

Examining the Role Of Networks in Conflict-Induced Migration in Bawku

Ebenezer Goodman Ashie Nikoi^{1*}

Isaac Kwamena Arthur¹

Mumuni Yakubu Nambe²

Abstract

Conflict-induced migration has received extensive attention, but little remains known about the role of social networks in the patterns of migration during conflicts and peace times in the Ghanaian context. This study examined the use of social networks for migration during the conflict and peace time. The aim was to understand migrants' experiences in and out of Bawku, and to offer a comparative perspective. The mixed method approach was employed to survey 180 respondents in Bawku. Additionally, 80 relatives of the selected respondents were contacted and surveyed. Also, 24 respondents were recruited for three focus group discussions. The survey data was analysed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented using tables of frequencies and charts, while the framework analysis was used for the qualitative data. The study revealed that migrants' decisions were motivated by strong ties to family and friends in both the origin and destination areas. Respondents who did not migrate lacked networks outside Bawku, rather had strong family ties in Bawku. However, there were instances where networks failed to explain migrants' destination decisions. For return migrants, the motivating factors transcended strong family ties to include education and employment ties. While this paper extends studies on conflict-induced migration by introducing the theoretical framework of networks, it was narrow in scope. Future research should therefore include categories of migrants and how networks affect their activities. This paper should be considered as a starting point in the analysis of the role of networks in conflict-induced migration in Bawku.

Key words: network, migration, conflict, Bawku, Upper East Region

¹Department of Geography & Resource Development, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Ghana

²Bawku Municipal Assembly, Bawku, Upper East, Ghana

*Corresponding author's email: enikoi@ug.edu.gh

Introduction

Conflict is an inherent part of human society (Massey and Miller, 2018) and helps in the establishment of group identity and development of new rules and laws. Conflict can be construed as the consequence of the pursuit of incompatible goals by different people or groups (Mengistu, 2015). Opposing factions often act under the guise of institutions such as family, clan, tribe (ethnic group), language, regional and nation state affiliations (Deng *et al.*, 1996). Violent acts associated with conflicts are often direct, indirect, repressive and alienating, and in some cases, politically motivated (Raleigh, 2014). Conflicts in countries like Syria, Nigeria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Somalia, Palestine, and Yemen portend an increasingly violent world (Dupuy *et al.*, 2017).

Africa has experienced violent conflicts since the end of the Cold War, leaving in its tracks serious political, social, economic and humanitarian consequences (Anderson & Rolandsen, 2014; Annan, 2014). Notable among them are the 1967-1970 Biafra war in Nigeria, the recurrent Tuareg rebellion in Mali and Niger between 1960 and 2012, conflicts in Somalia since 1991, Liberia (1989-1997, 2000-2003), Sierra Leone (1992-2002), and Rwanda (1994) (see Heerten & Moses, 2014; Emerson, 2011; Lyons, 2009). Remarkably, majority of these conflicts are intra-state, though there are a few inter-state conflicts such as the Ethiopia-Eritrea (recent events point to improving relations) and Eritrea-Djibouti conflicts (Ramsbotham, *et al.*, 2011).

While some scholars cite scarcity of resources, the fragility of the African states, bad governance, ethnicity, and colonialism, among others (Kendie *et al.*, 2014), others suggest control of economic resources such as gold, diamond, oil and competition over territorial boundaries as reasons for the conflicts (El Jack, 2003). Notwithstanding, conflicts have been blamed for stymieing human development in Africa with far-reaching consequences for stability and development (World Bank, 2011). Collier *et al.* (2008) contend that conflicts in the form of civil wars have the tendency to reduce economic growth by 2.3%, therefore posing major impediment to socioeconomic development. For instance, the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) was estimated to have resulted in a 2% loss in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Oelbaum, 2010).

Conflicts impact migration at the individual, community, regional and national levels, particularly where political and ethnic conflicts are more pervasive in many developing countries (Teye & Yebleh, 2014). Conflict-induced migration gained much prominence in the migration discourse as a result of the frequency and severity of conflicts in countries such as South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Libya, among others, as well as other violent activities of radicalized and extremist groups. Although violence is a major determinant of forced migration in Sub-Saharan Africa (BICC, 2010), the decision to migrate is often multifaceted (Dewind *et al.*, 2008), with social ties at both the origin and potential destination playing an important role.

Apart from four coup d'états, conflicts in Ghana have generally not taken on a national dimension. A number of localised violent conflicts have however been well documented (Yahaya & Tinab, 2015; Osei-Kuffour *et al.*, 2016). These are prominent and often recurrent, including the Mamprusi and Kusasi conflict in Bawku, in the Upper East Region; the Konkomba and Nanumba; the Abudu and Andani conflicts in Dagbon in the Northern Region (Awedoba, 2011); and the Nkonya and Alavanyo in the Volta Region (Coleman, 2000;

Gati, 2008). In northern Ghana for instance, protracted conflicts are partly due to chieftaincy succession right, landownership, ethnic or tribal sentiments, religious differences (Osei-Kuffor *et al.*, 2016) and struggle for paramountcy and autonomy (Sulemana, 2009).

The Mamprusis' and Kusasis' conflict in northern Ghana is one of the protracted conflicts in the country. The quest for dominance and power is centered on the rights to the Bawku skin. Studies show that the first clash between the two groups occurred in 1957, with subsequent violence erupting between 1980 and 2000, and producing five violent clashes often with negative consequences for the population, property and livelihoods (Odonkor & Mason, 1994). Several studies also implicate factors such as title to land, ethnicity, colonial policies, chieftaincy, religion, politics, urbanisation, struggle over resources, and the fight for recognition in the protracted Bawku conflict (Talton, 2010; Kendie *et al.*, 2014; Osei-Kuffor *et al.*, 2016). For instance, Kendie *et al.* (2014) reported chieftaincy and related land disputes and political interference as undergirding the conflict in Bawku. Accordingly, though British colonial policies of consolidating smaller ethnic groups with bigger/centralized groups could be blamed for provoking the Bawku conflict; party politics' the quest for dominance, and authority continued to fuel it.

Although some form of mediation and resolution have been championed by various religious bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government, the complex nature of the conflicts has made them intractable, and in turn induced some out-migration from Bawku. The migrants end up in other regions or communities to avoid the negative effects associated with the violent conflicts (Williams & Pradham, 2009). Even though the causes and effect of the conflict have received extensive treatment (Annan, 2014), the effects of social networks on the decision and patterns of migration from Bawku due to the violent conflicts remains under-researched. Similarly, motivations leading to the return of migrants to Bawku during peace times are less understood, resonating a common phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa (Hirvonen & Lilleør, 2015). Given the out flow of migrants from Bawku during the conflict and later returns, what role did social networks play in motivating the decisions to leave or return? The objective of this study is to examine the interpersonal ties that enabled access to and use of social networks for migration during the conflict and peacetime. Our aim is to understand migrants' experiences in and out of Bawku and to offer a comparative perspective.

The sections that follow present the theoretical underpinning of the study- interrogating the network theory with particular reference to the strong ties view, brief description of the study area, the paper's methodology, the study's results, discussion and conclusion.

Understanding the Role of Networks in Out-migration and Return migration: A Theoretical Perspective

Migration has evolved over the past three decades without a single encompassing theory, whereas only a heap of competing theories attempting to explain its different dimensions (de Haas, 2010; Kurekova, 2011). According to Kurekova (2011:7), different migration theories examine "the origins of migration; the directionality and continuity of migrant flows; the utilization of immigrant labour; and the socio-cultural adaptation of migrants" in isolation or binary combinations. Many of these theories are skewed towards out-migration, while others on return migration have emphasised more on the economically successful

and unsuccessful migrant discourse (Hirvonen & Lilleør, 2015). Although no theory answers all the main dimensions of migration, this study found the network theory of migration useful as it provides understanding of how migrants' networks boost and perpetuate migration in space and time, by minimizing the cost and risks involved (Massey et al., 1993). The network theory also helps to explain the rationale for the uneven patterns of migration across places, and the tendency for the formation of migration regimes (Faist, 2000).

One way we seek to understand access to and use of networks for our empirical analysis is through Mark Granovetter's views on strong ties. His views rest on the assumption that, intuitively, close friends and relatives have the tendency to develop strong ties and are inclined to group together due to their common linkage (Granovetter, 1973). This echoes the view that shared norms, reciprocal ties, and practical assistance are often features of kin-based networks, which may be a key source of social capital for migrants (Dyckhoorn *et al.*, 2019). Common linkages shared through strong ties are usually ubiquitous in big cities that attract migrants from all walks of life in search of peace, greener pastures and other opportunities they can obtain. Strong ties therefore provide greater motivation for the group to get assistance, which is typically available. Furthermore, strong ties are likely to become useful, for example for migrants, when they find themselves in insecure and risky situations such as violent conflicts (Granovetter, 1983). According to Guilietti *et al.* (2018), the decision to migrate is co-determined by an individual and the strong ties which he/she can access. This suggests that strong ties are key in the decisions making of migrants and constitute a base of trust that can lessen risks and costs while offering comfort in the face of uncertainty (Krackhardt, 2003).

According to Granovetter (1973, p.1361), the strength of people's ties can be identified through the 'combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie'. However, (Granovetter 1973; 1983) argues that there is a possibility for information obtained through strong ties to be redundant, thereby making the network ineffective. Therefore, weak ties (acquaintances) are usually important than strong ties in understanding network-related activities. While strong or weak ties can play key role in migration, the most significant to demonstrate is, how the conflicts and network ties reinforce people's migration choices and return decision.

Migration networks may be defined as 'sets of interpersonal ties that link migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through the bonds of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin' (Ullah, 2009, p. 155). Similarly, Dyckhoorn *et al.* (2019) describes networks as a complex web comprising of close family and friends and weaker ties to colleagues, neighbours, and community members. Migration Network theory therefore acknowledges familial and community roles in ongoing processes of migration decision making, passage funding, settlement facilitation and maintenance of home ties (O'Reilly, 2012).

Migrant networks enable access to jobs, financial information, and accommodation among other things, at the destination region (Massey *et al.*, 1998; Sagynbekova, 2016). Through the development of social and economic infrastructure—often complete with associations and even professionals—migrant networks aid settlement and community formation, and can perpetuate itself (O'Reilly, 2012). Taking advantage of particular places that assure the greatest opportunity to succeed, new migrants tend to further expand these social connections. For instance, the existence of diasporas or networks and social connectivity is likely to influence the decisions of migrants when they choose their destinations (Dustmann *et al.*, 2008), thus,

making networks key to explaining the variations in the spatial distribution of migrants even in the face of declining economic incentives (wage differential).

Notwithstanding their many advantages, Martinez-Brawley & Zorita (2014) observed that migrant networks are not unimpeded, and that they may be mitigated by the realities of destination policies which determine who stays or leaves. Thus, even where strong networks exist, new migrants may trade areas with stringent policies for those with less strict policies. Moreover, Ullah (2009) cites the severe adversities that define Bangladeshi migrant journeys to Malaysia to question the notion of cost and risk minimization of migrant networks. Although mostly applied to analysis of international migration, Awumbila *et al.* (2017) demonstrate that migration networks are also useful for understanding internal migration. They observed that domestic workers originating mostly from northern part of Ghana, took advantage of networks of family, friends, and brokers to migrate mostly to southern parts of the country for work. The links between people, places and mediating structures become active through social networks.

Brief Description of Study Area

The Bawku Municipal Assembly, with Bawku as the capital, became one of three municipalities in the Upper East Region of Ghana after the Bawku East District Assembly was elevated to a Municipality with Legislative Instrument (L.I) 1798 in 2004. It shares boundaries with Pusiga, Garu-Tempane, Binduri and Bawku West Districts to the North, East, West and South respectively (GSS, 2014).

With a population of 98,538, the municipality represents 9.4% of the total Upper East Region population. It is however sparsely populated with a density of 169 persons per sq. km, and 52% females compared to 48% males (GSS, 2014). While the urban community is served with portable water largely from mechanized boreholes, a number of hand pumps, hand dug wells and small dams provide water to the rural communities. Additionally, the road network in the municipality is poor compared to other parts of the country.

The occupational distribution shows that subsistence and rainfed agriculture dominates economic activity with 70% employment, while commerce, service and industry/manufacturing employ the remaining 30% of the labour force. However, as the commercial hub of the Upper East Region, commodities traded in the Bawku market range from foodstuffs and livestock to manufactured goods, with brisk trading with other parts of the country evidenced by the truck loads of goods that head to the south, and the manufactured goods that are brought back to the north.

Methodology

Research Approach

This study adopted the mixed method approach which combined elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches in order to simultaneously analyse quantifiable data and generalise findings, while providing detailed account of peoples' perceptions, emotions, beliefs, experiences and behaviour (Johnson *et al.*, 2007). Tashakkori & Teddlie (2010) argue that this allows for a more robust analysis because the mixed method takes advantage of the inherent strengths of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The quantitative data was obtained from a household survey on migration patterns during and after the conflict. A systematic random sampling method was employed to select a total of 180 respondents in

Bawku for the survey. Additionally, the contacts of 88 relatives of the selected respondents were obtained and followed up, with 80 successfully contacted and surveyed. Where access to the relatives was very difficult, phone interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to elicit information on socio-demographic characteristics, social networks utilized by out migrants and returned migrants, and destination experiences among others. The questionnaire was pretested in Bunkprugu, in the Northern Region of Ghana due to shared characteristics with Bawku, and reported incidence of conflicts in the region. For qualitative data, 24 respondents above 18 years were recruited for three focus group discussions in Bawku. Each group was made up of eight respondents, with separate groups for males, females and a mixed gender. All the focus group discussions were recorded with the permission of participants.

Data Analysis

The survey data was coded and analysed using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20 for windows. Tables of frequencies and charts were utilized to examine the nature of the relationship between selected exposure variables and the outcome variable. Due to its flexibility and adaptability, the framework analysis was applied to the qualitative data generated from the audio recordings of focus group discussions. The themes that emerged from the transcription and coding formed the basis for direct quotations and representation of participant views and experiences.

Results

Characteristics of Respondents

Just like in many other places in the world, the categorisation of people affected by conflict induced migration from Bawku differs. Table 1 shows that males constituting 58.8% of our respondents dominated the out-migrants, while females constituted 41.2%. The youth categorised in the 26-35 years age group dominated the out-migrant sample with 47.5%. In general, migrants within the ages of 26-45 years age range are about 85% of the out-migrants. Regarding marital status, 41.7% of respondents in Bawku were married while 50.6% were single; and this reasonably compared with 46.2% married and 53.7% single among the out-migrants. Moreover, compared to 48.7% of the out-migrants, a high proportion (69.4%) of the Bawku residents had tertiary level education. Additionally, given the religious composition of the study area, 81% and 85% of the respondents in Bawku and outside Bawku, respectively, were Muslims.

Table 1: Distribution of Residents and Out-migrants by Selected Socioeconomic characteristics

Variable	Residents (N=180)		Out-Migrants (N=80)	
	F	%	F	%
Sex				
Male	118	65.6	47	58.8
Female	62	34.4	33	41.2
Age				
15-25 years	71	39.4	9	11.3
26-35 years	63	35.0	38	47.5
36-45 years	30	16.7	28	35
46-55 years	7	3.9	5	6.2
56-65	7	3.9	0	0.0
65 years & above	2	1.1	0	0.0
Marital Status				
Married	75	41.7	37	46.2
Divorced	4	2.2	0	0.0
Single	91	50.6	43	53.7
Living with Partner	4	2.2	0	0.0
Widowed	6	3.3	0	0.0
Level of Education				
No formal	8	4.4	3	3.8
Elementary/Primary	4	2.2	14	17.5
Middle school/JHS	1	0.6	6	7.5
SHS / Vocational / Technical	42	23.3	18	22.5
Tertiary	125	69.4	39	48.7
Religion				
Christianity	31	17.2	7	8.8
Muslim	146	81.1	68	85
Traditional	2	1.1	5	6.2
Others	1	0.6	0	0.0

Source: Field work, 2016

Networks of Migrants from Bawku

The study observed that out of the 180 respondents, 48.9% indicated they migrated compared to 51.1% who did not, suggesting that more than half of the respondents remained in Bawku even in the face of conflict. For those who indicated that migrating out of Bawku was the only option, the study found that this decision was partly inspired by the existence of family and friends they had outside Bawku, with whom they could live temporarily or permanently, thus making migration a convenient option. As shown in figure 1, uncles constitute the most important host of migrants (43.8%) outside Bawku during the conflict, whereas (28.8%) were also hosted by friends.

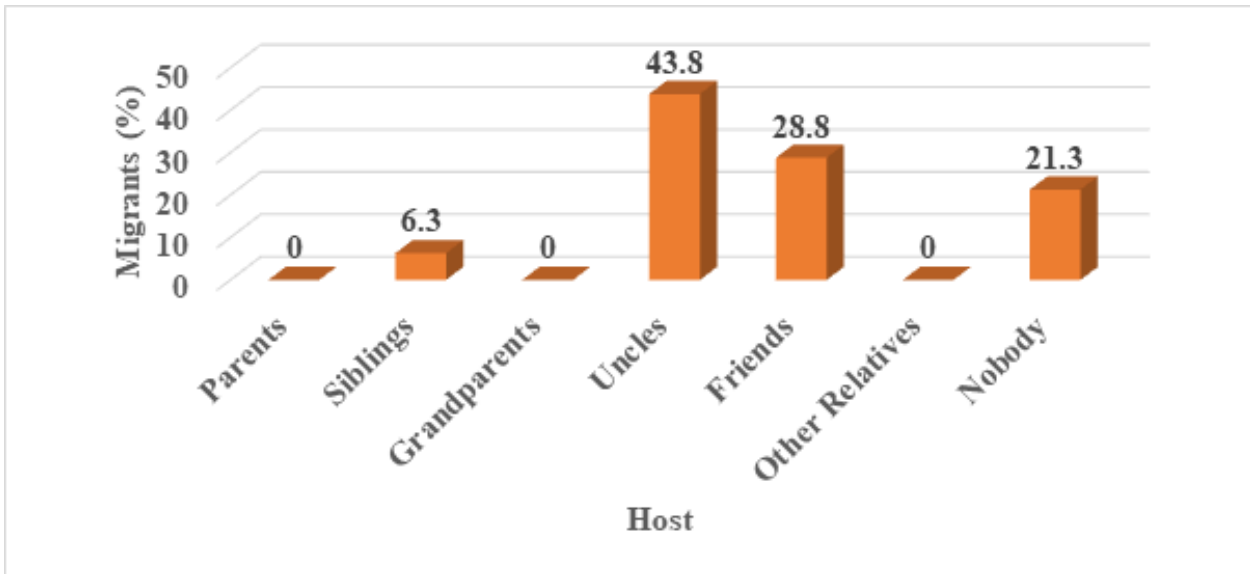


Figure 1: Distribution of Migrants (n=80) by host during conflict

Source: Field work, 2016

Notwithstanding, it was observed that 21.3% of migrants had no networks and had to live on the street or struggle for shelter on their own. For instance, a migrant who resides in Kumasi indicated the following:

“I had nowhere to go to when I moved to Kumasi after the fight (conflict). So, when I came to Kumasi, I slept at Kejetia for months before I started working as a cleaner at the station. It was there that my boss gave me somewhere to stay for some time” (Yakubu, a 25-year-old out-migrant)

Greater Accra region was the major destination for migrants (26.1%) and 26% also settling in other communities in the Upper East Region. Table 2 shows the destination regions of migrants (80 relatives of Bawku respondents) that left Bawku during the conflict. Notwithstanding the close geographical proximity of Bawku to the Northern and Brong Ahafo Regions, the Ashanti Region attracted the next highest proportion (17%) of migrants, with the Upper West and Brong Ahafo Regions attracting 6.9%, respectively.

Table 2: Destination Regions of Migrants (%)

Destination Regions	Migrants (N=80)
Upper East (excluding Bawku)	26.1
Upper West	6.8
Northern	3.4
Greater Accra	26.1
Ashanti	17.0
Brong Ahafo	4.5
Western	3.4
Outside Ghana	3.4
Others	9.1

Source: Field work, 2016

For those respondents who did not migrate, we found that many had no relatives or anyone outside Bawku, while others opined that they decided to stay because of the strong family ties they had in Bawku, and this

was indicated by a female respondent in Bawku:

“I decided to stay in Possum (suburb of Bawku) during the fight (conflict) because I had nowhere to go. I cannot go and stay on the streets like some people when they go to Accra or Kumasi. Moreover, my husband and two children are here so we decided to stay but know how to go about our duties and prevent any wahala (problem) (35-year-old female trader in Bawku).

There are also indications that some respondents opted to stay because they did not feel threatened by the conflict. This could be due to the fact that they were not located at key conflict spots and had the necessary coping strategies to cushion challenges associated with the conflicts.

Networks of Return Migrants

Within the context of conflict and migration, the re-integration of migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), especially in the wake of tranquillity is of cardinal interest. Table 3 shows that although respondents noted employment (22.4%) and education (29.3%) as important rational for returning to Bawku after the conflict, strong family ties in Bawku was mentioned by 17.2% of respondents as the motivation for returning to Bawku.

Table 3: Motivations for Returned Migrants to Relocate Back to Bawku

Reasons	Frequency	%
Employment	13	22.4
Education	17	29.3
Relative peace	10	17.2
Family	10	17.2
Visit	4	6.9
Others	4	6.9
Total	58	100

Source: Field work, 2016

Returned migrants after spending 1-3 years outside Bawku in some cases (43.1%) and in other cases 4-6 years (31%) indicate that strong family ties (17.2%) played a key role in their return. Many of them on their return stayed with siblings (29.3%), parents (13.8%) and uncles (31%) as indicated in Figure 2.

During the focus group discussions (FGD), a respondent confirmed the importance of family ties in the decision to return to Bawku by stating:

“I came back about 4 years ago after my brother-in-law informed me of some calmness that has been restored in the Sabon-Gari (a suburb of Bawku). I decided to come back and continue with life here because it is not easy to live in Accra” (43-year-old male farmer, FGD)

Similarly, a female migrant who has also returned remarked:

“I travelled to Kumasi when they started fighting. I left my two sons with my mother who was old to take care of them while I find a job to do and send her money. I had to return to take care of them when my mother couldn't take care of them anymore and I couldn't bring them here to Kumasi with me” (31-year-old female trader, FGD)

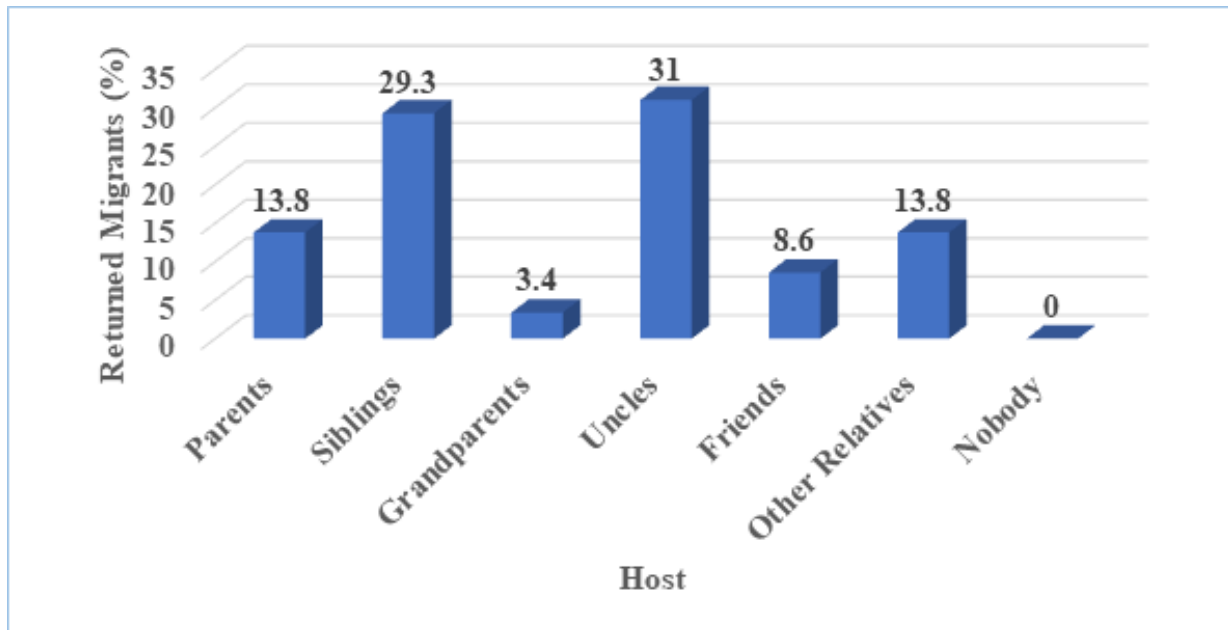


Figure 2: Distribution of Returned Migrants (n=80) by host after conflict

Source: Field work, 2016

It can therefore be deduced that, harsh economic conditions at the destination, as well as relative peace and socioeconomic ties at the origin combined to compel migrants to return to Bawku. As conflicts are often associated with disruption in economic and social activities, decline in living standards, and worsening poverty levels (Yahaya & Tinab, 2015), the availability of employment served as one of the important motivations for relocating back to Bawku. We found in the study that employment opportunities to have jumped from 41.1% before the conflict to 49.4% after the conflict. This may be attributed to progressive interventions by government, NGOs, religious/faith-based organisations, and the traditional authorities to foster peace and enhance development within the region.

Discussion and Conclusion

This paper examined conflict-induced migration and networks in Bawku. Following Manchin & Orazbayev (2018), who assert that close social networks (composed of family and friends) matter in migration as they influence migrants' decisions at the origin location and destination region, we sought to understand how access to and use of networks motivate people to out-migrate during violent conflicts and return during peacetimes. This focus was intended to provide insights into migration trajectories during and after conflicts.

As the results of study suggest, the decisions of both out-migrants and returned migrants are motivated by their access to strong ties in and outside Bawku. This confirms the assertion that access to and use of social network marks an important social capital (Ryan *et al.* (2008), as they ease people's anxiety before, during, and after migration (Cohen and Wills, 1985). The provision of shelter by family and friends to migrants do not only satisfy a psychological need but also offers security, particularly to the most vulnerable (Maslow, 1943). The assurance obtained from such network-related support obviously informs migrants' decision to move to the destination areas or return to their origin (Dustmann *et al.*, 2008). This echoes the view of Massey *et al.* (1993) which indicated earlier that, networks facilitate in reducing the potential cost and risks associated with migration, which could be very fatal or devastating for migrants.

Interestingly, majority of respondents did not migrate out of Bawku during the conflict. The lack of networks outside Bawku and strong family ties in Bawku may have accounted for why majority of the respondents did not migrate. The former demonstrates that the probability of migrating increases with strong social interactions or ties (Giulietti *et al.* 2018). Manchin & Orazbayev (2018) argue that strong ties at origin location reduce the likelihood of people's decision to migrate. This resonates with respondents in Bawku who refused to migrate because of their strong family ties. Conversely, it is same for some returned migrants in Bawku who reorganised themselves—adapted to the environment through family support (Schermerhorn & Cumming, 2008). Such strong ties can be construed as a constellation of emotional intensity and intimacy knitted in kin relationships or friendships established by people (Granovetter, 1973). This implies that while the discourse on migration networks appears to support the position that strong ties are important for migration; the findings from this study suggest that strong ties may equally prevent migration.

Moreover, the study also revealed that while migrant destination selection is significantly influenced by networks of family and friends, there are exceptional instances where networks failed to explain migrant destination decisions. Rather, migrants can establish new ties in destination areas to foster their survival. Although the network theory has been mostly used to explain the migration decision process and survival of migrants at the destination, it may be equally useful for explaining return migration; since in the case of return migration to Bawku, respondents indicated family as an important factor in the decision-making process. This underscores the culture of strong and dependable family system in Bawku, characterised by the ethos of supporting family members in difficult moments. According to Yiran (2016), the family system in Bawku is strong and reliable in times of need, and confers social capital in terms of care for the aged, disable and children, as well as farming-related assistance. Beyond the family, neighbours are also considered important social capital as they offer financial and material support in the form of temporary shelter, evacuation of the weak/injured and labour for rebuilding, especially in times of disaster. These kinds of interpersonal networks potentially connected migrants with relatives, neighbours and friends outside of Bawku, to facilitate and sustain migration of Bawku residents during the conflict.

The findings, with regard to education and employment (economic) ties as the most important factors facilitating the decisions of returned migrants can be linked to the lack of better opportunities in the destination areas. Given the fact that majority of the migrants were youthful and potentially dependent on their parents and relatives, there was a high incentive for them to return home. For those who returned for employment purposes, there were many who were unemployed or marginalised from formal employment in big cities such as Accra and Kumasi (Gillespie, 2017). Others who were predominantly farmers also could not compete for access to land for agricultural purposes due to high prices and complex land tenure system in the destination areas. Accra, which attracted many of the migrants is not only experiencing high cost of lands (Arthur, 2018) but the transformation of most agricultural land-use into residential and commercial uses (Owusu, 2013). These migrants lacked the networks to help them overcome the issues indicated above; hence the option was to take advantage of the relative peace to return to Bawku. Interestingly, the findings regarding returned migrants to Bawku runs contrary to a study in the Northern Region of Ghana where 'return migration was contingent on the completion of a successful migration project, which allowed migrants to 'get money' in order to prepare for their return' (Sward, 2016, p.24).

This study has implications for current research and contributes to several ongoing strands of research within geography and migration studies. It extends existing studies on ethnic conflict-induced migration in Africa by introducing the theoretical framework of networks and providing evidence of how strong ties contribute to the decisions of out-migrants and return migrants. The findings also provide evidences of factors motivating migrants' decisions that transcend strong family ties. However, this study limits the scope of networks to strong ties instead of combining with weak ties as Granovetter (1973) originally focused on. Where as many extant studies on migration networks tend to focus on the motivations for international migration (O'Reilly, 2012; Manchin & Orazbayev, 2018; Windzio, 2018) gravitate towards economic factors in internal migrations (Sward, 2016), this study focused more on the influences of family and friends on migrants' decision to leave or return to Bawku. We believe that future research should broaden the scope of network ties, categories of migrants (youth, skilled labour, unskilled labour, gender, etc) and how networks affects their activities in both the places of origin and destination. In this regard, the analysis presented in this paper should be considered as a starting point in the analysis of the role of networks in conflict-induced migration in Bawku.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, D. M. & Ø. H. Rolandsen (2014). Violence as politics in eastern Africa, 1940–1990: legacy, agency, contingency. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8(4), 539-557.
- Annan, N. (2014). Violent Conflicts and Civil Strife in West Africa: Causes, Challenges and Prospects. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 3(1), 1-16, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.da>.
- Arthur, I. K. (2018). Exploring the development prospects of Accra Airport City, Ghana, *Area Development and Policy*, 3(2), 258-273, DOI: 10.1080/23792949.2018.1428112
- Awedoba, A. K. (2011). *An Ethnographic study of Northern Ghana Conflicts: Towards a Sustainable Peace*: Accra: sub-Saharan Publishers.
- Awumbila, M., Deshingkar, P, Kandilige, L, Teye, J.K and Setrana, M. (2017). Brokerage in migrant domestic work in Ghana: complex social relations and mixed outcomes. Working Paper 47, Research Report submitted to the Migrating out of Poverty RPC.
- (BICC) Bonn International Center for Conversion (2010). Migration and Displacement in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Security-Migration Nexus II. Bonn. Retrieved on February 10, 2017 from https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx.../gmf_climate-change-migration-conflict.
- Cohen, S., Wills, T.A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychol. Bull.* 98, 310–357.
- Coleman, P. T. (2000). Intractable conflict. In M. Deutsch & P. T. Coleman (Eds.), *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice* (pp. 428-450). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Retrieved on August 17 2018 from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242712070_Intractable_Conflict_as_a.
- Collier, P., Hoeffler, A., & Soderbom, M. (2008). Post-Conflict Risks. *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(4), 461–478.
- de Haas, H. (2010). Migration and development: a theoretical perspective. *International Migration Review*, 29: 1–82. <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2009.00804.x>.
- de Haas, H. (2014). International Migration, Remittances and Development: Myths and Facts. *Third World Quarterly*, 26(8), 1269–1284. <http://doi.org/10.1080/01436590500336757>.
- Deng, M. F., Kimaro, S., Lyons, T., Rothchild, D. & Zartman, W. I. (1996). *Sovereignty as responsibility: Conflict Management in Africa*. The Bookings Institutions, Washington D. C.

- Dewind, J., Castles, S., & Ranis, G. (2008). Migration and Development : Future Directions for Research and Policy, (March).
- Dupuy, K., Gates, S., Nygård, H. M., Rudolfson, I., Rustad, S. A., Strand, H. & Urdal, H. (2017). Trends in Armed Conflict, 1946–2016, *Conflict Trends*, 2. Oslo: PRIO.
- Dustmann, C., Glitz, A., & Frattini, T. (2008). The Labour Market Impact of Immigration,” CReAM Discussion Paper Series 0811, Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration (CReAM), Department of Economics, University College London.
- Dyxhoorn, J., Hollander, A-C., Lewis. G., Dalman, C., & Kirkbride, J. B. (2019). Family networks during migration and risk of non-affective psychosis: A population-based cohort study. *Schizophrenia Research*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.schres.2019.01.044>.
- El Jack, A. (2003). Gender and Armed Conflict: Overview Report. Bridge development-gender. Institute of Development Studies. UK. Retrieved on May 21, 2017 from www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/CEP-Conflict-Report.pdf.
- Emerson, S. A. (2011). Desert insurgency: lessons from the third Tuareg rebellion. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 22(4), 669-687, DOI: 10.1080/09592318.2011.573406.
- Faist, T. (2000). Transnationalization in international migration: implications for the study of citizenship and culture. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 23(2), 189-222, DOI: 10.1080/014198700329024.
- Gati, N. (2008). The dynamics of communal conflicts in Ghana’s local government system: a case study of the Adaklu-Anyigbe conflict. University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada.
- Ghana Statistical Service [GSS] (2014). *2010 Population and Housing Census: District Analytical Report – Bawku Municipality*. Accra, Ghana.
- Gillespie, T. (2017). From quiet to bold encroachment: contesting dispossession in Accra’s informal sector. *Urban Geography*, 38 (7), 974-992.
- Granovetter, M. (1983). The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited. *Sociological Theory*, 1, 201-233.
- Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology* 78, 1360–1380.
- Guilietti, C., Wahba, J. & Zenou, Y. (2018). Strong versus weak ties in migration. *European Economic Review* 104,111–137.
- Heerten, L. & Moses, A. D. (2014). The Nigeria–Biafra war: postcolonial conflict and the question of genocide. *Journal of Genocide Research*, 16(2-3), 169-203, DOI: 10.1080/14623528.2014.936700.
- Hirvonen, K. & Lilleør, H. B. (2015). Going Back Home: Internal Return Migration in Rural Tanzania. *World Development* 70, 186–202.
- Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A., & Turner, L. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1, 112-133.
- Kendie, S. B. Osei-Kufuor, P. & Boakye, A. K. (2014). Mapping conflicts in Ghana. Cape Coast: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Cape Coast.
- Krackhardt, D. (2003). The strength of strong ties: The importance of Philos on Organizations. In Cross, R., Parker, A. & Sasson, L. (eds), *Networks in the knowledge economy* (pp. 82-105), New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Kurekova, L. (2011). *Theories of migration: Conceptual review and emperical testing in the context of the EU east-west flows*. London: University college London.
- Lyons, T. (2009). The Ethiopia–Eritrea Conflict and the Search for Peace in the Horn of Africa. *Review of African Political Economy*, 36(120), 167-180, DOI: 10.1080/03056240903068053.
- Manchin, M. & Orazbayev, S. (2018). Social networks and the intention to migrate, *World Development*, 109(C), 360-374.
- Martinez-Brawley, E., & Zorita, P. (2014). The neglect of network theory in practice with immigrants in the southwest. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 41(1), 122-136.

- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review* 50 (4), 370–396.
- Massey, D. S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A. & Edward, T. (1993). Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal. *Population and Development Review*, 19(3), 431-466.
- Massey, D. S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., & Taylor, J. E. (1998). *Worlds in motion: Understanding international migration at the end of the millennium*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Massey, Z. B. and Miller, C. H. (2018). Case studies on interethnic conflict: A theoretical integration. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 66, 130-147.
- Mengistu M. M. (2015). The Root Causes of Conflicts in the Horn of Africa. *American Journal of Applied Psychology*, 4 (2), 28-34. doi: 10.11648/j.ajap.20150402.12.
- O'Reilly, K. (2012). *International Migration and Social Theory*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Odonkor, M. & Mason, J. (1994). Land, Paramountcy and Conflict in Northern Region: the 1994-guinea-fowl war. Unpublished confidential report for CIDA, Accra.
- Oelbaum, J. (2010). Spatial Poverty Traps and Ethnic Conflict Traps: Lessons from Northern Ghana's "Blood Yams". ODI Working Paper 324; CPRC Working Paper 164. London: Overseas Development Institute.
- Osei-Kuffour, P., Kendie, S. B. & Boakye, A. (2016). Conflict, Peace and Development: A Spatio-Thematic analysis of Violent Conflicts in Northern Ghana between 2007-2013. *Conflict & communication online*, 15(2). Retrieved on 10, February, 2017 from www.cco.regener-online.de ISSN 1618-0747.
- Owusu, G. (2013). Coping with Urban Sprawl: A Critical Discussion of the Urban Containment Strategy in a Developing Country City, Accra. *Planum Journal of Urbanism*, 1(26), 2-17.
- Raleigh, C. (2014). Political hierarchies and landscapes of conflict across Africa. *Political Geography*, 42, 92-103.
- Ramsbotham, O., Woodhouse, T. & Maill, H. (2011). *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Polity Press UK.
- Ryan, L., Sales, R., Tilki, M., Siara, B., (2008). Social networks, social support and social capital: the experiences of recent Polish migrants in London. *Sociology* 42, 672–690.
- Sagynbekova, L. (2016). *The Impact of International Migration: Process and Contemporary Trends in Kyrgyzstan*. Springer International Publishing, Switzerland.
- Schermerhorn, A. C., & Cummings, E. M. (2008). Transactional family dynamics: A new framework for conceptualizing family influence processes. *Advances in Child Development and Behaviour* 36, 187-250.
- Sulemana, M. (2009). Understanding the Causes and Impacts of Conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana. *Ghana Policy Journal*, 3, 110-139.
- Sward, J. (2016). Moving to 'greener pastures'? The complex relationship between internal migration, land tenure and poverty in mid-Ghana. *Migrating out of Poverty Migrating out of Poverty. Working paper Series* 33.
- Talton, B. A. (2010). *Politics of social change in Ghana: The Konkomba struggle for political equality*. New York: Palgrave, Macmillan.
- Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (2010). Putting the Human Back in "Human Research Methodology": The Researcher in Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 4(4), 271–277.
- Teye, J. K. & Yebleh, M. K. (2014). Living Without Economic Assets: Livelihoods of Liberian Refugees in the Buduburam Camp, Ghana. *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 16(3), 557-574. DOI: 10.1007/s12134-014-0352-6.
- Ullah, A. K. M. A. (2009). Theoretical Rhetoric About Migration Networks: A Case of a Journey of Bangladeshi Workers to Malaysia. *International Migration*, 51 (3), 151-168.

- Williams, N., & Pradhan, S. M. (2009). Political Conflict and Migration: How has Violence and Political Instability Affected Migration Patterns in Nepal? Research Report, Population Studies Center, University of Michigan. U.S.A.
- Windzio, M. (2018). The network of global migration 1990-2012: Using ERGMs to test theories of migration between countries. *Social Networks* 53, 20-29.
- World Bank (2011). World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development. Washington, DC: World Bank, forthcoming.
- Yahaya, A. B. & Tinab, M. (2015). Socio-economic effects of armed conflict on women and children in Bawku Municipality. *UDS International Journal of Development* [UDSIJD], 2(1), 148-159.
- Yiran, G.A.B. (2016). Mapping Social Capital for Adaptation to Climatic Variability in a Savannah Ecosystem of Ghana. In Yaro, J. A. & Hesselberg, J. (eds.), *Adaptation to Climate Change and Variability in Rural West Africa* (pp. 215-237), Switzerland: Springer International Publishing