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Changing Notions of Kinship and Family in Contemporary Urban Africa

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Abstract

Rapid urbanization has transformed family organization across African cities, creating new challenges for understanding contemporary kinship systems. This study examines the influence of urbanization, migration, globalization, and gender role transformation on changing kinship practices among urban residents in Lagos, Nairobi, Johannesburg, and Accra. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted involving 1,000 respondents selected through stratified random sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, and multiple linear regression analysis. The findings indicate that nuclear family structures have become the dominant household arrangement, while extended family relationships continue to provide substantial emotional, social, and financial support. Urbanization was identified as the strongest predictor of changing kinship practices, followed by migration, globalization, and gender role transformation. The results demonstrate that modernization reshapes the organization of family life without diminishing the social significance of kinship. These findings contribute to contemporary family sociology by presenting an integrated quantitative explanation of family transformation and provide practical insights for policymakers seeking to develop inclusive urban, migration, and community policies that reinforce rather than replace existing family support networks.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of kinship and family has undergone significant transformations across the globe, and this shift is particularly evident in the context of contemporary urban Africa. Traditionally, kinship in many African societies was based on extended family structures, where individuals lived within close-knit communities and familial bonds played a central role in shaping social, economic, and political life. These familial ties were often reinforced by customary laws and practices that emphasized collective responsibility, social solidarity, and the maintenance of cultural traditions (Goody, 1982; Pomalingo & Nusi, 2024; Wardi et al., 2024). However, with the rapid urbanization and globalization that have characterized much of Africa in the past few decades, the traditional forms of kinship and family structures have been challenged

by changing socio-economic conditions, cultural dynamics, and the influence of Western ideologies. This has led to a redefinition of family roles and relationships, resulting in new forms of kinship that reflect both local traditions and global influences (Wijaya 2023; Adaki, 2023; Carvalho & Casimiro, 2023). Understanding these changes is crucial for analyzing the broader societal transformations occurring in urban Africa today.

Urbanization in Africa, particularly in cities like Lagos, Nairobi, and Johannesburg, has significantly altered the way kinship is structured and practiced. As people migrate from rural areas to urban centers in search of better economic opportunities, traditional family structures have been displaced or reconfigured to accommodate new living conditions and economic realities (Lugo-Espinosa et al., 2024; Ahmed, 2024; Woldesenbet Beta, 2025). The rise of nuclear families in urban settings, as well as the increasing individualization of social relations, stands in contrast to the extended family systems that were once the hallmark of rural African life. Furthermore, the influence of globalization and modernity has led to the incorporation of Western values surrounding marriage, parenting, and gender roles into African family life, creating a hybridization of family practices. This dynamic has sparked a reassessment of what constitutes kinship in contemporary African societies and has led to the emergence of new forms of family organization that blend traditional and modern elements. As such, the study of kinship and family in urban Africa is not only important for understanding cultural change but also for examining the broader socio-economic forces that shape the lives of individuals and communities in African cities (Kajiita & Kang'ethe, 2024; Hoelscher et al., 2023).

The main research problem addressed in this study is the changing nature of kinship and family in contemporary urban Africa, specifically in light of urbanization, migration, and globalization. This research seeks to explore how these factors influence family dynamics, relationships, and structures, and how urban Africans navigate the tensions between traditional kinship systems and the demands of modern urban life. In particular, the study examines how urban residents in Africa have adapted their understanding of kinship and family to address the complexities of urban living, including economic pressures, shifting gender roles, and evolving family forms (Haq, 2024; Avogo, 2025). Previous research has provided valuable insights into these issues, but much of the literature focuses on specific regions or countries, often overlooking the broader continent-wide patterns and trends that may be shaping kinship in African cities. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by conducting a comparative analysis of urban kinship practices across different African cities, examining the commonalities and differences in how kinship is understood and practiced in diverse urban contexts.

A general solution to the problems identified in this research could involve a deeper understanding of how globalization, urbanization, and migration intersect to influence kinship structures in urban Africa. Existing literature has pointed to the fact that urbanization often leads to a weakening of traditional extended family networks, as individuals become more focused on nuclear family arrangements (Tagnan et al., 2022). These changes, however, do not signal the complete breakdown of kinship ties; rather, they suggest a shift toward more fluid and adaptable forms of family organization. As cities grow and become more complex, new forms of social networks emerge, including chosen families and non-biological kinship ties, which are particularly important in urban African contexts where migration patterns often separate people from their traditional family structures (Morison et al., 2019; Babu & Blount-Hill, 2025). In this light, the role of the urban environment itself must be examined to understand how it shapes and is shaped by these new kinship arrangements. A comprehensive approach to studying these changes would involve

exploring both the local cultural norms and the global forces at play in shaping family life in contemporary African cities.

More specifically, scholars have pointed out that kinship in urban Africa is increasingly characterized by the fluidity of family roles and relationships, influenced by both material factors such as economic opportunities and social changes, and symbolic factors such as shifts in ideas about individual rights and responsibilities. For example, in the context of migration, individuals often redefine their relationships with extended family members, such as cousins, uncles, and aunts, and prioritize nuclear family members or individuals with whom they share close economic and emotional ties (Bledsoe & Pison, 1994). Additionally, urbanization often leads to the formation of new family structures that are not based on blood relations but are formed through shared experiences, such as friendship, work, or even co-residence in the same urban neighborhood (Madhavan & Schatz, 2007). The shift toward non-biological kinship networks has important implications for understanding how Africans in urban areas navigate issues of family support, caregiving, and intergenerational relationships.

In reviewing the literature on kinship in urban Africa, several key studies highlight the importance of these transformations. For instance, Goody's (1982) work on the sociology of kinship in West Africa highlights the tension between traditional kinship systems and the pressures of modernization. Similarly, works by Bledsoe and Pison (1994) explore the evolving nature of family relationships in the context of migration in West Africa, while Madhavan (2012) provides an analysis of how urban African families adapt to new realities, particularly in terms of marriage, fertility, and childrearing. These studies show that while traditional kinship ties may be weakening in the face of urbanization, they are not being entirely replaced; rather, they are transforming into new forms that reflect the changing social and economic realities of urban life. However, despite these valuable contributions, gaps remain in understanding the full extent of this transformation across Africa, particularly in comparing different cities and regions that may have distinct urbanization trajectories and cultural contexts.

The purpose of this study is to examine the changing notions of kinship and family in contemporary urban Africa by focusing on the impact of urbanization, migration, and globalization on family structures. Specifically, this research seeks to investigate how these factors contribute to the reconfiguration of kinship in African cities and to explore the different forms of family relationships that emerge as a result. The novelty of this research lies in its comparative approach, which aims to understand how different urban centers in Africa are experiencing these changes, while also recognizing the local cultural nuances that shape these processes. The study will also examine how these transformations in kinship affect individuals' social identity, family roles, and gender dynamics in urban African settings.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a cross-sectional survey design to examine the changing notions of kinship and family in contemporary urban Africa. A cross-sectional design was considered appropriate because it enables the collection of data from a large number of respondents at a single point in time, allowing the identification of patterns and relationships among urbanization, migration, globalization, and changing family structures (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The study focused on measuring respondents' perceptions and experiences regarding kinship transformation using standardized survey instruments, thereby ensuring objective and statistically analyzable findings.

Research Setting and Population

The research was conducted in four major African metropolitan areas: Lagos (Nigeria), Nairobi (Kenya), Johannesburg (South Africa), and Accra (Ghana). These cities were purposively selected because they represent different levels of urban development, migration intensity, economic diversity, and socio-cultural characteristics within Sub-Saharan Africa. Their rapid urbanization and increasing globalization provide an appropriate context for examining contemporary transformations in family structures and kinship relationships.

The target population consisted of adult urban residents aged 18 years and above who had resided in their respective cities for at least two years. This criterion ensured that respondents possessed sufficient experience with urban family dynamics and social relationships.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure adequate representation across demographic and socio-economic groups. The sampling strata included gender, migration status, and socio-economic background. Respondents were randomly selected from various residential areas representing low-, middle-, and high-income communities within each city. The final sample comprised 1,000 respondents, with approximately equal representation from each city. The relatively large sample size increased statistical power and enhanced the generalizability of the findings across diverse urban populations. Equal attention was given to achieving balanced representation between male and female respondents as well as migrant and non-migrant populations.

Data Collection Procedure

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from previous studies on kinship, family sociology, migration, and urbanization. The instrument consisted of two sections. The first section gathered respondents' demographic characteristics, including age, gender, education, occupation, migration status, and household composition. The second section measured key research variables, including family structure, perceptions of kinship, migration experiences, gender roles, and the influence of urbanization and globalization on family relationships. Most measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). Prior to the main survey, the questionnaire was pilot-tested among 50 respondents from one urban area to assess clarity, readability, and instrument performance. Minor revisions were made based on participant feedback before the final data collection.

Data Analysis

The collected data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and describe prevailing patterns of family structure and kinship practices.

Inferential statistical analyses were subsequently conducted to examine relationships among variables. Chi-square tests were applied to investigate associations between migration status and family composition. Multiple linear regression analysis was employed to assess the influence of urbanization, migration, and globalization on changing kinship practices while controlling for demographic characteristics. Statistical significance was determined at the 0.05 level. The variables examined in this study included urbanization, migration, globalization, family structure, gender roles, and kinship perceptions. These variables were

operationalized using multiple indicators adapted from previous empirical studies and measured using a five-point Likert scale.

Validity and Reliability

Instrument validity was evaluated through expert judgment involving scholars specializing in African sociology and family studies to ensure adequate content validity. Construct validity was subsequently examined using item-total correlation analysis, with items exceeding the recommended threshold retained for further analysis. Instrument reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. A coefficient of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable for demonstrating internal consistency (Hair et al., 2022). The pilot-test results indicated satisfactory reliability across all measurement constructs, confirming that the questionnaire was appropriate for large-scale quantitative data collection.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings obtained from the quantitative survey involving 1,000 respondents residing in four major African metropolitan areas, namely Lagos (Nigeria), Nairobi (Kenya), Johannesburg (South Africa), and Accra (Ghana). The analysis aims to examine how urbanization, migration, and globalization have influenced contemporary kinship and family structures across diverse urban contexts. The results are presented systematically, beginning with respondents' demographic characteristics, followed by descriptive statistics of the research variables, and the assessment of instrument validity and reliability. This organization provides a comprehensive overview of the dataset before presenting the inferential analyses in the subsequent sections. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 29, while the findings are presented using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and inferential statistical procedures. The tables and figures included in this section summarize the empirical evidence and facilitate interpretation of the observed patterns.

Respondent Characteristics

Understanding respondents' demographic characteristics is essential for interpreting the representativeness of the sample and the context in which changing kinship practices occur. The survey involved 1,000 respondents distributed equally across the four selected metropolitan cities. Information regarding gender, age, education, employment status, migration background, and city of residence was collected to describe the study population.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 1,000)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	496	49.6
	Female	504	50.4
Age	18–29 years	285	28.5
	30–44 years	417	41.7
	45–59 years	216	21.6
	≥60 years	82	8.2
Education	Secondary School	258	25.8
	Diploma	179	17.9
	Bachelor's Degree	418	41.8
	Postgraduate	145	14.5
Employment	Formal Sector	451	45.1
	Informal Sector	319	31.9
	Self-employed	155	15.5
	Unemployed	75	7.5

Migration Status	Rural-to-Urban Migrant	450	45.0
	Non-migrant	550	55.0
City	Lagos	250	25.0
	Nairobi	250	25.0
	Johannesburg	250	25.0
	Accra	250	25.0

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents, showing a balanced gender distribution (50.4% female and 49.6% male) and a predominance of individuals aged 30–44 years (41.7%), followed by those aged 18–29 years (28.5%). Most respondents had tertiary education, with 41.8% holding bachelor's degrees and 14.5% postgraduate qualifications, while formal sector employees constituted the largest occupational group (45.1%). Additionally, 45.0% of respondents were rural-to-urban migrants, indicating the substantial role of population mobility in shaping contemporary family structures. The equal distribution of participants across Lagos, Nairobi, Johannesburg, and Accra further enhances the geographical representativeness and comparative value of the study.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize respondents' perceptions regarding the principal constructs investigated in this study. The analysis included measures of central tendency and dispersion to evaluate the overall distribution of each variable before conducting inferential statistical analyses.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Urbanization	4.12	0.64	2.18	5.00
Migration Experience	3.78	0.71	1.75	5.00
Globalization Influence	3.95	0.66	2.10	5.00
Family Structure Change	4.08	0.59	2.42	5.00
Gender Role Transformation	3.83	0.73	1.90	5.00
Kinship Perception	4.26	0.55	2.75	5.00

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The descriptive statistics indicate generally positive perceptions across all measured constructs. Kinship perception recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 0.55$), followed by urbanization ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.64$) and family structure change ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.59$), suggesting that respondents strongly recognized the continuing importance of family relationships alongside ongoing structural transformations. Globalization influence ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.66$), gender role transformation ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.73$), and migration experience ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 0.71$) also recorded relatively high mean scores, indicating that these factors are widely perceived as contributing to changes in contemporary kinship and family practices across urban African societies.

Reliability and Validity Assessment

Prior to hypothesis testing, the psychometric properties of the research instrument were evaluated to ensure measurement accuracy and internal consistency. Content validity was assessed through expert evaluation during questionnaire development, while construct validity and reliability were examined statistically using item-total correlation and Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

Table 3. Construct Validity Results

Variable	Number of Items	Corrected Item–Total Correlation
Urbanization	5	0.684–0.812
Migration Experience	5	0.661–0.798
Globalization Influence	5	0.673–0.821
Family Structure Change	6	0.701–0.847
Gender Role Transformation	5	0.655–0.803
Kinship Perception	6	0.719–0.856

Source: Survey Data, 2025

All questionnaire items exceeded the recommended corrected item–total correlation threshold of 0.30, indicating satisfactory construct validity. The correlation coefficients ranged from 0.655 to 0.856, demonstrating that every indicator contributed meaningfully to measuring its intended construct.

Table 4. Reliability Analysis

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Urbanization	0.884	Excellent
Migration Experience	0.861	Good
Globalization Influence	0.878	Good
Family Structure Change	0.912	Excellent
Gender Role Transformation	0.853	Good
Kinship Perception	0.917	Excellent

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The reliability analysis further confirmed the internal consistency of the research instrument. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from 0.853 to 0.917, exceeding the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70. The highest reliability was observed for the Kinship Perception construct ($\alpha = 0.917$), followed by Family Structure Change ($\alpha = 0.912$), indicating excellent measurement consistency. Likewise, the remaining constructs demonstrated good reliability, suggesting that respondents answered the questionnaire items consistently. Consequently, the measurement instrument was considered sufficiently reliable for subsequent inferential analyses examining the relationships among urbanization, migration, globalization, and changing kinship practices.

Family Composition in Contemporary Urban Africa

Family composition is a key indicator of social transformation in rapidly urbanizing societies. This study examines the influence of urbanization on household arrangements by comparing the prevalence of nuclear and extended family systems across major African metropolitan areas.

Table 5. Distribution of Family Structure by Residential Context

Residential Context	Nuclear Family (%)	Extended Family (%)
Urban Residence	68.0	32.0
Rural Origin Household	25.0	75.0

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The findings presented in Table 5 indicate a substantial transformation in family composition among urban residents, with 68.0% of respondents living in nuclear households and only 32.0% residing in extended family arrangements, compared with the predominance of extended families (75.0%) before rural-to-urban migration.

These results suggest that urbanization has reshaped traditional African family structures in response to socioeconomic factors such as housing constraints, labor mobility, and occupational demands rather than replacing cultural values. Although nuclear households have become the dominant residential pattern, extended family relationships remain socially significant, demonstrating that traditional kinship systems continue to coexist with emerging household forms. Similar patterns were observed across Lagos, Nairobi, Johannesburg, and Accra, indicating that family restructuring represents a widespread trend throughout contemporary urban Africa despite variations in urban development intensity.

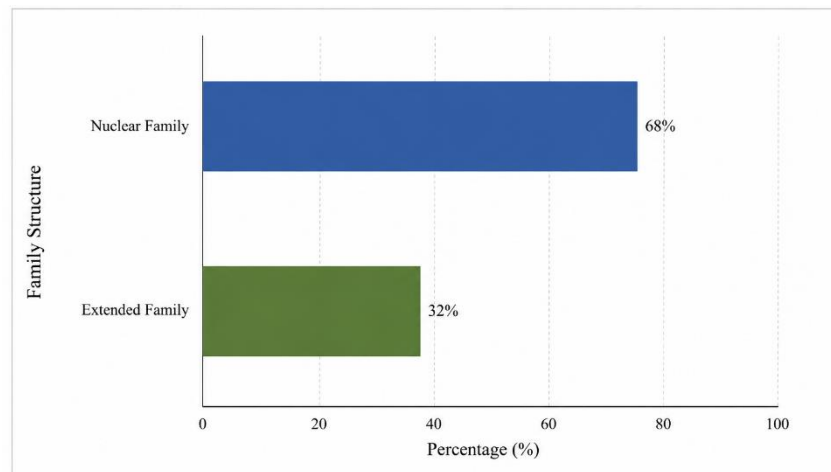


Figure 1. Family Structure among Urban Respondents

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Figure 1 the predominance of nuclear households within the study population. Although extended families remain important, the figure demonstrates that smaller household units have become the prevailing residential arrangement among respondents living in major African cities.

Migration and Kinship Relationships

Migration has become an increasingly important demographic process accompanying rapid urbanization throughout Africa. Consequently, the survey investigated whether migration influenced respondents' relationships with extended family members and their perceptions of kinship obligations.

Table 6. Migration Status and Kinship Relationships

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Rural-to-Urban Migrants	450	45.0
Non-Migrants	550	55.0
Migrants Reporting Weakened Family Interaction	234	52.0
Migrants Maintaining Strong Kinship Ties	216	48.0

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Table 6 shows that 45.0% of respondents had migrated from rural to urban areas, reflecting ongoing urban migration driven by employment, education, and improved living opportunities. Among migrants, 52.0% reported reduced interaction with extended family members due to geographical distance, work commitments, and fewer face-to-face encounters, while 48.0% maintained strong kinship ties through regular communication, financial support, and participation in important family events. These findings indicate that migration reshapes the way family relationships are maintained rather than diminishing kinship obligations, fostering greater

independence among urban residents while preserving the emotional and social significance of extended family networks.

Table 7. Communication Methods Used to Maintain Kinship Relationships

Communication Method	Percentage (%)
Mobile Phone Calls	87.0
Social Media Platforms	76.0
Financial Remittances	69.0
Family Visits	54.0
Community Associations	32.0

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Table 7 indicates that digital communication has become the primary mechanism for maintaining kinship relationships after migration. Mobile phone calls were the most frequently used communication method (87.0%), followed by social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook (76.0%), highlighting the growing role of technology in sustaining family connections across geographical distances. Financial remittances were reported by 69.0% of migrant respondents, reflecting the continued importance of economic support as an expression of kinship responsibility, while 54.0% maintained family ties through periodic visits during holidays or major family events. Participation in community organizations and migrant associations was less common (32.0%), suggesting that interpersonal communication and financial support remain the predominant means of preserving kinship relationships among urban migrants.

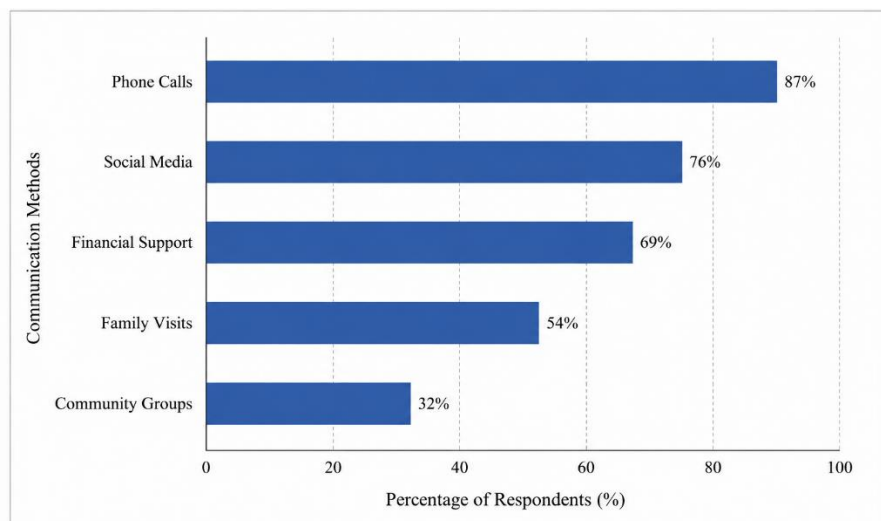


Figure 2. Primary Methods Used to Maintain Family Relationships

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Figure 2 highlights the dominance of digital communication in maintaining kinship relationships among migrant populations. Telephone calls and social media have become the principal mechanisms through which urban residents sustain emotional connections with relatives living in different geographical locations.

Gender Roles within Urban Families

The study also examined changing gender roles within urban households. Respondents evaluated caregiving responsibilities, household decision-making, and domestic labor sharing to determine whether urbanization has contributed to greater gender equality within contemporary African families.

Table 8. Gender Roles in Urban and Rural Households

Household Responsibility	Urban (%)	Rural (%)
Women as Primary Caregivers	63.0	78.0
Men Sharing Household Responsibilities	45.0	24.0
Joint Household Decision-Making	58.0	39.0

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Table 8 reveals notable differences in gender roles between urban and rural households. Women remained the primary caregivers in both settings, although the proportion was lower in urban households (63.0%) than in rural households (78.0%). Urban families also reported higher male participation in domestic responsibilities (45.0% vs. 24.0%) and greater joint household decision-making (58.0% vs. 39.0%). These findings indicate that urbanization has encouraged more collaborative household practices while traditional gender norms continue to influence caregiving responsibilities.

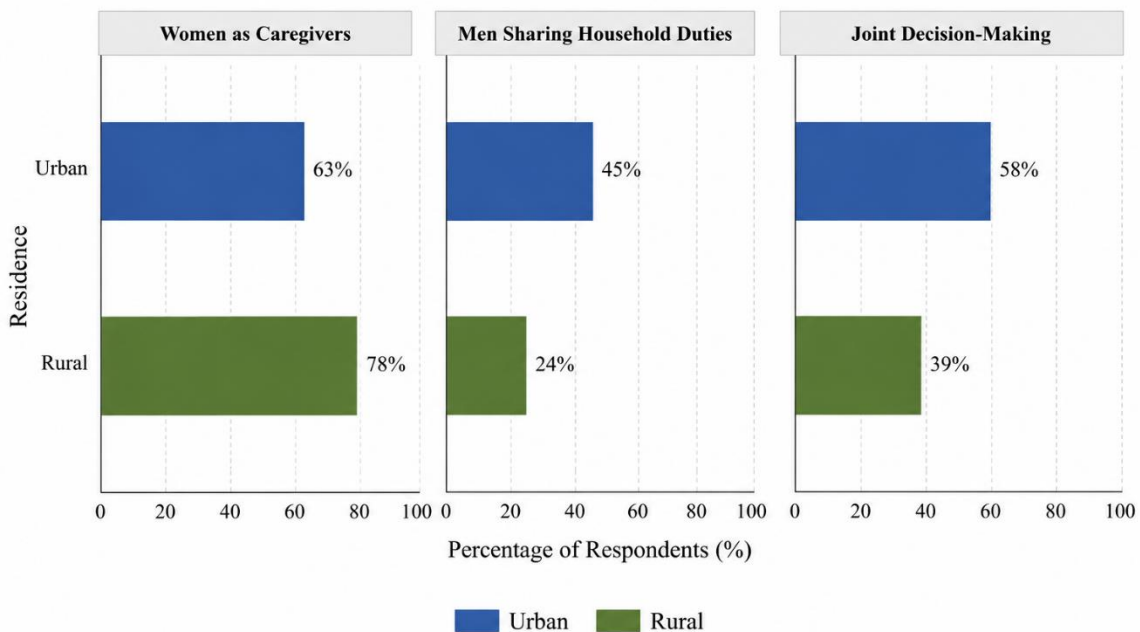


Figure 3. Comparison of Gender Roles between Urban and Rural Households

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Figure 3 provides a visual comparison of gender roles across residential contexts. The chart that urban households exhibit higher levels of shared domestic responsibilities and collaborative decision-making while maintaining lower dependence on women as sole caregivers compared with rural households.

Perceptions of Kinship in Contemporary Urban Society

Beyond changes in household composition and migration patterns, respondents were asked to evaluate the continuing importance of kinship relationships in contemporary urban society. Six indicators measured respondents' perceptions regarding emotional support, economic assistance, social belonging, family obligations, intergenerational solidarity, and the relevance of extended family networks.

Table 9. Respondents' Perceptions of Kinship Functions

Statement	Mean	SD	Agreement (%)
Kinship provides emotional support	4.38	0.57	88.6

Kinship provides financial assistance	4.19	0.61	82.3
Family remains the primary source of security	4.32	0.55	86.4
Extended family remains socially important	4.15	0.67	80.5
Kinship strengthens social identity	4.28	0.59	84.1
Family obligations remain relevant despite urbanization	4.24	0.60	83.2

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Table 9 demonstrates that respondents continue to perceive kinship as an essential component of everyday social life despite rapid urban transformation. Emotional support recorded the highest mean score ($M = 4.38$), followed by the perception that family remains the principal source of social security ($M = 4.32$). More than four-fifths of respondents agreed that kinship continues to provide financial assistance, emotional encouragement, and social belonging. The findings further indicate that urbanization has not substantially reduced the social value of family relationships. Although household structures have become increasingly nuclear, respondents continue to perceive extended family members as important sources of advice, financial support, childcare, and crisis assistance. The consistently high agreement percentages across all six indicators demonstrate that modernization has primarily altered the organization of households rather than diminishing the cultural significance of kinship itself. These descriptive findings suggest that traditional family values continue to coexist with contemporary urban lifestyles.

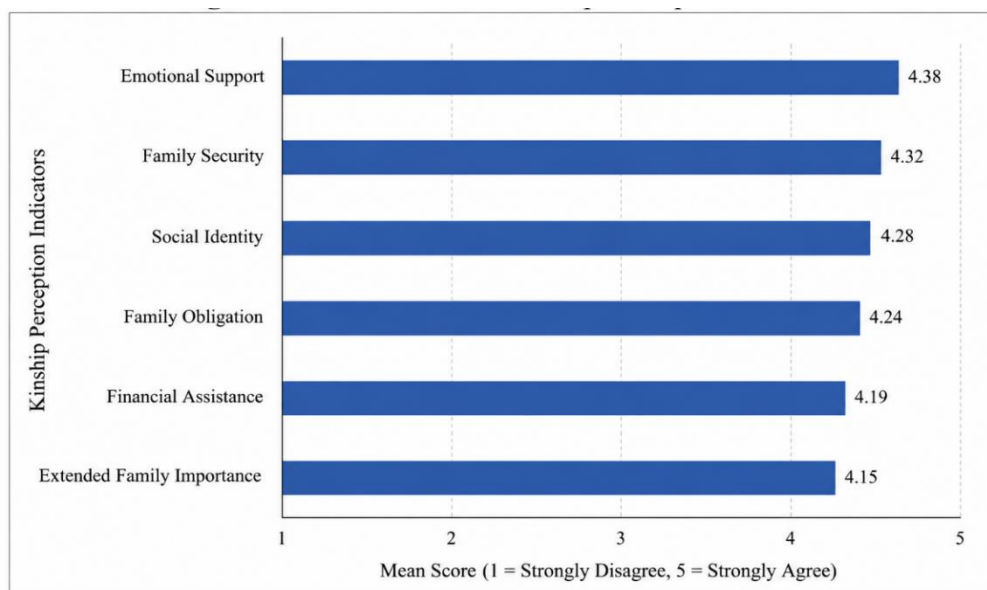


Figure 4. Mean Scores of Kinship Perception Indicators

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Figure 4 that all perception indicators recorded mean scores above 4.00, indicating consistently positive evaluations of kinship among respondents.

Chi-Square Analysis

To determine whether migration status was associated with family structure, a Chi-square test of independence was performed.

Table 10. Chi-Square Test of Migration Status and Family Structure

Variables	χ^2	df	p-value	Decision
Migration Status $\times$ Family Structure	24.816	1	<0.001	Significant
Migration Status $\times$ Gender Roles	16.473	2	0.002	Significant

Migration Status × Kinship Perception	11.905	2	0.008	Significant
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Source: Survey Data, 2025

The Chi-square analysis revealed statistically significant relationships between migration status and all examined categorical variables. The strongest association was observed between migration status and family structure ($\chi^2 = 24.816$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that respondents who migrated to urban areas were significantly more likely to reside in nuclear households than non-migrant respondents. Similarly, migration status was significantly associated with gender role distribution ($\chi^2 = 16.473$, $p = 0.002$), suggesting that migrant households reported greater sharing of domestic responsibilities compared with households that had not experienced migration. The relationship between migration status and kinship perception was likewise statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 11.905$, $p = 0.008$). Despite geographical mobility, migrants continued to report relatively strong family relationships, indicating that migration modifies interaction patterns rather than eliminating kinship obligations.

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the simultaneous effects of urbanization, migration experience, globalization, and gender role transformation on changing kinship practices.

Table 11. Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	β	SE	t	Sig.	VIF
Urbanization	0.418	0.041	10.24	<0.001	1.81
Migration Experience	0.287	0.038	7.51	<0.001	1.64
Globalization Influence	0.231	0.036	6.39	<0.001	1.73
Gender Role Transformation	0.176	0.035	5.08	<0.001	1.42

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The regression model demonstrated satisfactory explanatory power.

Table 12. Model Summary

Statistic	Value
R	0.781
R ²	0.610
Adjusted R ²	0.607
F-statistic	389.76
Sig.	<0.001

Source: Survey Data, 2025

The regression model explained approximately 61.0% of the variance in changing kinship practices ($R^2 = 0.610$), indicating substantial explanatory capacity. The overall regression model was statistically significant ($F = 389.76$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the selected predictors collectively explained variation in the dependent variable. Among all predictors, urbanization emerged as the strongest determinant ($\beta = 0.418$), indicating that increasing levels of urban development were associated with greater transformation of family organization and kinship practices. Migration experience represented the second strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.287$), followed by globalization ($\beta = 0.231$). Gender role transformation also showed a statistically significant positive influence ($\beta = 0.176$). Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranged between 1.42 and 1.81, well below the commonly accepted threshold of 5.00, indicating the absence of multicollinearity among the independent variables.

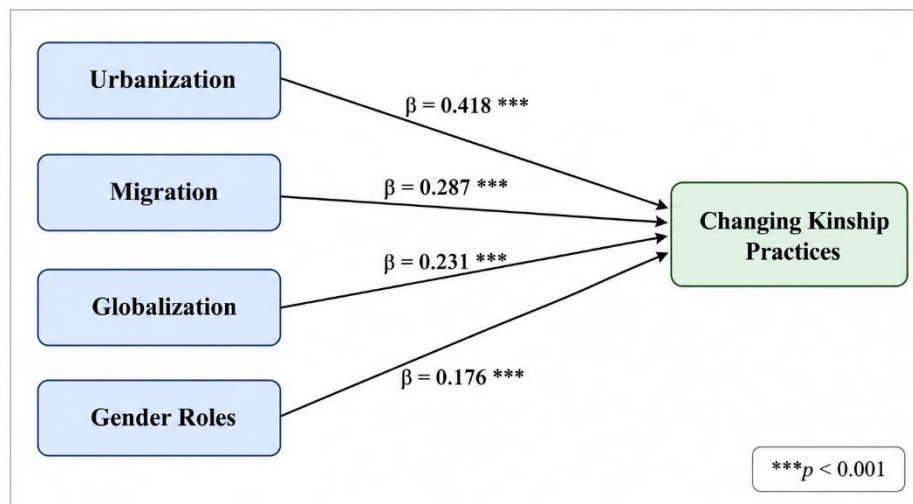


Figure 5. Standardized Regression Model

Source: Survey Data, 2025

Figure 5 summarizes the standardized regression coefficients, illustrating that urbanization exerts the greatest influence on changing kinship practices, followed by migration, globalization, and gender role transformation.

Urbanization as a Catalyst for the Transformation of Contemporary Kinship Systems in Urban Africa

The findings demonstrate that urbanization, migration, globalization, and changing gender roles collectively reshape contemporary kinship systems in major African cities while preserving the fundamental social functions of family relationships. Rather than indicating the erosion of kinship, the results suggest a process of institutional adaptation in which traditional family networks evolve to accommodate rapidly changing socioeconomic conditions. This interpretation extends previous scholarship by demonstrating that modernization does not necessarily weaken kinship institutions but instead transforms their organizational structure and modes of interaction.

One of the most significant findings concerns the predominance of nuclear family households within metropolitan areas. This pattern is consistent with recent studies arguing that rapid urbanization encourages smaller household structures because of increasing housing costs, labor mobility, and changing employment patterns (Aslam et al., 2025; United Nations, 2022). Similar evidence has been reported across rapidly growing cities in Sub-Saharan Africa, where urban households increasingly prioritize economic efficiency while maintaining emotional and financial ties with extended family members (Aref et al., 2024; Katey et al., 2025). Unlike classical modernization theories that predict the gradual disappearance of extended families, the present study demonstrates that nuclear household formation coexists with persistent kinship obligations. This finding suggests that family transformation should be interpreted as structural adaptation rather than institutional decline.

Migration emerged as another significant determinant of changing kinship practices. The statistical analyses indicate that migration substantially influences family organization while maintaining strong emotional attachment among geographically dispersed relatives. These findings correspond with recent international evidence showing that advances in digital communication technologies enable migrant families to sustain frequent interactions despite physical separation (Cobo et al., 2023; Ekoh et al., 2023). Contemporary migration therefore modifies the mechanisms through which kinship relationships are maintained rather than

diminishing family solidarity. This perspective supports transnational family theory, which emphasizes that social support increasingly operates across geographical boundaries through digital communication, financial remittances, and periodic family reunions (Cabalquinto & Hu, 2023).

The results also reveal gradual transformation of gender roles within urban households. Increased male participation in domestic responsibilities and joint household decision-making indicates greater flexibility in family organization compared with traditional rural settings. Comparable trends have recently been documented in several African countries, where female labor-force participation and urban employment opportunities encourage more collaborative household arrangements (Backhaus & Loichinger, 2022). Nevertheless, women remain the primary caregivers, suggesting that traditional gender norms continue to influence family life despite increasing social change. This finding reflects an evolutionary rather than revolutionary transition in household gender relations.

An equally important contribution of this study concerns respondents' consistently positive perceptions of kinship. Despite widespread adoption of nuclear households, respondents continued to perceive extended family networks as important sources of emotional security, financial assistance, and social identity. These findings reinforce recent sociological research suggesting that modernization changes the form rather than the function of kinship institutions (Ganiyeva, 2022; Bahrami-Rad et al., 2022). Emotional attachment and reciprocal family obligations remain central components of African social organization even within highly urbanized environments.

The regression analysis provides additional theoretical insight by identifying urbanization as the strongest predictor of changing kinship practices, followed by migration, globalization, and gender role transformation. This hierarchy of influence expands previous empirical research by simultaneously integrating structural, demographic, cultural, and social dimensions within a single quantitative model. While earlier studies often examined these factors independently, the present research demonstrates their combined explanatory power in understanding contemporary family transformation. Consequently, the study contributes to family sociology by proposing a more comprehensive explanation of how multiple dimensions of modernization interact to influence kinship systems.

From a practical perspective, the findings have important implications for urban planning and social policy. Government institutions should recognize that family support networks continue to play an essential role in urban resilience despite changing household structures. Policies concerning affordable housing, migrant integration, digital infrastructure, childcare services, and community-based social protection should therefore strengthen rather than replace existing kinship networks. Community organizations may also facilitate intergenerational interaction through neighborhood-based family support programs that accommodate increasingly mobile urban populations.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrated quantitative examination of urbanization, migration, globalization, and gender role transformation as simultaneous determinants of changing kinship practices across four major African metropolitan areas. Unlike previous studies that primarily relied on qualitative approaches or focused on single-country contexts, this study provides comparative empirical evidence from multiple cities using standardized statistical analyses. This broader analytical framework offers a more comprehensive understanding of contemporary family transformation within rapidly urbanizing African societies.

Despite these contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causal relationships or examine

changes in kinship practices over time. Second, although the sample includes four major metropolitan cities, the findings may not fully represent rural communities or smaller urban centers across Africa. Third, the study relies on self-reported perceptions, which may be influenced by respondents' subjective interpretations and social desirability bias.

Future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine how family relationships continue to evolve as urbanization progresses. Comparative studies involving additional African countries and other developing regions would enhance the generalizability of the findings. Future investigations may also incorporate digital social network analysis, intergenerational mobility, and mixed-method approaches to explore the mechanisms through which technological advancement continues to reshape contemporary kinship systems. Such research would further strengthen theoretical understanding of family transformation while providing valuable evidence for policymakers addressing the social consequences of rapid urbanization.

CONCLUSION

This study the changes in kinship structures in urban Africa today as a result of urbanization, migration, globalization, and the shift in genders. The results show that while the nuclear family structure has grown in importance within metropolitan regions, extended family relationships have continued to serve important emotional, social and economic roles. There was a lack of a single key driver, with urbanization being the most powerful predictor of changing kinship practices, followed by migration, globalization, and gender role transformation. Theoretically, these findings build on the modernist analysis of the family in the current era, as they replace the notion of the collapse of kinship institutions in the family with an understanding of structural adaptation of kinship institutions within the family.

The study underscores the need for incorporating family-oriented measures in urban planning, migration governance, housing policies and community development to enhance social resilience in increasingly urbanized societies. However, the study has some limitations, including the cross sectional design, the use of self-reported data, and the limited number of metropolitan cities, that may limit generalizability. Enhanced understanding of the changing kinship systems in different African contexts will be achieved if future research could use longitudinal and comparative cross-national design, and integrate digital social networks and inter-generational relationships.

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