The Effects of Colonization on the Career Development and Occupational Choices of African Students Studying in the United States

Augustine E. Bessong

Western Michigan University

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THE EFFECTS OF COLONIZATION ON THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOICES OF AFRICAN STUDENTS STUDYING IN THE UNITED STATES

by
Augustine E. Bessong

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Counselor Educational and Counseling Psychology

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
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A quantitative research design was utilized to understand the perceptions of the effects of colonization on career choices and occupational development of Africans in the United States. In face-to-face, 60–90 minute interviews using a semistructured interview guide developed by the researcher, participants were asked open-ended questions about the effects of colonization on their career choices and occupational development. Using purposeful sampling, 12 African male and female students, 7 enrolled at one Southeastern university and 5 from a large metropolitan city in the Southeastern United States, were interviewed for data collection.

Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. Transcripts were analyzed using the constant comparison (grounded theory) technique. Themes and patterns were identified which could contribute to knowledge of Africans regarding the study.

Findings indicate the following: (a) colonization has had an influence on the career choices and occupational decisions of African students; (b) differences between French and British colonial influences regarding careers exist; (c) although parents/family and significant others play significant roles in career-decision making of African students, their career choices have also been influenced by their present environment and life situations; (d) government and foreign scholarships influence career choices and occupational decisions of Africans; (e) although the gap in career and occupational choices between males and females in Africa has continued to
diminish (more women doing the same jobs as men), some occupations still seem to attract more men than women; and (f) responses of participants support the notion that in looking at the career development and occupational choices of Africans, it is important consider the person in relationship to his or her environment.

Counselors and university personnel working with African international students must try to understand the intricacies and goals, as well as the concept of careers from the perspective of Africans and their country of origin. Counselors must also understand that colonization was very influential in the lives of Africans and has played significant roles in the career-decision making process for them.

Counselor training programs should incorporate the results of this study into every aspect of education, including practicum experiences and studies as part of the multicultural counseling course.

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Augustine E. Bessong
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sharf (1992) noted that some career development theories developed prior to 1960 were based solely on research involving "white males from middle-class or upper-class families" (p. 10). While some research has been done internationally with other cultures, it is unclear how much of the European and American theories translate to other cultures. Sharf observed that no theories of career development have been formulated that apply specifically to one race or another. It must be noted that most of the authors of these theories mentioned very little about the environmental, social, cultural, and educational implications for the people of Africa whose territories were colonized.

In addition, little research exists concerning career development and occupational choice in developing countries. More specifically, there is no research on how the career development process works for the colonized people of Africa who come to the United States. Their formative years of career development were influenced by their country of origin and other "internal and external environmental forces" (Mathabe & Temane, 1993 p. 25), but their current career development is influenced by U.S. society.

Osipow (1983) maintained that individuals' career choices are the sum of their estimate of the probability of the attainment of a particular career goal in combination with an evaluation of the career. In the case of Africans and their career
choices, many other factors and influences, including colonization, must be taken into consideration when understanding career development and occupational choice.

Context of the Researcher

My homeland, Cameroon, went through German, British, and French colonization. As one who was born and reared in Cameroon, I know the effect colonization had upon my developmental and formative years. I attended an all-boys Catholic secondary school that was administered by the Mill Hill Missionaries from England. During these formative years, I was indoctrinated in British and French mannerisms, dress, educational goals, and career outlooks. Although I have made a few career changes in life, I am very certain that these early developmental forces and my environment influenced my early career decisions. Mathabe and Temane (1993) suggested that the impact of the individual's external culture on career development and choice is significantly more potent than the person's internal culture. Similarly, Stead (1996) noted that career attitudes are developmental-contextual in perception and include the various levels of analysis (e.g., family, school, and individual-psychology). According to Miller-Tiedman (1987), one would expect career attitudes to be associated with childhood experiences found in the matrix of the family social and home environment. Roe (1956) posited that the home environment influences the type of occupation an individual will choose. In my case, the presence of Europeans in Cameroon had an impact on my social, economic, and external as well as home environment, which played significant roles in my career development.

Furthermore, one could also argue that contact with the rest of the world in general, and the brunt of Europe's colonialist enterprise in particular, inevitably directed the course and conduct of business within and among Africa's nations (E.-A.
Elango, personal communication, November 5, 1998). Elango noted that the presence of the colonial powers in Africa ultimately prescribed the nature and kind of goods, materials, and services that were exported and imported from independent African nations. The generations of Africans who have come to inherit these economies and social structures have, of course, had little choice but to deal with this reality, especially since their respective countries, and the continent as a whole, continue to play a role in the exchange of materials that has expanded since colonial days. As a direct consequence, Elango observed that educational institutions and career choices made available have been limited to areas where there has been the greatest need. Thus, the interplay of many factors, including colonization, has a significant influence in the career development and occupational choices of Africans studying in the United States. Similarly, I. Endeley (personal communication, April 24, 1997) shared this opinion, stating:

I think it would be foolhardy to attempt to overlook the impact that colonialism had on us. The legacy bequeathed to us by both British and the French during their 45 years or so (1916–1960/61) that they administered their respective Mandated and Trust Territories continues to have a major influence on our lives even today. The [official] language we speak, the literature we read, the culture we acquire, or some of the philosophies we adopt, are all strongly influenced by our colonial heritage.

Purpose of the Study

In this study, the perceptions and beliefs of African international students from countries that were colonized by England and/or France regarding the effects of colonization on their career development and occupational choices were explored. Through personal interviews with selected African students studying in United States, the researcher explored students' perceptions and beliefs on how colonization affected their career development and occupational choices.
Rationale for the Study

The effects of colonization can be seen in the educational and political lives of most Africans today (Nkabinde, 1997; Nkapoya, 1994). Despite the growing importance of foreign students' enrollment in American institutions of higher education (Da Silva, 1974), little is known about the effects of colonization on the career development and occupational choices of African students studying in the United States. It has been noted that limited efforts have been made to encourage most Africans to choose careers they really love. According to Nkabinde (1997), scholarships offered by foreign countries determined what students studied, rather than giving them the option to choose their curriculum. Nkabinde cited the alarming number of Nigerians receiving Western education outside their country who were not granted the final decision regarding their areas of specialization. This practice is still common throughout the continent of Africa. The present study is essential, as it investigated the perceptions of Africans studying a program or career imposed by foreign scholarships or grants, and it illustrated the effects of no choice on their career development.

In a study conducted by Ifenwanta and Gardner (1978), the majority of respondents agreed that many Nigerian students leave the educational system without making conscious career decisions. The authors concluded that career planning would have a positive impact on unemployment in Nigeria. As Kunnu (1987) also noted, because of the limited career guidance Nigerian students receive in their home country before leaving Nigeria, and due to the limited involvement they have in choosing their careers, Nigerian students often experience anxiety and tension in making career decisions and choices upon arriving in the United States. Supporting
the need for intervention, Luzzo (1993) confirmed that a 20-year review of vocational behavior research included the charge that research on ethnic and cultural groups and strategies for responding to their differences has not been adequately represented in the career development literature. This statement holds true for Africans studying in the United States.

Over the past few decades, international students have become a rapidly growing population within higher learning institutions in the United States. It was predicted that international students would constitute more than 25% of graduate student enrollment in the 1990s (Parr, Bradley, & Bingi, 1992). Nationwide, foreign student enrollment reported to the Institution of International Education increased from 61,278 in 1993 to 73,443 in 1997, nearly a 20% increase (Suhler & Timms, 1998). Although the African student population has experienced a small decline due to the tightening of the U.S. immigration policy, a significant number of African students continue to study in the United States. According to the Institution of International Education (1998), during the 1996–1997 academic year, the number of registered African students in the U.S. was 22,078. The number may be actually higher because a large number of African students may have outlived their immigration status, and, therefore, may not have been counted.

Fort Valley State University (FVSU), one of the sites for the present study, has a population of international students. According to the Office of the Vice President of Students Affair at FVSU, the population of foreign students during the 1999–2000 academic year is over 50, with 35 students from Africa. According to Suhler and Timms (1998), many American colleges have international exchange programs and also send officials overseas to recruit students. Suhler and Timms
noted that most colleges have Internet sites that provide information to international students.

Presently, a large population of over 1,000 African students, representing African countries that were colonized by Britain and/or France, attend institutions of higher education in Atlanta, Georgia. These figures are adequate to show that the subject of foreign students is of widespread interest in the United States. Yet, at the same time, it is a subject about which there are striking gaps in knowledge, especially relating to the effects of colonization on the careers of Africans. Da Silva (1974), in his historical study of foreign students in American higher education from its colonial beginnings to present, identified the missionary movements, the philanthropic foundations, and the United States government as the major forces that have significantly contributed to foreign students' presence in Americans higher education.

At present, changes in American society and the behavior of many developing countries seem to have led to a new approach regarding the exchange of students. In a recent news article about foreign students, Suhler and Timms (1998) indicated that, for many educators and government officials in the U.S., the goal is to balance national interests with the benefits that foreign students represent. They noted that part of the mission in recruiting foreign students is to create an atmosphere that prepares people to live and work in the global community. Thirty-five years ago the rationale behind the exchange of students was framed as the need to promote national goodwill and a favorable attitude toward the American way of life (Da Silva, 1974). Evidently this approach is distinctively different now. The institution that is at stake abroad is no longer the nation—it is the university. Suhler and Timms noted that the recruitment of international students helps defray cost, increases that critical mass of international students, and diversifies the campus. Suhler and Timms contended that
the role of foreign students in U.S. higher education is a sensitive issue, especially at
the graduate level. They noted that foreign students receive more than half of the
nation’s doctoral degrees in science and engineering (Suhler & Timms, 1998).

According to Olesky-Ojikutu (1986), one tool developed for vocational
counseling of Nigerian secondary school pupils has been the Career Time-Line. He
reported that practicum participants objected to this tool, saying that the time-line
approach was “foreign” and “awkward” for the Nigerian context and that it was “too
new.” Apparently, controversies exist in the career-counseling field in Africa. More
extensive research and studies need to be carried out in the area of career counseling
as it relates to career development and occupational choice.

Another area of concern is the use of traditional career development theories
for research and practice with culturally different groups. These theories have been
severely criticized as inadequate because most were developed from Euro-American
populations (Okocha, 1994). Supporting Okocha, Luzzo (1993) mentioned that
numerous vocational psychologists have insisted that existing research on ethnic
minorities’ career development is confusing and inconsistent. Luzzo further
confirmed that one major criticism is the repeated failure to consider theoretically
sound variables in career development assessment.

Additionally, it is posited that most career theories are based on faulty
assumptions and tend to ignore the social-psychological and political realities that
shape the lives of African students. According to Herr and Cramer (1992), career
development for ethnic minorities can sometimes be restricted because of few
positive work-related experiences, limited educational experiences, poor
environmental resources, and restricted access to career employment information,
which applies as well to most African students.
Another problem is the ethnocentric worldview of some White career development teachers and counselors. According to Okocha (1994), this ethnocentric orientation makes it difficult for such individuals to actually develop an honest, open, and genuine working relationship with culturally different persons. A White teacher or a career counselor, for example, who views his or her culture as superior, may not be interested in learning or understanding the culture of persons of color.

Perceived barriers have been identified as important moderating factors in career development that may have an impact on the formation of occupational aspirations and the quality of career decision-making (Luzzo, 1993). Luzzo further disclosed that studies addressing ethnic differences in the perceptions of barriers to career development have been limited to few ethnic groups and have lacked some of the precision noted in more recent investigations. Because what Luzzo postulated may apply to Africans studying in the United States, it is anticipated that the present study will assist vocational professionals and counselors in developing effective services for African students. The incorporation of minority persons’ cultures and languages in career intervention programs will foster their career development.

It must be remembered that, unlike the United States, the practice of career counseling in Africa’s primary and secondary schools or universities is still in its infancy. According to Olesky-Ojikutu (1986), the use of counselors in school settings is still relatively new to the Nigerian educational system. He mentioned that the provision of high quality career counseling for adolescents has become a truly national emergency and that trained counselors are scarce. As a result, counselors who are available to work in secondary school settings find themselves overwhelmed with the number of students needing vocational counseling.
A justification for vocational counseling in African schools has previously been suggested in a United Nations report, which stated that:

African governments should perhaps consider providing more definite guidance for secondary school pupils in the light of economic, social, and cultural needs. Stronger guidance than in Europe would be reasonable in Africa because many families here are scarcely capable of reaching well informed decisions about the future of their children. (United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization, 1962, p. 39, cited in Olesky-Ojikutu, 1986)

Definition of Terms

The key terms used throughout this study are defined as follows:

*Career development:* The implementation of a series of interrelated career decisions that collectively provide a guiding purpose or direction in one's work life. These career decisions are necessarily made in a social context and they may involve choices about interpersonal relationships and leisure as well (Peterson, Sampson, & Reardon, 1991).

*Career choice:* The direction of activity that is determined by (a) individuals' efforts to obtain work that is congruent with their interest; (b) the differential competition for work of different categories (i.e., the ratio of workers desiring work of that kind and the available jobs); and (c) the availability of work of the desired kind at the desired level of attainment (Savickas & Walsh, 1996).

*Colonization:* The act of a European nation controlling and dominating an African territory and imposing its culture and influence onto the African people.

*International/foreign students:* Refers to anyone who is enrolled in academic courses in the United States who is not a citizen or an immigrant (permanent resident) (Kunnu, 1987).
African college students: The subjects selected for this study were African students from countries colonized by Britain and France, who received their high school education in Africa but currently are enrolled in or recently graduated from universities in the State of Georgia.

Research Questions

The focus of this study was directed towards the following areas of inquiry:

1. What are the perceptions and beliefs of a selected number of African students studying in the U.S. regarding the effects of colonization on career development and occupational choices?

2. Did the policies of Britain and/or France have any influence on the career decisions and other areas in the lives of the Africans that they colonized?

3. Did family, government, and foreign grants play a role in the career decisions of Africans?

4. What are the opinions and perceptions regarding career development and occupational choices of African males and females?

Benefits of Research

In the case of Africa, very little research has been conducted on the career development of African students studying the United States. As a minority student, and someone whose country was colonized by different European powers, I found it of special and personal interest to investigate the impact of colonization on career development and choices of African international students. The present study may also open up interest for further studies, such as investigating whether some African students' choice of a career is based on economic necessity, or examining the
usefulness of different career inventories with African students studying in the United States. The study may also generate discussion on career development for Africans at regional and national conferences. The study may also benefit Africans who plan to study in the U.S. concerning their career decision-making process. The study may also contribute to the limited knowledge base in the area of career development for Africans. Participants may gain valuable insights about their own career development and occupational process.

The conclusions emerging from participants about their career development and occupational choices, should be useful for institutions, administrators, career counselors, and others who are concerned with the welfare of minority or African students. Furthermore, studies of this type are likely to be of assistance not only to American institutions of higher education, but also to nations experiencing an accelerated process of socioeconomic development. Such assistance would be achieved by enabling institutions of higher learning, parents, vocational counselors, and governments to understand the position, individual interest, and career development of African students.

Limitations of the Study

Like quantitative research, there are also inherent limitations to qualitative research. First of all, qualitative research is a relatively new methodology and the efficacy of techniques, such as inductive category coding with simultaneous comparison procedures, used in the present study has been opened to criticism. In addition, qualitative studies, unlike quantitative studies, intentionally incorporate and value both subjective and objective positioning by the researcher. It is, in fact, the subjectivity and objectivity that adds richness and depth to qualitative studies and yet
must be considered when viewing the results (Thiel, 1995). With qualitative studies, the researcher does not seek to prove a particular phenomenon but rather sets out to comprehend the world as it is, and to be true to multiple perspectives as they emerge. Qualitative data will, therefore, typically make sense to individuals who entertain the concept of multiple perspectives rather than absolute truth.

The research was structured to allow for a single interview with each participant. Such a design may not permit uncovering as thoroughly as might have a longitudinal design. In addition, it is not known if a single interview was sufficient enough to uncover individual differences and similarities among the participants.

It is important to note that participants in this study were chosen by purposeful sampling. Colonization of Africa took place a very long time ago. Most of the participants have only read or have been told stories about colonization. Thus, it is not possible to know for certain that the final pool of participants actually represents the targeted group. In addition, because the participants were not selected randomly and they represented only students from selected African countries, it is not known if the results of this study can be generalized to a larger population of African students in U.S. or those from other parts of the world.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter I is an introduction to the study and includes the context of the researcher, purpose of the study, rationale for the study, definition of terms, benefits of research, limitations of the study and the organization of the study.

In Chapter II, a review of literature is presented, encompassing the following areas: overview, early European influence, African culture and career development,
and the influence of colonialism on career development and choices. The chapter includes discussion on historic African influences, African vocational studies, gender roles, and career development. Africans' perceptions of careers, political impact on careers, and a summary are also included in this chapter.

Chapter III contains methodology including the description of methodological conceptualization and the research sample. The chapter includes discussion on selection of participants, research instruments, data collection, and data analysis. The description of participants and organization of the findings are presented in Chapter IV.

Chapter V includes a summary of the research, conclusions, and a discussion of the results. The chapter ends with a set of recommendations for practice, and suggestions for further studies.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Overview

A review of the literature indicates that no known studies similar to this one have been conducted to date. There is, however, a small body of literature that spans several areas related to career choice and occupational development. Considering the fact that the purpose of this study is relatively new, the literature review included very old historical and career-related references. Additionally, personal communications (e.g., e-mails, discussion groups) with African scholars in the United States were utilized as sources for literature review.

First, because the subjects of the study are African students attending colleges in the United States, a brief introduction to the history of colonization and early European influence is offered. The other sections of the literature review relate to culture and career development. Areas addressed include the influence of colonization on career development and choice, historic African influences, African vocational studies, and gender roles. Family/parental influences on career development and choice, Africans’ perceptions of careers, and the political impact on careers are also covered.
Early European Influence

Although this study investigated the effects of colonization on the career development and choice of Africans studying in the United States, it is important to understand some of the early reasons for Europeans' interest in Africa. Therefore, an examination of the phenomenon of colonialism is necessary to understand the degree to which it influenced not only the economic and political development of Africa, but also the African people's perception of themselves (Khapoya, 1988), as well as the impact it had on their career development and choices.

For purposes of this study, the countries colonized by England and France were selected as these countries have experienced the greatest impact of colonization. According to Khapoya (1988), the two largest colonial powers in Africa were France and Britain. Together they controlled two thirds of Africa before World War I and more than 70% after the war. Supporting this view, Pakenham (1992) described Britain as a large formal, and even larger informal, African Empire, and France as the world's leading protectionist nation.

The period from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s marked the zenith of imperial rule in Africa (Khapoya, 1988). The formalization of colonial rule was accomplished at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885 when European powers met and partitioned Africa. Some of the European nations present at this conference were invited as onlookers. According to Pakenham (1992), the list of onlookers included three great powers—Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the United States—and a number of smaller countries—Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Holland. Pakenham noted that these countries had no appetite for colonies, no stake in Africa, and little hope of expanding trade. Some countries dropped out of the colonial race. The major powers
that took part in the partition included France, Britain, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Portugal; only 4% of the landmass was uncolonized (Khapoya, 1988) (see Table 1). These powers had complete control of these territories until after World War I.

Table 1

European Control of African Pre- and Post World War I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imperial Power</th>
<th>Pre-World War I (%)</th>
<th>Post-World War I (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncolonized</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Khapoya, 1988, p. 112.

Reasons for Colonization

One scholar of Portuguese imperial history has suggested that the Portuguese were moved by a "crusading zeal, the desire for Guinea gold, the quest for [the mystical Christian Kingdom of] Prester John, and in search of spices" (Khapoya, 1988, p. 112). Another scholar detected in Prince Henry's penchant for hazardous travel abroad a real thirst for adventure in the name of acquiring knowledge (Khapoya, 1988). The European occupants felt that it was their duty to "civilize" and "uplift" the African people (Khapoya, 1988), because Africa was not technologically advanced, and their achievements were not written and, therefore, unknown to the
rest of the world. With that background, Mbaku (1997), in his latest work, mentioned that the African colonies served as a source of raw materials for the European economies and as markets for excess production from metropolitan factories. Mazrui (cited in Khapoya, 1988) stated three broad reasons for European exploration of Africa. The first reason was the need to gather scientific knowledge about the unknown, and Africa, then referred to as the “Dark Continent,” provided just the right kind of challenges for European explorers. The second reason stemmed from European ethnocentrism or racism, rooted partly in Western Christianity. Delancey (1989) noted along with the European traders came the missionaries. European nations felt that Africans needed God. First the Bible was brought into Africa, and later most of the continent was colonized. Delancey (1989) noted:

Although the missions’ intention was to spread the faith, one of their most significant effects was the increase in educational facilities that accompanied their evangelical efforts. The ability of the missions to expand their schools so rapidly was in turn dependent upon the actions of Cameroonians themselves. It was the tremendous desire for education (and the clerical and other white-color and blue-color jobs that went to the educated) that caused the population to provide most funds and labor for construction of schools.

(p. 29)

Imperialism, that is, the desire by European patriots to contribute to their country’s grandeur by laying claim to other countries in distant lands, was the third reason for European explorations of Africa (Khapoya, 1988). Whatever was the reasons that brought Europeans to Africa, it is very evident that the influence of colonialism played a role in how Africans viewed certain professions, and those influences may be felt today in the area of career development and choice as well as social lives and educational aspirations for many Africans.
African Culture and Career Development

In Africa, the early experiences of the individual, including cultural beliefs, may influence career development and choices. According to Mathabe and Temane (1993), research has revealed the influence of culture on career development and choice. A study by Watson, Stead, and DeJager (1995), using the Life Role Inventory and Career Development Questionnaire, investigated the possible influence of gender and culture on the career maturity, study, and work role of South African students. Subjects included 260 first-year university students (137 White, 123 Black). The study concluded that, although gender had no significant effect on students' career maturity or on their study and work role salience, culture did have a significant effect. The study noted that White students consistently participated more in work role, were more committed to, and had higher expectations than their Black peers. Watson et al. concluded that Black South African students had significantly less career maturity than White South African students did. It must be noted that although culture must have played a part in these results, other factors like colonization and racism must also be considered. According to Hickson and White (1989), the political structure in South Africa has resulted in an educational, social, and economic system that has discriminated against black students, and this has implications for the career development of black students. Mathabe and Temane (1993) cited Begg's (1991) research on South African university students, and Stead (1996) confirmed that cultural values and constraints in part determine an individual's view of career development. In his paper entitled *Career Development of Black South African Adolescents*, Stead concluded that Whites in South Africa generally identify with Western lifestyles that emphasize independence, individuality, self-actualization, and
competitiveness. In this respect, Stead added that their career decisions differ from Blacks, who follow a traditional African lifestyle that emphasizes cooperation. According to Stead, Africans tend to be community-oriented and dependent on the wishes of significant others when making career decisions. As Langley (1990) suggested, the career development of students from some cultural groups is affected in unique ways.

It has been documented that counseling, especially career guidance with African students studying in the United States, is somewhat complex and challenging because of ethnic diversity, value systems, world views, and cultural belief systems (Kunnu, 1987). Only counselors who are culturally sensitive to diversity can work successfully with African students. As Abiola (1971) noted:

The African school child is not a strange being whose behavior requires different forms of construct and explanation, or whose behavior modifications require different types of principles. Rather, the African child is unique only in the sense of the particular experience to which he is exposed. This experience is the result of being in an environment whose physical and socio-cultural complex predispose him to behaving in particular ways, and whose educational orientations channel him in accepting the stereotypes and prejudices prevailing in a transitional society with conflicting aspirations. . . . The African school child is in a process of transition from traditional society, to an assumed Western mode of living. This process of transition creates problems arising from the clash of cultures. . . . These conflict systems affect parental and societal values and ideas, and through this, the type of socialization process embarked on at home, at school, and in society at large. (pp. 63–64)

According to Super and Crites (1962) social adjustment has a bearing in vocational development. Similarly, Crites and Semler (1967) reported significant findings in their assessment of psychological aspects of vocational development. In order to assist African students studying in the United States to fulfill developmental tasks associated with career development and occupational choices, their early environmental influence, world views, culture, and country of origin must come into
play. The major tenet of developmental psychology is that an individual who succeeds with developmental tasks of earlier stages is prepared to cope more effectively with developmental tasks of later stages (Kunnu, 1987).

This view is based on the theory that one's life is made up of various stages that correspond roughly to chronological life periods. These tasks must be completed satisfactorily in order that the person might successfully pass through a particular life stage into the next (Collins, 1985). As D'Andrea (1984) noted:

Developmental changes represent transformational shifts in a person's previous manner of thinking, perceiving, feeling, and relating to others. . . . When a person's naturalistic tendency for psychological growth is impeded to the degree that it causes serious personal, vocational/career, or social/interpersonal frustrations, however, professional counseling services are often sought. At this point, counselors are placed in the position of helping clients "adjust" or "adapt" to their specific experimental hurdle. (p. 3)

Kunnu (1987) posited that Nigerian students studying abroad are victims of two cultures: (1) their home country's educational system (influenced by White colonization), which has afforded them little or inadequate career guidance; and (2) the counseling and guidance programs in American colleges and universities, which have not been broadened enough to encompass developmental factors of Nigerian college. Additionally, little emphasis is given to the cultural belief systems and meaning-making systems of African students and the implications of these factors for career counseling. As D'Andrea (1984) noted:

As orchestrators of human development, counselors must understand and related to clients within the context of their meaning-making systems. Though these meanings-making systems individuals interpret and make sense of their experiences. Furthermore, for counselors to amplify and sustain their impact, they must learn ways of utilizing the totality of clients, life experiences to more effectively guide them. (p. 3)
The Influence of Colonialism on Career Development and Choice

If culture, the influence of significant others, and perceptions about certain professions play significant roles in the career development and choices of Africans, then it could be argued that the restrictions White colonialism and apartheid placed on educational and career development (Stead, 1996) among African peoples must have influenced their attitudes about careers in general. Mathabe and Temane (1993) noted:

The Vocational Educational Act No. 70 of 1955 amongst others barred Africans from attending technical colleges in South Africa. The concept of career choice was indeed a farce for indigenous South Africans because even they could perceive a high probability of the attainment of a particular career, based on personal internal factors, that perception more often than not had an inverse relationship with perceived probability of attainment based on external and largely socio-political factors. (p. 26)

Black South Africans were not the only group of people in Africa whose perceptions about certain careers were influence by colonization. Many African nations with European influences had similar experiences. For example, the major European interests in Cameroon were economic, (i.e., trading and plantation agriculture) (Delancey, 1989). Plantations were developed mainly around the Cameroonian coastal regions. These plantations attracted a massive migration of unskilled labor from the hinterlands to the coast. This period of massive movement was also characterized by forced and cheap labor from the hinterlands. The workers lived on the plantations and raised families. Some of their offspring eventually were employed on the plantations, while a few were afforded, by the colonial administration, the opportunity to study a specified discipline overseas and be employed in the same agricultural plantations upon their return. As N. A. Ngwa (personal communication, September 6, 1999) observed:
Cameroon Development Corporation’s (CDC) [this body was set up by the British Government to carry out the development of Cameroon] main activity to date is agriculture and some allied activities. Profits from the sales of products [rubber, cocoa, bananas, tea, palm oil, etc.] were ploughed into the development of Cameroon and its people. Various developmental organs were set up for different purposes. In the social aspects, schools, clinics, hospitals, were set up . . . Children of workers went to these schools and along with their parents and relatives had free medical attention . . . CDC awarded scholarships for further studies to overseas [Britain and other parts of Europe].

It must be noted that most schools in Africa were tailored according to the system of education in England and/or France. It is obvious that these influences had a significant impact on the economic, social, psychological, and political lives of most Africans then, and certainly continue to play a role in their occupational and career lives today. It has been observed that the educated few (mostly males) were guaranteed white-collar jobs. Similarly, King (1971) noted that educators and large numbers of missionary and colonial authorities believed the school to have been responsible for creating in Africans the “distaste for manual work and the overwhelming desire for clerical occupations” (p. 257). Furthermore, Wood (1974) noted that Africans believed in the efficacy of formal education as a means of escaping the arduous and unremunerative life of peasant occupations.

A few educated Africans served as interpreters to the colonial masters, and sometimes later as administrative officers in the colonial bureaucracy (Mbaku, 1997). Employment with the government was regarded as very prestigious, while private enterprise was limited to Europeans with the majority of Africans relegated to manual labor. Colonialism glorified some professions, such as medicine, law, administration, and university teaching. These professions were all represented by Europeans who had been educated at Europe’s leading universities (Mbaku, 1997).
Agricultural and trade occupations were not viewed favorably by the Africans because farmers were placed in the lowest rank in the economic and social strata. As Krumboltz (1979) indicated, through a combination of observing and hearing about occupations, people devise occupational stereotypes that can be enduring and have tremendous impact on career choices. Collins, Burns, and Ching (1994) noted the neglect of technical education and the emphasis on liberal education (teaching) created in educated Africans a contempt for manual work and an admiration for white-collar jobs that persist today. Nkabinde (1997) reiterated this when she posited that the colonial period is, in part, responsible for perpetuating the belief among Africans that only liberal education (e.g., teaching) is the most important instrument of social transformation. Evidence of this trend was supported by a survey of African students studying in the United States conducted by Davis, Hanson, and Burnor in 1961. According to the survey, 36% of the students listed teaching and related positions within education as attractive careers, 14% listed civil service, 7% listed medicine, 5% listed physical and natural sciences, 5% listed politics, and only 3% listed business and agriculture. The results of the survey revealed that in the 1960s careers in business and agriculture attracted the least number of African students. It must also be noted that this survey was conducted in 1961, at the time when African countries were still struggling for independence from their European masters and the presence of European influences was still very fresh. In the same survey, using a longer-term projection of 10 years, politics and business became more attractive as the fascination of civil service and teaching declined.
Historic African Influences

The colonial powers took complete control of Cameroon, Nigeria, Mali, Kenya, and South Africa, as well as other African nations and instituted in them their own forms of education and management to fulfill their self-serving motives.

In a recent electronic mail, L.T. Tandap (personal communication, December 27, 1999) stated that economic investments were made into these colonies and the French political, economic, and military infrastructure established therein to protect these interests from intrusions from any other European economic interests. Mbaku (1997) observed that during colonialism, the institutional arrangements designed by the state were used to oppress the indigenous peoples, limit their participation in economic and political markets, and generally prevent them from developing skills and methods to effectively challenge European monopolization of colonial institutions. He also charged that the indigenous peoples were often treated like children who had little say or no capacity for independent thought and were subjected to many indignities, including forced labor. Initially the British, like the Germans before, and the French simultaneously in the new territory, relied on forced labor (Delancey, 1989). Africans were regarded by these European powers as second-class humans and were forced to engage in unskilled occupations. Education and work were limited to special areas and to special populations. For Africans, education was viewed as insignificant unless it served the interests of the ruling elite. Because of educational inadequacy, large numbers of Africans remained illiterate, and those who went to school or engaged in employment activities were sponsored by their White masters to satisfy their own aims.
It must be noted, however, that the idea of education for nation-building is by no means new; it is the direction education has taken that has differed in each phase of Africa's historic, economic, social, and certainly career development. There were other forms of education and identified careers in the colonized territories before the Europeans arrived. For example, tribal and traditional education was part of the social order of all African communities. As Maculu (1971) noted, education for life was part of the community life of the tribe through which the younger generation was prepared for its role in society. Organized patterns and systematic instruction were part of this preparation. Makulu mentioned that the nature of early tribal education differed greatly depending on the needs of the particular society and the demands of its environment. In societies in which people relied on hunting, training was related to those skills that sharpened the senses of the youth and trained their responses to the stimuli of the environment. In the same way, children in a fishing community were given the necessary orientation to make them resourceful and effective members of that particular group. Education would continue from childhood to adulthood, punctuated by intensified tests during points of crisis (traditional initiations, death in the family) in the life cycle of the individual in accordance with his physical and psychological development (Makulu, 1971).

Slavery and the slave trade, which carried away millions of able-bodied men and women, interrupted development. In addition, the expansion of colonial empires swept away the remaining strength of these civilizations and replaced them with new technological civilizations. This brought Western education and the dynamic power of the Christian gospel and its teaching into Africa, gradually transforming the entire continent. Throughout Africa, the leading roles in the post-World War II nationalist
and independence movements were played by the graduates of mission and colonial schools (Delancey, 1989).

Transformation of the continent came with much resistance from the European powers. According to Mumford and Orde-Brown (1970), a career in government service entailed the acceptance of the French attitude in all matters; a tendency towards agitation would prove disastrous. Mumford and Orde-Brown further mentioned that, whereas the British system would permit and, indeed, encourage a large measure of local nationalism and spirit, the French authorities would frown upon any tendency to evolve a possible rival to French culture. Delancey (1989) noted that it was not the plan of the colonial officers (or most of the missionary leaders) that their subjects should become leaders of nationalist movements that, in time, would overthrow their rule. He suggested that the purpose of schools, according to the French colonial masters, was only to provide clerks and catechists, not politicians and ministers, who would fill the lowest levels of the colonial and mission bureaucracies.

Although the French educated a small number of Africans to fill clerical positions, it has been documented that their colonial policy was repressive and manipulative as well. L.T. Tandap (personal communication, December 27, 1999) observed that the French electoral system had to be carefully crafted to ensure that the ruling party in France had people to be elected to the French parliament who were of its persuasion (interests), which was hardly in the interest of the colonial domains. He noted that France was so attached to its overseas territories and had such a desire to perpetuate colonialism that after World War II, clauses which would protect their interests were written into the French Constitution, and African parliamentarians were virtually coerced into voting for those clauses. Tandap noted
that coercion was carried to the electoral process in the African colonies. The French saw themselves and their system as a permanent in Africa. Tandap suggested that the French developed a security infrastructure to block the independence movements in their territories' neighboring British colonies (Cameroon and Togo) during the 1950s. The French controlled the day-to-day thinking of the African government, both at the local and international levels. He observed that the French decried the teaching of local languages in favor of the French language. The strength of a language denotes the strength of the French culture. It must be noted that even today in some African countries like Cameroon, there continues to be a French presence in many aspects of their affairs.

African Vocational Studies

Only a few studies conducted in the last 30 years have investigated specific career-related issues in Africa. Nwachuku (1986) noted that research efforts in the past two decades have concentrated on the dynamics of career choice in Africa, including, for example, the effect of parental attitudes regarding certain occupations (Achebe, 1982); the relationship of school curriculum to choice (Okeke, 1973; Olayinka, 1973); and the ecological influence on choice (Osuji, 1976). None have specifically addressed the effects of colonization on the career development and choices of Africans studying in the United States.

Kunnu's (1987) study investigated the relationship of ego development and career maturity in Nigerian male and female college students. Sixty Nigerian undergraduate and graduate students who were enrolled between the fall of 1986 and the spring of 1987 in two state universities in middle Tennessee comprised the sample for the study. The study indicated that there was no significant inverse relationship of
ego development and career maturity between male and female Nigerian college students. The researcher concluded that the ego development stage distribution for Nigerian college students was consistent with that of the American adult population. The study further indicated that Nigerian students studying in the U.S. had little or no career guidance in their home country. Upon arriving in the United States, they were confronted with issues of adjusting to American culture, as well as learning the necessary social skills to enhance survival in a foreign and culturally alien environment. Consequently, career development concerns may have been of secondary importance. The authors of the research suggested that counselors in the United States need to focus on the African students' meaning-making systems and the tasks associated with the process of transition from the conformist to self-aware level of ego development. The result indicated that more than two thirds (66.7%) of Nigerian youths in occupational training experienced deflection from their primary interest, while among their counterparts in the Western world only 33–45% deflection was noted. The difference is attributed to the knowledge about the world of work and the availability of adequate career counseling opportunities in the Western world, as compared to Nigeria (Cosby & Picuo, 1971). Nwachuku (1986) indicated that realism of implementation of occupations was found to be significantly related to the type of occupation. He concluded that medicine had the highest percentage of realism of implementation of occupations (94.4%), while biological and physical sciences had the least (4.5%).

Ifenwanta and Gardner (1978) attempted to ascertain if a representative sample of Nigerian teachers and educational administrators were in agreement with basic tenets of the U.S. Office of Education career education model. A 31-item survey instrument was sent to 120 teachers and administrators from two Nigerian
states and the federal capital of Nigeria, Okocha (Lagos). The study concluded that the basic concepts of career education in the U.S. were consistent with many of the concerns of Nigerian educators. According to the study, many Nigerian students leave the educational system without having made conscious career decisions and with little or no knowledge of the basic skills that employers require.

Luzzo (1993) investigated ethnic differences in college students’ perceptions of barriers to career development. Participants included 375 undergraduates (237 female, 138 male) attending a large California state university. The data revealed a significant social class difference between ethnic groups. The result indicated significant ethnic differences in college students’ perceptions of the types of barriers to their career development. The result also noted that family-related barriers did not significantly differ between ethnic groups, but significant differences were found in students’ perceptions of study skills, ethnic identity, and financial barriers. These barriers are also applicable to Africans studying in the U.S. Luzzo cautioned that ethnic differences in the perceptions of barriers are limited in their interpretive value because only descriptive data were provided.

Gender Roles and Career Development

In the case of Nigeria, and African countries in general, the colonial curriculum for males consisted primarily of core subjects such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. However, until the 1940s, the curriculum for women was geared toward a domestic role. As Burayidi (1986) mentioned, the few women who were privileged to receive formal education were trained not to be part of the labor force, but to provide support as mothers and wives. According to Alele-Williams (Burayidi, 1986), female students tended to be tracked into areas regarded as “feminine.” Even
in single-gender schools, the courses that were taught reflected the stereotypical gender roles. For example, home economics was taught in female schools and woodworking or carpentry was taught in male schools. Traditional female fields such as nursing and home management, however, continued to be popular among females.

In a study by Anumonye (1970), a sample of 40 African students studying nursing at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland was comprised of 35 females and 5 males. In another sample of 15 students studying secretarial subjects, 11 were females and 4 were males. In that same study, not one female, out of a population of 47 students, studied medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, law, or accountancy. Gender inequality was also reflected in the career aspirations of males and females (Burayidi, 1986). Burayidi suggested that women tended not to enroll in specialties that were regarded as male preserves, such as engineering, science, and technology. Similarly, Osipow’s (1983) research on undergraduates and other young women in the U.S. indicated that, in the past, women tended to modify highly demanding career goals in favor of a career that could be more easily combined with marriage and family plans. Burayidi (1986) concluded that female participation in various academic and career fields in formal schooling has not significantly changed since 1986.

In comparing the occupational choices of 520 10th-grade students by ethnic groups and gender, Lee (1985) concluded that there were gender differences in occupational choices among rural Black, White, and Native American adolescents. Lee also maintained that females, regardless of ethnicity, aspired to attain high-level occupations more frequently than did males.

In contrast, Achebe’s (1982) study, assessing the vocational developmental pattern of students in the East Central State of Nigeria, used a total of 400 Nigerian students (200 females, 200 males) randomly selected Forms I–V (grades 7–10),
ranging from ages 11 to 22 (divided into eight age groups), in four secondary schools (two urban, two rural). The author concluded that the developmental theory of vocational maturity seems to have cross-cultural application. The overall vocational maturity of the sample showed a prototypic pattern of progressive increase by age and especially by grade. The author stated that the students showed more mature vocational attitudes, knew more about jobs, and could better plan toward the achievement of their career goals as they progressed in school. Achebe further noted that in job-planning competence, there was no significant difference between boys and girls, but in job knowledge and vocational attitude, boys seemed more mature than girls. On the contrary, Watson et al. (1995) noted that some international researchers have found female university students more career mature than boys. Achebe further cautioned that any statement concerning the effect of gender from the Nigerian sample must take into consideration the effect of the location of the school. According to Achebe, children in urban areas appear to be more exposed to better career information and work knowledge than children in the rural areas.

Arap-Maritim's (1984) study investigated sex differences in vocational aspiration and sex-role perceptions of primary-school children in rural Kenya. The subjects were 203 children (120 boys and 83 girls) in Grades 3, 5, and 7. They ranged in age from 9 to 14 years with an overall mean of 10.6 years (3rd graders), from 10 to 18 years with an overall mean of 13.7 years (5th graders), and from 12 to 19 years with an overall mean of 15.2 years (7th graders). It must be noted that the means seem high for the respective grade levels because in some rural communities in Africa not all children have the opportunity to start primary schools at an early age. All subjects were drawn from a Kipsigis community and were Kipsigis-born. The subjects were homogeneous with respect to parental educational level and economic
status, with a mean individual attainment for parents of 3.2 years of schooling. Fathers were mostly unskilled or semiskilled laborers, typically masons, policemen, messengers, drivers, clerks, tailors, and shoe repairers. Six percent of the fathers were employed as primary school teachers; 7.4% of the mothers were either nurses or primary school teachers. The questionnaire was administered to the students in English. The results indicated that girls’ choices exhibited a significantly lower variety of vocations and the diversity of vocational aspirations increased with higher grade levels among boys but not girls. Such a difference between boys and girls may be a function of modeling agents. Arap-Maritim pointed out that boys have more frequent contacts with career models that enable them to develop a wider spectrum of vocational opportunities. The author’s conclusion supports the contention that sex differences are associated with the types of careers, task assignments, and roles that are culturally perceived as desirable and valued for boys and girls. The author also contended that role prescriptions and children’s task assignments are the two factors that bring about differences in role perceptions among children, because the data explicitly showed that the relationship between gender and the appropriate role reflects the influence of social environment. For instance, subjects strongly perceived females to be competent in cooking and childcare, and males to excel in roles demanding physical strength.

Nwachuku (1986) designed a correlational model based on vocational development theory constructed to analyze the implementation of crystallized realism of occupational preference and goal attainment projections of high school graduates. Data were collected from 180 male and female final-year occupational trainees at the University of Calabar, Nigeria. The author indicated that school graduates actually do make rational choices concerning their vocation, even if not implemented, and
Nigerian youths are aware of reality factors that face them. Interpretation of the results also indicated that perceptions of barriers to the attainment of work goals were more influential mediators of social origin in the attainment of high school seniors' occupational expectations than experienced reality factors.

In another study, Owuamanam (1982, cited in Kunnu, 1987) investigated the occupational aspirations of 560 Nigerian adolescents through the Employment Aspiration Questionnaire. The study concluded that boys had higher employment aspirations than girls. Owuamanam suggested that this might be due to the differences in their social roles, environmental context, and other expectations.

Explaining the traditional family expectations between males and females, he noted:

Traditionally, the males are expected to provide principal economic support for the family. They can effectively execute this role by being exposed to a variety of occupations from which they can make a choice. Boys are therefore subject to more social pressures to develop status oriented and permanent aspirations to employment than girls are. Culturally, the girl is a wife and mother and her occupational choices are few. The boy is expected to work for most of his life and his occupation to a large extent determines his status. (p. 172)

In Cameroon, for example, the "hard sciences" were glorified as the best disciplines to pursue. There was a general consensus that engaging in secretarial and nursing careers was neither lucrative nor prestigious, and, thus, they were regarded as professions for women or only for individuals who could not face the rigorous challenges of the "hard sciences." Fitzgerald and Cherpas (1985) conducted a study to investigate the assumption that a complex set of variables operates to maintain the traditional division of labor between the sexes, which then functions as a barrier to the career development of men and women. Their subjects consisted of 122 graduate students enrolled in counseling courses. The results of this study indicated that all practicing counselors believed that the profession of nursing is a less appropriate
choice for males than for females. The authors concluded that the subjects were less willing to work with a male than a female nursing aspirant. Mayer (cited in Kunnu, 1987) suggested that men who do not conform to the "masculine mystique" are sometimes reprimanded socially and classified as immature, unmasculine, and effeminate. Clearly, the problems of gender inequality, participation in education, and stratification of untraditional female professions still persist in Africa to a great degree.

Family/Parental Influences on Africans' Career Development and Choices

The notion that parents and family play important roles in a young person's career decision-making process has been extensively documented in the literature (Thomas, 1990). Thomas maintained that parents can provide support and guidance to their children as they consider career options. Super (1957) postulated that work values develop through interaction and identification with various socialization agents, particularly parents and significant others.

In a study by Watson and Stead (1993), Black high school students in South Africa were asked to rank the five most important sources of occupational information. Guidance teachers and parents were considered significantly more important sources than teachers, other relatives, or peers. According to Nwachuku (1986), the analysis of reality factors revealed that parental influence had diminished to the "least influence" among 10 variables, contrary to assumptions held about youths in African countries.

Kunnu (1987) studied the relationship of ego development and career maturity in 125 Nigerian students (95 males and 30 females) in two state universities in middle Tennessee. The results dispelled the notion that parental influence has a
significant effect on the career choices of Nigerian students. Seventy percent of the participants in this study indicated that neither their parents nor their peers influenced their career choices and decisions. Kunnu noted that with the increasing orientation and acculturation into the Western norms and values, the family in Africa will inadvertently lose some of its influence over individual students studying in the United States. This may also be associated with the influence of the environment as well as better career options in the U.S.

However, other studies suggest that families continue to play significant roles in the career decisions of most Africans. Research has consistently suggested the importance of parental encouragement and support in facilitating children's career development (Walsh & Osipow, 1973). Within African society, parents and relatives exert considerable influence on the occupational choices of their children (Idowu & Dere, 1983). Hence, parental expectations and perceptions of certain occupational choices may influence the career development or occupational decision of African students. Olayinka (1973) emphasized that most of the youths in Lagos, Nigeria consulted with their parents regarding their choice of jobs. According to Stead (1996), the importance of family in the career development of the adolescent cannot be underestimated. Stead posited that in South Africa the role the family plays in the career development of its members has also been linked in part to the educational and economic implications of the apartheid policy.

Stead (1996) noted that many parents of Black adolescents seem unable to provide much assistance on career choices in such a rapidly changing technological environment. According to Matsebatlela (1986), the advice of many Black parents is generally limited to the need to provide a constant income and the necessity for social and professional status. Stead pointed out that this is not surprising as a large number
of Black parents have difficulty moving beyond the status of unskilled or semiskilled workers, largely because of the apartheid-placed restrictions on their educational and career development. Consequently, the parents' occupational knowledge and experiences and those of their children remain limited. Watson et al. (1995) noted that in South Africa, Black students are exposed to an education which fails to encourage an analytic and problem-solving approach to their studies and fails to provide support in and exposure to the world of work and career decision-making.

Africans see education in terms of economic values and prosperity for the individual and family. According to Stead (1996), career issues are closely linked to maintaining adequate subsistence levels, particularly among disadvantaged families. Poor African families preferred to educate boys rather than girls, in part because of economic reasons as well as cultural perceptions about educating females. Boys were more likely to support their families after acquiring an education, whereas girls married into another family (Nkabinde, 1997).

In Cameroon, as in other African countries, women in some cultural groups or tribes did not receive a formal education. There was, and still is, a belief in some tribes that the woman's place is the home and her main functions are childbearing, caring, and farming. According to Fitzgerald and Betz (1983), the socialization process channels women into nurturing and service-oriented occupations. In a related study investigating self in relation to others, as opposed to separate and objective self, Forrest and Mikolaitis (1986) suggested the notion that men's and women's career development may differ because women are more likely to define themselves in relation to others, whereas men are more likely to define themselves as separate from others. Similarly, this view was corroborated by Fouad and Arbona (1994) when they suggested that vocational choice as an implementation of self-concept may
have very different implications for men and women, with men choosing occupations
and careers independent of others, or careers that define them separate from others.
Fouad and Arbona noted that women, on the other hand, may choose careers that
allow them to relate to others or to accommodate relationships with others.

South African society, like others in Africa, has traditionally regarded the
male as dominant and the major breadwinner, and the female as subordinate and a
homemaker (Watson et al., 1995). Similarly, Preston-Whyte (1988) contended that,
traditionally, while Black women have worked in order to support the household,
their economic contribution has been considered peripheral to that of their menfolk,
resulting in a disproportionate male to female ratio in schools and the work force.
This contention would appear to contradict Maracco’s (1976) position that in more
traditional cultures where men are considered the breadwinners, women would
exhibit lower career maturity than men. Watson et al. noted that gender appears,
then, to be an important variable when societal role expectations may differ, with
resulting differences in the career expectations of males and females.

Fitzgerald and Cherpas (1985) emphasized that sex-role expectations are
equally as strong for men as they are for women. Watson et al. (1995) noted that by
virtue of their decision to study, African women may have already questioned
traditional roles. Fitzgerald and Cherpas maintained that men experience equal
pressures to conform their career behavior to sex-role expectations. They suggested
that variables long known to function as barriers to women’s career development can
function reciprocally as barriers to the career development of men.

In Cameroon, some parents display prejudice in the kind of educational
establishments they want their children to attend. Generally, the type of education
that children receive is based on the wealth of the father, the gender of the child, and
the father's perceived opinions about certain occupations. Marini and Greenberger (1978) maintained that "the level of boys' occupational ambitions follows more directly from resources afforded them by their family background and academic achievement than does the level of girls' occupational ambition" (p. 175).

It has been noted that to most African fathers, the cost and, most importantly, the social and economic status of children who attended the first colonial elite schools influenced the final decision as to what educational institutions their children attended. Some parents believe that sending their male child to an expensive missionary educational institution was a guarantee for better employment opportunities after graduation. Marini and Greenberger (1978) noted:

This is to be expected in a social system that places a higher value on occupational accomplishment for males than females. Since occupational achievement is the major route to status attainment in adulthood for males, boys who possess resources relevant to the accomplishment of occupational rewards can be expected to be highly motivated to apply those resources toward the attainment of occupational status. Girls with similar resources, however, are less likely to be highly motivated to strive for occupational achievement since their anticipated rewards for doing so are lower. (p. 175)

Some poor families who are unable to pay for an elite and expensive secondary school education for their children send them to presumably less prestigious schools, such as commercial or technical institutions, or to apprenticeships for trade (i.e., carpentry, electricity, brick laying, or mechanics for males, and sewing for females). These decisions are based strictly on gender and the economic standing of the family.

In a study conducted in the Lower Volta areas of Ghana, Hanson (1980) found that parents looked upon the education of their children as the way to secure their own futures, especially through remittances:

A form of security sought is investment in education of the young on aspiration that the educated child will earn a higher income and thus be able to assist his parents and family more readily later on . . . investment in
education was far more likely to yield a good return than investment in agriculture. (p. 6)

From this study it may be inferred that many Africans do believe in human investment, that is, turning to education as a means of investing in their children’s careers, which will provide them security later in life.

Existing literature indicates that African parents have a significant influence on their children’s career development and choices. Kunnu (1987) cautioned that parents (and presumably others) should not impose their choice of careers on their children. It has been observed that some African parents even decide what type of major their children should pursue. He suggested that every child should be given the opportunity to follow his or her inclinations. The explorations of work interests are important in the career development process; therefore, educational systems must be changed so that the innate qualities of every child are brought to fruition (Kunnu, 1987).

Africans’ Perceptions of Careers

Shortly after independence, many Africans were not interested in so-called “dirty professions.” As Mumford and Orde-Brown (1970) noted, the first difficulty was the old persistent prejudice against manual labor, which was considered servile and not very dignified. Most Africans preferred administrative positions in government or, until recently, in academia as university professors. Many Africans see no other route to social, economic, and political prosperity except through education (Nkabinde, 1997). Collins et al. (1994) indicated that some of the social elite produced by colonial educational institutions were people alienated from their own society in terms of their dress, outlook, and tastes in food, music, and even
dance. Collins et al. further acknowledged that they were people who worshiped European culture, equating it with civilization, and who looked down upon their indigenous culture.

In Zimbabwe, as well as other African countries following independence, a vast educational reform occurred that marked a shift from an exclusive system of education to one of inclusive, mass education (Nkabinde, 1997). The rationale for educational expansion in many newly independent African countries was linked to political and economic independence.

Education brought a sense of national awareness among the African people and pride in civil servant occupations and other professions. But for some civil servants, their education implanted a thirst for more knowledge and a desire to understand their situations (Collins et al., 1994). Collins et al. wrote that some civil servants have come to a fairly rapid understanding of the total bewilderment of their people, and of the falsity of the “axioms” and racist affirmation of colonial propaganda. Delancey (1989) noted there are indications that members of this Christian, literate, and skilled group were to become part of the new elite of clerks, teachers, craftsmen, pastors, and other officials of the colonial era, an elite that would become a significant factor in the growth of African nationalism.

Another factor of importance is the influence of peers and their perceptions about certain majors. According to Fitzgerald and Cherpas (1985), peer expectations concerning gender normative behaviors can also be seen to function as a constraint, or barrier, to men’s career development. This concept, although drawn from the U.S. college population, can well be applied to Africans. In Cameroon, for example, individuals who embrace majors in sciences sometimes feel superior to those who major in the arts. This low regard for certain professions stems from the influence of
colonial masters, little or no exposure to career counseling, the effect of role models, or other environmental and perceived cultural factors. Mathabe and Temane (1994) and Stead (1996) postulated that the impact of the individual’s external culture on career development and choice is significantly more potent than the person’s internal culture.

Very few Africans have pursued careers in psychology and other social science fields. It has been noted that the entire continent of Africa has fewer than 200 doctoral-level professional psychologists. According to Nsamenang (1992), Nigeria, with a population of 116 million people, had only 58 academic psychologists. Nsamenang revealed that with this small number, the psychologist-to-population ratio in Nigeria still exceeded that of most African nations. The traditional African belief that problems in the family “stay inside the family” has influenced the manner in which Africans view careers in psychology. Hence, only a few Africans studying in America today pursue majors in the helping professions.

Many Africans have pursued certain professions for economic reasons or the prestige that accompanies these professions. Career decisions for college students are increasingly perceived by students as determiners of their future life styles (Kunnu, 1987). Many Africans who went abroad, or continued with their education at home, believed that becoming an engineer, a medical doctor, a chemist, or an accountant would guarantee them better employment opportunities within their government. Of course, this has not always been the case. Because of the emphasis, by parents and students alike, on training and development in African countries, entering professional training after high school has become more desirable.

In countries such as Cameroon and Nigeria, occupational training at the university level has been erroneously equated with employment attainment.
(Nwachuku, 1986). Consequently, the illusion of a ready job soon after obtaining a
university degree has led to a public outcry at the explosion of qualified yet
unemployed university graduates. This has resulted in a massive exodus of the
educated Africans to North America, Europe, and overseas in search of lucrative
employment. According to Kigotho (1999), over 30,000 Ph.D. holders from sub-
Saharan Africa may be working in North America and Western Europe. Kigotho
noted that new evidence suggests the problem of “brain drain” in most African
countries is too extensive and has negative effect on economic growth. By tracing
international migration workers from 61 developing countries working in Canada, the
United States, and the European Union, International Monetary Fund researchers
found that highly educated workers from sub-Saharan Africa represented a sizeable
proportion of the pool of skilled workers from their countries of origin (Kigotho,
1999). Such professionals are not just academicians employed by universities and
top-notch research centers; they include computer experts, corporate lawyers,
doctors, schoolteachers, nurses, engineers, and business executives, among other
professions. This investigator holds the opinion that it is about time for all African
countries to reinvestigate their priorities and start exploring ways to arrest the
massive brain drain of educated Africans. The report concluded that African
governments would have to undertake major reforms in governance and academic
freedom, as well as create positive working environment for elite workers. Despite
these very high and impressive statistics about Africans who leave their home country
to seek employment abroad, it is a paradox that there is still a very high population of
young Africans studying in the United States who are still not sure about their career
choices and occupational decisions.
As many young people continue to move to the United States and overseas, some have come to the realization that they must look further into their career choices and train in those areas or professions that will permit them better jobs in their new environment. Thus, the old colonial mentality about certain careers is changing among Africans in the U.S. Recently, for the younger generation of Africans studying in the U.S., careers in nursing, teaching, computer sciences, as well as the helping professions have become very popular. It is anticipated that these professions will assure graduates gainful employment in the U.S., as the possibility of employment in some African countries declines. Confidence in education’s productivity is called into question together with a central assumption held in developing countries that education is a good investment in national development (Nwachuku, 1986). He noted that current research trends on vocational behavior of youths in developing African nations had shifted from occupational choice to the realities of implementation. Nwachuku maintained that in Nigeria the number of trained unemployed professionals, both at middle and top management levels, raised questions about the rationale behind acquiring professional training in fields that have no actual employment prospects. This trend is also felt in Cameroon and other African countries. For example, 26,760 youths who completed teacher training still remained unemployed one year later (“Graduate Unemployment,” 1985). The report suggested that, besides the unemployment issue, a crucial underlying question was whether the graduates realistically decided to be teachers. Thus, better career counseling opportunities must be made available.

An assumption is held that developing nations’ youths undertake occupational training to fill immediate existing positions. Sometimes those positions are filled before training is completed. The realism of such occupational training in reference to
vocational preference comes under question. With the present plight of unemployed medical doctors, university graduates, engineers, agriculture specialists, and others, the problem of occupational goal attainment in Nigeria, Cameroon, and other African countries lies beyond acquisition of suitable and appropriate training. As a result of these uncertainties, most of African students studying abroad and those who stay in Africa are consistently overwhelmed and are under psychological turmoil of career uncertainty after completing their education. As Okun (1983) asserted:

The problems that most Nigerian youth face today (can also be applied to most youth in Africa) include lack of knowledge about their strengths and weaknesses, concern about personal development, feelings of inferiority, poor work habit, drug abuse, unemployment, lack of knowledge about education and work, relationships with the opposite sex and adults, and many others. (p. 457)

Other external realities that act as mediators of social origin exist, which manpower planners, counselors, and educators must integrate into their systems. When responding to the issue of how well the educational systems in some countries in Africa could be organized to meet the hard test of “fitness,” Nwachuku (1986) was of the opinion that a major re-orientation towards actual occupational goal attainment is needed. Citing Nigeria as a case, he noted:

Nigeria’s educational system is almost exclusively oriented toward filling city jobs in the modern sector. The values, subject matter and examination criteria at all levels of Nigerian education assume that school leaders want to become government civil servants, teachers, and employees of relatively modern and industrial and commercial establishments. (p. 11)

Political Impact on Careers

It is this researcher’s perception that a number of African nations have state-controlled schools that permit little room for individual self-expression or other career alternatives. E. A. Elango (personal communication, November 5, 1989) noted,
the leaders, with the assistance of other European nations (most often their formal colonial masters who still vested interests in these countries), maintain a stronghold over certain educational options and career opportunities available for their citizens. The leaders of these nations exercise extreme caution in tailoring policies on national higher education. They recognize that throughout colonial and/or modern history, the seats of higher education have also been a hotbed of dissatisfaction, providing fertile breeding ground for those ideas and volatile tendencies that could spontaneously provoke public unrest. Carefully tailored educational policies are one of several tools for retaining control over the incipient danger that institutions of higher learning pose to the power structure in place (E. A. Elango, personal communication, November 5, 1998). As such, those individuals who attend such institutions or are offered foreign scholarships are limited to those career opportunities that the government offers, and many are not likely to alter their careers in the future. As Hinchliffe (1973) noted, potentially one of the strongest controls which the government authorities can use to influence occupational choice along the lines of estimated manpower requirements is through the use of “scholarships” with strings or bondage (p. 169). It must be noted that in most African countries, the government is the number one employer; over 75–80 % of the total labor force is employed by the government. Thus, the government can control career opportunities in many ways.

Summary

Most of the literature about colonization touches on the historical, geographical, economic, and social implications of colonization on Africans. In addition, vocationally related studies about Africans have suggested the influence of the early environment, family, and other social factors in the career decision making
of Africans. It must also be noted that the presence of Europeans in Africa played a
significant influence on the environment and left indelible memories in the lives and
values of most Africans. It appears as though no research has been conducted that
specifically addresses the effects of colonization on career development and
occupational choice of Africans. Considering the very long history of colonization,
and noting the fact that there is no study that specifically addresses those effects, it is
difficult to believe that important knowledge of this magnitude in the area of career
psychology, about a group of people, has been ignored for this long. Understanding
Africans from their own voices or perspectives concerning the effects of colonization
on their careers may help to illustrate the cultural context, values, early environmental
influences, and other factors that have been ignored in the field of career guidance.
CHAPTER III

METHOD

Methodological Conceptualization

Prior to colonization, the African tradition was an oral one, passing on values, norms, and traditions. As a researcher, I will be honoring this oral tradition by hearing stories from the participants. Qualitative research, therefore, better honors the oral tradition, since it is more compatible with the traditional pre-colonization African experience. Not only does qualitative research give voice to the African tradition; it also fills a need in the field of counseling psychology. Recently, many voices have been forceful and calling for new relevance in research approaches (Brown & Lent, 1992). Brown and Lent noted that qualitative research method is becoming increasingly visible. They noted that some researchers are now focusing on expanding paradigms. According to Brown and Lent, the emphasis on expanding paradigms is meant to increase the growth in research methods. They pointed out that just as therapists have become increasingly eclectic, there are also signs of researchers engaging in epistemic eclecticism. Researchers need different approaches in gaining knowledge. In support for the qualitative paradigm, Hill (1984) states:

I have grown to recognize the limitations of research, particularly the traditional models. . . . It is easy to put together an idea and run a study but it is very difficult to do a study that says anything about counseling. . . . I have come to have more confidence in studying my own ideas in my own ways. In my early years of doing research, I felt that I had to follow established methodologies, whereas I now feel free to try out new ways of doing research, particularly qualitative means. (p. 99)
In this study a descriptive approach to understanding the effects of colonization on career development and choice for Africans was adopted. Considering that no studies of this nature had been carried out, and given the lack of knowledge with respect to the effects of colonization on career development for Africans, this researcher believes that a qualitative approach was the best method to discover the phenomena as understood from the perspective of the respondents.

Patton (1990) noted that qualitative interviewing provides a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms, as opposed to having the researcher supply predetermined phrases and categories that must be used by respondents to express themselves. Thiel (1995) indicated that qualitative data typically make sense to people who are comfortable with the concept of multiple perspectives rather than absolute truth.

Additionally, this researcher believes that because career attitudes are developmental-contextual in nature, a descriptive method was the most appropriate for this type of study. Fouad and Arbona (1994) contended that because the person and environment affect each other in complex and reciprocal ways, conducting research from the perspective of the developmental-contextual model requires qualitative methodologies that allow for the description of people's interactions with their environments. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore, through a descriptive method, the effect of colonization on career choice and occupational development of Africans studying in the United States.
Participants

Research Population

The research population for this study consisted of international students from African countries that were colonized by England and/or France, and who were enrolled in undergraduate or graduate programs at Fort Valley State University (FVSU), and students from a large metropolitan area in the Southeast (Atlanta, Georgia). According to the listing of international students provided by the University's Office of International Services (ISS), a total of 35 African students were enrolled in the university for the fall semester, 1999. Of this number, 1 student from Ethiopia was eliminated from participating because Ethiopia was the only African country that was never colonized by any of the European nations. Slightly more than three quarters of the remaining students were male ($n = 15$). It should be noted that the above listing did not represent the entire African student population at the university because of personal/cultural and other reasons (e.g., visa/immigration status, and there are many students from Africa attending universities in the U.S. who do not register with the ISS at various universities).

Because the researcher's goal was to select participants from Africa who had some knowledge and personal experiences about colonization, the research population was extended to include African students from a large metropolitan area in the Southeast. It must be noted that there is a large population of African students in the southeastern United States. I know these participants personally and contacting this group of students did not present an insurmountable challenge. Because they were day students, no special permission was needed to contact them for the research.
The sexes of the subjects was another primary consideration in determining those who took part in the study. Equal representation of both sexes was anticipated, as this would have given a true representation about the career development and occupational choices of African students. It must be noted that the anticipation of equal representation of both sexes was difficult to attain because there appeared to be more African males than females studying in the U.S. The unequal representation can also be attributed to the gender-roles phenomenon in Africa, where males' education is favored over that of females. However, selecting fewer females did not disturb the result in any way.

During the initial meeting, only those students who agreed to participate and were from African countries that were colonized by England and/or France were selected. One potential participant was disqualified because her age did not meet the criteria for the study, and another participant was disqualified because he was from an African country that was never colonized.

Selection of Participants

Participants were recruited by purposeful sampling (Patton, 1980) as opposed to random sampling. Patton (1980) refers to purposeful sampling as selecting information-rich cases whose study will illuminate the questions under consideration. He defines information-rich cases as “those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the evaluation” (p. 52). Among various purposeful sampling methods outlined by Patton, maximum variation sampling seemed most appropriate for the present study in that this strategy “aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participants” (p. 53). The advantages of this method include: (a) high-
quality, detailed descriptions of each case which are useful for documenting
uniqueness; and (b) important shared patterns which cut across cases and which drive
their significance from having emerged out of heterogeneity. Patton (1980) further
noted:

By including in the sample individuals the evaluator determines have possible
had quite different experiences, it is possible to describe more thoroughly the
variations in the group and to understand variation in experiences, while
investigating core elements and shared outcomes. (p. 54)

The research sample consisted of 12 African students. This sample was
considered small enough to permit in-depth interviewing and large enough for
individual variations to emerge. In addition, to maximize opportunities for uncovering
similarities and variations in participant decisions for career choice and occupational
development, an effort was made to secure students from the countries that had
colonial influence from England and/or France only.

Potential participants were contacted by telephone and/or in person. At the
time of contact, the researcher presented in some detail the purpose of the study, the
interview process, risks concerns, and issues of confidentiality. Upon agreeing to
participate, individual interviews were scheduled at a place and time mutually
agreeable to both parties. The phone number of the researcher was provided to
prospective respondents in case of any concerns or questions about the research. A
letter confirming the interview arrangements was mailed to those who agreed to
participate in the study (Appendix D).

The 12 students who finally participated in the study came from four African
countries that were colonized by Britain and France. Seven of the participants came
from countries that passed through the French and English influence. Four
participants came from countries that were colonized only by England. One
participant came from a country that was colonized only by France. Not every student who was initially contacted participated in the study. During the initial contact, 14 respondents were selected to participate in the study. However, 1 participant, a female, did not show for the interview, and another male participant had a very tight schedule and did not arrange a meeting time. The final sample consisted of 3 females and 9 males.

Research Instruments

Demographic Information Form

A questionnaire was used to collect demographic data (Appendix G). The participants completed demographic information forms to provide information in several personal areas of their lives. The questionnaire requested information regarding sex, age, marital status, academic level, college major, future career, family, educational background, religion, colonial influence, and length of stay in the United States.

Semi-Structured Interview Guide

A semi-structured interview approach was conducted to investigate the effects of colonization on the career development and occupational choice/decisions of the participants. The sessions were structured to allow for in-depth face-to-face interviews with the participants. Patton (1980) outlined the advantages of an open-ended interview guide as follows: (a) flexibility to react to the respondent's lead, (b) increased ease in organizing and analyze data, (c) reduction of interviewer effect and bias, and (d) increased comparability of data for each respondent.
The interview questions were open-ended in nature and were designed to encourage the participants to reflect on, and articulate, their perceptions on the effects of colonization on their career development and occupational choices. Watts (1981) noted that the purpose of interviewing is to learn how people in everyday interactions construct definitions for their situations and shape their realities. Similarly, Guba and Lincoln (1983) noted that interviewing is the most appropriate tool because interview taps into the experience of others in their own natural language, while utilizing their value and belief frameworks is virtually impossible without face-to-face and verbal interaction with them. The semistructured format, combined with the interviewer's interest in and willingness to understand the participants' perceptions about career decisions from their own points of view, was considered during the interviewing and data collection processes. The interviews were structured to provide an approach by which the participants could convey "their own understanding in their own terms" (Patton, 1980, p. 205). After reviewing this literature and considering the research questions, a primary interview guide was developed (Appendix F). Guiding questions for the interview were designed to encourage participants to reflect on, clarify, and make sense out of often confusing cross-cultural experiences, as well as environmental influences in making career choices. As Kim (1996) indicated, by engaging in the interactive process of addressing the questions and issues raised during the interview, participants may have become more self-aware than they were before they involved themselves in the study. All questions were in English and all participants were fluent in the English language. However, participants from French speaking regions used some French expressions during the interview, which was not a serious drawback to this researcher because of his fluency in French (a direct result of colonization).
After the first two interviews, one question that appeared to be somewhat similar was eliminated. Question #10—"What will influence your decision about whether to return to Africa or remain in the U.S.?"—was omitted because Question #11—"How does the decision to return to Africa or remain in the U.S. impact your career development and career decision making?"—was similar. Some other questions were expanded. Question #1—"What are some of the values of England and/or France that have had an influence on your educational and vocational decisions and life aspirations?"—was broken down into two parts. The first part was "What are some of the values of England (to participants that were colonized by England) that have had an influence on your educational and vocational decision?" and the second part was "What are some of the values of England and/or France (again depending on the country of origin of participant) that have had an influence on your life aspirations?" Also, Question #13—"Do you think that your present career decision was influenced by any family/peer pressures?"—was broken down into two: "Do you think that your present career decision was influenced by any family member and how?" and "Do you think that your present career decision was influenced by any peer pressure?"

All of the changes that were made (Appendix F: Revised Interview Guide) were guided by the researcher's growing sense of a certain flow or pattern that began to take place after the first few interviews, as well as consideration of the original research questions.

Data Collection

For this study, the major source of data was individual face-to-face, semi-structured in-depth interviews with the 12 participants. With the use of in-depth face-
to-face interviews, results from this study could illuminate some of the subjective and contextual aspects of African student experiences that might otherwise go unnoticed in research using a more structured approach (Kim, 1996). According to Patton (1980), "In-depth interviews probe beneath the surface, soliciting detail and providing a holistic understanding of the interviewer's point" (p. 108). Later, Patton (1990) noted that in-depth interviews could be potentially enriching and educational experiences for the participants.

The researcher met with participants at mutually convenient times and places to conduct interviews. For all participants, interviews were completed in a single session. The time required for each interview was between 60 and 90 minutes. Respondents in this study were 7 African students attending FVSU and 5 African students from a large metropolitan area in the Southeast, (Atlanta, Georgia) who were attending or recently finished college. The reason for extending the participation pool was to obtain participants who were somewhat knowledgeable and had personal experiences with the topic under consideration. The researcher did not need any special permission to interview participants from the extended pool. Names for the second group of participants were obtained through personal contacts. Only participants from Africa who came from countries that were colonized by the French and/or British and were above 19 years old were selected for the study. From the contacts, a list of 12 participants was prepared. The researcher interviewed 6 participants in their respective homes and the other 6 at the researcher's office. The researcher made sure that the environment was conducive for interviewing and confidentiality was respected at all times. Each interview began with a personal introduction and greetings to the subjects participating in the study. A brief orientation to the researcher's interest in the area of the effects of colonization on the
career development and occupational choices of Africans was again discussed. Participants were told that the researcher had generated a number of questions that would help in exploring their perceptions about colonization, their career development, and occupational choices. They were reminded that the questions were to obtain their perceptions/opinions and that there were no right or wrong answers. Participants were encouraged to relax. They were reminded that they could turn off the tape-recorder whenever they become uncomfortable during the interview. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were addressed; participants were told that no identifying information would appear on any part of the study, but some of what they said may be quoted during the write-up. Participants were informed that the interview would be audiotaped and transcribed.

Participants signed the informed consent form (Appendix E) and provided demographic information prior to the beginning in-depth interviews. At the end of each interview, participants were asked about their reactions and suggestions and how they felt. Generally, the reaction from most participants was positive. All mentioned that it was a positive learning experience. They reported that the questions made them to think about colonization and they were able to make some connections in their own lives. One participant was somewhat excited during the interview. He stated that the exercise made him think about himself and the effect colonization must have had on him. He disclosed that he had never thought about it before. We processed his thoughts for a while, and he said that he was fine. I encouraged him to call me if he wanted to talk some more. He stated, “I will be fine.” Interviews took place from mid January through the end of February, 2000. It was also a positive learning experience for this researcher.
Data Analysis

Patton (1980) observed that analysis of qualitative data is "the process of bringing order to the data, organizing what is there into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units" (p. 144). Also, Tesch (1990) defines data analysis as a process which entails an effort to formally identify themes and construct hypotheses (ideas) as they are suggested by data and an attempt to demonstrate support for those themes and hypotheses. The data analysis strategy in this study is called "constant comparative method" (Glaser & Strauss 1967) or "coding" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), this strategy, "constant comparative," combines "inductive category coding with simultaneous comparison" (p. 182). The themes, constructs, and hypotheses (ideas) that emerged from the data were identified from the interviews and were tested and compared against themselves as the analysis proceeded.

The research questions, interviews, subjects' decisions and their perceptions in deciding careers and other influences guided the examination and the identification of themes. This researcher's conceptual framework (cross-cultural and developmental-contextual model) was also used in identifying themes and constructs. According to Tesch (1990), data segmenting and categorizing are features that interpretational types of analysis have in common. In this study, the descriptions from the subjects were used to discover the commonalities and differences/contrasts concerning the perceptions of colonization on career choice and occupational development of participants studying in the U.S.

In order to determine the major themes and concepts, the first two interview transcripts were read, examined, and analyzed separately for the purpose of
identifying key terms, phrases, and categories the participants used to represent their opinions or perceptions about the effect of colonization on their career development and occupational choice. Spradley (1979) offers a great deal of help in this area by suggesting that through domain analysis, categories can be determined. During this process, key terms, phrases, and statements were identified under the following headings: experiences in career counseling in the native land of the participants, educational influences, impact of colonization on careers, career differences, reasons for either returning to Africa or staying in the U.S., identity, personal motivations, the impact of foreign scholarships, family influences on career decisions, the role of fathers, the role of government on careers, the impact of education in the U.S., influence of native land on career decision, influence of colonization on education, motivation to study in the U.S., motivation for choosing careers, childhood influence related to career decision, and experiences in career counseling in the native land.

The headings reflected the interview guide that was used, although not in the same order. These terms and phrases were indexed on 3 × 5 cards (one card for each transcript) according to the page and the number of the page in the original transcript in which they were situated. The remaining interviews were completed, reflecting the specific terms, phrases, statements, and categories that were identified during the first two interviews. At this point, it was necessary to identify recurrent themes, patterns, and differences within the statements made by each respondent. Recurrent themes or patterns were recorded. The indexed listing was used for locating what individual respondents said about specific topics or issues.

After the above process was completed, the next phase in the data analysis was to cross-examine the complete listings in order to identify recurrent themes or issues as discussed by the respondents. Key statements, phrases, and terms pertaining
to similar concepts were noted and put together under major categories. While using
the process of constant comparative method, on-going modifications and refinements
of themes and categories was important. Accordingly, through the method of
comparative analysis, a second set of listings of the identified categories was prepared
under the following headings: the influence of colonization on education, the
influence of the method of communication, the motivation to study in the U.S., the
role of family/parent/elders on career choice, the impact of native land on career
decisions, the influence of scholarships on careers, impact of the U.S. in their
education/career, the role of government in vocational and career decisions, career
choice differences between males and females, and the general impact of
colonization. These listings are composites containing each respondent’s responses to
particular categories. Since the method of analysis requires further examination and
clarification of identified themes, concepts, and categories as well as subcategories,
the final refinement of coding continued through the initial stages of writing. The final
categories and subcategories that emerged from the data analysis are listed in the
outline presented in Chapter IV.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The Participants

As already noted in Chapter III, African students were invited to participate in this study based on their knowledge about and experience with the topic.

The participants for this study consisted of 12 African men and women from countries that were colonized by England and/or France. Thirty potential participants were initially identified. Of these 30, 15 initially agreed to participate. One was eliminated because he was from an African country that was never colonized. One female participant was eliminated because she was less than 19 years old. One potential participant had a very tight schedule and was unable to make time for the interview. All 12 participants participated in a 60–90 minute face-to-face interview. One half of these interviews were conducted in the homes of the respondents; the remaining interviews were held in the researcher’s office. Seven participants were students attending Fort Valley State University; 5 were from a metropolitan area in the Southeast.

The research participants consisted of nine males and three females. The participants ranged in age from their early 20s to their late 40s. Four participants were in their 20s, 3 of the participants were in their 30s, and 6 were in their 40s or above. The mean age for participants as a group was 36.25 years.
Nine of the participants were undergraduates and 3 were graduate students. Participants' major fields of study were grouped into the following two areas: (a) sciences, and (b) arts. Eight participants selected the sciences, and four indicated the arts as their field of study. When asked to list the occupations they would like to pursue after leaving school, 3 participants, all males, listed computer programming; 2 participants, 1 male and 1 female, listed accounting; 3 participants, 1 female and 2 males, listed teaching/education; 1 male listed sales; 1 male participant listed chemistry; 1 male participant listed plant sciences; 1 male participant listed economics; and 1 female participant listed dental health sciences.

When asked about the major influence(s) in making career decisions, all 12 of the participants checked "self" as the major influence in making their career and occupational decisions. Three participants also checked "family," and 1 participant checked "government" as an influence in his career decision. When asked to indicate who is responsible for their education in the U.S., 7 participants marked "family" as being responsible for their education in the United States, 1 marked "family" and "self," 5 of the participants marked only "self," and 1 marked "foreign sponsor" as being responsible for his education in the U.S.

Seven participants marked both English and French as their principal colonial influence, 4 participants marked only the English, and 1 checked the French as the principal colonial influence. The countries of origin and numbers of participants were as follows: Cameroon, 6; Nigeria, 3; Kenya, 1; Mali, 1; and Zimbabwe, 1.

Five participants indicated that they have received some form of career counseling in their native country, and 7 participants responded that they did not receive any career counseling in their native land. When asked to indicate if they have
received career counseling in the U.S., 6 participants answered “yes,” and 6 participants answered “no.”

Five participants checked 0–5 years as length of stay in the U.S., and 7 participants have been in the U.S. for over 10 years. All 12 participants said that they finished high school before coming to the U.S. One also indicated that he finished his first degree in his country before coming to the U.S. Nine participants were currently employed in the following areas: education, sales, accounting, and student-worker. Three participants were currently not employed.

One participant responded that he definitely will return to his home town after his education in the U.S., 1 checked “Somewhat Unlikely,” 1 checked “Not Sure,” 5 checked “Somewhat Likely,” 1 checked “Definitely Will,” and 1 checked that he will “Very Likely” return after his education in the U.S. One participant expressed this opinion on the demographic form: “I would love to return, but I can’t because of the economic crisis.”

Eight participants indicated that they are in the middle economic class in their country, 2 participants indicated upper middle, 1 participant checked lower economic class, and 1 participant left the space blank. This item was optional.

Organization of the Findings

After further examination and clarification of identified themes, concepts, categories and subcategories, the final refinement of categories and subcategories was determined. Data were organized into the categories and subcategories that emerged from the data, as presented in Figure 1.

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1. Childhood Influences Related to Careers
   Early Environmental/Family/Parental Influence

2. Career Counseling in Native Land
   a. Parents as Career Counselors
   b. Role Model/Peer Influence on Career
   c. Missionary Influence in Education

3. Impact in Colonization on Careers
   a. Political/Social/Cultural/Economic Impact of Colonization on Careers
   b. Differences Between the French and English Regarding Careers
   c. Perceptions About Careers: Influence of Colonialism

4. Motivation in Choosing Careers
   a. Motivation to Study in the U.S.
   b. Impact of the U.S. on Career/Education
   c. Scholarships on Career
   d. Role of Government on Career Choices

5. Career Choice Differences

Figure 1. Categories and Subcategories Emerging From the Data.

In subsequent sections of this chapter, each category is explained and then supported by a series of quotations from the interviews as narrated by the participants. To ensure confidentiality, the names and other identifying information in the quotations have been altered.
Childhood Influences Related to Career

From a social learning theory analysis of career decision making, Krumboltz (1979) noted that environmental, i.e., social, cultural, political, and economic, forces can influence decision making when people enter particular educational programs or occupations. Similarly, from the interviews, early environment/family/parental influence, parents as "career counselors," role model/peer influence, and early missionary presence in education emerged as factors that influenced participants' early educational and career choices. It must be noted that the responses from all the participants were consistent with most vocational studies about Africans regarding the influence of parents and significant others on their careers.

Early Environment/Family/Parental Influence

Although 2 participants included personal motivations and self-interest as some of the factors that influenced their career choices and occupational decisions, all participants mentioned that their early childhood experiences/environment played a significant role in their career decisions.

My parents have been paying my fees right from start. I did not have a dime. The best thing you can give them is honor and respect. Just heed to their advice. They advised me about my career plan. You try to talk it out with your parents. If you can't talk it out, just listen to them. After all, they paid for everything. You just have to listen to them. The word is respect.

My family played a role in my career. I came from a family that is educated, and for me not to pursue my education would have been like not following the family path. So, I had to go further than high school and, to make a long story short, the family was very instrumental in my education.

Our parents, they were telling us that in order to be a better person in the society, you have to attain a higher education, and if you don't attain a higher education, you will fall in a group that we call "dead head" (laughs). The system was set up as such that most of the family pride and your individual
pride and energy were centered on education. That was a big incentive to go as high as you could.

Well, I come from a family with very few educated people. Growing up, I saw a lot of people. I saw engineers. I always wanted to be like them, and coming from that type of family with less opportunities and where there are not so many who went to school, I made a decision to stay in school. I started to look at different fields. With the help of my parents, I am now studying in the United States. My family played a big part in my career. I had always wanted to be the best in my family. I want to put my family in a position that they will not suffer.

I come from a large family. Education was always stressed from day one. My parents knew that the higher you go in education, the better person you are in the society, and that was the focal point of growing up. You have to have a high level education, you have to be a better person, and you have to be respectable. All these qualities, I picked them up growing up as a child. My parents were a big factor in my life because of those things they taught me from birth.

Actually, my father was an administrator and he emphasized education a lot. He wanted all his children to be educated. He believed that being educated is like freedom in the world. That background made us feel that it is a duty for us to go to school and be educated, because we will be free to do whatever we want to do with our lives.

Growing up, just anybody in the family is up there when it comes to education. I come from a family of seven children, and just everybody is educated. I knew that I did not want to be (excuse my term) the "black sheep" of the family. All my sisters were doing well in school, my brothers were doing very well in school, and I could not stand the fact that I would be the one that would bring the family down. So it was very important that I get to a higher level of education as well. My brothers and sisters were just like role models to me . . . I did not see why not me.

My parents knew that I wanted to do accounting, although they had something else in mind. Basically, being a doctor or a lawyer were the main things that they wanted me to do. They saw that accounting is equally good and they accepted my idea. But there are some ideas that they may not accept. You cannot tell my parents that you want to paint. In Nigeria, being an artist will not put food on the table. You have to be sure of your future. You have to be sure a financial reward is coming from what career you pursue.

Like my grandmother, she told me that "G whatever in this world that you want to achieve, the only significant witchcraft [something to make you successful] you can achieve in this world is your education." As soon as you are educated, no matter what it is, it can't be taken away from you until you die. That is what my grandmother told me, and I will never forget that.
Discussing early experiences/influences on career choices and occupational decisions, 2 male participants, who had worked with one of the agricultural corporations that was established by the British in their country, noted:

What motivated me in my present career choice was the presence of the various agricultural plantations that the colonial masters had established in my country. Because I was employed with that company, I fell in love with the way the line preparation in the farm was carried out and the way everything was organized. . . . I loved the organization in the agricultural sector. It was well planned—all figured out properly. Then you realize that you are doing the line preparation by yourself; it made me want to continue with agriculture. In addition, my parents were just peasants who worked on the same plantation. We lived on the farm . . . I am still living on the farm in some way. The company has influenced me a lot. It even influenced my parents, because my parents would have remained in the village. So that movement to the coastal area to work in this company resulted in my parents having us as children.

My parents played a big role in my early career, because my father worked with the corporation that sponsored me to the school of agriculture. This was a big agricultural corporation that was established by the British in my country. My father played a big role in making me join the corporation. I think my father working there was a big opportunity for me. . . . If not for him, I would not have known about the opportunity to the agricultural school. He told me to go sign up for it. I did, and I was hired to work with that same company. In a sense, that motivated my early inclination to pursue agriculture . . .

Career Counseling in Native Land

Although most of the participants noted that they did not receive any form of professional career counseling in their native land, a few noted that they had received some form of career counseling or influence from their parents, role model or peers, and schools.

Parents as Career Counselors

Five participants mentioned that they received some form of career counseling from their parents.
My parents told me that I could do what I wanted to do. But, there are no-good areas that are not advisable to do . . . Some areas, you should not go into, and some areas you should concentrate on them and pick what you want to do. Many times the counseling was just done by my parents . . .

Schools do career counseling but most of the time counselors are the parents. I saw my parents to be very experienced because they were here before me. They are professionals; they know what is going on in the world of work.

I did not have any professional career counseling in my country. It was basically family career counseling. My father sits and talks with the children and tries to bring out the best in them, treats to bring out their strengths and weaknesses, and tries to encourage them in what their strengths are. . . . Our parents mold our career development. . . . My family played a part, in a way, as career counselors.

We hardly had any career counseling. Any career counseling that I had came from my family mostly.

Role Model/Peer Influence on Career

In African society, the influence of peers and role models on career choices and occupational decisions has been extensively documented. During this study, some of the participants reported their present career choice had been influenced in some way by friends, teachers, and significant individuals in their lives. Half of the participants mentioned the impact of peers on the career choices and occupational decisions.

When I was in junior college, I met a friend who was also in the same profession in which I am. He loved what he was doing. I got to talk to him a lot. I attended his graduation . . . I tried to get as much information as I could about his career and, in a way, he influenced me also.

I have a friend who is an engineer. I always see the way he talks, the way he walks, and I always see him as a kind of role model. I appreciated him any time I saw him . . . His influence motivated me to stay in school.

I used to admire nurses because I liked the way they cared for people, and teachers, too. I actually grew up thinking that I would be a nurse. I think teachers in the elementary schools and secondary schools really influence us. They are really good models, and sometimes we grow up thinking that we want to be teachers. Maybe that is why I decided to do teaching.
Friends told me to do law. . . . They told me that with the way I argue I could be a good lawyer.

Yes, all my friends are doing well. My very best friend did a degree in X and she is earning good money. . . . My childhood friend in X, she did civil engineering. So, I have to be somebody as well. Since I was not in the sciences, I had to do some professional degree as well. . . . I don’t want to be the one who will be down there, you know.

Well, I will not really tell you it was career counseling. When I was in secondary school, just talking to other people who had gone through that same secondary school did give me a notion that coming in, if you know that you’re good in sciences, you’ve got to pursue a career in sciences; if you were good in the arts, you’ve got to pursue a career in the arts.

Missionary Influence in Secondary School/Education

Early environment and family played a significant role in the career choices and occupational decisions of most of the participants. Eight participants mentioned that their early experiences and contact with White missionaries from England and Canada, during their days in secondary school, had some impact on their early educational and career aspirations.

Those early years are the molding years of our lives, and anything you pick up at that level reflects on your later life. My secondary school was a boarding school. We went to boarding school very young. We lived in the dormitory; we ate in school, and did everything in school. We had dress codes and we wore uniforms. Our study time was arranged for us. At that time, we need guidance; we had time for classes. Since it was a mission school, we had to go to church every morning. I mean, those things helped us. Today, I am a strong Christian because of what I picked up from secondary school. It did a lot for me: discipline-wise, spiritual-wise, and education-wise. X was a Catholic mission school controlled by a religious order called the Mill Hill Missionaries based in London. Our education was tailored from the British. We took exams set in England. The British did more good than bad colonizing Cameroon in this aspect.

I went to an all-girl Baptist Mission secondary school. It was a 5-year program. Being in a religious environment, we had a very solid foundation. When it comes to morals, the way we were raised by the White missionaries was pretty much the best. I can say I had some of my best times of my life when I was attending that secondary school. I spent 5 years in that environment and I made good friends. Before I finished school, certain values
like responsibility, patience, togetherness, and being very polite were instilled in me. The principal was a White missionary who came from the U.S., and the housemother was also a missionary from Canada.

I attended a Christian school in my country. Basically, they instilled the values that most parents really want in their children in those days, and it was also religiously inclined. It was very important that you go to a school where, other than molding you into a young woman, they also instilled the values of God and the Bible. My school was tailored somewhat using the White values.

It was important that the children go to mission schools.

Basically, their method of speaking English. We had to learn English and speak the way they did. Also discipline. We went to schools with uniforms. Most Nigerians went to missionary schools, because the British brought Christianity. So missionary schools came into place and discipline, too.

Well, at the secondary school level in S, by Form 3, most students know whether they are stronger in arts or in the sciences. At that point, you were made to choose between science and arts. So you have to make a choice . . . Sometimes, the school advises the students on what subjects to take. There were certain subjects that every student was supposed to take.

I have seen a couple of counselors in my country. I saw a counselor because I really wanted to be a computer scientist. My family said things like, "Why do you want to do this? It will take a long time." So I went to see a career counselor to seek help. I wanted to explore different careers that I could go into. I got good support. He told me that if that is what I wanted to do, I should go ahead and do it to the best of my abilities . . . My father was thinking something like mechanical engineering.

During my senior year, we used to have people coming to talk. For a period of, I think, two semesters, I think every Tuesday, we used to have career talks. Most of the speakers were former old boys from our school from different fields.

Impact of Colonization on Careers

When participants were asked their opinions/perceptions about the effect of colonization on their careers, they all described their reactions. While a few became somewhat excited and were not pleased about the colonization of Africa, most of the participants mentioned the positive effects of colonization. One male participant indicated that "as a whole, colonization did more good than evil." Also, many of the
participants mentioned that their early education was influenced by the presence of
the English and French in their respective countries. Below are some of the reactions
as reported by almost all the participants.

I would say before the arrival of the French in my country, we did not have an
organized system of education. With the arrival of the French, schools were
created. So, to get educated in my country, in order for you to serve the
colonial power, you have to go through that educational system from first
grade. I went through the school system in my country until I graduated. I
had a diploma to teach foreign languages. For us, French is a foreign
language . . .

Well, without colonization, we would not have been what we are now.
According to our first president, he said that "La colonization était bien et
male." Colonization has been good evil. Okay, because without colonization,
we would not have been able to have the system of government we have now.
And according to him also, we would not have been able to communicate so
freely and widely with our African brothers. Because we had the influence of
the French language, we have been able to communicate with other African
countries, or presidents or leaders, and with English the same way. Even
though colonization did not come without its evil-like exploitation. The
colonial masters even destroyed our culture. When we got independence, we
tried to return to our roots; still that was difficult.

Our educational background in Cameroon is actually designed according to
the British system . . . That is what we followed. So most often, we study to
get into professions where we can get employment in the system. These were
surely jobs like teaching, medicine, nursing, because those were the jobs made
available by the British in Cameroon.

I guess, now that I think of it, our education was fashioned from a British
kind of pattern. Since I was in a school that was fashioned in a way from the
British that has a heavier emphasis on math and sciences, in my case, that
created scientific and mathematical inclinations which maybe made me do
computer sciences . . . The British fashioned the education that is much more
rigorous . . .

I think the British did a lot positively in Cameroon. Some of the jobs that they
came with, they later on trained the Cameroonians to do those same jobs.
Like engineering, they trained engineers to continue to develop new roads
and build new houses. They also trained doctors, because there is a medical
school in Cameroon. They trained doctors so that when the colonial masters
left, they had some Cameroonians who were doctors. They also opened many
technical schools. Education-wise, I think they did a lot. Agriculture-wise,
they opened plantations, and those plantations employed so many people.
They also helped to educate some people on how to manage the plantations.
Well, the sector of Cameroon that I came from, the English left an imprint in every aspect of that sector. We were left with the aspect of hard work, perseverance, and see-through. The British gave us those qualities and that helped us a long way in our educational goals. In the earlier years of my educational life, my education was really centered on the British system. Like in the secondary level, the final examinations were set up and in England.

The effect the British had on my educational system is that they provided a solid foundation when it comes to sciences and English language. The mathematics level in Cameroon is pretty high.

Coming from a country that was colonized by the British, I have the opportunity of speaking English. I don't have any problems speaking English in the U.S. while studying, although there are differences in our accents. So, I feel colonization has affected me in that way. Our way of life over in Africa is different from the way of life here. We were taught the British way of life. It had helped me with mingling and communicating with people around the world.

Well, prior to the British coming, there was no school system the way it is known in the Western world. The school system was set up by the colonial masters to reflect their way of education. Really... Even at the end of the rule, there were still some instructors who were British. So, that gave me the basic education and exposed me to the English language.

Looking back and drawing from history, colonization must have had an impact on the career choices of the people in my country. Because the basic opportunities that were given to people were liberal arts study... The seeds that were planted were less of science and more of arts. So most of the people ended up with teaching, education, and some became historians. When it came to science, the colonial master deprived the people, and it still has some impact... These same mentalities of careers were handed down to us; the colonial powers did not expose us to science courses.

Well... First of all, I speak English; that is one of the influences the Englishman had on me. Secondly, the little French I speak is part of what the Frenchman imparted to me. We also try to imitate their lifestyle and abandon our own traditional lifestyle that is not true for our culture.

The influence can be seen in the education in Cameroon. When I grew up in Cameroon, I had to study languages, English and French. When I moved to the States, all my lectures were in English. Before I came, I already had a better understanding of the English language. I can say that it really helped me in my classes. I also had to take a foreign language that was required for my major. With that, I had an easy shot in French... I excelled in it. I would say, taking into account that we have those different dialects in Cameroon, I think English and probably the French language played a role that our leaders decided to follow. By trying to make sure that instead of using over 150 different dialects in schools, it was better to use a medium of communication
whereby most of the people can talk and which will also be probably uniform across the country.

The education system and formal aspects of daily life are kind of fashioned into the British way. The English we use, the judiciary, things like that.

**Political/Social/Cultural/Legal/Economic Impact of Colonization on Career**

All participants reported that colonization had an impact on their political, legal, social, and economic lives. Some participants were somewhat excited as they narrated their reactions. A few participants reported the political impact of colonization on their lives and career.

Nigeria had her independence in 1960. Imagine, if Nigeria had been left alone for the longest time to tap her own resources and utilize them the best way they could, I believe Nigeria would have gone a long way. Nigeria would have been able to be comparable to all those super powers—Britain, U.S., Germany. As such, the economy would have been versatile. The only advantage I can say is we learned English (laughs). I mean, late 1800 to 1960, I know that Nigeria was entrapped and entangled in some sort of mediocrity.

The colonial education was meant to make leaders out of few people and has been in that role ever since.

Colonization has some good sides and bad sides. I think a lot of people lost their ways of life, their traditions, their culture, and their ways of thinking . . . There are some things that work in one system and some things that can never work in other systems. Like the system of government. People in Nigeria want to use the system of government like that in Britain. It can't work in Nigeria.

Five of the participants noted social/cultural impact of colonization in their lives and career.

Well, since my childhood, I can say I was brought up in the French way. I went to school and then came back home. I would say my culture has been adulterated by the French culture in such a way that we try to copy some of the ways of the French, and then mix them up with our own ways of life.

Me, personally, I am a mixture of three cultures: my native culture, the Arabic culture, and then the French culture . . . I say Arabic culture because basically we are Moslems. Your way of life has got to go by the way of life of Islam. So we went by the Islam ways of living, and also the French ways of doing
things officially. Every time you do something in your private life, to make it public or official, you must go the French way. Take, for example, marriage. If you have to marry a wife, you have to do it three ways. You have to do it traditionally, our African way; you have to do it the Islamic way of marriage; and you have to make the marriage official, like we say "marriage official," by going to the civil Administration and then seal up the marriage. Of course, there are other aspects of our lives influenced by the French. For example, our way of dressing ... 

Socially, in the English section of Cameroon, the influence we had from the British was to be conservative when it comes to ideas, which, in my opinion, is something to value. In the French-speaking section of my country, the social and educational system is modeled after the French ... 

The French-speaking is more liberal—liberal in every sense; their approach to social life is more to the extreme.

Of course, comes fashion and design. France is known all over the world as the fashion headquarters and that influenced us. Since the French colonized us, fashion was transferred down. Whatever is foremost in Paris, within a week, it is foremost in Cameroon. Usually, it will come to the French-speaking section before it later on goes to the English-speaking side. So, the French-speaking people in Cameroon are very fashionable.

The whole system is French. French system was introduced in my country, because the French people trained the first instructors, and they later on trained instructors who taught us. Then we finish and teach others. Really, everything is French. That is why sometimes we say, "Our culture is French." Even though we can't say that, because our culture has been adulterated by different things. It is French and executed by Africans who have been brought the French way. In Mali, some private schools still have the French system of exams. Those students, who finish their studies in Mali most of the time, they go to France to continue with their studies. I would say that we just copied everything from the French system.

We try to imitate Europeans' lifestyle and abandoned our own traditional lifestyle that is not true to our culture.

Also, 4 participants mentioned the economic impact of colonization on their career and lives.

The way the colonial education brought us up was for White-collar jobs, and that is the way it has been, even though we have been struggling to change the imbalance.

Well, to an extent, there is an effect of colonization on my career. Because of colonization, I would think that various professions were introduced in Cameroon. Like, say, if you did this or did that, you will become a dentist,
chemist, and if you did this, you will become a psychologist. Maybe before colonization our forefathers did theirs in their own way. But I think all these structures were put in during colonization.

The British, in terms of infrastructure, the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) [an agricultural corporation built by the British] did a very good job. In Cameroon, CDC was like a country within a country. If you were a worker in that company, you had free medical facilities. Even though the pay scale was low, they did some other things to help the workers survive. For example, the corporation gave some people free farmland where they could farm crops like cocoyams and plantains. That helped a long way. The corporation gave scholarships to some of the workers and their children. Most of the kids of the workers achieve the highest level of education. I think, in a sense, colonization played an important role in the lives of most of the people today.

During the colonization period, most of the plantations that existed were mainly for the people of the Western world. The crops that were developed were sent to Europe. The people producing the crops did not benefit from the crops. It was meant to satisfy the people in the Western world.

**Differences Between the French and English Regarding Careers**

Participants from Cameroon reported differences between the French and English colonial policies. It must be noted that there is a divergence of opinion depending on what section of the country participants came from. The British and French colonized Cameroon; consequently, both European powers instituted independent colonial policies in their respective territories. Although Cameroon was granted independence in 1961, the effects of the colonialism still linger on in every aspect of the Cameroonian citizen’s life today. The majority of the participants noted:

I come from West Cameroon that was colonized by the British. If you look at it in terms of politics, one aspect that readily interests me more as far as colonization is concerned, we of West Cameroon are much more outward-looking; we are prone to questioning and always probing for answers, whereas our counterparts in East Cameroon are shallow and are not prepared to ask questions. That is the way we were brought up. These two aspects are really creating lots of problems in Cameroon right now. In fact, even our legal system is different from that of French. We have the civil law; you are locked up and they have to prove you are guilty. In the French system, you are arrested and locked up, and you have to prove your self-innocence.
The British colonial policy was very different from that of the French. The British came to exploit and leave. On the other hand, the French came to stay and they made French people out of Africans and gave them that pride that, in spite of your color, you are still a Frenchman, but the British always told you you are an African. There is nothing that can make you a British; you are Black. Take, for instance, it was not uncommon to find somebody from the French section telling you that he is going home. A Cameroonian telling you he is going home. Going home to Paris! On his staple, he is eating and drinking wine and water that came from France.

We did not have this type of people in West Cameroon. This has a tremendous impact on the way we look at things now.

I think if the British treated us as the French treated East Cameroon and allowed us to stay on our own, we would have been one of the best countries in West Africa. Very rich natural and rich human resources, but because they left us in mid ocean, the French sort of re-colonized us. Then we became the breadbaskets for the Republic of Cameroon. We can't fight back. We were trained by the British to be peaceful. That is our problem. That is our plight.

To me, the influence of the French system did not help Cameroon at all. They just helped to mix things. The French system was trying to dominate the English system; as a result, the two systems got mixed up. And most students were cut in the middle because they did not know whether the French system was better than the English system. If you go to Cameroon, the French-speaking always make you feel as if they are better off than the English speaking.

Love of “cerebral” activities, philosophy, outsmarting the opponent are some of the salient aspects of French education that I can think. There is a quote from a French philosopher that is known to most people of my upbringing; it goes as follows: “Une tête bien faite vaut mieux qu’une tête bien pleine.” A popular French proverb goes as follows: “A malin, malin et demi.” [A well prepared head is better than a full head] I know that the perception in the French system at the time when I was in school in Cameroon was that the English system is easy and shallow. The early specialization (“GCE A-level in 3 subjects including religion” as the joke went) was not seen as a mark of excellence.

Yes, (loudly) there is an impact of colonization on my career. Technical education was never ever made an issue when educational courses were designed. The majorities were trained to be teachers, clerks, and nurses; just those courses that could be consumed immediately, so much so that to be able to bring technical education to the forefront, especially among the Anglophone (English-speaking Cameroonians) is a problem. But the French introduced technical education in their own schools so much so that in Cameroon today most of the technical areas like electricity, water supply, agriculture, aviation, telecommunication are dominated by the French. That is one thing I am not happy with the British colonization of Cameroon. They did...
not train people to take care of themselves. They trained people to be
dependent. Because if you were not a clerk in an office, you would not live; if
you were not a nurse in a government hospital, you would not live; if you
were not a teacher in a school, you would not live. If you were trained as a
carpenter, you could open up your own workshop and take care of yourself.
If you were a carpenter, you could open your own workshop and take care of
yourself . . . (voice lowered). This is what they did the other way, but the
British did nothing in West Cameroon.

I think colonization has an impact on the way career decisions are made in
Cameroon today, in the sense that having been colonized by the French and
the British, the standard of education or career in the French area is different
from the English-speaking area. In a way, how the educational system is
structured, how career decisions are made in both areas is different. Actually,
the French and English educational systems were tailored after the respective
colonial influence. The French pretty much rely on hands-on job placement
career-oriented goals, unlike the English-speaking area—in colleges, you take
5 years and move on to high school and do 2 more years, and then you start
worrying about what university to go to. In the French section, secondary
school takes 4 years. Once they finish with their college, they start branching
out exactly into what they want to do, and whatever they are doing is actually
tailored, more of a hands-on program.

The French system was science-inclined. I remember that when I was in class
3 in the French section, I already knew mathematics or arithmetic for class 6
pupils in the English section. I remember that when I went to X in Yaounde,
they used to come and take me to go solve arithmetic problems for class 6
pupils in the English school. The French start teaching addition and fractions
at a very early class. So by the time you get to class 4, you are usually doing
mathematics or arithmetic for class 6 or 7 pupils in the English section. That
is elementary level. It gives you that strong background so much so that the
French-speaking Cameroonians are very good in math. In the French section,
they introduced logic at a very early age in their education. Logic is a very
important subject in the French system of education, because it helps you
understand any other subjects. (I mean, that is what they always tell you.) Just
like philosophy, that is another subject that is very important to the French
educational system. They feel like it is the base to understand the why of
everything. Another difference between the French and the English system in
education is that if you get to the secondary school level, about form 3 or 4 in
the English system, you start specializing. If you are an arts-inclined person,
that is all you do. So you don’t touch anything that has to do with math. If
you are science-inclined, that is all you do. You don’t know anything about
the foremost writers and artists and things like that. So you are pretty much
lost. If you sit with your colleagues who are talking something about
literature, you don’t have a clue. But in the French system, at that stage, they
touch on a bunch of subjects. You do a bit of literature and a bit of just about
everything. But you don’t go in-depth as you do in the English system.
Perceptions of Certain Careers: Influence of Colonialism

In Africa, there is a tendency for some parents and children to discriminate concerning which majors to pursue. Both environmental influences and, in some cases, peer pressure have played significant roles in what major some students decide to pursue in college. During these interviews, a few participants gave their perceptions of vocational choices and career decisions in their native land.

In Nigeria, people equate social life, social activities, social decisions, and social class with occupations and careers. You have to do something that everyone will look at you and say you are tough. Doing something like a technician is not enough. In Nigeria, the social status for technician is very poor. Technicians are placed in the lowest class. We look at doctors, lawyers, and architects as in the higher class. These are professionals. We look at social status based on occupations. Mechanics don’t occupy a very powerful status in Nigeria. In Nigeria, most people choose their career based on what other people will see in them. Many people may have the aspirations maybe to contest for governor. You can’t do so if you are a mechanic. We need accountants, lawyers, we need political scientists who have a good command of the English language. So, you see, doing an occupation in Nigeria is not only based on what your family says, or what the economy determines; it is also based on what other people will say. You know, you are subject to tailoring your mind to do something; you may not notice it, but your social environment plays a part in your career decision making.

In the U.S., being a musician or artist may pay—not in Nigeria. You have to be in the main part of the economy, like business, commerce, accounting, management, and marketing. Sciences, too. Yes, research, doctor, medical field, petrol-chemical fields, and chemical engineering—these are the areas you want to go into. Who need humanity in Nigeria now? But in this country, you can do anything you want to do and be anything you want to be. No matter how little, how trivial. I mean, it will pay off.

Looking at it, I think that every career is important in Cameroon, but again, I would just say that while looking at the adults, there is the emphasis that whatever you study you should pursue it to the fullest of your abilities. But among friends again, there is that tendency where people want to pursue the sciences. The tendency of wanting to pursue a career in the sciences has led some other students astray in that they wanted to be looked upon as very educated people, or very intelligent people, and some of them choose careers which they were not cut out for.
Motivation for Choosing Careers

Although perceptions about certain careers may influence some Africans when making career choices and occupational decisions, many reasons have been suggested, when dealing with African students, regarding their motivations in their career decision making and reasons for coming to the U.S. During these interviews, the majority of the participants mentioned different reasons for coming to the U.S. to study.

**Motivation to Study in the U.S.**

Basically, I was young and my parents pretty much told me you are going to the U.S. to study (laughing). It is not like something that I decided on my own. They told me and I liked it. They thought that I would get a better education if I came to study abroad.

My parents wanted me to further my education. . . . Cameroon being an agricultural economy, there were many jobs available in that field. It was apparent that if I pursued a career in agriculture and went back to Cameron, I would have a better job, better life style, so that is why I came over to study.

I came to the U.S. because I wanted to go to a place that would offer me lots of opportunities to learn as much as I want.

Well, taking for granted that the secondary school I attended in Cameroon and our means of communication was in English, I was looking for somewhere that I would gain knowledge while using the same language. Since I was fluent in English rather than in French, I felt that I should go somewhere were I could gain knowledge while using the same language, English.

I am into computers and the U.S. is number 1 in the world in computers. So if you want the best, you have to go to the best.

I had already framed my mind to work as an agriculturist. Back home, I was already working in the field of agriculture. I thought it was wise for me to continue in that field.

I wanted to pursue a career in the sciences. In Cameroon, being a very small country population-wise, the universities we have when it comes to sciences are very limited. We have one university to compete. Competition in
education in Cameroon is very high and as such it makes very difficult for everybody to get into any school, especially in the sciences, which makes you consider the idea for further studies out of the country. And having known a little of what the U.S. could offer, I thought I would have a better chance to succeed. That is why I came here to study.

Well, I wanted to come here because I thought and knew that coming here gave me a greater opportunity in life because I had more choices. In Cameroon, we have very limited choices. Here, I know that I will have a lot of choices. That was a big factor for coming here.

Impact of the U.S. in Career/Education

Although education and better career options/choices were some of the reasons that motivated some participants to study in the U.S., a few participants continued with the same career plans they had when they left their country. However, a majority of the participants changed their career goals after arriving in the U.S. Participants mentioned that the availability of good opportunities, better resources, the rich world of work know-how, and better career exposure influenced their career change. When participants were asked whether they believed that their education in the U.S. had influenced their career in any way, the majority of participants mentioned:

When I got here, getting to know more about the oral health profession, like what the profession offers, and the importance of the profession, in a way, that changed my career. I think I have the opportunity to impact the people in my country. This field is limited in Cameroon. . . . We don't have many oral health professionals in Cameroon.

Yeah, I think in a positive way, because my education in America has given me more exposure and put me on a better footing to compete and to look at things from a broad perspective. In that sense, yes, I think coming here has influenced my career.

I was motivated when I came here. . . . I saw that there are a lot of things that I was missing in my country. I saw lots of opportunities in the U.S. Studying here has given the opportunity to know that I can go anywhere and ask for any help I need. Studying here has kind of broadened my knowledge of what I really want to do. It has given me the opportunity to explore other options.
After arriving in the U.S., it did not bother me much because I was not thinking I was going to stay in the U.S. after my education. But when I realized that I was going to continue living in this country, then it occurred to me that having a degree in economics was not good enough. So, that pretty much told me I have to look for something that is needed, a career that is selling.

I was admitted to come here to do criminal justice. Somewhere along the line, I had a glimpse of the criminal justice system and I did not think I was interested, especially given the criminal justice system that I was exposed to at that time. I did not know much. But the little glimpse of things that came across to me was not impressive. I did not think I would finish with criminal justice and then secure a job in the U.S. So somewhere down the line, I changed my major.

Well, after a few years in this country, I realized that just studying agriculture would not take me to where I wanted to be. So, that is the reason I changed to X. And I think X has helped me a lot.

Well, I would have opted to teach, and opting to teach I would have taken some more courses to have certification, but I did not really feel I was comfortable going into the teaching field here. So I decided to look around at least to find if I could have something here to do. It is in the absence of that I decided that I could go back to school to do what I am doing now.

I was about 80% not sure, I guess. Actually, when I came here, my major was computer information system. Then I changed into computer science. I think computer information system is more business-inclined, but computer science is more of mathematics. It is easier for me to study the mathematics courses than to study business.

Originally when I came here, I came to study agriculture. I did agriculture to an extent, and finally I am in the teaching field now. This is because I can easily have a job in education than in agriculture in the U.S. So that influenced my decision, because I switched from agriculture to education. But if I go back to Cameroon, I will have a better chance of using my agriculture degree and making better money and a better standard of living. So living here influenced my career change.

Yes. Very. I believe my education in the U.S. has really changed my career a lot. I wanted to do accounting in Nigeria. But coming here, it is totally a different story; from accounting to computer. You see that it is a very long step because, before I came here, I did accounting. Since I came to the U.S., I now know lots of things going on with computers. I still love business. That is why I changed to computer information system (CIS) because CIS is a blend between computer and business. I want to go into computer because this country is very computerized and technologically advanced. We need computer. I don’t know what we will do without it.
When I came here, I didn't stay long enough. I did not need to be told that you couldn't do anything in this country. I already made up my mind that I can do anything I want, unlike in Nigeria. In Nigeria, there are specific paths you have to take in order to be something. You cannot just go to school and learn barbing in Nigeria, and learn carpentry or learn to be a technician or a mechanic. I know it will not work. But here, you can learn everything. This country has vast opportunities for every work of life. Coming here you can do whatever you want to do. There are just a lot of choices to make.

When participants were asked how they thought they were different in their career decision making from their peers who never left Africa, the majority of the participants noted:

There are so many things I can adjust to like career change in the U.S. But most of my peers at home, if something happens that they can't do what they are doing, they will be stranded. With me, the education I have attained in this country, I can adjust to various conditions.

In fact, I have just been in school for 1.5 semesters. I feel that if one had come here at an early age in this U.S., one would have done some greater things than what I have done now. If I came here in my teens, I would have been a greater person than I am. Because the options are there, the counseling is there, well developed. In fact, I took the Myers-Briggs test the other day and it told me a lot about myself which, if I had known many years ago back, I would have been able to improve on that. I am prepared to at least right the wrongs from now. There are many more opportunities and many options here in the U.S. than in Cameroon.

I feel I have more choices here than the average person who is in my home. They are kind of restricted there. But here, I could do what my abilities led me to. My peers in Nigeria do have limited resources to pursue what they really want.

I don't think my peers who stayed back home kind of sit down and look into what they are going to do or kind of decide whether that is what they really want to do. I think they pretty much go with the flow. But here, you can start in some field and then if you decide that this is not what you really want to do, you switch because the system is different. Most of the time the students in Cameroon are stuck with what they have. They pretty much go with the flow.

My friends in Nigeria are restricted to certain career paths. They are restricted by the economy and their parents dictate to them. Here, people can be restricted to what their parents say but not the economy. The economy gives room for vast opportunities and you plan to do anything you want to do. So, I should say, I have a comparable advantage over them because I am here. The
country and the economy here are booming. And you can go into whatever you want to do here and make it, but not there . . .

In Nigeria, the government controls the economy. You just do what the economy wants you to do. Hence, you are limited.

Two male participants mentioned personal motivations as reasons for their career decision making. They noted:

For my peers home, it depends on how much drive they have inside them or, if they have the drive, how much is it that they are able to manipulate their situations in order to achieve their goals.

It is just motivation. That ego and desire that is pushing you to achieve is what makes you leave the country . . . . You find that the friend who is back home and who has not made any effort can't leave to come here. So with the small effort you made to come here, you can build up yourself.

Participants were asked about what would influence their decision on whether to return to Africa or remain in the U.S. Although a few respondents reported that remaining in the U.S. would depend on certain conditions, like better political and economic situations at their homes, and the availability of opportunities to help their families in Africa, some participants mentioned that they did not come to stay. Most participants cited economic and political conditions and the opportunity to help their families in Africa as reasons that would influence their decision to return or stay in the U.S.

Right now, the decision to remain is what is impacting on my career decisions more than any other thing else. So far, I don't see any improvement going on in my country . . . . I can't be sitting here and waiting for 10-20 years for the country to improve. I have to think about what's going to happen to me now. So, remaining here impacts what I do now.

With the economy crisis in Africa now, most people, including me, have decided to stay in America where they have more opportunities. Plus, the types of jobs one would love to go home and do are no longer in Cameroon.

It does in the long run because what I wanted to do was agriculture. Then, the political situation in Cameroon was stable. I thought I would come here and do agriculture, finish, and go back to Cameroon and start working. But as the years went by, the political situation started changing in Cameroon. It also
started changing the way I was feeling towards agriculture. It swayed me towards making a different decision, to take up a different major.

If things changed politically and economically, that is where I belong, in Cameroon. But if things remain what they are instead of taking one step forward, and 20 steps backward, there will be no need going to frustrate myself over there . . .

I feel very strongly for some who have acquired education in the U.S. What will influence me to go back, I feel, is the type of government in our country. If the government is so repressive to people who are educated, then you don’t expect me to go back, because my knowledge will not be accepted . . . So, you don’t expect me to go back.

Economic stability may influence my decision to go back . . . That will come when I feel so comfortable with my career here and could go home without straining myself financially . . .

A major decision that will influence my staying or returning is the demand for my profession . . . If the possibility is not there, then I don’t see or know how I will be able to achieve my goals. So the availability and the demand of my profession and finances all play a role.

I have my mind made up that I will return home . . . I need to go back home to help as much as I can, to improve my folks and to do my part in the development of my country. The only reason that can make me stay is if staying here can benefit my country.

Two participants reported that they did not come to the U.S. to stay. They noted:

I did not come here to stay. I always want to go back. We say in our language, “No matter how long a log stays in water, it will never become a crocodile.” So, no matter how long I stay here, I don’t think I will take the American idle of living . . . I am deeply rooted to my culture. I am always thinking about home . . .

I did not come to stay . . . I love my family in Africa. There is no need to stay here . . .

When participants were asked whether staying in the U.S. has changed their identity in any way, almost all participants reported that staying here would not change their identity as Africans. However, a few participants mentioned that they
are still struggling with their identity in the U.S. Almost all participants reported that they did not think staying in the U.S. would change their identity in any way.

Well, I don't think I feel different whether I am here or in Africa. . . . I have worked with the Americans before when I was at my home. I worked in the American Embassy for about 3 years before they gave my scholarship to come and study here. . . . I am a type of person I can adapt very easily in every situation.

The decision to stay should not impact my identity. Basically, I am the same person, the same goals, drives, and same ideas.

My identity will not change. I don't see myself changing my identity. I have always considered myself a Nigerian. . . . I have not lost my identity as someone from Africa. It is always in the back of my mind. I still feel like a Nigerian. . . . I must have picked up some American ways, because I have been here for a long time. But my original identity that I am Nigerian is still permanent in me. . . .

Well, I don't think my identity has changed because I am still a Cameroonian.

I will be a Nigerian no matter where I am. . . . I was born a Nigerian. I will not lose my identity because I am in another country. I might blend with the system. We must not forget where we come from. We must not forget our native land. No matter what I do, no matter where I go, I just have to remember Nigeria. Nigeria is a great. Too bad, Nigeria is not technologically advanced like America. . . . I have decided to stay here, but I am still going to be regarded like a Nigerian.

I hold allegiance to my tribal group and to my home. I hold allegiance to my country. At the same time, you live in the world of American imperialism. So it will not be something so major. . . . An average educated African is already composed of many factors and it will not be very hard to adjust. I would say it, probably for Africans than any other people to adjust to new situations. . . . To some extent it is like who you are, a lot from many different places in the world contributes.

Well, I am an African. First, I am a Nigerian and I think being a Black person, and being in the U.S., and seeing that way other people live, I think I need to go back home. It keeps ringing a bell in my head that I need to go back home.

No, I am still a Cameroonian. . . . I don’t think I would like to say that I am an American. It's ridiculous!

A few respondents reported that as Africans presently studying and working in U.S., they continue struggle with their identity.
My identity in the U.S. has been a struggle. . . . Forget about coming from a very good home or status at home. . . . I think here in the U.S., I don’t still have an identity because I am Black . . .

To identify myself as a Black person, I will only do that successfully when I go home. . . . I feel that in U.S., my true identity is not really recognized. . . . I am not readily given that opportunity as a White person in this country. . . . My identity is one of those things very unique that is creating a problem for me. It is very difficult being a Black man in this society.

The Role of Scholarships

About two decades ago, there were many opportunities for foreign scholarships for African students. Most of the recipients of these scholarships pursued majors or careers that had already been determined by the sponsoring agents. To confirm this trend about scholarships, 4 participants noted:

I got a British scholarship through Cameroon. It was of assistance. I was in Britain and I had no problem. Actually, the scholarship was quite a rich one. The scholarship was for administrators, educators, active officers, and I happen to have fallen under one of these groups. The scholarship was for a specific purpose. The scholarship was earmarked for a special career orientation.

Foreign scholarship helped me to further my education. The scholarship they gave me was to study agriculture. It was to study agricultural irrigation. . . . I came here and I got my master’s in agricultural education. But actually, with my degree, I could not get a job back in my country in that same area. So I had to stay here. I did not want to do agriculture here because of many factors. So, I decided to do a second master’s in French to go into the classroom. I got another scholarship to do that one too . . .

In my country, there were many scholarships for students. Some students did agriculture because the government sent them to foreign countries to continue with their studies in agriculture. That is why I made that choice to study agriculture.

I think foreign scholarships are helpful. . . . My brother was offered a British scholarship to pursue engineering. He was able to go through school very fast. He had his Ph.D. at a very early age because he was on scholarship.

Presently, the opportunities for scholarships have continued to drastically diminish. Although a majority of the participants in the study mentioned that they
have never received scholarship, a few noted that foreign scholarships are very important for Africans, and some questioned the motives behind some of the scholarships. This is what some of the participants noted about scholarship:

I think scholarship is very helpful for foreigners. For African countries, without foreign help I don't think the government can afford all that money to educate its countrymen. So, it is a blessing. I would say it is a tremendous help, mostly for countries that colonized us. I think England and France owe us that scholarship. But America has to help us. I think that we just have to be thankful for them.

I think they are good. Scholarships are good. There are fantastic because there are many men who would have remained outside, who would not have gone to university if these scholarships were not there. . . . So they are great assistance for most African professionals. . . . These are venues that many students are succeeding in going into universities.

I think foreign scholarships are good. I don't want to diminish the impact of foreign scholarship. . . . If that is the only thing that people will be able to get out. Generally, it is great.

I think foreign scholarships are generally good. In the third world, or undeveloped world, foreign scholarships play a very big role . . .

I realize that the impact of foreign scholarship to students is a good thing that helps those of us who are poor to go to school to achieve something. . . . To sit down and come with the amount of money to pay your fees is extremely difficult . . .

I think foreign scholarships are very helpful. It kind of deviates the burden from parents in some way. They also give Cameroonians some exposure as far as technology that is kind of lacking in the universities back home.

One participant questioned the motives behind foreign scholarships. He noted:

On the one hand, I questioned the motivation behind some foreign scholarship, whether there are really recruiting people to protect their interest in the respective country . . .

The Role of Government in Career

Although almost half of the participants noted that the government did not play a role towards their career choices and occupational decisions, about a third of
the participants from Cameroon reported that the government influenced their career choices and occupational decision in some way.

The government played a role in a sense that at different times in my society, you find out that certain majors will sell more than others. When I was going to school in my country, economics was selling. All the guys who had big positions in para-statals were economic majors [para-statials are private companies that are subsidized by the government in certain ways and they usually pay more than the government]. So the companies and the government influenced careers in that way, because they were the sole employers at that time.

My government played a lot in my career development, because 85% of the economy at that time was from agriculture and there were many jobs in the agricultural fields, which paid very lucratively. So I decided to study agriculture so I could go back and work in the agricultural sector. The government used to give scholarships for people to study agriculture, and I know that helped me.

Yes, I remember, prior to my coming, there were some people who were sent abroad, and their career decisions were made for them based on the need of the country, like in science, agriculture, and education. There were people who came who had scholarships from the government for those fields that were specified by the government.

The government influenced my educational career because education was free. They actually paid you at the college level. . . . When I was in high school, I did not buy books. They had a ranking system that was an incentive for students. If you were, like, in the first three in class, you were given money to buy your books. . . . In high school, it happened to me. In the private schools, it did not happen. Nobody was left behind as far as education was concerned. Everybody could go to school. The government influenced my education in that way.

When I was leaving high school, there was a need for teachers in English language. . . . It was opted that on coming back, I was going to work with the government. So, I got a scholarship to X University. So, at least my government at that time gave this direction. Maybe that is the reason I decided to become a teacher, because there were also ready scholarships opened for teachers and employment opportunities at the end of their courses.

Career Choice Differences

In order to investigate whether colonization played a role in career choice differences between males and females in Africa, participants were asked their
opinion about career choices between males and females in their country. Almost all participants mentioned overwhelmingly that there are differences in career choices between males and females. However, although the gap has continued to diminish (more women doing the same jobs as men), some participants noted that there are still some occupations that seem to attract more men than women in their countries.

A male participant from Nigeria mentioned:

I think there are differences. There are some careers over time that were for men and some careers that were for women... jobs like working in a steel factory, carpenter, or construction. People feel that those jobs are not for females because women are fragile... Jobs like sewing clothes—people in Africa think this is for women. Women don't get into construction jobs and truck driving in Nigeria. Presently, I have been to places where women are doing jobs that were done by men.

Another female participant from Cameroon reported:

I will say in the sciences, you narrow it down to physics—more males do physics in my country than females... But when it comes to other professions, you just have as many women as men. Let's say physics and architecture—those are the two professions that I know more males do in my country than females... For women, you see them in careers like nursing in my country. They see it as the female profession.

A male participant from Zimbabwe indicated:

Uhm... not now. Before independence, yes. Before independence it was segregated where women could either be teachers or nurses. They were not exposed to pursue things like being a doctor, aircraft pilot, and engineer. They sort of go to easier tasks. After independence, we were looking for equality—we fought the war of independence with women... It is totally equal.

A male participant from Cameroon stated:

This gender problem has been one of the issues in my country. Before, women were just seen as people who will only become housewives and have children... Things are changing with time. Women are playing significant roles in the development of the country... Women work in hospitals and women are doctors today.

A male participant from Nigeria noted:
Yes, 30 years ago, women were not favorably looked upon, like becoming lawyers. Now, I went home last year, there are more women lawyers than men. Thirty years ago not many women went to college. Most of them ended in high school. They were subjected or relegated to housewife positions. It is no more that way now. Things have really changed. Look at the priesthood profession. I am surprised there are women priests now in Nigeria. That will tell you how far we have come. That was unheard of 15 years ago.

Similarly, a male participant from Cameroon mentioned:

Yes. Yes. Yes. Let's say when we were growing up, you find more males in teaching careers, women in the nursing careers, very few in technical fields, like agriculture and engineering. As I am talking now, I doubt whether there is an engineer per se who is a woman in Cameroon. We are getting agricultural officers. The army, when I was growing up, was an exclusive area for women. But recently, women have started going into the army. In fact, it is only recently that women have started venturing into certain careers or the sciences. Women were meant for the arts, history, and English literature. That is where they were made to believe that is where they belong . . . society. I remember in the early days when the technical school in Bamenda was opened, some girls who ventured into survey courses and carpentry were looked upon as being abnormal.

Another male participant from Cameroon noted:

In those days, there were some career choices that were not open to women. A case like being an engineer—you could hardly see women going into the field of engineering. Even medicine—there were very few women who were going for medicine. Men mostly dominated medicine. For women in those days, most of them were nurses, secretaries, and homemakers.

A female participant reported:

Yes, in Cameroon there are some careers that are actually regarded as female careers, like being a nurse. Then, careers like law, medicine, and even agriculture were regarded as a man's career. In Cameroon, there are more females in teaching and nursing than males.

Another female participant from Cameroon indicated:

Oh yes, there is a difference (excited, laughing). I don't know if it is changed now. . . . Well, even now, most women don't become lawyers. Because they are intimidated in court; there are not respected. . . . You hardly find women in Cameroon who went to law school and practice law in that sense, like representing people in court. Men go into engineering and architecture. . . . Now, in Cameroon women are doctors as well. More women tend to be nurses and midwives. If you see a man who is a nurse, it is kind of strange. But if a you see a man who is a medical doctor or a pharmacist, that is okay . . .
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Summary

The effects of colonization on the career development and occupational choice of Africans studying in the United States was the focus of the study. Conceptual frameworks of cross-cultural and developmental-contextual models guided the research. Using purposeful selection techniques, 12 participants from countries that were colonized by England and/or France and who were somewhat knowledgeable about colonization were identified and participated in the study. Semistructured face-to-face interviews of 60–90 minutes were used to collect data. Participants were asked open-ended questions to investigate their perceptions of the effect of colonization on their career choices and occupational development. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed, and the transcripts were analyzed using the constant comparative method (grounded theory). After further examination and clarification, a final set of coded categories and subcategories were identified.

The following conclusions were drawn from the interviews with all participants:

1. Colonization has an influence on the career choice and occupational decisions of Africans.
2. There are differences in the early educational up-bringing and way of life of Africans from French and British colonial influences, which have played a role in their career and occupational decisions.

3. Although parents/family and significant others still play important roles in the career decision-making of Africans, their present career choices have also been influenced by their present environment and life situations.

4. The government and foreign scholarships have influenced the career choices decisions of Africans.

5. Although the gap in career and occupational choices between males and females in Africa has continued to diminish, there are still some occupations that seem to attract more males than females in Africa.

6. The responses of participants support the notion that, in looking at the career development and occupational choices of Africans, it is important to take into consideration the person in relationship to his or her early environment as mentioned by Roe (1957), Krumboltz (1979), Mathabe and Temane (1993), Stead (1996), and Miller-Tiedman (1987).

Conclusions

**Conclusion 1: Colonization has an influence on the career choice and occupational decisions of Africans.**

Africa as a continent went through colonization and continues to go through some form of colonialism even today. Research has shown that when people of different ethnic backgrounds and cultures come together, there is a learning process and acculturation occurs. In the case of Africa, the countries that were colonized by the European powers were all exposed to the doctrines, lifestyle, culture, and career
orientation of the colonizers. Additionally, the European powers introduced systems of education and government that most countries in Africa continue to follow even today. For example, almost all the respondents in this study noted that their early education was somewhat influenced by the different European powers that colonized their countries.

Although the people of Africa had some form of native or informal education and social training before the Europeans arrived, it was not like it is today. One participant noted, “With the arrival of the French in my country, schools were created.” Another participant mentioned, “The school system was set up by the colonial masters to reflect their way of education.” All participants noted that their present ways of speaking (English and French languages) were a result of the Whites in their country. One participant noted, “First of all, I speak English; that is one of the influences the English had on me.” He further added, “The French language that I speak is part of what the French imparted to me.” Similarly, another participant mentioned, “Coming from a country that was colonized by the British, I have the opportunity in speaking English.” One participant reported that because of the early English exposure, “my education in the U.S. did not suffer.” He added, “Before I came to the U.S., I already had a better understanding of the English language. I can say it really helped in my classes in the U.S.” The above findings were consistent among all the participants in this study.

In Cameroon, the British opened very large agricultural plantations, which hired many of the local inhabitants. As a result of people migrating to work in these agricultural plantations, many people subsequently raised families who benefited in many ways from the corporation. As one participant noted, “I think they did a lot; they opened plantations and those plantations employed so many people. They also
helped to educate some people on how to manage the plantations." A few participants indicated that because their fathers were employed at the plantations, they themselves subsequently were employed by the same corporation. One further noted that he majored in agriculture in the U.S. because of the love of agriculture he had developed while working in the agricultural corporation in his native land. Many of the workers and subsequently their children were trained either as agricultural or clerical workers, which to some extent influenced their perspectives about careers. The findings in this study suggest that the large agricultural plantations opened by the British in Cameroon have played a role in the educational and career goals of some of the participants.

Today, there are many Cameroonians who are products of this colonial influence and some that continue to benefit indirectly from the plantations that the British left behind in Cameroon. For example, the education and the types of occupations that the British and the French introduced in their respective territories increased interest among the Africans in careers and fostered educational opportunities or careers like those of the British and French.

**Conclusion 2: There are differences in the early educational up-bringing and way of life of Africans from French and British colonial influences, which have played a role in their career and occupational decisions.**

In the interviews, participants from the French and English colonial influences reported differences in their early educational up-bringing and way of life which contributed to their career and occupational decisions. Participants had a divergence of opinions about the colonial policies of the French and the British in their respective environments. Even with the differences in opinions, the study suggests that all participants were influenced in some way or another in their respective countries.
One participant from the French colonial influence indicated, "Everything they did—from education, life style, fashion—was French." One noted that the French policy of assimilation made them feel as if they were "French people." He mentioned that some of the people in his country even referred to France as "home." On the other hand, participants from countries that were colonized by England did not feel that way. One participant noted that the British came to "exploit and leave." However, most participants noted that colonization still left an "imprint" in the lives of most Africans.

Regarding education, all participants suggested that the educational system in their countries was tailored in accordance with their colonial influences. Most participants noted in their interviews that the French system of education is completely different from the English system. Referring to the French system, 1 participant noted, "Love of cerebral activities, philosophy, outsmarting the opponents, are some of the salient aspects of French education." Another participant noted that in the English system "technical education was never made an issue when education programs were designed." He noted that the French system introduced technical education into their schools so much so that in Cameroon today, most of the technical areas such as electricity, telecommunication, and aviation are dominated by the French.

Another participant mentioned that the French system is "science inclined." The participant noted that the French system introduced logic and too much arithmetic at a very early age in education (usually at elementary level). One participant from English Cameroon felt that the French system of education "did not help Cameroon at all. They just helped to mix things." One participant who was somewhat excited during the interview, noted, "This is one thing I am not happy with the British colonization of Cameroon." He noted that the British trained people to be
“dependent.” They did not train people to take care of themselves. The British trained people to work either as teachers, nurses, or as clerks with the government. They gave very few opportunities for independent career motivations/orientations. This view was supported by another participant who added that the “French pretty much rely on hands-on job placement career orientations.”

Conclusion 3: Although parents/family and significant others still play important roles in the career decision making of Africans, their present career choices have also been influenced by their present environment and life situations.

Research on career and vocational decisions of Africans has indicated that parents and family play significant roles in the career decision of their children (Idowe & Dere, 1983; Mathabe & Tamane, 1993; Nkabinda, 1997; Nwachuku, 1986; Olayinka, 1973; Stead, 1996). Similarly, the findings in this study support the notion that in Africa, family and parents play significant roles in the career decisions of their children. It is very interesting to note that some participants in this study noted that they even received some form of “career counseling” from their parents. One participant mentioned “family loyalty” and “respect of father” as important factors in career decisions. One participant stated that his father was responsible for his education and he sees no reason why he should not “heed” his parents’ advice. A few of the participants reported that, although the final decision in their career was sometimes theirs, they first needed to discuss it with their parents. “I needed my parents’ blessing and wisdom,” one participant noted. Two participants reported self-motivation and the influence of peers on their career choices.

The study also revealed that, for most participants, their present career decisions have been influenced somewhat by the present economy and labor trends in the U.S. All participants noted that the availability of better career opportunities and
good knowledge about the world of work in the U.S. have influenced their present career decision-making. One participant noted that because the U.S. is very "computerized and technologically advanced," he was influenced to pursue a major in computer science instead of accounting.

Although their family and environment had an influence during their early years in their countries of origin, their present decisions and career choices have been made because of present family situations, such as getting married and having children, as well as better career opportunities in the U.S.

Conclusion 4: Government and foreign scholarships have influenced the career decisions of Africans.

Almost all participants noted the influence of government and foreign scholarships on careers. In the interviews, 2 participants mentioned that they received some form of government scholarships, and 2 participants mentioned that they received foreign scholarships. Both participants who received foreign scholarships stated that the scholarships specified what discipline to pursue. One said, "The scholarship was for a specific purpose. It was earmarked for a special career orientation." Similarly, another participant stated, "The scholarship they gave me was to study agriculture." A third participant reported that her brother was a recipient of a British scholarship to pursue engineering. She stated, "The scholarship was very helpful." The findings of this study, as well as the literature, support the assertion that some foreign scholarships, although very worthwhile, appear to determine the career orientation of the recipients. It must be noted that the participants were offered these foreign scholarships over a decade ago. The findings of the study support the contention that foreign scholarships have continued to decline in Africa over the last few decades. All participants expressed the belief that foreign scholarships are very
important for Third World countries. One participant noted, “I think foreign scholarship is very helpful, mostly from countries that colonized us. I think England and France owe us that scholarship.” Two participants noted that the government did not play any role in their career decisions. Five participants acknowledged the role of government in their career choices. Participants who did note a governmental influence in their careers gave reasons such as the government’s offering special scholarships, and the government’s being the sole employer in the country. Others were influenced by the type of economy and labor demand that was in place at the time of their decision.

**Conclusion 5: Although the gap in career and occupational choices between males and females in Africa has continued to diminish, there are still some occupations that seem to attract more males than females in Africa.**

Participants in this study overwhelmingly reported that in Africa there are still differences between males and females regarding their career choices. One participant noted that there were some careers that were for men and some careers that were for women. He indicated that jobs such as working in a steel factory, carpentry, and construction were for men. He noted that African people felt that those types of jobs were not for women because women were “fragile.” Another participant mentioned that jobs such as “sewing clothes and housekeeping” were for women. One participant stated that more males majored in “physics and architecture in [her] country than females.” She reported that women were found in careers such as nursing. She stated, “They see it [nursing] as a female profession.” One participant stated that the “gender problem” has been one of the issues in his country. He noted, “Before, women were just seen as people who will only become housewives and have children.” He further mentioned that women are now playing significant roles in the
development of the country. Women work in hospitals and women “are even doctors
today.” Another participant stated that 30 years ago, “women lawyers were not
favorably looked upon” in Africa. He stated that women were “relegated to
housewife positions.” He emphasized that “things have really changed” with women
entering into the priesthood in Nigeria. He noted, “This is something that was
unheard of 20 years ago.” One participant indicated that even now in Cameroon,
most women don’t become lawyers. She added, “You hardly find a woman in
Cameroon who went to law school and practiced law in that sense, like representing
people in court. Women are intimidated in court, and they are not respected.”
Another participant stated that years ago, the fields of engineering and medicine were
mostly dominated by men, while women were nurses, secretaries, and homemakers.
He mentioned that girls who went into technical schools and ventured into survey
courses and carpentry were looked upon as being “abnormal.” One participant
stressed that it is only recently that “women have started venturing into certain
careers or the sciences.” Another participant commented, “Now in Cameroon,
women are doctors.” The responses from all participants were consistent with the
notion that in Africa, there are career differences between males and females,
although quite recently, females have started branching into predominantly male
areas. The findings in this study list jobs in law, truck driving, construction,
agriculture, physics, architecture, pharmacy, engineering, military, and the priesthood
as male-dominated areas in Africa, and the arts, nursing, homemaking, midwifery,
teaching, and secretarial services as areas for women. The findings also suggest that
these trends have continued to decrease with more women venturing in medicine,
sciences, agriculture, military, law, and the priesthood.
Conclusion 6: The responses from participants support the notion that in looking at the career development and occupational choices of Africans, it is important to take into consideration the person in relationship to his/her early environment.

Most of the participants in this study mentioned that their early environment played a role in their present career decisions. Almost all noted that their parents/families were instrumental in their early educational aspirations. A few participants mentioned the influence of the agricultural plantation system that was established by the British. One noted that his father's employment on a plantation influenced the father's choice of a wife. He further noted that he too grew up to work on that same plantation. He loved the plantation and because of his love for farm work, he has decided to major in agriculture in college in the U.S. Another participant's decision to work at a particular agricultural establishment was influenced by the fact that his father worked there. It is important to note that these plantations were established by the White colonial powers.

Eight participants mentioned that they attended missionary schools that were built by the British in their country. One noted, "Our education was modeled after the British system. We took exams set in England." All respondents who attended these missionary schools reported a very positive experience. One stated, "When it comes to morals, the way we were instructed by the White missionaries was pretty much the best." Most participants noted that what they learned in those schools has helped them later in their lives. Another participant said, "Values such as responsibility, patience, togetherness, and being polite were instilled in me in secondary school." One participant acknowledged, "Today I am Christian because of what I picked up in secondary school. It did much to me, discipline-wise, spiritual-wise, and education-
wise." The study suggests that the educational roots of all the participants were planted in their early schools and have continued to grow stronger since then. One participant noted that because of a very strong science background to which he was exposed in his country, he is presently majoring in mathematics and computer science in college. He reported that his experience has been very positive. Another noted that his education in the U.S. "did not suffer." He reported that, because of his background in English and French languages in his country, he has no problems studying in the U.S. He is majoring in chemistry because of the early science exposure in his home country.

Discussion

The findings of this study are consistent with what is known about the effects of the early environment, parents, and external and internal factors on the career choices and occupational decisions of Africans. Studies conducted by Thomas (1990), Krumboltz (1979), Miller-Tiedman (1987), Mathabe and Temane (1993), and Stead (1996) provide evidence that the early environment, parents, and other external and internal factors must be considered when examining the career choices and occupational decisions of individuals. All participants in this study came from African countries that were colonized by the Europeans. The findings indicate that colonization had an influence on the participants. Thus, participants inherited or have all been impacted either directly or indirectly by colonization, which was a factor in their early social and educational environments.

The findings reveal not only that most participants were impacted through educational and economic means, but most participants noted that colonization had an impact on their culture, religion, and legal system, as well as their system of
government. Participants described their systems of government as being designed like that of either England and/or France. Some noted that the local inhabitants were obligated to accept the French or English ways of life; thus, they abandoned their traditional ways of living or culture.

Results obtained in the study indicate that 2 participants went into majors because they were offered scholarships that determined what area they had to pursue. The findings also suggest that 5 participants initially pursued careers based upon what they observed while growing up in their native land. The findings also expose the perceptions of some participants regarding certain careers in Africa. Most participants noted that occupations in the sciences are held in high regard in their country. One participant reported that some students are inclined to go into the sciences, even though they may not be “cut out” for the sciences, which has led to some dropping out of school along the way.

The findings supported the notion about the influence of African parents toward the career decisions of their children. Parental influence has continued to diminish as Africans prolong their stay in the United States after completing their studies. It is the opinion of this writer that the opportunity for better career counseling may help to dispel certain self-defeating ideas, the colonial mentality, and the prejudices about certain careers. Although the differences between males’ and females’ occupations or career choices are diminishing with more women going into professions that were once male-dominated, there still exist some professions in Africa that men tend to dominate.

The findings in this study suggest that almost all participants have been affected in some way during their stay in the U.S. The availability of better career choices and more opportunities has increased the possibility of better employment
opportunities. As a result, many participants have made certain changes in their present career choices. Most participants identified political prosecutions, the high rate of unemployment, and economic disparities as reasons that may hinder their return to Africa after completing their education. The findings support the recent trend of “brain drain” from Africa, where Africans are migrating to Europe and the U.S. in large numbers, because of economic and political insecurities in their native land.

The Europeans came into Africa with certain jobs and services. Most Africans saw European jobs as prestigious and developed a low regard for other professions. Participants disclosed that careers in the sciences were regarded as superior and some Africans developed a “distaste” for certain professions. Some Africans pursue certain professions because of the economic security and social status that accompany the profession. For example, professions such as medicine, accounting, and engineering are regarded as professions with more prestige, while careers in painting, art, and mechanics hold a very low social position.

Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations for clinical practice are based on the results of this study and are aimed at three audiences: (1) career counselors and therapists who provide counseling to African international students, (2) international student services officers who work with African students, and (3) training programs for therapists or career counselors.
Providing Career Counseling for African Students

Therapists or counselors who want to provide career counseling to African international students can do several things to enhance the quality of services. They can begin by trying to know clients better. As in all counseling relationships, the therapist should begin by developing a positive relationship of trust with African clients. Relating can be accomplished by trying to know something about clients and their countries of origin, and by trying to understand some of the beliefs, traditions, and cultural implications involved in working with African students. Counselors should remember that most Africans are a minority group in this country. Africans have continued to face some forms of racism, stereotyping, and other subtle forms of discrimination, especially as most Africans see themselves as victims in this culture with respect to their accents and country of origin. The study suggested that some of the difficulties above are faced by African students studying in U.S.

After developing a trusting relationship and cordial environment, counselors should understand that most Africans are not very sophisticated when it comes to career counseling. As the findings in this study confirm, most participants have never seen a professional career counselor. To some Africans, the concept of even seeing a counselor is a very new phenomenon. It is important for counselors to orientate African clients to the counseling process. Counselors must understand the intricacies and goals of African clients’ education in the U.S. It is necessary for counselors to be aware of what motivates Africans in choosing careers.

The results revealed the roles of government, scholarship, and family in the career decision making of most Africans. Counselors need to understand that some Africans have career choices or areas of study that have already been determined by
their families and parents. In the traditional African culture, individuals are subordinate to the group and, in decision making, individuals are strongly influenced by family expectations. The counselor should exercise enough caution, however, so that too much emphasis is not placed on individuation. Counselors must be aware of the role of the family in the career decision-making of African clients. Counselors should consider these factors as they try to help African clients in their career decision process.

Most African students have the tendency to believe that they will return to their country after their sojourn in the U.S. It will be necessary for counselors to understand the concept of careers from the perspective of African students and their country of origin. Although the study appears to indicate a change in this direction, with more Africans remaining in the U.S., it is important for counselors to understand African clients, their cultures, and how they perceive certain careers as well as the reasons for going into certain careers.

African students are somewhat unique because they come from a continent that was colonized and marginalized by European powers. The effects of colonization can still be felt in the psyche of most Africans today. The study suggests that some Africans entertain prejudices about certain careers. They see some majors (sciences) to be better and some (painting, carpentry) to be in the lower economic strata. It is also important for counselors to consider African clients with respect to their early environment and worldview, as well as the way they make their meanings, especially their prejudices about certain careers. Counselors should help to dispel the old beliefs about certain occupations. African clients must be made to understand that all careers or professions are important and to know that not everybody will become a scientist,
a doctor, or a lawyer. Counselors should reinforce the idea to African clients that the world needs people in all walks of life.

In addition, counselors should help the African client adapt to the new changes and cultural shock that come with moving to an entirely new country with a different culture, social differences, and career orientations. With increasing orientation and acculturation into American norms and values, the African family will inadvertently lose some of its influence over individual students studying in the United States. This means that the individual will become increasingly more independent when making vocational choices. This trend towards such an orientation is reflected in the response of participants to questions addressing the impact of the U.S. on their education and career choices. All participants noted that their education in the U.S. has given them more exposure to better career options. It is important for counselors to understand the influence of better career exposure and availability of good career opportunities in the U.S. on African students.

Counselors should understand the employment trends of the country of origin. They should also consider the fact that most African countries are presently going through very heavy reconstruction in their economic infrastructures, coupled with a general downward trend in the employment sectors, and poor job opportunities in Africa. Because of these factors, and as the results of the study indicate, there is the probability that most Africans will not be returning home immediately after their studies. It is advisable for the career counselor to explore with the client those areas that will "sell" in this economy. The therapist should remember that most career measures in the U.S. were not normed with a foreign population, and counselors must try to be sensitive to the cultural, social, and environmental
factors to which most Africans have been exposed, and which continue to play significant roles in their career decisions.

Most importantly, to help facilitate better use of counseling services, counselors should be encouraged to work in collaboration with the international student services personnel on the interdepartmental level toward developing and providing diverse counseling services and psychoeducational programs that are responsive to African student needs and situations.

The findings reveal the political/social/economic impact of career choice on Africans. Counselors should try to understand some of the political, social, and economic factors that influence the career decisions of Africans. By posing good questions, counselors may begin to understand African students and help to uncover some of the concerns that may be associated with colonization and its effects on careers. Some of these concerns may include the way they see certain careers, and the perceptions and prejudices about some majors or careers. It is important for counselors to understand the motivation in choosing careers by Africans. Why the African client decides to pursue a certain career is a very important question, because as a result of prejudices and stereotypical tendencies from colonization, and little career counseling exposure, many Africans have perceived some professions as “dirty” and/or “low,” and some as “better.” Counselors must be aware of these meaning-making systems.

The study indicated that there are career differences between males and females in Africa. Counselors must also understand that African males and females have been exposed to different roles, norms, early environmental experiences, and career expectations. It is necessary for counselors to understand these differences and expectations as well as the meanings about career choices between African males and
females. Counselors should understand why African males and females pursue certain careers and be aware of what *career* means to African clients.

Counselors should be aware of the English and French colonial influences on African students. The results of this study suggest that some of the culture, social norms, and values of the colonized countries appear to be adulterated by those of their colonial masters. Counselors must be aware of these mixes and try to understand their African clients from their own perspective. The study indicated the influence of White missionaries in the educational advancement of some Africans. It is necessary for counselors who are directly working with African students to understand the early religious up-bringing and the influence it may have on African clients.

**International Student Services**

International student advisers should connect new students with other African students on their campuses, or encourage them to join African student organizations. It is necessary for the advisers to be culturally sensitive and receptive to new students. New, incoming African students do need social and moral support. Most often, the international student adviser is the first point of contact for African students. Introducing African students to the services available on the campus and its environ may help to smooth the cultural concerns that may arise. This study indicated that some African students have never sought any form of career counseling. By explaining the function of career counseling, the advisers may help to assuage the uneasiness of African students in asking for help in case of difficulties in making career decisions.
The literature suggests that some parents in Africa invest in their children for financial support in the future. Some students may have families in Africa who may be expecting much from them. The international student advisers must understand some of the cultural meaning context of African students. As noted, the study suggested that some African students, after their sojourn in United States, may not immediately return to Africa. Some Africans may decide to look for employment during and after their studies. The adviser should help the student understand the immigration laws of this country, especially as they concern employment. The international student personnel may need sometimes to play the role of the surrogate father/mother, helping with the adjustment, transition, and acculturation process. Sometimes the student services personnel may become the advocate and help to mediate between the students and professors in case problems arise.

Counselor Training Programs

African international students are a very important entity, as they help to diversify any university campus and, as such, they should be included in all aspects of academic training, including courses on counseling theory, student personnel services, career counseling, professional issues, multicultural counseling, and assessment. It has been noted with dismay that this population has been either left out of most course curriculums, or lumped together with other international student groups.

It has been documented that most research in vocational psychology has been conducted by Whites studying Whites. Also, many of the measures being used today were normed with a different ethnic group or population. Including this population into the academic curriculum in the U.S. will help to gain an understanding of a
group of people that have been somewhat forgotten in the research areas on vocational psychology. Training programs should encourage research in this area because this will help to fill an important gap in knowledge and will enrich the field of counseling/vocational psychology.

The results of this study can also be used to train counselors in understanding the African students' perspectives and worldviews regarding career choices and occupational decisions. Other suggestions for training programs include hiring African professionals in their programs, or encouraging African students to pursue degrees in the areas of vocational psychology. These suggestions will help the counseling profession to be more inclusive. Scholarships or aid can be an incentive to achieve such goals. Training programs should be flexible enough to bring in experts on this population and to provide training opportunities for faculty members and students on the psychology of vocational and career counseling of Africans.

Although the present study involved a group of African international students, the results of this study may extend to other nationalities whose countries were somewhat influenced, although not colonized like those of the study participants, including the Indian, Bahamian, Jamaican, Haitian, and Japanese international students.

Suggestions for Further Study

The present study offers several ideas for further study on colonization and career choices for Africans. Possibilities include the following:

1. The present study can be replicated to study the perceptions of African students who are presently in Africa about the effects of colonization on their careers.
2. This study can be replicated to investigate the perceptions of only African professionals who are either in the U.S. or in any country of the First World, e.g., England, Canada, Germany, and France, concerning the impact of these countries on their careers.

3. This study can be replicated to study the perceptions of only African professionals who are in Africa concerning the effects of colonization on their careers.

4. Another study may be done to investigate only the social/psychological effects of colonization on Africans.

5. Further studies may help to develop a culturally sensitive career assessment measure for African students.

6. Similar areas of interest may include investigating the effects of the career development process for other countries colonized by other powers, such as the United States’ effect on Hawaii or Puerto Rico or the effects of the British influence on Japan.

The present study explored the perceptions of African students studying in the U.S. concerning the effects of colonization on career development and occupational choice. The results of this study revealed several important connections/effects of colonization and the career choice of Africans. This study suggests the need for further research into the effect of colonization on career development for Africans. These results also have implications for career counseling with African international students and for the training of therapists, career counselors, student personnel service officers, and those who are responsible for the welfare of African students in the U.S. Career counselors should be aware that there is a relationship between childhood environment, the influence of parents or significant others, and foreign
grants on the career decisions of Africans. Counselors should be aware of gender roles and career differences between African males and females studying in the U.S. Counselors should understand the stereotypical tendencies and prejudices that may play a role in how Africans perceive certain occupations. It is necessary to understand what motivates Africans in choosing careers, as well as understanding the impact of American values, culture, and social norms on Africans studying in the U.S. regarding their career choices. Career counselors need to be aware that African students in the U.S. come from different cultures and social and economic backgrounds, and are affected differently by the interplay of their early educational environment, family, and government, as well as colonization. International student advisers should be aware of the important transitional and parental roles they play in the lives of African students during their adjustment periods in the United States.

Counseling training programs should incorporate the African student’s career development process into all aspects of education, including career counseling and academic studies, as part of the multicultural counseling course.
Appendix A

Telephone/Personal Contact Guide to the Office of International Student Services
Below is the text of statement I will make to the Office of International Student Services during my contact with them.

“I am doing a research project on the effects of colonization on the career development and occupational choices of Africans studying in the United States. The participants of the study will be African students from countries that were colonized by the French and British. I am requesting that you provide me with the list and names of all African students attending your institutions. The names will only be used for the purpose of contacting the students to solicit their willingness to participate in the study. Should you have any concerns, please contact my Committee Chair, Dr. Robert Betz at (616) 387-5107.”
Appendix B

Letter of Approval From the Human Subjects
Institutional Review Board
Date: 2 December 1999

To: Robert Betz, Principal Investigator
    Augustine Bessong, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Sylvia Culp, Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number 99-11-08

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled "Effects of Colonization on the Career Development and Occupational Choices of African Students Studying in the U.S." has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: 2 December 2000
Appendix C

Confirmation Letter From the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board to Expand Research Participants

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Western Michigan University

Date: 24 February 2000

To: Robert Betz, Principal Investigator
   Augustine Bessong, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Sylvia Culp, Chair [Signature]

Re: Changes to HSIRB Project Number 99-11-08

This letter will serve as confirmation that the changes to your research project "Effects of Colonization on the Career Development and Occupational Choices of African Students Studying in the U.S." requested in your memo dated 14 February 2000 have been approved by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board.

The conditions and the duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: 2 December 2000

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Appendix D
Telephone/Personal Contact to Participants
Below is the text of the statement I will make to the students during my contact with them.

“I am doing a research project on the effects of colonization on the career development and occupational choices of Africans studying in the United States. I will be interviewing several students from Africa whose country was colonized by the French or British. I will then be transcribing the interview tapes and writing up a report about my findings. All information about you will remain confidential and anonymous. I will not be telling anyone who I interviewed and your names will not be mentioned in the written report. If it is permissible, I will also like to tape record our interview so that I don’t lose any of the information. You are free to turn off the machine at any time if you feel become uncomfortable. Would you be interested in participating in this study?”
Appendix E

Letter of Reminder to Participants
Dear Participant:

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. As we discussed, the purpose of this research is to understand the effect of colonization on the career development and occupational choices of African students studying in the United States.

I believe this study will contribute, and help to fill in, the limited knowledge base in the area of career development for Africans. It will also be helpful in assisting Africans who plan to study in the U.S. in making career decisions. I hope that participating in this interview will provide you an opportunity to reflect about yourself and your own career development process.

As we already agreed by telephone/and or during our personal contacts, the following indicates our meeting time and place for the interview. (date, date, time and place).

If you have any questions or need to change our interview time, please contact me at (my telephone number) or e-mail at (e-mail address).

Thank you again for your participation.

Augustine Bessong, M.S.
Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Western Michigan University
I have been invited to participate in a research project entitled "Effects of Colonization on the Career Development and Occupational Choices of African Students Studying in the United States." This research is intended to study the perceptions of African students concerning the effects of colonization on their career development and occupational choices and whether there are differences in career decisions among African students whose countries were colonized by Britain and/or France. This project is Augustine E. Bessong's dissertation research.

If I agree, I will be asked to participate in an interview with the researcher that will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The face-to-face interview will consist of a number of open-ended questions about my perceptions of the effects of colonization on my career development and occupational choices. The interview will be audiotaped. The tapes will be transcribed and reviewed in order for the researcher to better understand what I have said about the subject matter. I will not be identified on the written copy, and the tapes will be destroyed immediately after transcription. Some of the information I provide will be summarized and/or quoted in the study. I will also provide demographic information about myself, such as my gender, age, level of education, and employment status. The data I supply will be used for statistical purposes only. At no time during the study or after will anyone be able to identify me.

As in all research, there may be unforeseen risks to the participants. If an accidental injury occurs, appropriate emergency measures will be taken; however, no compensation or treatment will be made available to me except otherwise specified in this consent form. One potential risk of my participation in this project is that I may be upset by the content of the interview; however, Augustine E. Bessong is prepared to provide crisis counseling should I become significantly upset and to make a referral if I need further counseling about this topic. I will be responsible for the cost of therapy if I choose to pursue it.
My participation will be kept confidential. This means my name will not appear on any papers on which this information is recorded. The forms will all be coded, and Augustine E. Bessong will keep a separate master list with the names of participants and corresponding code numbers. Once the data are collected and analyzed, the master list will be destroyed. All other forms will be retained for three years in a locked area in a designated place at Western Michigan University Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology.

Two ways in which I may benefit from this activity are (1) I may gain some valuable insights about myself and my own career development process and (2) become more aware of the effects of colonization on my career development and occupational choices. This study may contribute to the limited knowledge base in the area of career development for Africans. The results of this research may assist other Africans who plan to study in the U.S., in making career decisions and helpful to institutions, counselors and those who work with African international students.

I may refuse to participate or quit at any time during the study without prejudice or penalty. If I have any questions or concerns about this study, I may contact Augustine Bessong at (706) 568-0048 or his adviser, Dr. Robert Betz at (616) 387-5107. I may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (616) 387-8293 or the Vice-President for Research (616) 387-8298 at Western Michigan University with any concerns that I have.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner on all pages. Subjects should not sign this document if the corner does not show a stamped date and signature.

My signature below indicates that I have read and/or had explained to me the purpose and requirements of the study and that I agree to participate.

Signature Date

Consent obtained by: Initials of researcher Date

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Appendix G

Interview Guides: Original and Revised
Original Interview Guide

I would like to begin by thanking you for participating in this study. I have generated a number of questions that will help me in exploring your perceptions about colonization, your career choice, and occupational development. These questions are just to get your perceptions. There is no right or wrong answer.

1. What are some of the values of England and/or France that have had an influence on your educational and vocational decisions and life aspirations?

2. How did you decide to come to the United States to study?

3. When you were in your country, what do you think motivated you in your career development and decisions?

4. Do you believe that your education in the U.S. has influenced your career in any way? If yes, please explain? If not, why not?

5. What is your opinion of how decided or undecided you were about what career to pursue when coming to study in America?

6. What is your opinion about your career decisions after arriving in the U.S.?

7. What is your experience with career counseling in your country?

8. What is your opinion about occupational choices and career decisions in your native land?

9. When you were a child growing up in your native land, what were things that stood out as you think about your career and/or educational goals?

10. What will influence your decision about whether to return to Africa or remain in the U.S.?

11. How does the decision to return to Africa or remain in the U.S. impact your career development and career decision making?

12. How does the decision to return to Africa or remain in the U.S. impact your identity?

13. Do you think that your present career decision was influenced by any family/peer pressures? In what ways/and how?

14. In your opinion, looking back at the people that influenced you, what advice did they give you concerning your career?

15. What family values do you think led to the decision in your career choice?
16. What roles, if any, do you think your government has played towards your career development and occupational choice?

17. What is your opinion about the impact of foreign scholarships/aid on your career?

18. How do you feel you are different in career decision making from your peers who never left Africa?

19. Do you feel you different from Americans regarding your career decisions? If yes, please explain?

20. In your opinion, is there a difference in career choices between males and females in your country? If yes, what would this difference be?

21. In your opinion, do you think that there is an impact on the effect of colonization in your country on your career development and occupational choice? If yes, what have been the effects?

22. Finally, are there other factors that influenced your career that you would like to mention?
Revised Interview Guide

I would like to begin by thanking you for participating in this study. I have generated a number of questions that will help me in exploring your perceptions about colonization, your career choice, and occupational development. These questions are just to get your perceptions. There is no right or wrong answer.

1. What are some of the values of England and/or France that have had an influence on your educational and vocational decisions?

2. What are some of the values of England and/or France that have had an influence on your life aspirations?

3. How did you decide to come to the United States to study?

4. When you were in your country, what do you think motivated you in your career development and decisions?

5. Do you believe that your education in the U.S. has influenced your career in any way? If yes, please explain? If not, why not?

6. What is your opinion of how decided or undecided you were about what career to pursue when coming to study in America?

7. What is your opinion about your career decisions after arriving in the U.S.?

8. What is your experience with career counseling in your country?

9. What is your opinion about occupational choices and career decisions in your native land?

10. When you were a child growing up in your native land, what were things that stood out as you think about your career and/or educational goals?

11. How does the decision to return to Africa or remain in the U.S. impact your career development and career decision making?

12. How does the decision to return to Africa or remain in the U.S. impact your identity?

13. Do you think that your present career decision was influenced by any family member and how?

14. Do you think that your present career decision was influenced by any peer pressure? In what ways and how?

15. In your opinion, looking back at the people that influenced you, what advice did they give you concerning your career?
16. What family values do you think led to the decision in your career choice?

17. What roles, if any, do you think your government has played towards your career development and occupational choice?

18. What is your opinion about the impact of foreign scholarships /aid on your career?

19. How do you feel you are different in career decision making from your peers who never left Africa?

20. Do you feel you different from Americans regarding your career decisions? If yes, please explain?

21. In your opinion, is there a difference in career choices between males and females in your country? If yes, what would this difference be?

22. In your opinion, do you think that there is an impact on the effect of colonization in your country on your career development and occupational choice? If yes, what have been the effects?

23. Finally, are there other factors that influenced your career that you would like to mention?
Appendix H

Demographic Information Form
Demographic Form

Please check or write in the spaces provided corresponding to your best answer.

1. What is your gender: _____ Male _____ Female

2. Your age range: _____ 18-23 _____ 24-29 _____ 30-35
   _____ 36-41 _____ 42-47 _____ 48 or above

3. Level of Study: _____ Undergraduate
   _____ Graduate
   _____ Other (Please specify): ______________________

4. Field of Study: _____ Science
   _____ Arts
   _____ Other (Please specify): ______________________

5. List two occupations you would like to pursue after leaving school:
   a. ____________________
   b. ____________________

6. Major influence(s) in making above choices
   _____ Family _____ Government _____ Foreign sponsor
   _____ Self _____ Other (please specify) ______________________

7. Who is responsible for your education in the U.S.?
   _____ Family _____ Government
   _____ Foreign sponsor _____ Self
   _____ other (please specify): ______________________

8. Your country of origin: ______________________
9. What was your principal colonial influence?
   ______ French
   ______ English
   ______ Other (Please specify) ________________________________

10. Did you ever receive career counseling in your native country?
    ______ Yes ______ No

11. Have you received career counseling in the United States?
    ______ Yes ______ No

12. Length of stay in the U.S.:
    ______ 0-5 years ______ 6-10 years
    ______ 11-15 years ______ 16 years or above

13. Education:
    ______ Finished high school before coming to the U.S.
    ______ Finished 1st degree in your country before coming to the U.S.

14. Current Employment:
    ______ Not Employed
    ______ Employed: (specify your area of specialty)

15. How likely is it that you might return or remain permanently in the U.S. after your education?
    ______ Definitely not ______ Very unlikely
    ______ Somewhat unlikely ______ Not sure
    ______ Somewhat likely ______ Very likely
    ______ Definitely will

16. Please indicate your family status in your country particularly from the viewpoint of economic class.
    ______ Upper ______ Upper middle
    ______ Middle ______ Lower middle
    ______ Lower
Appendix I

Permission Letter to Interview Students
Attending Fort Valley State University
November 23, 1999

Mr. Augustine E. Beesong
Doctoral Student
5130 Yosemite Drive
Columbus, Georgia 31907

Dear Mr. Beesong:

In reference to your letter dated November 22, 1999, requesting permission to interview African Students at Fort Valley State University (FVSU) as part of your dissertation project entitled "Effects of Colonization on Career Development and Occupational Choices of Africans Studying in the United States," I'm pleased that you chose Fort Valley State University (FVSU) as one of the sites of your study.

Approval is granted for the interviews to begin by mid December, 1999 to December, 2000. It is my understanding that students' participation shall be confidential and anonymous. A student may discontinue from participating at any time without prejudice or penalty. I understand that participants, during interview, may experience some uneasiness about colonization, but other risks are highly unlikely.

Congratulations on your doctoral candidacy at Western Michigan University! My doors are always open and if this office can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (912) 825-6291.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Cynthia D. Sellers, Ph.D.
Vice President for Student Affairs

CDS/csd
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