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Nigerian Immigrant Entrepreneurs in Contemporary Ghana: Insights on Locational/Sectoral Niches and Inter-Generational (Dis)Continuities

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Abstract Scholarship on immigrant entrepreneurship tends to focus on those in the developed world. In this paper, I attempt to shift the balance by focusing on Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in contemporary Ghana, specifically their locational and sectoral niches as well as inter-generational continuities and discontinuities. I do these by examining the outcomes of broad-based field work employing in-depth interviews and observations of these immigrant entrepreneurs in Accra - the capital, Kumasi—the second largest city after Accra, and Ashaiman—a sprawling sub-urban settlement. What emerges from analysis and discussion of empirical data is that, among other things, the activities of Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in contemporary Ghana reveal both old and new strands of sectoral participations, and the dynamics of locational and sectoral participations also evincing elements of precinctization (albeit incipient in form) and specialisation. Further, the nature of sectoral participation appears to embody shapes of continuity and discontinuity with those of their earlier generations in Ghana. These findings provide introductory glimpse to the unexplored phenomenon of Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurship in contemporary Ghana and further chart a way to compare to their predecessors.

Keywords Immigrant entrepreneurship · Locational/sectoral niches · Inter-generational (dis)continuities · Nigeria · Ghana

Introduction and Context

Recent review of immigrant entrepreneurship literature shows lack of focus on immigrant entrepreneurship activities in less developed countries (Aliaga-Isla and Rialp

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2013). Even before this review, Sepulveda et al. (2011: 470) had argued that 'much research on ethnic enterprise has concentrated on particularly well-established groups' like Koreans, Latinos, Chinese, and Indians, among others (see also Barret et al. 1996; Barrett and McEvoy 2013). Thus, the extant scholarly opus biases our attention to developed countries, mainly in North America (USA and Canada), in Europe (Netherlands, Germany, UK, Spain, etc) and in Oceania (Australia). For African immigrant entrepreneurship, the context for analysis has been in developed countries (Nwankwo 2005; Ekwulugo 2006; Jones et al. 2010; Ojo 2012; Ojo et al. 2013a, 2013b; Barrett and McEvoy 2013; Chacko 2015). For instance, Ekwulugo (2006) examined a decade ago, the development of black African SMEs (BASMEs) from five different African countries (Kenya, Sierra Leon, Uganda, Nigeria, and Botswana) in London building a four-point conceptual classification (Africa in Africa, African adopters, British born Africans and Johnny just come) based on their peculiar attitudes to business development. Recently, Barrett and McEvoy (2013) examined what they termed 'an emerging African business quarter amid urban decline' where, they argued, West African immigrant enterprises in the declining retail district of Moston Lane in north Manchester, UK appear, to have stabilised this retail district, albeit, temporal, and their activities helping to extend 'the commercial life' (food stores, hair and beauty salons, cafes, internet cafes and clothing shops) 'of buildings that might otherwise have become vacant' thereby giving some kind of life to this area (Barrett and McEvoy 2013: 288). When Africa has become the context for studying immigrant entrepreneurship, scholars have often focused on black African immigrants mainly from the southern African region in South Africa (Ojong 2005; Kalitanyi and Visser 2010; Crush et al. 2015; Grant and Thompson 2015; Khosa, and Kalitanyi 2015; Thompson and Grant 2015; Rogerson and Mushawemhuka 2015). The entrepreneurial activities of African immigrant entrepreneurs in African countries outside of South Africa remain unexplored. This paper attempts to make a modest contribution in that regard focusing on contemporary Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurship in Ghana.

Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurship, arguably, is the most researched when it comes to African/black immigrant groups. Their activities have been reported in a host of countries and geographical settings including the USA (Brettell and Alstatt 2007), UK (Ojo et al. 2013b; Ojo et al. 2013a; Ojo 2012; Nwankwo 2005), Greece (Antonopoulos et al. 2011b; Antonopoulos et al. 2011a) and Japan (Schans 2012), among others. They have transited from ethnic enclave to diaspora/transnational entrepreneurship (Ojo 2012), and even rationalise working outside the formal/legal system (Ojo et al. 2013a), including illicit activities like the counterfeit CD/DVD selling businesses in Patras, Greece (Antonopoulos et al. 2011b; Antonopoulos et al. 2011a) or, what Ojo et al. (2013a: 588) call the "fringes, grey 'twilight zone', or plain criminal areas" of market economy. There is also transnational relevance here as they operate transnationally (Vertovec 2003), leveraging dual opportunities by traversing entrepreneurial opportunity spaces linking their countries of origin (Nigeria) and country of residence (Barrett and McEvoy 2013; Schans 2012; Jones et al. 2010). Schans (2012: 81) has reported on the transnational stratagem for success in the so-called *container business* by Nigerians in Japan who buy second-hand cars, car parts as well as other kinds of items and ship them back home to sell.

Among other things, this paper contributes to the bourgeoning south-south migration, an important but less explored dimension of global migration dynamics—

presenting a different context where immigrant entrepreneurship has developed for a long time in Africa. It is a case of immigrant entrepreneurship development in a less developed economic context of Ghana with actors from a country (Nigeria) not poorer than Ghana. Key questions undergirding this study are as follows: What are the nature of entrepreneurial activities of these contemporary Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in Ghana? Where are they located? Do their activities (the nature of their entrepreneurial activities) depart from those of the earlier generations of Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in Ghana? In other words, have they started new forms of economic activities or they operate in the old forms of economic activities their predecessors did? Perhaps a better way to put this question is whether or not they represent new kinds of immigrant entrepreneurs. This study is in fulfilment of the admonishing by Aliaga-Isla and Rialp (2013:835) that future researchers consider 'new contexts' for studying immigrant entrepreneurship.

Theoretical Background

Recent Migration Mantra in Ghana

Ghana entered into democratic governance after the promulgation of the 1992 Constitution. Thus, the period from the early 1990s has seen surging inflows of immigrants into Ghana. This has led to increased discourse on immigrants in the country compared to the preceding decades of 1980s and 1970s. Explanation for these developments has drawn on the changing socio-economic and political circumstances of the country beginning from the mid-1960s (Antwi Bosiakoh 2009). The early 1990s was a continuation of the long years of socio-economic and political quagmire in Ghana which had its root in the 1970s. On January 13, 1972, Ghana's democratically elected Busia-led government was overthrown by the military strongman Colonel I. K. Acheampong and his National Liberation Council (NLC) and by the mid-1970s, a combination of factors including mounting balance of payment challenges and national debt, foreign exchange constraints, inflation drought, and political patronage, among other factors (Asamoa 1996; Songsore 2011) had made the Acheampong regime unpopular. From 1978 to 1993, Ghana had four different governments—three military (Supreme Military Council II by Lt. General Fred Akuffo from July 1978 – June 1979, Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings from June 1979–September 1979 and Provisional National Defence Council by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings from December 1981–January 1993) and one civilian government (People's National Party by Dr. Hilla Limann from September 1979–December 1981).

Therefore, throughout this period, the immigration question in Ghana was generally relegated to the background. The reason was not far-fetched. Immigrants had developed disinterest in what had become an unstable Ghana and by 1980, the immigrant component of the Ghanaian population had reduced to an all-time low of 3.9%, down from the 1960 figure of 12.3%. Ghana's economy was confronted with serious internal challenges including high inflation, unemployment, worsening balance of payment deficit and mounting national debts. On the political front, the situation was seriously unstable. The country was also confronted with unprecedented droughts in the 1970s

and 1980s with attendant famine and fire disasters. Thus, these periods in Ghana's migration history, replete with episodes of emigration especially to the more economically advanced western countries in North America, Europe, and elsewhere in Africa including South Africa and Nigeria (Awumbila et al. 2011; Manuh 2006; 2005; Peil 1995; Anarfi 1982), were difficult times for immigrants.

However, for the past two decades (1994–2015), an entirely new story line describes the country as Ghanaians have shown desire for democratic governance, leading to political stability and relative peace within the West African sub-region. The country's political system has shown stability since then. Six democratic elections have been held. The last two Presidential elections in 2008 and 2012 went into second rounds. Additionally, the results of the 2012 presidential election were challenged in a Supreme Court petition. The country's seventh set of presidential and parliamentary elections are scheduled for December 2016 to mark almost two and half decades of institutionalised multi-party democratic consolidation, what Lenhardt et al., (2015:11) refer to as 'golden age' of political practice. And while Ghana consolidated and 'walked' on her democratic credentials, much of the rest of West Africa was in political quandary. Two of Ghana's neighbours—Togo and Ivory Coast—for example, experienced turmoil. In addition, Liberia and Sierra Leone experienced protracted civil conflicts and Nigeria under military rule until the late 1990s.

An epi-phenomenon from these developments has been an increased migration into Ghana from the West African sub-region and elsewhere around the world. Essuman-Johnson (2006) whose work explores immigration to Ghana since the 1990s, argues that, immigrants have entered Ghana from across West Africa, the Middle East and Asia. West African immigrants have come from a cross section of the sub-region including Ivory Coast, Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Niger, Togo and Liberia. Middle Eastern immigrants in Ghana have come from Lebanon and from Asia, the nationality of the immigrants include India and Pakistan. In addition, Chinese nationals have over the past two decades or so entered Ghana for all manner of reasons (Teschner 2012; Marfaing and Thiel 2013; Hilson et al. 2014; Giese and Thiel 2015).

A key chorus in migration scholarship in Ghana the last two decades relates to the motivation paradox where in one stretch of breath, the 1990s, an extension of the 1980s saw the country battle one of the most difficult economic times in its history, leading to increased emigration of Ghanaians (Manuh 2001; Peil 1995; Anarfi et al. 2003; Antwi Bosiakoh 2009; Awumbila et al. 2011). And whilst Ghanaians deployed emigration as a strategy for dealing with the deteriorating economic and social conditions in Ghana (Manuh 2001: 19), immigrants increased their foothold in Ghana. The poor socio-economic situations in Ghana had set in motion, the country's biggest emigration stream in history but stability within the political sphere attracted immigrants mainly Africans (particularly West Africans) but also non-Africans (Essuman-Johnson 2006; Antwi Bosiakoh 2009), thereby placing Ghana in a dual location - simultaneously as a migrant receiving and migrant sending country.

A key component of Ghana's immigration stream originates from within West Africa with Nigeria as the dominant player, though the trend appears to show diversity (Fig. 1). Nigeria dominates not only in the stream of sub-regional/West African migration but also the general Ghanaian international migration (see for example Twum-Baah 2005). And while some studies have shed light on the multiple factors of political, economic and historical considerations as the basis for the motivations of

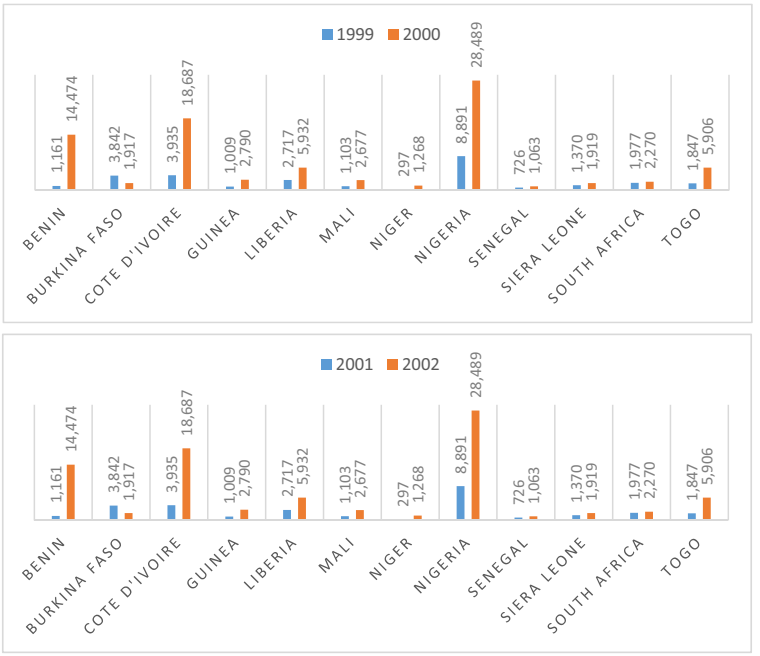

Fig. 1 Migrant arrival—1999–2002 (Twum-Baah, 2005: 59)

this recent migration to Ghana and the associational forms of these immigrants in Ghana, there is very little or no accounts at all on their enterprising activities in the country in recent times. This paper contributes in that direction by examining the locational/sectoral niches and continuities/discontinuities dynamics among contemporary Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in Ghana. The inter-generational dimension seeks to understand cases of conventional entrepreneurs following in the footsteps of their earlier counterparts and innovative ones who are charting new frontiers of entrepreneurial drives. While taking advantage of the ECOWAS protocol on free movement of persons and goods, these immigrants have been engaging in trade and related activities involving all manner of goods and items. Some of these e activities adrift from those of their fore-bearers, but others can be described in terms of continuity with their forbearers.

Perspective of Nigerian Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Ghana

Research on Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurship in Ghana and the broad participation of immigrants in economic activities in the country has a long history. While it is difficult to identify a particular point in history where this commenced, there is certainty that, long before formal incorporation of Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) and indeed other West African nationalities into colonial rule, various forms of migratory-related economic exchanges occurred to offset differences in natural resource endowments in different ecological zones (Davies 1966; Arhin 1979; Arhin 1980; Anquandah 1985; Massing 2000; Amenumey 2008; Kobo 2010). The process was mainly peripatetic but also involved settling from time to time in towns and villages as

well as on trade routes which led to the development of market centres for some of the products of exchange including the cola market centres identified by Goody (1954) and Arhin (1979) in Gbuipe, Kafaba, Umfaha, Yendi, Salaga, Kintampo and Attebubu, among others, as well as Bergo which served as the gold trade route and settlement for Muslim gold merchants (Clarke 1982).

Thus, in the precolonial era, immigrants including Hausa ethnics from Nigeria were attracted to Ghana mainly because of the products of the forest-savannah ecology - cola, and later gold and other minerals (Arhin 1979, 1980, 1991; Ntewusu 2011). Other economic goods at the time included asses, pack-oxen, mules, and horses (Meyer 1898; Arhin 1979) for carriage and transportation purposes. Thus, Hausa traders from Nigeria travelled eastwards to what was described as Ashanti and its hinterlands including such principal towns as Kumasi, Salaga, Yendi, Attebubu and Kintampo, among others. Bowdich (1819: 172) has pointed out that in the early nineteenth century, Salaga assumed the status of the 'grand market of the Gonja state' connected mainly to the cola trade at the time, and after the collapse of the Salaga market between 1875 and 1881, Kintampo took its place (Kirby 1884). In the process, Atebubu, a non-cola producing town at the time, also became a kola market town partly because, the chief of Atebubu (Atebubuhene) was able to effect a blockade of cola supplies enroute to Salaga from Ashanti, thus compelling cola traders to do business at Atebubu (Arhin 1970: 365).

Colonialism introduced new methods in agriculture and mining, making interest in other mineral resources, for example diamond and cash crops—such as cocoa and palm—to be pursued. These activities as well as the myriad of infrastructural development activities at the time - habour, rail works, roads and bridges, schools, hospitals, etc., required labour that was unavailable locally, thereby opening the way for immigrant labour from the West African sub-region including Nigeria to enter the country (Eades 1994; Peil, 1974). Others engaged in small-scale trading activities in beans, dried, salted and smoked fish, grains, tomatoes, yam, cigarette, matches, and herbs, in addition to those in retail and wholesale of manufactured goods including, the so-called Japan and European goods at the time (Eades 1994; Hill 1970; Peil, 1974). Jeremy Eades has reported about the handing over note read in Kumasi in 1931 in which it emerged that, 64 of stalls owned by government in Bawku market and 34 other stalls had been occupied by Nigerian traders (Eades 1994), mainly Yoruba and Hausa ethnics (Eades 1979, 1994; Hill 1970). Eades (1979:169) further observed that, the pattern for the development of these immigrant enterprises was for immigrants from the same town and even from the same compounds to cluster and build up businesses in a process of chain migration. This process utilised the traditional apprenticeship system where the migrant could call on the labour of junior relatives and others including friends and young community members when it suited them to learn and also provide their labour in the business. Many of these trading activities continued even after independence up until the late 1960s when Ghana promulgated its immigrant expulsion order to reduce the number of immigrants and by extension their participation and dominance in economic activities in the country (Peil 1974).

In their halcyon days, these immigrants, both men and women, were spread almost evenly across the length and breadth of Ghana. Commenting on this in the introduction to her seminal work on the occupations of migrants in Ghana, Hill (1970:1) remarked that, 'the women… spread evenly over the whole of Ghana… in every one of the 69

local authority areas (which existed in 1960)… to the degree that, a Ghanaian market-place might almost be defined as a concourse of buyers and sellers such that at least two or three of the sellers are Yoruba women'. Hill further observed that, the Yoruba men 'percolated deeply into the countryside, tapping a great variety of neglected economic opportunities' as they operated 'behind the scenes as collectors and processors of produce' because of their 'strong aversion to limitations imposed by wage-earning employment' (Hill 1970: 1).

In recent times, very little research on immigrant entrepreneurship has been conducted in Ghana even though in the past two decades, migration into the country has surged after plummeting in the 1970s and 1980s. This is a serious omission in immigrant entrepreneurship discourse giving the very crucial and perceptible roles of immigrants in various Ghanaian market places particularly in Accra and Kumasi, the two major cities in the country. A casual visit to such Ghanaian market places as Makola, UTC, and cow lane areas and Kwame Nkrumah Circle in Accra, as well as the PZ area of Adum-Kedjetia precinct and the Suame Magazine Auto Spare parts area in Kumasi show the ubiquitous presence of foreign business operatives in shops as both wholesalers and retailers in the Ghanaian market place. This is in addition to the various ethnic/immigrant restaurants and immigrant operated hotels and other enterprising activities in and around East Legon, particularly on the Lagos Avenue and elsewhere in other parts of the country. However, these enterprising activities of immigrants have largely missed the lenses of empirical study the past two decades and are therefore poorly understood. The result is that, literature on immigrants' enterprising activities in Ghana the past two decades shows just paltry cases of Lebaneses businesses in Accra (Marfo 2012) and Chinese immigrants' participation in the informal gold mining economy and trade-related activities in urban Ghana (Hilson et al. 2014; Marfaing and Thiel 2014). This paucity of knowledge therefore makes any policy formulation attempts in this area, not only difficult but also without empirical support, thus making this study relevant. The findings presented in this paper aims to provide exploratory glimpse to this unexplored phenomenon of Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurship in contemporary Ghana.

Data, Methods and Characteristics of the Sample

Data and Methods

This paper is based on qualitative fieldwork in three study sites in Ghana namely Accra, Kumasi and Ashaiman. Accra is the capital city of Ghana, Kumasi, the second largest city and Ashaiman, a sprawling sub-urban settlement. Both Accra and Ashaiman are located in the southern region of Greater Accra and Kumasi, in a 'terminal centrality that belie the conventional hierarchy of center, periphery and semi-periphery' (Clark 2003:87) in the Ashanti region. Together, Accra and Kumasi constitute the nerve-centre of economic activities in Ghana as Accra is home to the headquarters of major companies and organisations in the country, and Kumasi retaining itself as economic, political and cultural centrality Clark (2003: 87). Largely the cities of Accra and Kumasi serve as home to the largest number immigrants in Ghana (GSS 2013). Ashaiman on the other hand has in recent years become attractive to new immigrants

because of the presence of other migrants, both internal and international. As a sprawling sub-urban area in a peripheral location, Ashaiman also attracts Nigerian immigrants because it has a wide array of marginal suburbs, similar to those identified by Harvey and Brand in their 1974 study of spatial allocation of migrants in Accra including Nima, Mamobi, New Town, Kotobabi, Sabbon Zongo and Tudu and Fadama, among others (Harvey and Brand 1974). Additionally, Ashaiman's location makes it extremely important for many Nigerian immigrants as it is one of the likely places to settle on the way to Accra from the border town of Aflao. The narrative below is an example of how Ashaiman's location is important when it comes to Nigerian immigrants settling in Ghana. This quote, taken from interview with Achebe,[1] 32 years, who operates a CD and electricals shop at Ashaiman Traffic Light Area, typifies many of the observations made by the respondents who were recruited from that town:

Q: Why did you decide to set up your business in Ashaiman?

R: This was my first place when I came to Ghana. It was Ashaiman that I first stepped my feet on. This was the last stopping place for the car that brought me to Ghana. I didn't know any other place... not Accra, not Kumasi, not even Tema. I didn't know any other place. It was the first place I got to know... nowhere else except Ashiaman, that's why I set up my business here.

Thus, among other things, the selection of Accra, Kumasi and Ashaiman was based on the idea that, though this is a qualitative study based on limited sample, they provide an opportunity to paint a broader picture of Nigerian immigrants and their entrepreneurial activities in the country. These places are located in Greater Accra Region (Accra and Ashaiman) and Ashanti Region (Kumasi)—the regions in Ghana that serve as home to the largest number of immigrants (GSS 2013). According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census of Ghana, there were 600,049 foreign nationals in Ghana. Of these, 86% was African nationals with 68% from the regional economic bloc—the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (ibid: 206). A fifth (20.24%) of the total non-Ghanaian nationals was in the Greater Accra region, and 16.7% in the Ashanti region. Among the ECOWAS nationals (majority of them being Nigerians), more than a fifth (21%) of them was concentrated in the Greater Accra region and close to 15% in the Ashanti region. Further, personal observation of Nigerian immigrants in Ghana over the past 9 years and specifically their entrepreneurial activities for the past 4 years indicate that, the three research sites provide a good approximation of the Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurship in Ghana.

The data for this paper were generated as part of a 7-month field work from January to July 2015. A total of 41 Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in Ghana dispersed in different locations in Accra ($n = 17$), Kumasi ($n = 14$) and Ashaiman ($n = 10$) form the empirical basis of the paper (see Fig. 2). Each of these entrepreneurs was interviewed face-to-face in English and interviews recorded. The interviews lasted approximately 1 hour. Further to the interviews, the businesses were observed in the process and notes taken. Most of the entrepreneurs allowed pictures of their businesses to be taken. In selecting the entrepreneurs, I first drew on multiple entry points/contact cases to

[1] All real names have been changed to provide subject anonymity.

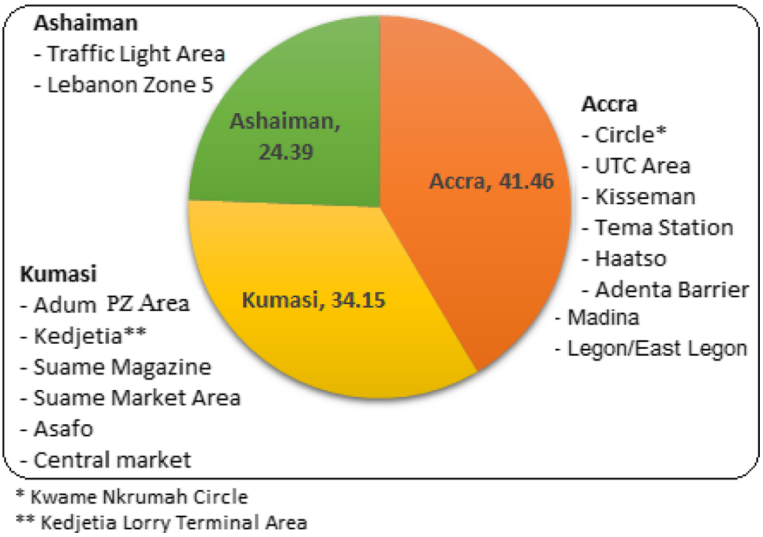

Fig. 2 Business locations

generate diverse cases of entrepreneurial activities immigrants pursue and further relied on referrals and trusted intermediaries (snowballing) to expand the sample. Giving this approach to sampling and recruitment, this paper does not make claim to representativeness. Majority of the interviews were conducted at the business premises of the entrepreneurs and were interrupted, in some cases by business transactions, and rather frequently, by noise from moving vehicles, generators (when there was light outs) and calls/shouts by some business operatives to attract customers. The procedures for this research met the requirements set out in the Australian National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007 – Updated March 2014) (the National Statement) and was approved by the Macquarie University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC (Human Sciences & Humanities))—Reference No: 5201400968—at its meeting on 28 November 2014.

Characteristics of Respondents

The characteristics of the entrepreneurs are presented in Table 1. Males overwhelmingly outnumber females, the proportion being 85% males to 15% females. In age terms, the oldest entrepreneur was 60 years, and the most noticeable feature of the age structure is the high concentration (83% of the entrepreneurs) in the 20–49-year age regime (the most active of all age groups). Within this active age group, majority of them were between the ages of 40–49. Almost a third of the sampled entrepreneurs ($n = 13$; all males) were in this age bracket. This supports empirical claims that, this age cohort has a high propensity to set up their own businesses (Henley 2005) because their ages put them ahead of others in terms of knowledge, work experience and better possibilities for capital acquisition. For the females, the majority (7%; $n = 3$) was in the 20–29 age cohort. Majority of the respondents (78%; $n = 32$) were married, and among those married, a further majority (66%; $n = 27$) were males. Among the unmarried entrepreneurs (22%; $n = 9$), one had been married before but was divorced at the time

Table 1 Summary demographic variables of Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs (% in brackets)

		Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Age	20–29	6(15)	3(7)	9(22)
	30–39	10(24)	2(5)	12(29)
	40–49	13(32)	–	13(32)
	50–59	5(12)	1(3)	6(15)
	60–69	1(2)	–	1(2)
	Total	*35(85)*	*6(15)*	*41(100)*
Marital status	Married	27(66)	5(12)	32(78)
	Single	8(19)	1(2)	9(22)
	Total	*35(85)*	*6(15)*	*41(100)*
Number of children	No child	7(17)	2(5)	9(22)
	1–2 children	14(34)	1(2.5)	15(37)
	3–4 children	11(27)	2(5)	13(32)
	5–6 children	3(7)	1(2.5)	4(9)
	Total	*35(85)*	*6(15)*	*41(100)*
Education	Basic (primary, JSS)	4(9.7)	–	4(9.7)
	Secondary (SSS, HSC, dropped out and completed)[21]	15(36.5)	2(4.8)	17(41.3)
	Post sec (O′ level, diploma)	5(12.2)	1(2.4)	6(14.6)
	Tertiary	8(19.5)	3(7.3)	11(26.8)
	N/A	3(7.3)	–	3(7.3)
	Total (*approx.*)	*35(85)*	*6(15)*	*41(100)*

of interview. Only one female indicated that she was single at the time of the interview, and further observed that she has a fiancée with whom she has been staying in Ghana. For the married females (12%; $n = 5$), only two of them came to Ghana on their own. One came 'on a business trip—and the rest with marriage-related reasons—to get married, and to join their husbands.

Also, majority of the study respondents (78%; $n = 32$) had at least one (1) child and the highest number of children for a single entrepreneur was six (6) for a 50-year-old female entrepreneur. For those with children, close to half of them (37%; $n = 15$) had 1–2 children and additional 32% ($n = 13$) with 3–4 children. Together, these two classifications (1–2 and 3–4) form the highest concentration of the number of children of Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs, accounting for 69%. Among those without children (22%; $n = 9$), two of them were young females, both of them 28 years, one single and the other recently married. Table 1 further shows that, more than one-quarter (26.8%) of the Nigerian entrepreneurs in Ghana have tertiary education with females more likely than males to have tertiary education. Additionally, about 15% of the entrepreneurs have post-secondary level education. The highest concentration however was within the secondary level (SSS, HSC, dropped out and completed). All the entrepreneurs were in the small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) category with employees ranging from one to a maximum of ten (only one of the 41

enterprises—a laundry business located at East Legon in Accra—had 10 employees) even though many of them plan to expand their businesses and eventually increase the number of employees.

Results

Duration of Stay of Entrepreneurs in Ghana

Duration of stay, a proxy for year of arrival in Ghana shows that all the entrepreneurs arrived in Ghana from 1990 onwards. And though all the entrepreneurs came to Ghana in the past 25 years, majority of them (37%; n = 15) came in the last 5 years (2010 = 2015) and about a quarter (22%; n = 9) of them from between 6 and 10 years. Together, they constitute about 60% of the entrepreneurs operating in the three locations of Accra, Kumasi and Ashaiman. Additionally, I identify a total of 41% (n = 17) of the entrepreneurs who have been in the country for the longest period of time from 11 to 25 years inclusive. Analysis of the arrival years of the entrepreneurs correspond with the period of democratic development in Ghana. This was the period when Nigeria was under the military rule of General Sani Abacha. It was not until his death in 1998 that a democratic pathway was charted and in May 1999, the democratically elected Olusegun Obasanjo took office as President of Nigeria. In the 2000–2001 census of Nigeria, 5% of Nigerians outside the country were said to be resident in Ghana (Mberu and Pongou 2010). The political stability in Ghana since the early 1990s and the associated peace had thus been key factors of attraction for Nigerian immigrants into the country and in staying in Ghana, these immigrants took to entrepreneurial activities.

Thus, the data shows most entrepreneurs have stayed in Ghana for a long time. This long duration of stay is of key importance for them, not least for setting up and running their businesses in the country. This has led to the acquisition of Ghanaian-specific contextual knowledge for setting up and running businesses. On this point, many entrepreneurs noted their familiarity with the Ghanaian terrain, particularly the informal features on the Ghanaian market place as well as other social and cultural capitals which implicate the prospects for mobilising resources not only to set up businesses, but also run and expand them in the country. One key evidence on this point is in the competence levels of the entrepreneurs in the major Ghanaian language, the Twi, for communication. For majority of the Ghanaian populace, the Twi language is the medium of communication. This is even more the case in the market places where many of the businesses are located. Business owners' proficiency in this language is therefore a key requirement for meaningful participation in the Ghanaian market operations, and this is something the entrepreneurs know very well and avail themselves to. Thus, all but one of the business owners have learnt to speak the Twi language to some degree, ranging from extreme fluency to those whose competencies do not go beyond calling out and negotiating prices.

Locational/Sectoral Niches

Accra, Kumasi and Ashaiman were the three macro-level business locations. In each of these locations, I identified multiple micro-level locations (Fig. 2) as well as different

levels of sectoral concentrations. In Accra, the businesses were identified in Adenta, Madina, Haatso, Kisseman, University of Ghana, Legon, East Legon, Tema Station in Accra Central, UTC, and Kwame Nkrumah Circle. Similarly, in Kumasi, the Nigerian enterprises were identified within the Adum-Kedjetia business precinct particularly in the PZ and Kedjetia terminal areas, Asafo, Kumasi Central market, Suame Magazine area and its surroundings including the Suame market area. The Ashaiman respondents were mainly concentrated at the Ashaiman Traffic Light Area around the main Ashaiman Lorry Station.

The locations of the Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs show four (4) areas of high concentrations, namely the Kwame Nkrumah Circle area in Accra, Adum PZ-Kedjetia business precinct (Adum PZ and Kedjetia) and Suame Area (Suame Magazine and Suame Market Area) in Kumasi and Ashaiman Traffic Light Area in Ashaiman (Fig. 3). The Adum PZ Area and Kedjetia are only separated by road and they together form arguably, Kumasi's largest business enclave. Also, the Suame Magazine and Suame Market Area are all within the Suame Area/suburb. These business locations were also identified as clusters for different economic activities (to be discussed later). Respondents gave various narratives to demonstrate their numbers and concentration within the specific locational areas of their operation. Abiola is a 50-year-old Nigerian man operating phone/IT accessories business at Tiptoe Lane, Kwame Nkrumah Circle in Accra. He has been doing this for the past 3 years and is a member of the local business association for Nigerians. He observed as follows:

'Here at Tiptoe Lane, Kwame Nkrumah Circle, there are more than 300 Nigerian business operatives. We have an association that meets regularly with about 200 people who have registered and others who have not registered for the association. So yes we are many here. Almost all the shops on this particular lane are owned by Nigerians, so yes we are many here. There are only two Ghanaians on this lane for example'.

Thus, in the Tiptoe Lane Area in Kwame Nkrumah Circle, Accra, but also in the other places of locational concentration (for example Adum PZ area in Kumasi), the Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs were observed to have become important element of

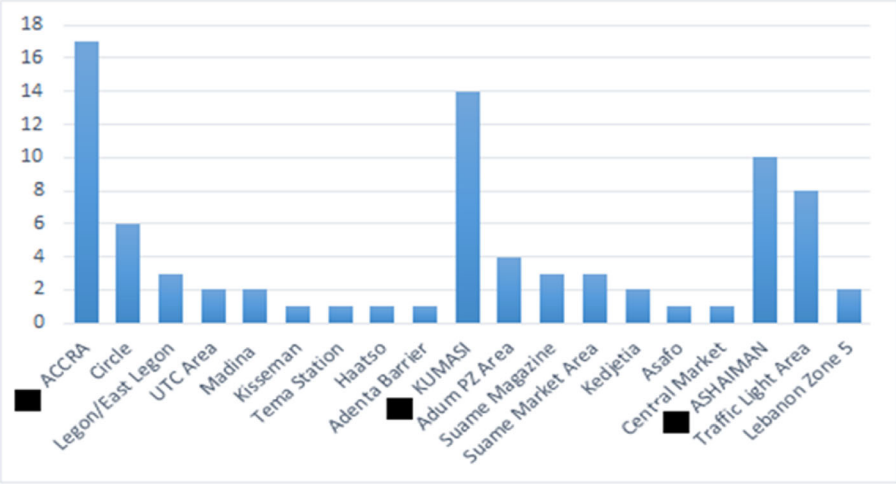

Fig. 3 Locational concentration of entrepreneurs

the changing dynamics of the economic processes and social geography—an accepted part of the landscape of these enclaves. In this respect, the findings from this sample parallel the cases described by Kalitanyi and Visser (2010) and Moyo (2014) about black African immigrant entrepreneurs in Johannesburg, South Africa. They are engaged in the deployment of diverse networking strategies, sometimes commingling in form and generally informal, wormholing and snowballing in characteristics to reinforce their concentration in the places of their operation. Partly as a result of these operational strategies, but also their locational and sectoral concentrations, the areas of operation of these immigrant entrepreneurs have become vortexes attracting other micro-level entrepreneurs both from places near and around as well as from far off places in the regions, districts, towns and villages across the length and breadth of Ghana. Indeed, there were narratives to suggest some micro-level entrepreneurs from places as far off as Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso also come to these places. To this end, the activities of the entrepreneurs appear to produce what may be described as a nascent immigrant business precinct.

Figure 4 shows diversity in the range of sectoral activities pursued by Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in Ghana. Majority of them are in the phone and IT-related accessories (29.2%; $n = 12$), food-related activities (17.1%; $n = 7$) and auto mobile spare parts activities (15%; $n = 6$). Generally, the entrepreneurs were engaged in activities that encompassed retailing or selling of one thing or the other—food and foodstuffs, auto mobile spare parts, phone and IT-related accessories, watches, electrical and electronic items, as well as tailoring and shoe-making accessories. A few of the businesses (in phone-accessories, auto mobile spare parts and watches), however, were into wholesale and were typically at the interface of import and supply. However, almost all the trading entrepreneurs were conceptually at the borderland location of retail and wholesale bearing simultaneously some characteristics of retail trade and wholesale trade, though they did not have the full complements of any of them. In this way, the entrepreneurs defied the conventional notions of retail and wholesale and found themselves in a quandary/frictional situation in relation to their identities. They were neither completely fish (retail) nor completely fowl (wholesale), and thus provided nuanced understanding better captured in borderland location term (Lindemann 2005). Two of the entrepreneurs were also involved in laundry services with identified outlying areas of economic activities including the second-hand bag/luggage mending, the glass/photo framing, event management and scrap businesses.

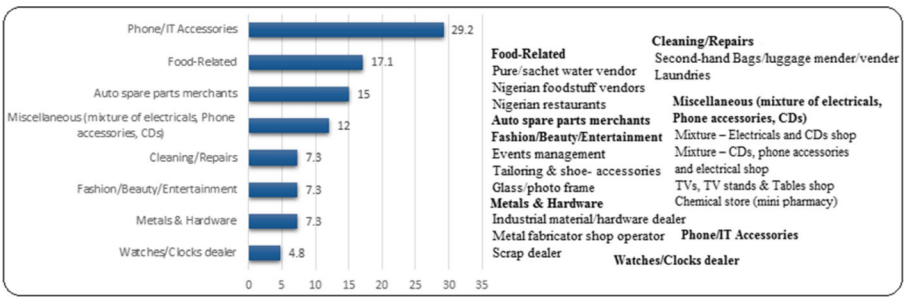

Fig. 4 Sectoral niches/composition of Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs

Pattern of specific business activities clustered at specific business locations are also discernible (Fig. 5). Almost all the phone accessories and IT-related activities were in Accra and Kumasi. The Kwame Nkrumah Circle in Accra and the Adum PZ/Kedjetia Area in Kumasi were the hubs for these activities. All the entrepreneurs in these business activities in Accra were located in the Kwame Nkrumah Circle area and those in Kumasi were in the Adum PZ/Kedjetia Area. Similarly, all the auto mobile spare parts businesses were in Kumasi (Suame Magazine) and Ashaiman (Traffic Light Area). Thus, the locational concentration discussed earlier and the sectoral concentrations discussed here, together evince elements of precinctization, albeit incipient in form, and specialisation.

Inter-Generational (Dis)Continuities

The preceding sections shed light on the duration of stay of the entrepreneurs in Ghana as well as their locational/sectoral niches in the Ghanaian market place. The evidence suggests that the entrepreneurs are engaged in diverse/range of business activities related to food, auto mobile spare parts, fashion/beauty/entertainment, metal and hardwares, cleaning and repairs and phone/IT accessories, among others. On this point, perhaps, Steven Vertovec's (2007) argument that immigrants have become more diverse, if not 'super-diverse' in their characteristics appears to apply to the Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs with regards to the nature of the businesses they are involved in Ghana. The nature of the business activities further demonstrates elements of continuities and discontinuities with those of earlier generations of Nigerians in Ghana (Table 2). As shown in the earlier studies, the business/entrepreneurial activities of Nigerian immigrants in precolonial Ghana involved trading in cola nuts, gold, asses, pack-oxen, mules, and horses (Meyer 1898; Goody 1954; Mabogunje 1968; Arhin 1979, 1980; Amenumey 2008; Ntewusu 2011). In the early stage of the colonial era, the extant work shows that migrants took to labour work in mines, cocoa farms and construction sites and then to self-employment/entrepreneurial activities in the last few decades before independence

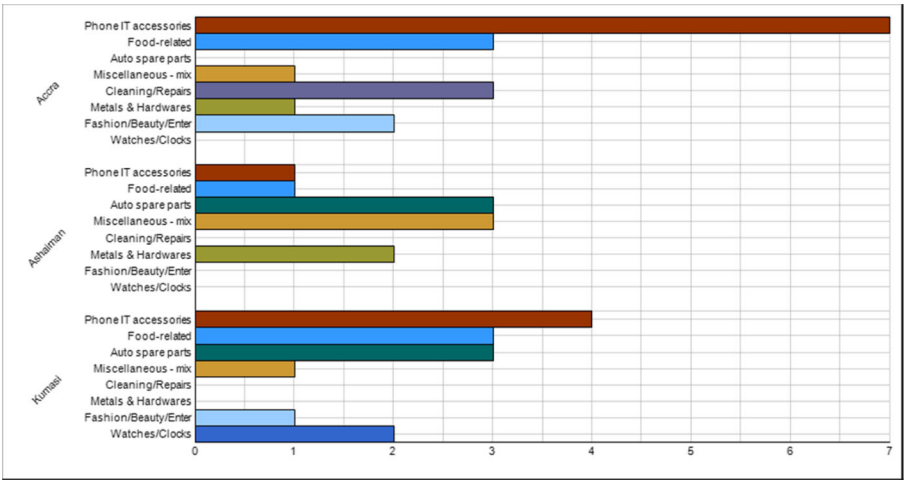

Fig. 5 Locations vs. sectoral niches

Table 2 Matrix of inter- generational entrepreneurial continuities and discontinuities business

	Current sample		Earlier studies
	Types of business	*n*	
Discontinuities	Phone/IT accessories (R6, R7, R9, R10, R21, R22, R24, R26, R27, R31, R33, R38); pure sachet water (R1); event management (R16), laundry (R8, R11); mixed compact discs/electrical items/phone accessories (R2, R4, R13); TVs/TV stands and tables (R3); second-hand bags/luggage mender/vender (R17); watches (R25; R28)	23	*Pre-colonial* - *Trading in cola nuts, gold (*Amenumey 2008; Goody 1954; Mabogunje 1968; Arhin 1979, 1980; Ntewusu 2011*).* - Trading in asses, pack-oxen, mules and horses (Meyer 1898; Arhin 1979)
Continuities	Foodstuffs/restaurants (R5, R12, R32, R35; R43, R41); industrial materials—hardware (R13); metal fabricator (R18); auto mobile spare part (R15, R20, R36, R37, R39, R40)	14	*Colonial era* - As labour/job-seekers in mines, cocoa farms, construction sites (harbour, rail works, roads and bridges, schools, hospitals) (Eades 1994; Peil 1974) - As operators of small-scale diamond mines, butchering shops and traders in yams, grains, beans, tomatoes etc. (Peil 1974; Lyon 2000; Clark 2004) - Petty-brokers (Southall 1978; Hill 1970) - Petty traders, e.g. in smoked fish; also preparation of foods (Garlick 1959; Eades 1994; Boakye-Boaten 1975; Hill 1970).
Not fully applicable	Scrap dealer (R23) taloring/shoe-making accessories (R30); glass/photo framer (R19); chemical store (R29)	4	*Post-colonial* - Petty-brokers (Southall (1978; Hill 1970) - Petty traders (Eades 1994; Boakye-Boaten 1975; Hill 1970) - Toolmakers, plumbers, welders, mechanics, carpenters, butchers, craft workers (Hill 1970) - Farming (Hill 1970)

(Garlick 1959; Hill 1970; Peil 1974; Boakye-Boaten 1975; Southall 1978; Eades 1994; Lyon 2000; Clark 2004), entrepreneurial activities which continued even after independence in 1957 (Hill 1970; Boakye-Boaten 1975; Southall 1978; Eades 1994) only to be terminated after the Aliens compliance Order in 1969.

In this study, the entrepreneurs in the phone/IT accessories are in the clear majority. Together with others in pure/sachet water vending (food-related), second-hand bags/luggage mending and vending (cleaning/repairs), event management (fashion/beauty/entertainment) and laundries, among others, these entrepreneurs are charting livelihood frontiers that can be framed in terms of both continuities and discontinuities with those of earlier generations of Nigerians in Ghana. These entrepreneurs are engaged in the 'old' trading activities (continuity) but in new items of trade (discontinuity) with the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial actors (Table 2). The element of discontinuity can be explained in terms of the entrepreneurs' experience of the changing Ghanaian local market demands and supply. On this point it should be noted that, the entrepreneurs display good knowledge of the context as this is important for entrepreneurial success and also falls in line with the *mixed embeddedness approach*, a theoretical frame which has gained popularity in immigrant entrepreneurship research over the past two decades.

The discontinuity argument is also related to the globalising process and the mass production of new consumer items especially in the past three decades. The new frontiers of economic activities can therefore be illuminated as a response to changing times and the globalisation of consumer items—attempt to replace the old with the new. This aside, some patterns of continuity are discernible. First is in relation to trading as an economic activity which can be traced to the very beginning of Ghana Nigerian contact, surviving through the various eras. Further, the activities of entrepreneurs in the auto mobile spare parts and industrial material/hardware are analogous to those of their early post-independence fore-bearers. They continue to hold fort the business traditions of the earlier generations. In this way, it is difficult to accept a single node of idea, either continuity or discontinuity and its explanatory power for understanding the nature of Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in contemporary Ghana. It is also difficult to argue that, the (re)emerging lines of trading activities (if they are entirely new trading activities) can entirely replace those of old. A better way to understand the dynamics of these economic activities is to conceive them as somewhere between—between the old and new and in terms of both continuity and discontinuity.

Conclusion

I have examined in this paper, the locational/sectoral niches and inter-generational (dis)continuities of Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurship in contemporary Ghana. These have been done for a number of reasons, not least to contribute, to the growing discourse on the nature of south-south migration (Crush et al. 2016; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2015; Deshingkar and Zeitlyn 2015; Cissé 2014; Gagnon and Khoudour-Castéras 2012), to offer different context away from the developed world where, as suggested by Aliaga-Isla and Rialp, (2013), research on immigrant entrepreneurial activities has to focus, as well as to focus on a relatively lesser known immigrant group (Sepulveda et al. 2011). In itself, the case of Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurship in Ghana

suffered serious academic insouciance, particularly in the past two decades even though their presence in the Ghanaian market place within this period was never in doubt. All the entrepreneurs in this study arrived in Ghana during the period of Ghana's democratic development (from the early 1990 to somewhere in the mid-2000s) and consolidation (from mid-2000s till now)—all within the last two and half decades. They are the contemporary migrants of Nigerians sustaining the ancient south-south migration within the West African sub-region. Their migration to Ghana was motivated by multiple factors reflecting political (peace, stability), growing economy and historical considerations. Many of them saw Ghana and continue to see Ghana as an open, tolerant and peaceful country with, moreover, a growing economy at least in the 2000s (Antwi Bosiakoh 2009).

Discussions on the activities of these immigrant entrepreneurs illuminate diversity—in terms of the nature of their sectoral focus—trading as in buying and selling, service provision (for example the case of the three laundries and the event manager), artisanal as in the metal fabrication, and those involved in some basic forms of production/processing—like the photo/glass framer and second-hand bag/luggage mender. With majority of them involved in trading activities, the findings strongly support the common conception of trade and retail as a major pathway for immigrant business ownership (Kallick 2012; Kloosterman 2003b; 2003a). This finding also places the Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in Ghana in similar trajectory as their counterparts in South Africa (Akintola and Akintola 2015; Khosa and Kalitanyi 2015), Greece (Labrianidis and Hatziprokopiou 2010; Piperopoulos 2010), Japan (Schans 2012) and UK (Ojo 2013) with regard to trading activity as a defining character of their entrepreneurial pursuits. Further, the trading activities of the entrepreneurs show diversity in the items of trade—water, food (prepared in restaurants and raw in foodstuff shops), auto mobile spare parts, tailoring and shoe-making accessories, industrial materials, watches, electrical items, CDs, TVs, TV stands and tables and mobile phone and IT accessories, among others. These diverse items in the trading activities reflect how the Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in this study emblematize the case of immigrants and their characteristics taking diverse shapes (Vertovec 2007).

Taken together, the activities of these entrepreneurs show both old and new strands of sectoral participations—old and new strands which appear to embody shapes of continuity and discontinuity with those of their earlier generations in Ghana. The dynamics of their locational concentrations and sectoral participations demonstrate incipient forms of precinctization and specialisation. I conclude on the node of idea that, the findings presented here provide preliminary prevue to the nature of entrepreneurship pursuit by contemporary Nigerian immigrant entrepreneurs in Ghana. Are they a clone of their forerunners or they are a new kind of immigrant business people with different outlook? Further research/interrogation is required to generate greater understanding to inform migration policy-making and migration-related professional work in Ghana and West Africa as the sample from which these arguments are being made is quite small and allow only limited scope of generalisation.

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Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest I declare no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship and publication of this paper.

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