

Stayer youth shaping their transnational family lives

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Impact paragraph

This section is about the societal contributions I have made using this dissertation's content and valorising the outcomes of this study. First, I discuss my contributions to existing literature through conferences, workshops, seminars, guest lectures and open-access publications. Secondly, I valorise the overall implications of the study for social actors, particularly origin and host country governments. Finally, I indicate how this work will continue contributing to knowledge production, including using unpublished data.

This dissertation has resulted in four publications in international journals and as chapters in books, extending nascent literature about stayer youth, i.e., migrants' children living in origin countries. Three of the four publications form the empirical bases of this dissertation, specifically their agency for transnational digital parent-child communication, educational trajectories and migration aspirations-capabilities alignment. All empirical chapters of this dissertation are co-authored and freely accessible online through two international journals and a Springer book chapter. The fourth publication, a book chapter not part of the dissertation, explains our research methodologies on the mobilities of children of migrants in the Global South and North. Overall, the methodological paper shows how quantitative, qualitative and mixed-method researchers can collect mobility data using the MO-TRAYL project's trajectory method.

So far, I have shared published study results in local and international academic meetings, including conferences, seminars and guest lectures. I presented my emerging findings at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences' Transnational Migration research group throughout my fieldwork and afterwards. Furthermore, I shared the study results at four international conferences, International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion (IMISCOE) 2021 and 2022 and Development Studies Association (DSA) 2022. and Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development (MACIMIDE) 2021. I also offered guest lectures at Maastricht University (Globalisation and Development Studies master and minor programmes) and Leiden University College (Governance and Global Affairs) based on some of my study results. In preparing and delivering my lectures to these students, I sought to highlight and discuss how my observations related to or differed from existing adult-centric and Global North-based literature on transnational families. By doing so, I demonstrated to the students how they could design their research to extend existing knowledge.

This dissertation, constituting three open-access publications, improves existing knowledge by uncovering what stayer youth's agency entails for desirable life chances momentarily (for example, at schooling transition points) and for shorter or longer periods of parental migration. Thus conceptually, this dissertation extends knowledge about stayer youth by arguing that they are agentic if scholars critically consider how they adapt to transnational family life by relying on a broad social support network. By extending nascent knowledge about stayer youth's agency for transnational family life, this project also demarcates limitations of the youth's agency for further investigation. Through this

qualitative investigation, this work enhances understanding of stayer youth's experiences and aspirations.

By gleaning through why stayer youth activated their agency through extended social network support for their lives, I reflect here on the policy implications of my work. My work shows that some stayer youth have limited support in their transnational families for their education and migration aspirations due to their parents' living abroad as irregular migrants. Such parents do not have the financial resources to be able to remit and at times, break off, at least temporarily, through communication with their stayer children. It is important for destination governments to understand the full repercussions of their migration governance. The effects are also felt outside of their nation-state borders through the effects that migrant parents' undocumented status has on stayer youth.

At the same time, my work has implications for origin country governments' policies. Stayer youth can face life difficulties, including low or lacking migrant parent support and inadequate local caregiver support. Therefore, programmes in the origin countries available to children and youth in need must not assume that having a migrant parent necessarily means that young people are financially taken care of. Local caregiver support is not always available and enough. Existing youth social protection programmes should include every child and young person in need, including stayers, to get the required security or opportunities for upward social mobility.

Stayer youth's migration aspirations often stemmed from their inability to see a viable future for themselves in the studied origin country, Ghana. Therefore, it is important to address social and economic problems facing youth transitioning out of secondary and tertiary schools in origin countries. Stayer youth continue to aspire to emigrate because they find inadequate social and economic opportunities for life advancement in their local environments, especially after secondary and higher education completion. These stayer youth compare their local contexts to realities abroad, which they find online, and through what migrant peers (friends and family members like siblings and cousins) say about living overseas.

Global migration policies and programs that strive to improve life opportunities for migrants' children make little mention of stayer youth, if at all. Likewise, African countries' state policies about migration, children or youth development hardly consider stayer youth. My dissertation shows that this is a particular group worthy of specialised attention based on their demographic status, lived experiences or life aspirations. The detailed information about stayer youth in this dissertation offers some contextual information to think about how to improve stayer youth development.

During my 15 months of fieldwork as part of the ERC-funded MO-TRAYL project, I also piloted and collected a quantitative dataset that I will use in future publications. After my PhD, I will use the quantitative dataset and remaining ethnographic data for publications. I am currently working on two articles with Maastricht University scholars and the final project book with the MO-TRAYL team, besides personal ideas for individual publications.

Lastly, I have teamed up with other researchers at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University, who are also working on migrants' children, to organise a workshop with the Centre for Migration Studies at the University of Ghana on 13-16 June 2023. This workshop comprises a societal impact panel where I will discuss the policy implications of my work with academic and non-academic audiences. The last day of the workshop is dedicated to early career researchers at the University of Ghana. I am co-organising a methodology training for early career researchers based on the mobility trajectory methodology developed in the MO-TRAYL project. A second workshop will be dedicated to helping early career scholars to publish their work by providing training and specific feedback on the drafts of their work to encourage them to publish.