The dynamics of north-south migration in Ghana: Perspectives of Nandom migrants in Accra

Thomas ANTWI BOSIAKOH, Macquarie University, Australia
Cyril Tuota, University of Ghana
Sylvia Ohene Marfo, University of Ghana
Paul K. ANDOH, The University of Queensland, Australia

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/thomas_antwibosiakoh/22/
The dynamics of north-south migration in Ghana: Perspectives of Nandom migrants in Accra

Thomas Antwi Bosiakoh*, Cyril Abe-ifaa Tuota#, Sylvia Ohene Marfo* and Paul Andoh$

*Department of Sociology, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia
#Department of Sociology, University of Ghana, Legon Accra, Ghana
$School of Social Work and Human Services, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia.

Correspondence email: bosiakoh@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper re-visits the old north-south migration discourse in Ghana by focusing on Nandom youth migrants in Accra. It explores the perspectives of resident Nandom youth migrants in Accra with emphasis on three key issues, namely perception, predisposing factors and impacts of their southern migration project on the Nandom community. Empirical field results show a multiplicity of factors undergirding the migration decision of Nandom youths in Accra. While both positive and negative perceptions emerge from the study regarding seasonal, long term and return migration of Nandom youths in Accra, the entire migratory project demonstrates a livelihood pursuit. Additionally, we identify a ‘suitcase’ of remittance types, the different kinds of remittance recipients and usages and also the conditions under which these migrants remitted. The discussion on remittances provides a platform for understanding the impact of their southward migratory project on the Nandom community.

Keywords: North-south migration; Migration perception; Migration impacts; Nandom; Ghana

1. Introduction

Migration in Ghana is one of the enduring themes in the country’s history. Its causes are multiple with dynamic effects on society. Over the years, scholars have focused empirical investigations on the various facets of migration in both space (internal and international) and time (past, present, and future) with recent attempts to merge, in particular, the spatial mantra on migration with trans nationalist engagements and trans nationalist theories (Mazzucato and Kabki, 2009; Mazzucato, 2008; Levitt and Jaworsky, 2007; Mazzucato, Kabki, and Smith 2006).
Some early investigations into internal migration in Ghana focused on the
determinants of rural-urban migration (Caldwell, 1969), as well as population
growth and the urbanising impacts on the receiving areas (Kasanga andAVIS, 1988;
Johnson, 1974). The role of the environment in north-south migration (Rademacher-
Schulz, et. al., 2014; van der Geest, 2011b; 2011a; Primavera, 2005), but also other
determinants and predispositions (see for example Ackah and Medvedev, 2010) as well
as the rural-urban linkages and welfare (Boakye-Yiadom, 2008) and socio-economic
development impacts (Twumasi-Ankrah, 1995) have also been explored in this age-
long migratory phenomenon in Ghana. Some scholars have for example treated the
north-south migration phenomenon as a response to climate change/environmental
scarcity8 with limited non-farm opportunities and effects on the sustainability of
agricultural activities (van der Geest, 2011a: Primavera, 2005). Additionally, some
existing literature has identified particularly the north-south migration stream in
Ghana as a livelihood enhancement strategy (Claver, 2013; Awumbila and Ardayfio-
Shandorf, 2008; Yeboah, 2008) with some recent research attempts focusing on the
economics of it, specifically the remittance aspects (Adaawen and Owusu, 2013), the
perceived impacts on agricultural productivity (Anaglo, et. al., 2014), and poverty
reduction potentials (Awumbila, et. al., 2014), as well as the (social) perceptions and
social demands9 (Sow, et. al., 2014; van der Geest, 2010).

Thus in the survey of the extant literature, we are confronted with different facets
of north-south/internal migration in Ghana, not least the perceptions, predispositions/
motivations and impacts. What stays unclear in these empirical treatments is the
strand of interface that exists between migration perception, migration predisposition/
motivation and migration impacts. The relevance of this paper therefore is in its
contribution to understanding this strand of interface. We drift from just the notions/
explanations of migration perceptions, migration motivations/predispositions and
migration impacts and focus on the associations that exist between and among them.

As social psychologists have suggested, human behaviours can be unknowingly
influenced by knowledge that is incidentally activated in memory through our
perception (Ferguson and Bargh, 2004). Drawing from this, we argue that the
perception of Nandom youths on rural-urban/north-south migration affects their
behaviours to them and also to other issues across a range of domains, sometimes
unrelated. As Gough et al. (2013: 96) observed, and corroborated by Thorsen’s (2013)
ethnographic case narratives, young rural people in the global south are increasingly

---

8 Some recent research findings suggest that climate change and climate-related strains are themselves
not enough variables for explaining migration intentions (see Abu, et. al., 2014).

9 An archetypal demonstration of social perceptions and social demands is reflected in the case that the
bride price for young northern females who have been to the south is higher than their counterparts
who have never travelled.
‘turning their backs on farming’ \(^{10}\), … migrating to urban areas’ for better opportunities and social mobility.

Thus we examine the perceptions and motivations for mobility and also discuss the eventual impacts of the migratory actions of Nandom youths on the Nandom community. Our study showed that remittances are considered important epiphenomena of migration and form a critical aspect of the ways in which migration impacts sending areas. The paper is structured into five sections. After this introduction which sets out the context, we discuss the patterns and trends of the north-south migration in Ghana. Next, we discuss the methods and analytical framework and then the empirical section where we discuss the perceptions on north-south/rural-urban migration, the inveigling factors as well as remittances and conditions for remittances. The last section presents the conclusions.

2. Patterns and trends of North-South migration in Ghana

Northern Ghana is a composite name for the three northern regions in Ghana (made up of Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions). Conceptually, northern Ghana reflects an area en-block, but in specific terms, the study focuses on Nandom, the capital town of the Nandom district of the Upper West Region of Ghana with a long history of migration. The migratory behaviour of this people bears resemblance to that which pertains in the entire north of Ghana, where, as Hilson et al. (2013: 125) observed, ‘scores of skilled residents and youth’ migrate southwards ‘in search of more remunerative employment’. Adaawen and Owusu (2013) corroborate this view and observe that these migrants bear strong anticipation of earning income to be able to remit to support and improve the well-being of relations back home (see also van der Geest, 2010).

Historically, the north-south migratory phenomenon in Ghana fits into the huge spectacle of the migratory phenomenon and the permanent stranger communities, the so-called zongos in Segou, Kano, Kong, Sokoto, Salaga and Ouagadougou, among others as reported by Skinner (1963) across the West African sub-region. In a paper on West African migration, Cleveland (1991, p.228) also shows how local migration in response to food shortages, lack of cultivable land and encroachment by neighbouring tribes, among others, was rather high compared to long term/distance migration down south. Evidence of long distance migration was tied to military movements to outside one’s state, slave raiding and trading across the Sahara. This

\(^{10}\) This is very much the case in the northern Ghana where the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) project and other commercial farming projects are challenged because of the lack of man power even though some farm managers pay higher daily wages than national minimum wage.
phenomenon, similar to what pertained to other ethnic groups at the time, often led to the movement of entire clans, villages and even ethnic groups in order to escape the depredation of internecine wars (Agyei and Ofosu-Mensah, 2009; Amenumey, 2008; Buah, 1967).

Later, with the advent of the European international trade in African slaves in the sixteenth century, long distance trade-related northern migration was extended to the south of Ghana. In this long distance migration, warriors and traders were the two identifiable actors. In the 18th and 19th centuries, wars between the Ashanti state and the northern states of Mamprusi, Dagomba and Gonja lands, as well as slave raiding activities, together encumbered any form of large-scale voluntary migration from the north to southern Ghana. Colonisation of the northern territories, however, re-configured the face of this migratory phenomenon, introducing forced labour recruitment from northern Ghana to southern mines, railway construction sites and related activities (Tanle, 2013; Yaro, 2006; Songsore and Denkabe, 1995; Thomas, 1973). Following this, was the era of voluntary migration of northerners to southern cocoa growing areas which is continuing (Tanle, 2013; Anarfi et al. 2003; Songsore 2003; Songsore and Denkabe 1995).

Annual population growth for northern Ghana shows that migration gradually increased during the course of the twentieth century with temporary declines in the 1970s and 1980s. As with the annual population growth, van der Geest (2011a), using longitudinal census data from 1931 to year 2000 (Figure 1) reports that there was steady growth in north-south migration in Ghana with incremental trend, except in the 1970-1984 inter-censusal period. Decline in the 1970-1984 inter-censusal period was followed with an extremely sharp increase in the 1984-2000 inter-censusal period. Disaggregated regional level out-migration data from the Ghana Statistical Service (2005) shows that, of the three northern regions, Upper West has the highest out-migration rate of 26.9%, followed by the Upper East region with 22.2% and the Northern region (13.0%).

11 The1970s and 1980s in Ghana’s history were periods when the country experienced extreme economic and political challenges. In almost the entire period of the 1970s and 1980s, the country was under military governments (Supreme Military Council (SMC I&II 1972-1979, Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) 1979, Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) 1981-1992). Additionally in these periods, the country encountered serious economic challenges, which were made worse by the 1983 fire disasters, the 1983 and 1985 mass deportation of Ghanaians from Nigeria, among others. In all these, southern Ghana, the main destination for northern migrants was affected, thus making it less attractive for northern migrants. Additionally, some northern migrants refrained from migrating.
These statistics, together with those of the other administrative regions in Ghana, make internal migration substantially more important in numbers and in remittances, than international migration. The three regions together are also the least preferred destinations for internal migrants in Ghana. Regional level in-migration analysis for 1995-2000 shows that, the Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions were the least preferred destinations for internal migrants in Ghana. The food crop producing middle belt, the cocoa frontier in the Southwest, and the cities of Kumasi and Accra are the prime destination areas of migrants from these three Northern regions (Castaldo, et al., 2012; van der Geest, 2011b; 2011a; GSS, 2005). Against this historical background, we draw on the discourse on north-south migration in Ghana to examine the complexities and subtle shades of viewpoints associated with the movement of Nandom youths from the Northern region) to Accra, the capital of Ghana. We focus on the perceptions and motivations for mobility and also discuss the eventual impacts of the migratory action on the Nandom community.

3. Methods & analytical framework

The data for this paper were generated from six months (November 2011-April 2012) of formal and informal interactions/conversations with Nandom migrants in Accra. These migrants, organized into three associations, namely Nandom Youth Forum, Nandom Students Association and ‘Tierber’ Association, provided an empirical setting for examining the issues under investigation. Interactions with the migrants involved visits to meetings of the associations, formal and informal conversations, as well as semi-regular observations, among others. Given that the focus of the study was to explore the interconnections of migration perception, migration predisposition and migration impacts, the interactions with Nandom youth migrants emphasized the distinctive imperatives of these issues. Members of the three youth associations are representative of the migrant youth of Nandom because, as evidenced in
The dynamics of north-south migration in Ghana: Perspectives of Nandom migrants in Accra

existing studies (see for example van der Geest, 2011a; Antwi-Bosiakoh, 2010; Twumasi-Ankrah, 1995), most migrants, upon arriving in their migration destination, join these associations as a measure to cope with the conditions they are likely to or will face in the new area, accessing all manner of benefits and entitlements provided for by the associations (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2012). Many of these migrants remain in these associations as long as they stay in the migration destination area.

Leaders and members of the associations were spoken to and interacted with and after agreeing to participate in the study, they helped in recruiting some of the members. We initially thought of covering all members of the associations (thus using the memberships of the associations as frames for sampling) but problems relating to non-attendance of meetings and unwillingness on the part of some members weighed heavily on us. Thus, we ended up relying on the willingness of those present in meetings. A questionnaire was the main instrument employed for the data collection and was administered in different forms, to leaders and members of the associations. A total of 110 questionnaires were administered. However, 96 were retrieved eventually for the analysis; 36 from Nandom Students Union (33 members and 3 leaders), 32 from Tieber Association (29 members and 3 leaders), and 28 from Nandom Youth Forum (25 members and 3 leaders). In all, three (3) associations, ninety-six (96) respondents made up of nine (9) leaders and eighty-seven (87) members were involved in the study (Table 1). Recruitment of both leaders and associations members into the study was influenced by attendance in meetings as interactions/conversations with them often took place before and after their meetings.

Table 1: Composition of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associations</th>
<th>G1*</th>
<th>G2**</th>
<th>G3***</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Nandom Students Union; ** Tieber Association; *** Nandom Youth Forum

The respondents ranged in duration of stay in Accra and length of time in the associations from less than one month to 15 years. There was also a variation with regards to experience and social connections within the urban milieu. The very young and recent arrivals had limited experience and social connections compared with the older and more experienced migrants in Accra. Simply put, older migrants showed appreciable familiarity within the urban space and often had much more sophisticated social networks (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2010).

Akin to what many social researchers do, we spent time with the migrants in their
meetings and administering questionnaires and developed our analytic approach in the process. In this process, we blended the case method principles with attempts to improve ideas about the migration perception, migration predisposition and migration impacts of Nandom youth migration to southern Ghana, thereby allowing empirical analysis to be driven by empirical observations, what has come to be termed as grounded theory (Sheridan and Storch, 2009; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). We conceptualised migration perception to be significant in the entire migratory project as it provided a platform for gauging the migration benefits, both real and imagined. Depending on the outcome of the perceptions, actors were assumed to respond appropriately. Thus we posed two questions as follows: how do positive perceptions of rural-urban/north-south migration implicate outcomes of migration? And how are negative perceptions of migration in rural north of Ghana affect the pursuit of migration as a livelihood enhancement strategy? We argued that whichever case it was - whether positive or negative - the effects of the decision regarding migration came back to the community in the form of remittances, among others, as impacts.

We provide a further explanation of our conceptualization of the phenomenon under discussion in Figure 2, which links migration perception and motivation among the people of Nandom to migration decisions and outcomes and how these (the outcomes of migration decisions) affect families, households and individuals in the sending area (Nandom) as well as reinforcing migration perceptions. As explained by Ackah and Medvedev (2012), internal migration in Ghana is driven by individual and community factors, which they describe as pull and push factors respectively. They further explain that younger and more educated individuals tend to have a higher propensity to migrate, as we found in our study (see also van der Geest, 2010: 610).

Since the focus of this study is Nandom migrants, the study rightly fits into the label of rural-urban migration analysis in terms of perception and motivation, decision to migrate, the outcome of migration and its socio-economic effects. In Figure 2, we demonstrate that the sending area (Nandom) is a deprived area in the Upper West region of Ghana with low access to basic necessities of life. The region is among the poorest regions of Ghana and the youth generally migrate to urban areas in the south. Thus, the relatively poor socio-economic conditions serve as push factors that drive the migration perceptions among the people, especially the youth. These perceptions (positive and negative) further produce migration motivation, which is the desire to be successful, to support family and to tap into opportunities offered by urban centres (Accra in this instance). These internal motivations are what Ackah and Medvedev (2012) describe as the pull factors. In 2011, van der Geest (p. 69) reported that the motivation to migrate from the northern part of Ghana is largely due to what he describes as “poor agro-ecological conditions” in the area (see also Boakye-Yiadom, 2008).
Figure 2: Conceptual model

Source: Authors’ Construct

Having sufficient motivation further leads to the migration decision, which is either long term or seasonal in nature and results in migration outcomes in the form of socio-economic benefits that affect not only the individual migrants but also their families, households and communities in the sending area (Nandom) through material and non-material remittances. It is significant to note that Asante (1995) observed that remittances by migrants in urban areas to their relations in rural areas are significant contributors to the welfare of family members and in reducing the welfare gap between rural and urban communities. This was confirmed by Boakye-Yiadom (2008) in a related study that posited that the positive outcome of rural-urban migration is felt not only on the migrants but also on the welfare of their families and households through remittances (See also van der Geest, 2010). Thus, we show in our framework, the arrow leading from migration outcome to the sending area as well as migration perception to demonstrate the fact that it is these outcomes that reinforce the migration perceptions and consequently the motivation to migrate.

Our study outcome therefore supports the migration optimist view of de Haas (2006) and supported by van der Geest (2010) that under certain circumstances, out-migration becomes a catalyst to economic development through investments and remittances of migrants. While there is also the pessimist view of out-migration, which emphasizes the role of out-migration in perpetuating under-development in the sending area, our study supports the migration optimist view. However, in recognition of the need to create jobs for the youth and to retain manpower in the northern
part of Ghana in particular and to stem the out-migration of the youth to the south (notwithstanding the optimistic view of migration), for the overall development of the area, state interventions like the Savanna Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) and Ghana Youth Employment and Entrepreneurial Development Authority (GYEEA) were instituted. Our view is that these may have long lasting effects in reducing the phenomenon of north-south migration only by sustained effort and in conjunction with other interventions in health, education, housing, infrastructural development, improved agriculture, and particularly entrepreneurial development.

As noted by Guo, Akudugu and Al-Hassan (2013), the socio-economic circumstances of the northern part of Ghana as well as institutional effectiveness will determine the success of the initiatives of SADA (See also Al-Hassan and Diao, 2007; Shepherd, Gyimah-Boadi, Gariba, Plagerson and Musa, 2006).

4. The case study of Nandom migrants in southern Ghana

This paper focuses on the Nandom migrants in Accra, which is a microcosm of migrants from northern Ghana. Conceptually, the paper drifts from the entire northern Ghana to place emphasis on the specific study population of Nandom migrants. Respondents identified themselves as coming from Nandom, a broad convenient way of identification which incorporates people from adjoining villages but also others with different ethnic affiliations but have migrated from Nandom to Accra. The survey covered Nandom youth migrants (n=96), comprised of males (64.6%; n=62) and females (35.4%; n=34) in three different associations in Accra. The ages of the migrants ranged between 18-35 years with the majority being between 24-27 and 31-35 years. Most of the migrants had attained high level education before leaving Nandom or after they had settled in Accra. The majority had senior high school education (22.9%; n=22) with several others having had university education (18.7%; n=18), post-graduate education (16.6%; n=16) and teacher training education (14.5%; n=14). About a third of the respondents were engaged in teaching related jobs with the rest engaged in a myriad occupational activities including trading, nursing, civil service jobs, security workers, among others.

a) Perceptions on north-south/rural-urban migration

We explored the perceptions of the migrant respondents on their migratory behaviour. First, we identified two strands of migration, seasonal and long-term migration, and while some migrants suggested positive perceptions on seasonal migration including investment in productive activities and sending of remittances back home, particularly to take care of medical expenses of sick relatives, there were other seasonal migrant youths indicating that migration allows them to return home during the rainy season to help with the seasonal farming activities. Thus seasonal migration allowed the
migrants to be more useful all year round, in their own native lands when there was favourable season for agricultural activities and then embarking on migration during unfavourable season where they could be more useful doing something other than farm work. In this argument, there is also the traditional notion of conservation and regeneration of arable lands, similar to those Briamoh (2004) proffered on seasonal migration and land-use change in Ghana where woodlands were converted to agricultural lands. Respondents also pointed out that some of the money they make as seasonal migrants are mostly (but not always) used for the payment of their bride wealth and also to buy food for the family. The migrant youths also observed that some seasonal migrants who make it economically are able to pay hospital bills and fees of their siblings.

Some negative perceptions of seasonal migration were also identified, including the view that these migrants often return home with HIV/AIDS from the place to which they migrate and the fact that they are poorly accommodated in the destination areas. They also observed that some migrants use their money on unproductive activities like alcoholism and womanising, observations which resonate well with those of Dungumaro (2013) who, writing on female migration in Tanzania found that families expecting to see improvement in their lives following the migration of their daughters, actually identified no improvements in their financial status and in addition, found negative impacts ranging from health (care for the HIV positive returning migrants) to socio-economic shortfalls (having to care for the fatherless children they return with).

Discussions with the respondents also uncovered some of the deplorable conditions in which seasonal migrants live away from their origin areas including poor sanitation. It appears that seasonal migrants face the kind of challenges they face because of the itinerant nature of their migratory behaviour – moving forth and back in response to changing seasons – which compared with the more permanent migrants, does not make for firm/concrete decisions on living conditions. They are unable to invest more in this area, a fact which is also explained by the itinerary nature of the kind of work they do and the income they earn in the destination area.

In relation to long term migrants, the discussions focussed on their return behaviours and how these impact on their identity and status back home. While some of these long term migrants are able to enhance their status back in their communities through certain good gestures such as building houses, paying school fees and hospital bills of people in their village, there are others who neither visit their communities nor provide support for even their extended families in any way. Such long term migrants, according to van der Geest (2010), lose their identity due to these practices.

The perception of the migrant youth on returned migrants was also assayed. Here, the migrant youths argued that most returning migrants plan very well by investing
in their home area, especially in non-farm activities, such as grinding mills (van der Geest, 2010). These well planned return migrants, some migrant youth (n=32/68; 47%) declared, were mostly workers who had gone on pension and also business men who had decided to returned home. However, some of the migrant youth (n=27/69; 39.7%) remarked that the inability to cope with the economic exigencies in Southern Ghana can be used as an explanation for the return of some of these migrants. These returning migrants are therefore perceived to be burdens on their extended family members at home and as such, they are seen to be no better than the non-migrants.

An overarching perspective on migration was largely positive (79.1%\textsuperscript{12} n=96). Even for the few who responded negatively (20.9%; n=20), the general impression was that, migration is now unavoidable, similar to what Johnson (2008) refers to as ‘involuntary immobility’. Whether one desires it or not, whether one appraises it positively or negatively, whether one wants to migrate or not, it is nigh impossible for an average youth to decide otherwise, as the act of migration is deemed almost a rite of passage.

b) Inveigling factors for Nandom migrants in Accra

Caldwell (1968), after a survey of migration intentions of some rural areas in Ghana, indicated that the highest proportion of persons planning a first migration to the towns were found in the 15-19 year age groups while a ninth of males and a tenth of females said they intended to migrate. He further argues that the high proportion of young adults in town populations is partly due to the fact that most initial migrations are made between 15 and 25 years of age. Consistent with Caldwell’s study, analyses of our data also show that our respondents are generally youthful, majority of them (75%) between the ages of 24-27 and 31-35 years.

In terms of education, our respondents have a fairly good level of education majority (senior high: n=22; 22.9%, university: n=18; 18.7%, post-graduate: n=16; 16.6%, teacher training: n=14; 14.5%). Related to educational level is the propensity to migrate. It is when a person has attained some level of education and/or training that he/she is more likely to move to the urban area in search of a job. Caldwell (1969) posits that the educated person in Ghana is perceived as someone who belongs to the city. Similarly, Twumasi-Ankrah (1995) states that the school curricula has undermined the traditional rural order by failing to teach the requisite skills for adaptation to the indigenous social environment and, as such, education at all levels has orientated the recipients to town-life. Nukunya (2003) also argues that the parents and community

\textsuperscript{12} Confidence level is 8.13, indicating high standard error which is expected given the size of sample used. By convention, large samples produce estimates closer to the population compared to smaller samples.
of the school leaver do not expect him/her to remain with them in the village after graduation. They are therefore forced to migrate to the urban areas in search of jobs after their education and/or training.

Consequently, the predisposing factors to migration were examined from two dimensions, namely, the push and pull factors. Most respondents indicated that the unavailability or the poor quality of certain facilities in the rural area contributed to their decision to migrate to the urban areas. Thus, according to Caldwell (1969), most migrants move to the urban areas in response to the ‘vagaries’ of rural living (see also Boakye-Yiadom, 2008). The majority of our respondents (62.5%; n=60/96) pointed to the unavailability/poor quality of certain facilities in the rural areas as the factor that forced them to migrate to the southern urban areas where these facilities are generally to be found, including good quality health care, quality education, good roads and transport, telecommunication facilities. Other respondents (35.4%; n=34/96) had a different view, arguing that the quality of some of these facilities is sometimes the same everywhere in the country. For instance, they noted that though the internet is easily accessible in the urban centres, sometimes the quality of service is always as poor as the few internet facilities in the village. This, they claim, applies to other facilities such as water, health care, telecommunication, roads and electricity, among others. These respondents also suggested that some people migrate to avoid the interference by extended family members in their marital affairs or to know ‘new places, new people’ and or to acquire ‘new ideas’. Hence, the unavailability of certain facilities in the rural areas was not the only predisposing factor.

Boakye-Yiadom (2008) argues that the favourable factors associated with the place of destination tend to pull potential migrants from their areas of origin to the place of destination. Our analyses revealed that the pull factors were equally mixed. While some of the respondents agreed that some of the facilities in the urban areas attracted them, others disagreed. In a discussion with some of the members of the youth associations it emerged that in the urban area one can easily access the head offices of some government departments or companies. They also claimed that the desire to get good quality education for their children and easy access to health facilities (both public and private) pulled them to Accra. Some also declared that it is easier for one to travel abroad in Accra, hence their decision to migrate. The factors that predispose people to migrate from the village to the city varied from one person to another. Inevitably, it is possible to argue that different factors motivate different people to migrate. Most of the respondents (64.6%; n=62/96) however suggested that the availability of certain facilities in the urban area facilitated their decision to migrate to the urban areas while 35.3%; n=34/96 of the respondents disagreed.
4.1. Remittances and conditions for remittances

i) Types of remittances

The evolving relationship between migrants and non-migrants/communities of origin is better captured in terms of the overall ‘suitcase’ of material and non-material goods, also termed remittances, that migrants send back home. These remittances, as Boccagni and Decimo (2013) have argued, sometimes have diverse and even contrasting meanings. Besides, these remittances also come in different categories, material, non-material, financial (economic), non-financial, social, etc, thereby reinforcing the diverse and contrasting meanings they engender. In Ghana, Twumasi-Ankrah (1995) has posited that, although Ghanaian elites in cities and other urban areas tend to modify their extended kinship obligations and interaction with their place of origin, the very successful ones show varying degrees of commitment to their homeland and kin by providing different kinds of remittances. He further argues that after achieving whatever there is to aspire for in their urban sojourn, they usually return home for reconciliation with those they deserted. Some build houses, contribute materially to major community projects and also help to educate young members of the extended family through remittances.

In line with these, Primavera (2005) has identified three kinds of remittances. The first is financial remittances - monies earned by the migrant in the region of destination which is sent to family or friends in the region of origin. Financial remittances help to cushion the income of the rural dwellers and in some extreme cases, rural dwellers depend solely on the financial support of their migrant relatives. The second type of remittance takes the form of material items e.g. food or goods brought or sent back to the region of origin and the third type being social remittance in the form of ideas, behaviours, identities and social capital that flow from receiving to sending country communities and vice versa (see also van Der Geest, 2003).

Consistent with the extant discourse, we also identify different categories of remittances from Nandom migrants in Accra flowing northwards to their community of origin. More than three-quarters (77%; n=74/96) of our respondents admitted that they usually send money back home. However, the remaining 23%; n=22/96 of the respondents stated that they do not send money back home (Table 2). In addition to monetary/financial remittances, a high percentage of the respondents (83.3%) suggested that they usually send material remittances in the form of goods such as clothes, footwear of all kinds, gadgets, among others. Food and other material items are sometimes sent home but in most cases financial resources (remittances) are used to procure them. Thus, financial remittance, because of its distinctive trait of being a medium for the exchange of goods and services, has a social value and can also assume a social form. As with the existing literature on remittances, non-remittance may be (but not always), due to the fact that, the migrants are unemployed in their destination (see for example Ackah and Medvedev, 2010).
Table 2: Distribution of remittance types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Remittance types</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial (money)</td>
<td>77%; n=74/96</td>
<td>23%; n=22/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material (e.g. food, clothes, foot-</td>
<td>83.3%; n=80/96</td>
<td>16.7%; n=16/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wares, gadgets, etc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funerals</td>
<td>93%; n=89/96</td>
<td>7%; n=7/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School fees, weddings</td>
<td>85.4%; n=82/96</td>
<td>14.6%; n=14/96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total**</td>
<td>84.7%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Weighted percentage responses

Remittance also took the form of support for specific social activities back home. As observed by van der Geest (2003), migrants make specific contributions to support the funeral ceremony back home. Our analyses show that 93% of the respondents contributed towards funerals while the remaining 7% indicated that they do not contribute toward funerals. Additionally, 85.4% of the respondents revealed that they support the payment of school fees and other social activities like wedding ceremonies, payment of bride wealth and hospital bills, in addition to the ideas they contribute on these. In some cases, money is given specifically to support these activities, while in other cases, financial remittances for different purposes are channelled into these social activities. Again from this line of thinking, we identify financial remittances to be endowed with a certain potential expenditure value which aids in its conversion, not only into social value/remittances, but also into other material forms of remittances. For example when used to procure farming inputs by non-migrant relations to improve agricultural practices and also improve livelihoods back home, financial remittances translate into both material and social remittances.

ii) Frequency and recipients

The responses of the migrants varied in respect to the frequency at which they remitted, as well as the beneficiaries. Remittances in support of certain activities - school fees, hospital bills, funeral ceremonies, etc., were generally given just when they were needed - at the spur of the moment. For instance, when someone suddenly fell sick, migrant relations were called upon to support financially in order to pay for the hospital bills. Also, rural dwellers made intermittent visits to their migrant relatives in the urban centres and when they were ready to return to the rural areas, their migrant relatives often gave them money and clothes, among other goods. In short, most remittances are given intermittently.
Though the recipients of remittances vary from one migrant to the other, most recipients of remittances are family relations (either extended or nuclear family members). Additionally, migrants may also remit to their friends in the village. Migrants who do not remit are mostly seen as people who have alienated themselves from their families in the village. Remittances therefore serve the function of strengthening the bond between family members who have migrated and those who remain in the rural area.

**iii) Conditions for remittances**

Migrants are often faced with forced labour, low wages, poor working conditions, as well as absence of social protection and other forms of exploitation (ILO, 2004). For these reasons, some migrants, as argued by Ackah and Medvedev (2010), do not remit because they have not had the opportunity to find employment that would allow them to earn enough to be able to remit (see also, Adaawen and Owusu, 2013). Moreover, it is the case that migrants have to first pay back loans they received to enable them to migrate. In addition, van der Geest (2003) has reported that it is mostly the rural-urban educated migrants (those with a salary) rather than the rural-rural migrants who usually contribute to the payment of school fees for relatives at home. Similar findings emerge from this study. Respondents reported that there are certain conditions that propel remittance back home. These conditions include being employed (23.4%), being able to cater for an individual migrant’s financial needs (31.9%), being able to pay all bills incurred (31.9%), if they get extra money apart from what they earn (12.8%). These findings are consistent with Adaawen and Owusu (2013, p. 47) who find a significant statistical relationship between income earnings by migrants and likelihood to remit. They report that the higher a migrant’s income (generally the fact that migrants have a steady income), the more likely they will remit, thereby making income earning a key indicator for migrants’ decision to remit back home.

4.2. Effects of rural urban/north-south migration on Nandom Community

Migrants affect their origin communities in diverse ways, both positively and negatively (Lucas, 2007). In this section, we discuss the ways in which Nandom migrants in Accra affect their community with the ‘suitcase’ of material and non-material goods they send home. Undergirding the frame of discussion here is that migrant remittances engender multiple meanings and extend our understanding beyond the strict economic meaning to the socio-cultural and material dimensions (Boccagni and Decimo, 2013).

Of our 96 migrant respondents in this study, nearly 73% of them admitted they contribute to projects for the development of Nandom, consistent with the views Vargas-Lundius and Lanly (2007) and van der Geest (2003) expressed that migrants
often provide financial support, skills and knowledge to development projects in their communities of origin. The support that migrant respondents mostly provide for their communities include, farm inputs and equipment for farmers (37.1%); drilling of boreholes (25.7%); building of community toilets (25.7%), and the building of schools (11.4%). Some of these projects go a long way to improving the socio-economic life of the rural dwellers. For instance, Vargas-Lundius and Lanly (2007) have observed that the increasing financial capacity and entrepreneurial inclination of many migrants may gradually change the nature of peasant agriculture, moving it from largely subsistence to more commercial farming. This may in turn create employment opportunities for other villagers.

In addition, some of the respondents contributed collectively through the associations to which they belonged. For instance, health outreach programmes are organised by members of the Nandom youth forum on yearly basis. Through this outreach programme, doctors who have their roots traced to Nandom go to the Nandom hospital for one week to work without charging patients any amount or fee. The network of friends and colleagues workers gained through migration, also benefit the migration origin community. The case of the health outreach programmes by the Nandom youth forum help lay some claim as doctors, who are not from Nandom, sometimes willingly join their friend doctors in this health outreach programme. Members of the Nandom youth forum argued that this outreach programme seeks to improve the health conditions of the people in Nandom, and to encourage doctors to accept posting to Nandom hospital. Another project is the establishment of a radio station by some migrant youth from Nandom. The radio station which they identified as radio FREED was established in Nandom to educate and empower the people of the community and other surrounding areas. They also contribute as groups to support needy but brilliant students from Nandom.

However, 12 (12.5%) of the respondents do not or have never contributed to any community project back home. To van der Geest (2003), such migrants “forget where their roots lie” and hence do not remit to their families or community. Our analysis however shows that these are the migrants who have not been in Accra for a long period of time and have therefore not been able to find some meaningful economic activities to pursue.

Overall, a good number of our respondents (55.3%) indicated that they go home intermittently while 38.3% go home once a year. However, 6.4% of them reported that they have never gone back to Nandom to visit since they migrated to Accra. Those who visit their families back home do not stay there for a long period of time. According to some of the migrant youth, they go home during the Christmas/New Year period, funerals or for other important family gatherings. Some reported that they are able to communicate with their family members on a daily basis on phones and hence, there is no need for them to go home frequently. These revelations support
Vargas-Lundius and Lanly’s (2007) assertion that longer-term migration to cities or abroad usually means that migrants are unable to return home and engage in agricultural activities and employment during the farming seasons. For our respondents, i.e. those who responded that they have never gone back to Nandom to visit since migrating to Accra, the remittances they send home provide a clever way to convince their relations for not visiting. They proudly pointed out how, through their remittances, they maintain their presence with their relations and the general community. Thus, we see a dialectic conviction employed by the migrants to resolve a conflict that may occur because of their inability to visit home and the ways in which they tactically resolve it with their remittance package (material, non-material, financial, non-financial, social, etc.). In this way, migrants substitute the imperative to visit their relations (their physical presence) with their remittance presence.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, we have explored the perspectives of resident Nandom youth migrants in Accra on their migration to the city. We have focused on three key issues of migration perception, migration predisposing factors, and impacts of their own southern migration project on the Nandom community. We identify seasonal, long term and return migration and the multiplicity of factors undergirding them. We also identify both positive and negative perceptions apropos seasonal, long term and return migration of Nandom youths to Accra.

Emerging from this study, we discovered an evolving interaction between migrants and their non-migrant relations and community members, interactions which straddle from intangible abstracts to those that have direct bearing on both the migrants and the non-migrants in distinctive ways. Migrants (long-term and short-term), whether knowingly or unknowingly, exude some kinds of perceptions in non-migrants, perceptions which, together with others, constitute the multiplicities of predisposing factors that impact the southward migration from the north of Ghana. In other words, rural northern people’s perceptions on southward urban migration influence and implicate decisions to migrate or not to migrate among non-migrants.

Migrants who are able to make it in their new destination are better able to remit to family members back home, remittances which also serve as pull factor that persuades other people to migrate to the urban centres. The impact of migration which could be positive (remittance to family members back home) or negative (non-remit-tance and loss of able population) also informs migration perception not only for migrants themselves but also migrants’ friends and relations back home. Remittances in the form of money, goods and services go to different categories of recipients and for some scholars (see for example, Vargas-Lundius and Lanly, 2007), these remittances are beneficial not only to the families, but also to the society as a whole since they
aid in improving the livelihood of rural dwellers, as these outflows of workers and inflow of remittances, as well as the continuous exchange of goods, ideas and cultural values, have growth and development effects on the rural landscape economically, socially and culturally, among others. Our discussions on remittances therefore provide a platform for understanding the impact of the southward migratory project by Nandom migrants on the Nandom community.

References


