

Kinship and International Migration Intentionalities of Youths

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Abstract

While studies exist on international migration intentionalities in Africa, very few have sufficiently examined their kinship interfaces among the youths. Although, Africa remains a major migrant sending continent, the role of kinship in emigration is still poorly understood especially relative to the youths who are the most migratory. It is against this background that this article examined the intersectionalities of kinship and international migration in Nigeria with specific attention to youths' ultimate actions informing intentions. The article adopted social action theory and the push and pull framework as its theoretical framework. The research design was descriptive and explorative. A total of 300 questionnaire was distributed through simple random sampling. 20 in-depth interviews were also conducted with purposively selected youths. The relationship between kinship and international migration intentionalities was found to be positive due to the previous and current kinship migration patterns, realities and expectations that have become normatively sanctioned within youths' kinship networks. Hence, the kinship outcomes on migration co-relate with youths' belief that Nigeria's (like many other African countries') social institutions are dysfunctional and infrastructural systems are opportunistically disabling for their values, goals and aspirations. Overall, the migration intentions and believed functionalities of emigrations among the youths are traceable to the subjective interpretations of migration values and outcomes within subsisting kinship systems usually predating and external to the youths.

Keywords

Kinship, international migration intentionalities, ethnicity and migration, youths in Nigeria

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Introduction

Relationships are central to humans as they traverse spaces across time. These relationships are of different types depending on context of actions. While some of these relationships are created others are given and beyond individual choices. Kinship relational choice is beyond the individual and in Africa, kinship ranks among the most important relationships as identities are formed along kinship lines and opportunities and gains are appropriated along the lines (Akanle and Adesina, 2017a). Kinship determines existences and worldview by socialisation, sanctions and rewards. Kin not only give identities, they set goals, aspirations and expectations and associate norms and values with moderate peoples' course of actions and orientations overtime (Giddens, 2009). Roles, statuses and expectations are set within kinship networks and even when these conflict, social actors are expected to balance the conflicts without jeopardising kinship norms and values (Massey, Durand and Nolan, 2002).

Kinship is very strategic in society as an instrument of social order and as enablers of actions and social systems ancestry/decent, marriage, adoption. Even though kinship is not immutable, it is possible to observe stable existences in African kinship (Akanle and Adesina, 2017b) and this is why it is impossible to understand developments in Africa without understanding kinship and kinship networks even with increasing urbanisation, modernisation, industrialisation and globalisation. Kinship therefore continues to be important in Africa because of its organisational capabilities and this is why it is important to continue to engage the possible roles of kinship in understanding international migrations from Africa. This is because even when Africans migrate internationally, kinship may play important roles that must be understood to better manage migrations and outcomes- including gains and backlashes (Akanle and Olutayo, 2009).

Kinship and its networks of related actions have capacity to determine international migration intentions and actions and this particularly likely to be so among the youths because kinship is very influential in determining and moderating orientations and actions including (chain) international migration ones (Massey, Durand and Nolan, 2002). People usually construct and weigh consequences of actions against existing kinship yardsticks in manners that suggests *what my previous generations and older siblings did to succeed is most likely good for me*. And this include international migration since when kinship systems determine an instituted course of action as effectual, they are indeed effectual in their consequences and the drive actions (Andersson, 2014; Arifeen, 2013). For instance, once a kinship system construct and institute international migration as a major survival and development mode, kin are socialised towards that orientation and successes and failures are judged against the instituted standard. Kin therefore create actions that will enable them conform even though deviation may also be possible in some instance. In cases where kinship norms and values are successful however, deviation becomes the exception rather than the rule. Kinship also creates support

systems that allow continuous migrations to desired destination as established by the network. Such support systems include migration information, migration socialisation, provision of funds for migration and creation of survival success structure at destination (Massey, Durand and Nolan, 2002).

Despite modernisation, kinship still structure many aspects of social life (Kottak, 2003). Kinship oils society's cohesiveness and equilibrium in Africa through promotion of human generational continuity, support, belongingness, identity, security and survival (Mason, 2008; Mason and Tipper, 2008). Migration intentions of youths have not received proper attention in the literature. Many authors have focused on migration outcomes and ramifications in terms of remittances, welfare, national income, international relations, gender, health, rights and return (Akanle and Adesina, 2017a; Akanle and Adesina, 2017b; Fonta *et al.*, 2015; Dzingirai, Mutopo and Landau, 2014; Lu, 2012; Mason, 2008; Mason and Tipper, 2008; de Haas, 2007; Comaroff and Comaroff, 1989; Comaroff and Comaroff, 1987) with little attention to how kinship along networks and chain migration actually shape mentality and actions and subsequently drive continuous outward flows beginning from intentions of youths who are the barometer of migration realities.

Kinship continues to be relevant in Africa because most Africans are linked effectively and relate within kinship realities, cultural and social developments (Akanle and Olutayo, 2012). In the same vein, kinship may not be without playing active roles in migration interests and decision making given its centrality in shaping worldviews and self-consciousness. Kinship is the bearing that constructs and structures different strategic aspects of lives and it may be difficult to understand Africa development trajectories including migration without considering the roles of kinship particularly when the youths are involved. Regardless of the level of development of African societies, kinship connections play important roles in many areas of social life.

Kinship allegiances motivate individuals and groups to network and reflexively enable in-group and out-group resources annexation and optimisations. Kinship relates along kin solidarity and this is made possible by instituting kinship norms, values and orientations that moderation intentions and actions (Schaefer, 2003). Kinship survival depends on how well kin solidarises and expands to appropriate gains and expand over many years and generations beyond the immediate (source please). Kin firm and form networks for economic, social, political, cultural and psychological gains (Abiona, 2005; Scupio, 2000; Ajayi, 1998) and migration is a major development and welfare as kin now relate with for kinship survival (Akanle and Adesina, 2017a; Akanle and Adesina, 2017b; Gabriel, 2015; Akanle and Olutayo, 2012: 171-172). Many kinship networks have instituted structures around international migration in faces of economic challenges to drive social mobility in societies where international migrations have become *sure leeway* out of poverty due to remittances' impacts

on household welfare and socioeconomic quality of life (Cuong, 2008; Kottak, 2003).

Kinship plays active roles in structuring obligations and interests of members in the networks and sets standards for socioeconomic and cultural understandings and interests within psychological systems (Haviland, 1974). Hence, when crises erupt, people leverage on kinship networks for legal, social, religious and economic supports. Problems preventions are also not without kinship inputs beginning from socialisation processes of every kin from birth. Migration orientations and conscientisations within kinship systems thus start early through socialisation of every member. Kinship not only drives members towards networks' goals but also regulate their intentions and actions including those having to do with international migrations. A common realisation in sub-Saharan Africa today is that international migration promotes development especially as it affects people's capacity to appropriate opportunities across boundaries (Akanle and Adesina, 2017a; Anyanwu, 1999). International migration is therefore generally seen as positive approach to household, individual and national development which kin now strategise to leverage on for welfare gains.

While many migrations from Africa could be involuntary, a significant proportion is voluntary and economic. Even those which sometimes appear involuntary are somewhat voluntary with the toga of economic motivations caused by the push and pull factors of infrastructural decay, unemployment, poverty, political instability at origin and better facilities and economic opportunities at destination. Social, economic, political and environmental factors propel behaviours, attitudes, worldviews, intentions and orientations as responsive interactions and reactions to pull factors at destinations, usually America, Europe and generally better-off developed societies. These actions and reactions within push and pull factors become very easy nowadays with the aid of technology particularly smartphones and internet that expose youths and willing kin to critical appraisal of push factors and access to pull factors right on the palms. Once kin have access to appraisal outcomes of push factors and pull factors, they process these rationally with the aid of kinship norms, values, set goals and expectations. They then form intentions and subsequently, like kinship sanctioned actions as outcomes of conformity.

Youths are particularly ambitious, energetic and daring relative to desired life course. Once outcomes of pull and push factors analyses are unfavourable for origin, emigration intentions tend to be high and likely action is voluntary emigration (Scupio, 2000). In the order of social action, youths tend to be more critical in analysing social forces and they act once there is incoherence in expected social factors that are important for valued aspirations. Youths attach subjective meanings to kinship and international migration these meanings attached determine eventual intentions and migration decisions they make based on the results of social facts they have gathered particularly relative to push and pull factors interactions. This article therefore examine the interface of kinship and international migration intentionalities among the youths with case study from Nigeria. Indicative research questions include; what

are the international migration intentionalities of the youths? What are the reasons for the international migration intentionalities? What is the relationship between ethnic background and international migration? Among others. This article covers the implication of kinship network/ties for international migration intentionalities of the youths.

Methodology

This article was based on a research conducted in Ibadan, Nigeria in 2012. Ibadan is the capital of Oyo State, South-western part of Nigeria. Ibadan is a traditional yet modernising one with appreciable cosmopolitanism. It is also the largest really indigenous city in sub-Saharan Africa. While Ibadan is historically known for warfare, trading, agriculture, administration and handiwork, it has evolved over the years to be prominent in civil service, private investments and tertiary education. While Ibadan is modernising with significant international migration appeals and technological innovations, traditional elements remain appreciably intact signalling kinship resilience. There are over eleven higher institutions in Ibadan punctuating the youth technological social spaces in Ibadan (Akanle, Adesina and Adebayo, 2015). These youth technological social spaces correlate to moderate international migrations trajectory against the background kinship resilience and existences. This research was largely exploratory and cross sectional.

Both primary and secondary data were gathered. Secondary data were gathered through documents, learned journal articles, reliable internet sites and conference documents. Primary data were gathered through qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. For the quantitative data, 300 copies of semi-structured questionnaires were administered on randomly selected youths in the age bracket 18-29. Qualitative method was also triangulated with the quantitative. Thus, ten in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with youths to complement data gathered quantitatively. The qualitative interview guide was unstructured to accommodate original worldviews of interviewees. Data analysis was by data type. Questionnaire was analysed with the aid of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) while IDIs were analysed through content analysis. Ethical considerations of anonymity, non-maleficence, protection from harm, and informed consent were strictly adhered to.

Data and Findings

Table 1 below presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The table indicates that 46% of the respondents are male, while 53.3% are female. In other words, majority of the respondents are female. Age of the respondents shows that majority of the respondents are between the age of 21-25 years, that is about 66.6%, 22% of the respondent are below 20 years, 10% are 26 and above, while about 1.3% did not respond. Ethnic group of the

respondents indicates that half of the population studied are Yoruba 50%, 28.3% are Igbos, while Niger Delta and Hausa constitute 15% and 6% respectively. Religion of the respondents indicates that half of the respondents are Christians 50%, 31.6% are Muslims, while 16.6% practise traditional religion. The family type of respondents indicates that 50% of the respondents are from Nuclear family, 35% are from single parent family, while 13.3% are from extended family type. The educational attainment of the respondents indicates that majority of the respondents (98.5%) have tertiary education.

Table 1: Distribution of the socio-demographical characteristics of the respondents

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of respondents	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	138	46.0
	Female	160	53.3
	No response	2	0.6
Age	<20	66	22.0
	21-25	200	66.6
	26 and above	30	10.0
	No response	4	1.3
Ethnicity	Yoruba	150	50.0
	Igbo	85	28.3
	Hausa	18	6.0
	Niger Delta	45	15.0
	No response	2	0.6
Religion	Christianity	150	50.0
	Islam	95	31.6
	Traditional	50	16.6
	No response	5	1.6
Family Type	Nuclear	150	50.0
	Extended	40	13.3
	Single Parent	105	35.0
	No response	5	1.6
Educational attainment	Tertiary	296	98.5
	No response	4	1.3

Table 2 below is the distribution of the youths who wish to travel (emigrate) out of the country. Findings from the table shows that majority (90%) of the respondents wish to travel out of the country. Only 8.3% of the youths indicated that they do not wish to travel out of the country, while 1.6% did not give their response.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by intention to emigrate

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	270	90.0
No	25	8.3
indifference	5	1.6
Total	300	100.0

There is high consistency between quantitative and qualitative data. For instance, in-depth interviews conducted indicated the youth’s intention to travel out of the country because of the situation of the country. One of the interviewees opined that:

Everything about this Nigeria system is poor and cause the intention to travel out of Nigeria. Think of the economic, political, educational and social institutions, which do not encourage one to wish to remain in Nigeria but to travel out and experience a better life.

Another interviewee observed:

The political system through the government, the political leaders are wicked selfish and unwholesome that we citizens who are subjects are forgotten and are not provided for. No plan by the government for us but to them the custodian of our collective wealth. Well I have no option but to travel out when I graduate.

Table 3 below shows the respondents’ distribution by intended duration of stay abroad if they emigrate. The findings indicate that 43.3% of the respondents intend to stay permanently, 53.3% of the respondents indicated that their stay abroad will be temporary, while 3.4% do not respond.

Table 3: Intended duration of stay upon emigration¹

	Frequency	Percentage
Permanent stay	130	43.3
Temporary stay	160	53.3
No Response	10	3.4
Total	300	100

Table 4 below indicates the respondents’ choice of destination countries. Majority of the respondents (53.3%) intend to emigrate to the United States of

¹ It is noteworthy that even for those youths who initially indicated they do not intent to emigrate, they later answered follow up questions on intended duration of stay of abroad, choice of destination country and so on.

America (USA), 33.3% wish to emigrate to the United Kingdom (UK), just as 10.1% intend to emigrate to Canada, while 3.3% of the respondents did not indicate their choice of destination countries.

Table 4: Intended destination countries

	Frequency	Percentage
USA	160	53.3
UK	100	33.3
Canada	30	10.1
No Response	10	3.3
Total	300	100

These destination countries are very popular among Nigerians as majority of emigrants from the country prefer these nations. Common reasons for the preferences are language, history, strength of currencies (foreign exchange) and available existing kinship networks as international chain migration enablers (Akanle and Adesina, 2017a; Togunde and Osagie, 2009; Uduku, 2002). The *lingua franca* of Nigeria is English and all the preferred countries are English speaking with the exception of Canada that is bilingual (English and French). Hence, there is existing long history of migration exchanges between USA and U.K particularly as Britain colonised Nigeria. USA, U.K and Canada are among the countries with the strongest currencies in the world in terms of international convertibility (Akanle and Adesina, 2017a). This is very important in determining migration course and intentionalities as most migrants from Nigeria are economic migrants. Due to decades of Nigerians' emigrations to these countries, there exist strong kinship networks to aid chain emigration, settlement at destination, socialisation and profitability of movements at destination. These are very crucial factors in migration decisions and actions. Moreover, the table 5 below gives the breakdown of reasons for international migration intentionalities of the youths and findings show that 76.7% of the respondent intends to migrate because of general poor system in Nigeria and better economic opportunities abroad, 20% intend to travel because of educational pursuit, while 3.3% wish to travel for leisure.

Table 5: Distribution of the Reasons for Migration intentions

	Frequency	Percentage
For better economic opportunities	230	76.7
For leisure/recreation	10	3.3
For educational pursuit	60	20.0
Total	300	100

In-depth interviews conducted show that better economic opportunity is a major reason for youths' emigration intention. According an interviewee who captured modal perspective:

When you travel to a better international society with better economic activities you can have better access to be involved in the numerous economic activities and become more economically empowered... This is one of the gains of international migration.

An interviewee maintained:

Traveling out of the country to a better economic opportunity makes you to progress from our poor background to wealthy background.

Another interviewee posited:

Look! The whole system is not good at all. See transportation, see sport, see education, what about youth development, religious crisis, agriculture and the legal system. All of these are caused by the number one factor which is the political system controlled by the dictatorial and inefficiently insensitive political leaders.

According to another interviewee:

When you travel out and school in a country with better academic facilities you become more learned and you are seen as world academic and industrial gem rather than a local champion.

From table 6 below, information about what influences the youths' migration intentions is observable. The role of kinship is clear as over 68 percent of the youths maintained previous emigrations within their kinship networks have definitive impacts on their current emigration intentions. This is consistent with the findings of Togunde and Osagie (2009) where previous emigrants are seen as *icon of progress* in their kinship networks and communities. This have major influence on chain migrations not only in the community but also in the kinship structures (see also Akanle and Adesina, 2017). Also, 30% of the youths insisted their intention to emigrate is due to peer group influence while 1.7% of the respondents are indifferent.

Table 6: Influential factors of youths' emigration intentions

	Frequency	Percentage
Kinship influence	205	68.3
Peer group influence	90	30.0
Indifference	5	1.7
Total	300	100

In-depth interviews conducted confirmed that youths intend to emigrate because of intentions to better their lives and acquire international experiences necessary for aspirations' fulfilment traceable to peer influences and kinship networks values:

When you travel you acquire more experience but if you travel internationally you acquire more international experience.

Another respondent posit that:

Traveling is education when it is domestic but when it is transnational it becomes international orientation and education. So everybody should learn to travel out at least ones in his or her life time.

Another interviewee gave concise kinship roles:

In our family, traveling abroad is a norm. My grandparents, parents, older siblings and others in our extended family have always travelled abroad and this has affected our success. In our family, traveling is a must because it is also seen as living up to expectation of the family. In fact, if you do not travel, you are seen as a failure and breaking family expectations of many years. It is not just about traveling though but the success that comes with it because all those that travelled before were successful. So, it is a must for me too to travel otherwise I have failed.

Data was gathered on ethnic group and migration. This is very important because Nigeria is a multi-ethnic group and ethnic background may play a role in migration intentionalities. That is, it is important to know which ethnic group emigrate most by youths' perception perhaps this play a role in current migration intentions. As shown in table 7 below, 43.3% of the respondents opine that Yoruba people are the most internationally migratory ethnic group in Nigeria, 23.3% claims it is the Igbo that travel most, 18.3% said it is Hausa people that travel most, 13.3% opine that it is Niger Delta people that travel most, while 1.8% of the respondents are indifferent.

Table 7: The Distribution perceived most internationally migratory ethnic group in Nigeria

	Frequency	Percentage
Yoruba	130	43.3
Igbo	70	23.3
Hausa	55	18.3
Niger Delta	40	13.3
No Response	5	1.8
Total	300	100.0

The purpose of emigration by ethnic group was also measured from the perspectives of the youths. From table 8 below, the purpose for which the most travelled ethnic group travel out of the country was indicated and the finding from the table shows that 48.3% of the respondents perceive emigration to be due to education, 41.7% believe emigration was due to economic opportunities, 8.3% believe is due to leisure, while 1.7% is indifferent.

Table 8: The purpose for which the most travelled Ethnic Group emigrate

	Frequency	Percentage
For educational purpose	145	48.3
For economic opportunities	125	41.7
For leisure	25	8.3
No Response	5	1.7
Total	300	100.0

Discussion and Conclusion

Migrations from Africa remain development issues. This is because when migrants move they move with the intention to promote development from the perspective of capacity to appropriate societal opportunities across spaces and time (Anyanwu, 1999). Kinship however continue to be very important in shaping development, capacity and worldviews- not only relative to migration but beyond. According to Haviland (1974), kinship system structures the obligations and interests of kin and give direction for sharing understandings and development expectations. Even when individuals have personal desires and expectations, they are not outrightly divorceable from original kinship dictates and this is particularly so when international migration is involved (Akanle and Adesina, 2017a; Akanle and Adesina, 2017b). Often, when Africans migrate internationally, it is for the welfare benefits of not only the migrants but the entire kinship networks' (Akanle and Olutayo, 2012).

Overwhelming majority of the youths intend to emigrate throughout the period of their productive years even though they may return at old age to retire at origin. The most preferred destination countries are in the North and they include the United States of America, United Kingdom and Canada due to

their history of migrations, existing kinship networks, currencies convertibility and language. Even when migrants from Africa are beginning to try other destinations including in Africa and Asia due to difficult migration systems in the North (Akanle, Alemu and Adesina, 2016), the North still remains the most preferred destination due to comparative advantages identified above. Even when African migrants re-route towards Asia, for instance, they face unfamiliar cultural challenges, language barrier and weaker currencies problems. Within the prisms of push and pull factors of migration and Social Action theory, youths intend to emigrate due to poor infrastructural and opportunity systems of Africa which serve as push factors as well as results/outcomes of analyses of subjective interpretations of migration actions.

Perceived opportunities abroad serve as the pull factors in the migration structures. Such pull factors include stronger currencies, familiar languages, existing kinship supports and educational as well as economic opportunities. Within the tradition of Social Action theory, the way youths interpret values of migration opportunities ultimately determine migration orientation and eventual actions. This is particularly so when there is positive interpretative understanding of migration elements relative to subsisting kinship trajectories. Kinship plays influential roles in migration intentions of the youths who recourse to original kinship dictates to form migration intentions and possible outcomes. The Yoruba people are seen as the most profound relative to migration intentions and their main reason for migration intention is educational pursuit. This is however not to suggest that the Yoruba people do not migrate for other purposes or that other ethnic groups do not have intention to migrate for education and other reasons.

In this article, we have explored the interfaces of kinship and migration intentions of youths in Nigeria. We selected Nigeria for the study because Nigerians are among the most migratory in Africa and the country has the largest number of youths on the continent since it is also the most populous at about 200 million people (Akanle, Alemu and Adesina, 2016). While migration is demographically selective, the youths are the most migratory given their long term aspirations to succeed, youthfulness and motivated drives to explore even in distant places- thus, the scientific adoption of the youths as study population to better understand migration orientations in Africa. Findings from this study confirm overwhelming majority of youths have intentions to emigrate from their country and kinship plays a huge role in driving and sustaining this migration intentions. Youths are borne and socialised within strong kinship networks that determine current and later life decisions to migrate and succeed.

Most of the youths' intentions to migrate rests heavily on the stories of success institutionalised within the kinship structures and systems of the youths from which deviation is not expected and actually difficult because once migration values and ethos are successfully inculcated and internalised, they become efficacious in determining migration courses. Kinship is therefore still important in understanding migration intentions and outcomes in Africa as

found in this article. It is therefore important to continue to interrogate kinship to sufficiently understand emigration patterns from Africa and the possibility of optimising and/or stemming/aggravating the migrations depending on the states and policy objectives

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