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Trans-local migration in Southwest Nigeria: Insights from Migrants Releasing Households

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Abstract

Migration has been the way of life in Nigeria, with many households reported as sending households. On the other hand, this study examined responses from key informants in areas of origin of migrants in a major state in southwest Nigeria. We sought to find out the extent and types of relationships between migrants and areas of origin; as well as the challenges faced by migrants in interacting back with their sending households. Finding revealed that migration is largely trans-local, with several levels of interaction between areas of origin and areas of destination. However, the main form of trans-local interaction was monetary, with emerging patterns of social support and innovative ideas. The policy implications of the study suggest the need to create opportunities both in the areas of origin and destination in order to harness the developmental potentials of trans-local migration..

Key words: *Trans-local, migration, area of origin, area of destination*

1. INTRODUCTION

Migration has been viewed as a form of survival and livelihood over the years leading to development of communities and patterns of development in the human race (Clark, 2020). However, further from being permanent, recent literature shows that there is a great deal of interaction between areas of origin and destinations for migrants across the world (Ratha et al., 2013). The reasons for migration have been linked to environmental, social, political, and economic factors. In the past years, migration has been on the rise in developing countries (Castelli, 2018).

In West Africa, migration has been seen as a fulcrum for economic development, and historical records show migration of all forms (Mberu and Ponguo, 2010). This has been mainly in form of remittances from migrants back to their places of origin. These remittances have formed a large proportion of revenues into different countries over the years (Adjei et al., 2020; Tapsoba, T. A., & Hubert, 2022).

3. FINDINGS

The findings from the study revealed that outmigration was a regular phenomenon in the study area. The main reason for such outmigration was to seek for employment outside of the farming communities and to get an education. (Figure 2). The highest educational attainment in Itesiwaju LGA would have been a secondary education; thus, aspiration for higher education would mean migrating out of the village to neighbouring LGAs within the state, or outside the state.

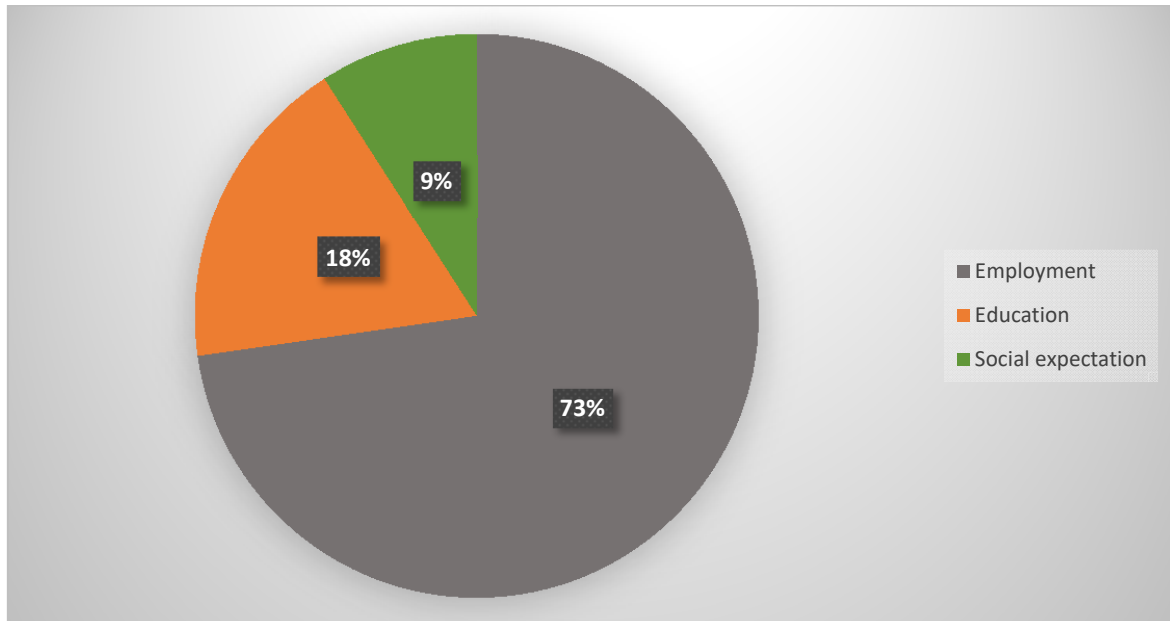


Figure 2: Reasons for migration out of Areas of Origin

However, there seems to be a social expectation tied to migrating from the communities to larger communities at certain periods within a resident's life.

“In Komu, it seems like a normal thing to leave the town once you finish secondary school or after learning a skill”.

Main Areas of Destination

Households in areas of origin may have multiple migrants, and thus there may be more than a single area of destination for their household members. The response on main areas of destination (Figure 3) were however larger towns both within and outside the state. Considering the reasons for migrating, this result is acceptable as movement to larger towns may increase the opportunities to gain higher education; and the hope for more lucrative forms of employment.

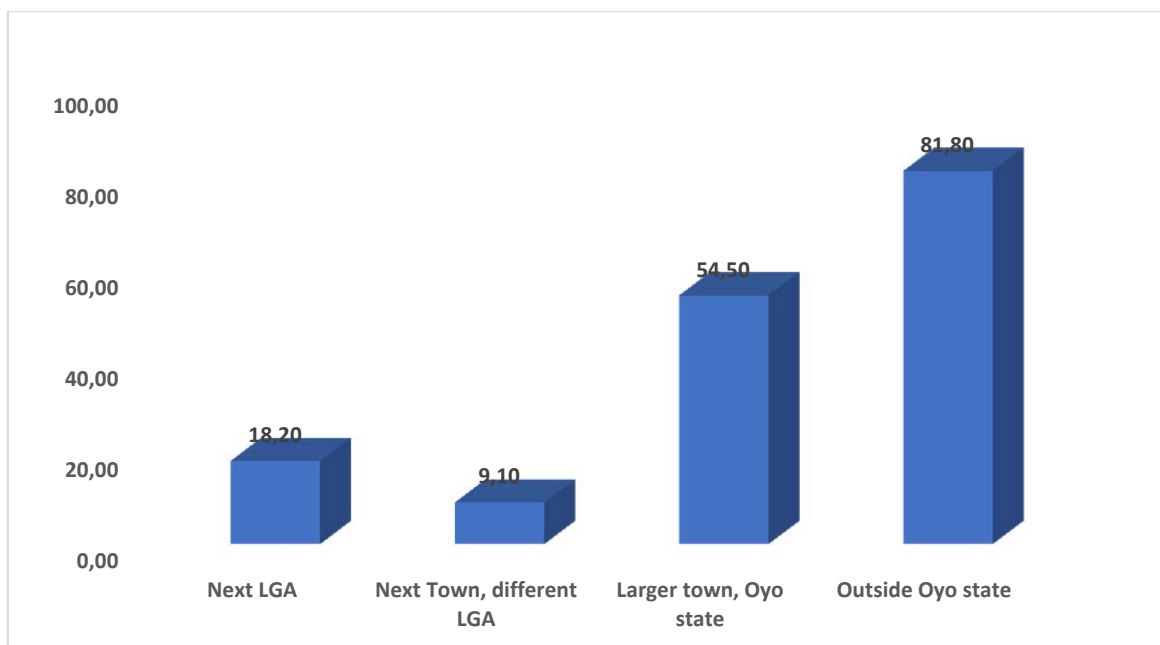


Figure 3: Mean Areas of Destination

Extent of Flows between Area of Origin and Areas of Destination

Responses to the question on the extent to which flows occur between areas of origin and destination revealed average two-way flows. This may raise concerns as to the level at which labour is being depleted at the origin without commensurate returns from the migrants.

- *There is a group in diaspora in Igbojaiye, but the impact is very low. The woman in charge was contacted, she collects money from members in diaspora and then does a project at the area of origin, but we are not too sure of the impact because nobody attested to being a beneficiary.*

Further investigation also reveals that migrants may depend on their sending households for a number of years before they are well integrated into their areas of destination and hence gain the ability to also send to back to their origin household.

- *Most migrant almost don't send anything home because they are also struggling financially in their area of destination.*
- *A lot of them don't have what it takes to survive in such places; most are still being sent food*

The constraints to flows back to the areas of origin is the result of a number of factors (see constraints faced by migrants). However, the extent of flows is determined by Reasons for leaving, duration of absence from the area of origin, capacity to obtain employment, as well as type of employment in the areas of destination.

Dimensions of Flows

In Figure 4, the main types of flows are monetary in nature. This reflects the classical remittance structure drawn from various migration studies. Monetary remittances have been shown as important income flows for many homes in developing economies. These monetary remittances have been used for consumption and in some cases for investment in rural based (especially agricultural) activities.

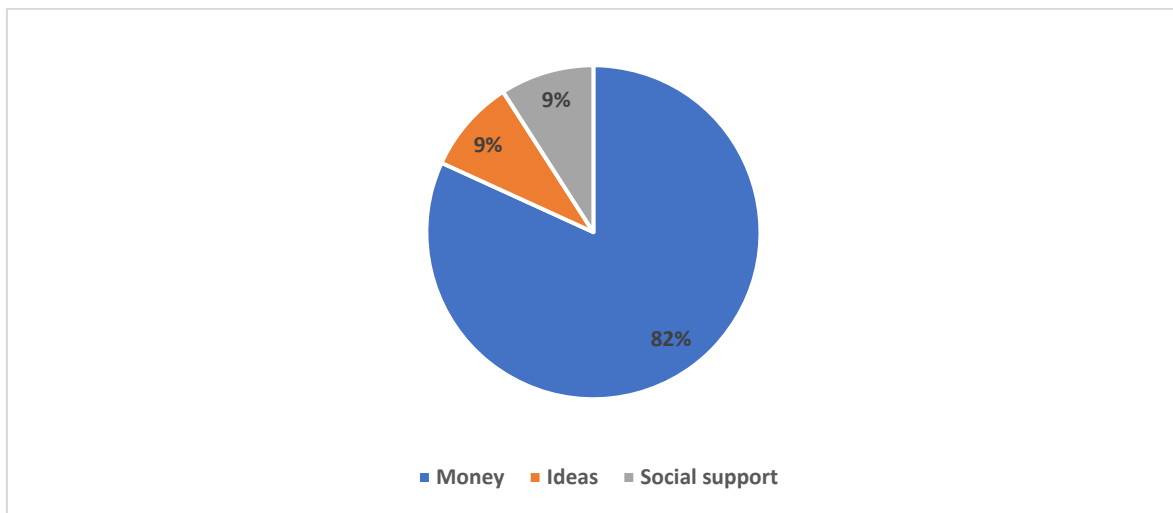


Figure 4: Dimensions of flows between Areas of Origin and Destination

However, beyond monetary flows, there are emerging flows which support the concept of trans-locality. These are the transfer and exchange of ideas and other social support to the areas of origin. The thesis being that innovative ideas could be exchanged with areas of origin to improve on their productive activities. These intangible transfers may have more sustained impacts on areas of origin than consumption-based remittances. In fact, targeted remittances for agricultural activities will benefit the sending households when combined with transfer of knowledge of improved practices on current practices.

Social support in form of market linkages and links to other commodity chain actors may also be important in driving the economies of the areas of origin. This support, though intangible, may provide a multiplier effect on existing rural based activities.

- *Some of the farmers have a link to supply the starch company in Ado Awaye through a chief and some selected friends who came from the town*

However, outmigration from such agrarian communities may tend to leave out agriculture as an employment option for many migrants. There seems to be a “moving out” process in the agricultural system of the country. An increase in the number of years of education and educational attainment may prevent a local migrant from returning to agriculture as he once knew it.

- *Most do not appreciate the informal skills gotten freely in agriculture which will have benefitted the area of origin in terms of opportunities such as output market as most of them are artisans and traders.*

Constraints faced by Translocal Migrants

It has been established that many trans-local migrants are limited in the extent to which they are able to interact with their areas of origin in terms of flows. These have been attributed mainly to lack of information about the economic conditions of the areas of destination. Thus, there may be low level of preparedness for the realities of areas of destination. This coupled with low capacity for high valued employment opportunities may in fact increase the economic burden of such migrants back to the area of origin.

4. POLICY IMPLICATION

The findings reveal areas in which policy can improve the process of trans-local migration such that it becomes a means for cross-development between areas of origin and destination. Chief among this is the provision of institutions that enable human capital building in areas of origin. This would create a critical mass of skilled migrants with the ability to productively engage in higher valued labour markets in the areas of destination.

The social expectations that drive migration in agrarian communities has grave consequences for farm labour in such communities. There is a need to encourage agricultural production with adequate infrastructure and markets, such that youth are able to productively engage in agriculture without the need to seek employment outside their communities.

5. CONCLUSION

Migration is a norm in Nigeria, and especially from rural and agricultural based communities. This study sought to gain insights from the points of view of areas of origin on the extent of trans locality of the migration patterns, the dimensions of flows as well as the constraints to successful migration by the migrants.

The findings revealed high level of outmigration, with emergent patterns suggesting it is socially expected for individuals to move to the town after a certain age. However, the search for employment and education were the dominant reasons for migration in the first place. The main dimension of flows is

monetary, with limited flows of intangible innovations; which could have sustained impacts on the areas of origin.

Policy implications are tailored towards providing equal opportunities in areas of origin and destination such that trans-local migration would be beneficial to both parties.

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