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# MIGRATION IN A GLOBALIZING WORLD: PERSPECTIVES FROM GHANA

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UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

JULY 2017



MIGRATION READER SERIES

First published in Ghana 2016 for THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA  
by Sub-Saharan Publishers  
P.O.Box 358  
Legon-Accra  
Ghana  
Email: saharanp@africaonline.com.gh

© University of Ghana, 2016  
P.O.Box LG 25  
Legon- Accra  
Ghana  
Tel: +233-302-500381  
website:<http://www.ug.edu.gh>

ISBN: 978-9988-550-

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## Chapter Three

### A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF MIGRATION FROM AND TO GHANA

*John Anarfi And Ofosu-Mensah Emmanuel Ababio*

#### **Abstract**

Migration has been part of human existence since creation. Many people migrate for various reasons underlying which is the element of survival or the search for an improved situation. It sometimes seems to be the only logical and rational thing to do when one is faced with situations that border on survival and is also faced with making a choice.

Keywords: Migration, Ghana, Gold mines, Northern Territories, colonial, Immigration, Emigration.

#### **1. Introduction**

Migration movements 'have been a feature of Africa in the past and are one of its most important demographical features at the present day' (Anarfi, 1982). International migration within West Africa, and between the region and the rest of the continent, dates back to time immemorial (Arhin, 1978). The trans-Saharan caravan routes are among the earliest evidence of major interaction between West and North Africa for trading and exchange of scholars (Boahen 1966). Ibn Batuta, writing in the fifteenth century, and Leo Africanus, writing later in the sixteenth century, both made mention of the peaceful movement of people across ethnic boundaries (Batuta 1929; Africanus 1896). The presence of Europeans on the West Coast from the 1400s onwards disrupted the then existing north-south movement of people and goods. However, the contact with Europeans created new patterns of movement, first through slave trade and later colonisation, within the sub-region and with the rest of the world (Boahen 1966). The new dynamics that emerged continue to the present day. Virtually all the ethnic groups in present Ghana claim to have emigrated from somewhere other than their present location (Boahen 1975). The aim of this section is to examine briefly the history of migration from and to Ghana.

## 2. Historical Development of Emigration from Ghana

Based on the available evidence, four distinct phases have been identified in the international history of migration from and to Ghana. These are:

- a period of minimal emigration (preceding 1874),
- a period of initial emigration (1874-1956),
- a phase of large-scale emigration (1957-1964),
- a period of intensification and diasporisation of Ghanaians (1965-1980s).

From pre-colonial times up to the late 1960s, Ghana enjoyed relative economic prosperity and was the destination of many migrants from neighbouring West African countries (Anarfi 1982; see below). During the period under consideration, international movement from Ghana involved a relatively small number of people, most of whom were students and professionals. Most of these movements were to the United Kingdom and other English-speaking countries due to colonial links (Anarfi, Awusabo-Asare et al., 2000). For instance, immigration data indicate that in 1967 there were only about 100 Ghanaian immigrants in Canada (Owusu, 2000). Some Ghanaian professionals also served in the public services of Gambia, Botswana and Sierra Leone. Other Ghanaians, mostly from fishing communities, were known to have migrated across international boundaries to Benin and Ivory Coast (Odotei, 2000).

The initial emigration of Ghanaians started after 1965. From that period Ghana experienced an economic crisis of an unprecedented magnitude (Anarfi, Awusabo-Asare et al., 2000). This was manifested in a balance of payments deficit, growing unemployment and social malaise. The decline of the economy made Ghana unattractive to both foreigners and citizens. The proportion of foreigners in Ghana declined from 12.3 per cent in 1960 to 6.6 per cent in 1970. This trend was reinforced by the Aliens Compliance Order of 1970, whereby non-Ghanaians without valid documents were expelled from the country. Within that period Côte d'Ivoire emerged as one of the dominant points of destination in the sub-region.

By the end of the decade, many Ghanaians were travelling outside the country in search of jobs. A majority of these emigrants were professionals such as teachers, lawyers, and administrators, some of whom were invited by countries such as Uganda, Botswana, Nigeria and Zambia to assist with their national development after independence (Anarfi, Awusabo-Asare

et al. 2000). Others returned to work in the countries where they were trained when the economic conditions in Ghana began to be unfavourable. Moreover there were those who travelled initially for education and/or training but stayed behind after their programme of study. There were also increasing numbers of Ghanaians who were born abroad and either stayed behind when their parents returned to Ghana or went back when they were old enough or could afford to travel on their own.

The phase of the large-scale emigration began in the early 1980s when unskilled and semiskilled Ghanaians emigrated out of the country in search of jobs in neighbouring West African countries (Anarfi, 1982). The number of professionals migrating also increased in response to the demand for their labour abroad and at a time when the economy had collapsed and there were shortages of basic items including detergents and food. Migration then became one of the basic survival strategies adopted by individuals and families to enable them to cope with difficult economic conditions.

In the early 1980s unofficial figures put the average number of Ghanaians who migrated into Nigeria at about 300 per day (Anarfi, 1982). By December 1980 about 150,000 Ghanaians had registered with the Ghana High Commission in Lagos. The nature of the migration was such that the country lost much of its trained personnel. For example in the early 1980s, about 13 per cent of the 163 paid up members of the Ghana Institute of Architects had addresses in Nigeria. It was also estimated that about 50 per cent of the architects from the University of Science and Technology had migrated to Nigeria. Similarly the 1975 census of Côte d'Ivoire recorded over 42,000 Ghanaians in that country. In 1986, the number of Ghanaians in Côte d'Ivoire was estimated to be between 500,000 and 800,000 (Anarfi, Awusabo-Asare et al. 2000). These figures compare with the total population of Ghana of just over 15 million in 1990.

The migration was aggravated by a loss of faith in Ghana's future due to bad governance by both the civilian and military regimes. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), formed in 1975, precipitated further Ghanaian emigration to neighbouring West African countries. One of the objectives of the regional organisation was to facilitate freedom of movement, residence and employment within the community. It is estimated that about two million Ghanaians emigrated between 1974 and 1981, mainly from the south. Another indication of the number of Ghanaians who travelled outside is derived from the estimated number of Ghanaians among people deported from Nigeria in 1983. It is

estimated that of the two million people deported from Nigeria in 1983, between 900,000 and 1.2 million were Ghanaians. (Anarfi 1982). This figure excludes professionals and their dependants who were not affected by the deportation exercise. Adeku worked out the number of Ghanaian emigrants in major world regions from the 1984 census returns (Adeku 1995). According to this analysis, the number of emigrants at that time was 39,000, and this accounted for 0.3 per cent of the total resident population. Of that number, 47 per cent were females, contrary to the popular view that women emigrate less. In fact, women dominated short distance emigration to nearby countries, accounting for 64, 57 and 56 per cent respectively of the Ghanaian emigrants in Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Togo, whereas a higher proportion of men travelled further afield. (Anarfi 1982). In terms of age, female migrants were younger on the whole than male migrants. For instance, at that time, the mean age of the female migrants fell between 15 and 24 years, while for men it was between 25 and 34 years.

The exodus of Ghanaians to neighbouring countries continued through the 1990s to recent times. Nonetheless, this most recent phase of the migration of Ghanaians is more importantly characterised by their diasporisation, which had begun in the middle of the 1980s. Van Hear classifies Ghana as one of the ten countries in Africa involved in producing a 'new diaspora' in recent times (Van Hear 1998). Since the 1990s, large numbers of Ghanaians have moved to major cities such as London, Amsterdam, Hamburg and New York (Black, Tiemoko et al., 2003). According to the UK Home Office, Ghana was among the top ten sending countries to the UK in 1996, and in the decade 1990–2001 about 21,485 Ghanaians entered the UK. Meanwhile, North America has become increasingly dominant as a destination for Ghanaians. From 1986 to 2001 49,703 Ghanaians emigrated to the US. By 2001, 104,000 Ghanaians were living in the US, whilst 14,335 were registered in Canada. (The Ghanaian diaspora also live in many more countries around the world. Data from the Ghana Immigration Service also indicate that more than 2,000 Ghanaians were deported from 58 countries around the world in 1993 (Van Hear, 1998).

A number of reasons explain this continued exodus. Overall, there is a long history of emigration from Ghana to other West African states, as well as Europe and North America, for various reasons including employment, education and training (Nuro, 1999). Initially, few of the migrants went as economic migrants. However, the increase in international out-migration in the late 1970s and early 1980s has been attributed to economic decline

and political instability (Alderman, 1994; Fosu, 1992). By the mid-1980s, the economy of Ghana was growing at a negative rate. To arrest the decline, the government introduced a Structural Adjustment Programme, which included staff redeployment and the withdrawal of subsidies on social services such as health, transport and education. The unemployment and other hardships that occurred with the withdrawal of subsidies created conditions for further emigration.

Initially, Nigeria became a major point of destination for Ghanaians. But with the expulsions of Ghanaians from Nigeria in 1983 and 1985, the destination countries of migrants became more diverse, particularly for professionals. Furthermore, some professionals took advantage of the then strong value of the Nigerian Naira to travel to Europe, America and other African countries while the semi-skilled workers tried to go wherever they could. It is estimated that between 1975 and 1981, Ghana may have lost about 14,000 qualified teachers, among them 3,000 university graduates (Rado, 1986). Both less and well qualified Ghanaians migrated to work in developing and developed countries as economic refugees, the latter group constituting the mass 'brain drain' from Ghana to the North, or what others call 'brain exchange' among developing countries. These highly qualified individuals migrated for a variety of reasons including lack of job satisfaction at place of origin, poor salary structure and prospects, and lack of motivation (Gould, 1993; Nuro, 1999).

Since the mid-1990s, there has been some evidence of return migration to Ghana. This has been attributed partly to the improvement in the Ghanaian economy vis-à-vis the economies of the neighbouring countries that once attracted Ghanaians (World Bank, 1994) as well as restrictions on Ghanaians travelling abroad (for instance, those travelling to EU countries) and repatriation of those without valid documents. Nonetheless, a second generation of Ghanaians living abroad is also growing, often settling there, but maintaining links and identifying with Ghana.

### **3. Historical Development of Migration Within Ghana and From Its Neighbours**

Like emigration, migration movements within Ghana and from the rest of the West African region date back to a period long before colonisation. During this period trading activities stimulated flows of traders from neighbouring territories, who brought ivory, kola nuts, cattle, sheep, hides of wild animals and clothes to Salaga market for sale (Wolfson, 1958).

Clapperton (1929) also describes the presence in the town of Kaiama of a caravan consisting of 'upward of 1000 men and women, and as many beast of burden on their way back to Hausaland after a long trading trip to Gonja and Ashanti.' According to Sudarkasa (1974-75), migration for the purpose of trade gained momentum in the colonial era. This situation resulted from the relative peace that prevailed in the region following the end of inter-tribal wars, and the establishment of better lines of communication. Rouch (1959) has noted that some of the migrants to Ghana, including many from Niger, Mali and Nigeria, were self-employed traders rather than wage labourers. Nypan's study of market traders in Accra also documented the presence of a sizeable population of emigrant traders from Nigeria, Niger and Mali working in the city's markets. The activities of commercial migrants continued from the pre-colonial era to the early 1970s when it dwindled as a result of the Aliens Compliance Order, as well as the enactment of Ghana Business Promotion Act number 334 of August 1, 1970, which was also used as a weapon to chase commercial migrants away from the country (Anarfi, Awusabo-Asare et al. 2000).

In addition to traders, the development of gold mines and cocoa farms from the late nineteenth century to the second half of the twentieth century country attracted many migrants. According to Amin (1974): "Of the regions which benefited from the contribution of the permanent migration, Southern Ghana is outstanding." He further stated that the migrants were predominantly unmarried young male adults who mainly went into agriculture and mining in the areas of attraction (Anarfi 1978). Mabogunje (1972) also identifies a similar pattern and explains it as a natural reaction to the geography of West Africa, which is such that the southern forest is more favourable to economic development than the savannah north. He also recognises Ghana as a major attraction for migrants in West Africa.

Labour migrants came from a variety of neighbouring countries in response to labour shortages in the colony (Ababio, 1999). For example, by the middle of 1909, the labour shortage was described by the authorities as 'acute'. The 1910 Annual Report of the West African Chamber of Mines complained that 'all the local supply of native labourers was exhausted and the industry was faced with a shortage'. This problem came about as a result of the fact that the Akan mine labourers resented underground work. They believed that underground mining was associated with unfriendly spirits. In addition, they viewed underground mining as a low status activity associated with slaves and therefore degrading. In addition, the Akan could

reasonably subsist on cultivation of traditional food crops (yams, cocoyams, cassava, bananas, plantain and green vegetables) supplemented by hunting and fishing. Consequently there was no pressing need for them to sell their labour to Europeans to be able to earn a living.

The cocoa boom of the 1930s worsened the shortage of labour to work underground, as work in the cocoa industry was more attractive than work in the mines. Workers came from Liberia and Sierra Leone, whilst even larger numbers of unskilled migrant workers were recruited from the French West African colonies of Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Togo, Ivory Coast, Mali, Benin and Nigeria. In the 1913 population census it was reported that the number of African foreigners working in the country was 4,142 (Cardinal, 1931). Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) was the main source of migrant labour in West Africa during the colonial era. Crozati (1891), who visited Mossi Country (in what is now Burkina Faso) in 1890, declared that the Mossi population 'is surprisingly dense for a Black country. There is here an enormous capital, immediately exploitable'. Albert Londres who also visited French West Africa in the 1920s reported that the Upper Volta was then considered a 'reservoir of manpower: 3 million Negroes. Everyone comes here to get them as one would go to wells for water' (Londres, 1929).

In practice, entire villages or entire clans of the people of Upper Volta moved to Ghana during the second and third decades of the century due to tribal uprising, military recruitment, forced labour and famine. An official British document puts the number of Upper Volta nationals who entered Ghana during 1927- 1928 at 120,000 (Anarfi, 1982). The 1931 population census of Ghana estimated that between 1921 and 1931 about 287,000 Upper Volta nationals moved into Ghana. Between 1948 and 1960, the percentage of the population in Ghana who were born abroad had practically doubled. In 1960, 195,000 Upper Volta nationals and 133,000 Upper Volta born persons were living in Ghana. (Anarfi 1982). The high influx of migrant labourers from the Northern Territories and Upper Volta towards the end of 1922 was the result of the outbreak of famine. Reports reaching the Chief Commissioner spoke of a growing threat of famine in north Mamprusi, Builsa and Zuarungu districts where villagers were reported to be eating grass weed. Due to the famine many young men between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five were forced to migrate in search of work in the mines (Ababio, 1999). Another reason for this migration was the need to satisfy social obligations such as the payment of dowries and bride wealth.

With the expanded cultivation of cocoa in the year following World War Two, Malians also emigrated to Ghana. Of the 350,000 Malians who were residing outside their country in 1960, as many as 19,367 were living in Ghana (Zacharia and Condé, 1978). Migrant labourers from the French West African countries migrated to work in the mines in the nineteenth century because of the French colonial government's policy of forced labour, oppressive direct taxation and corporal punishment. Between 1916 and 1917 more than 12,000 people left Ivory Coast for Ghana. Large numbers also came from Togo in 1910 with as many as 14,000 migrating from the Misahohe district alone (Ababio, 1999). The extent of the historical migration of Togo nationals to Ghana can be indirectly obtained from the 1960 population census (Table 1).

Table 1: Togo Nationals Born and Enumerated in Ghana

YEAR OF BIRTH	NUMBER ENUMERATED IN 1905-1960
1955-60	43,876
1950-55	25,856
1945-50	12,303
1940-45	6,821
1935-40	5,356
1930-35	4,151
1925-30	2,523
1920-25	587
1915-20	851
1910-15	492
1905-10	266
Before 1905	515

\*Source: Derived from Ghana Census Office, 1960 Population Census, Vol. III, Accra

Whilst movements from Upper Volta, Mali and Ivory Coast date to the early twentieth century, Nigerians were established in Ghana even at the beginning of the nineteenth century; indeed, their connection with the country goes as far back as the period of the caravan trade when Hausas were actively involved in that activity. By the second quarter of the twentieth century Nigerians constituted the largest single group among the subjects

of other British West African colonies resident in Ghana and made up a sizeable proportion of all aliens in the country (Tables 2 and 3).

**Table 2: Immigrants from Other British West African Colonies in 1931, by Province**

Colony Provinces	Gambia	Sierra Leone	Nigeria	Total
Western Province	13	1,630	6,846	8,489
Central Province	5	59	10,518	10,582
Eastern Province	7	807	24,970	25,784
Ashanti	–	299	15,036	15,335
Northern Territory	–	–	6,378	6,378
Togoland	–	13	3,955	3,968
Total	25	2,808	67,703	70,536

Source: (Cardinall, 1931)

**Table 3: Aliens Recorded by the 1931 Census**

Country of Origin	Population	%
Other British West Africa Colonies	70,536	24.4
French West Africa Colonies	196,282	67.9
Liberia	6,812	2.3
Unclassified Areas	15,587	5.4
Total	289,217	100.0

Source: (Cardinall, 1931)

After independence in 1957, Ghana continued to attract migrants due to its relative affluence. In addition, the foreign policy of the government was geared towards the promotion of pan-Africanism; hence Ghana became a haven for a number of African freedom fighters and pan Africanists. Thus, in the 1960 census, non -Ghanaians accounted for 12 per cent of the

enumerated population. Migrants from other African countries constituted 98 per cent of the foreign population (Anarfi, Awusabo-Asare et al., 2000).

Apart from the labour migration into the country, there are also significant historical movements of people within Ghana itself. First, the movement of cash crop farmers within the country began well into the latter part of the nineteenth century. For example Akwapem farmers were migrating by the middle of the nineteenth century to empty lands where they could grow oil palm and subsistence crops, palm products then ranking as the leading cash crop of the area (Hill, 1963). Thus, long before colonisation, migratory movements in Ghana were strongly determined by the distribution of economic opportunities. Political exiles also moved out of the Asante region in 1818, 1824, 1832 and again in 1874 -5. After the 1890s, private individuals were also attracted to southern Ghana by the seemingly unlimited economic possibilities held out in an era of legitimate trade by the vast expanse of fertile, unoccupied agricultural lands of the region. (Addo-Fening 1987).

Second, not only did migrant workers seek out economic opportunities in agricultural work, but they were actively recruited by the colonial authorities. The reduction in the supply of Kru labourers due to the development of rubber plantation in Liberia (Szerezewski, 1965) and the unwillingness of the Akans to work underground made the mining companies consider importation of unskilled labourers from the north. The Northern Territories were deemed by the colonial regime to have little direct economic value; hence in the 1920s Governor Guggisberg designated the territories as a labour reserve for the supply of cheap labour for the mines and general labour in the cities in the South (Guggisberg, 1920). The period 1919 to 1924 saw the acceleration of labour recruitment in the Northern Territories. When Guggisberg launched his development plan in November 1919 he calculated that a labour force of 27,000 men would be needed and suggested that a special recruitment scheme be organised in the Northern Territories.

During that period the cocoa industry also required intensive labour and provided inducements in the form of high wages (Ababio, 1999). The period of inactivity in the Northern Territories corresponds to the time of peak agricultural demand in the cocoa regions of the forest zone, so that labourers from the Northern Territories could migrate to the south to work on a seasonal basis and return home for the single growing season. This form of migration has been occurring in the country since the beginning of the twentieth century. For example in 1945 about 46,000 labourers

migrated from the Northern Territories to the south, and by 1954, this kind of seasonal migration involved more than 200,000 labourers from the Northern Territories (Abdulai, 1999).

The decline in the cocoa industry in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in a dramatic fall in this kind of seasonal migration. As a result of the fall in demand for seasonal labour on cocoa farms, most of the seasonal migrants from the North found employment either in the informal sectors of the urban centres or plantations in neighbouring countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Togo (Abdulai, 1999).

Permanent migration, on the other hand, mostly involves the movement of rural dwellers to other rural or urban areas for long periods of time. While in 1960 roughly 23 per cent of the population could be classified as urban, the proportion is now over 35 per cent. Migration from rural areas accounted for much of this growth, especially in the 1960s. This was largely due to the growth of industrial activities in the urban centres in the 1960s. Thereafter, high rates of natural increase in the urban population became a significant factor in urbanisation.

While those with skills and an adequate level of education move to the national and regional capitals, the less educated have continued to move instead to the mining and cocoa growing areas. According to the 1960 census, the Northern, Upper and Volta regions recorded net losses of enumerated native born of 157,000 and 95,000 respectively, while Ashanti, Greater Accra and Brong Ahafo imported almost 100,000 people each. The 1984 census report, however, reveals that Northern Region, Greater Accra and Brong Ahafo recorded net increases in their shares of the total population, while the rest of the regions experienced declines. Quite significant is Greater Accra's share of the total population, which increased from 7.3 per cent in 1960 to 10 per cent in 1970 and further to 11.6 per cent in 1984.

According to Abdul-Korah (2006), the 1980s marked the beginning of a significant shift in the pattern of Dagaaba migration to southern Ghana. Instead of the mining centres of Obuasi (Asante Region) and Prestea and Tarkwa (Western Region) respectively, many Dagaaba men and women have been migrating to predominantly agricultural areas in the Bono-Ahafo Region when they either lost their job or retired. The Dagaaba of the Upper West region have migrated to the southern part of Ghana in various capacities since the pre-colonial period. However, since the annexation of the Northern Territories (NTs) to the Gold Coast colony in 1901, the

nature and pattern of Dagaaba migration to southern Ghana changed and continues to change. Like all people of the then NTs, the British colonial state required the Dagaaba to contribute their labour power to colonial pursuits in the mines, plantations and other sectors of the colonial economy mainly in the southern and coastal regions of the country.

In response to this policy, the first batch of state-sponsored recruited labourers from the then North-Western Province was sent to the mines at Tarkwa in 1909. Thus, while colonial policies forced the first generation of Dagaaba migrants to migrate, others, especially after the abolition of forced labour in the Gold Coast in 1936, migrated to the south without force or coercion. Abdul-Korah (2006) posits that unlike their predecessors who migrated to the south for a different set of complex reasons, the *mass movement of Dagaaba migrants to the Bono-Ahafo Region since the 1980s is mainly due to conditions internal to their communities-ecological conditions in the North-Western Province (Upper West Region) which began to visibly deteriorate in the 1970s.*

#### **4. Main Determinants of Internal and International Migration in Ghana**

A range of individual, household, community and national factors influence migration. The high population growth rate in Ghana within the last three decades has generally increased the domestic supply of labour, and in areas like the Upper East Region, put pressure on the available cultivable land, thereby encouraging migration (Abdulai, 1999). Another factor that has influenced rural-urban migration in the country is the macro-economic environment. Through urban-biased policies, the terms of trade were turned against agriculture and the rural areas, contributing to wide rural-urban income differentials. Urban bias policies which include over-valued exchange rates, industrial protection and cheap food policies discriminated against agriculture in particular and rural areas in general. These policies suppressed farm prices and rural incomes, encouraging a shift of labour out of agricultural production and a subsequent increase in rural-urban migration. However, macro-economic and sector-specific policy reforms initiated in 1983 contributed to improving the domestic terms of trade in favour of the rural sector, thereby encouraging urban-rural migration. Rural-urban migration in the country has been largely induced by the expectation of higher wages in the destination region and is entirely consistent with the principle of comparative advantage.

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Ewusi (1986) found that depressed social conditions at the place of origin is one of the compelling motivations for rural people to migrate. However, once they decide to migrate, individual migrants base their choice of destination primarily on the economic opportunities available at that end. In other words, the social conditions prevailing at their place of origin act as a push factor while the economic opportunities available in a particular town act as the pull factor attracting migrants to that locality (Johnson 1974). One survey of internal migration and urbanisation in Ghana revealed that over 80 per cent of the respondents gave economic reasons for migrating from their previous locations, suggesting that income differentials contribute significantly to internal migration in the country. The pattern of internal migration in the country has also been influenced by the stark differences in the levels of poverty between north and south, as well as their respective capacities to respond to new economic opportunities.

The pattern of socio-economic development in Ghana has created three distinct geographic identities. These are the coastal zone dominated by Accra-Tema and Sekondi-Takoradi; a middle zone with Kumasi as its centre; and the northern savannah zone with Tamale as the core. The coastal zone, as the most industrialised and urbanised area in the country, has been the focus of internal migration since the beginning of the last century. With the opening of Takoradi as a deep-sea port in 1927, Sekondi-Takoradi became another point of attraction for migrants in addition to Accra along the coast. In the 1960s, the development of Tema port and township shifted the focus of migration back to the Accra-Tema metropolitan area. The middle zone, with its forest, mining and agricultural potential, was the centre of the old Ashanti Empire. With its natural endowment, the middle belt became an area of rapid socio - economic development in the 1980s. Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti region, became a dominant centre in the country and became the focus of migration from the savannah belt (Nabila, 1986).

Accounting for about half the land area of Ghana, the northern savannah zone has, until quite recently, been a net out migration area. With its seasonal rainfall and absence of any large scale industrial activities, and general neglect, the area has provided labour for the cocoa and the mining industries in the middle zone as well as to the developed coastal zone. The relative affluence of the coastal zone and the middle belt created focal points for migration, first within the country and subsequently outside the country. The rapid expansion of the economy in the 1960s also provided

impetus for international migration, initially to pursue further education in most cases (Nabila, 1986).

Besides wage differentials, the disproportionate opportunities for development and welfare in towns have made them relatively more attractive. This has included investment in productive enterprises such as factories and investment in infrastructure such as water supplies or medical services. This and many actions by the government to make urban areas more attractive have encouraged rural-urban migration (Ewusi, 1986). As in many other African countries, most of the post-independence investment in projects outside agriculture were part of the then government's industrialisation strategy. Most of the public corporations established to create employment were sited in urban areas, and as such attracted labour from the rural areas. For example, the Greater Accra Region, which is the most urbanised region in the country, recorded a population growth rate of 5.6 per cent between 1960 and 1970, while the national average was 2.4 per cent. However, a 1960 sample survey showed that the region had the least natural increase, indicating that a large proportion of the growth of the population in 1970 was due to migration from other areas (Abdulai, 1999).

Relative to the share of the sector in the entire economy (on average about 51 per cent of GDP between 1980-91), budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector was particularly low. For instance, in spite of the government's pledge to increase support to the sector, budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector declined from 10.4 per cent in 1983, to as low as an average of about 4 per cent per annum in 1986-90. Other direct urban-biased policies such as minimum wage legislation were also implemented to protect the interest of organised urban employees. These minimum wage rates, which in some cases were put above the market clearing wage rate, further reinforced rural-urban wage differentials, thus encouraging rural-urban migration (Abdulai, 1999).

An additional factor that has encouraged increased inter-sectorial labour movement is the decline in the costs of transportation and communication. The extension of the road network into rural areas has significantly decreased the cost of movement of people. In many cases migrants are no longer faced with an unknown destination as a result of the improved communication systems. The easier movement back and forth from rural and urban areas serves to improve information and as such lowers the risks of movement, thereby increasing the chances of rural residents locating jobs in the urban centres (Abdulai, 1999).

Beals and Menezes (1970) have shown how reduced transport costs between the southern and the northern parts of Ghana accelerated the North-South migration in the late 1960s and 1970s. De Graft Johnson (1974) also showed that the number of migrants between Greater Accra and each of the remaining regions in the country is inversely proportional to the distance between them. This suggests that distance between the source and the destination and by implication transport costs have influenced the inflow of migrants from the other regions into Greater Accra. Meanwhile a study of migration from the Upper East region showed that migration in the late 1980s was taking around half of all working age males, and 15 per cent of working age females to southern Ghana for periods of at least a year (Cleveland, 1991). The World Bank Voices of the Poor Report on Ghana argues that urban and rural young people feel they have no choice but to leave home in search of work, since successful generation of remittances is likely to make the difference between food security and a lack of it for their families (Kunfaa, 1999).

In addition to the factors discussed above, family oriented issues have also contributed to migration. Women migrate to join their husbands. A nationwide survey conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service in 1995 revealed that as much as 64 per cent of the rural-urban migrants moved to join their families. Similarly, data from the Ghana Living Standards Survey of 1997/98 show 60 per cent of migrants reporting marriage or other family reasons as the cause of their migration, with only 25 per cent reporting work reasons. The results obtained, however, need to be interpreted with caution: for example, the GSS household samples included members who were at least seven years old, whilst the GLSS included all household members over 15. In both cases, this means many dependents of parents who migrated for economic reasons may be classified as having moved for family reasons. The barriers to international migrations have also influenced labour migration and urbanisation in the country.

As rural dwellers find it increasingly difficult to migrate beyond the borders of the country, they are compelled to settle in the urban areas, provided the perceived conditions are better than those at the place of origin (Abdulai, 1999).

As indicated earlier, policy reforms initiated in 1983 altered the domestic terms of trade in favour of the rural sector. This encouraged reverse migration, as urban dwellers returned to the farm. A survey by the Ghana Statistical Service published with the World Bank on current

and prior employment for over 8,000 individuals in Ghana revealed that among individuals who have changed occupations during the period, those moving from non-agricultural jobs into agricultural jobs outnumbered those moving in the opposite direction by a ratio of two-to-one (Abdulai, 1999). These survey data suggest a significant reverse migration from urban to rural areas after the reform programme was initiated, although not all agricultural occupations imply rural residence nor do all non-agricultural occupations imply urban residence. A study by Oti Boateng et al. (1990) using 1987-88 household survey data showed that over 65 per cent of the total population that fell below a poverty line of about US\$165 per annum were at that time based in rural areas, while 27 per cent were based in urban areas excluding Accra.

The transition of Ghana from the status of a net immigration country to one of net emigration in the last two decades has been attributed to internal political instability, economic mismanagement and external conditions unfavourable to the Ghanaian economy (Rimmer, 1993; Peil, 1995). It runs counter to the usual transition of countries from net emigration to net immigration (Findlay, Jones et al., 1998). However, whilst national mismanagement and associated economic and political problems provided the 'push' for this unusual migration transition, the booming economies of neighbouring African countries and in Europe also constituted a 'pull' for migration (Anarfi, Awusabo-Asare et al., 2000). In addition, one important factor relevant in the Ghanaian context is the sex of the individual involved in the migration phenomenon. Societal norms and traditions of most tribes (if not all) in Ghana are such that there is a bias in favour of men, and discrimination against women. It is possible that this discrimination could be reflected in the migration decision-making process, by making it more difficult for women to move (Treveh, 1997), although the evidence suggests that women do migrate as well as men. (Anarfi et al, 2000).

## 5. Key Gaps

Despite a considerable body of material on migration within and from Ghana, some gaps remain in the literature and in public policy. First, it is clear that in terms of recent studies, more attention has been paid to international migration than to movement within the country, even though the latter remains significant and is almost certainly more in reach of the poorest sections of the population. The same is broadly true of policy towards migration which, as can be seen in the previous section, is overwhelmingly

orientated at present towards international migrants. Second, the pattern of diversification of migration movements appears to apply not only to international migration (in terms of new countries of destination) but also to internal migration, where there is some evidence that traditional patterns of rural-urban migration and movement to cocoa and coffee plantation areas are breaking down. One interesting area to explore is the extent to which new forms of production in Ghana are generating new migration flows – as for example with the shift in patterns of export crop production, which may be drawing workers into areas producing pineapples and other export crops. Meanwhile, within internal migration, the movement of children in particular is clearly an important phenomenon, but one that remains relatively poorly understood.

Finally, despite the interest it has already generated, it is clear that the area of professional mobility remains a key issue for policy makers in Ghana, and here, there are a number of ways in which existing studies could be extended. For example, although there has been some work on the movement of health professionals out of the country, and public policy that responds to this movement, there remains scope both to analyse the dynamic effects of professional mobility of doctors and nurses on medical and health training and labour markets within the country. There is also value in exploring the extent of professional mobility in other occupational categories, as well as examining the link between the availability and quality of higher education in Ghana and professional mobility in search of such training.

## 6. Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that migration is a way of life in West Africa and that, the reason why people migrate are not static. The movements from the sub-region to other parts of Africa and outside have been shaped by historical, political, demographic, ecological and economic factors. Among Ghanaians, migration is a way of life and it continues to be a significant demographic feature of the population. It has evolved from the pre-colonial era when there were no distinct national boundaries through the colonial era to the present day. In view of this, there was no distinction between internal and international migration. During that period, migration was initially seen as population movement in response to needs like trading activities, favourable ecological conditions, fertile lands for agriculture, food, shelter as well as greater security during the period of tribal warfare.

The activities of commercial migrants continued from the pre-colonial era to the early 1970s.

In addition, the development of gold mines and cocoa farms during the colonial administration attracted many migrants. Labour migrants came from a variety of neighbouring countries in response to labour shortages in the colony.

The development of colonial policies acted as a push factor for people to migrate from one area to another. Movements of people from outside and within the country continued unabated during the post-independence era. Political instability and bad governance which resulted in economic crisis of an unprecedented magnitude from the 1960s up to the 1980s led many Ghanaians to emigrate out of the country in search of jobs in neighbouring West African countries. Some also moved to major cities in Europe, America and Canada.

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Chapter Three

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