involvement in the marriage, and sense of belonging begin to decline” (p. 386).

Social Structure in the Nigerian Ibo Culture

A related factor to the communal orientation of the Nigerian Ibo culture is the larger kin group beyond the nuclear family that provides an extensive network for socialization as well as structural, emotional, and functional support for its members. This structure represents a value idea, a cultural category that implies a set of norms governing expected behavior between kin. It is part of the grammar of behavior that reinforces the marital, social, and ritual aspects of family solidarity. It determines social status, and supplies social control for marital life. It is the basic group from which an individual constructs his or her meaning.

With migration to the United States, Nigerian Ibo couples leave behind this social structure, a process that is said to correspond with the loss of the native culture over time (Buriel & De Ment, 1997). Berry (1992) referred to this as “cultural shedding.” Within the United States, there are no Nigerian neighborhoods as we have “Chinatown” for Chinese, “Little Italy” for Italians, Puerto Rican neighborhoods, and Portuguese neighborhoods. Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986) has observed that changes associated with the loss of traditional institutions do affect the sociocultural nature of traditional family ecologies and impact the marital dyad. For one reason, the social network helps keep problems within the family while allowing marital problems and difficulties to be resolved outside of the core nuclear family. It is, therefore, expected that, with the loss this social
structure, Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States would experience less constraint in their marriages and may be vulnerable to malfunction in values and beliefs, role relationships, in their quest for self-differentiation.

Family’s Emotional System

The loss of the native social network is also the loss of the social structure that provides emotional support outside of the core family unit. The Nigerian Ibo social structure is such that it is the familial social network that provides emotional support and fulfills interpersonal needs for all family members. The living arrangement places families related by blood in the same compound, thereby providing ample avenues for interaction, recreation, and emotional support (Otiti, 1992). Consequently, material and emotional giving are not necessarily a dyadic giving. Nigerian Ibo men usually see their responsibility as that of providing material wellbeing for their families. While spouses may emotionally be giving to each other, the domain of emotional sustenance is generally community-based. This structure reduces the risk associated with spouses being too dependent on each other for happiness and companionship through making too many expressive demands on each other.

The United States society presents a different normative cultural dimension that centers on the nuclear family where both material and emotional giving is centered around the marital dyad and among the nuclear family members. Without the extended kin network to provide emotional support, Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States become vulnerable to stresses in the marital dyad. They are consequently left to depend on each other for emotional support, a situation that, Sluzki (1992) has observed, can become too heavy a burden, resulting in emotional distance and, consequently, marital burnout.
Gender and Gender Roles in the Nigerian Ibo Culture

The patriarchal nature of the Nigerian Ibo culture is such that males are more valued than females. By the experience of this author as a Nigerian, it is a common practice for the birth of a male child to be announced by four heralding acclamations from the women in contrast to three for a female child. A male issue guarantees a woman's place in her husband's family and among her fellow women. Many polygamous relations are the consequence of the quest for male offspring. The male is an irreplaceable factor in the Nigerian Ibo unending quest for the propagation of the lineage (Iroegbu, 1994; Kayongo-Male & Onyango, 1986). Males are raised to compete and to achieve. Females are raised to be homemakers and to be delightful. According to an Ibo proverb, "the beauty of a woman is her character."

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that gender relations within the Nigerian Ibo culture are embedded in normative practices and expectations that enable men and deny women the authority and the resources necessary to act independently. As Udvardy and Cattell (1992) have noted, "Whether in patrilineal or matrilineal kinship systems, whether monogamous, polygamous or polyandrous, [Nigerian] marriages are systems of unequal, gender hierarchies" (p. 280). Role allocation and spheres of functioning for spouses are usually quite delineated by clear enough boundaries (Kayongo-Male & Onyango, 1986). Gender roles are traditional and conservative. Men are expected to be the major economic procurers in families (Iroegbu, 1994). Land is patrilineal, and men are expected to make major economic decisions for the family and to handle any exchanges with the outside world (Kayongo-Male & Onyango, 1986).
Women, on the other hand, are the nurturant caretakers of their husbands and children. The care of the family is considered to be their central roles, and it is expected that a mother's energy and creativity are to be channeled primarily into raising her children. Their social contacts are restricted to their families and other wives in the community (Iroegbu, 1994). While in more recent years, Nigerian Ibo women have come to play more significant roles as wage laborers, this has in no way changed the household division of labor. Levine (1982) succinctly captured this reality when he stated that

It is in one sense normal that woman's labor does not bring her any real resource in the power relation, since she has very little control over it and its products to begin with, and since the exchange value of her labor never reaches a sufficient level for her to appropriate it as a means towards social emancipation.... (p. 195)

In fact, wage labor has in most cases simply added another set of obligations to their domestic responsibilities (Kayongo-Male & Onyango, 1986).

With migration, this situation changes as many Nigerian Ibo women assume the role of significant breadwinners and, therefore, demand greater recognition, respect, and consideration for their new responsibilities (Thomas, 1995). This author conducted an informal interview with 20 Nigerian Ibo men and 20 Nigerian Ibo women living in the New York and New Jersey metropolitan area. Nineteen or 95% of the men interviewed expressed the view that Nigerian Ibo women in the United States are much more assertive and no longer accepting of their traditional roles as home makers. The women interviewed said that they feel a greater sense of freedom and autonomy and attributed this feeling to their socio-economic power relative to their husbands. Results from this
interview also showed that a good number of these women are significant breadwinners in their families. Many of the women said that they insist on being coequal partners with their husbands. Kelley and Thibaut (1979) have observed that such demands are known to exacerbate overt conflict, particularly when neither partner in a relationship is highly dependent on the other for economic or social status.

Nwadiora (1996b) has noted that the introduction of African women to the more liberal position of United States women can have ambivalent consequences for Nigerian women and men.

On the one hand it provides her [Nigerian woman] with the abundant opportunity to assert herself and aspire to higher professional status, but if this attempt is not carefully moderated it may be threatening to her husband’s sense of being the breadwinner, thereby impacting on the psychological well-being of the family system. (p. 123)

In the informal interview conducted by this author and reported above, many of the male respondents reported that they feel the loss of power, control, prestige and authority in their marriages and expressed this as a fairly general feeling among Nigerian Ibo men who are married. Many of the Nigerian Ibo women interviewed saw their career aspiration as very important, if not as important as their marriage. As one of them succinctly stated: “this is America, and I have to do what I have to do because you can never know what may happen. I may have to take care of myself and my children tomorrow.” (Except from an informal interview conducted by this author).
Communication between Couples

Within the Nigerian Ibo culture, there is not much communication on general topics or the negotiation of role sharing among couples. Roles are clearly delineated. As Kayongo-Male and Onyango (1986) have observed, even relevant topics such as how many children to have do not receive much discussion among Nigerian couples. In many modern cultures like the United States, communication between spouses revolves around negotiations of role sharing and allocation of responsibilities, i.e., defining the relationship and the position of the spouses in that relationship (Fisok, 1982). Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States are therefore challenged by the tendency toward increased egalitarianism and role sharing, a situation that could lead to conflict since negotiating these roles is not something that these couples are accustomed to, nor was it modeled for them during their formative years.

Marriage Institution

Since Nigerian Ibos see themselves as an extension of the group, the institution of marriage and child bearing are of pivotal importance (Nwadiora, 1996a). Marriages are both polygamous and monogamous and represent a welding together, through symbolic ceremonies of the extended families of the spouses affected, into a network of relationships involving reciprocal obligations and duties (Kayongo-Male & Onyango, 1986). Beginning from the selection of a prospective bride to the payment of her bride price, marriage is commonly a collective affair. Bride price is a significant part of Nigerian Ibo marriages. As Otite (1991) observed, a woman is not bought as a commodity by means of this payment. Rather, bride price serves to regularize and stabilize the marriage and marks the foundation of a family as different from other types of casual love.
relationships. It equally "guarantees the wife's children to [the man] and establishes the mutual obligation of husband and wife and of their different natal family units" (p.23). Conflicts between husband and wife are mediated by relatives and families of the couple instead of being sorted out privately by the couple. Marriage is seen not just as a contract between two persons. Rather it is a covenant between two extended families, kindred, and villages which is elaborately initiated, and, when fully accomplished, is protected to stay and endure (Iroegbu, 1994).

Underscoring this communality is the deep religious sense that pervades the life of Nigerian Ibos. Religion plays a dominant role in the life of a Nigerian Ibo, and all that they do, say, and permit is impregnated with a vision of the divine. All natural reality including marriage is explainable in the light of supernatural reality (Iroegbu, 1994). Thus the sanctity of marriage is never questioned. Divorce is frowned upon, and the extended family works at preserving marriages.

**Divorce**

Divorce within Nigerian Ibo marriage occurs when the bride price is refunded either in full or, in the case of a woman who had children for the husband, less some amount (Kayongo-Male & Onyango, 1986). The grounds for divorce are usually witchcraft, adultery (on the part of the wife), cruelty or insubordination to one's husband or his kinsmen, desertion, or barrenness (Mboso, 1994). On the whole, divorce is frowned upon, and shame is attached to it, especially in the case of the woman. Being divorced by one's husband has negative implications for a woman and her family in general. A woman who is divorced leaves with nothing other than her clothing. The chance of being remarried after being divorced by one's husband is slim because a woman
is married into her husband’s lineage, not just to her husband. Moreover, it will always be
predicated of her that she has been divorced and, therefore, not a good wife. The divorce
courts are strict and lean mostly toward the resolution of conflict. In addition, the
extended family - in-laws, kin' group, and the elders - are engaged in mediating conflict to
prevent divorce. In the event of divorce, the children automatically stay with their father
because they were born into that lineage.

The constraints on divorce are reinforced by the conservatism of the Catholic
Church in Nigeria that takes seriously the absolute indissolubility of marriage. A review of
the records of one of the Catholic dioceses in the South Eastern States of Nigeria show
that that in the last 15 years, only three marriages were annulled by the marriage tribunal.
This contrasts significantly with the number of annulments granted within the United
States Church. In the past six years of this author’s residence at a parish within one of the
dioceses in New Jersey, over ten annulments were filed and granted. One can speculate
that the more permissive stance of the United States Church on issues of marriage
annulments does diminish, in a psychological sense, the moral constraint on marital
commitment and makes possible the attainment of alternate marital relationship within the
church.

The social and legal processes for divorce in the United States are much more
liberal and have thereby diminished the constraints on marital commitment. Divorce has
not only become deproblematized, it has also become an accepted social phenomenon.
For Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States getting divorced has far less social
consequences on the partners, there is reduced shame on the female and, more
importantly, on her family of origin by the sheer force of distance.
Custody Issues

Marriages within the Nigerian Ibo culture are patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal. A woman is married into her husband's lineage and children unquestionably belong to this lineage. The divorce law of the United States is such that children do not automatically belong to the man. In contrast, women are much more likely to gain custody of their children than men in the event of a divorce with men having visitation rights. There is evidence that an overwhelming majority of children who live with a single parent live with the mother, who is, for the most part, separated or divorced (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1988; Golini and Silvestrini, 1997). What this means is that, for Nigerian Ibo women in the United States, the fear of losing their children (a factor that was identified by Nigerian Ibo women living in Nigeria, during an informal interview conducted by this author, as one of the main constraints that keeps them in marriage) is greatly reduced. On the other hand, Nigerian males in the United States feel threatened by this arrangement since it challenges a major male prerogative within the Nigerian Ibo culture. It would, therefore, seem that, while migration to the United States reduces the constraints on Nigerian Ibo women, it does create new constraints for Nigerian Ibo men.

Summary

In summary, Nigerian Ibos come from an extended family system with a high degree of social stratification and where hierarchical family roles are strictly defined with male dominance in decision-making sacrosanct. These combine with other moral and social institutions that serve families and marital stability. They contain inequalities and inequities, but they work to keep families together and to preserve couple relationships. For Nigerian Ibo couples who live in the United States, these structures are vastly
diminished. In its place sits a culture, where the nuclear family and egalitarian role orientation is the ideal, women have higher socio-economic power, and the equality of sexes is the benchmark of gender relations. The United States culture generally presents a far more permissive environment that in many ways impacts the sociocultural and moral constraints on marital commitment. Without a social structure that supports marriage and family life in it various dimensions, Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States may be far more vulnerable to marital instability than their counterparts in Nigeria. Marital stability is a function of the amount of positive affect toward the spouse, constraints against its dissolution, and the perceived unattractiveness of alternatives to the marriage (Levinger, 1965, 1976; Nye, 1978).
Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The general purpose of this study was to determine the impact of acculturation on marital stability among Nigerian Ibo couples who live in the United States. The investigation was carried out using binational data by comparing Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States and Nigerian Ibo couples living in Nigeria. The introductory chapter laid out the theoretical framework for the different hypotheses that were tested in this study. Chapter 2 dealt with a review and integration of the acculturation literature vis-a-vis the cultural reality of Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States. The present chapter enunciates the methodological framework that was used in gathering and analyzing data for the various hypotheses postulated in this study.

Research Participants

Study Sample A: Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States

Characteristics of the Sample

Participants from Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States were solicited from Nigerian Ibo couples in the New York/New Jersey, and Washington DC metropolitan areas. These areas were chosen because large groups of Nigerian Ibo immigrants are known to reside in these cities (Takougang, 1995). To be eligible to participate in the study, a couple must (a) have lived in the United States for at least one year and (b) have at least one child in the family since children are considered to be part of the constraints on marital commitment. The one-year residency requirement was set on
the sample selection because of research finding relative to the effect of acculturation on immigrant families. In his theory on stages of migration process, Sluzki (1979) maintained that acculturative stress does not take its heaviest toll in the weeks or even months immediately following migration. Rather, most immigrants are frequently unaware of the stressful nature of the experience and of its cumulative impact, and it is only after some six months to a year that the long-range responses to migration begins to set in.

Sampling Procedure

Cornelius (1982) has observed that conventional random sampling techniques are not feasible when researching an undocumented immigrant population in the United States. As was noted earlier in chapter one, there is a high number of undocumented Nigerians living in the United States (Nwadiora, 1996a), and much more importantly, there are no documentation of the number of Nigerian Ibo couple in the United States. Based on this consideration, a nonrandom snowball sampling procedure was used.

Solicitation for volunteers was made through minority student and faculty organizations, churches, Nigerian Ibo cultural organizations, and personal networks within the specified area. For all couples who volunteered and met the criteria for participation in this study, their addresses were taken and they received a package of materials. Each package was coded, and the code was used to (a) match the address of a participating couple, (b) keep count of how many packages have been distributed, and (c) to identify which couples returned their packages. Each package contained (a) two copies of a cover letter delineating the purpose of the research and procedures to be followed with regard to completing and returning the research materials, (b) two demographic data sheets, (c) two copies of the Marital Commitment Inventory, (d) two copies of the Dyadic Adjustment
Scale, (e) two copies of the Attitude Towards Women Scale, (f) two official size envelopes (one designated "husband" and the other "wife"), and (g) a self-addressed stamped envelope for returning the questionnaires.

In the instruction letter, spouses were instructed to complete their inventories separately and without corroboration. This was to satisfy an important MANOVA assumption of the independence of observations. Couples were asked to place their inventories in the appropriately marked envelopes, put the two envelopes into the self-addressed stamped envelope and to mail this back to the researcher. After a two-week period, a reminder letter was sent to different churches and organization from which volunteers were solicited. Other follow-up letters were sent every two weeks for the next six weeks. This allowed for a two-month period time for data collection.

**Study Sample B: Nigerian Ibo Couples in Nigeria**

**Characteristics of the Sample**

Participants from Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria were solicited from the metropolitan area of the eastern states of Nigeria. The decision to use couples from the metropolitan areas was to match these couples with their counterparts here in the United States, in terms of living conditions, education, dual-career couple situations, and socioeconomic status. It was deemed that this would reduce compounding variables in determining that the observed differences between the two groups were acculturative in nature. To be eligible to participate in the study, a couple had to have at least one child in the family.
Sampling Procedure

Conventional random sampling techniques are not feasible in traditional societies because of lack of communication technology, poor transportation, and poor postal address systems. Consequently, the snowball sampling procedure was used in this instance also. Participants were solicited through colleges and universities, churches, different associations and organizations, and personal networks.

After each solicitation, all those who volunteered to participate in the study met with the researcher and determined a date and a place to fill out the research materials. This procedure was used with the Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria for two reasons. First, the Nigerian postal service is highly inefficient, and there was no way to guarantee that mailed out responses would get to this researcher on time. Second, work schedules in Nigeria are regular and people are generally free in the evenings and on weekends. So it was easy to find a time schedule that worked for a majority of the volunteers.

On the set date and place, each couple received a packet of materials containing (a) two copies of a cover letter delineating the purpose of the research and procedures to be followed with regard to completing and returning the research materials, (b) two demographic data sheets, (c) two copies of the Marital Commitment Inventory, (d) two copies of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, (e) two copies of the Attitude Towards Women Scale, (f) two official size envelopes (one designated “husband” and the other “wife”), and (g) a self-addressed envelope for returning the questionnaires. Spouses were instructed to complete their inventories anonymously and without corroboration in order to satisfy an important MANOVA assumption of the independence of observations. Couples were
asked to place their inventories in the appropriately marked envelope, insert the two envelopes into the self-addressed envelope and submit this to the researcher.

**Measures**

**Instruments**

**Demographic Data Sheet**

This instrument, designed by the researcher, was used to compile the following information for each individual participant: age, sex, number of years married to present spouse, number of children in the family, level of education, type of employment, yearly income, religious affiliation, and length of residence in the United States. The demographic data sheet for Nigerian immigrant Ibo couples in the United States also requested for information about how the couple came to live in the United States.

**The Attitude Toward Women Scale.**

The Attitude Toward Women Scale (AWS) (Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp, 1973) is a 25-item measure of gender-related attitudes. Respondents are required to rate, on a four-point scale, how much they agree or disagree with statements such as "Women should be concerned with their duties of childbearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers," and "In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of children." The AWS data involves obtaining a numerical index score for each individual in a given group. These scores, according to Spence, Helmreich and Stapp (1973), reflect the degree to which the individual holds traditional or liberal views, and permit comparisons of the attitudes of various groups on this dimension and predictions of behaviors on the basis of the individual attitude score.
The 25-item Attitude Toward Women Scale that was used in this study was developed by Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1973) from their original 55-item scale. The two scales were reportedly highly correlated. For the student sample that was used in developing the 25-item scale, the resulting R's were .968 for the males and .969 for the females. For mothers and fathers in the study analysis, reported R values were .956 and .963 respectively. A factor analysis of the 25-item scale (Nie, Bent, & Hull, 1970) using principal axis routine showed that the scale was essentially unifactorial, with the first unrotated factor accounting for 67.7% of the variance for females and 69.2% of the variance for males. As Spence, Helmreich, and Stapp (1973) stated, the analyses of both the student and the parent samples indicate that scores on the 25-item form are almost perfectly correlated with scores on the full set of 55 items and that the whole-part correlations and factor structures are also highly similar. (p. 220)

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) was developed by Spanier (1976) for use with married couples and other similar dyadic relationships. Adjustment, according to Spanier, is defined as a “process, the outcome of which is determined by the degree of: 1) troublesome dyadic differences; 2) interpersonal tensions and personal anxiety; 3) dyadic satisfaction; 4) dyadic cohesion; and 5) consensus on matters of importance to dyadic functioning” (p.17). Thus, adjustment, as it is used in this measure, is viewed as a process where “insight into the level of adjustment achieved by a couple at a particular point in time is derived from information obtained from individuals about selected aspects of their marital relationship that are assumed to be important” (Sabatelli,
1988, p. 897). The measure consists of 32 items, pared down from an original pool of some 200 items. According to the author, procedures used to arrive at the final version of the scale included a content review by a panel of judges, item analyses to eliminate items with low variances and highly skewed response patterns, and to ensure the inclusion of only those items able to discriminate between married and recently divorced individuals, and a factor analysis in order to confirm the presence of the conceptual dimensions of adjustment, namely dyadic satisfaction (10 items), dyadic consensus (13 items), dyadic cohesion (5 items), and affectional expression (4 items). Sample items include “How much do you agree on household tasks?”, “How often do you and your partner quarrel?”, and “To what extent do you and your partner engage in outside interests together?” The theoretical range of scores of the total DAS is 0-151. Couple scores can be derived by adding the individual scores, taking the difference between them and/or averaging them. The scale and subscales are reported to be highly reliable; Cronbach’s alpha = .96 for the entire scale and ranges from .73 to .94 for the subscales. Sabatelli (1988) has observed that the validity of the scale is supported by the consensus of the judges on the relevance of the scale’s content, the finding that the scale discriminated between those who were married versus those who were divorced, and the high correlation (r = .88) between the DAS and the LWMAT ([The Locke-Wallace Short Marital Adjustment Test], Locke & Wallace, 1959). The LWMAT, according to Sabatelli (1988), is commonly thought of today as being one the most widely employed instrument to evaluate marital quality because of its ability to discriminate well-adjusted couples from maladjusted couples.

The DAS was chosen for use in this research over the LWMAT for three reasons. The first is that the DAS is a more contemporary instrument relative to the LWMAT.
Sabatelli (1988) has argued that given the age of the LWMAT, one must consider whether some of its items on the face of it deserve a place of prominence in our judgment of a marriage's adjustment from a contemporary perspective. Secondly, the reliability of the LWMAT was calculated on the basis of a sample made up only of well/or poorly adjusted couples, a procedure that would tend to inflate reliability estimates. Donohue and Ryder (1982) have argued that with more representative samples, the LWMAT has not always performed reliably. Thirdly, Sabatelli (1988) has argued that, when the total marital adjustment score on the LWMAT is calculated, what is gotten is a “score that is psychometrically dominated by the respondents’ ratings of marital happiness.... This leads to the conclusion that what the LWMAT is tapping into is more likely to be a dimension of satisfaction than anything else” (P. 897). Sabatelli (1988), therefore, has suggested that, if a researcher is committed to the concept of adjustment as a reflection of multiple dimensions of the marriage relationship, a different measure should be considered.

It has been recognized that the DAS is built upon a clearly articulated conceptual foundation and attempts to address many of the criticisms leveled against the LWMAT (Sabatelli, 1988). One concern that has been raised about the DAS is whether the scale contains four conceptually distinct and valid subscales. This problem will be of little consequence to this research because the score being used is the total dyadic adjustment score and not the subscale scores. Consequently, whether the subscales are unidimensional or multidimensional will not affect the statistics being measured in this research.
The Commitment Inventory

The Commitment Inventory (Stanley and Markman, 1992) is a 60-item, 12-subscale inventory that measures two dimensions of relationship commitment - personal dedication and constraint commitment. Based on extant theories of commitment, Stanley and Markman (1992) theorized that commitment encompasses two distinct, but related, constructs: Personal dedication and constraint commitment. Personal dedication, according to these authors, refers to the desire of an individual to maintain or improve the quality of his or her relationship for the joint benefit of the participants. It encompasses different dimensions including: (a) Relationship agenda, which is the degree to which a person wants the relationship to continue over time; (b) primacy of relationship, which refers to the priority level that the relationship holds in a person’s hierarchy of activities; (c) couple identity, which refers to the degree to which an individual thinks of the relationship as a team, in contrast to viewing it as two separate individuals, each trying to maximize individual gains; (d) satisfaction with sacrifice, which refers to the degree to which people feel a sense of satisfaction in doing things that are largely or solely for the benefit of one’s partner; (e) alternative monitoring, which refers to an individual’s level of monitoring of potential, alternative partners; and (f) meta-commitment, a value that the individual may bring to a relationship.

In contrast, constraint commitment is defined as those internal or external forces that compel individuals to maintain relationships regardless of personal dedication to them. The dimensions of constraint commitment include: (a) structural investment, for example, possessions and investment of money, (b) social pressure which refers to the pressures that others put on a couple to maintain their relationship, the most important being friends
and family, (c) termination procedures which involves the difficulty of the steps that would have to be taken to end a particular relationship, (d) unattractiveness of alternatives which represents the degree to which a person would be unhappy about any or all of a broad range of possible life changes upon the relationship ending (e.g., change in residence, change in economic or social status), and (e) availability of partners which connotes specifically the perceived availability of other suitable partners should the current relationship end, (f) morality of divorce which refers to the moral acceptability of divorce.

The items in the scale are rated on a 7-point Likert scale with "1" denoting "strongly disagree," "4" anchored "neither agree nor disagree," and "7" anchored "strongly agree." Sample items include "It is all right for a couple to get a divorce if their marriage is not working out"; "My friends would not mind it if my partner and I broke up (or divorced)"; It would be difficult for my children to accept it if I ended this relationship with my partner"; "If for any reason my relationship ended, I could find another partner."

All items on the inventory are scaled so that higher scores reflect higher degree of commitment. For internal consistency, Stanley and Markman (1992) reported that each of the subscales had a coefficient alpha that met or exceeded the .70 criterion. They also observed that the 12 subscales were combined to form two composite scores: z scores of the dedication subscales were added for “total dedication,” and z scores of the constraint subscales were added to form “total constraint.” They reported that the reliability of these composites was .95 and .92 for total dedication and total constraint, respectively.

In constructing the inventory, Stanley and Markman (1992) drew from different groups which captured a spectrum of participants from the religiously liberal to the conservative. They also accounted for a wide range of relationship commitments. Sixty
percent of their participants were married, 12.5% were engaged or planning marriage, 
23.5% were exclusively dating, and 4% were regularly dating. The large number of 
couples used in developing this instrument is noteworthy. Adams and Jones (1997) have 
observed that, while most previous research on relational commitment has been conducted 
with college students involved in dating relationships, “commitment may be more salient 
within the context of marriage, which tends to be characterized by an interpersonal, social 
and legal complexity that is absent in most dating partnerships” (p. 1177).

Questions have been raised about the psychometric quality of the bulk of measures 
on marital commitment (e.g., Pramann, 1986). A recent review of 99 studies in which a 
self-report instrument was used to assess commitment (Adams & Jones, 1995) indicated 
that reliability evidence was provided for the measures of commitment in less than half 
(47%) of the studies. Furthermore, supportive validity evidence was reported in only 19% 
of the studies and typically took the form of correlation between the commitment measure 
and either relationship status or other putative measures of marital commitment or 
Inventory as one of the relatively few studies that addressed construct validity directly.

Based on their theory of relationship commitment, Stanley and Markman (1992) 
have showed correlational evidence that the measure of satisfaction, dedication, and 
constraint behave differently. Other studies have also demonstrated validity for notions of 
commitment consistent with dedication and constraint (cf., Adams & Jones, 1997).

Stanley and Markman (1992) have also shown some evidence that CI had 
concurrent validity by correlating it with other measures of commitment. The CI had 
moderately high correlation with Johnson’s (1978) measure of personal commitment, 1
(137) = 2.46, p < .02; Rusbult's (1983) Commitment Measure, t (17) = 2.36, p < .05; Beach and Broderick's (1983) Beach and Broderick's Commitment Measure, t (74) = 2.12, p < .05. It needs to be observed that the level of correlation between the CI and these other measure is compounded by the fact that some of the measures, for example Johnson's (1978) one-item measure of personal commitment does not really discriminate between the kinds of forces (e.g., dedication versus constraint) which are involved in commitment. The other measures tap more into personal dedication than constraint.

The CI was chosen for this research because it is based on a clearly articulated conceptual framework and its psychometric properties, as Adams and Jones (1997) have noted, are much more solid than most available measures of relationship commitment. Above all, the scale items tap into constructs that this researcher considers relevant in assessing the variables central to this investigation. It is also noteworthy that the items are constructed and worded in a way that will be meaningful to the population being studied.

The properties of all these scales were reviewed for applicability with the sample population being studied and were found to be adequate. The two group taken together, Cronback alpha for the Attitude Toward Women Scale was .92, .94 for the Commitment Inventory, and .89 for Dyadic Adjustment Scale. These alpha coefficients held up when the groups were evaluated separately.

Method of Data Analysis

Study participants were put into two groups. Nigerian Ibo couples living in the Nigeria were put in group one and Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States were put in group two. Each group was further subgrouped along gender lines resulting into
four gender subgroups: female Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria, male Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria, female Nigerian Ibo couples in the US, and male Nigerian Ibo couples in the U.S.

Analysis of hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 were done in one omnibus test of MANOVA. The decision to use an omnibus test of MANOVA analysis for the hypotheses was influenced by three considerations. First, there was the need to take into account possible intercorrelations among the dependent variables. Weinfurt (1997) has noted that intercorrelations between outcome measures suggest that the measures may be partially redundant because of the possibility of conceptual overlapping. MANOVA avoids this problem by taking the correlation between the dependent measures into consideration. “As long as the effects being tested are multivariate effects, there will be no redundant information in the results of the MANOVA” (Weinfurt, 1997, p.252).

The second reason for using the MANOVA analysis was because MANOVA can detect when groups differ on a system of variables (Huberty & Morris, 1989). According to Weinfurt (1997), taken individually, it is possible that dependent variables may not show significant group differences. However, taken as a whole, differences caused by the independent variables are more easily detected. “This is accomplished by finding a linear composite of the dependent measures that maximizes the separation between the groups defined by the independent variable, resulting in the most statistically significant value of the MANOVA test statistic.”(p.252).

Thirdly, the MANOVA analysis was used to keep the Type I error rate at the nominal alpha level. Researchers of one school of thought, supported by Hummel and Sligo’s (1971) research, maintains that a MANOVA should be conducted when there are
multiple dependent variables, and, if the multivariate test is significant, then univariate ANOVAs are conducted for each of the dependent measures. The theory behind this thinking, as Weinfurt (1997) observed, is "that by performing an overall omnibus test of significance first, MANOVA, one is guarding against the chance of committing a Type-I error that might occur as a result of unwarranted multiple ANOVAs." (p. 254)

- **Hypotheses Tested**

  **H.1.** There will be significant differences in mean scores between Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States and Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria when measured on constraint commitment. Specifically, females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigerian will score higher on this measure than females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States and males among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria will score higher than males among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States.

  **H.2.** The mean score for Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States will be significantly different from the mean score for Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria when measured on personal dedication to marital commitment. Specifically, females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States will score lower on this measure than females among Nigerian couple in Nigeria and males among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States will score lower than males among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria.

  **H.3.** For Nigerian Ibo couples who live in the United States, the vector of means on the traditional and egalitarian scores on a measure of gender role expectation for the female population will differ significantly from the vector of means on the
traditional and egalitarian scores for the male population on this measure. This
difference will not be seen for Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria.

H.4. When measured on overall dyadic adjustment, mean scores for Nigerian Ibo
couples in the United States will differ significantly from the mean scores for
Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria. The direction of this difference will be negative.

Analysis of Hypotheses

Independent Variables

The independent variables consisted of couple groups made up of Nigerian Ibo
couples in Nigeria (group 1), Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States (group 2), and the
gender subgroups (female Nigerian Ibo couple in Nigeria, male Nigerian Ibo couples in
Nigeria, female Nigerian Ibo couples in the U.S. and male Nigerian Ibo couples in the
US).

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables consisted of individual scores on (a) Constraint
Commitment and (b) Personal Dedication as measured by the Commitment Inventory, (c)
Traditional scores and (d) Egalitarian scores as measured by the Attitude Toward Women
Scale, and (e) Dyadic Adjustment scores as measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

Statistical Analysis

The purpose of this statistical analysis was to determine if the data collected
supported the stated hypotheses. In order to control for Type-1 error, the investigator
followed the recommendations of Bray and Maxwell (1985) and included all dependent
variables in the analysis using a 2 X 4 Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)
design.
Testing the Null Hypothesis

The null hypothesis that was tested for each hypothesis was that the vector of means on the dependent measure for group one (Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria) is equal to the vector of means on the dependent measures for group two (Nigerian Ibo couples in the U. S.) at the critical value of $p < .05$.

Since no interactions were postulated, the null hypothesis for the main effects were: (a) that the vector of means on the constraint variable for females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States is equal to the vector of means for females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria, (b) that the vector of means on this same variable for males among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States is the same for the vector of means for males among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria, (c) that the vector of means on the personal dedication variable for females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States is equal to the vector of means for females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria, (d) that the vector of means on this same variable for males among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States is equal to the vector of means for males among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria, and (e) that the vector of means on the traditional and egalitarian variables for females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States is equal to the vector of means for males in this group.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a detailed explanation of how this research was conducted. Discussion centered on the method used for data collection, the hypotheses that were tested at the critical value of $p < .05$, the test statistic for the stated hypotheses, and the reasons that guided the choice of the test statistic. There was also a
detailed review of the various instruments for the dependent measures. These include: (a) The Commitment Inventory which provided individual scores on constraint commitment for hypothesis one, and personal dedication for hypothesis two; (b) The Attitude Toward Women Scale which provided individual traditional and egalitarian scores for the analysis of hypothesis three and (c) the Dyadic Adjustment Scale which provided scores on dyadic adjustment for the analysis of hypothesis four. The independent variables used were Couple Groups and Sex.
Chapter IV

RESULTS

Overview
This chapter presents the results of the data analyses for the various hypotheses tested in this study. For the purposes of presentation, the chapter is laid out in three sections. The first section is focused on the analysis of the demographic data. The second part involves examining the dependent variables for compliance with the various assumptions underlying multivariate and univariate statistics. Lastly, descriptive statistics for the sets are presented with hypothesis testing along with results from the multivariate statistical analyses.

Demographic Data

Data for this research was obtained from Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria and Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States. For the Nigerian Ibo sample in Nigeria, 78 couples out of the 225 solicited through churches, schools and community organizations returned their questionnaires resulting in a 34.66% return rate. Of these 78 couples, 2 females and one male returned incomplete questionnaires and therefore, were eliminated with their spouses as subjects. Of the remaining 75 couples, three males and two females completed the questionnaires incorrectly, eliminating them and their spouses from the sample. This left the Nigerian sample with 70 couples or 140 subjects. For the Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States, 75 couples out of the 275 solicited from churches, organizations and personal contact returned their questionnaires resulting in a 27.3% return rate. Of this number two questionnaires were improperly completed. The subjects and their spouses were therefore eliminated leaving this group with 73 couples. Because
the data contained outliers, SPSS Outlier search and a cutoff criterion of \( p < .001 \) were used to eliminate data that could unduly influence the results of the statistics.

Consequently, five couples were eliminated from the Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria and six couples were eliminated from the Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States. As a result, there were 65 couples or 130 subjects in the Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria group and 67 couples or 134 subjects in the Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States group. It was not possible for the researcher to assess nonresponse bias because there was no way of knowing which couple returned their questionnaire and which ones did not. Moreover, because binational data sets were used the difficulty involved in travelling back to Nigeria and the near impossibility of tracking down subjects who did not respond made it difficult to assess nonresponse bias. At best, this inability would need to be accepted as part of the limitations of this study.

Tables 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 show the distribution of age, education, and salary of the sample population for both groups respectively. Age was divided into six categories: 25 years and under, 26 – 30 years, 31 – 35 years, 36 – 40 years, 41 – 45 years, and 46 years and above. Education was divided into six levels: High school or its equivalence, Associate degrees or two years of college, Professional Certification or three years of college, College graduates, Masters level education, and Doctoral level education. Salary grouping for Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria was done in the home currency called Naira, while for Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States the amount is in dollars. The dollar equivalence to the Naira at the time of data collection was about 1 : 85 (one dollar to 85 Naira).
### Table 4.1

**Age Distribution for the Sample Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Nigerian Sample</th>
<th>United States Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 years and under</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 to 30 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 to 35 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 to 40 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 to 45 years</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 years and above</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.2

**Educational Distribution for the Sample Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Nigerian Male (N) (%)</th>
<th>Nigerian Females (N) (%)</th>
<th>Sample Males (N) (%)</th>
<th>Sample Females (N) (%)</th>
<th>United States Sample Males (N) (%)</th>
<th>United States Sample Females (N) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>11 16.9</td>
<td>14 21.3</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Degree</td>
<td>8 12.3</td>
<td>9 13.8</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>6 9</td>
<td>4 6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three-Year College</td>
<td>7 10.8</td>
<td>11 16.9</td>
<td>8 11.9</td>
<td>23 34.3</td>
<td>8 11.9</td>
<td>23 34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Degrees</td>
<td>26 40.0</td>
<td>25 38.5</td>
<td>16 23.9</td>
<td>18 26.9</td>
<td>16 23.9</td>
<td>18 26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters level Ed.</td>
<td>5 7.7</td>
<td>5 7.7</td>
<td>23 34.3</td>
<td>15 22.4</td>
<td>23 34.3</td>
<td>15 22.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Education</td>
<td>8 12.3</td>
<td>1 1.5</td>
<td>16 23.9</td>
<td>6 9.0</td>
<td>16 23.9</td>
<td>6 9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.3

**Salary Distribution for the Sample Population**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Nigerian Sample</th>
<th></th>
<th>United States Sample</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males (N) (%)</td>
<td>Females (N) (%)</td>
<td>Males (N) (%)</td>
<td>Females (N) (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 14,999.00</td>
<td>6 9.2</td>
<td>10 15.4</td>
<td>0 0</td>
<td>0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000.00 – 24,999.00</td>
<td>10 15.4</td>
<td>16 24.6</td>
<td>6 9</td>
<td>5 7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000.00 – 34,999.00</td>
<td>3 4.6</td>
<td>12 18.5</td>
<td>13 19.4</td>
<td>8 11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35,000.00 – 44,999.00</td>
<td>15 23.1</td>
<td>6 9.2</td>
<td>10 14.9</td>
<td>20 29.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45,000.00 – 54,999.00</td>
<td>5 7.7</td>
<td>12 18.5</td>
<td>10 14.9</td>
<td>18 26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55,000.00 – 64,999.00</td>
<td>5 7.7</td>
<td>6 9.2</td>
<td>16 23.9</td>
<td>8 11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65,000.00 – 79,999.00</td>
<td>5 7.7</td>
<td>1 1.5</td>
<td>5 7.7</td>
<td>4 6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80,000.00 and above</td>
<td>15 23.1</td>
<td>2 3.1</td>
<td>7 10.5</td>
<td>4 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were eight groupings for salary: Under 14,000; 15,000 – 24,000; 25,000 – 34,000; 35,000 – 44,000; 45,000 – 54,000; 55,000 – 64,000; 65,000 – 76,000; 80,000 and above. A t-test for the equality of means between the two groups on Salary and Education was significant which was not surprising. While such comparability concerns may present some limitations to this study (this is discussed more fully in chapter five), it could actually be one aspect of acculturation effect.

Evaluation of Assumptions

All underlying populations in a factorial ANOVA are assumed to be normally distributed with equal variances when statistical assumptions are met (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989; Witte, & Witte, 1997). Iversen and Norpoth (1987) maintained that, even when those assumptions are not met, “the analysis is not necessarily doomed” (p. 92). The same assumptions hold for MANOVA and other multivariate statistics. Assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity and singularity underlie all populations of interest.

The variables of interest requiring testing for normal distribution included constraint scores (CONSTRAI), personal dedication (PERDEDIC) scores (derived from the Relationship Scale), traditional (ATWTRASM) and egalitarian (ATWEGASM) scores (derived from the Attitude Toward Women Scale), and dyadic adjustment (DYADJUST) scores (derived from the Dyadic Adjustment Scale).

Sample Sizes and Missing Data

Sample sizes are unequal in the two groups used as independent variables. The two groups are Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria (females and males) and Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States (females and males). Group one (Nigerian Ibo couples in
Nigeria) had 130 subjects, i.e., 65 couples and group two (Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States) had 134 subjects, i.e., 67 couples. Data and distribution for each dependent variable within each group were inspected for missing values and violations. No datum was missing on any of the dependent variables for the total 264 subjects, and the assumptions of normality were upheld as is described below. Descriptive statistics for these variables are presented in Table 4.4.

**Multivariate Normality**

The sample size of 264 includes over 40 cases for each cell of the 2 X 2 between subjects design, far more than the 20 degrees of freedom for error suggested to assure multivariate normality of the sampling distribution of means, even with unequal sample sizes (cf. Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). There are far more cases, therefore, than dependent variables in each cell. Furthermore, the distribution for the dependent variables produced no cause for alarm, and, given the sample size of 274 subjects, it is reasonable to assume that the sampling distribution of the mean would approximate normality.

**Linearity**

According to Tabachnick and Fidell (1989), if there is multivariate normality, then there is also linearity and homoscedasticity. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) Lilliefors Significance Correction Test was used to assess for normality of distribution (see Table 4.5). This test is extremely sensitive to the slightest deviations from normality, making it more likely that the null hypothesis of normality of distribution will be rejected. The distribution for Dyadic Adjustment, Contrain Commitment, Personal Dedication, and ATWTRASM (Traditional scores on the Attitude Toward Women Scale) were all normally distributed (p > .05, Table 4.5). The data distribution of ATWEGASM
Table 4.4

Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Subgroup</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<td>27.1376</td>
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<td>25.0254</td>
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<td>11.8222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11.9183</td>
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<td>60.6567</td>
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<td>115.8615</td>
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</table>

CONSTRAI = Constraint scores.
PEREDIC = Personal Dedication scores.
DYADJUST = Dyadic Adjustment Scores.
ATWEGASM = Attitude Toward Women (Egalitarian Scores).
ATWTRASM = Attitude Toward Women (Traditional Scores).
Table 4.5

K-S Tests of Normality of Dependent Variables

<table>
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<th>Variable</th>
<th>Subgroup</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>K-S a</th>
<th>Sig</th>
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</thead>
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<td>.0593</td>
<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Male (NIG)</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>.0520</td>
<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>.0855</td>
<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Male (US)</td>
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<td>.0607</td>
<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
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<td>.0933</td>
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<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
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<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
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<td>DYADJUST</td>
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<td>.0431</td>
<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
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<td>.0800</td>
<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
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<td>.1155</td>
<td>.0311</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (US)</td>
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<td>.0722</td>
<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
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</tr>
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<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
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<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male (US)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>.0954</td>
<td>&gt;.2000*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p > .05
(Egalitarian scores on the Attitude Toward Women Scale) for Males among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria approached normality (p < .05). Because of the extreme sensitivity of The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (K-S), visual inspection of data plots (see Appendix 1–10) is necessary and recommended in addition to the K-S test (Pett, 1997). Visually, the data distribution of ETWEGASM appeared to be normal (See Figure 4.1).

Homogeneity of Variances

As a preliminary check for robustness, sample variances for each dependent variable were compared across the four groups. The rule of thumb is that the variance of one group should not be twice that of another group (Pett, 1997; Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). This rule held up in the sample distribution. All groups were tested using the Levene Test, and the test statistic showed that the groups had equal variances on the dependent variables (see Table 4.6). Thus assumptions of ANOVA were not violated.

Homogeneity of variance-covariances matrices was examined by visual inspection of plots. The spreads for the three groups were relatively equal. Because the spreads were relatively equal, no further tests were necessary (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1989).

Multicollinearity and Singularity

Variables were also examined for multicollinearity and singularity. Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) recommend using the guideline of a bivariate correlation of .90. No variables in the data were correlated at the .90 level (see Table 4.7). The log-determinant of the pooled within-cells correlation matrix was found to be 13497727764.846, yielding a determinant of 23.32579. This is sufficiently different from zero that multicollinearity is not judged to be a problem (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).
Table 4.6

Test of Homogeneity of Variance – Levene Statistic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene Statistic</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONSTRAI</td>
<td>.369</td>
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<td>.775</td>
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<td>PERDEDIC</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>.638</td>
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<td>ATWTRASM</td>
<td>.869</td>
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<td>260</td>
<td>.457</td>
</tr>
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<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DYADJUST</td>
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<td>260</td>
<td>.161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P > .05
Table 4.7
Within Cells Correlations with Standard Deviations On Diagonal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CONSTRAI</th>
<th>PERDEDIC</th>
<th>DYADJUST</th>
<th>ATWTRASM</th>
<th>ATWEGASM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONSTRAI</td>
<td>26.642</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERDEDIC</td>
<td>0.526</td>
<td>12.618</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DYADJUST</td>
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<td>0.132</td>
<td>17.163</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATWTRASM</td>
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<td>-0.120</td>
<td>-0.058</td>
<td>5.305</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATWEGASM</td>
<td>-0.039</td>
<td>0.192</td>
<td>-0.056</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>4.855</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Test Findings

The independent and dependent variables used in this analysis were as described in chapter three. The independent variables consist of: COUPLE GROUP (COUPGROU), made up of Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria (group one) and Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States (group two), and SEX (females and males). The dependent variables consist of individual scores on: (a) Constraint commitment as measured by the Commitment Inventory, (b) personal dedication as measured by the Marital Commitment Inventory, (c) traditional scores as measured by the Attitude Toward Women Scale, (d) egalitarian scores as measured by the Attitude Toward Women Scale, and (e) total dyadic adjustment scores as measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

In order to control for Type-I error, the investigator followed the recommendations of Bray and Maxwell (1985) and included all dependent variables in the analysis using a 2 X 2 Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) design.

Using the Wilk's criterion, the omnibus test of MANOVA was significant for COUGROP, $F(5, 256) = 89.4 \ p < .001$; for SEX, $F(5, 256) = 8.6 \ p < .001$; and COUGROUP x SEX, $F(5, 256) = 3.7 \ p < .05$. Because omnibus MANOVA showed significant main effects and, since no interaction was predicted but was observed in the analysis, it was appropriate to investigate further the nature of the relationships among the independent variables relative to the dependent variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996).

For the purposes of this investigation, univariate Fs, Tests of Between-Subject Effects, post hoc tests for multiple comparisons using Bonferroni, and step-down Fs were used to clarify the relationships, and to test the specificity of the hypotheses.
Hypothesis 1

There will be significant differences in mean scores between Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria and Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States when measured on constraint commitment. Specifically, females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria would score higher on this measure than females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States and males among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria will score higher than males among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States.

As was predicted, univariate Fs for effect of couple groups (see Table 4.8) was significant for CONSTRAINT, $F(1, 260) = 325.3, p < .001$. Test of Between-Subject Effects showed that SEX differences, $F(1, 260) .001, p > .05$ and GOUGROUP x SEX differences $F(3, 260) .331 p > .05$ on this variable were not significant (See Table 4.10). Post-hoc tests on the CONSTRAINT variable using Bonferroni showed significant effects along the lines predicted. Females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria scored significantly higher ($M = 217.2, N = 65$) than females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States ($M = 160.2, N = 67$), $p < .001$. Males among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria scored significantly higher ($M = 218.9, N = 65$) than males among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States ($M = 158.2, N = 67$, $p < .001$).

Hypothesis 2

The mean score for Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States will be significantly different from the mean score for Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria when measured on personal dedication to marital commitment. Specifically, females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria will score higher on this measure than females among Nigerian
Table 4.8

Univariate Test

Effects of Couple Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Sums of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>260</td>
<td>702.93</td>
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</tr>
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<td>260</td>
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<td>290.40</td>
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</table>
couple in the United States, and males among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria will score higher than males among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States.

Univariate Fs for effect of couple groups was significant for PERSONAL DEDICATION as was predicted, $F(1, 260) = 144.2$, $p < .001$. Test of Between-Subject Effects showed that SEX differences, $F(1, 260) = .08$, $p > .05$ and GOUGROUP x SEX differences $F(3, 260) = .88$, $p > .05$ on this variable were not significant (See Table 4.10).

Post-hoc tests for the PERSONAL DEDICATION variable showed that females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria scored significantly higher ($M = 77.7846$, $N = 65$) than female among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States ($M = 160$, $N = 67$), $p < .001$.

Males among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria scored significantly higher ($M = 218.9231$, $N = 65$) than males among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States ($M = 158.1791$, $N = 65$), $p < .001$.

**Hypothesis 3**

For Nigerian Ibo couples who live in the United States, the vector of means on the traditional and egalitarian scores on a measure of gender role expectation for the female population will be significantly different from the vector of means on the traditional and egalitarian scores for the male population on this measure. This difference will not be seen among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria.

The Attitude Toward Women Scale provided scores for the traditional (ATWTRASM) and egalitarian (ATWEGASM) measures that were used to test this hypothesis. The scale is scored such that the lower the scores either on the ATWTRASM or the ATWEGASM the more traditional the attitude toward women and the higher the
Table 4.9

Univariate Test

Effects of Sex

<table>
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<th>Dependent Variable</th>
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<th>Df</th>
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<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
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<td>.77</td>
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### Table 4.10

**Univariate Test**

**Effects of Couple Group * Sex**

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<td></td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>182762.12</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>702.93</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Dedication</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>138.31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>138.31</td>
<td>.876</td>
<td>.350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>157.85</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>157.85</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ATWTRASM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>377.68</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>377.68</td>
<td>12.53</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
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<td>260</td>
<td>30.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ATWEGASM</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>182.72</td>
<td>7.54</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>6302.53</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>24.24</td>
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<td></td>
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<td><strong>Dyadic Adjustment</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
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<td>260</td>
<td>290.40</td>
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</table>
scores the more egalitarian the attitude toward women. A multivariate interaction effect was observed in this analysis. As is evident in Table 4.10, GOUGROUP x SEX was significant for ATWTRASM, F(1, 260) .12.5, p < .001 and ATWEGASM, F(1, 260) 7.5, p < .05. The test showed that while females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States group scored significantly different from females and males among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria, males among Nigerian couples in the United States scored in the direction of Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria causing the interaction effect.

Hypothesis 4

When measured on overall dyadic adjustment, mean scores for Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria will differ significantly from the mean scores for Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States. The direction of this difference will be positive.

As was predicted, univariate Fs for effect of couple groups was significant for DYADIC ADJUSTMENT, F(1, 260) = 123.7, p < .001. Test of Between-Subject Effects showed that SEX differences, F(1, 260) .04, p > .05 and GOUGROUP x SEX differences F(1, 260) .03, p > .05 on this variable were not significant.

Step-down analysis was used to further understand the contribution to the composite dependent variables that best distinguish between Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria and Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States. Results of this analysis are summarized in Table 4.11 and it shows that of the five dependent measures used in this MANOVA, three of them – Constraint commitment (CONSTRAI), Traditional Attitude Toward Women (ATWTRASM), and Dyadic Adjustment (DYADJUST) - made the most unique contributions to predicting differences between these two groups. CONSTRAI (marital constraints) made the most contribution, Stepdown F(1, 260) 325.3, p < .000.
Table 4.11

Roy-Bargman Stepdown F - tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Hypoth. MS</th>
<th>Error MS</th>
<th>StepDown F</th>
<th>Hypoth. DF</th>
<th>Error DF</th>
<th>Sig. of F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONSTRAI</td>
<td>228657.458</td>
<td>702.93124</td>
<td>325.29136</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERDEDI</td>
<td>440.35739</td>
<td>114.45950</td>
<td>3.84728</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATWTRASM</td>
<td>831.62121</td>
<td>29.90869</td>
<td>27.80533</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATWEGASM</td>
<td>72.77450</td>
<td>22.43503</td>
<td>3.24379</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>.073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DYADJUST</td>
<td>5092.94559</td>
<td>278.11264</td>
<td>18.31253</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This was followed by ATWTRASM (traditional attitude toward women), Stepdown F(1, 258) 27.8, p < .001. DYADJUST (marital dyadic adjustment) had Stepdown F(1, 256) 18.3, p < .001. Personal dedication (PERDEDI) and Egalitarian attitude toward women (ATWEGASM) made minimal contributions with Stepdown F(1, 259) 3.8, p > .05 and Stepdown F(1, 257) 3.2, p > .05 respectively.

Summary

In this chapter, the result of the 2 X 2 omnibus MANOVA analysis was present. Numbers in the cells were fairly equal with 65 couples, or 130 subjects, in the Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria group and, 67 couples or 134 subjects, in the Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States group. Age, education, and salary means were indicated as were the means, standard deviations, and range for the different variables. The various assumptions of MANOVA were tested and presented, and they indicated that the assumptions were generally met.

Wilks statistics for the MANOVA analysis were significant for couples groups (COUGROUP), SEX, and COUGROUP*SEX interaction. Univariate Fs were significant for COUGROUP and not for SEX, and COUGROUP*SEX except for ATWTRASM (traditional attitude toward women), and ATWEGASM (egalitarian attitude toward women), the two variables responsible for the MANOVA interaction. Post-hoc tests for multiple comparisons with Bonferroni were in the directions predicted in the hypotheses that were tested in the analysis. Roy-Bargman Stepdown analysis showed that three of the five dependent variables (Constraint commitment, traditional attitude toward women, and dyadic adjustment), made unique contributions to the composite dependent variables.
that best distinguished Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria and Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States with constraint making the most contribution.
Chapter V

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings of this study are discussed in terms of how they relate to the existing literature, what implications they hold for the population studied, and how these findings inform clinical intervention with immigrant populations. Limitations of this study and suggestions for future research are also explored.

Summary of Research Findings

As was earlier indicated, the purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of acculturation on marital stability among Nigerian Ibo immigrants in the United States. The study is preliminary in nature in that there are no known studies on Nigerian Ibo immigrants in the United States and, therefore, none on how the acculturative process impacts dyadic relationships among these immigrants.

Acculturation researches have shown that many changes occur among immigrant populations as they adapt to their host country. These changes are known to involve conflicts that often result in new forms of behavior that modify normative values which existed in the original culture (Berry, 1992). The present study attempted to examine how acculturation impacts couple relationships among Nigerian Ibo immigrants. The empirical investigation was accomplished by using binational data through sampling Nigerian Ibo immigrant couples in the United States and Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria.
The study involved assessing differences between these two groups on measures of constraint commitment, personal dedication, and dyadic adjustment -- factors that are known to impact marital stability. Intracouple differences on a measure of gender role expectations were also evaluated. Research has shown that the less crystallized couples are in their gender role expectations, the higher the risk of marital dissolution (Juni & Grimm, 1994).

In hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2, group differences and inter-group gender differences were predicted between Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria and Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States when measured on constraint commitment and personal dedication respectively. Study findings were as predicted. There were group differences. Nigerian Ibo females in Nigeria scored higher than Nigerian Ibo females in the United States while Nigerian Ibo males in Nigeria scored higher than Nigerian Ibo males and females in the United States.

Hypothesis 3 involved a prediction that Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States would be less crystallized in their gender-roles when measured on gender role expectations. Study results were as predicted with an interaction effect. Females in the United States group scored significantly different from males in this group and from Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria. An inspection of the interaction plot (Appendix B) showed that while males in the United States sample were less traditional in their gender-roles expectations when compared to the Nigerian sample, they were not by this fact more egalitarian. On the other hand, females in the United States sample scored significantly different from both males and females in the Nigerian sample on both measures and therefore were consistently more egalitarian. What this suggests is that the
difference between these two samples on gender-role expectation may be related to acculturative changes among females in the United States sample.

In hypothesis 4 a prediction was made that the mean score for Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria will differ significantly from the mean score for Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States when they are measured on dyadic adjustment and that the direction of this difference will be positive. As predicted, Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria scored significantly higher on dyadic adjustment than Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States.

Study Contribution to the Literature

Despite the growing literature on the impact of migration and acculturation on immigrant families, no empirical studies have been done on the impact of acculturation on Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States. Studies have shown that migration and acculturation can aggravate conflict in the marital dyad, create an imbalance in the traditional power structure between couples, and increase the risk of marital dissolution. Most of these studies were not based on binational data but on surveys and data collected only in the host country and, therefore, lacked the information necessary to directly examine acculturation effects. This study has thus advanced research on the effects of acculturation on marital stability in several ways. First, in contrast to prior studies, the effects of acculturation on union stability with binational data have been examined providing new evidence that migration and consequently acculturation indeed increase the risk of union disruption. Second, this line of inquiry has been extended to the behavior of Nigerian immigrants in the United States, suggesting that the effect of acculturation on marital stability among Nigerian immigrant couples needs further investigation.

A key finding of this research is that Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States differ significantly from Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria when measured on values and
attitudes toward marital commitment and gender roles. As a group, Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States scored lower on constraint commitment and personal dedication values. Females in this group showed strong egalitarian tendencies and the consequent challenge of traditional power structures of patriarchy. Previous research with other immigrant groups (Graig, 1971) tied this phenomena to experiences in the United States. These characteristics are clearly not typical of women in the traditional Nigerian Ibo culture.

There are at least two possible interpretations for these findings. It is possible that females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States are self-selected and differ in important ways from those who remain in Nigeria. Emigration from Nigeria has accelerated in the face of political and economic changes that accompanied military rule in the region. One could speculate that those who emigrate are less traditional and kin-oriented and more highly individualistic, attuned to more liberal values and democratic ideals. Thus, even prior to emigrating from Nigeria, these females may already have either exhibited values or receptivity to the values of the host culture. On the other hand, it may be that the persuasive cultural messages of the United States which hinge on postmaterialist values emphasizing self-expression, tolerance, equality, and a more democratic partner relationship and family configuration combined with the pervasive material comforts and women's economic independence to bring about these changes. The later suggestion has greater support in the acculturation literature, especially when the pull-push factors affecting emigration of Nigerians (Apraku, 1991) are factored into the equation. This study also adds some supporting evidence to this later suggestion. In the demographic questionnaire, research participants in the United States group were asked to choose from four statements the statement that best described how they ended up as a couple in the United States. Sixteen, or 24%, of females were already married in Nigeria before their husbands emigrated and joined their husbands later. Fourteen females or 21% were already married in Nigeria before they emigrated to the United States.
together with their husbands. For 27 or 41% of the females, their present husbands were living in the United States, came back to Nigeria to marry them, went back to the United States, and they (the females) joined their husbands later. Nine or 14% of the females made the personal decision to migrate to the United States. They met their partner in the United States and got married. Based on this information, 86% of the female participants in the United States group came to the United States to join their husbands. Apraku (1991) has identified the quest for more education, quest for greener economic pastures, and political reasons as the main pull-push factors affecting emigration of Nigerian men. In patriarchal societies like Nigeria, family stage migration usually involves the initial departure of husbands with their partners joining them later. This is because of the position of males in traditional families and their access to migrant network resources. Thus, the suggestion that the egalitarian orientation among females in the immigrant Nigerian Ibo group could be attributable to self-selection theory may not be as plausible as the other suggestions that the observed difference is acculturative in nature.

Values are culturally defined and they shift as a culture shifts. The dramatic structural transformation of the family in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century, destabilized the Victorian family patterns, especially its gender arrangement and the everyday patterns and practices that sustained them. This resulted in the transformation of the housewife into a paid worker outside of the home, which then undid the sharp dichotomy between roles that characterized the breadwinner-housewife pattern (Skolnick, 1997), and drastically reduced women’s economic dependence on men. Further, it challenged the prerogatives of patriarchy with its emphasis on individualism, independence and assertiveness, particularly in attitudes toward authority, sexuality, and freedom of individual choice. These values are mitigating factors to structural constraints on dyadic relationships and female subservience to patriarchal authority. Secondary analysis on the data on constraint commitment showed that females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States felt less social and financial pressure to maintain their
relationships and had a more liberal attitude toward the morality of divorce than females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria. This finding is related to other study outcomes (Butatao, 1984; Connel 1984; Gaves, 1984; Kibria, 1993; Morokvasic 1984; Safa, 1981; Uba, 1994; Yao, 1985) which show that migration does alter the structure of family systems, and significant gender-role transformations accompany this change.

Differential adjustment to gender roles between male and female immigrants were further supported by this research. The results indicated that among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States, females were far more egalitarian in gender-role expectations than males. Nigerian couples in Nigeria did not show this discrepancy and were more crystallized in their role expectations as both males and females remained traditional in their orientation. Thus, in line with other immigrant studies, Nigerian immigrant males and females displayed differential adjustments in the area of gender roles with females acculturating faster toward egalitarianism.

Other research outcomes have linked gender-role changes among immigrant couples to shifts in the material circumstances that underlie household subsistence resulting in women’s higher economic resources and increase in women’s status and power relative to men, and the tendency toward egalitarianism (Bee, 1996; Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Kibria, 1990; Lamphere, 1987; Pessar, 1984, 1986). While this study did not directly assess this relationship, it is noteworthy that, in contrast to their counterparts in Nigeria, over 80% of the females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States tended to strongly agree with statements like, “If we ended this relationship, I feel fine about my financial status”; “I would not have trouble supporting myself should this relationship end”; “I would not have any problem with meeting my basic financial needs for food, shelter, and clothing without my partner.” It may well be that the increase in immigrant women’s economic contribution to the family economy does impact male dominance in the family and the consequent challenge of traditional structures of patriarchal authority.
Another important finding in this study is the significant difference on dyadic adjustment between Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria and Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States with the later being much lower in their mean scores. This is not surprising considering the fact that they scored lower on constraint commitment and personal dedication variables and were less crystallized in their gender role expectations. Lund's (1985) longitudinal studies strongly implied that factors associated with constraint are better predictors of relationship stability than are measures more related to relationship satisfaction. Researchers who have examined the relationship between couples' gender-role expectations and marital adjustment discovered that couples with crystallized gender roles experience far less distress in their marriages than couples who differ in their role orientation (Juni & Grimm, 1994; Zammichiel, Gilroy, & Sherman, 1988). The present result, while not involving assessing these kinds of relationships directly, does substantiate these findings relative to Nigerian immigrant Ibo couples in the United States.

On a different dimension, this study contributes to the research on international surveys of values. Based on the findings of this research, reports on international survey of values cannot claim to reveal indigenous societal values if they do not take acculturative influences into account; otherwise they would have a major interpretive problem. Societies that are in contact with and influence each other probably cannot be taken as independent samples of country clusters and hence cannot be used to established cross-cultural value dimensions or to establish value universals (Berry, 1992). Because values do change with acculturation and are not fixed features of populations, any characterization of indigenous national values that does not take into account mutual acculturative influence of pairs of societies cannot result in a valid picture of value universals cross-culturally (Georgas et al., 1996).
Implications of the Findings

Statistical analysis on the findings of this study indicated that constraint commitment, gender-role expectation and dyadic adjustment are important in understanding differences between Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States and Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria (refer to table 4.11). The implications of this research, therefore, derive directly from the relationship that exists between low constraint commitment and dyadic adjustment and the connection between less crystallized role expectation in the marital dyad and marital distress. Many commitment theorists have hypothesized that constraints are major, perhaps the major, determinant of relationship stability (Johnson, 1978, 1982; Rusbult, 1983; Stanley and Markman, 1996). Marital stability, in this regard, is not equated with marital satisfaction. Stanley and Markman (1996) have noted that constraint commitment provides explanation for the existence of stable dissatisfying relationships. Even in satisfying marriages, constraints tend to help couples weather the inevitable fluctuation in satisfaction. Other theories about marital dissolution (Levinger, 1965, 1976) postulate that marital strength stems from the interaction between attractions (affective rewards, socioeconomic rewards), barriers (felt obligations, moral proscriptions, external pressure), and alternatives (a person’s perception of how he/she might fare outside of marriage) to a marital relationship. The theory argues that a decrease in the marriage’s attractiveness and/or an increase in the weakness of its barriers to leaving, coupled with a more positive assessment of alternatives, impel individuals toward dissolution. Similar conclusions were arrived at by Nye (1978) who suggested that marital stability is determined by the amount of positive affect toward the spouse, constraints against its dissolution, and the perceived unattractiveness of alternatives to the marriage. Lewis and Spanier (1979) described the relationship between marital quality and stability in similar constructs, implicating alternative attractions and external pressures to the marriage as contingencies mediating the relationship between marital quality and stability. All these theories allude to one
conclusion: that low constraint commitment and low personal dedication does have a negative impact on marital stability.

Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States reported significantly lower marital constraints than their counterparts in Nigeria. They concomitantly reported lower dyadic adjustment. This may actually mean that Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States are at high risk in terms of marital dissolution. In their proposed model of dissolution decision, Edward and Saunders (1981) specified the effects of decreased barriers and increased alternatives upon commitment and hypothesized a linear and generally unidirectional relationship among these variables. They proposed that once the barriers to divorce are overcome in a psychological sense and a viable alternative to the relationship has been perceived, the "goodness of marital outcomes" is reassessed. In other words, a spouse will begin to devalue the rewards in his/her marriage relative to the cost of staying in it. These authors maintained that, when a spouse becomes aware of attractive alternatives and reassesses his or her marital outcomes, there is increased likelihood that the sense of attachment or identity with that relationship will decrease. Consequently, "one's loyalty to the spouse, involvement in the marriage, and sense of belonging begin to decline" (p. 386). Based on this proposition, the authors concluded that the lower the level of commitment to marriage, the more likely the dissolution decision.

The risk of marital instability among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States when compared to their counterparts in Nigeria is even more critical when their lower scores in personal dedication are factored in. Studies in marital commitment make a distinction between "personal commitment" (feeling of wanting to continue or personal dedication to continue) and moral or structural commitment (factors which lead to the continuation of marriage regardless of personal preference). In circumstances where structural and moral commitments are low or not salient, a decision to stay in a relationship, that is, personal dedication, even where highly attractive and viable alternatives are available, can sustain the stability of that relationship (Adams and
Sprenkle, 1990). But when personal dedication is low concomitant with lowered constraint commitment, the risk of marital dissolution becomes very high. As Stanley and Markman (1996) have observed, personal dedication is a key determinant of future relationship quality, as well as an important indicator of future relationship stability. It needs to be observed though, that the fact that Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States scored lower in constraint commitment and personal dedication relative to Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria does not mean that they are low in these commitment variables. It only means that they are low in these variables as compared to their Nigerian counterparts in Nigeria. Thus, these findings only indicate that they are at a higher risk for marital dissolution than Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria and not as compared to any other group or as a group in and of themselves.

A second implication of this study lies in the interaction effect found among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States relative to gender-role expectations. Females in this group tended to be strongly egalitarian in their gender-role expectations than males. What was interesting in these research findings is that, while males among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States were significantly less traditional than males and females among Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria, they were not by that fact more egalitarian. Apparently, the cultural atmosphere of the United States may have impacted on their attitudes towards gender roles but not enough to make them egalitarian in their role expectations, or as egalitarian as the females in this group. The females were not only less traditional than all the other three groups, they were also far more egalitarian in their attitudes and perception on gender roles.

Abadan-Unat (1982) was of the opinion that immigrant men tend to retain as long as possible their traditional privileges based upon inequality within the family (Abadan-Unat, 1982). One can speculate that, for men, patriarchal structures embody values, characteristics, and customs that symbolize the stable part of their self-identity and, therefore, a strong defense against the vicissitudes and diminution of the sense of self that
their minority status may engender in the acculturative arena. On the other hand, the acceptance of Western orientation toward egalitarianism may often be preferable for the females since it challenges traditional women’s roles and the inequalities inherent in them. Whatever may be reason for this discrepancy, a struggle between partners championing the different values of the old and the new societies can escalate into a full-blown conflict. As Levine (1982) succinctly put it:

For those men who can adapt, social changes due to migration poses no source of marital distress, but for those who insist on traditional roles for their wives, a society striving for women’s equality becomes a personal struggle for freedom in the home resulting in inevitable conflict. (p. 339)

In general, the risk of marital conflict increases with poor communication skills in the marital dyad and becomes more critical when spouses have less crystallized role orientations. Within the Nigerian culture, the clearly delineated gender roles and different spheres of life for men and women that are built into the framework of patriarchy limit the necessity of communication and negotiation about role-sharing between spouses. As Kanyongo-Male and Onyango (1986) observed, even relevant topics such as how many children to have do not receive much discussion among Nigerian couples. It is revealing that on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale items that tapped into couples’ communication received very low ratings among the two groups. For example, when couples were asked to rate how often they, as a couple, “have a stimulating exchange of ideas”, “work together on a project” or calmly discuss something”, a majority of the ratings among the females in both groups, were either “once or twice a month” or “less than once a month.” In contrast, a majority of the males in both groups rated “once or twice a week” or “once or twice a month.” The low ratings, that communication between spouses received, especially among the female group, coupled with the discrepancy in ratings between males and females, is highly suggestive of poor communication mechanisms among these couples. While the negative impact of this limitation may not be as pronounced for
poses a potential threat to the stability of marriages among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States.

Clinical Implications

Nigerians come from a family-oriented culture that is patriarchal in organization with clearly delineated gender roles. The traditional structures provide the "holding environment" (the emotional and instrumental support, and the structural network that help constraint marriages to stability). These values are vastly challenged by the acculturation experience of Nigerian immigrants. Mental-health practitioners working with this population need to be aware of the burning reality of immigration experience and the impact of acculturation on immigrant cultures. Without this knowledge, they would be unable to validate, confirm, empathize, and provide a holding environment for these clients since the acculturation variable may be an underlying factor in the presenting problem. A therapist who is informed about effects of acculturation can be sensitive to symptoms that are metaphorical of acculturation stress and can identify stresses that are invoking past issues or emanating from limiting and estranging roles in the immigrant family.

Also important is the need to allow these clients to mourn the old country and the loss associated with migration. This is connected with the issue of the differential adaptation rates of the husband and wife. It may be that the slower adaptive partner, (the husband) is mourning the loss of traditional structures and privileges for both spouses while the wife is making the adaptation for both members of the couple. However, the different roles each has adopted are not accepted or realized by the other. Consequently, issues related to personal identity, social identity, and cultural identity must be assumed as matters of importance by therapists, so that these clients may deal with difficulties related to who they are in their present cultural environment. As Hanassab and Tidwell (1989) suggested, therapists treating individuals in cultural conflict need to be aware of the subtle problems such cultural conflict creates. To resolve the conflict by assimilating
to the mainstream culture carries with it overtones of both disloyalty and fear of abandonment. To resolve the conflict by reaffirming the cultural identity can turn out to be no resolution at all because the pressure to assimilate remains. Sometimes, it may be more beneficial to restrain the professional instinct to guide the client toward a solution, and instead recognize that, in some cases, conflict may be an adaptive solution in itself.

When Nigerian couples come for therapy, they may not cite acculturative experience as a reason for their distress. It would be important for the therapist to spend some time describing the effects of migration experience and its consequent acculturative impact. This would provide an opportunity for these clients to identify their own experiences if indeed these experiences are causing some of their discomforts. It would also help them not to personalize conflicts emanating from acculturation while reducing defensiveness in working through differences.

Therapists need to be aware of the traditional family hierarchy, gender roles, power structure, and the acculturation rate of Nigerian immigrant couples, so that they do not unknowingly label or take sides according to the general norms of the mainstream United States culture. They should endeavor to help these clients retain a sense of respect about the part of their identities formed in the home culture as well as assisting them in coming up with their own comfortable degrees of acculturation.

Sluzki (1979) pointed out the importance for therapists to be aware of the differences between their cultural values and those of the immigrant family in therapy. Bearing this in mind, therapists should attempt to reexamine their own biases to understand the unique perspectives of Nigerian immigrants about family values and gender roles. Therapists also need to be aware of the error of seeing family idiosyncrasies as cultural norms or seeing cultural norms as family idiosyncrasies. The ability to recognize one’s stereotypes while understanding the cultural background of the client can maximize the effectiveness of the counseling process with this population. To this effect, therapists working with Nigerian immigrants need to adhere to Pinsof’s (1992)
observation that challenging a client’s cultural beliefs and patterns is only justified when these ways of being play a major role in the creation and/or maintenance of change. “A culturally sensitive intervention respects patients’ cultural values and patterns and attempts to work within the patient’s cultural framework” (Pinsof, 1992, p. 117).

Limitations of Study

First, there are two separate issues of sampling. On the one hand, the paper-and-pencil measures used for this study were constructed using restricted samples from the United States. Although these measures were statistically analyzed and did maintain high alpha coefficients with regard to the population being studied, they assessed only a selection and not the full range of possible marital commitment values that can make them multiculturally inclusive. The absence of a widely accepted or universal taxonomy of marital commitment and adjustment values makes it virtually impossible to enumerate all values of interest in cross-national research (Feldman, Mont-Reynaud, & Rosenthal, 1992). Consequently, the issue of comparability of value constructs across different cultures remains a concern despite the careful attention to psychometric properties of the measures used and the use of qualified Nigerian professionals to advise on the cultural relevance and appropriateness of the items.

The second problem of sampling concerns comparability of participants across the different groups. As Feldman, Mont-Reynaud, and Rosenthal (1992) have observed, cohort effects among immigrant groups cannot be ruled out. Furthermore, even if the two groups were matched on education or salary, this would not ensure comparability because educational qualifications and their viability in the job market are very different between the United States and Nigeria. The conversion rate between the dollar (United States currency) and the Naira (Nigerian currency) are astronomical ($ = N94.5) and not equivalent relative in purchasing power. Thus, despite being reasonably (although not perfectly) matched on a variety of background characteristics, the samples were not equal across groups in terms of the parity between education and financial stability.
A third concern has to do with the sample method used for this study. As Lipson and Meleis (1986) have noted, “A basic purpose of research is to discover general concepts and predictors that represent a universe or a population, using a sample of that population” (p. 104). One major difficulty with this study is that Nigerian immigrant couples do not live in identifiable ethnic communities; they are scattered throughout various cities, counties, and states, and there is no means of accurately describing their numbers or characteristics. In addition, those who do not possess legal visas are not counted in immigration or embassy statistics.

Lipson and Meleis (1986) had noted that the United States Census which is most often used for identifying a population may easily misrepresent the actual numbers of an immigrant groups because data by country of birth or heritage are estimated at about one household in six or 17% of those who complete the long form of the Census. These authors observe that these numbers often conflict dramatically with subjective estimates of the size of immigrant populations by community leaders. Based on these factors, it is often difficult to obtain a representative sample with immigrant populations. In this study, sampling was problematic by virtue of the lack of “little Nigeria” or “Nigerian Ibo neighborhoods” from which to attempt random sampling by household. The danger with the “snowball” method used to obtain participants and the fact that the samples were drawn from selected regions of the United States and Nigeria means that the samples may not be representative of the populations being studied.

Another concern is that data was collected using only paper-and-pencil measures. This researcher expresses reservations about relying exclusively on such procedures to assess the innermost core of beliefs about marital commitment and related factors about marital adjustment. When items are to be rated on a scale with a fixed metric, there is no cost to the subject of giving high or low ratings to many items. Furthermore, conflict in the marital dyad can influence ratings that otherwise would have been rated differently prior to the conflict. Cultural inhibitions relative to some values, for example sexuality in
the marital dyad, can also influence ratings depending on how comfortable a subject is with responding to a particular item. The desire to "save face" is important among Nigerians. Thus, they may be reluctant to disclosing accurate information about themselves that they think would show them in a negative light. Consequently, cross-cultural subjective biases with regard to the measure items may abound.

Despite these qualifications, the groups used for this study are culturally homogenous and are of the same ethnic background. Participants grew up within the same ethnic culture, were raised within the Nigerian Ibo cultural values, speak the same language, and have a common heritage. They are, therefore, well suited for the study of acculturation effects.

Suggestions for Future Research

As was indicated earlier in this chapter, this study was exploratory in nature and was designed to determine if there were acculturative effects impacting Nigerian Ibo immigrants in the United States. Since the findings indicate significant acculturative effects, future research in this area should involve using methodological triangulation as a way of assessing more comprehensively the variables under consideration and delineating more clearly the nature of these acculturative effects. Denzin (1978) defined triangulation as the use of more than one method for studying the same phenomenon; it also means using different philosophical approaches to study the same phenomena (Stevenson and Woods, 1986). Combining the quantitative and the qualitative approach with other sources that provide checks on data, e.g., ethnography to help establish a sense of the number of Nigerian immigrants and their demographics, will aid in obtaining more accurate and complete data and increase the reliability and validity of the research results.

One modification of the present study would entail finding ways to discriminate between the reorganization of gender relations that is the consequence of family-stage migration (when the husband migrates first leaving the wife and children at home who then join him much later in the immigrant country) or acculturation effects. It would also
be necessary to use better measures to help clarify whether the differences found are acculturative in nature or more related to the self-selection theory. It is important to determine the possibility that females among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States are self-selected and differ in important ways than those in Nigeria.

With an understanding of the cost of such an investigation, future research on the impact of acculturation on marital stability may entail a longitudinal study to assess a couple or a spouse prior to migration with follow-up assessments in the host country over a period of time. This will provide a more accurate delineation of acculturation effects on marital relationships.

Extending the research to include other immigrant groups with more diverse cultural orientations would provide additional data that would allow for more generalization of outcomes.

Utilizing instruments that are more sensitive to cultural variations and study designs that can more directly establish a relationship between acculturation effects and marriage dissolution will improve the reliability and validity of research in this area. Increased literature on migration effects and the impact of acculturation on many immigrant groups has given rise to meta-analytic studies on acculturation and adjustment (Cf., Moyerman & Forman, 1992). With more efforts in this area, the conceptualization of acculturation and marital adjustment will become clearer and hopefully lead to better clinical interventions through the development of more culturally sensitive instruments to measure acculturation effects.

Summary Statement

Migration is a phenomenon of uprooting disorder, a stressful event that involves changes on many levels in the life of immigrant couples and their families. With migration comes acculturation by which the continuity of experience in the immigrant’s previous sociocultural context is impacted by the cultural variables of the host country. Such encounters have been associated with marital disruption among immigrant couples.
This study involved attempting to understand how the acculturation experience impacts dyadic relationships among Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States. To this effect, binational data sets (Nigerian Ibo couples in Nigeria and Nigerian Ibo couples in the United States) were used to more accurately discriminate the effects of acculturation. Research findings were as predicted. Significant differences were found between the two groups on measures of marital commitment, gender-role expectations, and dyadic adjustment. An interaction effect was found between males and females in the United States group on gender-role expectation with females adjusting, more so than males toward egalitarian ideals. These findings corroborate other study outcomes on acculturation and immigrants' experiences, while providing new insights about Nigerian immigrant couples. The findings also question any claims by international survey of values to reveal indigenous societal values if they do not take acculturative influences into account.

This study acts as a point of departure for researchers willing to investigate the impact of acculturation on marital commitment and how this relates to marital dissolution. It also provides a starting point for therapists who wish to work with Nigerian immigrant couples. McGoldrick, Garcia-Preto, Hines, & Lee, (1991) have pointed out that there is no easy solution to the complex problems that migration and acculturation imposes on the family and on the therapist. However, knowledge of migration effects and therapy that is based on principles of cultural sensitivity would be helpful when working with Nigerian immigrants and immigrant couples in general. As Ben-David and Lavee (1994) suggested, it is necessary to keep in mind the markers of all these different experiences so as not to lose sight of the complexity and diversity of human experience.
Reference:
Reference


Appendix A

STEM-AND-LEAF PLOT
Attitude Toward Women Scale: Egalitarian scores
Male Nigerian Couples
### Attitude Toward Women Scale: Equalitarian Scores

**Male Nigerian Couples**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Stem &amp; Leaf</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>0 . 678889999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>1 * 00011111222233344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>1 . 55555566667777788889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>2 * 001122333444</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2 . 568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3 * 11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Stem width:* 10.00  
*Each leaf:* 1 case(s)
Appendix B
Study Introduction and Informed Consent for Participants
Study Introduction and Informed Consent for Participants

I am a final year doctoral student in the Department of Counseling Psychology at Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. I am presently conducting a dissertation research on the impact of acculturation on marital stability with special reference to Nigerian Ibo couples living in the United States. The purpose of this study is to better understand how Nigerian couples in the United States are being affected by their acculturation experience and to see what clinical implications these effects (if any) hold for therapist who are working or who may work with this population.

Participation in this study is completely and absolutely voluntary. Since arbitrary numbers and not couple names will be used to code the questionnaires, confidentiality and the anonymity of subjects will be maintained throughout and after the study. Reports on the data collected will be done based on group scores. No individual scores will be reported. All returned questionnaires will be kept in a locked file cabinet at the researcher’s home and will be destroyed after the required time-lapse stipulated by the American Psychological Association. A subject can terminate their participation at any time without any penalties or obligations attached.

Participants will be required to complete the following forms and questionnaires and these would take a total of about 50 minutes to complete.

A) A Demographic Sheet that asks for basic information about the participant none of which is geared toward identifying the participant. It will take about 5 minutes to complete this form.

B) The Attitude Toward Women Scale. This is a measure asks you to agree or disagree with statements that reflect traditional or liberal views about women in general. It will take you about 10 minutes to complete this form.

C) The Commitment Inventory. This instrument measures two dimensions of relationship commitment: personal dedication and constraint commitment. It will take about 25 minutes to complete this form.

D) The Dyadic Adjustment Scale. This instrument measures marital adjustment in terms of: dyadic satisfaction, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, and affectional expression. It will take about 10 minutes to complete this form.

All questionnaires are coded to identify male and female forms. The codes are meant to help the researcher match respondents with their spouses after the questionnaires are returned. Please complete the questionnaires separately and without consulting with your spouse. Completed questionnaires are be sealed in the appropriate envelop marked “male” or “female” and then enclosed in the self-addressed stamped envelop and mailed back to the researcher. Returning the completed questionnaires implies an understanding of this project and consent to participate in the study.
Although no problems are anticipated from participating in this study, it is suggested that if you experience distress as a result of completing these questionnaires, please discuss it with a trusted friend or a counselor.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subjects' privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (973) 378-9809.

If you have any questions or would like a copy of the completed study, you may contact this researcher or Dr. Adriana Dunn in a separate mail using the Addresses/telephone numbers below:

Anselm Nwaorgu  
1096 North Ave.  
Elizabeth N. J. 07201  
(908) 282 - 1041

Dr. Adriana Dunn  
Department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy  
Seton Hall University  
South Orange, NJ 07079  
(972) 761-9450
Appendix C

Background Information: Nigerian Ibo Couples in the United States
BACKGROUND INFORMATION
NIGERIAN IBO COUPLES IN THE UNITED STATES

CODE: #----- DATE:---------- GENDER: M----- FEM-----

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION
A. AGE: 25 or under----26-30---- 31-35---- 36-40---- 41-45----
   46 and over----
B. Number of Children: ------
C. Number of children in each group: 0-5 years---- 6-12 years---- 13-18 years----
   over 18----

II. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:
A. Please circle highest educational level attained.
   GCE/WASC Professional College Graduate school.
   10 11 12 OND/NCE/ RN/etc HND/BA/BSC MA/MBA/Ph.D
B. Degree obtained: Associate---- Bachelors---- Masters---- Doctorate----
   Degree Expected: Associate---- Bachelors---- Masters---- Doctorate----

III. WORK INFORMATION
A. Are you presently employed? Yes__ NO__
   If "YES", What is your job? _____________________ hrs/week _________
B. Do you work more than one job? Yes__ NO__
   If "YES", What is your second job? _____________________ hrs/week _________
C. What is your primary reason for working? Check one:
   ___ Advance my career ___ Primary support of the family
   ___ Supplement Family Income ___ Other (specify) _________
D. What is your reason for not working? Check one:
   ___ Loss of job ___ Can't fine a job ___ Personal/couple decision not to work
   ___ currently a student ___ Other

IV INCOME

PERSONAL INCOME PER ANNUM (excluding spouse income) Please check the
range that applies to you.
V. RELIGION

A. What faith are you?

B. How religious are you?  1  2  3  4  5

VI. FAMILY SUPPORT

A. Besides you and your spouse, who else currently lives with you?
   ___Mother   ___Father   ___Grandparent(s)   ___Siblings
   ___Friends   ___Other (specify)

B. Where do you and your spouse live relative to your extended family?
   ___Same house   ___Same town   ___Neighboring town
   ___Same state   ___Different state   ___Different country

C. Where do you and your spouse live relative to your spouse's extended family?
   ___Same house   ___Same town   ___Neighboring town
   ___Same state   ___Different state   ___Different country

VII. MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

A. Number of years married?

B. Have you and your spouse ever sought help with your marriage?
   Yes   NO

C. Have you and your spouse ever been separated?
   Yes   NO

D. Which of these statements describes you and your spouse came to the United States
   a) We were already married in Nigerian before my partner traveled to the United States
      and I joined him latter.
b) We were already married in Nigeria before we left for the United States together.

c) My partner was already living in the United States, came back to Nigeria to marry me, and I joined him latter.

d) My partner and I met in the United States and got married.
Appendix D
Background Information
Nigerian Ibo Couples in Nigeria
I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION
A. AGE: 25 or under----26-30---- 31-35---- 36-40---- 41-45---- 46 and over----
B. Number of Children: ------
C. Number of children in each group: 0-5 years---- 6-12 years---- 13-18 years---- over 18----

II. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:
A. Please circle highest educational level attained.
   GCE/WASC.... Professional .... College.... Graduate school...
   10 11 12 OND/NCE/ RN/etc HND/BA/BSC MA/MBA/Ph.D.
B. Degree obtained: Associate---- Bachelors---- Masters---- Doctorate----
   Degree Expected: Associate---- Bachelors---- Masters---- Doctorate----

III. WORK INFORMATION
A. Are you presently employed? Yes___ NO___
   If “YES”, What is your job? __________________________ hr/ week ____________
B. Do you work more than one job? Yes___ NO___
   If “YES”, What is your second job? __________________________
   How many hours per week at second job? ____________
C. What is your primary reason for working? Check one:
   ___ Advance my career ___ Primary support of the family
   ___ Supplement Family Income ___ Other (specify)________
D. What is your reason for not working? Check one:
   ___ Loss of job ___ Can’t fine a job
   ___ Personal/couple decision not to work ___ currently a student ___ Other
IV INCOME

PERSONAL INCOME PER ANNUM (excluding spouse income) Please check the range that applies to you.

Under N14,999  
N 35,000 - N 44,000  
N 65,000 - N 79,999  
N 15,000 - $24,000  
N 45,000 - N 54,000  
Over N 80,000  
N 25,000 - N 34,999  
N 55,000 - N 64,000

V. RELIGION

D. What faith are you? 

B. How religious are you?  


very religious  
not at all religious

VI. FAMILY SUPPORT

A. Besides you and your spouse, who else currently lives with you?

__Mother  __Father  __Grandparent(s)
__Siblings  __Friends  __Other (specify)

B. Where do you and your spouse live relative to your extended family?

__Same house  __Same town  __Neighboring town
__Same state  __Different state  __Different country

C. Where do you and your spouse live relative to your spouse’s extended family?

__Same house  __Same town  __Neighboring town
__Same state  __Different state  __Different country

VII. MARITAL RELATIONSHIP

A. Number of years married? 

B. Have you and your spouse ever sought help with your marriage?

Yes__  NO__

C. Have you and your spouse ever been separated?

Yes__  NO__