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Immigrant's Personal Network in the Integration Process: a case study of Ghanaian immigrants' in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Geography

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on the integration of recent immigrants in receiving societies by analyzing their personal networks' contribution to this process. Although migration studies have stressed the importance of relationships or im/migrant networks in different spatial contexts, gaps exist in understanding this phenomenon. Specifically, studies on immigrants' networks' structure and composition that indicate their integration level in the host society is missing within the literature. This research, therefore, contributes to our understanding of personal networks. It considers the structure of immigrants' network by examining the role of their migration project and context of reception towards developing ties in the host society. Likewise, the application of methodological approaches that shifts the analysis from the individual immigrant to both the immigrant and network members is limited and concentrated in a few countries. Therefore, this dissertation adds to the literature by adopting Social Network Analysis to understand the specific role played by an immigrant's personal network. It adopts an anatomical approach before examining support provision within the network. For support provision, the study adds to the literature by examining the directionality of support among recent immigrants, which has often been overlooked.

The dissertation employs a mixed-methods approach drawing on quantitative data from an egocentric network survey among Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA) and qualitative data from in-depth interviews among Ghanaian immigrants in the TCMA. The egocentric data allowed for investigating the structure and composition of Ghanaian immigrants' networks', taking into account evolution and changes in the network. It also examined the dimension of support provided within the network. Descriptive and multilevel multinomial regression modelling techniques were employed in quantitative data analysis, while thematic coding was adopted in the qualitative data analysis.

Results from quantitative data analysis show that Ghanaian immigrants' structure consists predominantly of co-ethnics, few native-borns, and few ties with

other international immigrants. Many co-ethnic ties are facilitated by activities conducted by ethnic, religious organizations, and township/national associations in the TCMA. It is also based on the assistance from such ties towards making Canada their second home. Similarly, findings show that Ghanaian immigrants overtime in Canada do maintain ties with Ghanaians in Ghana and may not substitute such ties with new ties in Canada.

In terms of support exchanged between immigrants and their network members, quantitative results suggest that a small proportion of emotional, instrumental, and information support is received, provided, and reciprocated. Multilevel multinomial regression reveals that the immigrant and network characteristics do not guarantee the exchange of the three types of support. Instead, network members' characteristics, such as the degree of importance and the nature of the relationship between them (frequency of communication), result in exchanging all three forms of support within the network. Results from in-depth interviews support the argument that co-ethnics are essential in their integration process in Canada but often provide intangible support such as emotional support or companionship. However, accessing co-ethnic ties to obtain such support is hindered by mistrust issues and skepticism on the part of network members while native-born networks are challenging to access due to lack of common interest.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that personal networks contribute towards immigrants' integration in Canada. On the one hand, findings align with existing literature that suggests that relational attributes are the most important predictors of support within the network. For another, findings contradict some prior studies that argue that co-ethnics ties and their support may be somewhat unbeneficial to the immigrant's integration. Regardless of these findings, specific nuances emerged from the study. For example, only a small number of individuals within the network offer support despite qualitative evidence that suggests that they receive emotional support from their networks. This nuance from exploratory investigations calls for further studies, especially among other immigrant groups, to ascertain these findings'

veracity. In terms of policy implication, given the small number of native-born ties in the network of immigrants, specific programs should be targeted to help build and maintain strong networks with the native-born since evidence points to their essential contribution in the integration process of immigrants.

Keywords: Networks, Immigrants, Canada, Integration, Ghanaians, Toronto

Abstract for Lay Audience

Social networks, which represents an individual's friends, family, neighbours, acquaintances and the relationship that exists between them, plays an important role in the individuals' life. With respect to immigrants, these network members provide relevant information and financial support to facilitate their migration and provide diverse forms of assistance when immigrants arrive in the destination country. Despite these positive attributes of social networks, they also tend to hinder the occupational mobility of the immigrant and are fraught with other challenges.

In migrant receiving societies like Canada, research finds that immigrants with social networks tend to fare better in their settlement than those without any form of networks. This notwithstanding, studies investigating immigrants' social networks have been few. Specifically, studies detailing how immigrants access networks, the exchange of support within their networks and the structure and composition of their networks are missing from the accounts of immigrants in Canada. The current study therefore examined the networks of immigrants in Canada focusing on their role in the integration process. The study utilized a mixed method approach involving quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a better and nuanced understanding of networks using the case study of Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto census metropolitan area (TCMA).

Results from quantitative analysis shows that Ghanaian immigrants' network comprises many Ghanaians in Canada, a few Canadian born contacts and a small number of other international immigrants in Canada and abroad. The large presence of Ghanaians in their network is linked to the presence of ethnic religious and township/national associations in the TCMA. Quantitative analysis equally reveals that immigrants exchange informational, emotional and practical support with members of their network who they consider important and have frequent communication. Qualitative accounts, however, indicate that accessing Ghanaian networks to obtain support is hindered by cliques within larger networks as well as mistrust and envy on the part of some members of the network. With respect to Canadian networks, lack of

common interest and cultural differences makes it difficult for Ghanaians to access them. The study calls for alternate ways for immigrants to access Canadian-born networks.

Co-authorship statement

This dissertation follows the integrated article format comprising of a collection of manuscripts, which have been submitted for publication to peer-reviewed journals. The study problem and objectives are presented in the introductory chapter. Chapter Two details the context of the research and theoretical underpinnings while Chapter 3 presents the methodology for the dissertation. Chapters Four, Five and Six have been co-authored with my dissertation supervisor. In all three manuscripts, I performed the research design, data collection and analysis. The following citations are provided to indicate the destinations of the manuscripts:

Chapter Four: **Kyeremeh, E.** & Arku, G. (submitted). The composition and structure of immigrants' network in Canada: the case of Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto. *Global Networks*

Chapter Five: **Kyeremeh, E.** & Arku, G. (submitted). Social support networks of immigrants in Canada: a multi-level analysis of Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto census metropolitan area. *Social Indicators Research*

Chapter Six: **Kyeremeh, E.** & Arku, G. (submitted). Access to social networks: a qualitative account of Ghanaian immigrants in Canada. *Journal of Ethnic and Racial Studies*

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CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

This chapter provides a broad overview of the thesis, which is divided into three parts. The first part provides a summary of some critical issues regarding migration and immigrants' network. The chapter discusses the causes of migration and identifies the importance of immigrants to receiving societies. Further, it stresses on the significance of networks and the shift in attention from the immigrant to the relationship that exists between immigrants and their network members. The section indicates that personal networks play a pivotal role in overcoming integration challenges in Canada but warrants further attention among immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa. The second part of the chapter details the objectives of the thesis. To conclude the chapter, a description of the organization of the thesis is provided.

1.1 Background and Context of the Research

Immigration has become a vital component of demographic growth for most countries, especially those in the Western world (Boyd, 1989; Castles & Miller, 2003; De Haas, 2007; 2008; Massey, 1998). Although the causes of migration have changed over the years, they can be attributed to push¹ and pull² factors, which reflect unequal distribution of resources and opportunities (Coe, 2012; Czaika & De Haas, 2014; Massey et al., 2005; Samers, 2010). In the origin country, conditions related to economic, familial, political, cultural, and environmental factors push individuals/groups to migrate (Castles et al., 2014; Massey et al., 2005; van Hear et al., 2018). But the decision to migrate may be an individual, household, or group decision. Similarly, the quest for

¹ Factors in the origin country that forces individuals to move out. They may include but are not limited to unemployment, underemployment, civic unrest, wars, and environmental degradation, among other factors

² These refer to factors such as opportunity for personal development (to find jobs, to be safe and sound) that attracts individuals to move from their origin.

better opportunities, self-development, economic advantages, political freedom, and self-actualization goals may pull individuals to receiving societies (Samers & Collyer, 2017; Van Hear et al., 2018). The outcome of the migration process has both positive and negative consequences for the individual, their family, groups, origin country, and receiving society.

Over the last few decades, the number of international immigrants has increased globally. Research finds that economic, cultural, and political changes, as well as major improvements in transportation and communication development may account for this increase (Cwerner, 2001; Faist, 2000; Massey, 1998; Portes, 1999; Roberts, 1995; Schiller, 1997; Vertovec, 1999). The increase in migration has led scholars to refer to the twenty-first century as the age of migration (Castles & Miller, 2003) to capture the large-scale movement of individuals. The increase in movement is underpinned by changes in immigration policies in different countries, especially receiving societies with an eye for attracting individuals with the best human capital possible (Ager & Strand, 2008; De Haas, 2010; Samers & Collyer, 2017).

For receiving societies, immigration is often tied to perceived benefits from immigrants. Hiebert (2006) argues that immigrants help to sustain advanced economies in North America and Western Europe. They contribute to the economic and demographic wellbeing of receiving societies (De Haas, 2010; Hamer 2008; Stalker, 2008). Economically, immigrants contribute towards the growth of economies and increase the countries' per capita income. Demographically, they help to balance the size and structure of the population (Peixoto, 2012; Samers, 2010; Termote, 2011), that is, ensuring an even population, helping to reduce an aging population, as well as preventing specific labour shortages with respect to the educational and occupational structure of the country (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003; Münz, 2008). Immigrants are also accepted to be united with their families. This category contributes in their unique way (Bauder, 2019; Bragg & Wong, 2016; Strasser et al. 2009). For example, sponsored parents and grandparents may assume responsibility for the childcare of their grandchildren thereby enabling their children to resume or take up new positions on

the job market (Neysmith et al., 2010; Vanderplaat et al., 2013). These perceived benefits associated with immigrants have resulted in policies aimed at attracting the most skilled while discriminating against others without the required skill set of interest (Biles, 2008; CIC, 2017; De Haas, 2010; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Besides policies, networks³ facilitate the migration and resettlement of individuals as well as the movement of goods and resources across nations. According to Somerville (2015), networks can function at the individual/group level and the national level. At the national level, networks are considered as chains that historically linked and continue to link origin and destination countries such as those between countries in Africa and their former colonial masters in Europe (Samers & Collyer, 2017). An advantage of these migration chains is that they enable the flow of resources between the countries involved.

At the individual level, networks are considered as relationships and defined as a “set of interpersonal ties that bind migrants, previous migrants, and non-migrants within and between the countries of origin and destination” (Massey et al., 2005: 42). These networks typically consist of kin (sometimes referred to as strong ties) and friends (perceived as weak ties) who share similar ethnicity and hometown or nation and for which the relationship is built on some form of mutual trust (Bankston, 2014; Samers, 2010). These network members play a key role in “reducing the social, economic and emotional costs of migration” (Massey et al., 2005: 42). Specifically, networks assist immigrants to make transitions associated with migration, provide support in the form of information and monetary assistance to migrate, find housing, or finding a job while providing other forms of social, emotional, and economic support (Dolfin & Genicot, 2010; Fernandez et al., 2000; Somerville, 2015).

Despite the positives, networks can be complex and ambivalent. Networks sometimes act to place burden on immigrants within the group (Ahmad, 2015; Hu & Salazar, 2005). These networks can limit personal freedom or prevent individuals from

³ Networks may be defined simply as a set of actors and the relationship that exist between them (Wasserman & Faust 1994).

accessing alternative resources (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993), and the reciprocal obligations inherent in networks can overwhelm members (Menjivar, 2000; Nee & Nee, 1986). Nonetheless, access to networks are taken for granted by scholars. The general assumption is that immigrants easily access networks and as such, will be exposed to their influence, which has resulted in limited research on how networks are formed in practice (Eve, 2010; Ryan, 2007, 2011, 2015; Ryan et al., 2008).

Prior research on immigrant networks has also predominantly focused on providing information about the immigrant and in the process reified the immigrant (see Hooghiemstra, 2001; Hatziprokopiou, 2003; Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003; Gill & Bialski, 2011; Yue et al., 2013). To provide more illumination on the migration process and move the analysis beyond the immigrant, migration scholars have adopted social network analysis approaches. This move has shifted analysis from the immigrant to ties that exist between immigrants and their network members, examining various aspects of the relationship such as the composition of their networks and how the influence of network members impact their actions, among others (Perry et al., 2018). The rationale for moving the analysis to both the immigrant and their ties is to provide a more fine-grained analysis of networks, which may hitherto be missed when the lens of attention is solely on the immigrant together with the possibility of answering new questions (Ryan, 2011, 2015; Vertovec, 2001).

By adopting social network analysis perspective, new insight into the migration process has begun to emerge. For instance, studies employing personal networks reveal the multi-dimensional role of the immigrant's networks towards their integration in the receiving society (Herz, 2015; De Miguel & Tranmer, 2010). These multi-dimensional roles have been documented among immigrants in different spatial contexts. For instance, in Russia, Kornienko et al. (2018) notes that central Asian immigrant women whose personal network consists of siblings and close friends receive the needed financial and emotional support they require. In Spain, Lubbers et al. (2010) discover that an immigrant's personal networks influenced his/her self-identification within the country. Their findings reveal that individuals with more

heterogeneous personal networks are more likely to be identified as part of the new society. Similarly, in Germany, Gualda and Marquez (2012) find that an immigrant's personal network plays a pivotal role in the migratory process right from the pre-migration stage to the post-migration stage.

Despite the utility of these studies, gaps remain in our knowledge and understanding of networks (Hollstein, 2011; Ryan, 2015). Gaps exist with respect to the composition and structure of immigrants' networks most especially among recent immigrants. There is little insight regarding the emergence and dynamism in networks and how these changes affect the immigrant's integration in areas such as housing and the labour market (Hollstein, 2011). Also, the effects that distinct characteristics of immigrants, network members (from here will be referred as alters⁴), and their networks have on support provision among recent immigrants in destination countries is unknown. Given the different histories and geographies of immigrants, scholars advocate for specific group and context-based analysis (Hamer 2008). A focus on specific groups is aimed at providing recommendations geared towards that immigrant's group successful integration in the host societies. As well, since relationships often thrive on reciprocity, the social network analysis perspective⁵ is increasingly being advocated, with the goal of refining how the social structure of the migration process is understood (Bolibar et al., 2015; Bilecen, 2013).

Within immigrant receiving societies such as Canada, immigration is a building block that stimulates growth and development (Bile, 2008; Chui et al., 2007; Tolley, 2003). Immigration policies in Canada seeks to attract between 200,000 and 300,000 immigrants per year to meet the country's economic and demographic growth (Beji, 2010; Kyeremeh et al., 2019; Reimer et al. 2016; Simmons & Bourne 2013). In view of this, the Canadian government has adopted multiculturalism as a framework in a bid

⁴ Alters are individuals with whom the immigrant or ego has any form of relationship or ties with (Bolibar et al., 2015; Hannerman & Riddle, 2011). It would be used interchangeably with network members

⁵ A social network analysis perspective is a methodological and intellectual approach used to examine relationship between individuals, organizations, and among others. More details of this is provided in the next chapter.

to make the country welcoming for immigrants of diverse ethnicities and backgrounds (Banting, 2014; Harles, 2004). Multiculturalism is expected to influence the location of immigrants and thus enhance their integration into Canada. Yet, studies indicate that challenges exist along ethnic lines among immigrants from diverse backgrounds regarding their integration into Canadian society. Immigrants experience challenges relating to language (Hou & Beiser, 2006; Stewart et al., 2008), unemployment, occupational segregation, downward occupational mobility, financial difficulties and poverty (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2014; Kazemipur & Halli, 2000; Nakhaie, 2007; Nakhaie et al., 2009; Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2013; Picot & Hou, 2003). They also experience challenges with housing (Mensah & Williams, 2014; Murdie & Logan, 2011; Owusu, 1998), accessing social services (Makarimba et al., 2013), prejudice, discrimination, and racism (Oreopoulos, 2011; Schroeter & James, 2015).

The above challenges are further exacerbated by the sociodemographic characteristic (such as age, sex, income, and ethnicity) of the immigrant with research indicating that immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa experience the lowest rate of integration (Darden, 2005). Amid this, available evidence suggests that there has been a continuous increase in the number of immigrants from such places. For instance, Statistics Canada revealed that between 2006 and 2011, an estimated 145,700 immigrants arrived in Canada from Africa, representing 12.5 percent of newcomers within that period (an increase from 10.3% in 2000–2005, 7.3% in 1990, and 1.9% before the 1970s) (Statistics Canada, 2013). Similarly, census data from 2016 also reveals that immigrants from Africa constitute the second largest source of immigrants into the country thereby prompting the need for attention on this group of immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2016).

Furthermore, research finds that immigrant challenges in Canada are compounded by the lack of relevant and diverse personal networks. Immigrants without social networks experience challenges, have few individuals to assist in their settlement and integration, and are unable to patronize and utilize the services provided for them (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2009; Brown, 2017; Creese & Wiebe, 2012;

Makarimba et al., 2013; Phan et al., 2017; Stewart et al., 2009; Teixeira, 2011, 2014; Wang et al., 2017; White, 2017). However, those with some form of social networks can overcome integration challenges (Akkaymak, 2016; Majerski, 2019; Somerville, 2015). Yet, questions regarding how networks are formed, whether they are formed prior to immigrant's arrival or upon arrival, and what types of support are exchanged by virtue of immigrants, network members and network characteristics remain unanswered. Answering these questions from a social network analysis perspective will shed more insight regarding the role of personal networks toward the integration of immigrants within the Canadian society. In addition, it will help unravel the discourse behind personal networks for which some scholars perceive as being beneficial (Lubbers et al., 2010).

To this end, this study seeks to examine the role of personal networks in the integration process of recent immigrants in destination countries like Canada. It adopts an anatomical approach by first considering the development and structure of immigrant networks before delving into discussions on the role of these networks in the integration process. The thesis adopts a case study approach by investigating one of the recent immigrant groups from sub-Saharan Africa that is Ghanaian immigrants. Ghanaian immigrants are part of the black immigrant groups with a growing population whose integration is rarely studied. This thesis builds on prior work on this immigrant group to understand network development within the Canadian context, specifically within the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA). This thesis uses an integrated-article approach with three distinct but interrelated manuscripts to achieve its desired objectives. The specific objectives for each manuscript are discussed in the next section.

1.2 Study Objectives

1.2.1 Objective 1: To examine the structure and composition of immigrants' network within the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA)

Immigration scholarship within the Canadian context has highlighted the vital role assumed by members of the immigrants' network. These studies show the different assistance and support provided by these individuals. However, studies that examine what the composition and structure of these networks are few. Similarly, studies that consider how the context of reception and migration projects contribute towards creating networks are missing from the literature. To address these gaps and the first objective of the study, the following questions will be addressed:

- 1) What is the nature and composition of Ghanaian immigrants' networks within the TCMA?
- 2) What diverse configurations of personal networks exist among them?
- 3) How does the context of reception and migration project explain the development and formation of these networks in Canada?

1.2.2 Objective 2: To examine the combined effect of the immigrant's characteristics, alter characteristics and network characteristics on support exchange

In this manuscript, the nature of support exchange between immigrants and their networks would be examined. The focus is on how specific characteristics of the immigrant (transnationality), their network members (closeness) and network (brokerage) in general are likely to result in the exchange of three types of support – informational, instrumental, and emotional. The research question addressed in the manuscript includes:

- 1) What characteristics of the immigrant (transnationality), alter (closeness) and network (brokerage) result in the exchange of informational, instrumental and emotional support?

Data from an egocentric survey collected from Ghanaian immigrants in the TCMA will be utilized to address this objective. A multilevel multinomial logistic regression with type of support exchanged will be the dependent variable while the independent variables will center on transnationality as an engagement undertaken by immigrants, the spatial and geographic closeness by alters with ego and effective size as brokerage as a characteristic of the network. One of the goals of the manuscript is to move the discussion of support from the individual immigrant to the network level while accounting for directionality in support provision among immigrants and their network members.

1.2.3 Objective 3: To determine immigrants' access to networks, challenges encountered in accessing networks and their perception about their networks

The final manuscript in the thesis presents the narratives of immigrants with respect to accessing networks, the challenges encountered in the process, and their perception about the utility of networks in the integration process in Canada. Whilst a plethora of studies appreciate the importance of immigrants' network, only a few investigate how networks are accessed and more so the perception of immigrants with respect to how they value their networks as well as issues such as size and density of their networks. Moreover, few provide a comparative perspective between the various categories by which immigrants are received into Canada. The specific questions that this manuscript seeks to address include:

- 1) How do Ghanaian immigrants access networks in the TCMA?
- 2) What are the challenges they encounter with respect to accessing various networks in the TCMA and Canada?
- 3) What are the perceptions of Ghanaian immigrants regarding the size, density and utility of their networks?

1.3 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis consists of seven interrelated chapters. Chapter 2 sets the context for the study with the concepts and theoretical framework employed in the study. Specifically, the chapter explains the two principal themes of the thesis: personal networks and immigrant integration. It then reviews existing literature while explaining two interrelated concepts: social support and social capital of immigrants in general. Thereafter, the chapter discusses the role of integration in the development of networks and reviews relevant literature on access to networks. Finally, it discusses social networks and network social capital as the overarching theories employed in the study.

The methodological approach of the research is presented in Chapter 3. The chapter introduces the type of research approaches used, the research design, the sampling technique, and the modes of primary data collection. It also includes a critique of the methods and techniques adopted for the research. Chapter 4 (Manuscript 1) addresses the first research objective of the thesis which investigates the structure and composition of immigrants' networks in Canada. Chapter 5 (Manuscript 2) focuses on the social support that immigrants derive from their networks. The chapter investigates the extent to which the characteristics of the immigrant, alter, and network affect the provision of support within the immigrants' networks. Chapter 6 (Manuscript 3) provides a qualitative account of how immigrants access networks, the challenges they face in accessing these networks, and their perception of their networks. Chapter 7 sums up the discussion of the findings in view of the research objectives. It offers a discussion on the contribution of the thesis to existing studies on immigrant integration and personal networks in Canada. It also includes directions for future research in immigrant integration and personal networks.

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CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review: Theories & Existing Literature

2. Introduction

This chapter of the thesis reviews relevant literature on the various themes discussed in the study as well as the theoretical framework of the study. The chapter begins by first defining the key concepts, namely integration, social support and social capital. Here after, the chapter delves into a review of the thematic areas. It reviews existing literature on the nature of networks available to immigrants, their access to these networks and the support they derive from the networks. The chapter then discusses two main theories, social networks and social capital. Given that social networks function as a method, details on social networks as theory or social network analysis together with some properties are presented in the final part of this chapter.

2.1 Defining Key Concepts

2.1.1 Defining integration

The concept of integration like many other social science concepts has received considerable attention in recent times from scholars, policymakers and different stakeholders (Castles et al., 2001; Filipescu, 2009; Harder et al., 2018; Hout et al., 2013; Li, 2003; Pennix, 2005; Robinson, 1998). The reasons for this interest stem from the approach of some receiving society towards immigrants, the challenges immigrants encounter, and a lack of consensus regarding what it should be or how it should be measured (Age & Strand, 2008; Castles et al., 2001). Yet, integration has been defined in different ways by different countries and individuals—a situation that has resulted in a lack of relevant policy in some situations. Likewise, the different conceptualization has resulted in diverse descriptions of the term. Schunck (2014) posits that about 30 terms are associated with integration while terms such as adaptation, acculturation, assimilation and incorporation being the most commonly used in the literature with respect to how immigrants become part of the host society. Schunck (2014:12),

however, argues that, perhaps preference should be given to integration since it is a “neutral, superordinate concept that refers to the relationship between individuals and groups”. Castaneda (2018) also notes that in order to capture how immigrants feel about a destination they call home, integration is a better term to use. Castaneda defines integration as the ability of immigrants and their children to interact mostly on equal and fair terms as the native-born. According to Castaneda (2018) “equal opportunities” means upwards social mobility, absence of residential segregation, equal opportunity for political participation and activities. However, Castaneda’s optimistic perspective of integration has eluded most immigrants. Immigrants are confronted with myriad challenges in their quest to achieve parity with the native-born in receiving societies (Biles et al., 2008).

Despite the divergent opinions and definitional uncertainties, integration occurs at different levels and sectors of the society and involves a wide range of actors such as public officials, decision-makers, employers, service providers, neighbors and the immigrant themselves (Ager & Strand, 2008; De Haas 2010; Stalker 2008). Integration also continues to remain a relevant policy and research agenda in most countries given the continuous challenges that immigrants face in these countries (Cleave & Arku, 2020; Kuuire et al., 2016; Kyeremeh et al., 2019).

The concept of integration is considered a process and an outcome. As a process, previous accounts from policymakers and research indicate that integration was a one-way process (Kazemipur & Nakhaie, 2014; Kymlicka, 1998) where immigrants were expected to integrate into the host society without assistance from the receiving society. Thus, integration was conceived as assimilation whereby immigrants were expected to forgo their culture and adopt that of the host society (Banting, 2014; Frideres, 2008). They were expected to seek or identify network members who could assist in their integration.

Contemporary research, however, suggests that integration is a two-way process; a process that requires immigrants to contribute towards learning how to become part of the host society and the host society creating an enabling environment

for immigrants to part of the society (Biles, 2008; Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003; Kazimpur & Nakhaie, 2014; Li, 2003; Phalet & Swyngedouw, 2003). Frideres (2008) reveals that the two-way process that appears in integration policies assures safety and security for the native born as well as mutual respect for the immigrant.

Integration as an outcome is conceptualized as a multidimensional process consisting of social integration, economic integration, cultural integration, and political integration (Biles, 2008; Pennix, 2005). For this reason, Phalet and Swyngedouw (2003) note that scholars need to be mindful of these components when discussing immigrants' integration since immigrants can be well integrated into one dimension, but not in other components. Similarly, Entzinger and Biezeveld (2003) conceive integration as a multifaceted phenomenon, which occurs along the lines of institutional and normative approach. An institutional approach involves a surge in immigrant participation in the major institutions of the host society such as the labour market, health care, and educational system. A normative approach involves changes in the immigrants' identity and cultural orientation. Integration is also considered time-dependent, that is, whether short-term, intermediate or long-term with varied impact on the immigrant in the host society (Shields & Türegün, 2014). Variation also exists among countries that consider themselves as non-traditional immigrant receiving countries as opposed to traditional immigrant receiving societies such as Canada.

2.1.2 Social support

Given that one of the objectives of the study is to examine the kinds of social support Ghanaian immigrants derived from their networks, a description of the concept is provided here. Cohen et al. (2000:4) define social support as “the social resources that persons perceive to be available or that are actually provided to them by non-professionals in the context of both formal support groups and informal helping relationships.” The ability to derive resources may depend on personal, cultural and environmental factors. Personal factors relate to the type of relationship whether familial, friendship or acquaintanceship; cultural factors could be linked to expected norm or ways of relating with individuals within a network, and environmental factors

are often extended to where the relationship is established. Based on this, Gottlieb and Bergen (2010) assert that social support does not permanently reside in the social networks; it is not readily available, sufficient or insufficient in the desired measure that an individual may want it.

Social support also functions and exists in different forms such as emotional, instrumental, informational, companionship, esteem, financial and socializing support (Herz, 2015; Wellman, 2007). These forms of support may be provided by different individuals at different times in different contexts and may flow to the immigrant from different geographical locations (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018; Vertovec, 2002). For instance, informational support, which refers to offering advice or providing vital information such as where to find a job, a good school or some service, may be derived from different sources such as work colleagues, neighbours, and friends (Béji, 2010; De Miguel & Trammer, 2010; Lubbers et al., 2010). Likewise, emotional support, which involves providing encouragement, a caring shoulder for those in distress or cultural shock and listening to the challenges of others, is often supplied by family and close ties and is provided by individuals who are close by or in a different location (Bergeron & Potter, 2006; Djundeva & Ellwardt, 2020; Toruńczyk-Ruiz, 2008).

Another key component of social support revolves around how it is measured; that is, whether quantitatively or qualitatively and from the individual's perspective (Gottlieb & Bergen, 2010). Quantitatively, it can be measured as being too little to too much, qualitatively, it is based on the quality of support that is provided (Gottlieb & Bergen, 2010). This qualitative nature of social support can be examined with respect to the body language of the provider, the manner of delivery and the covert message that is associated with the delivery (Gottlieb & Bergen, 2010).

Further, social support can be unidirectional or bidirectional (Plicket et al., 2007). Unidirectional implies that support may flow from one individual to another person, whereas in a bidirectional relationship, support flows from one individual to another individual and vice versa. In some circumstance, the nature of the support such as financial support where an individual lends money to another individual or

support in the form of companionship is most likely to result in a bidirectional relationship. Instrumental support in the form of tangible assistance like helping with children, plowing a neighbour's house and others is likely to be bidirectional in nature. Others such as informational can be unidirectional.

2.1.3 Social capital

Another objective of this study is to describe how Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area access networks and derive resources from them towards their integration. The resources associated with the networks are considered as social capital despite capital being considered an investment with certain expected returns (Lin 1999). In describing social capital, Portes (1998) notes that it is one of the most popular ideas to have emerged from sociological theory into everyday language. Given its penetration and popular usage, some consider it as one of the buzzwords of the 20th century with different meanings from different disciplines (Field, 2008; Fine, 2007). In spite of this, Adler and Kwon (2002) define social capital as the goodwill available to individuals or groups. This goodwill comes from an individual's interaction and association with others in different social relations.

Social capital is also perceived as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (Bourdieu, 1985:248). This definition illustrates the tangible and intangible nature of the resource that an individual can accrue from their association with others. This resource is embedded within the structure of the network. Hence, scholars believe that individuals who possess some form of social capital are more likely to make use of such capital in different instances than those without (Nakhaie & Kazimpur, 2013).

A key attribute of social capital is that it functions like certain forms of physical capital, which are not reversible or convertible (Poder, 2011; Portes, 1998). As such, it requires considerable investment in establishing and maintaining those relationships in order to benefit from it (Foster et al., 2015; Ryan, 2011). It also presupposes that an overinvestment or unbalanced investment in it can cause the goodwill that is intended

to flow from it to turn into a constraint and a liability (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Field, 2008). Moreover, Portes (1998) and others indicate that despite the benefit that may be made available to the individual, social capital does have negative consequences for the broader personal network that one may be a part of – a view that is shared by Kao (2004) and Fine (2007).

Furthermore, social capital is rooted in the individuals within the network and constitutes the benefit individuals derive from members of the network (Putnam, 2000). As such, an individual can leverage on their status within the network to provide the needed capital for others (Bankston, 2014; Field, 2008; Rueda & Ragusa, 2012). Based on this line of reasoning, the general assumption is that an individual with a dense network is more likely to possess social capital compared with an individual with a less dense network. In migration studies, immigrants often possess less social capital due to the small number of individuals within their networks (Kazemipur, 2006; Newbold et al., 2015; Thomas, 2011).

2.2 Review of literature on thematic areas

This portion of the chapter focuses on relevant literature that pertains to the thematic areas covered in the thesis. It begins by reviewing the notion of integration within the Canadian context. It then examines how the integration process contributes to forming personal ties. Subsequently, the chapter discusses immigrants' social networks and access to resources, personal networks and social support and ends with a discussion of social network and social capital as the theoretical framework of the thesis.

2.2.1 Integration within Canada

Within Canada, the concept of integration features prominently in major legislation and organizational documents. Key immigration document such as the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) and Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA 2001) both outline and indicate the government's obligation to promote the full and equal participation of individuals and communities in various aspects (e.g., economic, social,

cultural) of the Canadian society (Meinhard et al., 2012; Praznik & Shields, 2018). Amongst policymakers, integration is often the desired outcome or the end of the settlement process during which immigrants become fully functioning members of the Canadian society (IRCC, 2017; Shields & Türegün, 2014; Walton-Roberts, 2012).

Li (2003:174) argues that the term integration is often used “liberally by those who have an interest in it.” For those who have attempted to define it, they conceptualized integration as a process whereby groups and individuals participate and interact with others at all institutional levels. Integration is also considered as the process that allows groups and individuals to become full participants in the Canadian society while, enabling them to retain their own cultural identity (Henry et al. 1995). The process of becoming full participants in the Canadian society has often eluded many immigrants by virtue of the different barriers and obstacles they encounter (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2014; Kazemipur & Nakhaie, 2013; Mensah & Williams 2014; Schroeter & James, 2015). The inability to become full participants in the host society has led Kuuire and colleagues to argue that an urgent research task in immigrant integration is the identification of barriers to integration (Kuuire et al., 2016).

In discussing integration, Canadian immigration scholarship often distinguishes it from assimilation - a term that is usually associated with American immigration studies. The reason being that assimilation connotes a one-way process of absorption and conformity (Fleras 2010) where the immigrant is compelled to adopt the culture of the host society. The right to maintain the immigrant’s uniqueness is not encouraged; rather, the idea of becoming the same people (both immigrants and native-born) is the goal. Immigrants becoming like the native-born may present challenges for them. As such, Canadian immigration seeks to facilitate the smooth transition of immigrants while allowing them room to maintain their distinct characteristics. Li (2003), however, argues that despite the existing efforts, when integration is critically analyzed, the process is similarly one of conformity, compliance, and uniformity, which is not different from assimilation.

Canadian immigration scholarship also identifies integration as a multidimensional concept. This consists of a social dimension (engaging in social organizations and institutions, development of networks and involvement in voluntary activities), economic dimension (parity in income and employment opportunities), cultural (achieving parity on cultural views, and a sense of attachment to Canada) and political dimension (citizenship and political rights) (Nakhaie, 2015). Frideres (2008) contends that in order for immigrants to be fully integrated into the Canadian society, there is the need to be engaged in these four dimensions of integration. However, given their unique individual attributes and different migration history and aspirations, some immigrants are unable to integrate in the various dimensions while some integrate differently over the course of time.

Regarding individual factors that affect integration, Murdie and Ghosh (2010) assert that length of residence and mode of entry influence the extent of immigrants' integration into the Canadian society. Phillmore and Goodson (2008) also disclose that specific objective and subjective factors play an important role in the integration process. Objective factors range from relatively short-term concerns such as housing, education and employment to longer-term issues such as citizenship, language and civic participation. The former is usually referred to as functional integration whereas the latter refer to civic integration (Ray, 2002: 3). On the other hand, subjective factors include variables such as identification with the new country, internalization of its values and norms and satisfaction with the overall immigration and settlement process (Goldlust & Richmond, 1974). These two objectives can shape the kinds of network that an immigrant is likely to build and consequently influence their integration in Canada. Yet, very little attention has been paid to the interplay between these factors and how the interplay of factors lead to the composition and evolution of immigrants' networks.

To measure immigrant integration in Canada, scholars typically compare the economic performance (e.g., earnings) of immigrants with the native-born. In doing so, evidence reveals that it takes a longer period for earnings of immigrants to

converge with non-immigrants (Frenette & Morissette, 2005; Green & Worswick, 2010; Hou 2013; Hou, & Coulombe 2008; Hum & Simpson, 2004; Majerski 2019; Picot & Hou, 2003; Picot, Reitz 2006). This lack of convergence has been attributed to the difficulty immigrants' face in accessing the Canadian labour market as well as challenges they encounter within the market. For example, Buzdugan and Halli (2009) find that immigrants with similar foreign education and experience levels as their Canadian counterparts earned less income. This situation has been referred to as devaluation of foreign educational credentials and work experience. Similarly, using the 2006 census data, Li and Li (2013) find that, on average, both native-born male and female Canadians earned more than male and female immigrants with slightly higher education. Overall, Canadian men earned about 10 percent more than immigrant men while Canadian women earned about 8 percent more than immigrant women.

Biles et al. (2008) argue that the lack of integration by immigrants in the Canadian labour market reflects poorly on the Canadian society on two fronts. First, it represents a waste of economic potential and low returns on investments in immigrant selection and integration. Second, it may lead to a decline in the quality of life, which might lower the desire of some immigrants to remain in Canada. This decline in quality of life has led to widespread interest in the labour market integration of immigrants, with Godwin (2008) suggesting that economic integration remains a central thrust of migration studies in Canada.

Beyond economic integration, residential distribution of immigrants together with their housing needs constitute another key area in immigrant integration in Canada. Carter et al. (2009) contend that housing is a vital component of the settlement process in the host country. Others note that it is the most important process as immigrants begin to search for a place to live for their family and themselves (Murdie, 2008; Murdie & Teixeira, 2003). Some suggest that out of the different needs of the immigrant in the new society, housing has a profound impact on the immigrants' adaptation and life-chances. Hence, securing a good housing facility can serve as a conduit to integrate in the other dimensions of the integration process. But in spite of

the perceived benefits associated with housing, immigrants in Canada are confronted with housing challenges. Ranging from affordability, accessibility, suitability, racialization and discrimination, the various categories of immigrants have experienced their fair share of housing challenges although with some variations. Teixeira (2008) for example reveals that blacks are more likely to encounter discrimination by property owners in their housing search as compared to other categories of immigrants.

To overcome some of the challenges that immigrants face in Canada, governmental initiatives and policies have been implemented to assist immigrants in the areas of employment, language, housing, and among others (Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC], 2013; IRCC, 2017; Richmond & Shields, 2005; Praznik & Shields, 2018). However, immigrants who are often information deprived coupled with linguistic difficulties are unable to access these services. Likewise, research shows that the support provided does not meet the needs of the immigrants, leading to suggestions to target services to meet the needs of immigrants (Frideres, 2006; Sethi, 2010; Walton-Roberts, 2008).

Considering the inadequacy of support or assistance from formal avenues, most immigrants tend to rely on their personal networks or through their associations such as ethnic and religious groups to provide them the needed support-making networks an important resource in the integration process (Goldring & Landolt, 2014; Ley, 2008; Reimer et al., 2016; Tse, 2011). For instance, Mensah (2009) finds that religious organizations of Ghanaian origin in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) assist Ghanaian immigrants in job search assistance, community activities and other social gatherings. Likewise, Owusu (2000) reveals that national and ethnic associations are vital to the social integration of Ghanaian immigrants in the GTA. In addition, immigrants may intentionally and unintentionally form ties with the purpose of such individuals assisting them in their integration. The next section is dedicated to how the process of integration leads to development of personal networks for the immigrant.

2.2.2 The integration process and development of personal networks

All dimensions of integration (whether economic, social, cultural and political) contribute to developing ties, which aid immigrants in their short-and long-term settlement in the host society. However, because different categories of immigrants are admitted within a receiving country, how ties are developed may differ among groups. For instance, for a family class immigrant who possesses existing ties prior to arrival in the host society, they may depend on their immediate ties to access labour market, housing market, and other social services (Bauder, 2019; Bevelander & Pendakur, 2014).

Skilled/economic class and refugees depending on their goals may realize the importance of developing ties on their own either purposely or unpurposefully. Economic/skilled immigrants for instance may leverage on the different types of capital they bring to host society and establish ties, thus helping them to integrate and shape their trajectory into various aspects of the society (Nee & Sanders, 2001; Roth et al., 2012). Others, however, may be reluctant because of linguistic challenges and find it difficult to deliberately form ties. The process of tie formation especially with the native-born has been identified as essential (De Miguel & Tranmer, 2010; Lubbers et al., 2013). This is because natives tend to have access to more and better information about employment given their long exposure to the labour market than the immigrant (Hagan, 1998; Kanas et al., 2011; Nannestad et al., 2008; Putnam, 2000). As well, immigrants may lack the appropriate cultural norms and expectations of the host society and have to depend on members of their personal networks to assist them. Immigrants who are able to achieve this often may possess a large network consisting of both co-ethnics, the native-born and other immigrants.

When immigrants form a diverse network (a network that consists of different groups of individuals and nationality) and interact with members of their networks, it results in changes in the composition of the networks of both immigrants and network members over time. This change in network composition may be visible within their neighborhoods or through a range of activities. Immigrants, for instance, may set up

businesses and services in their local neighborhoods that bring immigrants and native-borns into contact with one another, which has both networking and economic advantage. Alba and Foner (2015) reveal that the creation of immigrant cuisines has been modified for the European or North American tastes where members of the host society with an appetite for foreign cuisines patronize. These restaurants and eateries creates an avenue for employment, economic gains as well as a platform for interaction between immigrants and natives. Interaction between immigrants and natives may potentially results in friendship and partnership over time in the host society. These relationships are vital since a key component of integration is peaceful co-existence between immigrants and the native-born (Schnuk, 2014).

Interacting with members of one's primary network may pave the way for connection into other secondary networks in a process known as transitivity (Bankston, 2014; Hermann & Riddle, 2005; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). That is, because they are friends with B, and B is a friend of C, then they are likely to become a friend to C by their association with B. Ultimately, becoming friends with C is achieved through deliberate attempts by B to connect them or by leveraging their friendship with B to get to know C. These new ties as Small (2009) posits, may often serve as casual acquaintances with very little effect on the immigrant or in some cases may play an influential role in the integration process of the immigrant. Here, initial network members become effective brokers that connect immigrants to other individuals they consider useful for some aspect of their integration (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018). A major advantage of forming ties with others often lies in the ability to access or know that one can obtain resources in time of need or by being a member. The next section of the review focuses on the nexus between networks and access to resources that may lie therein.

2.2.3 Immigrant social networks and access to resources

Research suggests that the development of ties may emerge through a range of activities either purposely or non-purposely (Small, 2009). One phenomenon that results in the creation of social networks is migration (Eve, 2010; Ryan, 2011). The

interest in social networks with respect to migration is linked, in part, to two things. First, the interest in networks dates back to the 1970s and 1980s when networks led to changes in the migrant flows to industrialized nations based on family, household, friendship and community ties and relationship (Boyd, 1989; Massey, 1988; De Haas, 2007). Second, the interest is associated with functions that network members such as family and friends play in the migration process. Network members provide a wide range of assistance pre and post migration (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018; Dolfin & Genicot, 2010; Fong & Shen, 2011; Majerski, 2019). For example, in Canada, studies indicate that immigrants with diverse networks consisting of family, friends and acquaintances are more likely to find a job, have higher wages, and obtain better quality housing, compared to immigrants with a small network size. Immigrants who depend on formal organizations such as settlement and employment agencies also do not fare better as their counterparts with diverse networks (Fong & Cao, 2009; Thomas, 2011; Xue, 2008).

Furthermore, networks also influence the behaviour and perceptions of the immigrant. When immigrants' social connections expand by virtue of the presence of an established ethnic community in the host society, they become more familiar with the new environment and are therefore able to form ethnic, cultural and class identities (Xu & Palmer, 2011). These ethnic communities then provide norms and obligations as well as perception of the host society that lead to understanding between one another and the group at large. These contexts as noted by Xu and Palmer (2011: 282) "influence how immigrants perceive their new lives as well as the behaviors in which they engage in their new settings."

Despite the perceived advantages of networks, they also pose challenges in the migration process. In most cases, networks become unbeneficial by trapping immigrants at the bottom of the economic ladder through their participation in marginal sectors of the economy. These sectors provide immigrants with low-wages and little to no potential for advancement, and consequently prevents immigrants from forming ties with members of the host society (Ahmad, 2015; Feng & Oaka, 2002; Granovetter, 2005; Li, 2004; Menjivar, 2000; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993).

Regarding immigrants' access to networks, only a few studies show the mechanisms of formation and the challenges associated with it (see Brednikova & Pachenkov, 2002; Eve, 2010; Gill & Bialski, 2011; Grieco, 1998; Ryan, 2011; Ryan et al., 2008). As such, the sequence of events that results in formation of new ties by immigrants as argued by Varshaver and Rocheva (2020) is yet to be described and discovered. Most studies on immigrant's network often highlight and indicate support that flows through the networks (see Herz, 2015; Kornienko et al., 2018; Lancee, 2010), the absence of certain variables and how these variables affects their access to support, while others provide names of contacts within their networks that can provide a particular type of support or the other (Kazemipur, 2006). The reason for this neglect is based on the idea that since immigrants are likely to join co-ethnic ties in the new society, they can obtain support easily without any hurdle in the networks (Akkaymak, 2016; Eve, 2010). However, access to co-ethnic ties is not a straight course since an immigrant's unique characteristics, background and psychological factors such as personality traits might work either in their favor or against them in terms of developing and maintaining ties. Piracha and colleagues (2014) for instance, examine the probability of finding jobs and wage levels using an index of social networks among immigrants in Australia. Employing data from the Households' Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) longitudinal survey data (2002-2010), they find a positive effect of social networks on the employment outcomes and wages, especially for women (Piracha et al. 2014). Nonetheless, this account fails to provide details about negotiations that may take place before immigrants secure or obtain employment opportunities among other issues.

For the few works that describe in detail how immigrants' access ties, Ryan et al. (2008) reveal how Polish immigrants achieve this in London, United Kingdom. Their accounts reveal that ties to co-ethnics or Poles for instance is more complex than network studies will show. They indicate that many Polish immigrants had little to no ties with fellow Poles due to high levels of mistrust and rivalry that exists within co-ethnic networks. Nevertheless, these Polish immigrants were able to establish strong

ties with other immigrant groups to improve upon various aspects of their lives such as linguistic abilities – to facilitate access to opportunities such as employment. In the Canadian context, few studies have begun to emerge. Akkaymak (2016), for instance, examines how Turkish immigrants develop ties in Toronto and London. Akkaymak indicates that factors such as social class, ethnicity, habitus and different forms of capital often influence the opportunity to develop social networks. Thus, Akkaymak posits that developing ties with co-ethnic, other immigrants and native-born Canadians is a complex process. Despite the utility of this study, gaps still exist in our understanding of network development in Canada. Although available evidence indicates that immigrant groups have different integration experience, the process by which recent immigrants from non-traditional countries in Africa develop ties is under-researched. Hence, the current study sheds insight on this by examining the process of network development among Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area.

2.2.4 Personal networks and social support

The opportunity to derive actual support is a major motivation for accessing and developing ties. Thus, at the core of the works on personal networks is the kind of social support that an immigrant receives. This support as Kornienko et al. (2018) suggest is vital to the successful adaptation of the immigrant in a new society. Bilecen and Cardona (2018) posit that social support is a relationship-based concept, which reveals the type of assistance that emerges from personal relationships. In this regard, an individual with any form of relationship is likely to benefit from different types of supportive resources (Agneessens et al., 2006) which is particularly essential for the immigrant. Vertovec (2002:3) captures the importance of these supportive resources to immigrants when he asserts, “for migrants, social networks are crucial for finding jobs and accommodation, circulating goods and services as well as psychological support and continuous social and economic information.” In addition to this, Vasat and Bernard (2015) note that individuals are inclined to offer free support to members in their networks due to mutual solidarity and trust. However, this may not always be

the case since some investment is required on the part of members to be able to receive support (Poder, 2011; Tanasescu & Smith, 2012). Costs associated with this investment can be both tangible and intangible, which may prevent certain individuals from being able to draw from the resources in their networks.

Importantly, support is recognized as “an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well-being of the recipient” (Shumaker & Brownell, 1984:13). It is therefore divided into different dimensions as previously stated and provided by different ties at various points in time (Herz, 2015). Wellman and Wortley (1990) argue that close ties provide greater social support in the form of companionship and emotional support compared to weak ties. Ryan (2011) opines that this type of support that is, companionship and emotional support is most likely to come from immigrants in need of similar support. With respect to weak ties, Granovetter’s (1973; 1983) classic on the strength of ties, shows that weak or distant ties provide relevant information that tend to be useful for the immigrant’s economic integration. Gold (2005), also finds that financial support is most likely to be provided by immigrants in good financial standing. Members of one’s personal networks also provide different dimensions of support. De Miguel and Tranmer (2010), for instance, drawing on the accounts of immigrants in Spain, show that immigrants derive instrumental support from native-born Spanish while depending on other immigrants for support with respect to housing and information. In the area of finding employment, they resort to both the native-born as well as immigrants within their personal networks.

For the most part, it is documented that access to resources and the ability to make use of such resources is tied to the successful integration of the immigrant in the host country (Kornieko et al., 2018). Individual characteristics such as length of stay, educational attainment, income, intermarriage, language acquisition play a pivotal role in accessing these resources (Waters & Jimenez, 2005). Using the case of German immigrants in Great Britain, for instance, Herz (2015) finds that these characteristics

play a significant role in the provision of financial and emotional support that immigrants receive from their transnational ties.

Besides the influence of ties, spatial location also accounts for the type of support an individual receives. Bilecen (2016) suggests that this is particularly useful for international immigrants who tend to have geographically dispersed networks of friends and family at home and new acquaintances and friends in the host society. Such immigrants are therefore able to fall on their transnational networks when needed while depending on their local network for immediate assistance in some situations. For example, Boccagni (2015) argues that transnational networks or family left behind are increasingly becoming a source of emotional support provision as well as a source of locus for cultivating nostalgia, attachment and social status. Accessing dual ties (local and transnational) can be advantageous in situations such as finding employment (Ryan et al., 2008) but can equally be burdensome when social support requires personal interaction.

However, an individual's ability to access any type of support via their networks is dependent on the person's characteristics. These individual characteristics such as social and linguistic skills determine the extent to which an individual manages to incorporate certain people within their network. Feld (2004) asserts that the structural and social composition of the different social environments in which the individual engages in (for instance, labour market, civic associations, and religious institutions) helps them to develop a particular type of network. For an immigrant, Lubbers et al. (2013) point out that variation in terms of the category of immigrant, the context of origin as well as the type of migration shapes the type of network that they will access.

In addition, gender also plays an important role in the formation of personal networks. Szell and Tuner (2013) suggest that men and women have different ways of creating their social relations, which, in turn, create a particular type of network. In this regard, Kurtosi (2008) points out that women often produce homogenous networks as compared to men, who are inclined to engage in diverse networks. Thus, unraveling

the gendered dimension of networks also helps to understand the integration process of immigrants.

Similarly, Vasat and Bernard (2015) contend that the length of stay influences the type of networks an immigrant is likely to possess. According to them, since integration is a gradual process, immigrants will require time to build connections with the native-born. Overtime, their networks will extend to natives who may be in a good position to provide immigrants with instrumental support as well as emotional support. Although, this situation is achievable in many respects, it is seldom the case. Anecdotal evidence in Canada points out that some immigrants are comfortable staying with their own group after several years and do not see the need to establish networks with the native-born. Nevertheless, Vasat and Bernard (2015) do advocate for empirical justification of this situation for which the current study seeks to pursue.

Along these lines, one advantage of structured analysis of networks is its contribution towards social support. Vasat and Bernard (2015) contend that structured analysis can help reveal whether social support networks are made up of interconnected groups or isolated members of a group who do not know each other. They believe this type of analysis can help answer the question of whether they are creating local ethnic communities or not. Local ethnic community's especially personal communities have been found to provide sources of social support (Chua et al., 2009). Based on this thinking, the present study will seek to determine whether indeed the structured analysis of a particular immigrant group does play the role of personal communities. As important as the support that immigrants derive from their networks, the mechanisms by which these support flows is equally essential.

2.3 Social Network as Theory

The main theoretical framework that guides this thesis is social network theory. Although social networks function as a method, it also fits the category as theory. As a theory, social networks are based on the idea that “interconnectedness represents the mechanism of action” (Perry et al., 2018:5). That is, the outcome of an individual's

behaviour or action is born out of their interaction with different people instead of being solely the individual's decision, motivation or belief system. This is also the case since an individual's life is often dependent on the advice, suggestions, support, conflict and competition they receive from people (Dahinden, 2013; Perry et al., 2018). In this regard, Meyer (2001) argues that network theory is important for linking individual action with overarching economic and social processes. Besides influencing individuals, social networks also set the context in groups, associations, organizations and institutions that shapes how its members behave, how they feel and what potentially happens to them.

An important assertion by network theorists is that the nature of relationship between individuals, that is, the individuals one is connected to and how they are connected has severe consequences in terms of what and how much is shared or flows from person to person within a network. It also has influence on how much power or advantage an individual wields in the network. Typically, an individual's position within a network may determine to an extent, the opportunities and constraints that may accrue to the individual. For example, Bilecen and Cardona (2018) show that occupying a brokerage position in the network of Turkish immigrants is associated with receiving information and emotional support.

With respects to migration studies, Goss and Lindquist (1995) suggest that the incorporation of networks into theoretical and empirical analyses provide a means of articulating agency and structure and reconciling the functional (i.e. neo-classical economic theory) and the structural perspective (i.e. world systems theory). According to Massey (1988), network formation is the most important structural mechanism that leads to international migration.

For the most part, networks that emerge from the migration process are considered a web of reciprocal relations that connects migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in the host and destination society and act as conduits for the transfer of people, services, funds, goods, and information across geographical and economic space. According to Massey (1988), networks are responsible for the perpetuation of

migration. This is because once the migration stream begins; networks help to reduce the costs and risks associated with it while increasing the expected net returns. In essence, the network acts as a form of social capital that individuals can draw upon to gain access to opportunities and services.

Networks also serve as the link between sending and receiving countries and in part contributing to the self-sustaining nature of international movement. Networks play an influential role in this capacity since they act as entities that create a field of social action for transnationalism (Massey, 1998). Networks define a space for political and socioeconomic action that remains separate from both the sending and receiving societies involved (Basch et al., 1994; Smith, 1993). Networks equally connects the macro and micro, mediating between the individuals in the immigrant household and the larger social system (Somerville 2015). However, networks also exhibit some negative tendencies, which act as a burden on immigrants. Networks have the potential to limit individual freedom and prevent individuals from obtaining resources (Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993), and the reciprocal obligations inherent in networks can overwhelm members (Menjivar, 2000; Nee & Nee, 1986). This notwithstanding, they contribute to and explain immigrants' settlement in the host society.

2.4 Social Capital Theory

Network social capital is one of the theoretical orientations to emerge from social networks. It is a concept that provides an important tool for understanding how networks affect migration. According to Hanley and colleagues (2018), the concept provides an understanding of how the personal networks of immigrants' function in the destination countries. Network social capital as theory has emerged from the works of Coleman (1988), Bourdieu (1985) and more recently Putnam (2000). Given their impact on networks, a review of their accounts is provided below.

Coleman (1988) defines social capital as different resources available to an actor, which exist in the social structure of relations between actors and among actors. Coleman posits that an actor's ties to others allow them the opportunity to gain access

to the broad range of resources. His work is often credited for helping to understand the nature of resources sharing within networks, which is rooted in the notion of mutual obligation and expectations (Portes, 1993). The nature of this resource sharing functions based on some accepted practices. This involves assisting someone with the hope that similar help would be offered in return. Next is trust, which pertains to the assurance of knowing that or obtaining assistance from others; norms and penalties that discourage their transgression and information channel that entails information flow between well connected individuals with education playing a pivotal role in the process (Bankston, 2014; Kao, 2004; Poder 2011).

Coleman also notes that the presence of stable structures, altruistic motives and the network's degree of closure (a network in which all members have ties with all members) enhances social capital compared to others (Bankson, 2014). Nonetheless, Coleman's account has been criticized for considering the relationship between close ties "as an unmitigated good" (Edward, 2004).

Another notable contribution to the social capital debate is the work by Robert Putnam. Putman is often heralded for his popularity of the concept both within and outside academia. According to Putnam (1995), social capital should be considered as the product of an interaction between individuals and their social networks based on trust and reciprocity. His work revolves around two types of social ties and on the idea that the level of civic culture in a society depends on the type of ties that develops the most. Putnam identifies the two types of ties as horizontal and vertical ties. Putnam explains horizontal ties as ties that exist among actors of the same pedigree while vertical ties are ties that exist between actors of unequal power in relationships of hierarchy.

One major contribution of Putnam's works is his classification of the different types of bonds for which Coleman has been critiqued for identifying as "an unmitigated good" (Ryan, 2011, 2015). Putnam proposed the idea of bonding social capital which entails "ties to people who are like me in some important way" (ties with close individuals such as family or good friends) – and bridging – "people who are

unlike me in some important way.” Putnam describes ties with similar individuals as networks that may be important for “getting by” while those between individuals who differ from one another as bridging connections that are important for “getting ahead” (2000: 23). Bridging ties mostly include casual friends, colleagues or associates. With respect to works on immigrants, bonding ties is known as intra-ethnic ties (i.e., ties with one’s ethnic group members) while bridging ties is referred to as inter-ethnic ties or ties between an actor and individuals of a different ethnic group (Kanas et al., 2009; Kazemipur, 2006; Nakhaie & Kazemipur, 2013). Research finds that immigrants in particular, often draw support from these ties in order to overcome structural challenges in the new society (Li, 2004; Portes & Sensenbrenner, 1993).

This notwithstanding, Putnam’s account has been critiqued for not showing exactly how the different types of bonds would assist individuals to get by and get ahead. Likewise, Putnam’s proposition does not consider the heterogeneity that may exist in one’s network (Akkaymak, 2016). In addition, the idea that immigrants are able to draw support easily from their co-ethnic ties overlooks the complexities that may exist in the immigrant’s network which at times may lead to unequal power relations such as the vertical tie proposed by Putnam. The work of Pierre Bourdieu, another key proponent of social capital theory considers some of the short falls of Putnam.

Unlike Putnam and Coleman, Bourdieu’s understanding of social capital differs in that he identifies the primary goal of social capital as being able to build an analysis of relations of domination. To him, this allows social capital to contribute to the reproduction of power that allows us to identify the dynamics of unequal power relations that exist between individuals as well as conflicts of interests. According to Portes (1998), Bourdieu’s examination of the concept is instrumental since he pays attention to the benefits that accrues to the individual because of their participation in groups as well as the deliberate construction of sociability for creating this resource. From Bourdieu’s perspective, social networks are not automatic but constructed through investment strategies based on specific group relations and that serves as a source of benefits to the group members. In doing so, he highlights the challenges and

opportunities, which influences how an individual accesses different types of networks.

Furthermore, Bourdieu perceives social capital as “factors of social class, dominance and conflict” which reflects his idea of the challenges associated with tie development and access. Given this, Bourdieu also reveals some negative outcomes with network closure, which may at times work to concentrate economic capital by excluding outsiders. Ryan (2011) suggests that if this is the case, then it has the potential to limit access to resources since some individuals will prevent others from becoming part of the group. Although Bourdieu's account was not directly related to immigrants, it does provide an avenue to understand the challenges that lie ahead for individuals as they try to access networks.

Regardless of the profound contribution of these scholars to the discussion on immigrants' networks, their accounts seem to overlook one fundamental question: how do individuals access social ties that provide opportunity to access resources? Coleman on his part did not account for it. Bourdieu however provided some indication albeit not a direct response to the question. Bourdieu suggests that networks are the products of investments. Yet, what he meant by investments is not thoroughly described. Putnam and other theorists have also neglected the question with the assumption that as rationale as people are, they would access networks. Although this has merits, the process of accessing networks will vary based on specific characteristics and from one context to another. In light of this, studies have surfaced which has contributed to this theoretical discussion by considering how immigrants access networks. The current study therefore seeks to contribute to this endeavor by considering the case of recent immigrants in Canada.

2.5 Social network as methods or social network analysis

Social network analysis (SNA) or network analysis is a research perspective, which is considered as both a methodological and broad intellectual approach (Wellman, 1983). Methodologically, SNA is a tool for analyzing data and more specifically relational data

(Perry et al., 2018; Scot, 2002; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). SNA provides solutions to analytical challenges typically associated with relational data. With respect to relational data, traditional statistical methods such as linear regression models are often not suitable for it since they violate the assumption of independent observation. This is because networks by their very nature are interdependent or connected; hence, network analysis adopts approaches that takes into account the interdependence within the network or relationship between actors.

A social network analysis perspective has a unique orientation in which structures, their impact, and their evolution become the primary focus (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Social network analysts believe that in order to make sense of the social structure, there is the need to analyze the pattern of ties linking its members. Such analysis, they contend, moves beyond the regular pattern that helps to uncover social system to identifying 'deep structures' (Wellman, 1983:157) of the social phenomenon. In their quest to do so, network analyst model relationships to reveal the structure of a group. This makes it possible to study for instance the effect of the structure on the functioning of the group or the influence of this structure on individuals within the group (Wasserman & Faust, 1994).

Research involving social network analysis reveals some of the initial conceptualizations of migrant networks. Wellman (1983) recounts that network analyst used network concepts to study rural-urban migration and found that, migrants had complex social networks made of both rural and urban ties. These networks provided migrants with resources that helped them cope with the transition from rural to urban modern day life (Mitchell 1961 cited in Wellman 1983). More recently, it has been applied in a wide range of immigrant issues ranging from self-identification (Lubbers et al., 2007), multi-dimensional roles of network members (Kornienko et al., 2018), the relationship between service providers and immigrants (Dominguez & Maya Jariego, 2008) and social support provision among transnational ties (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018).

2.5.1 Properties of social network analysis

Social network analysis are characterized by structural properties such as density, size, intensity, and frequency, which are useful for understanding the nature and composition of networks (Bankston, 2014; Hannerman & Riddle, 2005; Knoke & Yangs, 2008; Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Density as a key feature of networks refers to the degree of closeness between actors in the network. There is high density when all actors in the network are connected to one another, and low density when few actors are connected (Bankston 2014; Hannerman & Riddle, 2005). Network size, refers to the total number of people in an individual's network (Borgatti et al., 2013; Perry et al., 2018). Frequency is another attribute used to measure the strength of the network and it refers to how often actors communicate with other actors in the networks.

A network may also be described by its intensity, which may be either strong or weak (Granovetter, 1983, 1995). Although there is little consensus on what strength and weakness entail, a strong network tie is one in which actors maintain very close relationships (Bankston, 2014; Hannerman & Riddle, 2005). This type of relationship exists between actors and their family members as well as close friends. Whereas a weak tie often exists between acquaintances or mere co-workers usually linked to a specific location (Hanneman & Riddle, 2005; Wasserman & Faust, 1994; Wellman & Wortley, 1990). These properties of network provide a sense of the nature of the relationship between actors and have implications for support flow within networks.

2.5.2 Personal networks

Two main types of networks have dominated the field of social networks. These are whole or sociocentric networks and egocentric or personal networks (McCarty, 2002; Perry et al., 2018; Wasserman & Faust 1994). Sociocentric/whole networks deal with a group of individuals or nodes and the ties that exist among them. They usually involve direct and indirect links within a group and has a well-defined boundary (Borgatti et al., 2013; Lubbers et al., 2007; McCarthy 2002). Personal networks, on the other hand are a special type of network that revolve around a single individual that is 'ego' and the mutual relationship between the ego and network members (alters) surrounding

him or her (Dominguez & Maya Jariego, 2010; Lubbers et al., 2007; Robbins, 2015). The ego's network typically consists of neighbors, friends, co-workers, kins, and acquaintances with some kind of cordial relationship existing among them. The personal network could include individuals who are geographically close and those that are scattered across different geographical regions (Bilecen, 2016; Perry et al., 2018).

Previously, the number of individuals on whom information was collected with regards to the ego was relatively small (Schweizer et al., 1998). However, McCarty (2002) suggests that a large number of individuals should be analyzed with respect to a particular ego while applying structural analyses of whole networks on such individuals. As such, this research follows in the direction of McCarty (2002). It adopts this approach since it allows the individual (ego) to list other individuals (alters) that consist of both strong and weak ties and, by so doing, help to identify the structural properties of their personal networks (Dominguez & Maya Jariego, 2010; McCarty, 2002).

2.6 Summary

This chapter sought to explain the key terms (integration; social support and social capital) associated with the study. It also identified studies associated with immigrants' experience of these key terms. The literature is rich with respect to providing explanations regarding the framework and key terms or concepts. Concepts such as integration have diverse interpretations which shape and influence policies differently in various spaces and places. However, it is generally accepted as the diverse approaches by which immigrants become part of the host society. Within the Canadian context in which the study is situated, integration is considered a two-way street – support from government and receiving communities and effort by the individual immigrant. The review focused on how the various avenues that would potentially help an individual integration, helps them to develop ties intended to assist in their integration.

The review also discussed social support that immigrants derive from their networks which also contributes toward their integration. Social support operates in diverse forms such as instrumental or practical, informational, financial, emotional, and companionship and are relevant for both recent and established immigrants. These supports may come from different groups of individuals within the network with work colleagues likely to provide information needed for occupational mobility while co-ethnic ties may provide the needed information required pre and post migration. Support may also vary in terms of location with transnational ties likely to offer emotional support given geographical barriers. Others such as practical and companionship may flow from network members within close proximity.

The review also provided some insight on social network as theory. It revealed that social networks as theory often represents the mechanism for action by individuals, that is, an individual's action is influenced by his or her interaction with different individuals and various contexts. As well, the individual's connection with others may determine how resources and support may flow within that network. In order to understand the nature of this resource flow within a network, the social capital theory was examined. Although not intended for scholarship on migration studies, the theory has made in-roads into this area and has contributed immensely to understanding immigrant networks and resource sharing within networks

2.7 References

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CHAPTER THREE - Research Design and methods

3. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview⁶ about the design of the study as well as the information regarding the data employed to achieve the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. The chapter is organized into four parts. The first part provides information on the case study methodological approach adopted for the study. The second part provides details on the mixed method design employed in the study. The third part details the specific methods adopted for the different objectives of the study, while the remaining part of the chapter describes the data sources utilized in addressing the research objectives as well as limitations of the various methods.

3.1. Case Study Approach

The study employed a case study approach as a research design. A case study is utilized when researchers seek to provide nuanced understanding of a phenomenon. Gerring (2004: 342) describes it as “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units.” Others such as Zainal (2007) indicates that it is a method that explores and investigates existing real-life experiences through detailed contextual analyses of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships. By focusing on a limited number of cases, researchers can provide a thorough interpretation and analysis of the phenomenon being studied.

Historically, case studies originated from qualitative research but have extended to quantitative and mixed method research over time. Kyburz-Graber (2004) suggests that a case study research design is a comprehensive design that consists of both qualitative and quantitative methods and is informed by a sound theoretical background. As a method of inquiry, case studies allow data to be examined within the context of their use (Yin, 1984). They also enable the collection of more in-depth information, leading to a better understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998;

⁶ Detailed explanation about each method is provided in the respective manuscripts in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Zainal, 2007). Despite this, case study research is often characterized as loaded with too much information (Yin, 1984), and is criticized as lacking rigour and thus making it not generalizable (Johansson, 2007; Merriam, 1998). Some scholars (Baxter, 2010; Flyvbjerg, 2016; Ruddin, 2006) have debunked the lack of rigour and generalizability in recent times. These scholars argue that a careful selection of cases backed by a coherent theoretical framework by the researcher should lead to analytical or theoretical generalization.

Research has identified different categories of the case study approach. Yin (1984) proposes three categories. One, exploratory case studies explore any phenomenon in a data that is of interest to the researcher. Two, descriptive case studies describe the natural phenomena involved in the data collection, which is often narrative (McDonough & McDonough, 1997). Three, explanatory case studies thoroughly examine data with a goal of explaining the phenomena in them. This often leads to theory development or testing of theory. I adopt the descriptive case approach to describe the structure and composition of Ghanaian immigrant network in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA).

3.2 Mixed Methods Design

As noted in Chapter 1, this study has three objectives. First, to examine the structure and composition of immigrant networks. Second, to determine how support is exchanged between immigrants and their network members. Third, to determine how immigrants access their networks, the challenges involved in accessing these networks, and their perception regarding the usefulness of these networks.

Overall, this thesis adopts a mixed method design to understand the role of personal networks of immigrants in the integration process in Canada. Specifically, quantitative and qualitative data from primary sources were used to address research objective one (RO#1). Quantitative and qualitative data were further utilized to achieve objectives two (RO#2) and three (RO#3), respectively. Typically, a mixed method approach is employed when knowledge from both quantitative and qualitative

methods will be useful to address questions being pursued. According to Schensul et al. (2013: 115), a mixed method is the “serial or joint use of qualitative, quantitative survey, and quantified qualitative data collection methods to achieve a systematic understanding of both the magnitude and frequency of the phenomena (quantitative) under study and the context, meaning and motivation of those phenomena (qualitative).” A mixed method has the potential to combine words, images, and narratives to add meaning to numbers, while making use of numbers to provide further precision to the words (Greene et al., 1989). It has become the go-to method for most scholars since it overcomes the issue of small sample size and lack of generalizability often associated with qualitative methods, as well as the skepticism toward quantitative methods for which some consider as neglecting the social context in which respondents or participants attribute meaning to their actions (Hollstein, 2014). Nevertheless, it may also involve a combination of two or more qualitative methods in a study or two or more quantitative approaches to understanding a particular phenomenon (Johnson et al., 2007).

The current study adopted a mixed method approach for some reasons. First, the method helps to comprehend the nature of social reality in which networks are formed (Bolibar, 2015). The study achieved this by examining the structure of relationships and the position of actors within their network using egocentric network data while utilizing biographical interviews to understand the meanings individuals attached to their relationships and to the interactive processes by which they were created.

Second, mixed methods allow for the answering of a broader and more complete range of research questions since the study is not confined to a single research paradigm or approach (Johnson et al., 2007). In the context of this thesis, it helped to ask additional questions regarding the formation of networks and the specific role that network members play in assisting the immigrant with their integration in Canada. By doing so, it enhances the validity of constructs regarding the

role of personal networks in the integration process by helping to counteract various sources of bias.

Third, mixed methods improve the reliability of research by complementing findings from the two traditional approaches. Reliability is primarily achieved since the study adopts the strengths from both quantitative and qualitative approaches and thereby mitigates the weaknesses associated with each method.

Fourth, a mixed method approach helps in the expansion of a research question by enabling questions to be asked at different scales. It increases the scope of research by adopting suitable methods for different components and at varying scales. In terms of the current study, the approach offered insights regarding the role of personal networks in the integration process among immigrants. For example, the use of primary survey data allowed for examination at the broadest level possible while in-depth interviews provided the opportunity to narrow in on specific experiences of immigrants and their network ties in the integration process.

Finally, a mixed-method approach provides stronger evidence for corroboration, drawing conclusions, and generation of theory through the triangulation of results generated by different approaches (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Downward & Mearman, 2007). The advantages of mixed methods research influenced the adoption of the approach in this thesis.

Nevertheless, there are challenges and critiques associated with this method. One challenge is understanding the dissonant data from the two methods with different philosophical underpinnings and social reality—a challenge that becomes more daunting when combining the findings of the interpretive data from qualitative accounts with that of statistical and generalized results from quantitative studies. In addition, mixed method is critiqued for a lack of unique identity in what some refer to as the “crisis of representation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 16). The crisis of representation is associated with the inability of mixed methods to identify a distinct voice in terms of how results and findings are communicated to readers.

3.3 Mixed Method Network Design

The first objective of the thesis was addressed using a mixed method network design. A mixed method network design consists of quantitative network data and qualitative network data. Quantitative network data refers to “all data describing relations, interactions, and structures of networks in formal terms as in using numbers” while qualitative network data refers to “aspects of networks that are described in text form” (Hollstein, 2014: 10). In this thesis, a combination of a quantitative network data and qualitative network data served as the primary method of data collection for the first objective (RO #1).

A mixed method network approach does not vary widely from the traditional mixed method approach or design. However, to successfully adopt it in a study, Hollstein (2014) identifies three major considerations. First, the study should make use of both quantitative and numerical network data—that is, data that describe nodes and relations — and qualitative textual data (components of network data that are described in text form). Second, when analyzing the data quantitatively, analytical strategies (e.g., multi-level regression analysis) should analyze the structural dimensions and relationships of the networks while qualitative, interpretive approaches are used to make sense of meanings and the social contexts of relationships. Finally, a mixed method network approach should involve some form of integration in one phase of the research during either data collection, data analysis or interpretation. Integration in this context refers to linking qualitative data with quantitative data. Without the linking of the data, the two approaches simply become a combination of methods.

3.4 Sources of Data:

3.4.1 Survey, Biographical Data and In-depth Interviews

Primary data were collected to address the three broad objectives outlined in Chapter 1. For the first research objective, a sequential explanatory mixed method research design was adopted to obtain data from participants. A sequential mixed method

begins with the collection of quantitative data followed by qualitative data. The quantitative data were obtained using an ego-network questionnaire. An ego-network questionnaire is a survey design that collects data from respondents (ego) and the focal ties (alters) that who are connected to the ego (Bilecen, 2016). In this project, an egocentric network survey was adopted because of its function and strength. Egocentric analysis enables relationships to be uncovered between egos and alters. By determining the existence of a relationship, it provides details about the nature of the ego–alter tie or relationship (Perry et al., 2018).

The ego–network questionnaire for this study was developed in and adapted from previous study (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018; Bolibar et al., 2015; Kornienko et al., 2018) which was divided into five components. The first component obtained respondents' socio-economic data, including sex, age, and education level, among other information. It also obtained information on the types of support respondents had received from individuals within their networks over a period.

The second component consisted of multiple name generator questions which asked respondents to list a number of social contacts in their networks. Respondents were asked to list individuals with whom they had interacted with in the past 12 months and who provided some specific type of support (Marin & Hampton, 2007; Marsden, 2005; Shakya et al., 2017). In both the first and second objective, respondents were asked to list 20 alters. Respondents were asked to list 20 alters in order to capture individuals with whom they had both strong and weak ties with while reducing the respondents' burden that is often associated with egocentric network data (Hogan et al., 2007; McCarthy et al., 2007; Perry et al., 2018).

The third component of the survey consisted of two types of questions that revolved around alter attributes and characteristics of the ego–alter ties. Socio-demographic characteristics of alters were obtained in the first part of the question together with respondents' rating of the level of importance of that relationship (Carrington et al., 2005; Bilecen & Cardona, 2018). The second batch of questions were limited to questions about the character of ego–alter ties such as the length of the

relationship between ego and alter, the frequency of communication between them, where the relationship began, how close ego is to alter, among others. This part of the survey produces data that is commonly referred to as “the composition of the ego–network, that is, the distribution of attributes of the ego–network nodes” (Vacca, 2019: 60). The final component of the survey involved ties among alters. Here, respondents were asked to evaluate the type of relationships that existed between the various alters in their network. Studies identify a range of questions that could be asked to achieve this objective but, in this study, respondents were asked to determine whether each alter talks to the other in the absence of the ego (Perry et al., 2018; Cachia & Jariego, 2018). This detail about alters helped to obtain information about the structure of the network and provided the basis to make subjective enquiries regarding the relationship between egos and alters in the networks.

The third research objective, which involved a qualitative in-depth interview, was used to obtain valuable information from participants regarding how they accessed networks and their perception regarding such networks. This phase of the research was meant to provide explanations and insights from narratives regarding immigrants' access to networks and factors that affect their ability to access support from their networks—the kind that might not be captured adequately in the quantitative analysis.

3.5 Justification for choosing Ghanaian Immigrants

In order to understand the role of personal networks in the integration process, Ghanaian immigrants—a section of the broader African group—were selected. Compared to immigrants from traditional source countries who migrate to Canada, Ghanaian immigrants constitute a part of recent immigrants in Canada who are under-researched (Firang, 2019; Mensah, 2010). With characteristics similar to other African immigrant groups, Ghanaian immigrants fare poorly on integration indexes, which warrants a thorough examination of such groups (Darden, 2005; Mensah, 2010). For instance, Ghanaian immigrants like most immigrants tend to have higher education

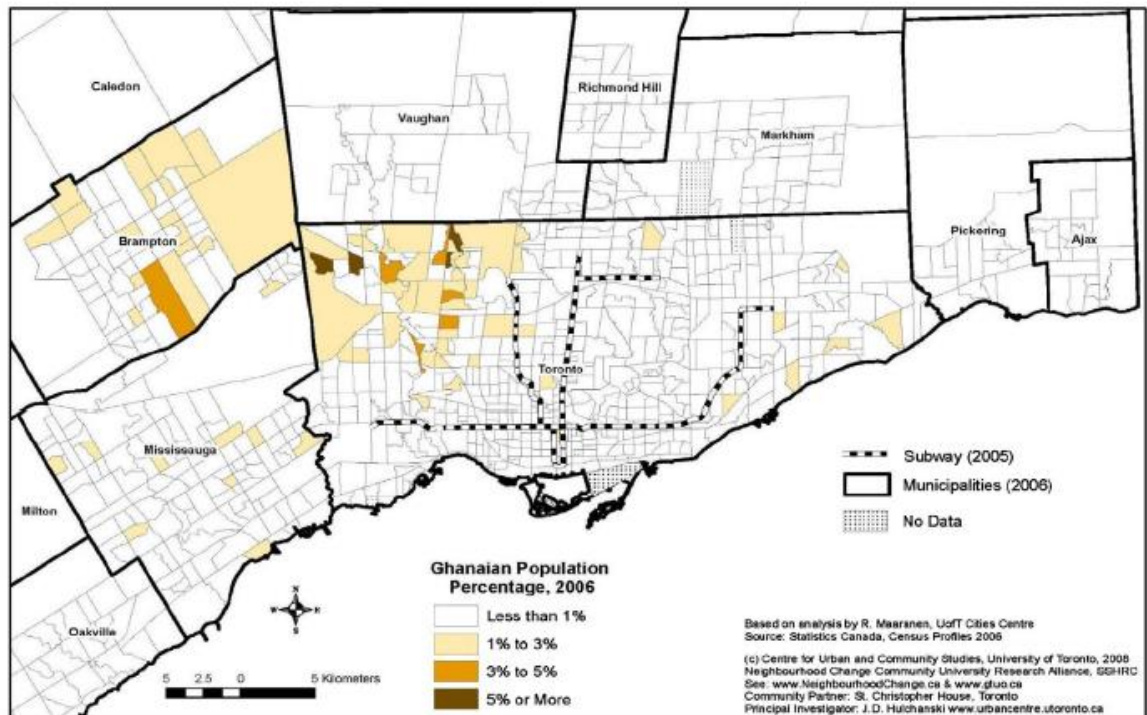
since most of them would have completed undergraduate degree prior to arrival in Canada (Nkrumah 2018; Mensah 2010). Others upon arrival tend to enroll in postgraduate programs, which is increasingly becoming a common feature of recent Ghanaian immigrants. Generally, a higher education is expected to culminate in better jobs and higher income but this is not always the case. Ghanaian immigrants tend to find jobs in low occupations such as processing, manufacturing, and under-represented in professional, managerial, business and government occupations (Firang 2018: 875). Therefore, research on these groups would help provide relevant policy initiatives to meet their needs as they seek to contribute their quota to the growth and development of Canada as stipulated by Canadian immigration policy (CIC, 2002). In addition, studies indicate that immigrant groups that experience challenges in their integration often resort to ties within their networks for assistance (see Bashi, 2007; Kuuire, 2016; Kornienko et al., 2018; Mensah, 2010; Owusu, 2000). Given their status as recent immigrants, and Black immigrants who are likely to experience challenges, they fall on their social ties for assistance thereby making them a good case study for the examination of support exchanges among a specific group of recent immigrants to Canada.

3.6 Methods

A hierarchical clustering and multi-level regression were performed to meet the first and second research objectives of the study, simultaneously. This approach was selected given the hierarchical nature of network data. Network data generally contains information that is observed at four different levels, namely egos, alters, ego–alter ties, and alter–alter ties. The different levels creates a multi-level structure where alters or ego–alter ties which constitute the lower level or level one are nested within egos which is the higher level or level two (Kornienko et al., 2018; Perry et al., 2018). According to Vacca (2019), the structure of ego–network data is hierarchical if there are no overlaps in the personal network of egos. That is, similar alters are not found in the networks of egos involved in the study.

In analyzing the first objective of the study, survey data was used to identify whether respondents' networks varied by their length of stay in Canada and whether egos had diverse networks. Drawing on Bolibar et al. (2015), alters within egos' networks were categorized into co-ethnic, multi-ethnic, native-born, and transnational ties. In order to understand the changes that may have occurred within egos' networks since arrival in Canada, the length of the relationship between egos and alters, taking note of when and where the relationship began, was accounted for. In the second stage of the analysis, egos' personal networks were identified and characterized. A hierarchical clustering analysis was performed to identify typologies of ego's network. The final stage then involved identifying how the migration project and context of reception employed as the conceptual framework (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006) influenced the type of networks developed by Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA). The TCMA consists of the City of Toronto and the surrounding suburban areas of Peel Region, Durham Region, York Region and Halton Region. In 2006, the Ghanaian population in the TCMA was 14,720. By (2016), the Ghanaian population had increased to 22, 395 in (Statistics Canada, 2016). When Ghanaians arrive in Canada, they prefer to settle in the TCMA, where about 66% of the population lives (Mensah, 2010). The spatial distribution pattern of Ghanaian immigrants (from Ghanaian ethnic origin) in the TCMA is shown in Figure 3.1, which confirms that Ghanaians are among the top 10 ethnic groups with high spatial concentration in Toronto (Murdie, 2010), with most of them residing in the north-western part of the older suburbs of the City of Toronto.

Figure 3.1: Neighbourhood concentrations of Ghanaian populations (Ghanaian ethnic origin) by census tract, Toronto CMA, 2006.



The second objective in the thesis was analyzed using a multi-level multinomial regression. A multi-level multinomial regression is a technique that examines the relationship between binary variables and a set of outcomes (Agresti & Finlay, 2009). Multi-level models enable researchers to analyze the variation of a dependent variable observed on ego–alter ties as a function of the characteristics of the ties themselves, the egos, the alters, and the larger social context in which the ties are situated (Kornienko et al., 2018; Vacca, 2019). In this study, the dependent variable at the ego level was the provision of support from alter to ego as a function of the ego, ego’s network, and alters. The ego–alter tie nested in egos or alters violates the fundamental assumption of ordinary least squares that errors are independent (Perry et al., 2018). The clustering of alters at the ego level leads to dependence which is a result of the similarity between alters. To account for this, a multi-level or hierarchical model was employed. This produces an outcome that shows that “one or more model coefficients are random variables that take a different value of each ego” (Perry et al., 2018: 205).

As such, models with ego, alter, ego–alter ties, and network characteristics were fitted in the multi-level multinomial regression to ascertain the nature of support exchanges among Ghanaian immigrants in their personal networks. A multinomial regression was used since it allows for more than two categories of the dependent variable (Perry et al., 2018). The dependent variable in the study had more than two categories, that is, no support, provided support, received support and reciprocated support.

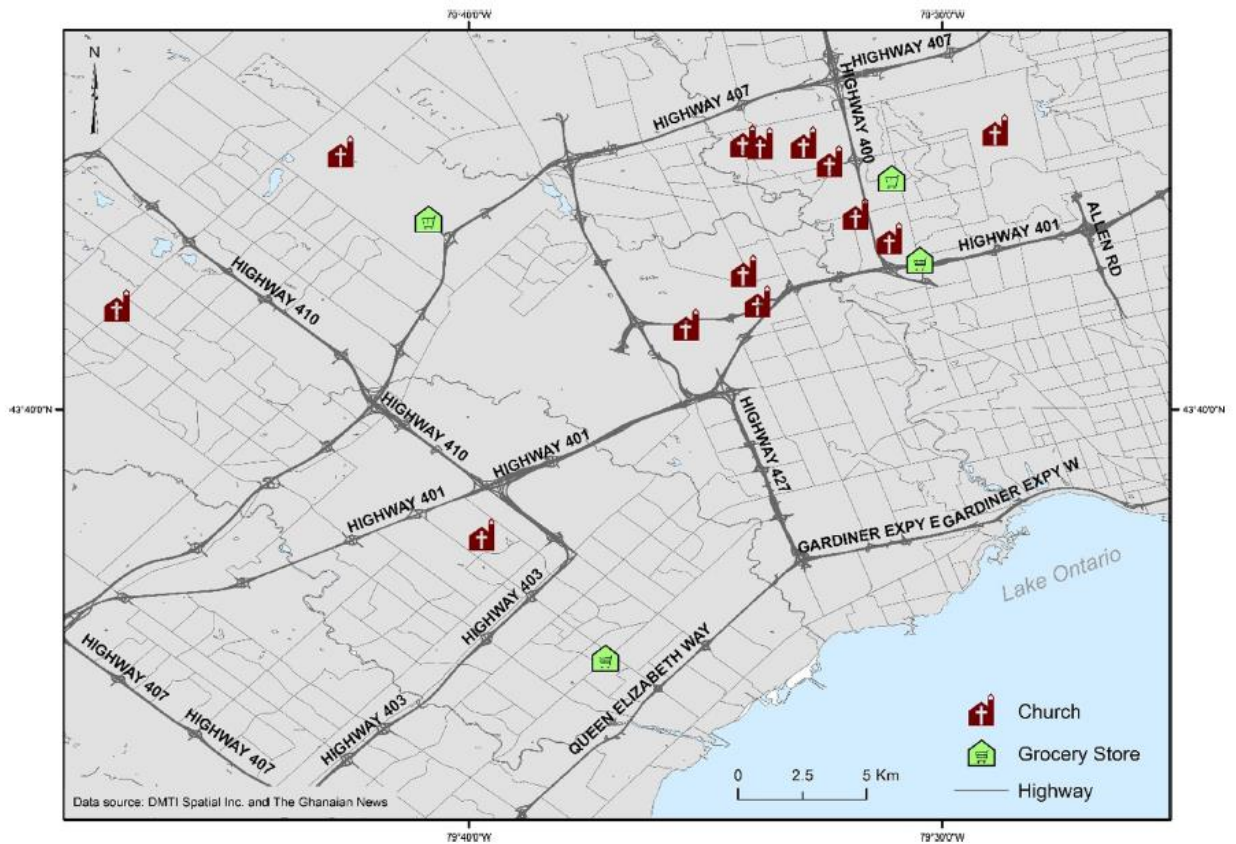
The final objective in the thesis, a qualitative study, utilized data gathered through in-depth interviews with 41 Ghanaian family class and economic/skilled class immigrants in the TCMA to examine access to networks. In Canada, family class immigrants constitute the second dominant group of immigrants accepted to serve the purpose of family reunification (Bragg & Wong, 2016). They are also expected to assist and contribute towards the integration and settlement of other immigrants even though not all accept this position (Bauder, 2019). However, in the last couple of years, they have been neglected in Canadian policy discussion on integration, hence the need for the focus on this category of immigrants (Bauder, 2019). Economic/skilled class immigrants however, are accepted based on their human capital but lack adequate social networks upon arrival (Bauder, 2019). As such, they develop ties over time, which may be useful for their integration.

Participants for this phase of the thesis were sought through a variety of approaches as in the first two studies. Posters were placed at settlement agencies. Participants were also sought from churches and ethnic association meetings where potential participants were informed about the study. Figure 3.1 provides a map of some churches and shops where participants were recruited from. Interested individuals made contact and a date, time, and venue were discussed for the interview. Interviews took place at sites such as libraries, parks, and coffee shops where participants were most comfortable. Prior to the interviews, an informed consent sheet that outlined the purpose of the study, issues of anonymity and confidentiality, the right to withdraw from the study, and participants' consent was read. Interviews

lasted on average about an hour to allow for optimal and meaningful conversation. Each interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

The data was analyzed using a thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006). According to them, this approach is “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 79). This approach helped to organize and code the data in clearly defined criteria, which was then manually analyzed. The choice of manual analysis was based on Warren and Karner’s (2015) suggestion that manually analyzing the data “gives the advantage of remaining true to the analysis” (p.216). The analysis began by reading the transcripts multiple times to gain insight into the data while audio tapes were also accessed periodically to ascertain participants’ tone within the interviews. From there, preliminary coding was done in relation to the research objectives. This was followed by a second level of coding where coloured pens were used to highlight texts that fit under the same code. The codes generated were used to categorize the data into sub-categories, which were synthesized into themes for the study.

Figure 3.2: Map showing some location of churches and grocery stores where respondents were sampled



3.7 Summary

This chapter provided an overview about the data collection process and methods that were used to analyze the various data for the thesis. The first part of the chapter identified mixed methods as the suitable methodology for the study based on the research question and proceeded to provide a description, explanation, and justification for adopting the method. Thereafter, the chapter provided details about the data collection for the various studies for the manuscript. Two of the three manuscripts employed a quantitative approach, specifically egocentric analysis and multi-level multinomial regression analysis to obtain valuable data and contributed towards the discussion on immigrant integration in Canada, while the last study involved a qualitative in-depth study on immigrants' access to networks.

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CHAPTER FOUR

The Composition and Structure of Immigrants Network in Canada: the case of Ghanaian Immigrants in Toronto

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CHAPTER FOUR

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Abstract

Research shows that the personal network of an immigrant provides insight into the level of integration or settlement in the host society. Yet, studies examining the personal network of immigrants have been few. Given this, the current study examines the personal networks of Ghanaians, a recent immigrant group in Canada. Using an ego-network analysis and interviews with members of this immigrant group in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, the study examines the diversity of configurations of their personal networks. The findings indicate that the personal network of Ghanaian immigrants consist of ties with fellow Ghanaians that are created in Canada, increased or sustained ties with Ghanaians in Ghana and the diaspora and few ties with members of the host society. The nature of this network is explained by examining the migration project of immigrants prior to migrating together with the context of reception in Canada. The results show that the desire to stay in Canada and making Canada their second home drives them to create ties with their co-ethnics. In addition, results indicate that the presence of various institutions such as ethnic associations, partially facilitated by Canadian multicultural policies, creates the avenue for Ghanaian immigrants to form ties with their co-ethnics. The implications of these are discussed.

Key words: personal networks, Ghanaian immigrants, context of reception

4.1 Introduction

Within migration studies literature, various studies have emphasized the significant role played by an immigrant's personal networks in the integration process (Boyd, 1989; Bashi, 2007; Castles & Miller, 1998; De Miguel & Tranmer, 2010; Kornienko et al., 2018). The immigrant's personal network, which consists of family, friends, co-workers, and acquaintances often, serves as conduits of information, social, emotional and psychological support (Bergeron & Potters, 2006). More pragmatically, they facilitate access to housing, finance, health, education and other social services that may enhance the immigrant's integration (Cachia & Maya-Jariego, 2018; De Haas, 2010; Hamer, 2008).

In addition, studies reveal that the personal networks of immigrants provide details regarding their level of integration in the host society (Maya-Jariego, 2003; Cachia & Maya-Jariego, 2018). Specifically, some indicate that the type and quality of immigrants' personal networks provide details as to why some immigrants fare better compared to others (Bergeron & Potter, 2006). Likewise, others reveal that the gradual inclusion of majority group members in the host society and different immigrant groups is a good indicator of integration (Berry, 1997; Yan & Lauer, 2008). Importantly, others argue that higher levels of economic wellbeing may not be enough to result in positive integration outcomes, but the type of networks and the quality of interactions within those networks plays an essential role in the integration process of immigrants (Kunz, 2005). Yet, relatively little is known about how personal networks are formed and the characteristics of the personal networks of immigrants in receiving societies like Canada. The limited knowledge on networks is concerning given that policy makers in Canada expect immigrants to establish social connections in their communities to provide assistance in their integration (IRCC, 2017).

The few studies that examine personal networks in Canada often employ large-scale dataset to describe the network of immigrants and lump immigrants together as a homogenous group. For instance using the first wave of the longitudinal survey of immigrants in Canada, Bergeron and Potter (2006) describe the network of immigrants

to Canada but limit their description to the type of individuals with whom the immigrant has ties with in Canada. The nature of these ties such as the when and where the relationship started as well details pertaining to the composition of the network are missing from their discussion. Similarly, Thomas (2011) using data from the 2008 general social survey (GSS) cycle 22 revealed the structure of the networks of immigrants and their Canadian born counterparts. However, details regarding the nature of the ties, the context in which such ties are formed and the purpose of such ties are not discussed.

Given the above, the current study examines the personal networks of recent immigrants in Canada by focusing on the evolution and composition of their networks. Specifically, it examines the extent to which the immigrants' personal networks consist of both the native-born and other immigrant group; identified as contributing towards the immigrant's successful integration in the host society (De Miguel & Tranmer, 2010; Kanas et al., 2011; Nannestad et al., 2008). It also seeks to reveal the rationale behind how such networks are formed. In addition, the study builds on transnational scholarship, which finds that immigrants maintain ties with family and friends in their country of origin and do not see the need to replace individuals within their networks (Castles et al., 2014; Herz, 2015; Nee & Sanders, 2005; Vertovec, 2002). Hence, we examine and explain the nature of transnational networks and their role in the integration process among a group of recent immigrants in Canada. In doing so, we employ the context of reception (opportunity structures in the host society) and migration project (individual migration aspirations) as the framework to understand the rationale behind the formation and maintenance of their ties.

Since the context of reception provides opportunity to form ties with different groups of people while the migration project defines the different relationships that the immigrant prioritizes, we hypothesize that the composition of immigrants' network may not follow a well-defined pattern. Rather, the composition of immigrants' network would reflect their aspiration more broadly. This effect has not

been empirically tested by means of the personal network perspective, which is the focus of this paper.

In addition, we employ the tenants of social network analysis to our study of a recent immigrant group in Canada. Social network analysis perspective provides an avenue to understand the personal networks of immigrants and their influence on one another (Bilecen, 2013; Bolibar et al., 2015; Perry et al., 2018). Yet, the immigrant population has rarely been examined using this perspective (Bolibar et al., 2015; Bilecen, 2013). Studies on social network application tends to be Eurocentric or Americanized with little attention on immigrants in Canada (Kazemipur, 2006). The current study therefore adopts social network analysis to understand a recent immigrant group in Canada. In doing so, it seeks to show how social network analysis is useful for understanding the integration process with respect to the personal networks of immigrants. Following the example of Cachia and Maya-Jariego (2018) and Lubbers et al. (2010), the study adopts a personal network questionnaire and biographical interviews to understand the personal network of Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA). We adopt this method to address the following questions: 1) “What is the nature and composition of Ghanaian immigrants’ networks within the TCMA?”, 2) “What configuration of personal networks exist and what characteristics do these exhibit?”, and 3) “How do the context of reception and migration project explain the development and formation of these networks in Canada?”

Considering our interest, we begin the paper by first discussing how aspects of the integration process potentially provide an avenue for immigrants to develop new ties by engaging and linking together various strands of literature. Next, we delve into how the context of reception and migration project facilitate the creation of networks. Specifically, we examine two components of the context of reception, which, include government policies and characteristics of the ethnic community. Hereafter, we contextualize our research site and present our methodological approach in detail. We then draw on our research data to answer our questions. We present a descriptive

analysis of the participants' network and utilize a cluster analysis to explore typologies based on the different networks derived from immigrants. We then provide qualitative assessment of the clusters and conclude the article with a discussion on the findings.

4.2 The concept of integration and personal networks

In Canada, integration is the umbrella concept used to discuss immigrant incorporation into the host society (Alba & Foner, 2015). Its use is in keeping with Canada's Multiculturalism Policy (Banting, 2014) which enables immigrants to maintain their own cultural identity, and in part, a critique to assimilation theory, which suggests a ubiquitous way of cultural change for immigrants. Integration is widely accepted as a process that grants opportunity to immigrants and their descendants to obtain parity as well as social acceptance by members of the native majority (Frideres, 2008; Schnuck, 2014). Integration may be achieved when immigrants engage in host institutions such as the educational and political system, the labour market, and housing market (Alba & Foner, 2015).

For some immigrants, this would simply involve the assistance of individuals within their personal network, typically pioneer immigrants, with extensive knowledge in the host society (Mensah, 2010; Teixeira, 2014). For others, it includes forming new ties with individuals in the community via the work place, community centers, ethnic association meetings, schools, neighbourhood parks, and churches (Mensah, 2009; Thomas, 2011). Immigrants may also form ties consciously or unconsciously (Small, 2009). Consciously, an immigrant may join a neighbourhood association primarily to develop friendships that they can leverage on to obtain access to various services and support. Unconsciously, an immigrant may establish ties through a random conversation in a queue that is later developed into a full-fledged relationship. Establishing these ties are important since immigrants may not be exposed to the cultural norms and practices of the host society, and may be unaware of support services in the society. As such, they require the assistance of individuals within their networks who possess knowledge about the norms as well as services in the host society. Being able to establish new ties in the process, would likely result in diverse

networks for immigrants consisting of both non-immigrants, co-nationals and immigrants of other nationalities.

When immigrants interact with non-immigrant and other immigrants, it may result in changes in the personal networks of these groups over time. This is likely to emerge due to the presence of immigrants who alter the ethnic composition of residents within a particular neighborhood or city through a range of activities (Alba & Foner, 2015; De Miguel & Tranmer, 2010). For instance, immigrants establish businesses and services within an area that brings them into direct contact with locals. Alba and Foner (2015) note that the creation of immigrant businesses provides an avenue for interaction between immigrants and non-immigrants, which may lead to developing friendship and partnership. Small (2009) for instance, demonstrates that childcare centers serve as a site for establishing and developing ties. These relationships are vital, since a key component of integration is peaceful co-existence between immigrants and the native-born (Frideres 2008).

In addition to forming new ties with non-immigrants and other immigrants in their new environment, immigrants also maintain ties with family and friends back home (Diminescu, 2008). Some immigrants undertake return or seasonal migration to be with family and friends in their country of origin (Nee & Sanders, 2001). Scholars posit that these individuals never leave their country of origin but rather “live dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contact across national borders” (Portes et al., 1999: 217). In the context of integration, ties with family and friends in the destination country provide valuable assistance in the form of emotional and spiritual support, which may not be readily available in the host society (Ong & Ward, 2005). As a result, immigrants may hold onto core network members in the country of origin regardless of the length of time in the host society.

In most cases, macro factors such as the structural and institutional framework in the form of labour market regulation, immigration policies among others coupled with the individual immigrant’s personal traits influence their interaction in the host

society. These macro factors, in turn, shape the ties immigrants form with implications on their integration. Based on these, we focus on both the individual characteristics and structural frameworks that affect the development of networks. These two components have rarely been examined with respect to immigrant integration, especially within the Canadian context. Further, we adopt this approach since integration is considered a two-way approach based on individual effort and assistance from the host society. By focusing on the integration process, we shed insights on how both micro and macro factors influence the composition of ties and its role in the integration process. We begin by discussing the context of reception.

4.3 The context of reception

The context of reception, described as the opportunity structures and the level of acceptance or hostility in the host society, affects the integration of immigrants (Model & Lin, 2002). These contextual factors, which include social, cultural, legal and economic may hinder or facilitate immigrants' integration in their new society (De Haas, 2010). Scholars generally agree that in spite of the prominent role that an immigrant's characteristics play in their integration, the absence of these vital opportunity structures may render them unhelpful and derail the immigrants' integration in the long term (van Tubergen, 2006).

Besides shaping immigrants incorporation in the host society, contextual factors also, influence the transnational engagement of immigrants (Guarnizo & Chaudhary, 2014; Guarnizo et al., 2003). For instance, an open labour market may enable immigrants to find work easily and remit to family and friends back home. Further, favourable immigration policies may allow immigrants to reunite with their families in the host society (Chaudhary & Guarnizo, 2016). However, immigrant groups are impacted differently by these contextual factors based on their histories, host society and home country relationship. In describing these contextual factors, Portes and Rumbaut (2006) identify three dimensions that constitute the context of reception, including government policies, labour market characteristics and characteristics of the ethnic communities. Given the strong influence of these contexts

on immigrants in both the host society and origin country, they would influence the social context in which immigrants establish and maintain ties with others in their personal networks. As a result, we tease out how government policies and characteristics of the ethnic communities provide explanations regarding the composition of the immigrant's personal network.

As noted by Portes and Rumbaut (2006), government policies are essential in the establishment of networks. Immigration policies implemented by host governments determine whether immigration flows would occur while integration policies also determine the chances of success and immigrants' incorporation into various sectors of the country. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) reveal that government policies affect immigrants in different ways by restricting some immigrants while granting others either explicit or implicit access with additional support and measures to facilitate their immigration and integration (van Tubergen, 2006). Immigrants who are adequately supported may integrate smoothly into the social and economic system (Model & Lin, 2002; van Tubergen, 2006).

In the Canadian context, immigration policies in the last half century have been less restrictive, compared to the 1950s and 1960s (Banting, 2014; Biles, 2008). Recent immigration policies favour immigrants from non-traditional source countries such as Asia and Africa (Statistics Canada, 2016). In addition, immigration policies may help immigrants of a particular admission criterion. In the Canadian context, these policies favor economic immigrants who are perceived as being able to contribute towards the economic objective of the country (Reimer et al. 2016; Simmons & Bourne, 2013). As a commitment to assisting immigrants, the federal government provides funding for programs and services in areas such as applying for jobs, language classes, social housing and among others (Nakhaie, 2015; Praznik & Shields, 2018; Teixeira & Drolet, 2018). When immigrants patronize these services, they interact with immigrants of other nationalities, members of the host society and their co-ethnics. These interactions may result in building a community of friends who provide support or assistance in diverse ways.

Regarding characteristics of ethnic community, an immigrant's ethnic community may constitute their immediate connection with the new society. For the most part, it is assumed that immigrants from the same ethnic group are willing to assist their co-ethnic newcomers in a host society (van Tubergen, 2006:14). By associating with members of their ethnic community, they build new ties with members of their community. Scholars maintain that socioeconomic advancement in groups is usually network driven (De Haas, 2010). Therefore, by forming ties and joining ethnic networks, immigrants are likely to receive some assistance from co-ethnics in the form of information about employment opportunities, sources of jobs both within and outside the community needed for their social mobility in the host society (van Meeteren & Pereira, 2018). Nonetheless, ethnic communities also hinder some immigrants from establishing ties with the native-born resulting in social isolation (Ahmad, 2015; Li, 2004) as well as restricting the freedom of their members through strict rules and regulations (Portes & Landolt, 1996).

4.4 The migration project

An individual factor that influences the composition and formation of personal networks is what scholars call the migration project (Bolibar et al., 2015; Nee & Sanders, 2001). It pertains to the individual's aspirations and motivation for moving and settling in a new society (Izquierdo Escribano, 2000). Hosnedlova and Stanek (2010) argue that the migration project of the immigrant is likely to shape the social and economic strategies they adopt in the host society including their connections with individuals. These strategies are also impacted by whether immigration is in fulfillment of an individual or collective goal such as being the breadwinner of the family in the country of origin for a short period (i.e., temporary migration), whether migration is for family reunification or a combination of other factors. For temporary migrants, where the goal for migrating may be economic, building strong ties with members of the host society and other immigrants may not be a priority. Rather, maintaining ties with family and friends back home in order to help with reintegration upon return may be the main priority (Menjivar, 2006; Parrenas, 2010). Therefore, ties

established in the host society would be done predominately for assisting in their economic integration and the personal networks may consist of acquaintances who are mostly co-workers.

However, for family reunification immigrants who envision a long-term stay, priority may be given to establishing new ties in the host society. Deliberate attempts would be tailored towards developing and maintaining ties by participating in social events in the community such as going to church/mosque, attending neighborhood meetings, participating in volunteer activities, and joining ethnic associations (Hosnedlova & Stanek, 2010; Van Meeteren, 2012). In addition, other key demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of the immigrant such as age, gender, education, length of stay, linguistic capabilities and income would also be required in order to influence the different kinds of ties they may develop with others in the host society.

4.5 Study area

Data for this study was collected from the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA), which consists of the City of Toronto, the Peel Region, Durham Region, York Region and Halton Region. The TCMA is the largest and most multicultural urban area in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016). Because of the City of Toronto, it is the most popular destination and entry point for immigrants and home to the largest concentration of immigrants in Canada (Chadwick & Collins, 2015). According to Statistics Canada (2016), the TCMA accommodates 2,705,550 foreign-born individuals representing 35.9% of Canada's overall immigrant populations with the immigrant population growing steadily by 1.2% between 2011 and 2016. Most immigrants are attracted to the TCMA due to the presence of pioneer immigrants who offer various forms of support to one wave of immigrants who, in turn, offer support to a new wave of immigrants—a process described as social sedimentation by Mensah (2010). In addition, the TCMA has extensive ethnic resources such as eateries, religious centers and community centers that have typically attracted immigrants to the region.

The TCMA continues to be home to recent immigrants of English-speaking countries such as Ghanaians. Like many African countries, Ghanaian immigrants'

migration to Canada began in the 1950s, who were part of the first group of “Black” or “African” immigrants to Canada (Mensah, 2010). They consisted of a handful of individuals who arrived mainly for educational purposes. Their numbers remained small until the 1980s when more immigrants arrived in Canada. The increase in arrivals was facilitated by the change in Canadian immigration policy in the late 1970s, which paved the way for different categories of immigrants to be accepted in Canada, ranging from independent immigrants, refugees, and family members (Owusu, 2003). In addition, economic crisis coupled with political turmoil in the 1980s pushed many Ghanaians to migrate abroad to places such as Canada.

For Ghanaian immigrants, available evidence suggests that they typically gravitate toward the TCMA upon arrival in Canada, where close to 66% of the population reside (Firang, 2019; Mensah, 2010). In 2016, the total number of Ghanaians living in the TCMA was estimated at 22,395, constituting more than 90% of the 27,200 Ghanaians within the province of Ontario (Statistics Canada, 2016). Ghanaian immigrants’ preference for the TCMA is tied to the presence of co-ethnic networks, availability of jobs and the presence of ethnic religious groups. Further, their English-speaking ability enables them to reside in Toronto helping them to form ties with the Canadian-born and other immigrant groups.

4.6 Methods

We adopted a sequential mixed method research design, in the order of quantitative and qualitative (based on the results of the quantitative phase) phases respectively (Bolibar et al. 2015; Creswell 2009). A sequential mixed method enables data to be crosschecked in order to increase the reliability and validity of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011; Firang 2019). The sequential approach also enables the integration of the quantitative and qualitative data, which helps to “resolve the tension between depths and scope, providing a sufficiently large sample to make statistical comparison between the cases” (Bolibar 2015:2225).

Data was collected in two phases. First, a standardized ego-network questionnaire was used to identify the personal networks of immigrants for the

quantitative phase while biographical interviews enabled the networks to be placed in the context of their integration in the second phase. Personal network data on immigrants was obtained through the completion of a paper-based questionnaire by 172 adults with the help of the lead author to reduce the fatigue and burden associated with egocentric data (Cachia & Maya Jariego, 2019). These adults were recruited from the various Ghanaian churches, ethnic associations, settlement agencies, Ghanaian grocery shops and restaurants within the census area. The network survey captured information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the ego (respondent), and 20 alters (individuals with whom the respondent had contacted in the past 12 months by any means) (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018; Bolibar et al., 2015; Kornienko et al., 2018). It equally contained the relationship between ego and alter, the attributes of the alters (such as their nationality, frequency of contact, current location) and the relationships between each pair of alters (also known as network members) (Carrington et al., 2005; Shakya et al., 2017). We utilized a fixed-choice of 20 alters in order to delineate a personal network large enough for structural network analysis (McCarty, 2002), but also feasible to administer and not too complex, to interact with the network visualizations (Cachia & Maya Jariego, 2019; Perry et al., 2018). We arranged the sample according to the basic characteristics of the Canadian population such as age, ethnic group, gender and place of origin.

Next, we obtained qualitative data after the quantitative phase by conducting semi-structured narrative interviews with 18 selected participants from the quantitative sample. Participants were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in the interviews voluntarily. Eligible interested persons included their contact numbers or email on their questionnaire. Participants who consented to participate were contacted with 18 conveniently selected to represent the clusters generated. The interviews were face-to-face and based on a “relational-narrative” content where the structure of the informant’s network provided an avenue to shed light on their integration (Bolibar et al., 2015). A visualization software, Vennmaker (Schönhuth et al., 2012), was used to provide a good image of the participant's

network and their relationship with alters. We provide details regarding the analysis of the data, findings and results in the ensuing sections.

4.7 Analysis

We analysed our data in three stages based on the objectives of the study. The first stage of the analysis focused on the composition of participant's network using data from the questionnaire. Similar to Bolibar et al. (2015) and Lubbers et al. (2010), we identified four different types of networks based on the nationality and place of residents of the participant's alters. These include alters who reside in Canada and share the same nationality as participants known as *fellows*; alters from Ghana and who reside in Ghana known as *originals*; alters born and living in Canada known as *host*; and alters from other countries residing in Canada and outside Canada known as *others*.

In the second stage of the analysis, we identified and characterized the different configurations of the immigrant's network. To this end, we performed a hierarchical clustering analysis employing the variables: nationality, place of residence, and location where the relationship with alter started (that is to assess the degree of local integration as well as to report the transnational nature of the networks). These variables were selected since they best explain where and with whom immigrants' form ties with others and allowed for a better differentiation between the respondents (Cachia & Maya Jariego, 2018; Bolibar et al., 2015). We employed a hierarchical clustering approach because it does not require one to pre-specify the number of clusters (Boehmke & Greenwell, 2019). Similarly, Cachia and Maya Jariego (2018) who argue that developing clusters is one of the most efficient approaches to describing personal networks through typologies informed our choice of clusters. Generating clusters helped to identify common configurations of the networks.

To do this, we employed a ward D2 cluster analysis for the construction of clusters using R statistical software (R Core team, 2020). A ward method creates groups with the goal of minimizing variance within the clusters (Stanley et al., 2017). It provides a balanced and strongest clustering structure (Boehmke & Greenwell, 2019).

Based on Cachia and Maya Jariego's (2018) criterion as well as Bolibar et al.'s (2015), we settle on three clusters (see appendix for dendrogram). This was achieved after careful consideration between different numbers of clusters. We name the clusters based on descriptive purposes since they reflect the characteristics of participants in the cluster. Further, to provide an overview of participants in each cluster, we performed a test of independence between the types of networks and the sociodemographic variables collected (Cachia & Maya Jariego, 2018).

In the third and final stage, we examined how the context of reception and migration project informs the kind of networks that are developed in Canada. We utilized data from the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews. The data from the questionnaires and interviews enabled us to contextualize how these two factors shape an immigrant's network in the host society. The results are presented in the order of the research questions.

4.8 Results

4.8.1 Descriptive analysis of the evolution of personal networks of Ghanaian immigrants

The characteristics of our sampled population are presented in Table 4.1. The data was slightly dominated by male immigrants (56.4%) than females. Majority of the respondents were within the age range of 18 to 30 years. Most participants had obtained university or college education as well as postgraduate degrees. Participants had been in Canada on average about 11.32 years with almost 38% of them arriving in Canada in the mid-to late-80s—a period that coincides with changes in immigration policies in Canada and out migration in Ghana. The remaining participants arrived in Canada in the early 2000s. A greater number of participants initially arrived with student visas (46.51%) followed by family class immigrants (22.67%) before transitioning to permanent residence and citizens.

Table 4.1: Demographics of Respondents

| | | frequency | % |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------|-------|
| Gender | Male | 97 | 56.40 |
| | Female | 75 | 43.60 |
| Age | 18 to 30 | 78 | 45.35 |
| | 31-40 | 34 | 19.77 |
| | 41-50 | 29 | 16.86 |
| | 51 and above | 31 | 18.02 |
| Marital status | Single/never married | 47 | 27.33 |
| | Married | 116 | 67.44 |
| | Previously married/divorced | 6 | 3.49 |
| | Other | 3 | 1.74 |
| Education | Primary | 6 | 3.49 |
| | High school | 19 | 11.05 |
| | University/ College | 59 | 34.30 |
| | Postgraduate | 88 | 51.16 |
| Years of residence | Less than 10 years (recent immigrant) | 107 | 62.21 |
| | More than 10 years (established immigrant) | 65 | 37.79 |
| Long-term migration objective | Stay permanently in Canada | 133 | 77.33 |
| | Undecided/don't know | 25 | 14.53 |
| | Return home | 14 | 8.14 |
| Remittance | Yes | 160 | 93.02 |
| | No | 12 | 6.98 |

After carefully identifying the characteristics of alters within participants' personal networks, we made some inferences regarding the composition of these networks. Overall, we found no clear-cut pattern of immigrant's network, but one that resembles a broad mix of local, multiethnic and transnational networks. Most participants network members (alters) were based in Canada with individuals consisting largely of co-ethnic ties or fellows. In total, 55.93% of the 3,440 contacts

identified belonged to this network (Figure 4.1). Approximately 12.67% and 11.51% belonged to originals and host society, respectively, while 19.88% of their networks belonged to contacts from or residing in other countries. Given that two thirds of participants' sampled networks consisted of members of the same nationality, it raises questions about the extent to which Ghanaian immigrants are interacting with members of the host society as well as how they are integrating into the broader Canadian society.

Figure 4.1: Respondents Network Type

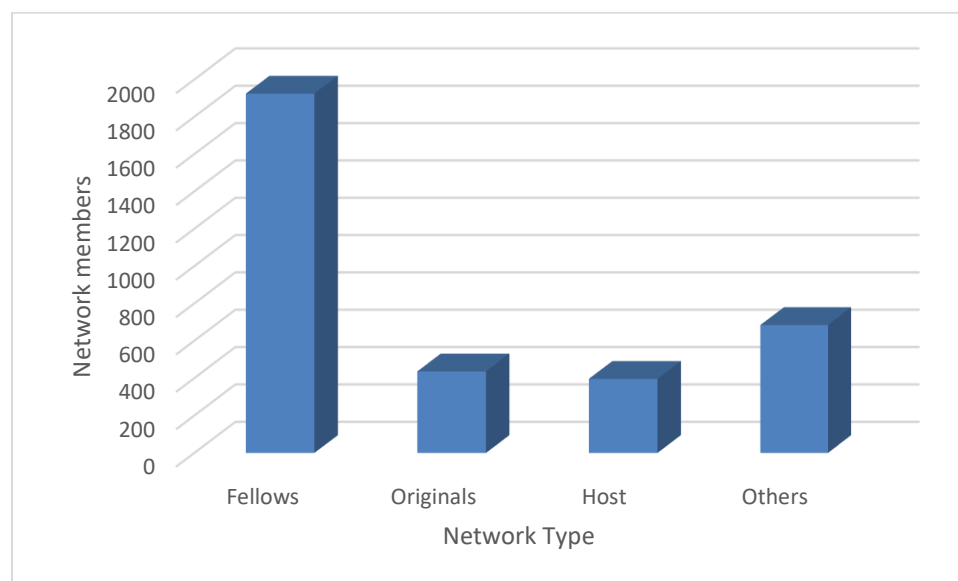


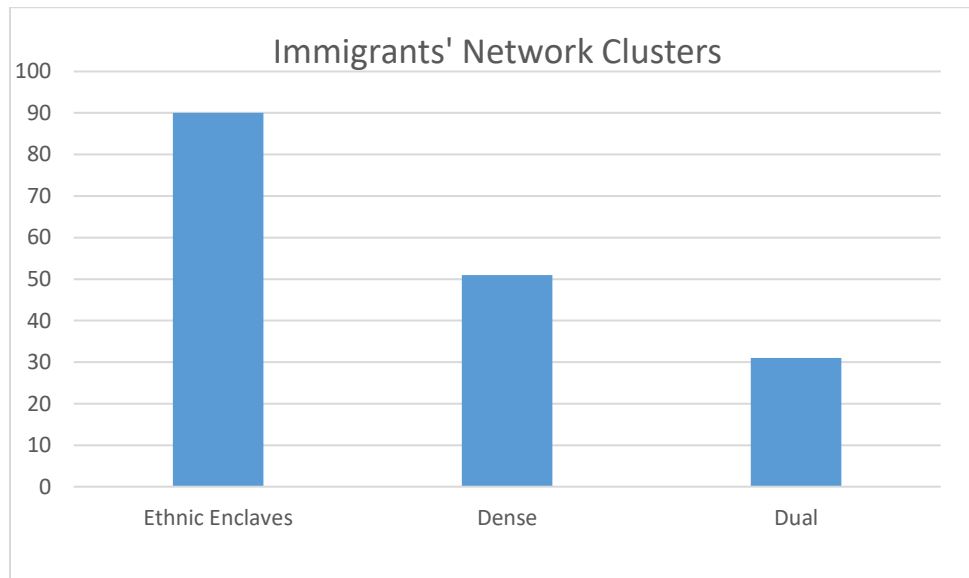
Figure 4.1 : Composition of respondents' network. *Fellows* are network members (alters) who reside in Canada and share the same nationality as participants; alters from Ghana and who reside in Ghana known as *originals*; alters born and living in Canada known as *host*; and alters from other countries residing in Canada and outside Canada known as *others*.

4.8.2 Network Clusters of immigrants

Based on the cluster analysis, we created a typology of three network profiles (ethnic enclaves; dense networks and dual networks) to reflect immigrant's network as identified in Figure 4.2. The clusters are predominately described based on the network type (Bolibar et al., 2015; Cachia & Jariego, 2018). In addition, we provide a visualization to correspond to the clusters identified. This is intended to provide a

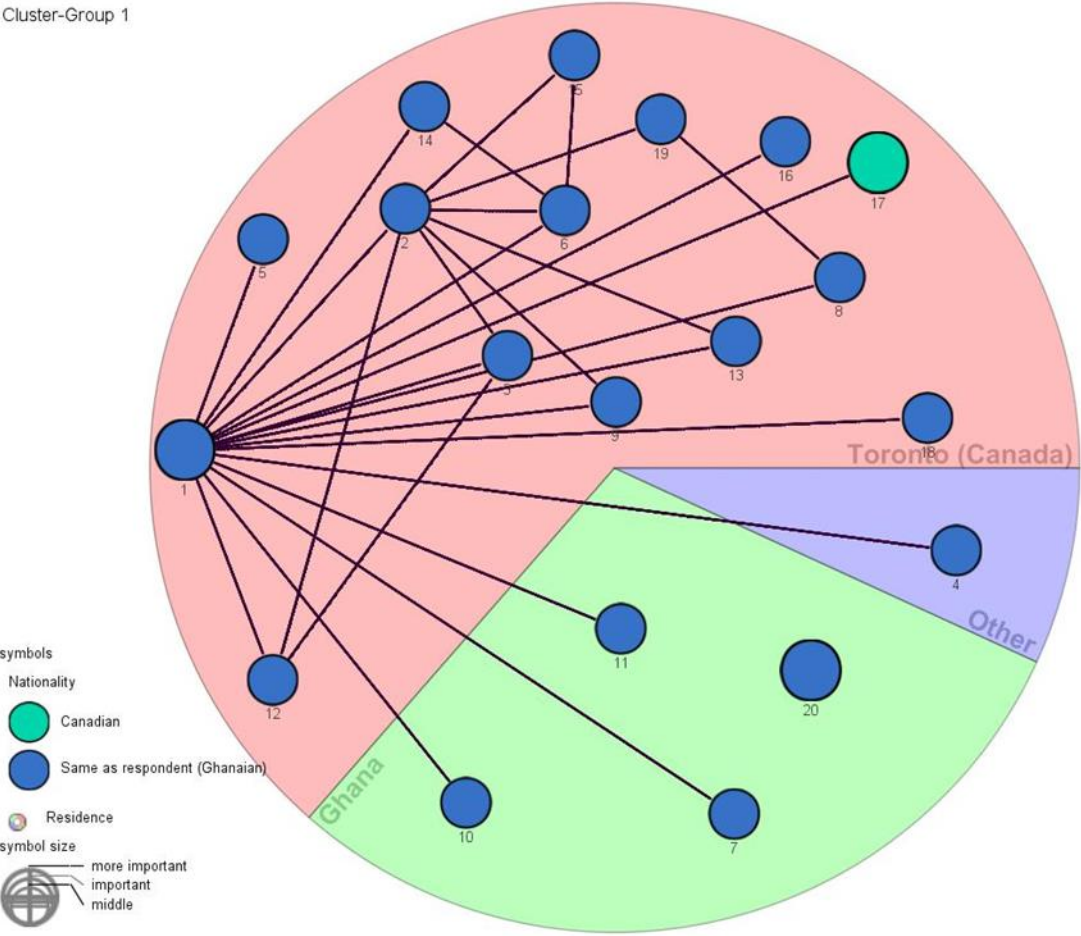
visual image of the nature of an immigrant's network. Since egos are connected to all alters in their network, they are omitted from the visualization. Rather ties between the various alters are represented with a line in the image. In the figures provided, the colour of the nodes represents the nationality of alter, the size indicates their degree of importance and the map space depicts alters location as provided by the ego.

Figure 4.2: Network Clusters based on network types



The ethnic enclave network (n=90), which constitutes the largest profile, is mainly characterized by male respondents whose network members are predominately Ghanaians residing in Canada or fellows (58.5%), followed by contacts from other nationalities either living in Canada or different countries (see **Figure 4.3**). Respondents in this cluster were mainly young adults 18 to 30years (36.67%) followed by an even distribution of respondents within the age group of 31-40years (21.11%), 41-50 (21.11%) and 51 and above (21.11%). Respondent's primary objective for moving to Canada was to study.

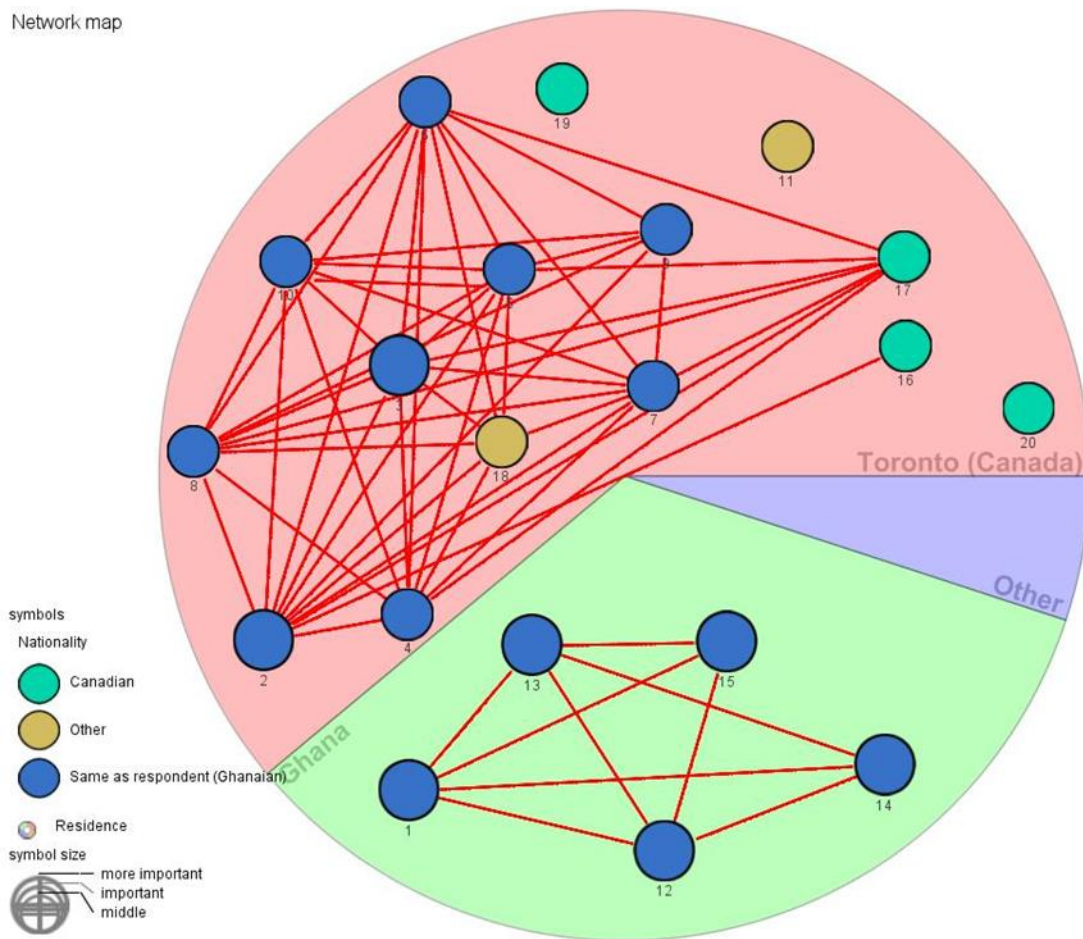
Figure 4.3: Visualization of Ethnic Enclave Networks



Within a dense network (n=51) profile, respondents are likely to have a large presence of fellows in their networks made up of immediate family (partners, siblings, other relatives) and friends in the host society. Respondents are also likely to have completed post-graduate education (52.94%) and were older (41-50). Most respondents had come to Canada purposely to work (33.33%) with a large number being employed (82.35%), while others had migrated to be with their family (33.33%). The long-term plan for respondents was to remain in Canada permanently (70.59%). **Figure 4.4** provides a visual image of an individual within this profile.

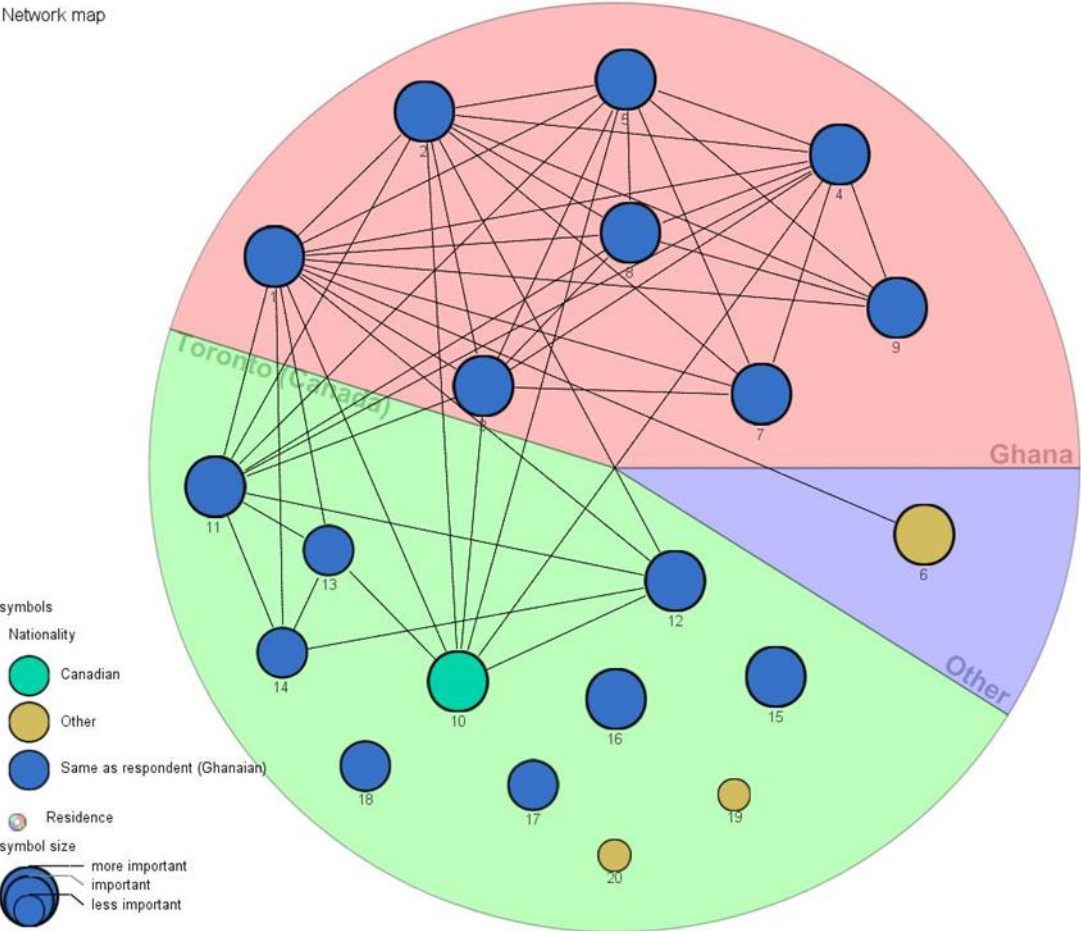
Figure 4.4: Visualization of Dense Networks

Network map



The third and smallest cluster described as the dual network ($n=31$) profile, is the only cluster that consists of more females than males who were married. In this cluster, respondents listed an almost even number of alters living in the host society and home country and with a small number of Canadian alters (see **Figure 4.5**). Most respondents in this cluster were recent immigrants (96.77%), whose primary purpose was to study. Although many of them had planned to stay in Canada permanently, some were undecided about their long-term plans.

Figure 4.5: Visualization of dual network cluster



Furthermore, the networks profiles also differed significantly based on the length of time spent in Canada (that is recent vs established immigrants), $\chi^2 (2, N = 172) = 19.22, p = .00$; migration objectives, $\chi^2 (4, N = 172) = 9.71, p = .04$; and their current immigration status, $\chi^2 (6, N = 172) = 23.08, p = .001$. There were also notable differences with respect to individual characteristics such as age $\chi^2 (6, N = 172) = 22.70, p = .001$; whether employed or not $\chi^2 (2, N = 172) = 10.56, p = .005$; and how settled immigrants were in Canada $\chi^2 (6, N = 172) = 8.99, p = .01$. The network clusters also differed in terms of frequency of contact between egos and alters (see Table in appendix).

4.8.3 Context of reception and migration project as explanatory variables for network clusters

Integrating the qualitative data with the quantitative data enabled us to provide reasons behind the network type of participants. It also offered the opportunity to trace the configuration of personal network identified using quantitative methods, to illustrate the results and to contextualize the type of migration process in which they occur. In doing so, we provide verbatim quotes from participants to provide first-hand accounts of participants' rationale for their networks based on their migration project and factors under the context of reception. We provide participants with pseudonyms in keeping with their wish for anonymity.

The ethnic enclave network and the largest network cluster is characterized by the large presence of fellows who are mostly friends. This suggests that participants found it prudent to be attached to their co-ethnics in the host society for various reasons. For one, the presence of fellows facilitated their migration from the origin and provided some initial support that helped in their settlement. Kwame, a recent immigrant who migrated for educational purposes commented about one of the fellows in his network. He reveals:

Dan and I have been friends for long and he happened to have got a scholarship to Canada after school. We stayed in touch and he also assisted me to get a scholarship to come here as well. He assisted me with the application, with purchasing a ticket, was at the airport to meet me and accommodated me for some time before I moved to my own place.

Other respondents also commented on the rationale for the large number of fellows in their network, which they associated with the need to feel at home in a "new" world. Therefore, by connecting with members of the same nationality they are able to achieve this goal. This assertion also reflects the migration project of most participants, which was to stay in Canada. Afia, a recent immigrant who had migrated to join the husband captured this succinctly. She notes:

My husband is here so the plan is to be here for some time and to make my stay enjoyable, certain things need to be in place. That is having people of the same nationality, who speak the same language, who understand what this society demands of us and what is expected of us back home is very important. They make you feel at home.

Regarding the dense network for which a large number of fellows are present, participants indicated the presence of community in the form of connecting with individuals in their churches, neighbourhood and ethnic association activities as helping to create ties with Ghanaians in Canada. Nana Ama, an economic immigrant in her mid-forties asserts;

I believe the church has been very instrumental in the kinds of friends that I have made over the years. Since most of us come from Ghana, it is very easy to reason together on many issues. Although I knew some individuals prior to joining the church, I have made other contacts some of whom have become good friends.

Others indicated that groups such as ethnic associations have enabled them to build life-long friendships that they leverage on for other things such as raising their kids. Some noted that when addressing an issue with their children, they could refer their kids to Ghanaian families that they had ties with. Mr. Nabia, one of such individuals notes:

I'm happy about my Ghanaian friends and especially those with kids. We interact often, my kids see the way they raise their kids, and their kids see how I raise mine. So, if my kids are misbehaving, I refer them to a family and say "hey, do you think Mr. K's son will do this?" Thus, I use my co-ethnic families as a yardstick to raise my kids in some areas.

In our dual network cluster, participants maintained a large number of fellows who they met after migration and maintained an almost even number of originals before migration. Also, they established ties with a large number of different individuals outside and within Canada while maintaining ties with a small number of hosts. This is associated with individuals whose initial concern was settling in smoothly into the host society, who maintained ties for that purpose but were open to the prospects of returning home or moving elsewhere. Such individuals had most of their immediate

and extended families back home, which could inform their thinking. Surprisingly, both recent and established immigrants shared in this perception. The interviews with participants buttress this point as shown in the extract below:

For now, I am sticking to what I have and doing what I have to do. However, I cannot tell exactly what will happen down the line. Both my wife and I have our immediate families back home and so the ideal of going back is not far from us. If we find a good gig at home, I think it will be a good motivation but for now, I am undecided (Mark, recent immigrant).

Although the various network clusters, reveal a small proportion of hosts, participants reveal that forming ties with native-born was not a difficult task. Several respondents described their formation of ties as “similar to any other friendship” and “generally straight forward”, among others. The responses were framed under the idea of tolerance among the Canadian population, which in part may be linked to Canada being a multicultural society. Participants also identified educational institutions as playing an important role in developing ties outside of their ethnic groups. Participants who pursued postgraduate education revealed that their institutions provided an opportunity to form new ties which helped them to understand and navigate life in the host society and ultimately to achieve their goal of completing their studies. They indicated that class activities and group assignments provided opportunities to bond with the Canadian-born. Beyond this, they also revealed that some domestic students were curious to know about them and through such ties provided recommendations regarding accessing services and finding necessities. Kobby, one of such participants, reveals:

My first major interaction with a Canadian was in my program at school. We had to pair and work on an assignment together. This provided the opportunity to chat with my Canadian colleague beyond the schoolwork. He became interested in my wellbeing and would check up on me from time to time.

Overall, almost all participants acknowledged the importance of moving beyond one’s community (that is same ethnicity) to forming ties with other individuals, most especially members of the host society. They indicated that if one truly wants to integrate then “the horizon of their participation in the society has to expand beyond

just their own community.” Thus, despite the small number of hosts in their networks, the general perception among most respondents is that the role of the non-immigrant born in the integration process is important and cannot be overlooked.

4.9 Discussion

We have shared insights regarding the structure and composition of the personal networks of Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA) in this paper. Among other things, we note that the personal networks of Ghanaians consist of Ghanaians (fellows) in Canada residing in the TCMA; family and friends in Ghana with whom they maintain ties (originals); relationship with other nationalities in Canada as well as maintaining their association with other Ghanaians in various part of the world (others). Using network clusters, we identified from a relational perspective the diverse configuration of their personal networks together with factors that account for these clusters and network type through in-depth interviews. These findings raise important questions, such as, what are the implications of these findings for understanding the integration of Ghanaian immigrants into the Canadian society? What role does elements of the context of reception tell us about the personal networks of Ghanaian immigrants? These are just a few examples of the issues for which we seek to throw more light on.

With respect to the context of reception, we find that government policies and the existence of a community play a role in the type of networks that exist among participants. As previously stated, Canadian immigration policy has not been discriminatory at any point towards Ghanaian immigrants. If anything at all, census data indicate that the total number of Ghanaian immigrants have increased steadily in the last decade, especially in the TCMA (Statistics Canada, 2016). This pattern is reflective of the broader immigration trend into Canada, which reveals that immigrants from Africa constitute the second largest source continent of immigrants moving into the country.

Still with Canadian policies, Canada’s adoption of multiculturalism may account for ethnic attachment of some immigrant groups including Ghanaians (Sano et al.,

2015). A key component of multicultural policies is the provision of an enabling environment for immigrant groups to flourish. The rationale is that immigrant groups may promote their unique cultural identity, fostering a bond of friendship amongst them while enjoying the diversity that others bring into Canada (Mensah, 2009). Participation in ethnic groups may lead to extensive ties with members of one's nationality. Nonetheless, we are cautious of this claim, in part, because immigrant groups exist in countries that do not subscribe to multiculturalism yet they are still able to organize themselves into cohesive groups in order to enhance the social capital of its members (Mensah, 2009). Also, the idea of multiculturalism as some have critiqued is considered a mechanism by the mainstream society to preserve its own identity by keeping immigrants segregated into distinct groups (ter Haar, 1998).

Regarding the existence of community, we argue that perhaps it is the immediate and main reason for the ethnic attachment among Ghanaian immigrants in Toronto. The establishment of townships, ethnic and national associations mainly in the 1980s—a time that coincided with large-scale Ghanaian immigration to Canada—provides a unique platform for Ghanaians across different socioeconomic backgrounds and cohorts to meet. These associations in most cases seek “to serve specific needs that individuals share with their own ethnic fellows but not necessarily with the native community” (Owusu, 2000:54). The specific interests include the need to maintain contact with individuals of the same background, who speak the same language as well as perpetuate their culture. The associations inform members of its role in the integration of the immigrant by helping to meet their material and emotional needs. For associations in Toronto, they provide avenues for Ghanaian immigrants to establish new ties and maintain existing ones through activities such as parties, picnics and other recreational activities (Owusu 2008). These activities for which most respondents in the survey indicated as patronizing provided the opportunity for them to bond with fellow Ghanaians, and explain the presence of a large number of them in their networks. Through the in-depth interviews, participants identified a range of assistance they received from members within these associations.

Concerning the migration project, findings indicate that it provides the basis for the formation and development of ties in Canada that produces the different types of support immigrants may receive from such ties. For instance, educational institutions played an active role in the development of ties for immigrants whose immediate goal was to study in Canada. Similarly, the migration project provides meaning to the different types of network developed and the centrality attached to the social and physical setting in which the networks develop (Bolibar et al. 2015). The different types of networks then provide specific opportunities for interaction, which shapes how networks are formed and maintained. Considering the nature of the network clusters, we argue that the configuration and evolution of personal networks is tied to a set of factors that are directly related to the migration project. These include the desire to stay and work in the host society, contribute to development back home, and to unite with families.

4.10 Conclusion

This study contributes to the few studies that have begun to explore the relational dimension of the migration process using a social network analysis approach. It achieves this goal by examining and describing the personal networks of Ghanaians in the TCMA of Canada. It finds that contextual factors such as government policies and the existence of community in the host society play an essential role in the formation and development of ties. Through the qualitative accounts, participants revealed that the presence of ethnic communities play a role in the development of ties with fellow Ghanaians. Overall, we find that the migration project and the context of reception are good explanatory variables to illuminate the network profiles of some recent immigrants' in Canada.

Interestingly, our quantitative analyses reveal that regardless of the length of time spent in Canada, Ghanaian immigrants maintain more ties with Ghanaians in Canada (fellows), with those in other destination countries (others) and largely with those in Ghana (originals). This finding goes contrary to the notion that overtime immigrants substitute original contacts with members of the host society (Bolibar et

al. 2015). A plausible explanation for ties with originals is linked to their engagement in transnational activities, which prior studies have found to be a feature of Ghanaian immigrants (see Kuire et al. 2016a; 2016b; Nkrumah 2018). In line with this, participants' response to remitting to family and friends on a regular basis suggests that they maintain some form of ties for these transactions to occur (see Table 1). Likewise, ties to other transnational ties is possible by improvement in communications technology, which comes at a relatively cheap cost and more accessible now than previous years. As well, social media applications has contributed to maintaining ties between individuals that are geographically dispersed (Boase et al. 2006; Cachia & Maya Jariego 2018).

Our findings does reveal some implications that should be attended to. First, considering the small number of the native-born in their networks, it does suggest that that Ghanaian immigrants may be either unaware of government support through third party organizations that promotes social integration or aware of these support assistances and not patronize them. Also, it could be that they make use of such services and do not make the effort to build any social ties through such medium. Alternatively, they may receive adequate co-ethnic support and do not have need for this services. Nonetheless, we do recommend the following to help Ghanaian immigrants build ties with the native-born as well as with their social integration broadly. For instance, it would be great for municipal government to use the various ethnic organizations as third party organizations or liaisons to create an avenue for interaction between them and the society. Funding could be provided with specific criteria and outcomes to evaluate the impact that these organizations could have on the integration of their members.

Despite the utility of the current study to immigrants' integration in Canada, we do realize some limitations with the study. First, a list of 20 alters by respondents may be inadequate to capture the totality of individuals within their personal networks. This may lead to selection bias and potentially account for the small number of host members in respondent's network. Likewise, the study does not consider the cohort

effect of immigrants. Presumably, recent cohorts may have benefited from migration networks, which involves a large number of fellows thereby influencing the number of fellows they include in their networks as well.

The implications of our empirical findings for understanding the nature of immigrant's personal networks and its association with immigrant integration has been explored. However, there are still pertinent questions that could be addressed in future studies. For instance, are there any differences in the network of other recent immigrants compared to that of Ghanaian immigrants? And if so, what factors account for these differences? Also, given that labour market condition influences immigration to the host society, what role does it play in the formation of networks? Considering that new ties are formed under different conditions, future studies can examine the changes in the personal network of immigrants to ascertain the role that length of time plays in the composition of one's network.

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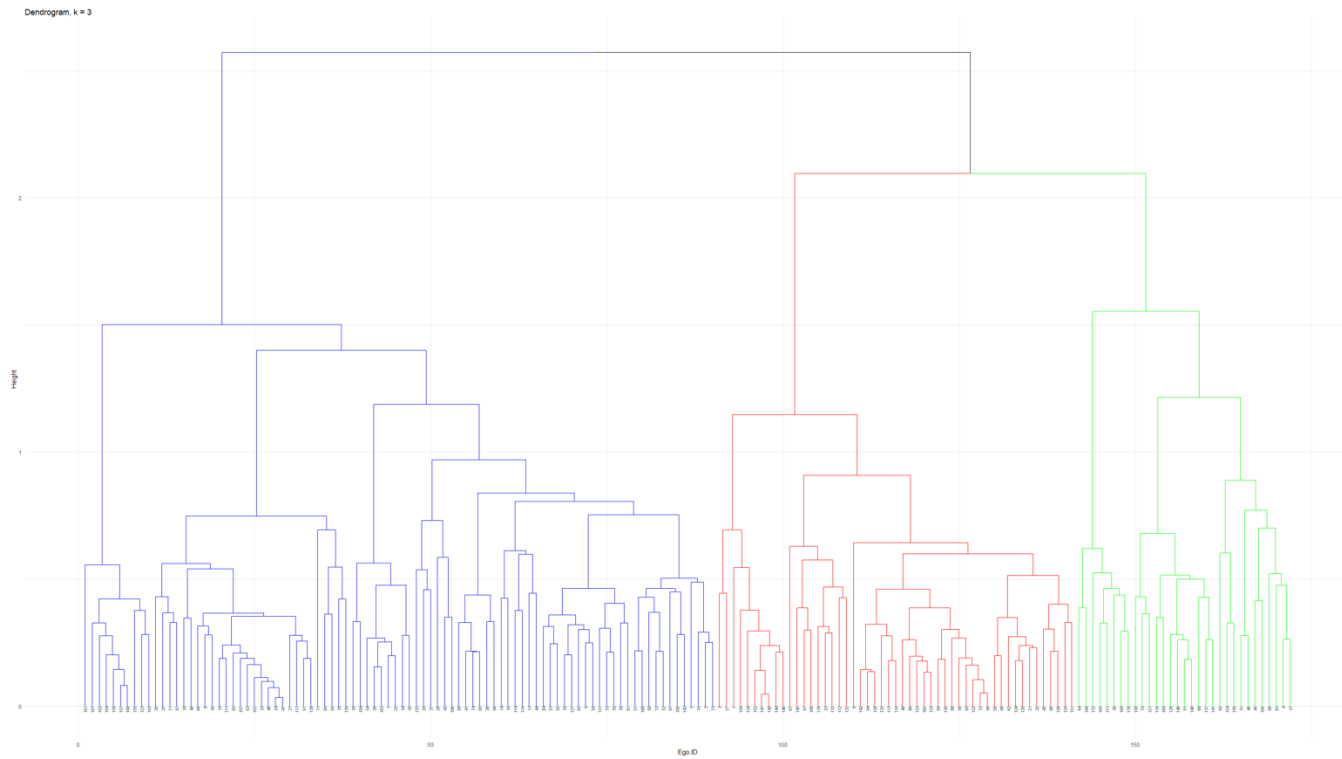
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4.12 Appendix

Dendrogram of three clusters



Legend

- Cluster 1 – ethnic enclave
- Cluster 2 – dense
- Cluster 3 – dual

Table: Characteristics of Participants in Clusters

| | | Cluster 1 | | Cluster 2 | | Cluster 3 | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|-----------|-------|----------------|
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % | X ² |
| Gender | Female | 36 | 40 | 23 | 45.1 | 16 | 51.61 | 1.33 |
| | Male | 54 | 60 | 28 | 54.9 | 15 | 48.39 | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Age | Under 30 | 33 | 36.67 | 21 | 41.18 | 24 | 77.42 | 22.7*** |
| | 31-40 | 19 | 21.11 | 8 | 15.69 | 7 | 22.58 | |
| | 41-50 | 19 | 21.11 | 10 | 19.61 | 0 | 0 | |
| | 51 and above | 19 | 21.11 | 12 | 23.53 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Education | Primary | 5 | 5.56 | 1 | 1.96 | 0 | 0 | 3.36 |
| | High school | 9 | 10 | 7 | 13.73 | 3 | 9.68 | |
| | University/college | 31 | 34.44 | 16 | 31.37 | 12 | 38.71 | |
| | Postgraduate | 45 | 50 | 27 | 52.94 | 16 | 51.16 | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Years of residence | Less than 10 years (recent immigrant) | 49 | 54.44 | 28 | 54.90 | 30 | 96.77 | 19.22*** |
| | 10 years or more (established) | 41 | 45.56 | 23 | 45.10 | 1 | 3.23 | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Long term migration plan | Stay permanently in Canada | 76 | 84.44 | 36 | 70.59 | 21 | 67.74 | 9.71** |
| | Undecided/don't know | 6 | 6.67 | 11 | 21.57 | 8 | 25.81 | |
| | Return home | 8 | 8.89 | 4 | 7.84 | 2 | 6.45 | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Employment status | Yes | 88 | 97.78 | 42 | 82.35 | 27 | 87.1 | 10.56*** |
| | No | 2 | 2.22 | 9 | 17.65 | 4 | 12.9 | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Reason for migrating | Work | 22 | 24.44 | 17 | 33.33 | 6 | 19.35 | 9.54 |
| | Family | 24 | 26.67 | 17 | 33.33 | 10 | 32.26 | |
| | Study | 33 | 36.67 | 12 | 23.53 | 15 | 48.39 | |
| | Refugee | 11 | 12.22 | 5 | 9.80 | 0 | 0 | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Settled in Canada | Yes | 83 | 92.22 | 41 | 82 | 22 | 70.97 | 9.00*** |
| | No | 7 | 7.78 | 9 | 18 | 9 | 29.03 | |
| | | | | | | | | |

CHAPTER FIVE

Social support networks of immigrants in Canada: a multi-level analysis of social support among Ghanaian immigrants' in Canada

Emmanuel Kyeremeh and Godwin Arku

CHAPTER 5

Social support networks of immigrants in Canada: a multi-level analysis of social support among Ghanaian immigrants' in Canada

Abstract

Although immigrants are able to provide and receive support in their networks post migration, few studies have examined the nature of reciprocal exchanges among recent immigrants. In particular, relatively little is known about the nature of these support networks - in the context where immigrants are engaged in transnational activity and how this contributes to their integration in the host society. This study therefore addressed this gap by considering directionality of support with respect to three dimensions of support (emotional, instrumental and informational) and the extent to which the immigrant's characteristics (transnationality), network member's characteristics (closeness) and network characteristics (brokerage) influence these support exchanges. Drawing on data from 172 egocentric networks collected from Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, results show that a small proportion of support is exchanged in the immigrant's network. Multi-level multinomial analysis of the networks reveal that immigrants' characteristics and network characteristics are less significant in influencing support exchanges. Rather, alter characteristics such as degree of importance and frequency of communication is likely to result in the provision, receipt and reciprocation of emotional, instrumental and informational support in Canada. Based on this, the implications for immigrant's integration are discussed.

Keywords: social support, personal networks, Ghanaian immigrants, integration

5.1 Introduction

Social support networks, which involves exchanges between informal individuals such as family members, friends, peers and formal individuals (e.g. health professionals, settlement agents, shelter personnel), leads to material, informational, esteem, emotional and other practical resources that is needed for one's survival (Guruge & Humphreys, 2009). Support from these networks help individuals to cope and mitigate against various stressors, thereby promoting their health and wellbeing during different transitions (Din-Dzietham et al., 2004). For immigrants in particular, support networks are invaluable to their immigration, settlement, and integration in the host country (Makarimba et al., 2013; Simich et al., 2005; Stewart et al., 2008, 2010). Further, these networks also have the potential to decrease the isolation and loneliness that individuals may experience while enhancing their sense of belonging and fulfillment in life (Bhui et al., 2006; Jaranson et al., 2004; Logie et al. 2016).

In immigrant-receiving societies like Canada, research finds that challenges immigrants experience in the various facets of their integration stem from the absence of social support (see Chadwick & Collins, 2015; Holtmann, 2016; Saad, 2018; Salami et al. 2020; Woodgate & Busolo, 2018; Woodgate et al., 2017). These challenges has resulted in studies that seek to understand how social support can help address the needs and concerns of immigrants. Two key findings emerged from these studies. First, the networks of immigrants tend to dwindle upon arrival in Canada with ties to a small number of individuals (Guruge & Humphreys, 2009; Salami et al., 2020; Simich, 2005; Stewart et al., 2015). For example, Stewart and colleagues (2008) reveal that after migration, Chinese and Somali newcomers have few contacts upon arrival to assist with their integration and settlement challenges. Second, they find that social support is a complex issue, unique to specific immigrant groups. As such, they recommend group specific analysis aimed at providing culturally sensitive approaches to dealing with social support among group members (Stewart et al., 2008).

Although the network of immigrants dwindles in the host society, available evidence suggests that immigrants receive some support albeit minimally (e.g.,

Mensah, 2009; Teixeira, 2014; Thomas, 2011). Newcomers identify pioneer immigrants who provide assistance while developing new ties with co-ethnics and other immigrants to serve the same purpose. According to Simich and colleagues (2005), newcomers to Canada depend on family and friends to overcome hurdles in their integration. They argue that over time immigrants are attached to their ethnic communities, develop a strong sense of attachment to Canada that enables them to extend their networks. Similarly, Covell et al. (2017) indicate that internationally educated nurses in Canada obtain support from their networks to assist in their workplace integration.

Despite previous studies highlighting the importance of these networks and identifying the support available within them, the characteristics of individuals who provide support and the network characteristics that they belong to are noticeably absent from the discussion within the Canadian context. The Canadian case is significant since there is a governmental focus on immigrants integrating successfully to contribute their quota to the economy (CIC, 2002). In line with this, government advocate for immigrants to develop ties with both the native-born, other immigrants and co-ethnics (CIC, 2002; IRCC, 2017). This makes it important to identify the personal network of immigrants since not all network members can provide support. Provision of support for the most part, is influenced by sociodemographic characteristics of each network member (alter) and the type of relationship that exist between immigrants and alters (Rho et al., 2019). Hence, by combining the characteristics of the immigrant (ego), alter and networks, one is able to account for the variation in network composition and structure, which affects the provision of support.

In addition, studies have focused primarily on support that immigrants receive from their networks, overlooking the agency that immigrants possess and the support they potentially offer to their network members (Cross et al., 2018). Recent evidence, however, shows that immigrants receive and provide support to members of their network (Kornienko et al., 2018). The ability of some immigrants to provide support calls for attention on the directionality of support. Hence, our objective in this paper is

to examine the relationship between the immigrant's characteristics, alter characteristics and network characteristics on support provision. In doing so, we address the question "what characteristics of the ego, alter and network leads to exchange of informational, instrumental and emotional support in one's network?"

To answer the research question the current study investigates social support exchanges among a recent group of immigrants in Canada. Informed by network analysis, we utilize egocentric data from 172 Ghanaian immigrants living in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA). We investigate support exchange within their personal networks based on three types of support – 1) informational, mainly on job opportunities and job search, 2) instrumental support, supplying tangible help such as helping with errands, household tasks among others, and 3) emotional support such as giving advice and discussing personal challenges (Herz, 2015; House, 1988; van der Poel, 1993). Importantly, we consider three key measures that reflect individual characteristics (transnationality), alter characteristics (emotional and geographic closeness) and network characteristics (brokerage) and how it affects support provision. We focus on these three given their direct relationship with support provision (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018).

Our study contributes to the literature in a number of ways. First, the study contributes to the field of migration studies by moving beyond "mere metaphorical" use of network terminology (Bilecen & Cardona 2018; Krissman, 2006). Rather it empirically examines social support exchanges among immigrants in Canada using a social network analysis approach, which, to the best of our knowledge, is the first of its kind. Second, our study contributes to the literature by examining the varied directionality of support exchanges. Few studies have concentrated on understanding directionality of support among immigrants (see Kornienko et al., 2018 for exception). Studies often examine support immigrants receive or network constituents of reciprocated support (Plickert et al., 2007). Our work, therefore, explores this issue in a receiving society. By doing so, it affirms the agency that immigrants possess as both receivers and givers of support within their networks. It also helps to provide an

accurate picture of the immigrant's experience since evidence discloses that although immigrants may be resource deprived, the dynamics is changing with more capital-rich immigrants moving into host societies (Ley, 2011).

We structure the study as follows: section 2 provides an overview of the support exchanges among immigrants; engages the literature on social support, the role of alter characteristics and transnationality in support provision as well as introduces our hypotheses. Given our interest in transnationality, it also reviews the literature on support within transnational ties. In section 3, we discuss the methods, including the data collection procedure, the measures used and the process of analyzing the data. Section 4 is dedicated to the results of the analysis. It includes descriptive analysis elaborating on the predictors of the three types of support as well as multilevel multinomial regression models assessing the influence of the three measures on the three dimensions of social support (informational, instrumental and emotional). The final section discusses and summarizes the findings and points readers to some limitations and directions for future studies.

5. 2 Background

5.2.1 Social support from transnational networks

Recent improvement in telecommunications and transportation has increased the ability of immigrants to maintain and sustain ties with family and friends across different geographical locations (Castles et al., 2014; Vertovec, 2009) and engage in a variety of activities simultaneously in the home and host society. This interaction known as transnationality is a major characteristic of contemporary migration (Samers, 2010). Herz (2015) argues that there has been sustained interest in transnationality within the last decade because of the realization that immigrants remain embedded in networks both in the host and destination country. Although migration results in the shrinking of networks (Koelet et al., 2016; Morosanu, 2013), immigrants maintain supportive relationships with a few close friends and family members (Koelet et al., 2017) in the origin country.

For both immigrants and their transnational relationships, engagement in transnationality has some perceived benefits. On one hand, sending remittances enable immigrants to provide opportunities to improve the livelihood of their families in the homeland (Kuuire et al., 2016). On the other hand, immigrants also derive benefits from their transnational ties albeit intangible in nature. Toruńczyk-Ruiz (2008) indicates that family members who communicate frequently with immigrants tend to provide emotional support in the day-to-day activities of Polish immigrants in the Netherlands. Similarly, within Canada, Amoyaw and Abada (2016) find that being able to remit after a period provides an emotional advantage for immigrants, especially females. Since geographical boundaries prevents immigrants from engaging physically with their transnational ties, support exchange is often emotional and informational (Djundeva & Ellwardt, 2020).

5.2.2 Directionality of support flow in immigrants' networks

Within networks, support from alters is translated into capital that is needed for everyday life (Plicket et al., 2007). Support is often requested by those in need and provided by those in position to provide it. Prior studies on support provision indicate that the different forms of support are likely to be unidirectional, flowing from an individual's network to alter without a reverse flow. For example, Wellman and Wortley (1990) using data from the East York studies focused on whether support flowed from the relationship an ego has with their network members without recourse for the reverse direction. Similarly, Herz (2015) accounts for the role of transnationality in the provision of support paid attention to received support among German immigrants in Great Britain also with little attention on reciprocal exchanges.

More recently, however, reciprocal exchanges of support are considered largely because of the characteristics of some recent immigrants. The human capital, coupled with past immigration experience, of an increasing number of immigrants empower them to offer support or reciprocate support with other recent and established immigrants within their network (Ley, 2011). They offer support in anticipation of such help from others later (Walker et al., 1993) since the requirement

for support exchange is tied to previous provision of support. For example, De Miguel and Tranmer (2010) find that immigrants in Spain are more likely to exchange support with immigrants of other nationality with respect to information and finding accommodation. Konienko and colleagues (2018) also show that the nature of the relationship as well as greater levels of resources on both parts of the ego and alter leads to providing, receiving and reciprocally exchanging financial and emotional support. However, scarce resources and low socioeconomic status may hinder the ability of some immigrants from engaging in reciprocal exchanges, resulting in unidirectional support flows (Roschelle, 1997). Considering the variation that exists in the characteristics of immigrants, it is essential to differentiate between the directions of support exchanges and examine characteristics of the various ties that are involved in the reciprocal and unidirectional support flows within the personal network of immigrants.

5.2.3 Theoretical background and hypotheses

This study sought to understand the impact of alter characteristics, immigrant characteristics and network characteristics (brokerage) on the provision of support among recent immigrants in Canada. By doing so, it connects three aspects of social networks: social support, transnationality, and brokerage. The concept of social support, as argued by Bilecen and Cardona (2018), is based on the relationship that exists between individuals and the various forms of resources that flow from such personal relationships. The ability to provide support is a function of the characteristics of both the supplier and the receiver as well as the structure of the network that the individual finds themselves. In line with this, Wellman and Frank (2001:234) argue that support from personal networks is rooted in “the nature of the giver and receiver, the relationship or in the composition and structure of the network.” This suggests that a network approach to social support provides a more complete picture of resource flow between individuals.

When social support is perceived as relational or by the characteristic of the tie, then certain relationships/ties would determine the level of support exchanged (Herz,

2015). Research finds that “strong ties and central ties are likely to provide more support” (Herz, 2015:66). Specifically, strong ties that consist of immediate or extended family provide different types of support. These individuals offer more emotional and instrumental support and are crucial in receiving other forms of support “in terms of financial resources, physical needs, and help during periods of illness.” Kornienko et al. (2018) find that family members in the network of Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Uzbek women in Russia are more likely to exchange both financial and emotional support. Other sources of support such as informational is provided by weak ties mostly co-workers and acquaintances (Granovetter, 1973, 1983; Bankston, 2014). These forms of support emanating from close ties can be referred to as emotional closeness.

Similarly, ties considered important tend to provide more support. Bilecen and Cardona (2018) find that Turkish immigrants are likely to receive financial, informational and care from alters they consider very important within their networks. Research further indicates that network members who communicate frequently with ego also tend to offer more support than those ego minimally communicates with (Borgatti et al., 2013; Perry et al., 2018; Wellman & Wortley, 1990). Frequent communication strengthens the bond between the individuals involved with such individuals inclined to assist one another in some form (Bankston, 2014). Although frequent communication leads to a variety of support, it does not necessarily guarantee information such as job openings. For instance, Granovetter’s (1973) classic on strength of ties indicates that with respect to job, weak ties are more beneficial since they transmit new information across the network to individuals compared to strong ties who exhibit network closure and do not provide any new information within the network.

Another form of closeness is spatial closeness, which further influences the type of support received within a network. Ideally, individuals within close proximity can offer support to one another. However, for immigrants who have more ties in their home countries, their networks tend to be geographically dispersed. They forge local networks with the goal of such networks assisting in their integration while

maintaining their transnational ties. In addition, members of their transnational networks may migrate to other countries, but they maintain ties with them in the new destination (Cachia & Maya Jariego, 2018; Nee & Sanders, 2001; Vertovec, 2009).

Previous accounts suggest that immigrants depend on their transnational ties to assist with care for their children and elderly ones back at home (Ryan et al., 2008). Although geographically dispersed ties do provide details about opportunities in their respective spaces, they are unable to provide any form of support that requires one's physical presence. Based on this background, we examine the effect of geographic and emotional closeness on support exchange by employing ego-alter attributes. Since close ties have demonstrated the ability to provide greater support, we argue that they will be in position to exchange emotional and instrumental support in both directions with ego. However, since weak ties have equally demonstrated the ability to provide new information, we expect them to provide this support in all directions and not close ties. Thus, we hypothesize that:

H1a: Closer ties (kin/family, high degree of importance of tie, frequent communication and ties within the same location as ego) are more likely to provide, receive and reciprocate emotional support.

H1b: Closer ties are more likely to provide, receive and reciprocate instrumental support.

H1c: Closer ties are less likely to provide, receive and reciprocate informational support.

Considering our interest in accessing the role of transnationality in support provision, we provide some hypotheses to that effect. Transnationality is perceived as the engagement in personal, political, economic or religious activities across different national borders (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018). It involves a deliberate attempt by actors to be fully engaged in different activities and not just mere participation in activities within the different geographical boundaries (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018; Bilecen & Sienkiewicz, 2015). According to Faist and colleagues (2015), transnationality is increasingly considered a marker of difference in migration studies when compared to

other factors such as gender, occupation and length of time in the host society. Despite becoming a common feature of recent immigrants, there are variations regarding the level of engagement.

Transnationality is a predictor of support, which does not require the physical presence of both the giver and receiver. Herz (2015) suggests that since transnationality typically takes place in different locations, the further the geographic distance between network members, the lesser the degree of spontaneity of the interaction between them. Hence, support is limited to particular forms of interaction. In this regard, emotional support and information are the two likely forms of support that is impacted by transnationality. These two forms of support are marked less by geographical distance. As such, a phone call to a network member (alter), offering encouragement in a time of despair or celebrating with them, serves the purpose of emotional support without requiring physical presence. Mok and colleagues (2009) indicate that the frequency of meeting physically between individuals decreases as spatial distance between them increases. The authors note that physical distance rightfully affects the type of support provision within one's network with large distance impeding tangible forms of support but having little impact on intangible one's such as emotional support. Findings from Herz (2015) and Kornienko et al. (2018) indicate that emotional support is exchanged within the network of immigrants.

For information flow, studies show that it may not be affected by geographic distance. Bilecen and Cardona (2018) find that transnationality was significantly associated with received information among Turkish immigrants in Germany. We therefore expect transnationality to lead to exchange of information. However, since physical distance hinders provision of tangible support one would assume that transnationality would have a minimal impact with the provision of instrumental support. Research finds this to be the case. Bilecen and Cardona (2018) posits that transnationality is not significantly associated with receiving support in the form of care for one's family. Against this background, we therefore hypothesize that:

H2a: Engagement in transnationality is associated with the provision, receipt and reciprocal exchange of emotional support.

H2b: Egos who engage in transnationality are less likely to provide, receive and reciprocate instrumental support.

H2c: Transnationality would result in the provision, receipt and reciprocal exchange of informational support.

We turn our attention to the network, specifically the position of the ego within the network. We focus on brokerage, which is one of the dominant theoretical models that explains how network functions (Kim, 2014). A network that exhibits brokerage characteristics is one that maintains an open network structure rich in what Burt (1992) calls “structural holes” (Borgatti et al., 2013; Perry et al., 2018). Structural holes are defined as the “relational gap between non-redundant contacts”, i.e., individuals within an ego network who are not connected to each other and are therefore able to provide novel information and brokering opportunities (Kim, 2004: 357). In essence, if an ego connects with two distinct individuals within the network, then the ego likely has access to a structural hole.

Within migration literature, some studies indicate the advantages that are associated with brokerage. For instance, Alpes (2013) finds that having brokerage opportunities within one’s network facilitates international migration among Cameroonian immigrants. These brokers connect immigrants to pioneer immigrants who provide other opportunities upon arrival. As well, Bilecen and Cardona (2018) find that brokerage is positively related to receiving support in an immigrants’ network.

Little evidence exists between instrumental and emotional support and their relationship with brokerage. However, since brokerage involves an open network with few connected individuals whilst emotional support is associated with close ties (Kim 2014), we anticipate that emotional support is unlikely to be received, provided, or reciprocated within such networks. For instrumental support, different individuals

within close proximity can provide such support. Based on this background, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H3a: The more brokerage an ego has, the lesser s/he would provide, receive, and reciprocate emotional support.

H3b: The more brokerage an ego has, the greater s/he would provide, receive, and reciprocate instrumental support.

H3c: The more brokerage opportunities an ego has, the more likely s/he would provide, receive, and reciprocate informational support.

5.3 Study context: Social Support among Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA)

Ghanaian immigrants are part of black Africans in Canada whose immigration is recent (Mensah, 2010). Although evidence suggests that their migration into Canada began in the 1950s, it was not until the 1970s that their numbers began to increase and continued to increase substantially into the 1990s and beyond (Firang, 2019). Mensah (2010) suggests that migration of Ghanaians was facilitated in part by the introduction of the point system in the 1960s, the immigration act allowing Canadian law to accept refugees in 1976 and deteriorating economic and political conditions in Ghana. Most Ghanaian immigrants in the 1950s (first wave of migration) arrived as either international students or asylum seekers (Mensah, 2009; Owusu, 2000). Similar to other immigrant groups, Ghanaian immigrants mostly settle in the TCMA where census data disclose that 22,395 of the 39,885 Ghanaians in Canada reside (Statistics Canada 2016). However, it is widely believed that this figure is an underestimation due to the lumping of some Ghanaians under the four predominant ethnic origins (Ghanaian, Akan, Ashanti, and Ewe) and others under the categories of black and other Africans (Mensah, 2009).

The decision by most Ghanaian immigrants to stay in the TCMA is due to several factors. First, the presence of pioneer immigrants helps in areas such as information, job, housing, and emotional support that is required in the integration process

(Hyndman et al., 2006; Mensah 2009). This is often facilitated by the presence of religious organizations: census data suggest that more than 90 percent of Ghanaian immigrants in the TCMA identify as Christians (Statistics Canada, 2016). The churches, which have roots in Ghana, provide the avenue for ties to be built with other Ghanaians who assist newcomers or recent immigrants (Mensah, 2009). Established with the goal of “creating space for the (re)production of their cultural identity, and for insulation from racism” (Mensah, 2009: 205), these churches organize activities and programs to meet this objective. For example, some have specific programs targeted at assisting newcomers with employment, housing and immigration related issues while organizing events such as community barbeques and picnics for members of their congregation and the Ghanaian community at large to feel welcomed in the host society (Mensah, 2010).

In addition, ethnic/hometown and national associations are prominent features in the TCMA that facilitate the integration of Ghanaian immigrants. Together with the churches, they serve as conduits that provide supportive resources needed to integrate successfully in the Canadian society while providing an important avenue to maintain and sustain transnational ties (Kuuire et al., 2016). Further, the multicultural appeal within the TCMA where immigrants are able to identify local shops where they can purchase homegrown items, restaurants where they are able to purchase and enjoy cuisines of their origin as well as meeting individuals of similar background is a huge incentive that attracts most Ghanaian immigrants to the area. Despite increasing housing cost within the broader community, housing affordability in certain parts of the city and opportunity to live among individuals of similar background has contributed to their settlement in the TCMA (Firang, 2019). In recent years, international students, economic immigrants, and family reunification immigrants constitute the core group of Ghanaians that arrive in Canada (Mensah & William, 2014). The recent immigration of these group of immigrants is partly explained by the federal express entry program that allow individuals of high human capital to move and scholarship offered to Ghanaian students by some Canadian universities

5.4 Methods:

5.4.1 Study sites and sampling

Research on international migration is often fraught with peculiar challenges not encountered by scholars in other domains (Beauchemin & Gonzalez-Ferrer, 2010). These challenges are associated with finding a representative sample of immigrants in the destination country, thus making it difficult to find a suitable sampling frame. The challenge is further compounded when the research involves studying a specific immigrant group. As a result, prior studies have suggested the deployment of both probability and non-probability sampling approaches such as targeted random sampling, and community collaboration to reduce biases among immigrant populations (Parrado et al., 2005). We therefore employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques in selecting respondents in this study. We began with a community collaboration or pilot test among twenty Ghanaian immigrants in the City of London, Ontario with a goal of refining the survey. The twenty surveys from members within this community were omitted from the final sample.

With no adequate sampling framework to choose from, participants were selected from several Ghanaian churches within the TCMA. The churches were identified as gateways to reach participants since over 90 percent of Ghanaian immigrants sampled in the 2016 census identify as Christians, 2 percent as Muslims, 1 percent as other religious groups and the remaining 5 percent as non-religious. We compiled a list of Ghanaian churches through an online search and the Ghanaian News newspaper. A total of 53 churches were identified and confirmed by some established immigrants within the community. Out of this, 25 randomly selected churches covering the various faiths were contacted to participate in the study. Nineteen accepted, with 6 declining, citing reasons relating to confidentiality and scheduling conflict. The interested churches provided a platform for the lead author to explain the purpose of the research to their congregation. Interested persons 18 years and above who identify as Ghanaian immigrants contacted the lead author who assisted them to fill the questionnaire through a face-to-face approach. The face-to-face approach was

adopted in order to reach a wide range of immigrants as well as to reduce the respondent burden that is typically associated with egocentric data collection (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018).

To account for the 10 percent of Ghanaians who are non-Christians and individuals who do not attend church, we followed the examples of Beauchemin (2012) and Kuire et al. (2016). We sampled participants from four grocery shops, four ethnic/hometown association meetings and three secular picnic events organized for Ghanaians in Toronto and other surrounding areas. The rationale for doing this is to ensure a heterogeneous sample. Participants eligible for the study were first generation Ghanaians residing in the Toronto census area. Overall, 204 surveys were obtained between June 2018 and July 2019 with 172 used as the analytical sample since implausible values were excluded.

5.4.2 Network data

We used a network survey with a single name generator to obtain information about individuals with whom respondents exchanged various types of support (Bolibar et al., 2015; Cachia & Jariego, 2018). We divided the network survey into five parts to enhance the collection process. Part one was used to obtain socio-demographic information about respondents (egos). The second part contained the name generator which was used to identify members (alters) of the respondent's personal networks (Marin & Hampton, 2007). Part three contained the name interpreter which helped to identify alter attributes in the network (Carrington et al., 2005). The fourth part was used to obtain information regarding the type of support exchanged between respondents and alters within the last 12 months. We asked respondents "from time to time, most people need assistance, be it in the form of small or big tasks or favors. Within the last 12 months who are the people with whom you usually exchange such assistance?" Respondents were asked to list up to 20 individuals with whom they exchange these supports. The rationale for asking for 20 people was to help capture both weak and strong ties that provide support while not burdening them since network study is

associated with a high rate of respondent fatigue (McCarty et al., 2007; Perry et al., 2018).

To assist the process, we included a network chart with four concentric circles which later combined to two. The circles were related to the importance of ties geared towards understanding the nature of the relationships (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018). Respondents were asked to reflect critically about what being important means to them before placing alters in the concentric circle according to the degree of importance that is “very important” and “less important.” We provided a network matrix in the fifth part of the survey for respondents to identify the relationship that exists between the various alters. The matrix was meant to help provide insight regarding the structure of the respondents’ network (Lubbers et al., 2010; Cachia & Jariego, 2018).

5.5 Measures:

5.5.1 Dependent variable

Three dimensions of support served as the dependent variable for our analysis. These include exchange of information (relating to job information and job help), instrumental support (assistance with small tasks and favours) and emotional support (anyone who has provided advice, support with minor or major issues). Respondents were asked to answer “yes” or “no” to each dimension in two directions; that is from respondent (ego to alter) and from alter to ego. Based on this, we created three binary variables: (1) reciprocal support (coded as 1, when alter \rightarrow ego = 1 and ego \rightarrow alter = 1); (2) provided support (coded as 1, when alter \rightarrow ego = 0 and ego \rightarrow alter = 1); and (3) received support (coded as 1, when alter \rightarrow ego = 1 and ego \rightarrow alter = 0). From these variables, we generated a polytomous nominal variable for each support outcome (i.e., informational support, instrumental support and for emotional support), with the following categories: reciprocal support = 3, provided support = 2, received support = 1, and no support = 0.

5.5.2 Transnationality

Following Bilecean and Sienkiewicz (2015) we created an additive index of transnationality with the following items:

Remittance (sending money or financial remittance to family and friends)
(1=yes, and 0=no)

Transnational media use (e.g., the use of television, the internet, social media and origin country) (1=yes, and 0=no).

Visit home/Ghana (1=once a year, 2= more than once a year, 3 = other)

Memberships in organizations (membership in hometown association, political organizations or business association both in the origin and destination country
1=yes, and 0=no)

The additive index was built based on these four items. The value of the visit home item was measured in a scale from 0 to 3 and divided by its maximum to give an equal weight in the sum index as a dichotomous item. With this weighting of scores, the additive index took values in the interval [0, 4] with 0 being the lowest and 4 being the highest engagement in transnationality.

5.5.2 Effective size as brokerage

We adopt effective size as a measure of brokerage and more specifically as characteristic of the network. Brokerage as a network measure emphasizes the non-redundancy of ties around the ego or the intermediary position of the ego between distant egos (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018). Since ego is at the center of the network and connected to all alters, we use effective size, which is a measure of non-redundancy of ties (Burt, 1992). Within the egocentric network, effective size refers to the number of alters (j) that ego (i) has minus the average number of ties that each alter has to the other alters (excluding ties to ego). It is represented by the formulae

$$E_i = \sum_j \left[1 - \sum \frac{a_{jh}}{k_i} \right]$$

where k_i is i 's degree and a_{jh} are ties among i 's alters. If all alters are non-redundant ($a_{jh} = 0$), effective size equals i 's degree (k_i). The more ties among alters, the smaller the effective size. E_i can be normalized in the range $[0, 1]$ by dividing it by i 's degree (k_i). We use the normalized measure.

5.5.3 Closeness

We employ four different dimensions of closeness as stipulated by Bilecen and Cardona (2018). These include type of relationship (kin = 1, non-kin = 0), reported degree of importance of tie (0 = very important, 1 = less important), alter's location (1=Canada, 2=Ghana, 3=other), and frequency of interaction (1 = yearly, 2 = monthly, 3 = weekly, 4 = daily).

5.5.4 Control variables

We control for basic demographic variables for ego as well as alters. Respondents provided information with respect to age in years (re-categorised into 18 to 30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years and 51 and above), level of education (1=primary, 2=high school/secondary 3=university/college, 4=Postgraduate studies). Respondents were asked to report on alter's gender (male=1, female=2), age in years (categorized into up to 24 years, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55 and above) and education (coded as that of ego's education).

5.6 Data analysis

Descriptive analyses involved calculating mean and standard deviations for continuous variables and proportions for categorical variables. Multinomial logistic regression analysis is used as the statistical model for analysing the data due to the nominal nature of the dependent variable. Furthermore, a multi-level modelling approach is incorporated in all the logistic regression models to account for the clustering effect due to the hierarchical nature of the data (alters nested within egos). The modelling is done in two phases: In phase one, we conducted a set of univariate analyses to determine the unadjusted effect of each independent variables (transnationality, closeness, and brokerage) on the dependent variable across all the support dimensions (informational, emotional, and instrumental). In phase two, all the

unadjusted models are controlled for the effect of age, education and gender for egos and alters. All the regression coefficients are exponentiated and interpreted as relative risk ratios (RRR). We set the significance level for this study at 0.1 and performed all analyses using Stata version 14 statistical software (Stata, 2015).

5.7. Results

5.7.1 Descriptive analyses

Table 5.1 presents a description of ego and alter characteristics. A total of 172 egos (43.60% female and 56.40 % male) with alters (n=3440) formed the analytical sample for the study. More male egos participated in the study leading to more males being nominated (53.81%) in their support networks than females (46.19%). Egos in the age range of 18 to 30 years dominated the study while their nominated alters were usually in the average age range of 30 to 40 years. Majority of the egos had university education and higher (87.82%). Similarly, 85.46% of alters had university education or higher. Nearly two-thirds (62.21%) of the egos were recent immigrants (had been in Canada for less than 10 years). The mean index indicating transnationality was 2.94 (± 0.72) and that of effective size (a proxy for brokerage) was 0.84 (± 0.11). Most alters were categorised as being less important (59.36%) while approximately three-quarters (77.67%) were categorized as non-family members. Majority (83.34%) of alters reside in Canada. Finally, half (49.01%) of the altars had weekly/bi-weekly communication with egos.

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics

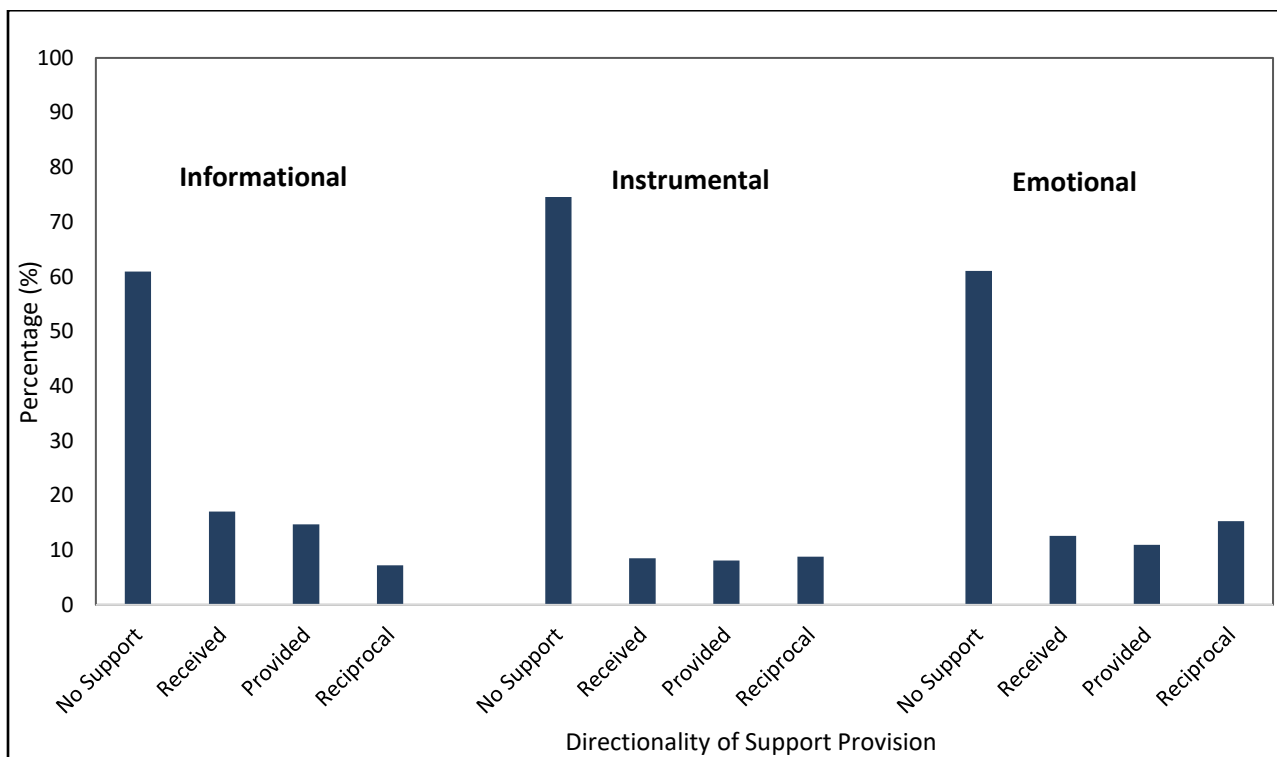
| Attributes | Descriptive Statistics |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Ego variables (n=172) | |
| Gender | |
| Female | 75 (43.60%) |
| Male | 97 (56.40%) |
| Age | |
| 18 to 30 | 78 (45.35%) |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 31-40 | 34 (19.77%) |
| 41-50 | 29 (16.86%) |
| 51 and above | 31 (18.02%) |
| Education | |
| Primary | 6 (3.49%) |
| Secondary/high school | 19 (11.05%) |
| University/college | 59 (34.30%) |
| Post-graduate | 88 (51.16%) |
| Length of time | |
| Recent (<10 years) | 107 (62.21%) |
| Established (\geq 10 years) | 65 (37.73%) |
| Transnationality | 2.94 (\pm 0.72) |
| Brokerage | 0.84 (\pm 0.11) |
| Alter attributes (n=3440) | |
| Importance | |
| Less important | 2,042 (59.36%) |
| Very important | 1,398 (40.64%) |
| Sex | |
| Male | 1,851 (53.81%) |
| Female | 1,589 (46.19%) |
| Education | |
| Primary | 48 (1.40%) |
| Secondary/high school | 371 (10.78%) |
| University/college | 2,216 (64.42%) |
| Post-graduate | 805 (23.40%) |
| Residence | |
| Canada | 2,867 (83.34%) |
| Ghana | 464 (13.49%) |
| Other | 109 (3.17%) |
| Alter Relationship | |
| Family | 768 (22.33%) |

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Non-family (friends/others) | 2,672 (77.67%) |
| Alter Age | |
| up to 24 years | 287 (8.34%) |
| 25-34 years | 1,284 (37.33%) |
| 35-44 years | 819 (23.81%) |
| 45-54 years | 565 (16.42%) |
| 55 and above | 485 (14.10%) |
| Frequency of Contact | |
| Other (yearly/bi) | 209 (6.08%) |
| Monthly | 755 (21.95%) |
| Weekly/bi-weekly | 1,686 (49.01%) |
| Daily | 790 (22.97%) |

Figure 5.1 presents the level of support exchange between egos and alters. Across all the three dimensions (informational, instrumental, and emotional), a higher proportion (> 60%) of no support is reported. In terms of received support, the highest proportion (17.09%) is associated with informational dimension while the lowest is associated with instrumental dimension (8.52%). Similarly, for provided support, the highest proportion (14.74%) is associated with the informational dimension while the lowest proportion is associated with instrumental dimension (8.11%). For reciprocal support, the highest proportion is associated with the emotional dimension (15.32%) while the lowest proportion is related to the informational dimension (7.21%).

Figure 5.1: Distribution of Support



5.7.2 Hypothesis 1: closeness

Our results show that all the markers of closeness (location, importance, relationship and frequency of communication) are directly related to the provision, receipt and reciprocal exchange of support for both the unadjusted and adjusted level. With regards to emotional support (H1a), the adjusted model shows that egos are more than two times more likely to provide support to alters located in Canada (RRR = 2.20, $p < 0.01$) compared to those located in Ghana (Table 5.2). However, egos are less likely to reciprocate emotional support with alters located in other countries (RRR = 0.44, $p < 0.05$) compared to those located in Ghana. On the other hand, alters who are considered important have a higher likelihood of engaging in all the dimensions of emotional support relative to those who are considered less important. In comparison to non-familial alters, familial alters are more likely to engage in all dimensions of emotional support with the highest likelihood noted amongst the reciprocal dimension (RRR = 4.17, $p < 0.01$). Finally, frequency of communication between alters

and egos result in increased likelihood of engaging in all the dimensions of emotional support with the highest probability observed among alters who communicate daily relative to those who communicate on a yearly basis.

Table 5.2: Results of multi-level multinomial regression analysis predicting emotional support

| Attributes | Unadjusted RRR (SE) | | | Adjusted RRR (SE) | | |
|----------------------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Received ^a | Provided ^a | Reciprocal ^a | Received ^a | Provided ^a | Reciprocal ^a |
| Closeness | | | | | | |
| <i>Location</i> | | | | | | |
| Ghana (ref) | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Canada | 0.48 | 1.00 (0.20) | 0.52 (0.80)*** | 0.81 (0.16) | 2.20 | 1.26 (0.24) |
| Other | (0.80)*** 0.68 (0.23) | 0.85 (0.35) | 0.38 (0.14)*** | 0.74 (0.27) | (0.52)*** 1.09 (0.46) | 0.44 (0.18)** |
| Ego level variance | 3.08 (0.46) | | | 3.65 (0.54) | | |
| <i>Important</i> | | | | | | |
| Less important (ref) | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Very important | 6.12 (0.81)*** | 4.21 (0.58)*** | 7.58 (0.97)*** | 4.18 (0.64)*** | 2.87 (0.46)*** | 3.55 (0.54)*** |
| Ego level variance | 3.85 (0.57) | | | 3.65 (0.54) | | |
| <i>Relationship</i> | | | | | | |
| Friend/Others (ref) | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Family | 3.76 (0.54)*** | 3.95 (0.59)*** | 7.27 (0.95)*** | 1.57 (0.29)** | 2.87 (0.54)*** | 4.17 (0.71)*** |
| Ego level variance | 3.36 (0.50) | | | 3.65 (0.54) | | |
| <i>Frequency</i> | | | | | | |
| Yearly (ref) | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Monthly | 3.05 | 1.73 (0.56) | 6.40 (2.61)*** | 2.06 | 1.29 (0.43) | 4.68 (1.98)*** |
| Bi/weekly | (1.07)*** | 2.03 (0.63) | 6.56 (2.64)*** | (0.74)** | 1.36 (0.44) | 4.22 (1.77)*** |
| Daily | 3.76 (1.29)*** 10.7 (3.79)*** | 4.95 (1.61)*** | 32.74 (13.35)*** | 2.30 (0.81)** 5.08 (1.87)*** | 2.33 (0.81)*** | 16.72 (7.15)*** |
| Ego level variance | 3.37 (0.50) | | | 3.65 (0.54) | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Transnationality | 0.68 (0.14)** | 0.68 (0.14)** | 0.66 (0.13)** | 0.76 (0.17) | 0.79 (0.18) | 0.82 (0.19) |
| Ego level variance | 3.01 (0.45) | | | 3.65 (0.54) | | |
| Brokerage | 0.80 (0.06)** | 0.83 (0.06)** | 0.83 (0.06)** | 0.89 (0.71) | 0.99 (0.07) | 0.92 (0.07)** |
| Ego level variance | 2.93 (0.44) | | | 3.65 (0.54) | | |
| Controls | | | | | | |
| <i>Alter Sex</i> | | | | | | |
| Female (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Male | | | | 1.02 (0.13) | 0.91 (0.13)** | 0.89 (0.11) |
| <i>Alter Age</i> | | | | | | |
| up to 24 years (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| 25-34 years | | | | 1.13 (0.29) | 0.81 (0.20) | 2.34 (0.64)** |
| 35-44 years | | | | 1.03 (0.28) | 0.96 (0.26) | 1.72 (0.49)** |
| 45-54 years | | | | 1.01 (0.29) | 0.54 | 1.63 (0.49) |
| 55 and above | | | | 1.06 (0.31) | (0.16)** 0.64 (0.19) | 1.48 (0.45) |
| <i>Alter Education</i> | | | | | | |
| Primary (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| High School | | | | 1.36 (0.72) | 1.20 (0.61) | 4.49 (3.17)** |
| University/College | | | | 1.56 (0.80) | 0.99 (0.49) | 5.52 (3.84)* |
| Postgraduate | | | | 1.39 (0.73) | 1.22 (0.61) | 5.14 (3.58)* |
| <i>Ego Sex</i> | | | | | | |
| Female (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Male | | | | 0.53 (0.17)* | 0.76 (0.26) | 0.49 (0.16)** |
| <i>Ego Age</i> | | | | | | |
| 18 to 30 (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| 31-40 | | | | 0.62 (0.26) | 0.65 (0.27) | 0.66 (0.27) |
| 41-50 | | | | 1.02 (0.69) | 1.83 (1.22) | 0.87 (0.59) |
| 51 and above | | | | 0.73 (0.31) | 0.78 (0.33) | 0.75 (0.31) |

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|--|--|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| <i>Ego Education</i> | | | | | | |
| Primary (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| High school | | | | 0.80 (0.63) | 1.59 (1.22) | 3.77 (3.94) |
| University/college | | | | 2.19 (1.99) | 1.56 (1.43) | 4.63 (4.42)* |
| Postgraduate | | | | 1.51 (1.36) | 2.01 (1.82) | 4.94 (4.66)** |
| Ego level variance | | | | 3.65 (0.54) | | |

(ref) represents reference category

^aThe reference category is No Support

*P value < 0.1

**P value < 0.05

***P value < 0.01

In terms of instrumental support (H1b), alters located in Canada relative to those in Ghana are more than ten times likely to engage in all the dimensions of instrumental support with egos (Table 5.3). Similarly, alters located in other countries, relative to those in Ghana are more likely to provide (RRR = 5.00, $p < 0.01$) and receive (RRR = 3.00, $p < 0.05$) instrumental support. Compared to alters considered less important and non-familial alters, alters who are important and family are more likely to engage in all dimensions (received, provide and reciprocate) of instrumental support respectively. Lastly, alters with frequent (daily) communication with egos are more likely to engage in receiving (RRR = 2.47, $p < 0.05$), providing (RRR = 3.52, $p < 0.01$) and reciprocating (RRR = 11.71, $p < 0.01$) instrumental support relative to their counterparts with infrequent communication (yearly).

Table 5.3: Results of multi-level multinomial regression analysis predicting instrumental support

| Attributes | Unadjusted RRR (SE) | | | Adjusted RRR (SE) | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| | Received ^a | Provided ^a | Reciprocal ^a | Received ^a | Provided ^a | Reciprocal ^a |
| Closeness | | | | | | |
| <i>Location</i> | | | | | | |
| Ghana (ref) | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Canada | 7.43 | 3.95 | 3.73 (0.94)*** | 25.03 | 11.36 | 13.51 |
| Other | (2.46)*** | (1.06)*** | 0.81 (0.53) | (9.32)*** | (3.56)*** | (4.07)*** |
| | 2.71 (1.58)* | 1.89 (0.97) | | 5.00 (3.11)*** | 3.00 (1.64)** | 1.37 (0.95) |
| Ego-level variance | 2.14 (0.33) | | | 2.53 (0.39) | | |
| <i>Important</i> | | | | | | |
| Less important (ref) | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Very important | 3.98 | 3.39 | 5.19 (0.75)*** | 3.31 (0.57)*** | 2.92 (0.51)*** | 3.56 (0.63)*** |
| | (0.57)*** | (0.49)*** | | | | |
| Ego-level variance | 2.28 (0.35) | | | 2.53 (0.39) | | |
| <i>Relationship</i> | | | | | | |
| Friend/Others (ref) | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Family | 2.41 | 2.50 | 3.81 (0.55)*** | 2.94 (0.59)*** | 3.10 (0.64)*** | 4.10 (0.81)*** |
| | (0.37)*** | (0.39)*** | | | | |
| Ego-level variance | 2.13 (0.32) | | | 2.53 (0.39) | | |
| <i>Frequency</i> | | | | | | |
| Yearly (ref) | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Monthly | 0.88 (0.39) | 0.98 (0.39) | 2.49 (1.58) | 0.56 (0.26) | 0.77 (0.32) | 1.66 (1.07) |
| Bi/weekly | 2.43 | 1.88 (0.73)* | 5.39 (3.34)*** | 1.46 (0.63) | 1.24 (0.49) | 3.20 (2.02)* |
| Daily | (1.01)** | 5.45 | 30.46 | 3.52 (1.55)*** | 2.47 (1.02)** | 11.71 |
| | 8.70 | (2.15)*** | (18.90)*** | | | (7.44)*** |
| | (3.68)*** | | | | | |
| Ego-level variance | 2.29 (0.35) | | | 2.53 (0.39) | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Transnationality | 0.80 (0.14) | 0.75 (0.13) | 0.76 (0.13) | 0.82 (0.17) | 0.80 (0.17) | 0.84 (0.17) |
| Ego-level variance | 2.02 (0.31) | | | 2.53 (0.39) | | |
| Brokerage | 0.85 (0.05)*** | 0.84 (0.05)*** | 0.79 (0.49)*** | 0.91 (0.91) | 0.90 (0.07) | 0.86 (0.06)** |
| Ego-level variance | 1.93 (0.29) | | | 2.53 (0.39) | | |
| Controls | | | | | | |
| <i>Alter Sex</i> | | | | | | |
| Female (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Male | | | | 1.42 (0.22)** | 0.72 (0.11)** | 0.89 (0.13) |
| <i>Alter Age</i> | | | | | | |
| up to 24 years (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| 25-34 years | | | | 0.98 (0.27) | 1.47 (0.44) | 1.51 (0.43) |
| 35-44 years | | | | 0.79 (0.23) | 1.57 (0.49) | 0.86 (0.27) |
| 45-54 years | | | | 0.66 (0.21) | 0.98 (0.34) | 0.89 (0.29) |
| 55 and above | | | | 0.60 (0.19)* | 1.06 (0.37) | 0.80 (0.26) |
| <i>Alter Education</i> | | | | | | |
| Primary (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| High School | | | | 0.49 (0.28) | 0.47 (0.31) | 0.70 (0.48) |
| University/college | | | | 0.30 (0.17)** | 0.61 (0.38) | 0.58 (0.38) |
| Postgraduate | | | | 0.50 (0.28) | 0.79 (0.50) | 0.99 (0.66) |
| <i>Ego Sex</i> | | | | | | |
| Female (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Male | | | | 0.77 (0.23) | 1.45 (0.44) | 0.75 (0.23) |
| <i>Ego Age</i> | | | | | | |
| 18 to 30 (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| 31-40 | | | | 1.02 (0.38) | 0.50 (0.19)* | 0.55 (0.21) |
| 41-50 | | | | 0.87 (0.54) | 1.35 (0.80) | 1.22 (0.74) |
| 51 and above | | | | 0.92 (0.63) | 0.85 (0.39) | 0.88 (0.40) |
| <i>Ego Education</i> | | | | | | |
| Primary (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| High school | | | | 0.72 (0.63) | 1.48 (1.37) | 4.38 (4.86) |
| University/college | | | | 0.65 (0.51) | 1.41 (1.18) | 6.10 (6.29)* |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|--|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| postgraduate | | | | 1.09 (0.84) | 1.49 (1.23) | 7.92 (8.12)** |
| Ego-level variance | | | | 2.53 (0.39) | | |

(ref) represents reference category

^aThe reference category is No Support

*P value < 0.1

**P value < 0.05

***P value < 0.01

Concerning informational support (H1c), alters residing in Canada are more likely to receive (RRR = 1.69, $p < 0.01$) and reciprocate (RRR = 2.20, $p < 0.01$) support with the egos compared to those in Ghana (Table 5.4). Subsequently, alters who are considered important are more likely to engage in all the dimensions of informational support. These probabilities ranged from 34% higher likelihood from providing support among less important versus important alters (RRR = 1.34, $p < 0.1$) to reciprocal support (RRR = 2.25, $p < 0.01$). Compared to non-familial alters, familial alters are more likely to receive (RRR = 1.91, $p < 0.01$) and reciprocate (RRR = 1.40, $p < 0.1$) support with egos. Finally, increasing frequency of communication between alters and egos leads to increased likelihood of support for all three dimensions.

Table 5.4: Results of multi-level multinomial regression analysis predicting informational support

| Attributes | Unadjusted RRR (SE) | | | Adjusted RRR (SE) | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Received ^a | Provided ^a | Reciprocal ^a | Received ^a | Provided ^a | Reciprocal ^a |
| Closeness | | | | | | |
| <i>Location</i> | | | | | | |
| Ghana (ref) | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Canada | 1.07 (0.16) | 1.30 (0.21) | 1.65 (0.38)** | 1.12 (0.19) | 1.69 | 2.20 (0.56)*** |
| Other | 0.97 (0.30) | 1.18 (0.39) | 1.05 (0.52) | 1.00 (0.32) | (0.32)*** 1.37 (0.48) | 1.35 (0.68) |
| Ego-level variance | 1.18 (0.17) | | | 1.15 (0.17) | | |
| Important | | | | | | |
| <i>Less important (ref)</i> | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Very important | | | 2.58 (0.37)*** | 1.34 (0.17)* | | 2.25 (0.38)*** |

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| | 1.55 (0.17)*** | 2.10 (0.24)*** | | | 1.57 (0.21)*** | |
| Ego-level variance | 1.25 (0.18) | | | 1.15 (0.17) | | |
| <i>Relationship</i> | | | | | | |
| Friend/Others (ref) | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Family | 1.39 (0.17)*** | 2.02 (0.25)*** | 1.71 (0.28)*** | 1.20 (0.19) | 1.91 (0.30)*** | 1.40 (0.28)* |
| Ego-level variance | 1.20 (0.18) | | | 1.15 (0.17) | | |
| <i>Frequency</i> | | | | | | |
| Yearly (ref) | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Monthly | 1.47 (0.44) | 1.05 (0.31) | 1.74 (0.82) | 1.40 (0.42) | 0.96 (0.29) | 1.60 (0.77) |
| Bi/weekly | 2.56 | 1.65 (0.47)* | 2.96 (1.34)** | 2.40 | 1.39 (0.41) | 2.33 (1.07)* |
| Daily | (0.73)*** 3.26 (0.97)*** | 4.29 (1.25)*** | 7.35 (3.36)*** | (0.69)*** 2.84 (0.87)*** | 2.90 (0.87)*** | 4.76 (2.24)*** |
| Ego-level variance | 1.20 (0.18) | | | 1.15 (0.17) | | |
| Transnationality | 1.03 (0.14) | 1.07 (0.15) | 0.88 (0.13) | 0.96 (0.14) | 1.18 (0.17) | 0.90 (0.14) |
| Ego-level variance | 1.18 (0.18) | | | 1.15 (0.17) | | |
| Brokerage | 1.04 (0.05) | 0.88 (0.04)*** | 0.88 (0.05)*** | 1.08 (0.05) | 0.90 (0.04)** | 0.93 (0.05) |
| Ego-level variance | 1.18 (0.18) | | | 1.15 (0.17) | | |
| Controls | | | | | | |
| <i>Alter Sex</i> | | | | | | |
| Female (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Male | | | | 1.08 (0.12) | 1.21 (0.14)* | 1.17 (0.17) |
| <i>Alter Age</i> | | | | | | |
| up to 24 years (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| 25-34 years | | | | 1.11 (0.27) | 1.21 (0.26) | 0.98 (0.27) |
| 35-44 years | | | | 1.38 (0.33) | 0.81 (0.19) | 0.80 (0.23) |
| 45-54 years | | | | 1.46 (0.37) | 0.54 | 0.51 (0.17)** |
| 55 and above | | | | 1.37 (0.35) | (0.14)** | 0.42 (0.15)** |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------|--|--|--|-------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| | | | | | 0.42 (0.11)*** | |
| <i>Alter Education</i> | | | | | | |
| Primary (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| High School | | | | 1.30 (0.60) | 2.49 (1.46) | 1.05 (0.73) |
| University/College | | | | 2.03 (0.90) | 2.30 (1.33) | 1.59 (1.04) |
| Postgraduate | | | | 1.69 (0.75) | 2.23 (1.30) | 1.46 (0.97) |
| <i>Ego Sex</i> | | | | | | |
| Female (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Male | | | | 1.20 (0.19) | 1.77 (0.38)*** | 1.17 (0.27) |
| <i>Ego Age</i> | | | | | | |
| 18 to 30 (ref) | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| 31-40 | | | | 0.78 (0.19) | 0.57 | 0.78 (0.23) |
| 41-50 | | | | 0.66 (0.28) | (0.15)** | 0.33 (0.17)** |
| 51 and above | | | | 0.72 (0.14) | 0.42 (0.19)** 0.67 (0.18) | 0.71 (0.13) |
| <i>Ego Education</i> | | | | | | |
| Primary | | | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| High school | | | | 0.73 (0.45) | 1.88 (1.29) | 1.07 (0.88) |
| University/college | | | | 1.28 (0.71) | 3.67 | 2.95 (2.13) |
| postgraduate | | | | 1.45 (0.79) | (2.28)** 3.53 (2.18)** | 4.37 (3.14)** |
| Ego-level variance | | | | 1.15 (0.17) | | |

(ref) represents reference category

^aThe reference category is No Support

*P value < 0.1

**P value < 0.05

***P value < 0.01

5.8.3 Hypothesis 2: transnationality

Overall, the associations between transnationality and the three types of social support [emotional (H2a), instrumental (H2b), & informational (H2c)] are not significant for the adjusted models. However, significant associations are observed in the unadjusted models with respect to emotional support.

5.8.4 Hypothesis 3: brokerage

In summary, our findings show that the relationship between brokerage and the social support dimensions are significant for both the adjusted and unadjusted models. For emotional support (H3a), a unit increase in brokerage index results in a lower likelihood of reciprocating (RRR = 0.92, $p < 0.05$) support. A similar result is obtained for instrumental support (H3b). A unit increase in brokerage culminates in a lower likelihood of reciprocating (RRR = 0.86, $p < 0.05$) support. Lastly, unlike emotional and instrumental support, a unit increase in brokerage leads to a lower likelihood of providing informational (H3c) support (RRR = 0.90, $p < 0.05$) to alters.

5.9 Discussion and conclusion

This study sought to understand social support provision within the networks of one of the recent immigrant groups in Canada using a multilevel design. With limited attention on the combined effect of the immigrant (ego), their networked members (alters) and network characteristics on support provision as well as directionality of these support, we sought to fill this gap. Specifically, we considered three important measures that are transnationality as ego characteristic, closeness (emotional and geographical) as alter characteristic and brokerage as network characteristic and examined their impact on three types of support dimensions (emotional, instrumental and informational). We provide plausible explanations of the finding as follows.

First, descriptive findings indicate that a small number of alters are engaged in support exchange with egos. Interestingly, egos and alters exchanged more informational support than instrumental and emotional support. We find this quite surprising especially for emotional support since it is one of the most common forms of support exchanged between immigrants (see Herz, 2015; Ong & Ward, 2005).

However, the small number of transnational ties in ego's network (16.66%) may account for this since emotional support is an expression of the relationship between egos and such ties. In addition, emotional support is often exchanged with family ties (strong ties) and with individuals with whom one has had a long relationship, and this may explain the anomaly. We also find that egos nominated more friends (weak ties) than family and therefore individuals with whom this type of support may be exchanged are omitted from the network members nominated. Likewise, qualitative accounts of immigrants may shed more insight on this. The work by Ryan (2011) and Ryan et al. (2008) finds that issues of mistrust and rivalry exist among Polish immigrants, which prevents them from building strong ties with each other. Given that egos in our study nominate more co-ethnics, we suspect that issues of mistrust may be present in such networks and therefore prevents individuals from sharing their personal issues with each other.

For instrumental support, our results are consistent with that of Herz (2015) who finds that few network members offer this type of support within their networks. Here, we believe that activities associated with the everyday life of immigrants' (e.g., different work schedules) perhaps makes it difficult for immigrants to interact and may explain the low proportion of support. Pertaining to informational support, we perceive that immigrants may fall on formal support systems such as employment agencies given their level of education. In addition, they may depend on the internet to surf for information on jobs and may not resort to their ties for such support. Hence, the low proportion of information exchange.

Our hypothesis on closer ties confirms most of our expectations. For instance, apart from location, other components of closeness (type of relationship, degree of importance and frequency of communication) are associated with emotional support (H1a). Past and previous studies indicate that members of one's family are the main constituent of emotional support. It is therefore unsurprising that we find similar evidence in our study. Family/familial ties often have a longer relationship history with other members of their family and are therefore comfortable exchanging emotional

support. Further, we find frequent communication as a relational attribute of ego-alter relationship to explain provision of all dimensions of support. Because emotional support is intangible, it is easily provided by individuals with whom one has frequent communication, which is the plausible situation in our study. Further, our findings conform to the notion that important ties are vital in the exchange of different forms of support that contains emotional support (see Djundeva & Ellwardt, 2020; Litwin & Stoeckel, 2013).

Again, our findings reveal that closer ties with the exception of geographical closeness results in the exchange of instrumental ties (H1b). This may be explained by the nature of the relationship. For one, important ties are people with whom egos share vital issues (see Bilecen & Cardona, 2018). Hence, providing a helping hand, which might not require much time and energy, would be an easier task. This is also applicable to alters who communicate frequently with egos. Engaging in frequent communication suggests the existence of a certain level of bond and trust. As such, small tasks in the form of going groceries, babysitting for a few hours may be easily exchanged between such persons. This finding is consistent with the account of Herz (2015). Moreover, the relationship that exists between family members should make it easy and perhaps the reason why they are likely to exchange such support.

Contrary to our expectations, we find that closer ties predict informational support (H1c). This is quite new since previous research points to weak ties such as friends and casual acquaintances as potential providers of informational support (see Granovetter, 1973, 1983). However, considering the human capital of alters it possible that they leverage on it to discuss issues pertaining to jobs. Most alters had university or postgraduate education that could make them knowledgeable with respect to the labour market and among other job-related information.

For our second hypothesis on transnationality, we first consider its effect on emotional support (H2a). To our surprise, we find that transnationality had no effect on emotional support. With this result, we arrive at a different conclusion than recent studies, which finds that the most realistic support from transnational ties is usually

emotional support (Boccagni, 2015). Our finding may best be explained that perhaps, immigrants have a large web of co-ethnic alters in the host society who they fall on a more regular basis for emotional support (see Sano et al., 2019) and as such, may not look to transnational ties for such support. This notwithstanding, since descriptive findings indicate a low number of individuals providing emotional support, then such ties may have been omitted in the survey.

Consistent with our expectations, engagement in transnationality had no effect on receiving instrumental support from one's network (H2b). Since instrumental support requires the physical presence of the provider, it is quite impossible for transnational ties to offer such assistance. The large distance between egos and their transnational ties for which some can be found in Africa impedes this form of support. The only instance where such support is possible is when transnational ties such as relatives help during their visits as demonstrated by Ryan et al. (2008). In addition, we tested for the effect of transnationality on informational support (H2c). Although we expected transnationality to result in more received or provided or reciprocated support as demonstrated by Bilecen and Cardona (2018), this is not the case. Whereas in Bilecen and Cardona's case (Germany and Turkey) are within proximity and so sharing information on job opportunities might be useful, the context will vary for Ghanaian immigrants. Many respondent's transnational ties are back in Ghana and other European countries who may not find information on job opportunities in Canada relevant if they are not interested or do not have the means to migrate to Canada or return home within the shortest possible time.

For our third hypothesis, we were particularly interested in how brokerage influences the provision, receipt and reciprocation of emotional, instrumental and informational support. We find very little evidence to suggest brokerage's impact on these exchanges. In most instances, brokerage had a negative effect on predicting any form of support within the network. This can partly be explained by the characteristics of alters in the network. The advantage of brokerage lies in connecting with individuals of different characteristics in the network. It therefore presupposes minimal

advantage would be present in networks that are similar. In our study, egos nominated alters with similar characteristics, but have little or no interaction with other alters in the network. Overall, this finding conforms to studies that show that properties of networks play a minimal role in support provision. Rather, relational attributes of egos and alters have a stronger predictive power of support provision (Herz, 2015; Kornienko et al., 2018).

Our findings have implications for the immigrant's integration in the host society. First, the low proportion of support exchanged in the three dimensions of support remains a cause for concern especially if social support is to assist immigrants in their integration. If immigrants obtain support from more formal means then, it is welcoming news for policymakers. Since it suggests that measures established for immigrants are patronized and would, help the government achieve its broad objective of making immigrants contributory members of the Canadian society (CIC, 2002). However, since prior studies suggest the contrary (Makarimba et al., 2013; Stewart et al. 2008), qualitative accounts would be helpful in ascertaining what areas of support are exchanged between immigrants and their network members that are not covered in this study. Second, although support is in short supply, the different forms and most notably emotional support exchanged tends to help immigrants to overcome structural and systematic barriers in their new environment. Additionally, depending on co-ethnic ties in the host society for support confirms the assertion that similar backgrounds and experience leads to empathy and encouragement among immigrants (Kornienko et al., 2018).

Despite the utility of our study to immigrant integration, we acknowledge some limitations associated with it. First, giving the small proportion of support received, further studies would be needed to investigate why few individuals are engaged in support provision. Specifically, qualitative studies as well as mixed methods would shed more insight on the issue. Second, issues such as cognitive and recall bias may be the cause of the low proportion of support exchanged. In this instance, respondent is likely to list an individual who fits the question being asked rather than an actual

individual who provided the support (Small, 2016). Likewise, the respondent may have difficulty remembering some alters, especially in situations where different people within their network may have provided the support. When this happens, whichever name comes to mind may be listed as providing the support. As well, since our data represents only a fraction of Ghanaian immigrants in the TCMA, it is not representative of all Ghanaians within the province and Canada at large. Finally, given the cross-sectional nature of the data, the regular caveat about causality applies to our analysis. Importantly, it is difficult to conclude that the nature of support exchange explains the structure of the network and characteristics of respondents and vice versa. To address this and sort out causality, longitudinal data will be required.

5.10 References

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CHAPTER SIX

Access to social networks: A qualitative account of Ghanaian immigrants' network in Canada.

Emmanuel Kyeremeh and Godwin Arku

CHAPYER SIX

Access to social networks: A qualitative account of Ghanaian immigrants' network in Canada.

Abstract

The concept of social capital has gained widespread popularity among scholars as a way to describe immigrants' source of social support and access to resources throughout their networks. Few studies, however, have empirically addressed how immigrants access new ties in their host society to obtain resources. This is particularly true for those who possess relationship/ties upon arrival as compared to those who may not. Using qualitative in-depth interviews, we examined immigrants' access to networks through the experiences of 41 family class and skilled/economic class immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA) of Canada. Findings indicate that family class immigrants access networks through two routes: by leveraging their initial ties to access new ones and by forming ties independently through their workplaces and other gatherings. Economic class immigrants, however, utilized the internet to surf institutions where they found co-ethnic individuals and forged relationships with them. Nonetheless, both groups' networks consisted primarily of co-ethnics and few multi-ethnics and non-immigrants. Immigrants' relationship with non-immigrants were usually superficial and on a need's basis. Additionally, findings revealed mixed opinions about the perception of immigrants' network in terms of size and density, with both groups leaning toward networks that provide adequate support. Both group of immigrants also value the contribution of their networks towards their integration. Results suggest the need for more diverse networks that can contribute more broadly towards immigrants' successful integration.

Keywords: social networks, ties, economic immigrants, family class immigrants

6.1 Introduction

Considerable interest has emerged over the last two decades regarding the role of social networks in the migration and integration process of immigrants (Barwick, 2017; Boyd, 1989; Castles & Miller, 2003; Massey et al., 1998; Samers & Collyer, 2017; Varshaver & Rocheva, 2020). The product of this interest has resulted in studies from various disciplines highlighting the diverse role and influence of social networks (Creese et al., 2008; Newbold et al., 2014; Portes & Manning, 2001; Slonim-Nevo et al., 2009). Yet, few studies have demonstrated how immigrants' access and maintain ties/relationships with network members in their host society (for exceptions, see Akkaymak, 2016; Ryan, 2011, 2015; Ryan et al. 2008). This is concerning given that networks are a major component of how immigrants obtain support and social capital towards their integration (Akkaymak, 2016; Eve, 2010; Ryan et al., 2008). The dearth of studies on this issue have been based on the assumption that immigrants easily access networks and automatically obtain resources in their networks upon arrival (Ryan, 2011; Ryan et al., 2008).

With respect to immigrants in countries like Canada, the situation is also important for at least three reasons. First, policymakers seek to promote a cordial rapport between immigrants and the native-born, with a goal of enabling them to become contributing members of the society (CIC, 2002). Second, policymakers acknowledge that immigrants need to establish social connections in their communities that would assist them in their integration (IRCC, 2017). Third, visible minorities have constantly fared poorly in their integration as compared to other immigrants. With these factors in mind, we have investigated the following questions: how do recent immigrants' access, maintain and construct networks in their host society? What are the differences between immigrants who have prior networks compared to those without prior networks with respect to accessing new networks? Lastly, what are immigrants' perceptions of their networks? To what extent do they find it useful and what are their perception in terms of size (number of people) and density (how connected their networks are)?

We answer these questions by providing a qualitative account of how Ghanaian immigrants, a recent black visible minority group, access, and construct networks in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA). In doing so, we draw upon social capital theory as well as some properties of social network analysis. Our first rationale for this is to determine whether immigrants network follow the Putnam-inspired dichotomised approach to social ties characterised as bonding and bridging (Clark, 2007; Patulny & Svendsen, 2007; Ryan, 2011), or whether immigrants networks transcend these two groupings. Second, we respond to pleas to adopt social network analysis concepts with a goal of providing more insight into the “dynamic form and function of networks” (Ryan, 2011: 709).

Likewise, since immigrants differ in terms of their migratory experiences and mode of entry, access to networks may be influenced by these factors. As a result, we limit our discussion to two groups of Ghanaian immigrants accepted into Canada: family class immigrants⁷ and skilled/economic immigrants⁸. For skilled/economic immigrants in general, data suggests that some “do not have social networks [upon] arrival” (Bergerone & Potters, 2006:77) in Canada and therefore have to construct new networks. For family class immigrants, the presence of a family member implies that they have an initial point of contact to build upon. However, such co-ethnic support may not guarantee successful integration. On the contrary, studies reveal that ties with the native-born and other immigrants contribute towards their successful integration (De Miguel & Tranmer, 2010; Yan & Laurer, 2008). Given this, we examine how family class immigrants form ties both with and without the assistance of their immediate families and how skilled/economic class immigrants build networks from scratch.

This paper makes both a theoretical and practical contribution. Theoretically, it links different strands of interrelated literature that is, immigrant integration, social network research, and friendship studies. Like Ryan (2015), we argue that joining these fields provide a nuanced understanding of how individuals associate with others and

⁷ Immigrants accepted into Canada primarily to join their families

⁸ Immigrants who are accepted based on their human capital and their perceived ability to contribute to the country.

join groups as they move and settle in new societies. With respect to recent interest in friendship making opportunities, the current study builds on and contributes by focusing on two groups of immigrants – family class and skilled/economic. By honing in on these two groups, we provide some insights into their friendship making strategies. In terms of practical contribution, our study provides policymakers with firsthand details regarding immigrants' access to networks in order to develop initiatives or programs that would better enhance their integration into the mainstream society.

We begin this paper by engaging briefly with the literature on social networks and social capital and its relationship with immigrant integration. Following this, we provide the reader with a description of the sample and research approach followed by our empirical data. Finally, we show the process by which family class immigrants and skilled/economic immigrants develop new ties with members of their host society, barriers to accessing networks, and perceptions of these networks in Canada in the results section.

6.2 Review of social networks and social capital theory

Social networks refer to a set of social actors and the relationship (ties) that exist between them (Robbins, 2015). The relationship between these social actors are based on motivations and strategies that may be beneficial to the actors' involved (Ryan et al., 2008). Eve (2010) argues that migration results in the creation of networks with varied interest by immigrants. The interest in these networks is linked to the diverse functions that network members such as family and friends play in the migration process. Network members provide a variety of support before and after migration in the form of informational, financial, practical, emotional, and spiritual support (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018; Fong & Cao, 2009; Herz, 2015; Majerski, 2019; Thomas, 2011; Xue, 2008). Despite these, the formation of networks is often overlooked with scholars calling for more analysis on the nature of networks (Hollstein, 2011; Ryan, 2015).

Interest in networks has soared with the introduction of methodological approaches such as social network analysis (SNA) (Edwards, 2010; Vertovec, 2001).

SNA involves quantitative approaches to determining social ties with the help of visualization softwares. It is associated with concepts such as density, which refers to the degree of connectivity between actors in the network and intensity which indicates the strength of the relationship (strong or weak) (Bankston, 2014; Wasserman & Faust, 1994; Wellman, 1983). A strong network may refer to actors maintaining close relationships with network members while; a weak network refers to actors and acquaintances who are not strongly bonded (Bankston, 2014; Wasserman & Faust, 1994; Wellman, 1983). Another concept associated with SNA is frequency, which refers to the rate at which communication occurs between actors and is an encouraged topic of study when analyzing immigrant networks (Vertovec, 2001). The network concepts which immigration scholars have been urged to use provide an alternate approach to understanding relationships and the social structure of networks.

Some recent literature has adopted network analysis terminologies in understanding how immigrants access networks. Drawing on the accounts of Polish immigrants in London, UK, Ryan (2011) reveals that ties with fellow Polish immigrants are often not as durable as expected. Rather, such relationships are complex since nationality is not the only basis of forming networks with other Polish immigrants. Likewise, Ryan (2011) observes that not all weak ties are valuable, contrary to suggestions of prior studies. Such ties, however, are only relevant in the context where resources flow within the network and where ties serve the needs of immigrants. Given the utility of these concepts, we apply some to examine access to networks by Ghanaian immigrants in Canada.

Within migration studies, the impact of social networks is often framed under a social capital perspective (Hanley et al., 2018). That is, networks are potential assert that connects immigrants to tangible and intangible resources that helps in their settlement in the new society. Key scholars such as Coleman (1988), Putnam (1995), and Bourdieu (1986) have heavily influenced this line of reasoning (social capital perspective). Despite little attention on migration by these theorists, migration

scholars find these authors' conceptualization useful in shaping their understanding of the migration process. For instance, Haug (2008) argues that social capital provides a good framework that reveals the influence of networks in the migration process. We draw primarily from Putnam given our interest in his dictomy of networks into bonding and bridging ties whiles making key inferences from both Coleman and Bourdieu. We begin with Coleman given his initial conceptualization of social capital.

Coleman's (1988) account on social capital focused on how resources are obtained in dense multiplex networks. Coleman defines social capital as "different resources available to an actor which inheres in the social structure of relations between actors and among actors" (1988: 598). From this standpoint, an actor's ties to others allow them the opportunity to gain access to a broad range of resources. Coleman's account provides an opportunity to understand the nature of resource sharing within networks, which is rooted in the notion of mutual obligation and expectations (Portes, 1998). These obligation and expectations involve assisting someone with the hope that similar help will be offered in return. Mutual obligation in this context is based on trust, i.e., the assurance of obtaining assistance from others, norms and penalties that discourage their transgression, and the exchange of information between individuals who have close relationship with one another (Kao, 2004). However, Coleman's work is criticized for considering networks between close individuals as "unmitigated good" (Edwards, 2004).

Putnam (2000, 2007) builds on the work of Coleman and presents a co-operative view of social capital through "bonds of community" (Putnam, 2000: vi), or "networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate co-operation for mutual benefit" (Wakefield & Poland, 2005: 2825). In this regard, social capital is considered a product of the interaction between individuals and their social networks based on trust and reciprocity. Putnam in his conceptualization identifies two important types of social capital that is bond and bridging social capital. According to Putnam bonding social capital refers to "ties to people who are like me in some important way" and bridging as "ties to people who are unlike me in some important way" (2000: 23). Putnam

describes ties with similar individuals as networks that may be important for “getting by,” while those between individuals who differ from one another as bridging connections that are important for “getting ahead” (2000: 23). This perspective by Putnam has been widely adopted and examined within migration literature with studies showing that bonding ties often results in greater assistance needed to overcome challenges in the host society by immigrants.

Despite its popularity within the literature, some questions and concerns have been raised. First, there have been calls for a more nuanced and differentiated understanding of the diversity of immigrant relationship that moves beyond just bonding and bridging (Ryan, 2015). Second, there has been re-appraisal of the impact of the social capital especially bonding capital on the migration process of immigrants. Studies show that irrespective of ethnic specific support, immigrants generally tend to fare poorly compared to their native-born counterpart (Akkaymak, 2016). Other issues associated with this is the lack of consideration for the heterogeneity and unequal power relations that exists within networks (Ryan, 2011; Ryan et al., 2008). Given these, the current study in its attempts to understand network formation examines the type of relationships that exists within the network as well as potential challenges that exists in the network of one of the recent immigrant groups within Canada.

6.3 Methods

Our study was conducted between December 2018 and October 2019. We employed qualitative semi-structured, in-depth individual interviews with both family class and skilled/economic class immigrants to gather accounts about how they form and access networks/ties, in addition to obtaining their perceptions about the nature of these networks. Our choice of a qualitative approach allowed for a thorough exploration of immigrant networks by providing details about the “precise nature, intensity, durability and reciprocity of networking relationships” (Ryan, 2011: 7). A qualitative approach enabled us to give “voice” to actors that experience immigration and the subsequent acclimatizing that occurs post facto since the aim of this study does not lie

in the frequency of immigration, but rather, the nuances of immigration and settling into a new country (Jaskulowski & Pawlak, 2020).

We selected two categories of Ghanaian immigrants as participants for the study. The first group consisted of family class immigrants who had either immigrated to join their partners, who immigrated together with their partners, or who joined their immediate families. The second group comprised of participants who migrated to seek economic prospects or transitioned shortly into permanent residence. We turned our attention to Ghanaian immigrants who are part of the Black group of recent immigrants who are understudied in terms of integration (Kuuire et al., 2016; Kyeremeh et al., 2019; Mensah & Williams, 2014). Available data, moreover, shows that their population is on the increase, especially in the Greater Toronto Area. Ghanaian immigrants' population has increased from 14,720 in 2006 to 22,395 in 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2016). Prior studies suggest that in Europe, small groups of immigrants are likely to meet and interact with both the native-born and other immigrants (e.g. Martinović, 2013). Considering the multicultural nature of the TCMA, we anticipate this may or may not be the case in Canada. However, by focusing on a small group compared to traditional source countries and large groups, we seek to shed light on how the size and presence of community affects tie formation in the TCMA (Akkymak, 2016).

Given our interest in both skilled/economic class and family class immigrants, we employed a variety of approaches to connect with them. We placed recruitment posters in some settlement agencies as well as Ghanaian grocery stores and restaurants. We visited Ghanaian churches and ethnic association meetings where our lead author was granted permission to brief members about the project. Interested persons contacted the first author and were subsequently interviewed for the study. Participants recruited had been in Canada for more than six months to about ten years, are considered recent immigrants (see Richmond & Shields, 2005) and who were in various stages of their settlement or integration in Canada. Prior to their migration, participants worked in both private and public sectors in Ghana, such as education,

banking, health, and transportation, while others were self-employed. Most participants had obtained post-secondary education such as a bachelors, diploma, or postgraduate degree from Ghana, in addition to degrees obtained in Canada. Participants had obtained legal status in Canada and were working as personal support workers, nurses, accountants, administrators, cashiers, and production line workers.

Forty-one participants constituting twenty-five family class and sixteen skilled/economic class immigrants were interviewed. Of the forty-one participants, we conducted thirty-four face-to-face interviews with participants and seven by phone. Interviews lasted between 45-90 minutes and were conducted in English interspersed with a local language (Akan) for participants who code-switched from English. Interviews took place in a “natural” setting, such as a workplace, home, or cafe. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed with participants’ approval. The format for all interviews were semi-structured. Participants were asked to discuss how they accessed ties in Canada, how they maintained ties with their transnational peers or family, the type of support they derived within such ties, and how they perceive these networks.

The data was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke 2006). The process of analyzing included multiple close readings of the data to allow themes and categories to emerge after which coloured pens were used to highlight text for easy identification of each code. Hereafter, codes were combined into sub-codes and categories (Newbold et al. 2015). This process sought to reveal both recurring themes and experiences unique to participants. Participants were given pseudonyms in order to conform to their wishes of confidentiality and anonymity.

6.4 Findings

For the two groups of immigrants, our analysis demonstrated that the first group, family class immigrants develop new ties primarily through two approaches: first with the help of existing social contacts and second, on their own through various forms of interaction. The second group of immigrants—skilled/economic immigrants—developed ties through Ghanaian organized events, meeting places, and workplaces. For both

groups, we identified some intentional and unintentional approaches to building new relationships with others. In the process, we teased out resources available to immigrants within these networks along with their perceptions of these networks. We then concluded with a general discussion of immigrants' access to ties during their integration process. We utilized direct quotations from interviews to illustrate and contextualize this study's analysis. A summary of participant characteristics is provided in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Characteristics of Participants

| | | Family class immigrants | | Skilled/economic class immigrants | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| | | Women (n=15) | Men (n=10) | Women(n=6) | Men (n=10) |
| Age | >30 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | 30-40 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| | 40-50 | 2 | 2 | | 2 |
| | 50-60 | | | | |
| Marital status | Married | 15 | 8 | 5 | 7 |
| | Single | | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Educational attainment | High School | 1 | | | |
| | Vocational/Trade school | 1 | | | |
| | University or college | 11 | 6 | 5 | 6 |
| | Postgraduate education | 2 | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| Employment status | Employed – full time | 12 | 8 | 6 | 8 |
| | Employed – part time | 3 | | | 2 |
| | Unemployed | | 2 | | |

Source: Fieldwork 2019

6.4.1 Accessing networks

Both groups of immigrants had some form of networks with those from shared ethnic backgrounds prior to arriving in Canada. For family class immigrants, some revealed

that they formed entirely new ties prior to their migration with the help of their partners. For these individuals, their partners thought it important to form networks to get a head start in the host society and to gain a better perspective of their new environment. These individuals provided their partners with information regarding expectations, i.e., “dos and don’ts” upon arrival and while acclimatizing to their new environment, calmed their partner’s fears, and provided information pertaining to how to access services. Beatriz (F, 32 years), one of such participants, explained:

My husband connected me with a few friends once I secured my visa to Canada. His reason was that he didn’t have much knowledge since he was a student and so feels it [would have been] beneficial to speak to others who knew more about the general society. Fortunately, one of the people he connected me to was an old school mate who became a valuable resource. The beautiful thing is she speaks my Ghanaian language and communicated things to me very well. This helped a lot. Once I arrived in Canada, she has been available to assist me in many ways.

Beatriz represents some female participants who joined their partners on the verge of completing their postgraduate education. Other family class participants echoed this point, including Douglas (M, 33), a participant whose wife filed for his permanent residence to join her:

My wife connected me to her brother and a male friend so that I could obtain [a] male perspective on what it means to stay in Canada. Prior to arriving in Canada, I had stayed in Germany and China, but she felt it might help if I had some insight before arriving. They shared with me how to settle in to Canada, which were helpful in many ways. I have developed a good rapport with them and do keep with them from time to time.

For family class immigrants, these initial connections played a dual role by assisting them pre and post migration. Pertaining to economic immigrants some indicated the presence of initial ties in Canada, who provided informational support prior to their arrival, but were not directly involved in their settlement and long-term integration upon arrival. Deandre (M, 39) recounted:

I knew some old school mates and I informed them of my decision to settle in Canada. They shared some information regarding what to expect when I [arrived] but these were people I had not connected in a long time so [I] didn't expect much from them when I arrived and that was the case.

It is noteworthy that nearly all participants indicated that various opportunities emerged to form new ties in Canada through various interactions. Unanimously, all participants agreed that building new ties/networks in the host society, whether with members of one's ethnic group and with wider society, would be "extremely important" for an immigrant's "successful integration or settlement" in Canada. New relationships were established both intentionally and unintentionally. In the case of family class immigrants, some received help from members of their existing networks. They connected them through participation in religious activities and social events such as baby christening and parties. One example is Nana Ama, a 30-year old female who migrated with her mum and brother to join their dad and had some extended family present in Canada. She revealed that her cousin, who is a pastor in one of the local churches, connected them to some Ghanaians in his church.

My cousin invited us to his local church. When the service was over, he introduced us to a Ghanaian family who shared the same ethnicity [as us]. We hit [it] off quite nicely in terms of conversation and exchanged contacts. After that, we began to communicate more frequently and gradually built a good relationship with this family. Since then, [the family] have now become like a second family to us. Both my family and I have benefited from this family. As a matter of fact, one of them took me to an agency to find my first job.

Economic immigrants especially those without prior ties presented a different route to forming networks from family class immigrants, despite similar results. Economic immigrants relied on the use of the internet to access information regarding services and institutions within the city. They visited institutions/organizations and began to forge new relationships with members of these groups. Given that most Ghanaian immigrants are very religious, the various religious organizations served as an important place where some accessed and developed co-ethnic ties. Eric (M, 41) narrated his account:

When I arrived in Toronto, I began to look for anything Ghanaian and I knew that given how religious we are as a people, I would definitely find a church. Truly I did. I visited the church and loved their service. I was given a warm welcome and interacted with the church leadership. They in turn connected me with other individuals who provided diverse assistance. I kept attending and gradually developed good friendships with these individuals and with some members over time.

From the above extract, religious organizations and government agencies play a crucial role in assisting immigrants with their settlement in the host society. As part of its commitment towards integration, the Canadian government provides organizations such as settlement and employment agencies with funding to assist newcomers, while religious entities create welcoming environments to help new immigrants adjust. Economic immigrants in our study also connected with friends and family back home during their initial days for them to provide emotional support.

In addition, sites such as local groceries stores, hair salons, and some services also provide the opportunity for forging new friendships—often ones that were not initially expected for both groups. For instance, Kwame (M, 43), purchased food items from a Ghanaian grocery store and realized via a conversation with the shop owner that they were ethnically related. The shop owner then became a bridge to other ethnic group members. Kwame explained:

My wife and I went in to purchase some local items from one of the Ghanaian grocery shops. As we chit chatted with the shop attendant, I realized that we share the same hometown in Ghana. She told me of our hometown association meeting, which she invited me to. I attended, and she introduced me to some other Ghanaians who have become friends.

Participant networks were not limited to only Ghanaian immigrants. Both immigrant groups had native-born Canadians and other immigrants in their networks. Participants identified the workplace, neighborhoods, and educational centers as places where these relationships started. Regarding the relationships formed at the workplace, participants in the formal employment stream found these to be important given the amount of time spent with co-workers. They were also cognizant of the perceived and actual support they derive or may derive within the network. Akuma (F,

32), who initially worked in a warehouse before transitioning to a nursing profession, recounted:

All my non-Ghanaian relationships began in my workplace. My supervisor was the first person I talked to who liked me from the onset. From there, I met other workers, both Canadians and other immigrants that we shared some common interests and soon began to click [with]. I received a lot of encouragement from them which was part of the reason why I went on to enroll in the nursing program and then into the nursing profession.

Participants greatly appreciated their relationship with native-born Canadians. They also hinted that at times such relationships did not transcend beyond the workplace and were often not strong bonds compared with their co-ethnics. Participants acknowledged that they failed to invest enough time into such relationships since their non-work related interest did not align together. Kwabena, a 36-year male worker at a government office revealed:

I do value the relationship with my colleagues at work and they have been helpful in many ways. But I would say, the relationship is limited to the workplace and the advantages thereof. The rest of my time is spent with my co-ethnic ties. I commit more time to [them].

Further, educational institutions also served as avenues to form friendships. Participants who enrolled in educational institutions revealed that their schools served as focal points to access networks beyond their ethnic ones (Hendrickson et al., 2011; Ryan, 2015). However, they gravitated towards networks made of other international students or immigrants. With similar characteristics as well as goals and aspiration, they found it easy to connect with them and to forge a relationship. For example, Frema (F, 29) who joined her husband, and was pursuing a diploma course in nursing notes:

I made some new friends when I was schooling. During the program, I became friends with other international students mainly through group assignments. I was fortunate to connect with some African, (Nigerian and Somali) Caribbean (Jamaican and Vincentians) and Asian (Chinese) students. We shared our experiences and encouraged one another in order to make it. For example, those with more years in Canada provided some useful tips such as engaging in volunteer work [in order to] obtain Canadian work experience, etc.

In this assertion, Frema underlines to some degree, the ease and rationale for seeking out peers with similar cultural backgrounds. Although immigrants often associate with individuals from similar cultures and ethnic backgrounds, the process of tie formation is not always seamless or straightforward. The next section highlights some of the challenges immigrants may experience when forming ties with the native-born, other immigrants, and co-ethnics.

6.4.2 Barriers to forming ties

Although participants indicated their ability to form ties with both immigrants and native-born Canadians, the process of such tie formation is also fraught with challenges which place limits on the nature of the tie formed (whether strong or weak). The participants alluded to challenges such as cultural differences, a lack of common interest, and lack of adequate support from some network members. Here, also, we find little to no difference between the two groups of immigrants. Kofi (38), a male economic immigrant working as an administrator with one of the provincial government ministries, elaborated:

For me, my relationship is typically based on support exchanges, that is, those who can offer me support and I reciprocate the gesture. However, I find that it is quite difficult for some Canadians to do that. Their culture is quite individualistic, and people focus on their own issues. They are sensitive to your needs but are unable to help you. Hence, my preference [is] for my own or those that are like me.

Other participants had similar perspectives as Kofi's. They attributed their inability to form local ties to how society is structured, and identified the 'structure/system' as "people keeping to themselves" which makes it difficult to make new connections.

Nana Abena (34) a female family class immigrant, explained:

The system here promotes individualism. People just want to mind their own business and in order not to offend anyone, you also mind your business. This doesn't help you to want to know people besides those you usually meet. Can you believe, I live here and don't know who my neighbours are? They go in and out, and we do the same and mind our own business. This is very different from what we were used to back in Ghana. There, everybody's business is your business. You virtually know all your neighbours and they also know you.

In line with the above, others indicated that cultural difference prevents them from developing strong ties with native-born Canadians, hence lacking in relations with such individuals in their network. Kwabena observed:

I want individuals who understand my culture. As a result [the] majority of people I know are individuals from Ghana with maybe less than 5% being Canadians or other immigrants. This group of individuals are at least not surprised by my actions or the kinds of conversation that they or I would bring up. They get me and I get them. On the other hand, I don't want to experience cultural shock when I move outside of my network.

Kwabena further indicated that the 5 percent who were native-born were individuals he approached for "assistance", i.e., those who were colleagues at work or senior staff at previous work places who would be able to provide some work-related assistance or career advice for that matter. He also clarified his position with respect to the cultural shock he experienced, adding, "I don't want [to be in a] situation where I don't know what is expected of me and maybe the odd one [out]". Although Kwabena had been in Canada for 7 years, he felt that there may have been unspoken norms and practices that were unfamiliar, thus serving as a deterrent for moving outside his network of co-ethnics. For the most part, the multicultural policy and nature of the TCMA has allowed diverse groups of individuals to be present within the city, which makes it possible to find co-ethnic nationals in various spaces to bond.

Besides difficulties with native/local networks, participants encountered some difficulties in co-ethnic networks. Given how the networks were formed, participants identified pockets of cliques, which caused individuals to congregate in smaller ethnic-based networks. Speaking to this, Phyllis (F, 36) stated:

I noticed immediately that there were factions and cliques within the church I attended. This was usually along ethnic lines. Individuals who speak the same local dialect usually belonged to a mini group, bonded more and were mostly seen together [as] compared to those who were seemingly from different ethnicities or hometowns.

According to Phyllis, such individuals would mingle with others but kept the core of such networks. A notable barrier was confirmed by participants that differed between economic class and family class participants. Economic class immigrants indicated that in some situations they experience disappointment from their network members compared to family class immigrants. Edward explained a time when a friend had offered to babysit for him only to disappoint him when he really needed the assistance. He observed:

My friend assured me that I could count on him when need be and I was so confident that he was going to keep his word only to be disappointed. I had informed my friend that I would be bringing my daughter over in a few days. He said he had no problem with it, but when the day came and I called, he never picked. I was in the process of looking for a job and was scheduled for an interview but had to abandon it since I had no one to drop my kid with.

Other differences were also based on the human capital that an individual possessed. Participants revealed that they typically tend to bond easily with those of similar characteristics like themselves. They argued that sharing common characteristics is necessary for intergroup bonding. Frank (M, 39) explained:

Most of the people in my network I would say are very similar to me on many fronts and that's because it's easy for us to have a common ground to discuss issues, share experiences and advise one another on the issues we discuss. We do associate with the large group when we go for meetings but the core of my network, I would say are friends who are like me in some way.

Frank's assertion revealed another important dimension of networks that is variation within the 'people like me' (Putnam, 2007). It does suggest that shared ethnicity may not be the sole reason for tie formation (Ryan, 2015) although it provides the pool from which immigrants may choose. Participants also mentioned issues of mistrust and envy as other barriers to forming ties with co-ethnics. They explained that this tends to be the case where one's network is quite wide. Despite the challenges

that exist within co-ethnic networks, participants indicated that overall, they were happy with their current networks and would only alter it minimally if need be in order to derive some support.

6.4.3 Perception about networks

We obtained participant's perception regarding the nature of their networks with respect to size and whether possessing densely connected networks generates more benefits compared to less connected works. Participants had mixed perceptions, although most seemed to lean towards having a large network. Nevertheless, they believe that size and density is contingent on the type of support that an individual requires from their networks. For instance, most participants confirmed receiving emotional support from both strong and weak ties within their networks. Papa (M, 44) noted:

...one support which you can derive from a lot of people is emotional support. I received a lot of this support from individuals in my church. They constantly encourage and advise me on how to make it here in Canada. [This] support [comes] from individuals who are casual friends within my network.

Additionally, others indicated that possessing a large network also helps with good decision making in certain situations. Naana (F, 32) who joined her husband with their daughter, and had established some friends through his husband's social ties revealed:

[M]y husband's personality draws many people to him and has helped him make a lot of friends whose wives are also his friends. When I joined him in Canada, he introduced me to them and I'm able to reach out to them and get different opinions on issues. Sometimes the different voices have confirmed my thoughts and helped me to make informed decisions [...] I would say that if not how sociable my husband is, I don't think [I'd] have that many people to talk to.

Other participants stressed that having a diverse network consisting of co-ethnics, inter-ethnics, and native-born is the best kind of network to possess. In their estimation, such a network is synonymous with what Canada represents and shows

that people are willing to co-exist with one another. Manu (M, 42), an economic immigrant, captured this quite clearly in the following statement:

Personally, I think having a large network in a lot of ways is good but having a more diverse network where you don't have just one group of people in it is more helpful, especially with respect to integration. For example, Canadians may assist [you] with finding a job and give you a sense of how to relate with them since they form the majority. At the same time, we also meet and interact with individuals from various places given the multicultural nature of the country. I have friends from Vietnam, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, etc. In their own small way, they contribute towards our lives here and I believe such acquaintances are useful for me. So, keeping to your own people prevents you from knowing aspects of the society you live in and that is why I believe a diverse network is better. You borrow from the different people and add to yours to make it whole.

Despite this, others shared that they found their small networks more beneficial and obtained all the required support from such support. According to them, it always comes down to support and so once you can get the support you need, that is good enough, as shared by Mariama (F, 43):

Support has come predominately from my husband and some family around. Maybe it is because of my nature but I think once my husband provided the support I needed and ongoing support, I believe that is good enough for me. There are certain types of support, such as financial support, that you can't get from [the] outside, so I think a small network is good enough.

In terms of network density, participants revealed that it has very little influence on their network development. According to them if a network yields sufficient support, it outweighs the issue of being densely connected or less densely connected. However, some indicated a preference for a small and dense network compared to a large and dense network. Jenifer (F, 27) explained:

[...] what I predominately look for in my networks is to offer support to [others]. Once we're able to do this I am satisfied. That said, I wouldn't want a large network where everybody is connected and your issue is out in the open for many people to know. It does not really help. People talk and they may hear something about you without verifying and you may never know where your issue may end up so I would prefer a small and connected network of friends.

Jenifer's position once more reveals some of the complexities associated with co-ethnic networks. As indicated above, there are issues of envy and mistrust within such groups. Yet, the collective goal of succeeding in the host society often drives them to stay connected amid the issues that confront them.

In terms of the value of their networks towards their integration, both groups of participants indicated that their personal networks are very useful. A large number of them identified a range of supportive elements received from their networks that contributed towards their integration. A key supportive element identified was social companionship, which they did not take for granted. Fiifi pointed out:

One of the benefits I have derived from my networks is companionship. I have friends that call me regularly to check in on me and my family. I equally call them and do same. There are times we have group calls and can talk for hours nonstop catching up on various aspects of life that are common and important to us. I have found this very helpful.

Fiifi stressed that although a large component of the companionship is often over the telephone, he and his network members also made time to hang out if they were not busy and the weather was favourable. He acknowledged:

We make time to hang out and do activities together even though it is not as frequent as would like. We have different work schedules, which makes it difficult at times. But we do visit each when the opportunity presents itself and in the summer we try our best to hang out as much as we can. We often organize a few outings here and there to strengthen our bond.

An important perspective shared by some economic immigrants was the idea of friends becoming family. For most of them despite having family back home who are reachable via social media, they had built lasting friendship and do consider their friends as family. They indicated that such individuals will come to their aid and they could depend on them most often. Mercy revealed:

I think of my friends here in Canada as family now although my actual family is back home [Ghana]. My friends here share in virtually all my issues and are pretty much available when I need their presence. They come to support me when there is an event and vice versa. They go out of their way to help me. So, on that basis I think they qualify as family. I am comfortable relating with them and hope to keep that bond of friendship going for as long as possible. Honestly, they are a big part of why Canada is home to me now.

Other forms of support that participants indicated include emotional support, spiritual support and other forms of instrumental support. They alluded that since the Canadian system created an almost equal opportunity for all, support from their networks was just about adequate.

6.5 Discussion and conclusion

Drawing on qualitative research, this article has followed in the stead of the few studies that document how immigrants' access networks in their host society (Akyymakk, 2016; Ryan, 2008; Ryan et al., 2011). Using family class and skilled/economic immigrants of Ghanaian origin in the Greater Toronto Area of Canada as a case study, we have attempted to contribute to the literature by providing the field with a detailed account of the various ways immigrants' access ties. We also examined the barriers or challenges associated with tie formation, and immigrant's perception regarding the utility of their networks specifically the number of individuals in their network (size); how connected individuals are in the network (density); and the role of network members in their integration. We have documented key findings and points of discussion in the extract below.

First, the study finds that family class immigrants and skilled/economic adopt different routes to accessing networks, but the end results are often the same. Whereas family class immigrants rely on the connections their partners have established to access existing networks within their communities, skilled/economic may take advantage of improvements in technology and communication and locate avenues where there is a possibility of interacting with co-ethnics to form ties. Both groups of immigrants accessed ties through their workplaces, educational institutions, grocery stores, as well as beauty parlors. Within co-ethnic networks, the shared

responsibility of succeeding as Ghanaian immigrants in Canada enabled immigrants to bond together, thereby offering support with the hope of achieving one's set objective in the host society (Vasat & Bernard, 2015). This confirms Conradson and Latham (2005) work who find that ties with co-ethnics helps immigrants' maintain stability and elements of familiarity to be able to cope with their new environment.

Similarly, both categories of immigrants also forged ties beyond their ethnic groups either in their workplaces or in educational institutions. This reveals the opportunity structures that are found in these places for tie development (Ryan, 2015). Specifically, given the presence of different groups of immigrants within the TCMA, they found like-minded immigrants within some places who became part of their social networks. The rationale for becoming part of such networks was to draw support from each other to help towards their migration objectives.

Second, our analysis shows that factors such as cultural differences, a lack of support, and common interests may act as hindrances to forming or developing ties with native-born Canadians. Although immigrants realize the importance of locals to their overall integration in Canada, these factors prevented them from deliberately maintaining these networks. Nonetheless, they interacted with native-born Canadians through their workplaces and through educational institutions. But these relationships were often superficial, limited to the workplace and sometimes quite challenging to become a central member. Participants revealed, however, that one of the ways one can bond effectively with native-born Canadians is to conform to their way of doing things which in turn affects how immigrants are perceived, thus opening the possibility of expanding one's social network. This finding confirms the work of Akkaymak (2016) who found that Turkish immigrants had difficulty developing strong ties with native-born Canadians.

Given calls for the use of social network analysis concepts in migration, we utilized a few in our study. For instance, we found that frequent communication is one of the common features exhibited by co-ethnic ties. Likewise, the relationship between the two (immigrants and co-ethnics) were more durable compared to others.

Here also, family class immigrants could rely on the trust of their family members, which is the opposite for economic immigrants who tend to depend on friends. We found mixed results regarding participants' perception about the size (small or large) and density (densely connected vs not densely connected) of networks. Whereas some preferred large networks, others preferred small networks. Those who leaned towards large networks preferred not just a large one but a diverse network. While those on the small side were content and agreed that they were more concerned with resources or support that they could derive from such networks. This finding aligns with Granovetter's (1983) and Ryan's (2011) assertion that the utility of a network lies in the resources made available in such networks. Beyond these findings, other points of discussion are presented below.

In terms of the contribution of their network members towards their integration, participants observed that they received support towards that goal. Although not in monetary or quantifiable measures, they indicated that emotional support and companionship are two important benefits they derived from their ties which was particularly helpful. For this, it was mostly reciprocated between individuals in the network and cuts across the two group of immigrants.

By revealing immigrant's preference for co-ethnic ties or relationships which as demonstrated is based on shared ethnicities, we challenge the assumption by Ryan et al. (2008), Ryan (2011) and Akyyamak (2016) that shared ethnicities and nationality does not constitute the basis for social networks in the host society. Although both categories of immigrants identified issues of cliques and envy among their ties, these issues did not prevent them from clinging onto these ties based on cultural understanding and social support derived from these networks. Several participants confirmed that co-ethnic ties often understood what is expected of an immigrant (that is their dual role of integrating in Canada and providing for families in their origin country)—both in the host society and origin country—and are therefore able to assist one another towards achieving that goal. Thus, one major advantage of ethnic ties is social support. This point confirms the work by Stewart and colleagues (2008) who

suggest that social support is cultural among immigrants in Ontario. Likewise, this position affirms Putnam's (2000) assertion of bonding ties while not neglecting Bourdieu's (1986) position that the process of tie formation is rife with challenges.

Our study contributes to the growing interest in immigrants' access to networks. Here, we connect two bodies of literature – social networks and migration/integration to inform the analysis of both family class immigrants and economic class immigrants in Canada. Despite the plethora of studies on the importance of transnational networks, the current study contributes to the resurgence of place and its role in acting as contributing towards the emotional and social wellbeing of individuals. Here, our study identifies where people make new connections and by so doing demonstrates the importance of opportunity structures within a specific place (Ryan, 2015). Second, the study shows the distinct process of accessing networks for two groups of immigrants and how they sustain such ties in the networks and how the networks evolve and flow over time. Third, the study contributes to migration studies by employing qualitative techniques to analyze social networks. Quantitative approaches have been used to measure social ties and have yielded important insights. But qualitative research provides further insight into the meaning of relationships. Following the accounts of Ryan (2015), this paper utilized in-depth interviews to examine the meaning of relationships. Through the in-depth interviews, we provided some insight into how two groups of immigrants' access ties based on shared interests, trust and common aspirations. By adopting this approach, we are able to capture dynamism in network composition (Bidart & Lavenu, 2005; Ryan, 2015).

Further, although our study focuses on the experiences of family class and skilled/economic immigrants in the GTA, it also makes a wider contribution as a “critical case study” (Flyvbjerg 2016; Jaskulowski & Pawlok, 2020). It provides the opportunity to draw some conclusions regarding Africans in the TCMA in general. Although various African groups such as Nigerians, Sierra Leoneans, and Liberians, among others, differ in a variety of ways both individually and collectively, attachment to their home

countries and developing a sense of belonging in the host society may compel them to exhibit similar characteristics like their Ghanaian counterparts. This was subtly affirmed by some participants who indicated that they would not have an issue “joining a network that is culturally similar” to theirs.

The accounts in this study have demonstrated and shed some insight on how immigrants access networks in the TCMA. To further enhance our understanding of this process and immigrant networks in general, future research can provide a gendered analysis of the integration process to determine whether significant changes exist in their networks. Similarly, studies can delve into a discussion on accessing networks in mid-size Canadian cities such as London, Waterloo-Kitchener, and Hamilton. This would help provide an assessment of the role of place in network formation. Additionally, future studies can access the networks of both immigrants and host community members. Findings from such studies can provide the basis for policies targeted at improving their interaction in their respective communities, which may result in peaceful co-existence. Lastly, with some participants indicating the importance of personality traits, future studies can delve into a discussion of how various personality traits in immigrant groups affect tie formation and influence their actions. It may even shed insight on how immigrants choose and negotiate networks. Finally, our study makes a useful contribution to the burgeoning body of literature on immigrant networks by focusing the lens on family class and skilled/economic immigrants, which have gone unexplored.

6.6 References

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CHAPTER SEVEN

7 Thesis Overview and Summary

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the thesis by summarizing the key research findings and linking them to the research problem introduced in Chapter 1. The first part of this section discusses the thematic integration of the three manuscripts while highlighting the points of divergence. Following this, the second sub-section discusses the contribution of the dissertation as well as the limitations of the study. The final section of the chapter details pointers for future research.

7.2 Linking the findings to the research problem

The overarching goal of this thesis was to examine and understand the role of personal networks in the integration of immigrants in destination countries. The thesis employed social network and social capital as the theoretical foundation to guide the study. From a theoretical standpoint, social network operates on the premise that the relationship between individuals or social ties and interactions rather than just the individual “represents a major engine of action underlying behavior” (Perry et al., 2018:4). That is, individuals are likely to react or function in a particular manner based on the outcome of the interactions they have with others. The individual’s decision or choices is not solely a function of their independent motivation but linked to consultation and suggestions from others in their networks. As well, the connection between individuals influences what flows or is shared between network members. In the current study, a theoretical perspective of social networks was used to identify support flows within the networks of immigrants. Methodologically, it utilized social network analysis as the primary tool of investigation. Social network analysis was used to analyze the relational ties that exist between immigrants and their network members. The case study group for this thesis is a relatively recent immigrant group in Canada—Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA).

The first chapter of the thesis provided the backdrop of the dissertation research. The chapter began with a brief overview of international migration noting the causes of migration and the contribution of immigrants to the growth and development of receiving societies (Termote, 2011; Samers & Collyer, 2017). With Canada as the geographical area of interest, the chapter provided an overview of migration into the country. It revealed that the contribution of immigrants to the growth of the country makes their integration a priority for policymakers and researchers. Despite this, research finds that immigrants in Canada experience challenges in their integration. While some studies pointed to the absence of relevant social networks as contributing to immigrants' challenges, others indicated that immigrants obtained assistance from pioneer immigrants and fellow new immigrants during pre- and post-migration stages. Studies acknowledging the role of these network members often concentrate on the immigrant with little attention to the nature of the relationship between immigrants and network members. Little is known about how these networks are formed and how immigrants access support from these networks during their integration. Likewise, given the goal to advance insight into the role of networks, new methodological approaches have been adopted, of which social network analysis is a component. Social network analysis enables various components of the immigrants' networks to be accessed and studied for their impact on the immigrants' decisions. Nonetheless, it has been rarely applied to the study of immigrants in Canada. These gaps in the literature formed the basis of the research for the thesis.

To address these concerns, the thesis provided methodological approaches and research findings that assist in unravelling the contribution of an immigrant's network towards their overall integration in Canada. It achieved this by examining the structure of their network and its relationship with their integration (which has received little academic interest), examining the support that is exchanged within these networks and providing a narrative account of how immigrants access networks. Findings from all three manuscripts (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) indicate that personal

networks of immigrants are useful in the integration process of immigrants in Canada, but support may come from a small number of people. However, the issues examined in Chapters 4 and 5 deserve further elaboration.

Chapter 4 examined the structure and composition of networks using the context of reception and migration project as explanatory frameworks, while Chapter 5 investigated the relationship between characteristics of the immigrant, network members, and network on social support provision, controlling for theoretically relevant factors. In Chapter 4, hierarchical clustering was performed as part of analysis to examine changes in the network of immigrants after some time. Results showed that both recent and established immigrants have few non-immigrants in their network. This in part reveals the extent of their integration in the new society as well as the level of cohesion, which can be considered as low. In Chapter 5, results showed that support was provided by a small number of network members despite a large presence of co-ethnic members in the network. Comparing the findings from the chapters' calls into question the rationale for having a large presence of co-ethnic individuals if minimal support comes from them. However, since qualitative accounts suggest the salience of such ties regardless, it lends credence that these small numbers may consist of closer ties who provide the most support in one's integration.

Building on Chapters 4 and 5, Chapter 6 provided a qualitative account regarding recent immigrants' access to networks and their perception of the networks. Here, the chapter detailed the experiences of two categories of immigrants: family class and economic/skilled class immigrants. Results showed that both groups of immigrants' initial access to co-ethnic networks is fairly simple while access to native-born networks is difficult. Both groups experience challenges within their networks. Regardless of these challenges, they both value the contribution of network members towards their integration, no matter how minimal it may be. The manuscript contributes to the understanding of networks and the integration of family class immigrants whose experiences are often overlooked. Table 7.1 provides a summary of the various themes that emerged from the study. The table also reveals the main

findings from the three empirical studies through a summary of the salient arguments advanced in the manuscripts and thesis. While findings from all three manuscripts do overlap, some are peculiar to each individual manuscript.

Table 7.1: Thematic integration and summary of key findings and arguments from the three manuscripts

| Summary of Empirical Studies | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Manuscript 1: structure and composition of immigrant networks in Canada</p> <p>Key issues: Context of reception and migration project, change in networks, the structure of Ghanaian immigrant networks in the TCMA</p> <p>Data and method: primary data, descriptive statistics, biographical in-depth interviews, network analysis and visualization, and hierarchical clustering</p> <p>Key findings (see below): (1), (2), (5), (6)</p> | <p>Manuscript 2: a multi-level analysis of social support networks of immigrants</p> <p>Key issues: how the characteristics of immigrants, alters, and networks affects social support provision; transnationality, brokerage, closeness</p> <p>Data and methods; primary data, ego-centric network analysis, multi-level multinomial regression</p> <p>Key findings (see below): (1), (3), (6)</p> | <p>Manuscript 3: access to networks and perception of networks</p> <p>Key issues; network types, barriers to networks, social capital; how family class and economic/skilled immigrants access networks and their perceptions of their networks</p> <p>Data and methods: in-depth interviews, thematic analysis</p> <p>Key findings (see below): (1), (4), (5), (6)</p> |

Key findings and associated arguments

- 1) The value of personal networks (web of friends, family, and acquaintances that an individual is connected to at different places) in the integration process is emphasized in this study. Immigrants value these since they contribute in their own way towards their integration in the Canadian society (**reference Manuscript 1, 2 & 3**).
- 2) Relying on a mixed method network analysis (hierarchical clustering and biographical in-depth interviews), the configuration of the personal networks of Ghanaian immigrants in the TCMA consist of co-ethnic people (Ghanaians) in Canada, a few multi-ethnic (different immigrant groups), and a few native-born Canadians. The presence of an ethnic community (churches and association) and long-term goal of remaining in Canada (migration project) explain this type of configuration (**reference Manuscript 1**).
- 3) Three types of social support (emotional, instrumental, and informational) are examined within the personal networks using ego, alter, and network characteristics. Co-ethnic ties provide a small proportion of support. Results from multi-level multinomial logistic regression suggests that ego to alter characteristics (closeness) best predicts all three types of support either in the form of provision, receipt, or reciprocation of support among immigrants and their network members (**reference Manuscript 2**).
- 4) Family class immigrants access new ties or networks in Canada with the help of pioneer family members and independently through institutions such as schools and workplaces. Economic/skilled class immigrants, however, build ties through access to institutions. For both categories, lack of common interest between immigrants and native-born people makes access to native-born networks difficult. Nonetheless, immigrants' networks consist of both bonding and bridging ties that serve multiple purposes (**reference Manuscript 3**).
- 5) The role of ethnic communities such as religious organizations and ethnic/township associations play a role in developing and maintaining ties among Ghanaian immigrants in the TCMA. However, the kinds of patterns they exhibit and how they act as effective brokers to improve the social capital and well-being of their members warrants further investigation (**reference Manuscript 1 & 3**).
- 6) Co-ethnic ties (Ghanaian immigrants) are an important part of the personal networks of Ghanaians in the TCMA. Regardless of the perceived notion of mistrust as demonstrated in Manuscript 2 and 3, their contribution to the integration of their fellow Ghanaians is valued (**reference Manuscript 1, 2 & 3**).

Overall, findings from all three manuscripts tend to support the general assumption that personal networks play a role in the integration of recent immigrants although supportive ties may be few (manuscript 2). The findings also demonstrate that support typically emerges from dyadic relationships (relationships between two people) rather than large networks. Further, these findings uncover that dyadic networks are mostly with co-ethnic people. The importance of this finding is twofold. First, it suggests the type of relationship between actors is critical in terms of support provision geared towards one's integration. Second, it shows that immigrants are deliberate about individuals they connect with to assist them—connecting with key individuals who can serve a specific purpose.

The rest of this subsection is dedicated to summarising the objectives of the dissertation as outlined in Chapter 1. Here, I recount how the objectives were achieved by submitting the specific arguments presented in the respective manuscripts that addressed each objective.

7.2.1 Objective 1: To examine the structure and composition of immigrants' network within the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA)

The purpose of this study was to describe the structure and composition of the networks of immigrants in Canada. Although the importance of networks is widely known, there is limited understanding regarding the diversity of the configurations in these personal networks, particularly the characteristics of the individuals within the network and the possible factors that explain these configurations. To address this objective, a sequential networked survey was used to obtain primary data on one group of recent immigrants (Ghanaians) in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area.

Quantitatively, the results suggest that the networks of Ghanaian immigrants consist predominately of fellow Ghanaians in Canada and Ghana. However, a breakdown of these networks can be categorized into four types: fellows (alters of the same nationality and based in Canada), origins (alters based in Ghana), hosts (alters who are born in and reside in Canada), and others (alters from other countries residing in and outside of Canada). Qualitatively, in-depth interviews revealed that the sites

such as churches, workplaces, schools, and ethnic associations meetings assisted with the formation of networks with co-ethnic people.

The findings identified may be explained in two ways. First, immigrants find it easy to bond with their co-ethnics and other immigrants who often share similar goals and aspirations—that is, to succeed financially and in other spheres within the host society. Second, institutions such as churches and hometown or ethnic associations are cognizant of the challenges immigrants face in trying to integrate, and therefore provide an avenue where they can develop networks while providing support to address their settlement and integration challenges even though not many individuals may take advantage of this. Irrespective of the plausible explanations above, a key argument advanced by this manuscript is to provide evidence for the inclusion of context of reception and migration project as explanatory variables in the study of immigrants' networks. The context of reception provides insight on the structural factors that affect tie formation such as governmental policies and ethnic communities/associations, whereas the migration project details the individual aspirations for migration. The study provided the opportunity to explore the configuration of immigrants' personal networks in destination countries such as Canada, thereby providing a segue to understand their integration.

7.2.2 Objective 2: To examine the effect of the immigrant's characteristics, alter characteristics, and network characteristics on support exchange

This manuscript built on the first objective and delved into the issue of social support exchanges within the network of immigrants. Specifically, it examined three types of social support (emotional, instrumental, and informational) which are essential for immigrant integration by considering the characteristics of the immigrant (ego), network members (alters), and network. This manuscript contributes to the gap in the literature on the interaction between immigrants, alters, and their network as well as directionality of support provision. An egocentric survey was specifically designed to address this objective, given the lack of network data on immigrants and the general population in Canada. Descriptive and multi-level multinomial regression models were

employed to assess the relationship between social support provision and characteristics of ego (transnationality), alter (emotional and geographic closeness), and their networks (brokerage as effective size).

Findings suggest that alter characteristics are the strongest predictors of support exchange within an immigrant's network. Specifically, results show that alters who are family, who are important, and who have frequent communication with immigrants are inclined to provide, receive, and reciprocate all three forms of support within the network. This finding corroborates previous research that indicate that dyads (relationships between two people) are better at explaining support provision (Bilecen & Cardona, 2018; Kornienko et al., 2018; Herz, 2015) and should therefore be at the forefront of discussions on immigrant integration.

In addition, this study is among the few studies that examine the directionality of support provision. By doing so, it affirms that immigrants have agency and are not just receivers but also providers of the support they receive. Another noteworthy finding in this manuscript is the association between emotional support and transnationality. It emerged that engagement in transnational activities does not guarantee exchange of emotional support as indicated in previous studies (see Amoyaw & Abada, 2016; Boccagni, 2015; Herz, 2015). This finding can be explained by increased ties to co-ethnic individuals in Canada, which, in a way, explains the large presence of such ties in their networks. Based on this finding, there is a need for programs that provide avenues for the cultivation of cross-cultural relationships, particularly for new immigrants. Such programs would help immigrants build relationships with other immigrants, which studies have found to result in the successful integration of immigrants.

7.2.3 Objective 3: To determine immigrants' access to networks, challenges encountered in accessing networks, and their perception about their networks

This objective addressed immigrants' access to networks and their perception about their networks with respect to size and density as well as their role in the integration process. Although an increasing body of research highlights the diverse forms of

assistance that immigrants receive from their network members, few studies demonstrate the route by which immigrants access their networks and the nuances that pertain to accessing resources within these networks. This manuscript sought to understand how two groups (family class immigrants and economic/skilled immigrants) of recent immigrants' access networks in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area of Canada. By employing social capital theory, another objective of this manuscript was to determine if immigrants' networks follow the Putnam dichotomy of bridging and bonding ties.

The manuscript employed in-depth interviews with Ghanaian immigrants to address these objectives. Thematic analysis was used to answer the research questions relating to access to networks, barriers to networks, and the perception of networks. The manuscript finds two primary routes for family class immigrants to access ties: immigrants leveraging on their existing contacts to forge new relationships and through various institutions on their own. Findings show that obtaining support was relatively easy from ties that were formed through initial contacts. Compared to family class immigrants, economic/skilled immigrants utilized the internet to find institutions and groups, mostly co-ethnic groups, which they patronized to develop ties and build long-term friendships. Similar, to Manuscript 1, findings show that co-ethnic ties were dominant within the networks of both groups.

The manuscript also reveals challenges that hinder network formation among immigrants. Issues such as envy and the presence of cliques within larger networks was a hindrance to network formation (Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan, 2011; White, 2014). In addition, immigrants are often unable to join domestic networks due to cultural differences, inability to receive support, and lack of common interests between immigrants and non-immigrants. Furthermore, immigrants tend to be concerned about the benefits they can derive from their networks rather than focusing on the size or density of their networks. Findings demonstrate that networks may be separated into bonding and bridging ties but serve dual purposes, nonetheless. That is, both categories of ties provide assistance that is typically associated with just one

category. For instance, bonding ties, which consist of close family and friends, provided relevant information about jobs and career progression which is typical of bridging ties. In like manner, some bridging ties equally provided some emotional support. To conclude, the paper argues shared responsibilities, and common traits of people (Ghanaians) was a precursor for forming ties and receiving support in networks, which is contrary to some previous studies that indicate that ethnicity and common traits do not form the basis of good relationships (see Akymakk, 2015; Ryan, 2011).

7.3 Study contributions

This dissertation makes theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions to the fields of immigrant integration, migration studies, and social network analysis. Although the research focused on Ghanaian immigrants, lessons gleaned from this dissertation can be applied to other immigrants, especially in terms of policies that address how immigrants interact with native-born Canadians. Immigrants from other sub-Saharan African countries may stand to benefit the most because of their similarities with Ghanaian immigrants.

7.3.1 Contributions to Scholarship

Considering the multi-disciplinary nature of this research, potential contributions exist in the transfer of knowledge, theoretical frameworks, and methodology between disciplines. Theoretically, this research builds on and contributes to the emerging body of work that focuses on network formation by recent immigrants in destination countries. As previously mentioned, scant information exists about the emergence and change in networks over time. There is also relatively little insight concerning the role of context in the formation and changes in networks in different places. The few studies that explore these dynamics have focused on European or Latin American immigrants. Few studies have been conducted in primary immigrant receiving societies like Canada (see Eve, 2010; Gills & Bialski, 2011; Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan, 2011, 2015). This study therefore focused on recent immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa who are

increasingly becoming one of the growing sources of immigrants in Canada. More importantly, the thesis draws on the development of networks to understand immigrants' integration into various facets of the Canadian society. This focus is consistent with scholars such as Wimmer who argue for further research on the "everyday praxis of group formation" and "its variability and context dependency" (2004: 4).

More specifically, the theoretical contributions of this thesis revolve around the context of reception and its connection to network formation among immigrants in destination countries. First, the thesis extends the discussion on two important elements of the context of reception—ethnic community and government policies—describing how these two create avenues for ties to be established with co-ethnic, multi-ethnic, and the native-born Canadian. In this regard, the thesis contributes by examining how the two elements of this context leads to tie formation or access to networks. Previous studies using the context of reception have focused on describing immigrant incorporation into the social and economic landscape of the host society (Potters & Rumbaut, 2001, 2006; van Tubergen, 2006; Takenaka & Paerregaard, 2012), the effect of belonging to a particular religion (Model & Lin, 2002), and effect on organizational structure (Chaudhary & Guarnizo, 2016). These prior studies have focused on the opportunity structures created by the context without delving into the practical steps by which individuals connect to take advantage of these opportunity structures. By demonstrating and revealing how networks are formed through these contexts, the thesis provides a new way of understanding the effect of these contexts.

Another theoretical contribution lies in understanding how immigrants' access or establish social ties. As argued by Small (2009), a fundamental question missing in the theoretical discussion about social ties from key theorists such as Coleman (1988), Bourdieu (1985), Putnam (2000), and Lin (1998) is how immigrants access social ties. This study took on the challenge of answering this question. It revealed that social ties can be accessed through various sites of interactions such as workplaces, salons, neighbourhoods, and events organized by ethnic associations and organizations. The

findings equally indicate that dyadic networks are prominent in the integration process, as relationships between two people often consists of a strong bond where trust and reciprocity is the norm.

This thesis makes some methodological contributions. First, it highlights the importance of adopting mixed methods in understanding immigrant network formation in the integration process in receiving societies. By employing a primary sequential mixed method design, the thesis demonstrates how both quantitative and qualitative methods can be effective in understanding network processes. The quantitative survey garnered specific details on alters such as duration of relationships, alter relationships with egos, frequency of communications, and the relationships between alters in the network. This provided measures that were used to determine the structure, composition, evolution, and change of immigrant networks. Qualitative methods were used to ground some of the findings observed from the quantitative data. Participants provided information about the context in which their personal networks were formed, why they maintain such relationships, and details about the role of these networks towards their integration (see Chapter 4). Primary data was used to investigate the type of support received within immigrants' networks (particularly Chapter 5), while qualitative data (Chapter 6) provided more depth regarding these support exchanges and the perception of immigrants regarding the support they receive from their networks (Chapter 7).

Another key methodological contribution of this thesis relates to the adoption of a network perspective. The network perspective provides an in-depth approach to understanding the structure and composition of immigrants' networks as well as the role of network members in the integration process. Examining both multi-theoretical (social networks and social capital) and multi-level relational data (alter at level 1, ego at level 2) provided useful methodological insights. Particularly, this offered insights into the personal networks through an investigation of dyadic relationships and helped shift the emphasis from the individual (immigrant) to that of the immigrant and alters (interaction-oriented), which has characterized the bulk of immigrant network studies.

Importantly, dyadic relationships helped to explain the variances that exist among relationships. The dyadic relationships in this thesis were used to determine how Ghanaian immigrants were connected to other Ghanaians both in Canada and in Ghana, how these alters were also connected to each other, as well as the rationale for such connections. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis is the first to adopt this approach to investigate immigrant network formation.

Finally, by adopting the analytical concepts of social network analysis, the thesis contributes towards emerging literature that adopts a reflexive approach to the study of integration. Further, it departs from the institutionalization and normalization of ethnicity-centred epistemology that characterizes research on migration and integration (Dahinden, 2016). Despite the significance of social networks in the migration process (pre- and post-migration) and the great diversity of studies interested in networks, few of these apply the methodology and theories of classical social network analysis. Most of these consider social networks as metaphors with a focus on a few networks, thereby normalizing the discourse on integration. However, by employing social network analysis, this study provides insights into the network structure of immigrants in an encompassing way. The use of ego-centred networks also made it possible to elaborate on the structure of immigrant networks in Canada. For example, it provided visualization that showed a firsthand, pictorial overview of the nature of immigrants' networks. In addition, social network analysis also helped to grasp the role of migration aspiration and other ego–alter attributes within the networks of immigrants alongside other structural forces such as education, gender, and age, among others.

7.3.2 Contribution to Practice and Policy

The findings of this study have the potential to provide critical lessons to policymakers in both Ontario and Canada at large. This thesis finds that personal networks contribute towards the integration process of immigrants. While this is not entirely new and is a well-established perspective within migration studies, it is worth reinforcing in the case of recent immigrants to Canada since it has not been given

thorough attention. Particularly, findings from network data show the presence of few native-born Canadians presents an overview of their integration and suggests a minimal level of relating with them. Further evidence of the small number of non-immigrants in the network of immigrants is revealed in the qualitative study (Manuscript 3), demonstrating challenges to forming ties with the native-born. However, research reveals the vital role of non-immigrants toward the integration of immigrants (see De Miguel & Trammer, 2010; Kyeremeh et al., 2019). Given this, there is the need for targeted programs and initiatives that would increase the opportunity for immigrants to interact with the native-born Canadian and establish ties that may assist in different facets of their integration in Canada. This may be done as a community-level intervention (Kyeremeh et al., 2020).

In line with this, ethnic and religious organizations can help with programs and initiatives. They can be tasked with developing programs based on the needs of their members since they are likely to have extensive knowledge of what their members (predominantly immigrants) would appreciate while coordinating with integration agencies for various forms of support. These initiatives can help break the divide between the native-born and immigrants.

This thesis also provides insight that will be useful for diaspora policy. First, it reveals that immigrants are often information deprived regarding relevant knowledge that would assist them at various stages in their integration in the host society. In line with this, the various diaspora groups can identify sources of important information that would be useful for the immigrant upon arrival in the host society. This can be attached as links on their websites or social media handles for easy access by potential immigrants. As well, the various diaspora groups can liaise with the government to set up kiosks at the airport to provide information to their respective immigrant groups when they arrive in the country. Overall, this would provide information to different categories of immigrants at various stages.

In addition, findings of the thesis have the potential to inform integration and diversity policy at the municipal level. Given the small number of non-immigrants in the network of immigrants, municipal government should develop community-based initiatives such as conversation cafes, sporting activities, host matching programs to improve chances of both the non-immigrant and immigrants to interact. These forms of interactions can enhance peaceful co-existence between immigrants and non-immigrants.

However, in order for these to be feasible, some initial challenges would have to be overcome. For starters, immigrants are often interested in securing economic prospects that would enhance their financial position. Once this is done, it would provide opportunity to move to communities with a good blend of both non-immigrants and immigrants where they are likely to interact with one another. Likewise, the financial freedom from finding jobs that matches their credentials would also make it easy for them to focus on other aspects of their integration, which includes community participation. As such, municipal governments should look at ways to support immigrants with respect to finding suitable employment since it would pave the way for integration into various facets of the Canadian society and lead to the success of the proposed programs.

7.4 Study limitations

Despite the contributions of this thesis, there are some noteworthy limitations. For instance, the nature of an egocentric survey also produces some challenges, which are not peculiar to the traditional survey approach. Egocentric surveys are demanding in terms of completion. This is because the respondents must provide information about themselves together with that of all alters they list. This can lead to fatigue and prevent them from providing accurate data or providing inaccurate responses to maintain a favourable impression of themselves referred to as social desirability bias (Perry et al. 2018). As such, in the current thesis, respondents were asked to fix list (that is list a fixed number of alters, in this case 20) to minimize this burden. However, limiting

respondent to only 20 alters could potentially cause them to omit some alters who may have provided some support.

Closely related to the above is the issue of recall bias (Wellman, 2007). Respondents' ability to recall specific individuals who they have interacted with and provided specific types of support within the past 12 months may be limited. As such, there is the potential to inaccurately report on their relationships and overestimate their frequency of contact with alters. This makes it difficult to determine the exact relationship between immigrants and alters (Perry et al., 2018).

A further limitation revolves around the nature of the study design. This thesis adopted a cross-sectional survey with respect to the collection of primary data. Cross-sectional studies enable brief observations of a phenomenon among a population of interest at a specific point in time or within a relatively short period. Compared to other methods, cross-sectional studies are relatively simple, fast, and an inexpensive method of obtaining primary data within a short period. But, despite these attributes, cross-sectional studies are less favourable for examining causal relationships between events and outcomes since they lack a time dimension (Sedgwick, 2014). The inability of cross-sectional studies, including this current study, to demonstrate temporal relationships inhibits its ability to infer causation between events and outcomes or variables of interest (Barros & Hirakata, 2003; Reichenheim & Coutinho, 2011).

Another limitation of the study is potential selection or sampling bias, which is linked to the cross-sectional design of the study. While quantitative studies aim to obtain a representative sample of a population, this is usually challenging, especially where a suitable sampling frame is unavailable. Despite combining both probability and non-probability techniques to address this challenge, some bias is likely to persist. In addition, the small sample size for the study means the results for this study cannot be generalized. As well, the current thesis is skewed towards more educated immigrants than less educated immigrants. Although several attempts were made to reach both groups, the length of time involved in completing the surveys might have posed challenges for some individuals, most especially less educated individuals.

A final limitation pertains to my positionality. I am a graduate student of Ghanaian origin, which has some advantages and disadvantages. In terms of advantage, it provided an avenue to access various Ghanaian groups and categories of immigrants to inform them about the project. This helped to whip up interest in the project. Although this was helpful, it did not yield the desired outcome all the time. Some individuals signed up to be part of the study but withdraw at various points. As well, being an insider within the community might have influenced the type of responses that participants provided and as such, I do acknowledge that some bias may have resulted from this process.

7.5 Directions for future research

Although the findings of the current thesis call for an interaction-based analysis (between immigrants and alters) in support provision among immigrants in Canada, it also advocates for further studies in this domain. First, it would be interesting to determine whether the diversity of configurations and the nature of the personal networks of other immigrant groups exhibit similar characteristics to that of their Ghanaian counterparts. With immigrants coming from different backgrounds with some unique needs, it would be important to access their tie formation process in order to recommend culturally appropriate programs that would pave the way for interaction between them and the native-born Canadian. Likewise, since prior studies have demonstrated that non-immigrants often have vital networks that enables them to obtain different forms of support, a focus on immigrants' would provide a basis for comparison which would indicate whether the immigrants' case is improving or worsening. This would provide a strong basis for targeted programs to enhance relationship building, especially in the case where immigrants' networks consist predominately of their co-ethnic ties.

Moreover, since immigrant networks do not remain static but change over time, there is the need to examine the extent to which the networks of recent immigrants change and how this change affects their integration into the social and

economic sphere of the country. Likewise, since there are three broad categories of immigrant groups accepted within the Canadian context, a corollary to the proposed study will be to examine how each specific category of immigrants' fare with respect to changes in their networks over time. This can be done over a period of two years or more. This longitudinal approach would then provide the basis to determine causality with respect to support provision among immigrants.

Furthermore, considering the importance of alter attributes in support provision, future studies can determine the extent to which a network considered high status or low status affect the type of support likely to be received. A network may be considered high status when alters have higher education, are employed, and earn high income according to Canadian standards, while a low status network would be the opposite. This would provide an alternate outlook in understanding the immigrant population using a relational approach.

As well, it would be pertinent to investigate the nature of the networks of second-generation immigrants. Although this category of immigrants often perceives themselves as similar to the native born, they face unique challenges in terms of their identity in the host society. For instance, there is often some confusion regarding how they perceive themselves. At home, they are expected to identify with the cultural norms of their parents while at school and other spaces; they are required to behave like the non-immigrant born. This has the potential to cause some confusion, which can affect their personal tie formation. Hence, it would be prudent to understand their networks since it gives an indication of how integrated they are in the host society.

There is the need for more research in the TCMA for several reasons. First, the TCMA would continue to remain the first entry point for most immigrants regardless of the various programs implemented by municipalities to attract immigrants to their respective cities. Hence, it would remain the best avenue for immigrants to interact with their co-ethnics and other immigrants to develop ties that may be relevant in their short-term and long-term integration. Second, the various economic opportunities and ethnic support services would continue to make the area attractive for most

immigrants. The TCMA is also the place where immigrants are likely to fare poorly given the high cost of living (e.g. accommodation). Considering these issues, it is vital that researchers continue to focus on understanding the unique experiences of immigrants within this area to inform policy and improve immigrants overall integration.

Despite the need for attention on the TCMA, a focus on other areas specifically mid-sized cities may be equally relevant. Such cities have been found to provide more economic opportunities and a better quality of life (Teixeira & Dralot, 2018). These cities also tend to have a much smaller immigrant population compared to the traditional immigrant receiving societies. This however, may be a blessing since a small number of immigrants would mean a greater chance of interacting with the native-born Canadian. These may take place in their various communities and workplace, which could ensure harmony within the larger society.

7.6 Conclusion

This thesis examined the role of personal networks in the integration process in Canada by considering three interrelated components. First, the study explored the configuration of immigrants' networks to determine the extent of their integration. Second, it employed a combination of ego, alter, and network characteristics to assess support provision. Finally, it examined immigrants' access to networks and their perception of their networks. Based on the findings from these three manuscripts that relied on primary data and a mixed method approach, the study highlights important theoretical and methodological network analysis and its role in understanding immigrants support networks in Canada. The relevance of this approach is rooted in the notion that immigrants interact with different individuals and their unique characteristics influence support provision. As such, incorporating this perspective in research provides a holistic picture of the support that immigrants receive towards their integration in receiving societies like Canada.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethics Approval Letter



Date: 11 May 2018

To: Dr. Godwin Arku

Project ID: 111521

Study Title: Understanding immigrants' personal networks in the integration process in Canada: a case study of Ghanaian immigrants' in the Greater Toronto Area

Application Type: NMREB Initial Application

Review Type: Full Board

Meeting Date: 06/Apr/2018 12:30

Date Approval Issued: 11/May/2018 11:37

REB Approval Expiry Date: 11/May/2019

Dear Dr. Godwin Arku

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the WREM application form for the above mentioned study, as of the date noted above. NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the expiry date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

This research study is to be conducted by the investigator noted above. All other required institutional approvals must also be obtained prior to the conduct of the study.

Documents Approved:

| Document Name | Document Type | Document Date | Document Version |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| In-depth | Interview Guide | 21/Mar/2018 | 1 |
| London - LOI - survey- | Written Consent/Assent | 26/Apr/2018 | 2 |
| London - LOI -indepth- | Written Consent/Assent | 26/Apr/2018 | 2 |
| Oral Script | Oral Script | 26/Apr/2018 | 2 |
| Oral script for leaders | Oral Script | 26/Apr/2018 | 2 |
| Survey instrument | Paper Survey | 26/Apr/2018 | 2 |

No deviations from, or changes to the protocol should be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB, except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazard(s) to study participants or when the change(s) involves only administrative or logistical aspects of the trial.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario. Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB. The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Katelyn Harris, Research Ethics Officer on behalf of Dr. Randal Graham, NMREB Chair

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system that is compliant with all regulations).

Appendix B: Letter of Information (Questionnaire Survey)

Introduction

My name is Emmanuel Kojo Kyeremeh, a student in the Department of Geography at the University of Western Ontario. Together with my supervisor, I am currently conducting a research project on the personal networks of immigrants' in Canada.

Purpose of Study

The overall purpose of the study is to examine the nature of immigrants' personal networks before and after migration to Canada. Specifically, I am interested in the composition and evolution of immigrants' personal networks, the social support they receive and provide within their networks and also their perceptions about the usefulness of such networks. As a Ghanaian immigrant residing in the TCMA, I would like to invite you to participate in the study. Your participation will assist us to examine the utility of personal networks within the integration process, advance Canadian immigration scholarship and contribute to international scholarship on immigrants' networks and integration more broadly.

If you agree to participate

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a survey. The survey covers topics such as the characteristics of individuals within your network and the type of social support you receive from and provide within your network. The survey should take approximately 70 minutes to complete. The survey can take place in your office, over the phone, or in a location of your choosing.

Confidentiality

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information that could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. The principal investigator and the co-investigator will be the only persons

to handle the raw interview data. That is, all information presented will be anonymized through the use of pseudonyms with the master list of participants kept separate from the raw data in a locked filing cabinet in the principal investigator's office. The raw data will also be secured in the office of the principal investigator's with the data encrypted on a password-protected hard drive and destroyed seven years after completion of the study. The findings will be published in a journal after the information has been aggregated. The data collected for this study will not be used for any purposes other than those related to this project. Please note that representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research.

Risks & Benefits

There are no known risks associated with your participation in the study. Rather, the research may benefit participants by identifying the utility or drawbacks associated with immigrants' networks and how it affects their integration. More broadly, these discoveries may be incorporated into future research and practice on immigration and integration and has the potential to influence immigration policy.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time. You may contact me or the principal investigator to withdraw your data any time after the interview and it will be immediately destroyed. There is no penalty for withdrawing or not answering all questions. You will not be compensated for your participation in this research and you do not waive any legal rights by participating in this study.

Questions

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Human Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario.

If you have any other questions about the study, please contact

Emmanuel Kojo Kyeremeh,
Co-Investigator
Department of Geography,
The University of Western Ontario,

Dr. Godwin Arku,
Principal Investigator
Department of Geography,
The University of Western Ontario,

Appendix C: Letter of Information and Invitation to Participate (in-depth interviews)

Introduction

My name is Emmanuel Kojo Kyeremeh, a student in the Department of Geography at the University of Western Ontario. Together with my supervisor, I am currently conducting a research project on the personal networks of immigrants' in Canada.

Purpose of Study

The overall purpose of the study is to examine the nature of immigrants' personal networks before and after migration to Canada. Specifically I am interested in the composition and evolution of immigrants' personal networks, the social support immigrants receive and give within their networks and also their perceptions about the usefulness of such networks. As a Ghanaian immigrant residing in the TCMA, I would like to invite you to participate in the study. Your participation will assist us to examine the utility of personal networks within the integration process, advance Canadian scholarship on immigration and contribute to international scholarship on immigrants' networks and integration more broadly.

If you agree to participate

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview. The interview covers topics such as your migration decision, access to personal networks, barriers to personal networks, support from personal networks, and perceptions about personal networks in the integration process. The interview should take approximately 60 minutes to complete and with your permission, I would like to digitally record the interview. However, interviews can still take place if you are not comfortable with audio-recording. In this situation, hand-written notes will be taken to enable me obtain the relevant data from you. The interview can take place in your office, any public space or location of your choice.

Confidentiality

The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor information that could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. The principal investigator and the co-investigator will be the only persons to handle the raw interview data. That is, all information presented will be anonymized through the use of pseudonyms with the master list of participants kept separate from the raw data in a locked filing cabinet in the principal investigator's office. The raw data will also be secured in the office of the principal investigator's with the data encrypted on a password-protected hard drive and destroyed seven years after completion of the study. The findings will be published in a journal after the information has been aggregated. The data collected for this study will not be used for any purposes other than those related to this project. Please note that representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study-related records to monitor the conduct of the research

Risks & Benefits

There are no known risks associated with your participation in the study. This research may benefit participants by identifying the utility or drawbacks associated with immigrants' networks and how it affects their integration. More broadly, these discoveries may be incorporated into future research and practice on immigration and integration and has the potential to influence immigration policy.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawing or not answering all questions. You may contact me or the principal investigator to withdraw your data any time after the interview and it will be immediately destroyed. There is no penalty for withdrawing or not answering all

questions. You will not be compensated for your participation in this research and you do not waive any legal rights by participating in this study.

Questions

If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Office of Human Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

Emmanuel Kojo Kyeremeh,
Co-Investigator
Department of Geography,
The University of Western Ontario,
Dr. Godwin Arku,
Principal Investigator Department of
Geography,
The University of Western Ontario,

Appendix D: Survey Instrument for Composition of Networks and Housing among Immigrants

Section 1: Socio-Demographic Information

1) Gender: Female Male

2) What is your ethnicity or main tribe in Ghana?

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Akan | <input type="checkbox"/> Mole-Dagomba |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ga-Adangbe | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ewe | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guan | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gonja | |

3) What age were you when you first arrived in Canada?

| | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| 18-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61-70 | 71 and above |
| | | | | | |

4) What is your current age? (years)

| | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| 18-30 | 31-40 | 41-50 | 51-60 | 61-70 | 71 and above |
| | | | | | |

5) Before leaving Ghana what was your marital status?

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Married | <input type="checkbox"/> Single | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced/Separated | <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|

6) What is your current marital status?

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Married | <input type="checkbox"/> Single | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced/Separated | <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|

7) Do you have children?

No Yes. If yes, how many?

8) Please indicate your religious affiliation

.....

9) What was your highest level of education **completed** before coming to Canada?

- Primary Education High School University/College Postgraduate

10) What is your current level of education?

- Primary Education High School University/College Postgraduate

11) Are you currently employed?

- Yes No

12) If yes, is your job full time or part time?

- Full time only Part time only Both full time and part time

13) How many jobs do you currently have?

- One Two Three or more

14) Which of the following best describes the job you currently do? If you have more than one Job, please select one job description which best describes each of your other jobs.

| Job Description | 1 st Job | 2 nd Job | 3 rd Job |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Machining, product fabricating, assembling, and repairing | | | |
| Transportation equipment operating | | | |
| Clerical and administrative assistant | | | |
| Construction | | | |
| Sales and Services | | | |
| Professional and managerial | | | |
| Other (specify) _____ | | | |

15) Please choose one of the options below that describes best your economic situation you have at the moment in Canada.

- High (above \$60000 per year) Middle (Between \$20000 and \$60000 per year) Low (less than \$20000 per year)

Transnational Engagement and Integration

1) How often do you visit Ghana since migrating?

- Once a year More than once a year Other,

specify.....

2) Do you use media (TV, internet like forum and sites) from Ghana?

- Yes No

If yes: How often do you use them and can you name them?

- Daily Weekly Monthly Yearly

(Please list them here.....)

3) Are you a member of any organization (including political organizations or business association both in the origin and destination country)?

- Yes No

if yes: What kind of organization: _____

4) Do you belong to any social institution such as professional development training, job agencies that helps in integration?

- Yes No.

If yes what kind of organization _____

5) Do you remit money home?

- Yes No.

If yes, how often?

- Weekly biweekly monthly quarterly

other.....

If you do remit money, who do you remit money to? (You can select more than one option).

Parents Partner Sibling/s Friend/s other relatives other, specify.....

Housing and Social Networks

1) What type of dwelling do you currently live in?

- Single detached house
 - Semi-detached house
 - Townhouse/Row or terrace house
 - Low Rise apartment (less than 5 floors)
 - High Rise apartment (5 or more floors)
 - Other, specify
-

2) Are you a renter or home owner of this dwelling?

3) Through what means did you find this dwelling? (Please list the most applicable)

- Personal contacts Agents Reading/placing ads e.g. Kijiji
- Housing Corporation Social Assistance

4) Did you have any social contacts within this neighbourhood before moving here?

- No Yes

If yes, who did you know? _____

5) To what extent would you say that your social networks influenced your decision to settle in this neighbourhood?

- Played a role Sort of played a role Did not play a role

6) Did you have a pressing need (that is experience some form of situation) to find your house or home?

- Yes No

7) Did the price or rent of your house influence your decision in choosing it?

- Yes No

Immigration background

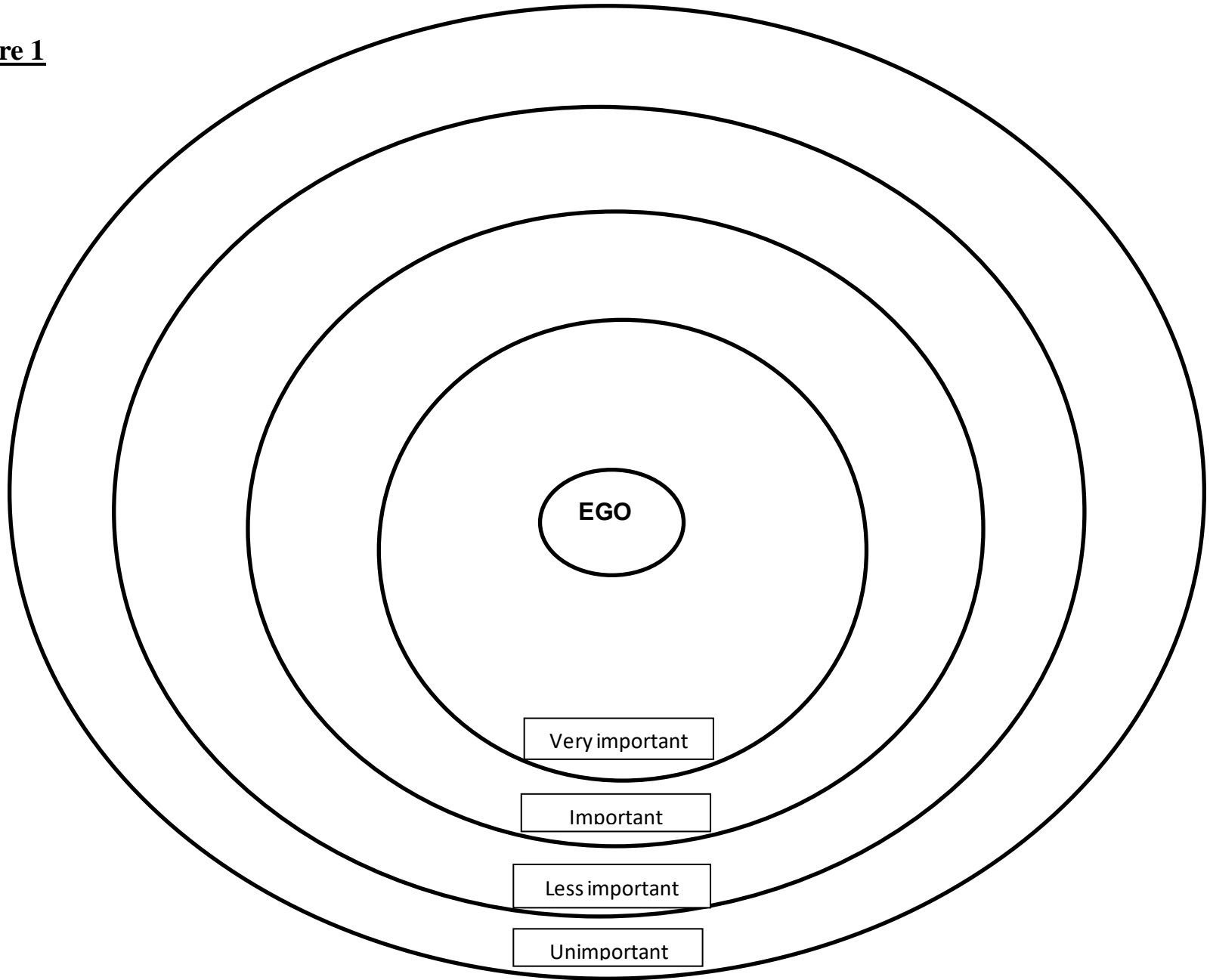
- 1) In what year did you arrive in Canada? (year and month)
- 2) What was your immigration status when you first arrived in Canada?
 Visitor Visa Student Refugee Family class immigrant Skilled worker/Permanent Residence Other, specify
- 3) Presently, what is your immigration status in Canada?
 Visitor Visa Student Refugee Landed/Permanent Citizen
 other, specify _____
- 4) What are your long-term plans regarding your stay in Canada?
 Stay in Canada Permanently Return to Ghana Don't Know/undecided other, specify.....
- 5) Do you think you have settled in well into your society/Canada with respect to jobs, cultural norms, etc?
 Yes No
If yes, how well have you settled into your society?
 Very settled sort of settled settled not settled

Composition of Personal Networks

Kindly provide a list of 20 people whom you have had contact within the past two years either through face to face interaction, text message, social media, email, who you can call on if need be (To answer this question, please see the next page). Please do well to list all twenty people since it help me calculate the size, efficacy, similarity and among other structural measures within your network. You can check your call log, go on any of social media sites to help you identify these individuals.

Please name the persons (using initials/code names) and place them according to their importance in the circle on the next page (Figure 1) and fill out their basic demographics in table 1.

Figure 1



| Initials/code name | Age | Gender F=Female M=Male | Nationality 1=Ghanaian 2 Canadian 3=Other (specify) | Highest level of Education 1=Primary 2=High School 3=University/College 4=Postgraduate | Where does this person live? 1=in Canada 2=in Ghana 3=in another country | How long has the person been in Canada (years) 1=less than 1 2=2 to 5 3=5 to 10 4= 10 yrs or more | Since when do you know this person? (years) 1=since 1 year and 2 years 2=since 3 and 5 years 3=more than 5 4=more than 10 | How often do you maintain contact with this person? 1=daily 2=weekly/biweekly 3=monthly 4=yearly | Who is this person? 1=Partner 2=Parent 3=Child 4=Brother/sister 5=Other relative 6=friend 7=Neighbor 8=Grandparents 9=Other e.g co-worker | How close are you to this person? 1= very close 2= sort of close 3 = not close | Where did the relationship start with this person? 1 = Ghana 2 = Canada 3 = other |
|--------------------|-----|------------------------------|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| 1. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 16. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19. | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20. | | | | | | | | | | | |

Evaluation of social support

We are interested in the ways in which friends and relatives help one another in all kinds of ways, during the integration process within Canada. For example, we are interested in knowing about how they assist you with money, items, information, advice, comfort, spiritual support or other tasks such as finding employment, caring for children, and among others.

From time to time most people need assistance varying from small tasks/favors to bigger ones. Who are the people with whom you usually exchange such assistance?

For each person you mentioned that is for example P1 for the first person, P2 for the second person in that order on your list above, please answer the following questions by writing in the number that applies.

Blank or 0 = No 1= yes

Q1. Within the past one year, have you got such assistances from these persons? Where P1, P2 refer to the first person, second person in that order on the list above

| | P1 | P2 | P3 | P4 | P5 | P6 | P7 | P8 | P9 | P10 | P11 | P12 | P13 | P14 | P15 | P16 | P17 | P18 | P19 | P20 |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Information on the labor market such as possible job openings or promotions for other person | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Information about career progression (such as specific courses, volunteering activities, etc) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Information on health care (doctor, medicine, insurance) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Information on legal status (e.g. visa/residence/work permits/naturalization) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Information on education | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Information about child/kids' education (such as summer program) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Advice about getting along with family members (such as marriage problems, raising children) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Practical | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Helping with household tasks (e.g. doing laundry, cooking, house cleaning, reconstruction) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Helping out in dealing with organizations, agencies, government (such as helping with an application for government benefits) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Helping with small services (such as driving person to hospital, groceries, errands, plowing snow, taking out mail, cutting lawn) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 11. Helping with a big service that might take a lot of time or effort (such as full day baby-sitting, keeping you company on a road trip) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Financial | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. Provided a small loan (less than \$500) at anytime | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13. Provided a large loan (more than \$500) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14. Provided a large loan purposely for a project such as mortgage or down payment | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. Enjoyed conversation about home country (talked about politics, soccer, etc) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16. Social daily interaction (such going for coffee, cinema) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17. Enjoyed a religious conversation (talked about church and other spiritual issues) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Emotional | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18. Provided emotional support during routine or minor upset (such as quarrel or some situation at work) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19. Provided emotional support during major crisis (death) or long-lasting problem (terminal illness/disability) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 20. Provided spiritual counsel (how to deal with a specific issue) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Q2. Within the past one year, have you provided such assistances to these persons? Where P1, P2 refer to the first person, second person in that order on the list above

| | P1 | P2 | P3 | P4 | P5 | P6 | P7 | P8 | P9 | P10 | P11 | P12 | P13 | P14 | P15 | P16 | P17 | P18 | P19 | P20 |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Information | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Information on the labor market such as possible job openings or promotions for other person | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Information about career progression (such as specific courses, volunteering activities, etc) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Information on health care (doctor, medicine, insurance) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Information on legal status (e.g. visa/residence/work permits/naturalization) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5. Information on education | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6. Information about child/kids' education (such as summer program) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7. Advice about getting along with family members (such as marriage problems, | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Practical | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 8. Helping with household tasks (e.g. doing laundry, cooking, house cleaning, reconstruction) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9. Helping out in dealing with organizations, agencies, government (such as helping with an application for government benefits) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 10. Helping with small services (such as driving person to hospital, groceries, errands, plowing snow, taking out mail, cutting lawn) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 11. Helping with a big service that might take a lot of time or effort (such as full day baby-sitting) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Financial | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12. Provided a small loan (less than \$500) at anytime | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13. Provided a large loan (more than \$500) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14. Provided a large loan purposely for a project such as mortgage or down payment | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Social | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15. Enjoyed conversation about home country (talked about politics, soccer, etc) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 16. Social daily interaction (such going for coffee, cinema) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17. Enjoyed a religious conversation (talked church and other spiritual issues) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Emotional | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 18. Provided emotional support during routine or minor upset (such as quarrel or some situation at work) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 19. Provided emotional support during major crisis (death) or long-lasting problem (terminal illness/disability) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 20. Provided spiritual counsel (how to deal with a specific issue) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Please enter the initials of members of your personal network into the table below and indicate **whether** in your opinion the selected persons know each other among themselves personally. For example, will Person 1 talk to Person 2 in your absence? Please write the applicable codes in the appropriate fields. It plays thereby no role, in which order you choose the persons.

Please fill in the blank in parentheses with the initials of the selected persons “**Person X (= _____) knows ____**”. Please fill all the **white cells** in the table below with **an appropriate code (0 or 1)**.

An example:

In case of Person A and Person B know each other, please indicate the initials of “Person A (= B.B.) knows____” and in the same line in the cell of Person B write in 1 (= they know each other). P1, P2, P3 refers to individuals you identified on the network sheet

Please do not write in the lower half of the table (shaded portion both black and grey).

0=don't know each other (meaning that they never met)

1= they know each other (meaning that they met each other and have a regular contact)

| | P 1 | P 2 | P 3 | P 4 | P 5 | P 6 | P 7 | P 8 | P 9 | P 10 | P 11 | P 12 | P 13 | P 14 | P 15 | P 16 | P 17 | P 18 | P 19 | P 20 |
|------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Person 1 (=___) knows | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Person 2 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Person 3 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Person 4 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Person 5 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Person 6 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Person 7 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Person 8 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Person 9 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Person 10 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Person 11 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
| Person 12 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | | |
| Person 13 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | | |
| Person 14 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | | |
| Person 15 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | |
| Person 16 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | |
| Person 17 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | |
| Person 18 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | |
| Person 19 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | |
| Person 20 (=___) knows | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |

Any comments? Please leave your email address or number if you would like to be contacted for an interview

Thank you very much for your time.

Contact Information:

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London, Canada N6A 5C2

Appendix E: In-Depth Interview Guide for Perceptions about the role of Personal Networks in the Integration Process

| Broad themes | Central question | Probes |
|---|--|---|
| Migration decision | | |
| | 1. Tell me about your migration experience from Ghana to Canada | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged in chain migration |
| | 2. What were the important considerations in your decision to migrate to Canada? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic, education, refugee. What were your migration goals |
| | 3. Given your experience now and looking back; how will you assess your migration decision? | |
| Role of Personal networks in the migration process | | |
| | 4. Which individuals did you discuss your decision to migrate with and how did they influence your decision? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends, colleagues, family |
| | 5. What specific role did they play in your migration? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided advice, information about travel, life in Canada, • Provided financial assistance for passport/visa processing or general upkeep • Spiritual counsel |
| | 6. Where or whom did you seek primary information or advice before embarking on your trip? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online sources, travel agent, middle men (connection-man) |
| Access to networks: Canadian and Ghanaian networks | | |
| | 7. How do you make friends in Canada? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you receive any help making friends? • Did you make friends at church, school, and work? • Was it difficult to make friends? |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| | 8. Who are the people in your networks? | |
| | 9. How different is it to make friends with Ghanaians compared to Canadians? Is the same process the same? Why and why not? | |
| | 10. Do you prefer one group of people to the other? | |
| Barriers to accessing networks | | |
| | 11. What are some barriers or challenges to joining Ghanaian networks? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there issues of conflicts, backbiting, envy, jealousy, mistrust, etc |
| | 12. Do these challenges deter you from joining such networks? Why and why not? | |
| | 13. Are there any barriers to joining networks that consists of Canadians? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there issues of racism, discrimination? |
| | 14. Do these challenges prevent you from joining such networks? Why and why not? | |
| | 15. Overall, have these barriers hindered your ability to integrate in some dimension? Why and why not? | |
| Support from personal networks | | |
| | 16. What type of support have you received from your networks? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informational, financial, housing, spiritual, etc |
| | 17. Are the variations with respect to the support you received from different individuals? Do support from co-ethnics vary from that of other immigrants? | |
| Perceptions about personal networks | | |
| | 18. Do you think you received adequate support from your personal networks? Why and why not? | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | | |
| | 19. Do you think the size (number of people in the network) of the network matter? What would be your preference that is large or small? Why and why not? | |
| | 20. Do you think how connected people are should matter in the network? Why and why not? | |
| | 21. Based on your experience thus far, would you say that personal networks are useful in the integration? Why and why not? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which category would you consider to be most beneficial that is those in religious organization, ethnic association, same occupation, etc? |
| | 22. Any other comments or suggestions? | |

Appendix F: Research Poster
Understanding immigrants in the integration process: a case study of Ghanaian immigrants in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA)

By Emmanuel K. Kyeremeh

An immigrant's network, which consists of friends, family, acquaintances and colleagues, contribute in diverse ways towards the immigrant's settlement and integration in the host society. This research therefore seeks to understand the role that these individuals play in the life of Ghanaian immigrants. Specifically, it examines how Ghanaians form ties, receive support such ties and the challenges they experience from such networks.

Are you 18 years and above?

Do you live in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (TCMA)?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above and would like to fill a survey and be interviewed for my Ph.D. research, please contact Emmanuel Kyeremeh:

Phone:

Email:

NB: There is no financial benefit or reward for participation in this research



Curriculum Vitae

Name: Emmanuel Kojo Kyeremeh

Post-secondary Education and Degrees: University of Ghana
Legon, Accra, Ghana
2006-2010 B.A. (Hons)

Center for Migration Studies
University of Ghana
Legon, Accra, Ghana
2010-2012 (M.A)

Brock University
St Catharines, Ontario, Canada
2013-2015 (M.A)

The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2016-2020 (PhD)

Honours and Awards: Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
2019-2021

Related Work Experience Sessional Lecturer
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
Summer 2020

Teaching Assistant
The university of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2016-2020

Summary of scholarship:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Published Refereed Journal Articles | 8 |
| Refereed Journal Articles under review | 8 |
| Conference Presentations | 18 |
| Invited Speaker/Lecturer | 3 |
| Invited Panelist | 2 |

Relevant Refereed Journal Publications:

Antabe, R., Kansanga, M., Sano, Y., **Kyeremeh, E.**, & Galaa, Y. (2020). Utilization of breast cancer screening in Kenya: what are the determinants? *BMC Health Services Research*, 20(1), 1-9.

Kyeremeh, E., Sano, Y., Antabe, R., Kwon, E., & Annor, B. O. H. (2020). Exploring the Intersection between Immigration and Gender in the Context of Troubled Sleep: Some Evidence from Canada. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 1-8.

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