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Conceptualizing Dynamics of Traders' Mobility

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Abstract

Conceptualizing mobility of traders is based on observatory, descriptive and explanatory adequacy required for any generalization or formulation of a theory. The present project approximates the requirements in its methodology, descriptions of its findings and in the explanations offered. Consequently, the conceptualization of the dynamics of the mobility and migration of internal and international traders, referred to simply as traders' mobility is presented in four main sections. One, traders' mobility is a super-ordinate of migration. Two, traders' mobility is an evolutionary process, with duration of stay changing from temporary to permanent stay and from being local to international mobility. The evolutionary processes bring out three distinctive features of traders, of effectiveness, economic strategy and individuality. Three, traders' mobility is socio-culturally determined, as apprenticeship, trading networks and places that are patronized within the country and internationally start off among an ethnic group, later extending to trans-national groups. And four, traders' mobility leads to the development of regulatory systems by marketing bodies and or governments, which affects the spatial and temporal behaviors of traders.

Key Words: Mobility, Migration, Effectiveness/Profitability, Economic Strategy, Individuality

Conceptualizing Dynamics of Traders' Mobility

1.0   Introduction

Migration theories and models have been concerned mainly with spatial mobility from one defined civil division to another and with moves that last at least six months (Adegbola, 1972; Adepoju, 1988; Afolayan, 2004). Consequently, spatial mobility of less duration has tended to be over-looked or passed-by. Nonetheless, there are some other forms of spatial mobility of significant proportion, which challenge the orthodox definition of migration, one of which is the spatial mobility of traders. The changes and massive level of occurrence of this mobility within and outside nations have sparked new scholarly interest. These form the premise for conceptualizing traders' mobility that derives from our project on "Dynamics of International and Internal Mobility and Migration of Traders in Nigeria" (Afolayan, et al, 2010).

The conceptualization of traders' mobility is based on the observatory, descriptive and explanatory adequacy required for any generalization or formulation of a theory. The present project has come close to these requirements in its methodology, descriptions of its findings and in the explanations it offered. While consenting to the fact that mobility of traders from place to place is immemorial, since trading involves the physical movement of traders as they transact their business, conceptualizing traders' mobility has not received adequate attention.

The records of migrant traders in Nigeria during three political eras, namely, pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence, focus less on the dynamics of the concept of mobility. No doubt, for both internal and international traders, mobility over space is the shared feature. Nonetheless, there were changes in the patterns, categories of international traders and of business links that they have at newly developing destination countries. Other important changes that affect their spatial and temporal patterns are political stability within and outside the country; many of which defy generalization (Afolayan, et al., 2008).

In addition, the rapid growth of urban centers has always provided the needed bigger catchment area within which traders could source customers for their goods, all things being equal. Equally, globalization draws an urban center towards the mainstream of events beyond the local environment. This is because it is an extension of commerce across traditional national boundaries. Consequently, urbanization and globalization processes provide a wider trajectory within which traders can source and disburse items of sale.

In other words, the traditional mobile nature of traders is heightened by forces generated by increasing attractive pull of urbanization and globalization, with the later transcending the local space. Consequently, the increasing dynamics of traders' mobility, in an urban space and in a globalized world has consequently influenced the processes, spatial and temporal patterns of traders' mobility.

In sum, the challenge that the situation posed has strengthened the inclusion of traders' spatial mobility within short and long-time duration in the conceptualization. Also, the conceptualization is aimed at capturing the underlying socio-cultural factors that facilitate traders' mobility. Consequently, three features of mobile traders, of effectiveness/profitability, economic strategy and individuality are considered as intervening variables for evaluating exogenous determinants, of urbanization, globalization, social networks and other factors in the decision making processes of mobile traders and for appreciating evolving spatial and temporal patterns of movement.

Therefore, the conceptualization is based on the main findings of a study of 728 traders (448 international and 280 internal) in four selected international markets in Lagos, Nigeria. Also, information was collected from 97 traders in focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews (IDI)s. Variables of interest include items of trade, destination(s) of purchase, frequency of mobility, length of stay, and social and economic networks facilitating business trips, among others.

The conceptualization is and is presented in four main sections, as: one, traders' mobility is a super-ordinate of migration; two, traders' mobility is an evolutionary process; three, traders' mobility is socio-culturally determined; in the sense that there is a linkage among an ethnic group towards trading which may later transcend cultural bounds, and four, traders' mobility brings about the development of regulatory systems, which invariably affect the spatial and temporal behaviors of mobile traders. The summary and implications form the concluding section.

1.1 Traders' mobility, a Super-ordinate of Migration

Trading is mobility over space and since it is the basic definition of migration, then mobility is a super-ordinate of migration; hence, traders' mobility encompasses migration, irrespective of duration of stay. By amending duration of stay, the study has extended the concept of migration.

In addition, re-defining migration captures the fact that mobility is for a purpose, such that minimum stay of six months is not the ingredient; rather, the principle is that once the goal is achieved, the trader makes a round-about turn for another business trip. The present study reveals majority of international traders

have their targets in terms of destinations, commodities to purchase and period to spend in destination country. Therefore, they are not to stay for too long because they are to meet the demand needs. This conceptual position manifests in the findings of traders' mobility from Lagos metropolis, in terms of frequency of moves and length of stay, among others.

1.1.1   Traders' Mobility, a Super-Ordinate of Migration - Frequency of Move

Fig 1.1 shows that international traders move forth and back the countries of destination two to three times a year. The figure shows over two-thirds (46.6%) of international traders had travelled twice outside Nigeria; followed by 25.7% per cent of those who moved once, while 10.8 and 6.5 per cent had moved thrice and four times. One tenth of them (10.3%) traveled based on circumstances and special cases.

Fig 1.1: Frequency of Travel for Business in the Last One Year by Category of Traders
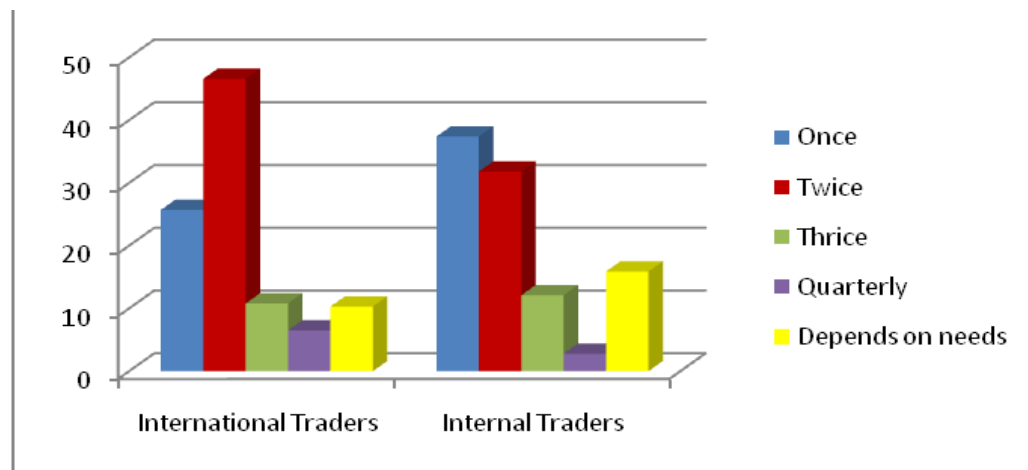
Source: Field Survey, 2009

Hence, the forth and back movements qualify the traders as mobile.

### 1.1.2   Traders' Mobility, a Super-Ordinate of Migration - Length of Stay

On the average, International traders spent 14 days in the host country before returning to Nigeria. Likewise, internal traders from Lagos spent on an average seven (7) days for business transaction within Nigeria. Furthermore, the overall average length of stay of international traders on their first trip is 17.11 days, as against 6.3 days for internal traders.

The duration of stay of mobile traders as indicated in Fig 1.2, shows majority of the international traders (41.5%) spent between 8 to 14 days on their first business trip outside Nigeria; followed by those who spent 1-7 days (28.5%), 15-30 days (26.7%) and just 3.3 per cent spent above 30 days in their first ever

trip outside Nigeria. Internal traders depict even shorter length of stay as 84.4 per cent of them spent 1-7 days on their first business trip within Nigeria.

However, Fig. 1.2 depicts a noticeable difference in the average length of stay of the traders among the four markets, as follows: ASPAMDA (20 days); Computer Village (20 days), Alaba Market (11 days) and Balogun Market (9 days). ANOVA test shows there is significant difference between length of stay among the markets, with F =1.287, df= 3 and at α= 0.278.

Fig 1.2: Average Length of Stay of First Business Trip by Market
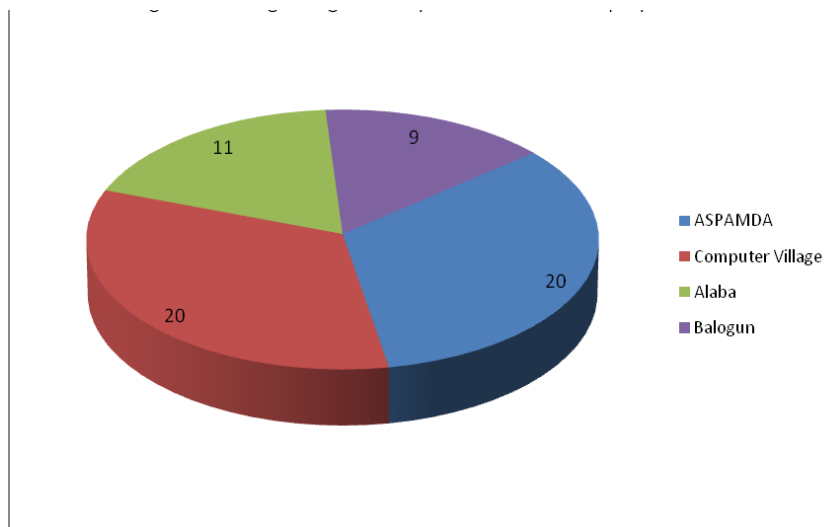
Source: Field-work, 2009

In essence, even though the study reveals very few of the international traders stayed more than 6 months, their trading activities across space, both within and outside Nigeria qualifies them as mobile traders. The traders' mobility depicts the three features of traders, in particular the effectiveness/profitability that underlines their spatial and temporal mobility patterns.

2.1   Traders' Mobility, an Evolutionary - Dynamic Process

Traders' mobility starts naturally as traders require relocation and moving between the source area or destination of the commodity traded in and the market. The trader mobility, therefore, evolves gradually by trading in commodities that are sourced and sold internally or locally, before changing or evolving into international mobilities to meet the need of the burgeoning population of the urban space.

2.1.1   The Model

Traders mobility is modeled as an evolutionary process as in Fig.1.3. The sets of exogenous factors are to the left-hand side of the diagram, economic, socio-political, urbanization and globalization factors. Urbanization and globalization are considered relevant determinants of the spatial and temporal patterns of traders' mobility than the usual determinants in classical and neo-classical models of labour migration (Ravenstein 1885; 1889; Lee, 1966; Todaro, 1969). Urbanization in this context refers to the influx of people from rural areas and other urban settings to the cities forming a large market demanding for goods and service. The demand, therefore, prompts some fragment of the population to move out and source for supply of the goods. Also, globalization concept means the processed information received through social networks and facts gathered on the Internet. The introduction of urbanization and globalization as determinants in the study aided our understanding of the spatial patterns that evolved, from destinations known to emergence of new ones.

In other words, already built into an urban center is the large stock of energy that drives human mobility. In the process of meeting the urban center's needs, there is the competition for scarce goods and services; thereby, generating the energy that drives the inflow of goods and services from outside the urban environment. The enhanced energies of the bourgeoning urban space finds a ready vehicle in traders who are driven to internal, urban destinations, to purchase commodities, goods and services in order to meet the needs of the urban population.

The intervening factors are in the middle of the diagram, covering mainly the tripartite factors of effectiveness or profitability of the movement, economic strategy, and individuality. The first covers the costs and benefits expected, which when discounted are measures in profitability or effectiveness of traders' mobility.

Costs taken into consideration often include the cost of transportation to the destination, cost of shipment of goods, tariffs, and cost of the product itself. Consequently, traders are attracted to and migrate to internal or international destinations, where their aspirations as economic persons are met, in the process of meeting the needs of the urban population and space.

The second distinctive feature is economic strategy, on which traders base their mobility behavior. Traders in deciding their destination of choice, sometimes tie it to the need to survive in the trade and business, which they have accepted as their occupation. In so doing, the migration decision making process, as to which destination the trader intends to move to, is premised on the urge to survive in the business and keep the business afloat, damning challenges they might encounter in the process of migration; thus, they carry out the trade transactions.

In addition, migrants could change into trading on discovering the attractions of trade in the destination area or other destination. The strategies may be towards enhancement or decrease of the articles of trade; the choice of location(s) to trade, the frequency and length of stay in the location(s). Some international traders could change their status, from being visitors, immigrants, or transit migrants to international traders, just to meet their aspirations of a better livelihood. Migration policy, treaties and or protocols and globalization are other externalities that influence which economic strategy traders adopt.

Individuality is another core factor in determining the destination to which the trader migrates. The choice to move or migrate to any destination is in the first place, that of the individual or trader involved in the process of migration. The item to trade in and destination to purchase such items is the trader's decision. This does not only influence the trajectory of movement but also the volume of the flow of traders. Individuality presents traders as capable individuals, who can take intelligent actions; protect their interests; expect and/or achieve a profitable venture. The individuality of traders is not premised on group action or regimented by a formal set-up as, traders could change or adjust their behavior in the best way they think fit, without any recourse to a formal authority. Their individuality depicts them as psychological, sociological and economic entities.

Fig. 1.3: Conceptualizing Mobility of Internal and International Traders
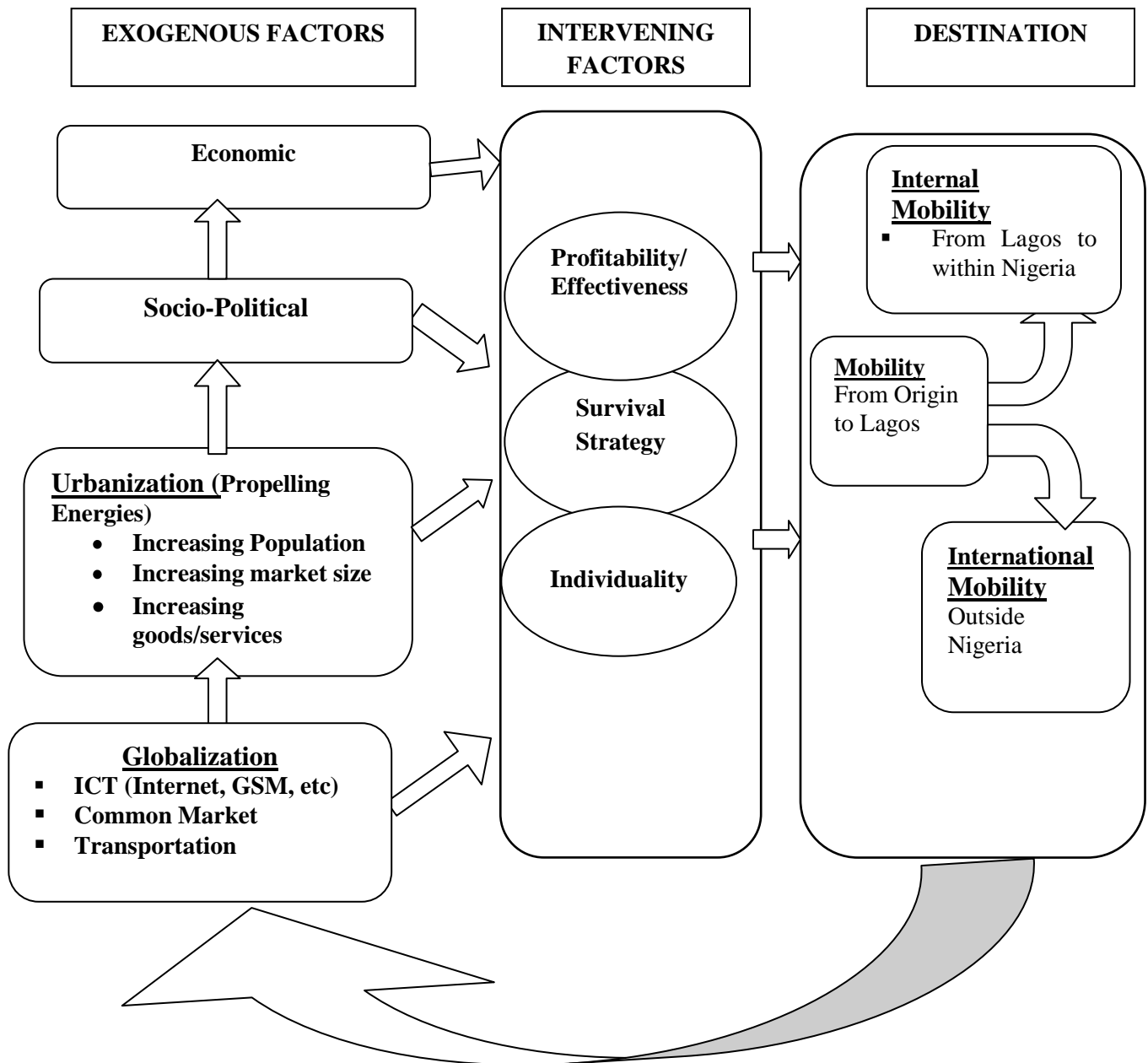
Source: **Afolayan; Ikwuyatum & Abejide, 2010**

In sum, internal and international traders base their decision to move on various reasons, and do so with different identities and varied strategies. In some other cases, they metamorphosed from being tourists, visitors, migrants in transits and or refugees/asylum seekers to become international mobile/migrant traders in the destination area, depending on circumstances dictating their actions. The heightened urban energies that drove the trader to move in the first instance and that made them choose the rapidly growing

urban destination have been further enhanced by globalization. Information about products and destinations are therefore at the reach of traders, by the grace of globalization.

In conclusion, the urban energies that build up under conditions of rapid urbanization and globalization are major determinants that come into play, as traders evaluate possible destinations in the light of their business-like nature, of profitability, economic strategy and individuality of actions. How inflexible is the borderline on the movement of traders? How do international traders surmount or reduce the effect of such political boundary? Answers to these questions are expected to lead to the examination of the social-networks of traders and how enabling they have been to the movement of international traders and operation of their business.

2.1.2   Internal Traders' Mobility Pattern

Fig 1.6 indicates the numerous places of origin from where 84 per cent of the traders migrated into Lagos. No doubt, the prominence of places in states in the south-eastern part of the country stand out clearly; followed distantly by those in the south-west and very few from north central states. The significance of the variation of place of birth shows that the data is the cosmopolitan nature of the markets and in turn, the metropolis.

Analysis of place of birth of all traders indicates majority of them (84.0%) were not born in Lagos, leaving very few (16.0%) as those that were born in Lagos. Fig 1.6 presents the same scenario, as 84.1 and 83.3 per cent respectively of the international and internal traders who were not born in Lagos. The figure clearly indicates the high level of in-migration of traders into Lagos over time, leaving less than one-eighth of the sample populations in each case as non-migrant traders.
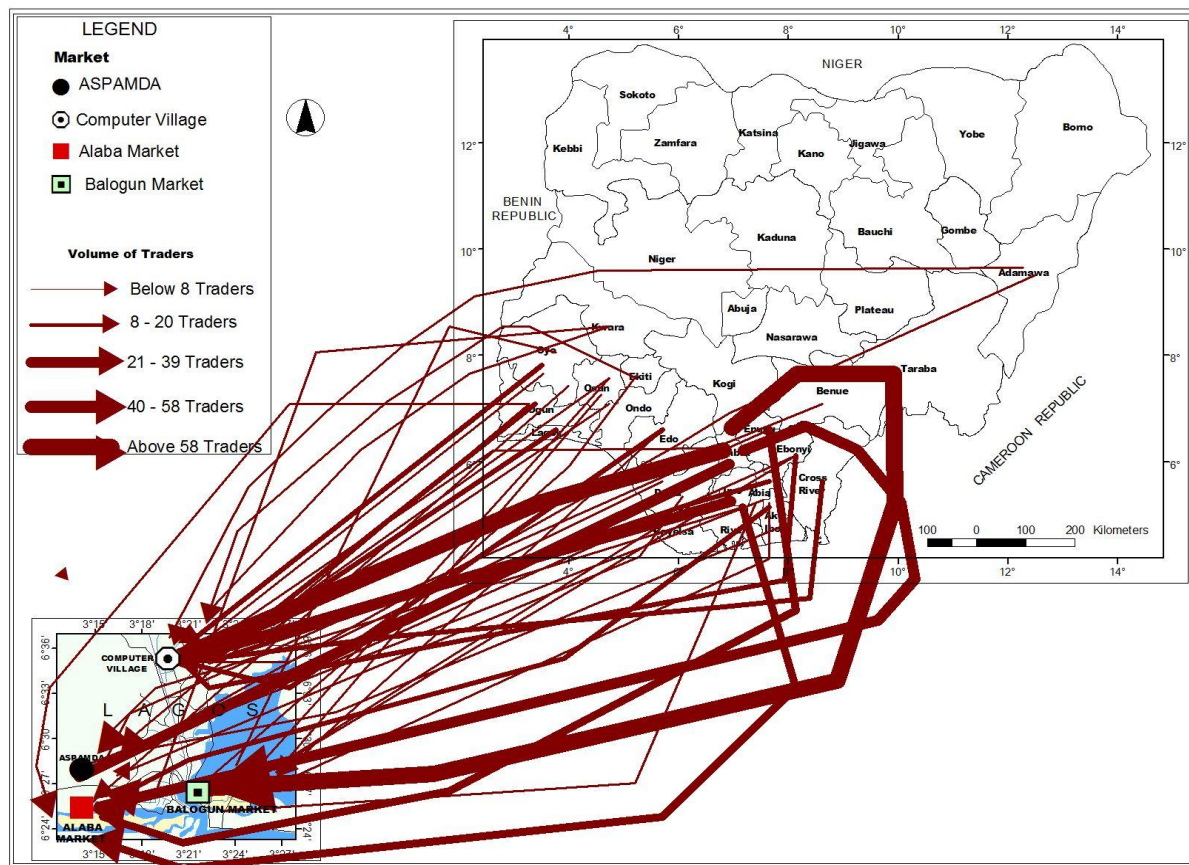
Fig 1.6: Place of Birth by Category of Traders
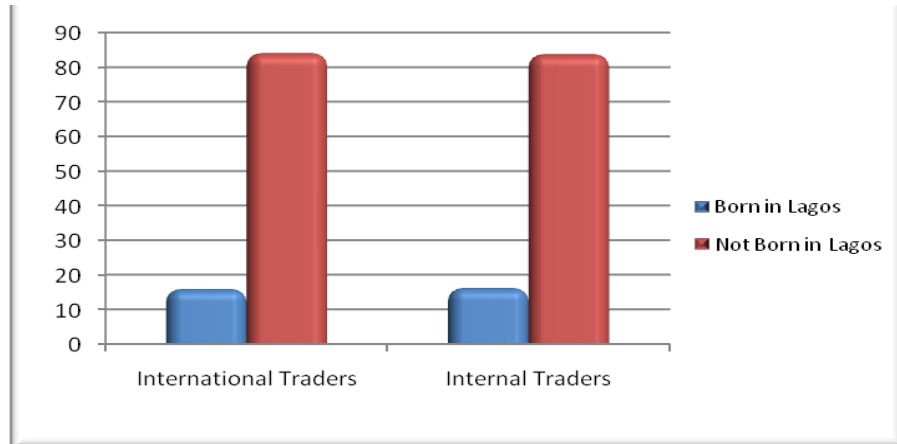
Source: Field Survey, 2009

Also, in each of the markets, traders not born in Lagos are in the majority. The situation is as follows: ASPAMDA (84.4%), Alaba (96.8%), Balogun (86.6%), and 77.3 per cent for the Computer Village.

Fig 1.7: Actual Places of Origin of Traders by Market

Source: Field Survey, 2009

The same scenario is obtained, based on the geo-political zone of place of origin of the traders. Fig. 1.7 and 1.8 depict majority of international and internal traders 78.9 and 81.2 per cent respectively are from the South-East geo-political zone of Nigeria; followed by South-West (10.9%; 11.6%), South-South (8.4%; 5.8%) and North-Central (1.8%; 1.4%).

Fig 1.8: Geo-political Zone of Place of Origin by Category of Traders
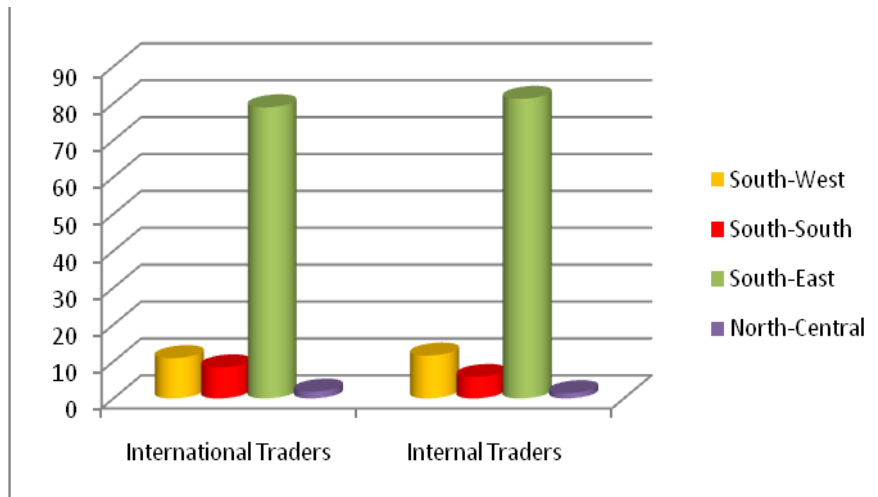
Source: Field Survey, 2009

Moreover, Fig 1.9 reveals traders from South-east geo-political zone are prominent in all the four markets, ASPAMDA (87.5%), Computer Village (71.1%), Alaba (93.3%) and Balogun (82.4%). The proportions for other zones are lower and quite varied. In ASPAMDA, the distribution is as follows: South-South (6.3%), South-West (4.7%) and North-Central (1.6%).

Fig 1.9: Geo-political Zone of Place of Origin of Traders by Market
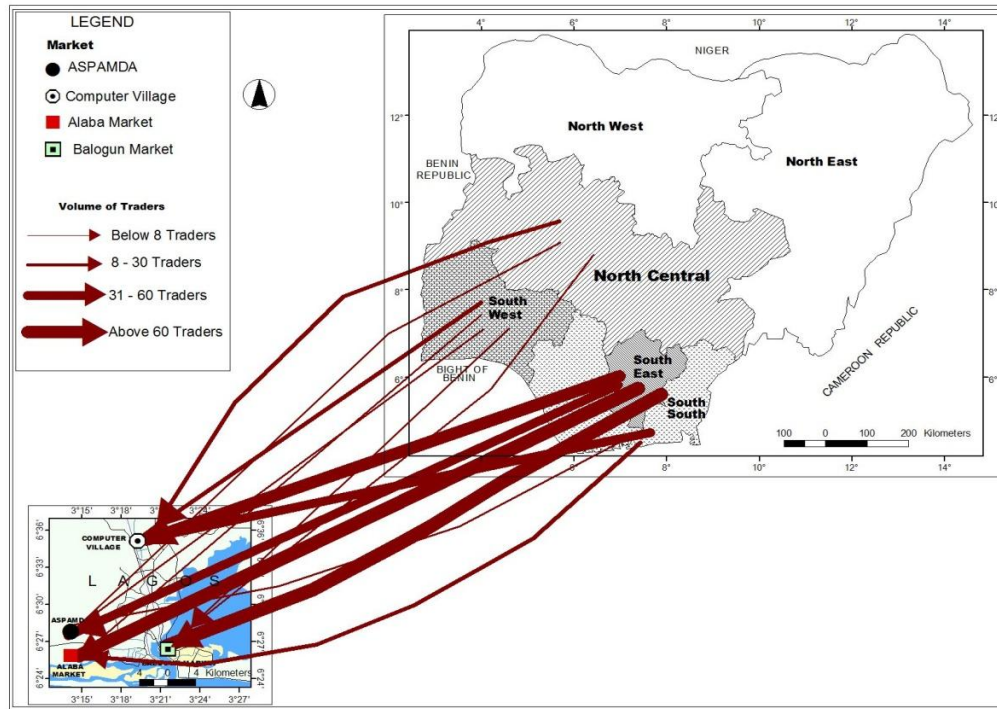
Source: Field Survey, 2009

On the other hand, the situation in Computer Village shows traders from South-West came second (17.6%); followed by those from South-South (8.5%) and North-Central (2.8%) zones. For Alaba market, the order is South-South (5.2%) and South-West (1.3%). For Balogun market, the other states that feature are South-West (8.8%), South-South (8.1%) and North-Central (0.7%).

Fig 1.10 indicates prominence of Anambra State, with 37.7 per cent of all the traders hailing from there and on basis of category of traders, with 37.3 and 38.4 per cent respectively of the international and internal traders. The next states of importance, for all traders, and for the two categories of international and internal traders are: Imo (22.9%; 24.4%; 20.3%), Abia (8.7%; 8.9%; 8.3%), Enugu (8.4%; 6.0%; 12.3%) and Ebonyi (3.3%; 3.6%; 2.9%) states. The other states trail behind but, of note is the very few percentages for traders whose state of origin is Lagos (3.3%; 3.3%; 2.9%), which indicates the very low level of traders that could be classified as non-migrants.

The Chi-square test further shows significant difference in places of origin of traders in all the four markets, with values, of χ^2=5.957, df =3, at α= 0.000 significant level. The places of origin of international and internal traders in all the four markets are, therefore, quite diverse.

13

Fig.1.10: Flows from Places of Origin into Lagos metropolis
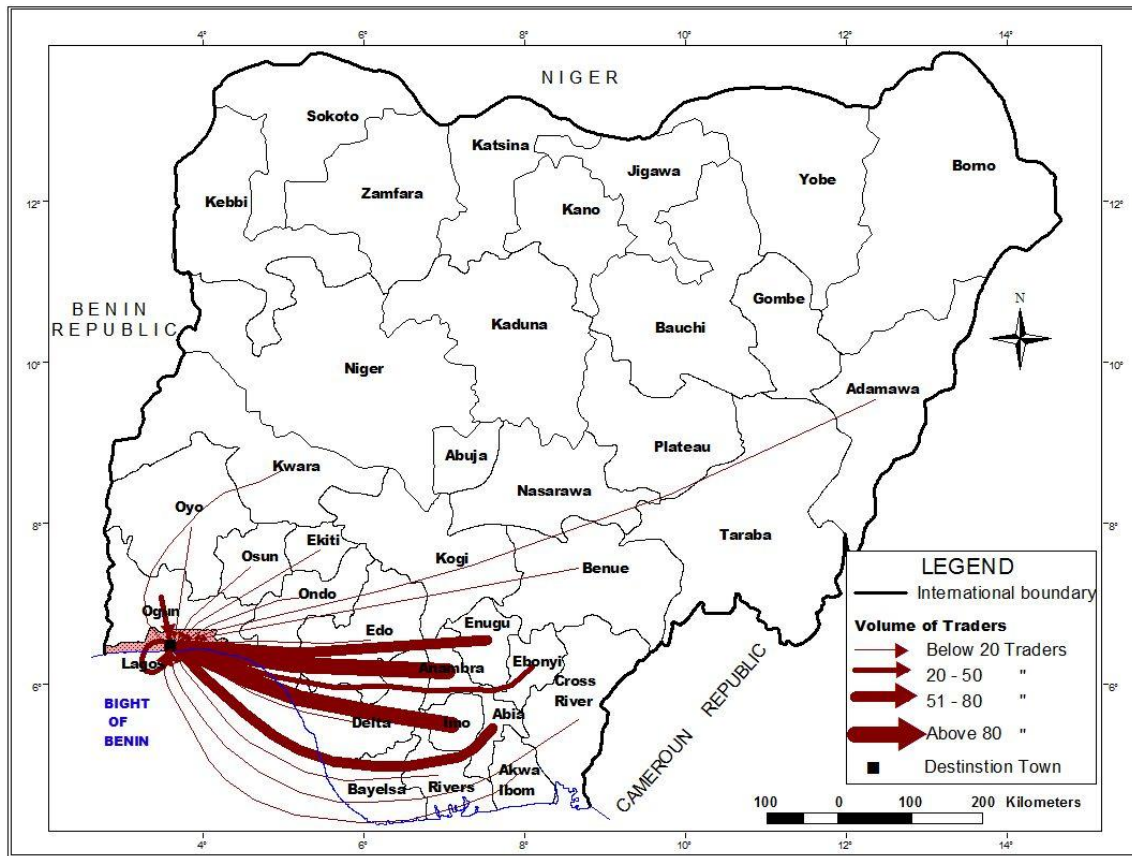
Source: Field Survey, 2009

Further breakdown of the data, as on Fig. 1.10, not only show prominence of states in South-East geo-political states, but variations in the order of importance in each of the four markets, as Anambra (60.9%), Imo (10.9%) and Abia (7.8%) and Enugu (6.3%) for ASPAMDA, as against Balogun markets that has traders from Anambra (51.5%), Imo (22.3%), Enugu (5.1%) and Abia (2.2%) states.

Alaba and Computer Village markets respectively have prominent traders from Anambra state (34.2%; 29.5%); other states are Imo and Abia, states (25.2%; 24.0%), while correspondingly traders from Enugu, and Ebonyi states (12.9%; 4.4% and 3.9%; 3.3%) feature more in both markets. Again, the Chi-square statistics, of χ^2=21.640, df =3, at α= 0.000 significant level shows a significant difference in the state of origin of traders in the four markets.

The reason for the high variation in percentages of both the international and internal traders from states within the South-East zone compared with those for the other three geo-political zones in the country is because of the special flair that people from the South-East zone have for business. Earlier writings have often referred to them as "Nigerian Jews", on basis of their business shrewdness. In addition, the people

from the zone are particularly interested or involved in the latest and fast moving imported goods and commodities, such as motor and machinery, automobile spare part, computers and accessories, GSM and accessories and imported wears, among others. Therefore, the data depict trading to be within certain states groupings.

2.1.3   International Traders' Mobility Pattern

The routes, to some extent, reveal the major destinations of the trips, while being mindful of the variations in the destinations. Fig 1.11 indicates that over half (53.4%) of international traders on their first business trip went to destinations in East Asia; followed by those who went to West Asia (23.7%), and distantly to Northern Europe (6.6%) and West Africa (6.4%), in that order of importance. South America destinations (0.3%) received the lowest volume of traders from Nigeria, while North America had 3.1 per cent.

Consequently, the pattern of the region of destination of traders on their first international business trip reflects the high volume of mobility of traders to the Asian sub-continent, as East Asia and West Asia destinations combined accounted for close to three-quarters (77.1%) of traders on their first trip outside Nigeria. Countries that feature prominently in the Asian sub-continent are China (129), Dubai (76), Japan (32) and Hong Kong (18). Others are United Arab Emirate (UAE) (6), Taiwan (8), Singapore (3), India (4), Thailand (4), Singapore (4), Spain and Italy each of which had one trader patronizing the country.

On the other hand, there exists a low level of business and trade transactions between Nigeria and Africa. In West Africa, Benin Republic and Ghana each with 9 traders, topped the list; followed by Algeria (3) and Zimbabwe, Cameroun and Sierra Leone, each had one trader patronizing the country. For Europe, Germany stands out, with 14 traders; followed by France (12) and Holland (2). Also, the United States of America featured to some extent, with nine (9) traders, while Brazil had just one trader.

In essence, the diverse destinations bring to the fore a new pattern that is quite different to the orthodox destinations in the literature. No doubt, this choice of destination by traders was based on the type of goods in vogue, the known places for their production, the profit maximization and least cost efforts of the traders, among others. Together, the factors served as the driving force behind traders' mobility between Nigeria and international destinations where business items were purchased.

Figure 1.11: Destination of International Traders: First Business Trip
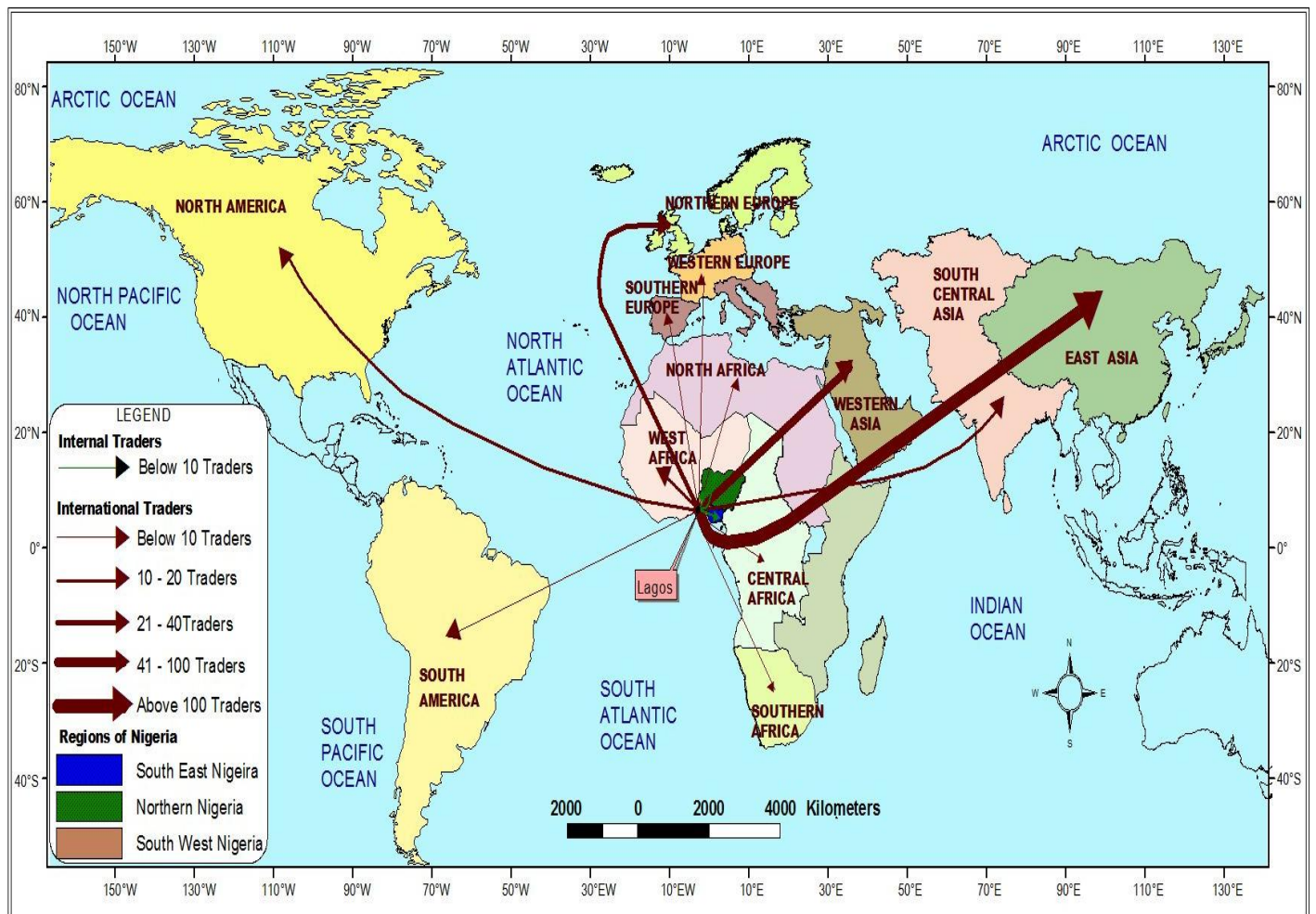
Source: Field-work, 2009

Also, the destination pattern of traders on their first international business trip differs by market as shown in Fig.1.12. About two- thirds of the traders that patronized East Asia (59.9%) were traders from Computer Village; followed by traders from Alaba (17.3%), Balogun (14.5%) and ASPAMDA (8.9%) markets.

Also, half of the relatively few traders that patronized destinations in South-Central Asia were from Alaba market and the remaining traders were from ASPAMDA (25%), Computer village (18.8%) and Balogun market (6.3%). On the other hand, all traders that patronized Western Europe were from Computer Village, and over half of the traders (55%), who went to Northern Europe, were from Computer Village; followed by traders from Alaba market (35%), ASPAMDA (5%) and Balogun (5%).

16

Fig 1.12: Destination of International Traders by Market on First Business Trip
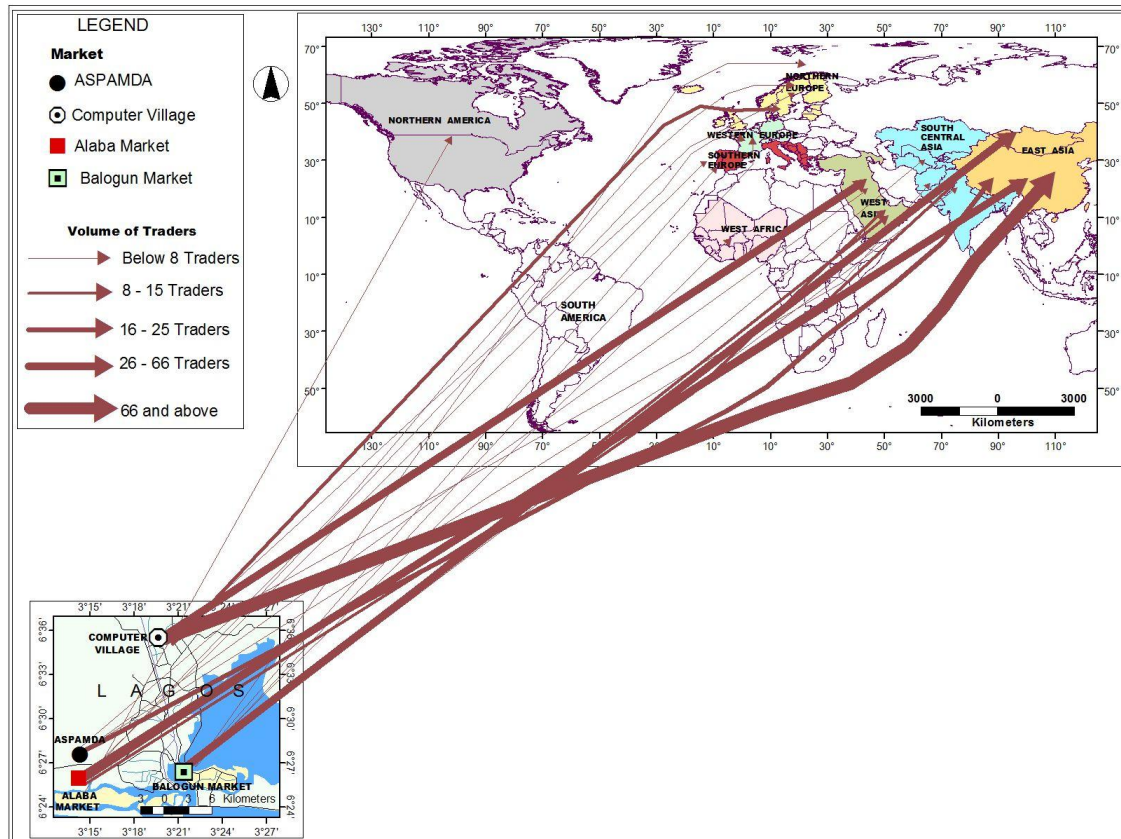
Source: Field-work, 2009

In addition, majority (66.7%) of the traders, who patronized southern Europe were from Balogun market, while the remaining traders were from Alaba market (33.3%). For West African countries, about three-quarters (69.6%) of traders were from Computer Village; followed by traders from Balogun (26.1%) and Alaba markets (4.3%).Also, four-fifths (80%) of traders that patronized North American destinations were from Computer village, while the remaining traders were from Alaba market (20%). In essence, traders in Computer Village patronized Asian countries most among the four markets. A Chi-square test for the first international trip reveals a significant difference in the destinations, with $\chi^2 = 450$, df = 6, and at a = significant level = 0.000.

3.1:   Trader Mobility is a Socio-Culturally Determined Phenomenon; Depicting Importance of Social Capital

3.1.1   Social Capital

Socio-cultural affinities influence traders' mobility behaviour, with particular reference to certain, ethnic groups. Socio-cultural affinities influence the type of commodity traded in, the social network, mobility

17

trajectories in terms of destination of sourcing commodities for sale and the process of evolution-dynamics of mobility pattern from internal to international destinations.

The Igbo of south-eastern states of Nigeria are known for their entrepreneurship and the existence of a highly developed apprenticeship system. The pattern of apprenticeship system in Igbo land, shaped traders' mobility through training and apprenticeship, which range between 3 to 5 years and depends on the agreement between the evolving trader and the master. The Igbo culture encourages the evolution of trader mobility behaviour internally and gradually across international destinations.

3.1.2   Social Networks

In the process, social and trade networks are established within the country and internationally which tend to determine the trajectory of mobility. The social networks are reflected in the development of trans-cultural linkages, such as links with agencies that facilitate business. Consequently, the behavior of individual traders is dependent on the prevailing circumstances they find themselves. The social network that results serves as a social capital in the choice of destination and insertion of the traders in their host communities.

Figure 1.4: Number of Relations of Traders in Destination Country
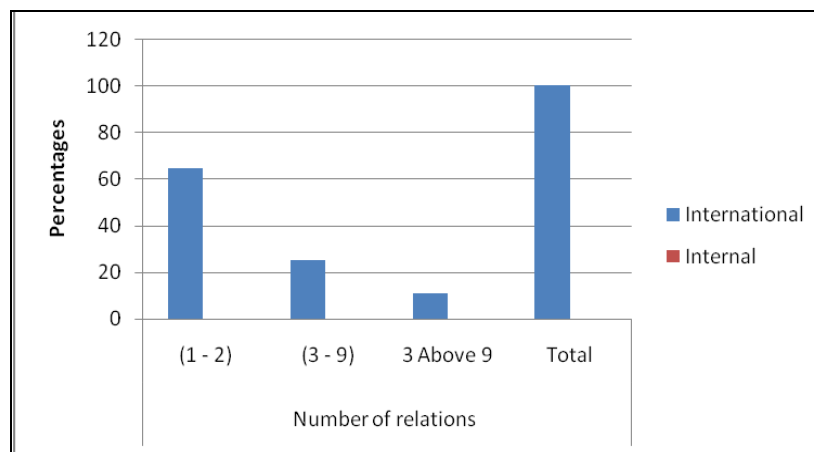
Source: Field-work, 2009

Also, there are variations in the minimum and maximum numbers of relatives for each of the markets: that is, they are 1 and 3 respectively for ASPAMDA, 1 and 10 for Computer Village; for Balogun market, 1 and 4 while for Alaba Market, 4 and 3 minimum and maximum numbers of relatives respectively. The presence of relatives, though few can be regarded as an incentive for the mobility of traders from Nigeria to destinations outside the country.

Figure 1.5: Number of Relation of Traders in Country of Destination by Market
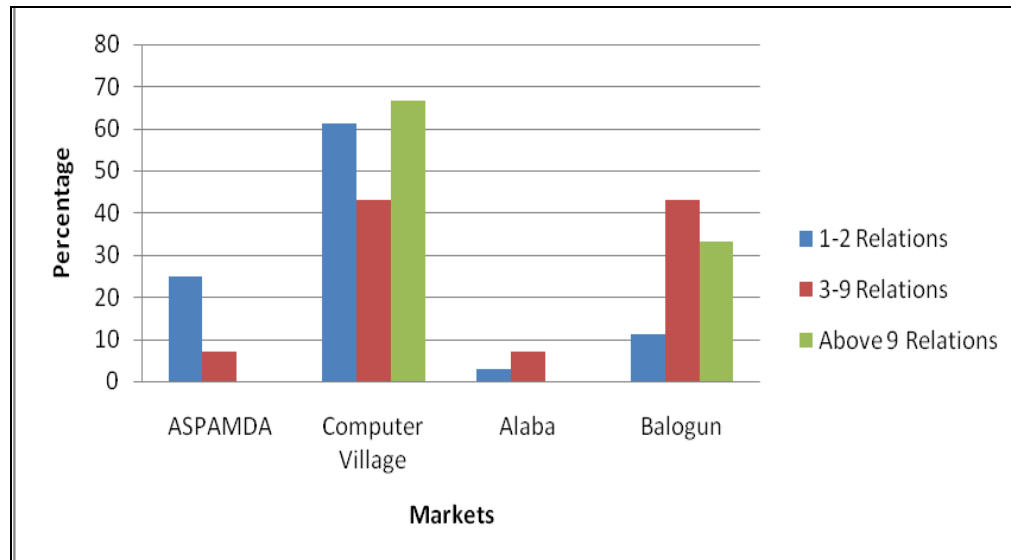
Source: Field-work, 2009

Findings from the study alludes to the socio-culturally driven nature of trader mobility, as reflected in the development of social network system, the establishment of socio-cultural communities like the Igbo communities in China among other south east Asian countries. The latter transcends social linkages and boils down on formalizing the informal sector.

The study reveals that majority of the international traders have one to two relations in country of destination before embarking on their first business trip, as indicated in Fig.1.4 The presence of relatives or kinsmen of traders in destination area is another measure of facilitators or social networks that aided first international business trip. Fig. 1.4 indicates majority (81.6%) of them had no relations, while the remaining 18.4 per cent had relations in the destination area. On the average, the international traders had in the destination countries three (3) relatives/kinsmen, with variations for ASPAMDA (2), Computer Village (3) Alaba (3) and Balogun markets (4).

4.0   Traders' Spatial Mobility and Temporal Behaviors: a Reflection of Regulatory Systems.

Traders' mobility patterns-spatial and temporal - are a function of the regulatory systems. The predominance of Asian bloc in the mobility of traders on their first international business trip of the traders can be explained by the fact that products from the Asian manufacturing countries tend to be

cheaper and accessible compared to those from the European region. Oruame (2008), for example, had nine points (itemized mine) why Dubai ruled Nigeria's computer market as of that date, as:

1. UAE of which is the major center,(United Arabs Emirates), EPZ has an almost zero custom duty
2. Has well supported infrastructure
3. The Government's promotion of Dubai as meeting point for ideas and industries- made it a strategic warehouse from vendors and their major partnership products and services to Africa and to the rest of the Arab World
4. PCs (Personal Computers), from Dubai continued to sell more than even what is on offer from the Nigerian Government – assisted PC mass acquisition program; tagged Computers for all Nigerian Initiative
5. Has several free zones- the largest being Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZ) in Dubai.
6. There was no taxation for many years
7. Has subsidized energy rates
8. Promotes full reparation of capital and profits and
9. Most brand name products are readily available (Dubai Exporters.Com)

About the same idea is portrayed by Gulf News, February 2004, as follows:

West Africa is traditionally dependent on imports from Europe and North Africa. However, thousand of West African traders, mostly from Nigeria and Ghana, have been using Dubai for some time as a source market for essential commodities. They found Dubai most convenient due to the city being an economic hub, in which they can buy the necessary items on a single trip.

Also, extracts from FGD and IDI buttress the prominence of the region, as:

There was a time when there was a boom, in that, if you settle some young boos with $5,000 you will see them going to Dubai the next day. People travel in order to expand their business. But because of economic recession you discover that the volume to exportation will drop, hence, those who travel are not many. Their number has reduced. I have been to United Kingdom but it is not a good business place (IDI, Computer Village).

The decision you take to go and buy in a particular place covers issues, such as, price, policies, etc that bring about change. Actually, what is there is that before I joined this very business, I was into motor cycle spare parts; later I was selling clothes and I went to Thailand in 1997 first time;

from there I went to Hong Kong. I came to Lagos in May 2003 and I joined this business of footwear. Do you understand? Since I joined it there are differences in items of trade: One time, I was trading adult shoes, which we mostly get it from Dubai and I used to go to Dubai. …Why I stopped going to Dubai is because of flight money, ticket, custom. To bring goods, the charge is very high. Andy they banned the goods, so if you are going there it is an illegal something. That is why I go back to canvas, sport wears and stopped going to Dubai. I started going to China because that is where you get cheap items. You get whatever you want and the flight ticket is cheap compared that for other places. You can easily get connections because if you go to China, many companies are there. And you can even get the connection here in Nigeria because they have some China people here, who you can have your business connection with. You give them sample of what you want they can import it for you. You deposit some certain amount of money with them and it would be expended based on the money you deposited (IDI, Footwear, Balogun Market).

Consequently, increasing number of traders from Nigeria tends to patronize Asia. In addition, the 'Asian Tigers' are involved in the manufacturing of variety of products, unlike destinations in Western Europe and North America, where there is immense specialization, with its attendant high cost. The quotes also bring out some challenges the traders are confronted with and economic strategies they employ, some of which reflect on dynamics of the spatial pattern.

The volume and frequency of the movement of traders to any destination, in particular international destinations, are tied to existing favorable conditions and policies: in terms of the existing immigration policy, political economic policy, peace and security and the rate of foreign exchange.

The experiences of international traders at immigration check points at source and destination centers on their first and latest international business trips vary but, in general, they were not too pleasant. It was found that virtually all the traders on the first (99.1%) and latest (98.8%) international business trips passed through immigration check points, while the remaining minority, 1.2 and 0.9 per cent respectively did not pass through immigration check points.

Also, international traders experiences are not too dissimilar at the two time-trips, as 66.4 and 68.per cent of them respectively indicated the experience was normal and interesting, while the remaining 33.6 and 19.2 per cent respectively indicated that their passage through immigration check point was horrible or

12.5 per that described the latest trip as 'long and boring'. There is no significant difference in the traders' experience at immigration check points during the two trips, with $\chi^2 = 11.2$, df = 8, at = 187 significant level.

In addition, the decrease in percentage from 33.4 to 19.2 per cent for traders who had a horrible experience on their first and latest trips respectively reflects the increasing civility of immigration official on both the Nigerian end and at major international border entry points.

In other words, the major pattern of traders that passed through immigration check points reflects that majority of them are engaged in legitimate business, which requires formal identification and genuine trade documents, such as visa and finances to carry out the business.

Nonetheless, the increasing security checks at all major international border entry routes is not unconnected with increasing concern against terrorism, which could have accounted for close to one-fifth of those that had horrible experience at immigration check point. To corroborate this, FGD and IDI conducted confirm the harassment and embarrassment meted out to traders at the immigration checkpoint, here in Nigeria and of destination countries, as:

The Nigerian image in the international community is quite embarrassing. So in most cases, even if you are a genuine business man, the moment you leave the shores of this country and flash your green-white-green passport, you are a suspect (IDI, ASPAMDA)

Traveling difficulties are numerous: clearing in the port, immigration and custom officers, et cetera. One encounter I will never forget was in 2006, October. I traveled for one Business Submit in Taiwan. On getting there, we were given a kind of police that followed us from International Airport down to Taipei. When we were doing the whole thing for about one week, the man was following everybody. To a point I was not myself again. Owing to previous experiences, his own idea was that when Nigerians go into another country, they don't like to leave. When you are being policed to the extent that when you are thirsty and want to drink water he would ask others to wait so he can follow you. It is a challenge in any country once you say you are a Nigerian (IDI, Balogun Market).

It was quite hectic with our immigration officers here; where did you get the visa, how did you get it, what do you want to go and do over there, and I had not learnt how to make transfer then

except cash and carry (the Nigerian way). So I carried a lot of cash around, and I was stopped, searched and questioned all the time for carrying a lot of money (IDI, Computer Village).

The transportation routes used by mobile traders also reflect their spatial mobility behaviour. The major mode of transportation for the first international business trip was by air, for 97.2 per cent of the traders. It is followed by land, or through official land border crossing (2.0%), by sea (0.9%) and by unofficial land border crossing points (0.3%).

Among the very few that traveled through informal land border routes, majority of them (66.7%) indicated the non-requirement of visa and passport for the trip they made, since it was 'within ECOWAS', while the remaining 33.3 per cent of the traders patronized non-official, informal border routes because in their own opinion 'it was cheaper and easier to pass through such routes than through official land border points'.

The political economic policies of origin and destination governments affect traders' calculation of level of profitability of their movement. Also, peace, security and political stability influence the migration decision making process, as destinations experiencing conflict and instability are avoided for destinations of peace, where security is assured. In addition, instability, in the foreign exchange rate between the local currency of the trader and the currency of the foreign destination contributes to profitability of traders' movement, as destinations with relative stability in foreign exchange rates are preferred.

At local level, market centers are being built by mobile traders, in order to stock and or display their goods. For instance, ASPAMDA, one of the selected four markets in the study and comparatively the biggest among them all in terms of size, was built by mobile traders. The initiative is sustained in the maintenance of the market and in the socio-cultural affinity of the marketers. This translates into the form of assistance they give each other, in particular for purchasing and ordering goods in bulk. Also, it affects the volume of traders involved in physically traveling out to international destinations, as just a few of them could go and see to the transactions.

Also, mobility has evoked the establishment of market associations in the markets by traders, of relatively similar commodities to foster cooperation in terms of pooling capital together to import goods and or give

support for easy clearing of goods in ports of entry, both within and outside the country. In sum the form of assistance the traders received and their affiliation with market associations are local enabling environments that aid their trading both within and outside the country.

Also, traders' mobility has facilitated different bilateral agreements between Nigeria and country of destination where business transactions are being done. And besides, free trade zones (FTZs) are being established in some states of the federation, in particular states with seaport and those that share boundary with another country. This has been facilitated by operation of mobile internal and international traders.

Moreover, the informal nature of trading is being transformed to formal by the mobility of traders in the course of globalization. Apart from traveling to international destinations, e-commerce is being adopted by traders for business transactions; goods are being traded via telecommunication and internet technologies, while money can be paid through e-banking operations and other electronic paying methods.

Nonetheless, negative regulatory systems of the governments of sending and receiving countries adversely affect traders' mobility. Also, inconsistencies in the government's policies, such as multiple taxations, high import duties and clearing delays are impediments to trading internally and internationally affect traders' mobility.

In addition, traders' mobility internationally has led to changing policies of most countries of destination on entry and exit. For instance, countries like the United Arabs Emirates (UAE) is said to have issued visas to traders with ease; had an almost zero custom duty, established free trade zones and imposed no taxation on goods exported for many years, among many other facilitators. All these have contributed to the influx of mobile traders in computers and GSM and accessories from Nigeria to purchase from and stay in Dubai.

Also, China, prior to this time, had similar policies; the government of the country operated open-market policy in which the borders of the country were opened for business transactions in exportation of cheap commodities. But of recent, the policy seems to be changing; visas are becoming very difficult to obtain by mobile traders and those with expired visas could not renew or extend it. As a result, international traders are either being detained or evicted even before the expiry of their stay.

In addition, regulatory systems in terms of immigration and economic policies constituted challenges for mobile traders on their first international business trip, which consequently influence their mobility behaviour. Traders on their first international business trip encountered a number of challenges. The greatest challenge encountered by traders on their first trip outside Nigeria was language barrier (36.4%); followed by fluctuating exchange rate (32.3%), bank charges (12.7%), separation from family members (9.7%) and multiple taxations (6.6%). The least was safety of destination or inadequate security (4.3%). Language barrier topped the list, in particular for traders that patronized Asian destinations. Traders in general seem to overcome language barrier, as they engaged Asian contact-fellows or agencies in destination area in subsequent trips. These contacts help in language translation and documentation of business transactions in the destination area. As Bodomo (2009) reported, the traders used calculator in communicating with the producers or sellers. Also, FGD and IDI reported that traders surmounted language barrier through the use of interpreters and calculators.

Moreover, the challenge of fluctuating exchange is more of a local or source region factor than that of the traders and trading associates in the destination area. Consequently, the business networks that develop between traders in Nigeria and their international counterpart tend to accommodate this challenge whenever it occurred. Almost the same scenario held for bank charges and multiple taxation, as these challenges seem to be passed on to goods that customers buy, in the form of scarcity of supply or higher prices. Bye and large the main challenge for traders on their first international business trip tended to have been eclipsed by existing favorable business environment in destination areas that enjoy the patronage of most traders. Therefore, destinations in East Asia were preferred.

Fig. 1.13: Major Challenges Encountered by Traders on First Business Trip by Markets
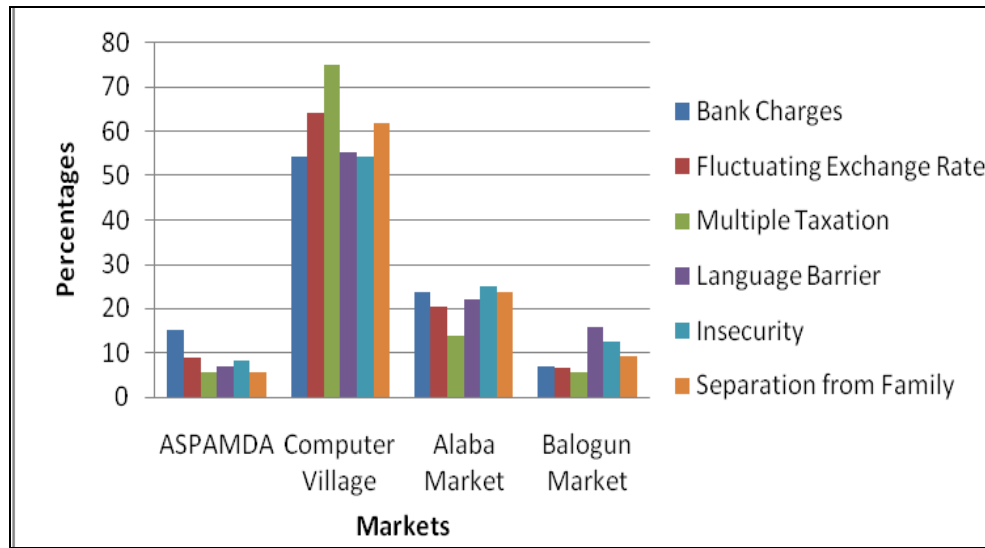
Source: Field-work, 2009

In more depth, Fig. 1.13 shows traders in Computer Village tended to have encountered greater challenges than traders in the other three markets. They recorded highest percentage for each of the challenges out of the overall number of traders that reported on each of the challenges. Traders in Alaba market came second; followed by those in ASPAMDA and Balogun markets.

5.0   Summary and Conclusion

The four concepts presented provide complimentary views of migration processes. By re-defining migration, traders' mobility has been seen as a super-ordinate of migration; thus, extending the orthodox definition of migration and the research frontier. The three features of traders' behavior, of profitability/effectiveness of their mobility, economic strategy and individualism assisted in examining their spatial and temporal behaviors across cultures, as explained values that exist outside individuals. In addition, the conceptualization is relevant across cultures, that is, it is applicable universally. Also, it is used to look at community-specific values. Nonetheless, the distinctive features of traders have to be further researched into, in particular how profitability affects choice of and change in destination, among others. Therefore, traders' spatial and temporal mobility will continue to feature in discourses on migration issues.

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