Of Local Places and Local People: Understanding Migration in Peripheral Capitalist Outposts

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Working Paper 43
September 2016

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Dorte Thorsen for providing comments on an earlier draft. We are grateful to all the respondents who generously gave their time to participate in the interviews. We would like to acknowledge the support of the Centre for Migration Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon.

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Abstract

This paper explores the ways in which migration and social change intermesh. It focuses on internal migration from Northern to Southern Ghana and through scrutinising changes to livelihoods in Northern Ghana in the long durée, the paper documents how these changes have contributed to women's ability to migrate southward. Drawing on qualitative data collected in 2015 by pairing adults and youths from twenty-four households in Northern Ghana, the paper also provides insights into recent forms of change wrought by migration. This material is supplemented by data collected in interviews with migrants in Accra. The paper demonstrates that the relationship between migration and social change is not unidirectional. Deep seated social changes in Northern Ghana have precipitated the large scale migration of young women seen today. Migration, in turn, leads to two forms of change; surface level changes relating to the development of new ways of being and changes to deep seated cultural norms relating to the rise of new ways of thinking. By highlighting the different dynamics engendering social change in Northern communities the paper contests the notion of rural communities being sites of social inertia.

Executive summary

This paper explores the ways in which migration and social change intermesh. It takes issue with the notion that developing countries – and within them, rural communities in the periphery – are backwaters of stagnant traditions and unfaltering norms. Drawing on the work of Pieterse (2013) and Clifford (1992, 1996), the paper raises the question of what engenders social change in rural communities.

Pieterse's work focuses on the hybrid individuals produced through migration and the cultural changes they embody through changes in cultural language or cultural grammar. The former refer to changes in habits and preferences related to food, fashion, art forms, etc., whereas changes in the cultural grammar refer to the deep seated elements of culture such as norms and values. The core idea of Clifford's work is that changes are not just produced through travelling, people become hybridized at home through influences from the outside. This is because the whole world has been touched by globalisation and commercialism and therefore we can no longer distinguish between the cosmopolitan traveller and the local. By combining the two sides of the discussion of what engenders social change – travelling out or outside influences affecting rural communities – the paper unpacks the migration-social change nexus.

The analysis is based on secondary material to trace changes to rural communities in Northern Ghana in the long durée and on primary material collected in Northern Ghana and Accra in 2015. In addition to conducting in-depth interviews with pairs of adults and youths from twenty-four households (migrant and non-migrant) to gain insights into intergenerational and intra-household dynamics, focus group discussions were conducted to learn about how people perceived the relationships between migration, gender power relations and youth aspirations.

The analysis examines social changes engendering migration and social changes wrought by migration. These changes are of a different kind. The analysis of changing rural livelihoods highlights how colonial policies to secure labour to the mines in Southern Ghana (then the Gold Coast) created a culture of internal migration from the North to the South. Migration flows changed in the 1980s, as more women began to migrate in response to grinding poverty. They made up for men losing jobs in the public sector, for farming becoming less profitable due to structural adjustment, and for crops being insufficient to cover the needs of a household due to environmental changes. A key point in this analysis is that economic and environmental explanations are insufficient to explain why women, and not men, migrate in response to poverty.

Social changes underpin these other changes. The analysis shows that deep seated changes have happened because of the increase in consumerism as more things are available, the increasing inability of men to provide for their families and the erosion of patriarchal authority. Young women especially feel a greater sense of poverty because

they are acutely aware of what they would like to have but, given the relations of production and reproduction common in Northern Ghana, are the ones to have least control over resources. These relations impact married women differently. While men were the breadwinners in the past, their inability to produce enough food on the farm or otherwise purchase staples, shifts part of the provision over to their wives. Women have diversified their activities over time from farming sauce ingredients like okro and peppers to engaging in a wider range of activities including trade, catering and labour migration to supplement the household head's provisions. Closely linked with the decreasing ability to provide for the family, the authority of the household head and other senior members of the family has been eroded. Where migration in the past was a family decision, governed by the patriarch, young people – mostly young unmarried women - today leave without permission. This should not be read as a complete breakdown of hierarchical relations but rather as a way for young women of circumventing barriers to their migration without insulting their elders and thus without bringing serious repercussions upon themselves.

Migration prompts social change of a different order. Migrants returning to their rural home community embody changes to their identity through their clothing, hairstyle, eating habits and by interspersing their mother tongue with words in *Twi* (one of the dominant languages in Southern Ghana). In short, they seek to set themselves apart by breaking with distinct practices in Northern Ghana. As these are only surface level changes, they are easily dismissed by non-migrants. However, migration also prompts changes in deep seated cultural norms, in the cultural grammar. Among migrants at the destination, changes have happened in relation to marriage especially. While the choice of marriage partner is guided by rules of endogamy in Northern Ghana resulting in inter-faith and inter-ethnic marriages being frowned upon, young migrants cross these lines when marrying at the destination. Moreover, they do not practice the traditional sequence of marriage first, then cohabitation and then child-bearing but often have children before going through the marriage rituals. Even though parents disagree with these changes, they are unable to enforce the traditional rules largely because they are unable to provide the things that go with these rules.

The paper demonstrates that the relationship between migration and social changes is not unidirectional. By highlighting the different dynamics engendering social change in Northern communities the paper contests the notion of rural communities being sites of social inertia.

1.0   Introduction

In the theoretical and conceptual body of work on migration and globalisation, developing countries feature only marginally. Framed as backwaters (Franklin and Crang 2001) or peripheral capitalist outposts (Ebron 1997), these parts of the world are largely perceived as contributing little to the global cultural flows that have come to be a defining feature of our twenty first century world. Bad things happen to the backwater – political crises such as the crises in Syria or economic crises which leads individuals in poorer economies to move in search of greener pastures elsewhere. Migrants leave these backwaters and encounter different cultures which they inculcate to produce hybrid individuals. According to Pieterse (2013), the cultural changes that these hybrid individuals will embody can be either changes in cultural language or changes in cultural grammar. For him, cultural language refers to the surface elements of culture such as food, fashion, arts, music and dance forms while cultural grammar refers to the deep seated elements of culture such as the values and norms of a people. Such hybrid individuals will then return either as circular migrants or return migrants to transform the backwaters from which they originate. Their presence and their changed behaviour cause social change as indigenes seek to emulate them.

This body of work suggests that social change in communities of origin in the developing world is only possible with international migration. However, the earlier work of Clifford (1992; 1996) stands in direct opposition to these ideas. He takes issue with the idea that there is a fundamental difference between cosmopolitans (Western travelers) and locals (non Western natives). Based on his concept of global commercialism, Clifford (1992; 1996) argues that the whole world has been touched by consumerist culture such that, as Clifford puts it, one cannot separate dwelling from traveling. One could in essence travel without traveling and by so doing become hybridized. Exposure to various ideas via media can be a powerful source of social change. Recent work in Latin America and Asia lend credence to these ideas. La Ferrara et al (2012) have demonstrated quite clearly the ways in which Brazilian women's exposure to the idea of small family sizes in soap operas have led to a decrease in fertility in Brazil. Chong and La Ferrara (2009) have also shown that the rate of divorce has increased over time as cable television has become available in Brazil. In India, Jensen and Oster (2009) have identified three areas of change resulting from women's exposure to novel ideas on television. One was that domestic violence had become less acceptable, another that despite fertility decreasing, son preference was seen as less appropriate and the last that women's autonomy had increased. Clearly then, one need not migrate to experience social change.

Taken together, the work of Pieterse (2013) and Clifford (1992; 1996) sit on two opposite sides of the discussion as to what engenders social change in communities of origin; international migration (Bakewell 2010; Lutz 2010; Portes 2010; Van Hear 2010) or media (Chong and La Ferrara 2009; Jensen and Oster 2009; La Ferrara et al 2012). We argue, in

this paper, however that the work of these two scholars can in fact be brought together to make sense of the migration-social change nexus. In merging the perspectives of Pieterse (2013) and Clifford (1992; 1996) to make sense of this nexus, we seek to primarily shatter the notion of the backwater/peripheral capitalist outpost as a site of socio-cultural inertia which is largely present in the literature on migration and social change. In the authoritative body of work in this area put together as a special issue of the preeminent Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies (Bakewell 2010; Lutz 2010; Portes 2010; Van Hear 2010), not one single article focuses on migration and social change in the developing world. The developing world features peripherally in so far as migrants from these destinations are able to affect the sights and sounds of the communities of destination to which they migrate internationally (Portes 2010). We focus on internal migration and social change to show that these discussions and concepts are as relevant to internal migration in the developing world as they are to international migration in the developed world. Much of the work on the factors that lead to migration in the developing world have been described mostly in terms of economic disparities between sending (the developing world) and receiving communities (the developed world) – witness Ravenstein's push-pull theory and its more recent permutations - or in the case of forced migration, conflict. The role of the social in engendering migration has been limited. We seek in this paper to fill this lacunae in the literature and to take the arguments one step further to explore the ways in which migration in turn leads to social change.

Drawing on the work of Clifford (1992; 1996) we argue that social change is possible in communities of origin in the developing world and that such change engenders migration. Similarly, internal migrants return to their communities either permanently or temporarily and create social change. However, drawing on the work of Pieterse (2013), we maintain that the kind of social change that engenders migration is quite different from that which is subsequent to migration. Deep seated social change, that which Pieterse (2013) would refer to as cultural grammar is the only kind that engenders migration while return or circular migrants create both surface level and deep seated social change, that which Pieterse (2013) would refer to as cultural language and cultural grammar respectively. In this work we explore the ways in which social change of a specific kind - cultural grammar changes (changes in gender norms, gender relations and household economic relations) - serve as a motive for migration while both cultural language and cultural grammar changes are produced post-migration.

We use the case of Northern Ghanaian female migrants to illustrate our arguments. We proceed as follows. In the next section, we provide justification for why using the case of Northern Ghanaian female migrants allows us to make the claims we set out to make in this work. Next we lay out the methodology by which the data for this paper was collected. We then draw on a combination of our primary and secondary data to explore the cultural grammar changes that have resulted in female migration in Northern Ghana as well as the cultural language and cultural grammar changes that return/circular migrants engender in these same communities.

2.0   Why Female Migrants from Northern Ghana?

The northern part of Ghana (present day Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions), otherwise known as the Northern Territories, officially became part of Ghana, then the Gold Coast, in 1901 when it became a protectorate of the British colonial government. Southern Ghana had been part of the British protectorate for roughly a quarter of a century at that point and the British recognising the mineral wealth of the south had granted mining concessions to a number of expatriate firms. However, the British were having difficulty finding labour for the mines. The Southern Akan were unwilling to work in the mines for three main reasons: first they were of the belief that unfriendly spirits lurked in the underground mines; second, mine work was seen as a low status job and third, Akans could subsist quite comfortably on their earnings from growing traditional crops and saw little need to sell their labour to others (Agyei and Ofosu-Mensah 2009). By 1910, the West African Chamber of Mines declared in its annual report that "all the local supply of native labourers was exhausted and the industry was faced with a shortage" (Agyei and Ofosu-Mensah 2009: 15).

The colonial government therefore looked to the Northern Territories for the provision of the labour required to work in these mines (Nabila 1985 cited in Agyei and Ofosu-Mensah 2009; Bening 1990). Governor Guggisberg outlined a compulsory labour recruitment system for Northern Ghana in his Development Plan of 1919 (Agyei and Ofosu-Mensah 2009). To ensure its survival, local markets were closed down so that it became near impossible for Northern Ghanaian males to earn a livelihood as peasants or traders (Plange 1984). The only option left to them then was waged labour in the mines in Southern Ghana. Thus it was that a state sponsored internal migration stream was created in Northern Ghana with only males as its participants (Abdul-Korah 2007). In addition to the mines, labour from the Northern Territories was also conscripted for various purposes determined by the colonial government including road and rail construction, and with the onset of World War I, as "volunteers" in the Gold Coast Regiment (Thomas, 1973). Although forced labour was abolished in 1936 (Abdul-Korah 2007), its effects were long lasting. Enforced migration for a period of nearly two decades set in motion a culture of southward migration such that by the 1940s, male migration southward to either the mines or cocoa farms had become the norm (Shepherd 1981) and had grown from a low of 26 recruited in February 1907 (Thomas 1973: 81; Abdul-Korah 2011: 393) for the mines in Tarkwa to 46,000 in 1945 and 200,000 in 1954 (Abdulai 1999). Southward migration of Northern Ghanaian men continued unabated through to the 1980s.

Throughout the seventy odd years of documentation of Northern Ghanaian men's migration to the southern part of the country, women's migration was largely invisible. First, they were described as women left behind. And indeed, in the colonial period, women were discouraged from migrating. To discourage women from migrating, women were denied equal access to employment opportunities for men (Koenig 2005). And single

women who were found in cities were branded as prostitutes (Grier 1992). During the late colonial and early post-independence period, women entered the literature as migrants accompanying partners to the Brong Ahafo and Ashanti Regions for agricultural purposes (Abdul-Korah 2007, 2011; Lobnibe 2008). Women only begin to enter the literature as independent, active participants in the migration process in the 1980s. That is when they begin to join the migration stream in significant numbers. In the fifth round of the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 5), the data for which was collected between 2005 and 2006, 47 percent of females in the rural savannah over the age of seven had migrated at least once in their lifetimes, as compared with 37.6 percent of males in the same age-group. Clearly, not only have Northern Ghanaian women entered into the internal migrant stream, their numbers now exceed that of males.[1] Using quantitative analyses Pickbourn (2011) and Abdulai (2016) show that these women tend to be young and single, either daughters of the household head or foster daughters of the head's wife, a point to which we shall later return.

In attempting to explain what shifted in the 1980s that led to a reversal in the migration trends, many scholars point to economic factors; the structural adjustment programme of the 1980s adopted by the Ghanaian state. While all of Ghana suffered the repercussions of the programme which eventually led to the adoption of a Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment (PAMSCAD), northern Ghana was more badly hit given its marginality within the national economy (Lobnibe 2008). A study by Yeboah and Appiah (2009) found thirteen per cent of female migrant porters reporting that their migration was due to the retrenchment of their male breadwinners from the public sector. Whitehead (2002, 2006) who has done a longitudinal study of the Bawku District of the Upper East Region of Ghana also shows how the structural adjustment programme of the 1980s that removed agricultural subsidies made farming more expensive and thus less profitable leading to a dwindling of household incomes and women's increasing search for alternative livelihoods. Pickbourn's (2011) work in the Savelugu-Nanton district in the Northern Region of Ghana makes similar claims.

A second set of explanations for the increasing interest women have in migrating southward is environmental. Changes in climatic and agro-ecological conditions over the last century (Abdul-Korah 2007; Van der Geest 2011) have led to a situation where families are increasingly unable to produce enough crop to last them through the year. Whitehead (2002) who studied communities over a fourteen-year period noted that while 80% of households purchased grain during the hungry season in 1975, the numbers had moved up to 95% by 1989. Similarly, Pickbourn (2011) describing the situation two decades later notes that, on average, food grain stock currently lasts only seven months. For five months in a year then, mothers who are responsible for the nutritional needs of a family have to make up the shortfall to ensure the survival of their families. Daughters look upon the increasing difficulties that their mothers face and opt to migrate south in order to be able to remit their mothers.

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[1] This feminization of migration is evident across West Africa (See Adepoju 2003).

Linked to the environmental factor is the seemingly intractable nature of poverty in the Northern part of Ghana. As evident from Table 1, the three Northern regions of Ghana have consistently ranked as the three poorest of the regions in Ghana since the mid 1990s. According to the most recent Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 6), for which the data was collected in 2012/2013, the poverty rate in the Northern Region, Upper East Region and Upper West Region translates into an average poverty rate of 55.1%. In comparison, the average poverty rate for the seven southern regions of Ghana was 24.9%. Thus while the average poverty rate for the seven Southern regions is lower than the national average of 30.9, that for the three northern regions is almost twice as high as the national average.

Table 1: Table indicating rates of poverty in Ghana (1987-2013)

REGIONS	GLSS 1 (1987/88)	GLSS 2 (1988/89)	GLSS 3 (1992/93)	GLSS 4 (1998/99)	GLSS 5 (2005/6)	GLSS 6 (2012/13)
Ashanti	42.5	41.3	22.1	28.0	20.0	14.8
Brong Ahafo	31.3	27.5	40.5	36.0	29.0	27.9
Central	50.4	41.7	27.4	48.0	20.0	18.8
Eastern	34.9	46.9	25.6	44.0	15.0	21.7
Greater Accra	11.1	23.6	22.8	5.0	12.0	5.6
Northern	**47.3**	**68.7**	**42.4**	**70.0**	**52.0**	**50.4**
Upper East	**60.5**	**50.1**	**32.5**	**88.0**	**70.0**	**44.4**
Upper West	**58.5**	**55.2**	**55.8**	**84.0**	**88.0**	**70.7**
Volta	51.8	56.0	31.1	38.0	18.0	20.9
Western	17.4	29.1	39.1	27.0	31.0	33.8
TOTAL	40.5	44.0	33.9	46.8	35.5	30.9

Sources: Ghana Living Standards Surveys I, II, III, IV, V, VI

While all of the above reasons are plausible explanations for why individuals would migrate, they do not explain one of our fundamental research interests which is to explore

why it is that women and not men sought to move in response to the grinding poverty and increasing food shortages in the northern part of the country. In particular, we are interested in exploring those factors that made it possible for a society that frowned on women's migration to begin to accommodate this practice. To explain this shift, we turn to our data and relevant secondary sources to document the changing shifts in life in Northern Ghana, what Pieterse (2013) would refer to as deep seated socio-cultural changes, and how that has contributed to women's ability to migrate southward.
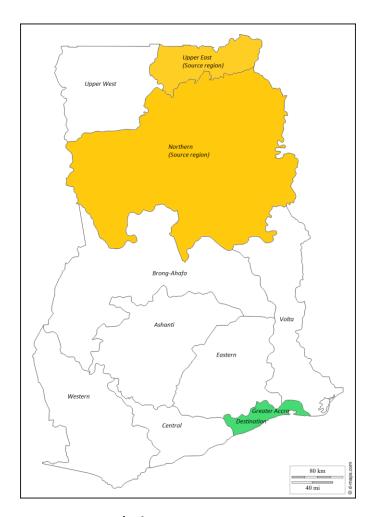
3.0   Methodology

The material for this paper comes from research undertaken in 2015. Data was collected primarily from conducting in-depth interviews with selected adults and young people in migrants' source regions (the Northern and Upper East Regions) and the destination region of Accra (see Map 1). We interviewed a total of 48 people from 24 households. These households were chosen out of a larger sample surveyed in a prior study (See Abdulai 2016). Of these 48 interviewees, 25 were adults and 23 young people aged between 15 and 24.   There were also 23 females and 25 males. The interviews focused on changing gender roles; the impact of migration on social and power relations within households; gendered dynamics of remittance use; youth aspirations towards migration, education and family life. In the destination city of Accra, we interviewed 5 male and 4 female migrants from Northern Ghana to understand their remitting behaviour and interactions with their parents.

We also conducted focus group discussions to gather further information from young people and adults in migrants' communities of origin. The aim of the focus group discussions was to provide a natural setting for the people to discuss the relationship between migration on one hand and gendered power relations and youth aspirations on the other hand. As Bedford and Burgess (2001:123) argue, this approach places the individual research participants in a group context, where 'conversations can flourish in what can be considered more common place social situations'. Having considered the various debates on the composition of focused groups (see Valentine, 2001; Teye, 2012) we organized separate focus group discussions for young people and older people.

In all, six focus group discussions were held in the migrant source communities. One focus group discussion was held with young people from migrant households, while another was held with young people from non-migrant households. In the third focus group discussion for youth, we combined youth from migrant and non-migrant households. There were also three focus group discussions for adults; one for women (from both migrant and non-migrant households), one for men (both migrant and non-migrant households) and another one for men and women combined.

Both the interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in the local languages of the migrants, recorded electronically, transcribed and then translated prior to analysis. The analysis for this report is based on a systematic thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling 2001) of all the focus group discussions as well as the youth and adult interviews.

Map 1: Research sites

4.0   Cultural Grammar Changes as a precursor to migration

Northern Ghanaian communities, like communities everywhere else, are not static. Changes in terms of access to various infrastructure such as pipeborne water, electricity and more recently telephony as well as better access roads have had a myriad of impacts on the socio-economic lives of communities across this part of the country. So have the

multiple impacts of colonialism, formal education and religion, both Christianity and Islam. Here, we examine the deep seated changes in the social fabric of Northern Ghana that are leading to the migration of young, unmarried women. A number of factors stand out: the increasing consumerism, the increasing inability of men to provide for families, and the gradual erosion in parental, particularly patriarchal, authority.

4.1   More to buy, less money to buy it

"There are so many things to buy but where is the money?" (Dietz et al 2013: 26)

We have already established that the poverty rates in Northern Ghana seem intractable, shifting much less quickly than has been the case for Southern Ghana and still at much higher average rates than the rates for Southern Ghana. In addition, as is the case the world over, poverty is feminized; women's levels of poverty are much higher than that for men. Bacho (2004) shows for example that the agricultural production levels of men are far higher than that for women. For example, while the average amount of millet men produce on an acre of land is 235.9 kilograms, women's average output is 198.3 kilograms. This obviously leads to relative poverty of women vis-à-vis men in the communities he studied. Oduro et al (2011) who track the gender wealth gap of Ghanaians affirm these results. Women are poorer than men. Northern Ghanaian women own only 9.3% of the total gross physical wealth in this part of the country ranging from a low of 4% in the Upper West Region to a high of 14% in the Upper East Region (Oduro et al 2011: 35).

In the face of the grinding poverty that women experience more acutely than men, spending opportunities in Northern Ghana have increased. With the advent of electricity and television, Northern Ghanaians are exposed to consumerism of both Southern Ghana and the wider world. In addition, improved access roads in this part of the country have meant greater access to consumer goods such as cheap Chinese motorbikes, bicycles, cell phones and the like.

Ali, a male adult we interviewed notes:

> Everyone buys to keep it for the future like a compact disk player because he doesn't want to buy sheep and they will steal it so they buy those things and keep it in case they need money, one day they can sell it to meet their demands…Others prefer to use their money to decorate their rooms so that if people enter their room they will know that they have money. Others spend on clothes for outings, food especially restaurants, so everybody has a different purpose for which they spend [their] money.

Ali points to consumables unavailable in traditional Northern Ghanaian communities such as compact disks, decorations for one's room and food available in restaurants. Given the

increased consumerism in Northern Ghana even as the poverty rates fail to decrease substantially, there is a much greater sense of poverty than would have been the case if the poverty rates and consumerist sensibilities stayed the same over time. Young women, who are the ones with the least control over household resources (Pickbourn 2011) are acutely aware of the discrepancy between what they have by way of resources and what they desire to have by way of assets. No wonder then that the majority of existing research on migration points to economic factors as the over-riding motive for Northern Ghanaian females moving southward (Abdul-Korah 2007; Agarwal et al 1997; Awumbila and Schandorf 2008; Tufeiru 2014). We argue, however, that the use of economic factors as a generic term masks the social changes underpinning these economic factors. Poverty is not new to the North and while in the past the response to it has been male migration southward, persistent poverty in the midst of growing consumerism is leading to a situation where women as well feel compelled to migrate.

4.2   Notion of males as breadwinner undermined

A second factor we identify as aiding in the southward migration of women is the decreased notion, both real and imagined, of men's ability to act as the sole providers of the needs of households. In Northern Ghanaian societies of the past, women and the young were the financial responsibility of the older men in the household, especially the patriarch. When male and female youth as well as married and single women worked on adult male farms, the product of their labour was handed over to the patriarch who pooled all the resources in the family and ensured that the needs of the women and younger people in the family were met (Grindal 2003). Although the distribution was sometimes contested for not being equal or commensurate with their work, the system stayed in place for the most part. Individuals might contest the unfairness of the system both covertly or overtly, but for the most part, the logic underpinning household economic relations remained intact. Since the 1980s, however, household economic relations have shifted fundamentally. Nowadays male household heads find it increasingly difficult to ensure that the needs of all household members are met. Most men have for all intents and purposes become ceremonial heads of households (Luginaah 2008).

The inability of men to cater to the needs of their families is linked to the increasing consumerism and longstanding poverty of this region of Ghana. Given this new reality, women are increasingly coming to the recognition that they have to do whatever is possible to help meet the needs of their families. Hawa, a 24-year old female we interviewed confirms this new reality when she says:

> The idea that a man is the breadwinner is not true but it is what many people know it to be. If the man is wealthy, he can take charge of everything but if that is not the case, the woman can also step in to help since you can't force him to

do things if he doesn't have it…A man cannot take care of the household alone without the women helping.

For women to be able to help their partners adequately as in the words of Hawa above, they need to participate more fully in economic activities. As is the case in many other parts of the world, childcare and domestic responsibilities including the preparation of food are the sole responsibility of women. In addition, Northern Ghanaian women engage in agricultural activities that are tied in with their domestic responsibilities; they produce non-staple crops such as beans, groundnuts and vegetables which they then use to prepare the condiments to accompany the staple meals in this part of the country. Women also engage in what Whitehead (1985) refers to as gender specific activities on men's fields; they plant the crops, apply manure and weed the farms. Men, on the other hand, who are socialised as providers and by extension owners of the production system in their societies, grow the staple crops, predominantly yam, sorghum, rice and millet, conceptualised as male crops. Unlike women, they do not provide services on the women's fields unless they are paid to do so. Traditionally then, the ways in which women supported men to provide for the household was by engaging in gender specific activities on men's farms and providing the 'soup ingredients' to accompany whatever carbohydrate the patriarchs provided for the evening meal. Men were supposed to provide the ingredients for the evening meal. In reality what they did was to provide the staples which served as the carbohydrate for the evening meal while women provided the ingredients for the soup that would go with the meal.

Over time, Northern Ghanaian women's participation in economic activities has shifted. Women have other options besides agriculture to earn income to support the family. The availability of Western education has offered Northern Ghanaian women who were able to take advantage of educational opportunities employment in the formal sector. For those who could not access education and there are many, the opening up of access roads has opened up opportunities for trading in petty goods, entrepreneurial opportunities in pito[2] brewing, handicrafts such as baskets as well as shea butter production. Whitehead (2002: 595) notes for example that the most marked difference in women's economic activities between 1975 and 1989 was the expansion in their petty income earning opportunities such as the switch from sheanut production for domestic consumption to its production for income earning purposes. Dietz et al (2013:27) also note the words of a young man in Daboya who described the changes in women's economic activities as "women now can do any job that a man can do." Northern Ghanaian women are thus now engaged in both farm and non-farm income earning activities.

Once Northern Ghanaian women began to participate in non-farm income earning activities, their lives were no longer confined to the land as would have been the case if they relied solely on agriculture for income. Trading requires the movement of goods from a place of plenty to a place of limited supply. By participating in trading then, women

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[2] Traditional alcoholic beverage made out of millet.

began to travel further afield than was the case previously, making the idea of traveling for work more palatable. Secondly, participation in non-farm income earning opportunities offers women a wider range of activities to choose from including work as domestics or kaya/headloading which is available in the southern part of Ghana. Together, these two factors encourage migration, a fact that is reinforced by the need to generate as much income as possible to supplement the efforts of male household heads in the provision of the needs of the family. In the past, wives offered husbands support in providing for the household nutritional needs through the provision of the 'soup ingredients' for meals. In contemporary Ghana, where family needs extend far beyond basic food consumption, women's contributions to the household invariably includes much more than food. The ability to do so is enhanced by participation in non-farm income earning activities, including migration if need be.

The shift in male ability to provide for the family has increased the burden for wives to contribute to household income. The response of wives to these new responsibilities can be understood in the context of Northern Ghanaian society. Here, one's social status is determined not solely by gender but also by other social characteristics such as age and marital status (Warner et al 1997). Married women with children are termed as cooking wives. They, as Pickbourn (2011) has shown, rarely migrate. Traditionally, they have access to lands, albeit marginal lands for the production of the non-staple crops for the family. Their social position as senior women also gives them the authority to commandeer the labour of the young, unmarried women in the household. These women can sponsor the migration of younger women, either daughters or nieces, who would then remit to them to cover household expenses. Such a reality was expressed in the words of Ali, a male adult we interviewed who noted, "Yes, some of the mothers encourage their daughters to go and acquire assets that others went and acquired."

Ali does not expressly identify whether the assets these young women acquire are for their own use or that of their households. We glean from the views of our interviewees as well as secondary data that young women are migrating both to assist with the needs of the households to which they belong as well as for a variety of personal needs. With respect to household needs, Rabi, a mother of a migrant notes for example, "Since she joined her [auntie] in Accra, she provides soup ingredients for me every market day (every six days)…" Clearly then, with the increasing burdens on themselves, wives inadvertently shift some of this burden onto daughters given the manner in which Northern Ghanaian communities are structured which helps to explain why the option of migration is one being taken by young women in particular. Increasingly, young women are also migrating to satisfy a variety of personal needs, a concept that may have been alien to most of them two generations ago. We speak to three of such needs here.

4.2.1 Young women's growing economic self-interest

In traditional Northern Ghanaian society, as we have already alluded to, access to resources, especially land with which one can earn a living off of farming is dependent not only on gender but also on age and marital status. Time of one's own to invest in income generation activities that one chooses is also dependent on these three factors. Based on work done among the Dagomba, the predominant ethnic group in our study, Warner et al (1997) have shown how cooking wives, married women with one or two children, have rights to days off from cooking which they can spend tending to farm plots of their own or engaged in an off-farm income generating venture. Cooking wives were granted days off from cooking because of their obligation to provide 'soup ingredients' for the evening meal. In terms of both access to resources and time of their own, cooking wives were better off than the young, unmarried women in their homestead.

These women were expected to cook or assist with cooking every day of the week. Whatever extra time they had was to be spent on assisting with agricultural production for the homestead as a whole. Hawa, describes the tasks of young women in her household in the following manner, "We fetch water, also sweep the compound, prepare food for the family, eat and go to Tamale market for kaya to earn our daily living…we also go to the farm to sow seeds." This response speaks to three separate activities of young women: their reproductive activities (fetching water, cleaning the compound, food preparation); their unpaid productive activities (sowing seeds) and their paid productive activities, head loading known in local parlance as kaya. Attempts to earn a living in such a manner in Northern Ghana are not always successful. Hawa goes on to say, "We go to Tamale market and carry people's belongings for money. At times we can go and will not find customers and come home empty handed." The sense of a lack of opportunity in the Northern part of Ghana is re-echoed by one of our participants in a focus group discussion who explains her desire to migrate as follows, "I will also want to migrate. The reason is that, over here there is nothing for us to do. If I go there I can work and earn some income…. As we sit in this community, we have nothing doing." Another female participant in one of the focus group discussions put it this way, "We do not necessarily want to go but there is nothing here for us to do and we cannot just sit idle."

Given young women's increasing interest in earning and controlling income of their own, it is no surprise that they are opting to move southward. The Southern part of the country is generally better off financially compared to the North and as such people have more discretionary income. In addition, Accra, a major destination for migrants, houses the largest consumer goods market in the country. Kayayee[3] in Accra are therefore not likely to go a day without customers as Hawa describes in Tamale. In addition, southward migration relieves women of at least their unpaid productive activities in the agricultural sector.

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[3] Women who engage in kaya, headloading

4.2.2 Daughters seeking to further their education

Formal education has been available in Ghana for almost two centuries. However, there are biases in the educational system that work to the disadvantage of Northern Ghanaian women. First is with respect to gender. When formal education was introduced into Ghana, it was designed primarily to create a male labour force for the colonial civil service. In 1890, when the British began to pay attention to formal education in Ghana, the gender ratio in primary school enrolment was 11 girls for every 100 boys (Fant 2008: 18). This gender disparity persisted throughout the twentieth century. Gender parity at primary level was only achieved in 2006 (Darkwah 2010). A second bias was geographical. As has already been noted, the British viewed the northern part of the country as a source of unskilled labour who could be transported to the south for work. There was therefore no incentive to put formal educational institutions in the north of the country. Thus, the first primary and secondary school were established in northern Ghana a full century after they had first been established in the south of the country (Bening 1990). During the early years of formal education in the North, only Christian families were keen to avail themselves of this opportunity. In most of these families, boys' education was prioritised over that of girls. When Moslem families warmed up to the idea of formal education for their children, boys were again prioritised over girls. In effect, young Moslem girls are the newest entrants en masse into the formal education system in Ghana.

Their entry into schools in large numbers, however, is not without difficulty. Although technically basic education (the first nine years of schooling) in Ghana is supposed to be free, it is not. While there are no tuition fees to pay, parents have to pay fees albeit nominal for a variety of things such as books, uniforms and parent teacher association dues. The last three years of secondary schooling is not free. There are tuition fees to pay in addition to all the other fees associated with primary and junior high school. If a child attends a boarding secondary school, then there are the boarding and feeding fees to pay as well. Between junior high school and senior high school, there is an entrance examination to pass. Students in poorly endowed schools many of which are in the northern part of Ghana are less likely to pass these examinations on the first try. A remedial school system has been created over the years to help such students. This obviously requires financial resources.

Be it for remedial classes or senior secondary education, we find interviewees alluding to girls' increasing interest in higher education as an incentive for migrating southward. Nsomah a female in a migrant household describing why her sister went off to Accra explains, "She had just completed junior high school and went to our Auntie, she worked with her to get money so that by the time the results are in she might have made some money for senior high school." A female informant in a focus group discussion noted similarly, "Others also travel when they write their examinations so that they can earn some money to buy their school materials." The work of Pickbourn (2011) corroborates our findings. She finds that 14.6% of her sample of unmarried migrant women who averaged 19 years of age migrated to save some money to further their education.

Similarly Hashim (2007) found that a quarter of her sample of children from northern Ghana migrated southward because of their interest in education.

4.2.3 Seeking to better prepare for marriage

Finally, marriage as in the past is considered a crucial institution in which every woman should participate. While the importance of marriage has not changed much over time, there are noticeable changes in marriage rites, ceremonies and practices. With respect to marriage rites, Abdul-Korah (2014) documents how bridewealth payments have changed from cowries, to cattle to currently cash. While in the past, families made these payments on behalf of the young man who was getting married, increasingly in contemporary Northern Ghana, young men are expected to make the payments themselves. Given that the adult men are demanding far more than what was demanded in the past and young men are expected to make the payments on their own behalf, young men are increasingly questioning the role of these payments in marriage ceremonies. Young women are also calling for its abolition because it is a dent on women's attempts at emancipation. He quotes one female interviewee who says "The emancipation question for women is burdened with a long history of oppression, suppression and acceptance of submissive roles…Many see the age-old tradition of brideprice as a major hindrance to women's emancipation" (Abdul-Korah 2014: 339).

Beyond the brideprice are the items contained in a wedding trousseau, known in Northern Ghana as *taalia*. This consists of fabric, jewelry and other items needed for the wedding day itself and life as a married woman as well as bowls, pots and pans needed to cook and serve meals at important functions in a household. According to the Islamic tradition as practiced in Northern Ghana, although the groom to be provides a majority of these items, the bride and her family are also expected to contribute towards these items. However, in these days of hardship, with some men unable to provide the items, many brides to be provide substantial portions of these items, although they may not openly acknowledge so. Meena, a female adult interviewee alludes to this as justification for female migration when she says:

> if she goes, works and earns something, it will be beneficial to the entire family. At times if the man wants to wed the wife and the wife doesn't have enough [with which to enter a marriage], she can go and manage to get something for herself.

Molara, a female adult interviewee explains the departure of a new mother in her household as follows:

> …she gave birth and decided to go and get some things that she needed for her matrimonial home…Culturally after you get married and have one child, you go back to your parents and get the necessary things that you need for your marriage. If she doesn't do it now and she has three or four children, then she can no longer migrate…

Similarly, Abdul, a young male interviewee noted "in this community it is not common but in the region the girls migrate more than even the boys. Some migrate to buy their items for marriage." Musa, a father explaining his daughter's departure notes, " She went there so she can get some items for her marital home because I couldn't afford to give her those things." This issue also resonated with participants in the focus group discussions. A male in one of them noted:

> What happens is that when the ladies are getting to the age of marriage they need to start preparing for marriage and they also need to start acquiring some items for their matrimonial home. So when they know that the person they are living with cannot afford those items that they need, they migrate and work so that they can afford them.

The views of our interviewees are echoed in the work of other scholars who interviewed Northern Ghanaian female migrants (Abdul-Korah 2007; Agarwal et al 1994; Awumbila and Ardayfio-Schandorf). Women's increasing contributions to households as wives and daughters suggests that the place of a woman in Northern Ghana has shifted for the better. Abdul-Korah (2011: 399) affirms this when he quotes an interviewee who says 'now if you have only sons, you are dead,' for women are taking on the roles previously assigned to men and doing a better job of seeing to the welfare of family members.

Women's increasing contributions to the household domestic budget as mothers, daughters and potential wives, as well as daughters' increasing interest in earning financial income to pursue their own dreams has occurred in tandem with an erosion of the patriarchal authority of males as evident in the next section, a third change that we argue contributes to women's migration southward.

4.3   Eroding Patriarchal Authority

"Women's freedom in decision making is much higher nowadays than for their mothers and grandmothers" (Dietz et al 2013: 29).

With respect to migration, the most obvious change over the last three decades is not simply the increase in the numbers of women migrating southwards, but also the numbers who do so without the explicit permission of household heads. Hassan, a 44-year old male interviewee, who had migrated twice before, had not only informed his father each time he wanted to migrate but had effectively sought his permission before migrating. However, he was of the view that times had changed. In his view, the current generation of the youth migrated on their own accord without even discussing the plan with, let alone seeking permission from, the patriarch to do so. While he was of the view that ideally, young people should inform the adult members of their families before

migrating, he believed that times had changed and there was really not much the adults in the community could do to ensure that they did the right thing. In his words:

> No, it does not bring any problem. The whole of this place, it does not bring any problem, that is their life style. Nobody will inform anyone before travelling, they will get there before they tell you, so if you choose to have a problem with them because of that, then you have failed to understand them, because that is what they have been doing. It is very good if they inform you before going but if they do not inform you, you cannot view it as a problem because that is how they always behave.

In the quote above, there is no sense of who exactly is migrating without permission. Previous research on the subject in Africa shows that both boys and girls migrate without permission (Hashim and Thorsen, 2011). However, our interviews point to the fact that in the Ghanaian context, it is mostly young women who are taking off for the city without permission. Only one male in a focus group discussion described the hypothetical situation where men took off without permission. In all the other cases, interviewees gave us concrete examples of how their female relatives migrated down south without their permission. Abu, a 44-year old father of migrants notes, "I travelled only to hear that my daughter had gone to Accra upon my return." Similarly, Rabi, a mother in a migrant household, points out that, "One of my children went to kaya like that without informing anyone." Molara shares a similar story when she says, "She told me she was going to gather sheanuts at her uncle's village and when she left, she went to Accra instead. Maimuna, a 50-year old grandmother also described the manner in which her granddaughter who lived with her had taken off for Accra as follows,

> I cannot explain why she has gone to Accra because I was not around when she left. I attended a funeral. When I came back, she had left. I wanted us to attend the funeral together but she refused. When I came back, she was not home. People say we send them there but it is not true because I was not aware and I did not even ask her to go.

The fact that young women were travelling without permission is a point that is also noted in the existing Ghanaian literature on the subject. Pickbourn (2011) in her study of 157 young unmarried women found that 14.6% travelled without notifying any member of their household.

To understand the factors precipitating the erosion in patriarchal authority such that young people were taking off for the south in fairly large numbers without informing let alone seeking permission from household heads, we turn to feminist conceptualisations of households (Chant and Radcliffe 1992; Chant 1998; Rodenburg 1997). Such scholars conceptualise households as an "uneasy aggregate of individual survival strategies" or a "locus of competing interests, rights, obligations and resources" (Chant 1998: 8). This perspective recognises the gendered power dynamics that govern decision-making

regarding migration within households and the extent to which men but especially women might choose to privilege their individual desire to migrate over the family's interests. In the earlier sections of this paper, we identified young women's increasing interests in pursuing an education of their own, preparing towards their marriages or earning independent income. These desires conflict with the traditional responsibilities of young women in Northern Ghanaian society which is to work the fields and pool their resources for the benefit of the household. In addition, acting on their desires undermines the normative moral order in Northern Ghana in a fundamental way. The absence of the women makes a bold statement to all and sundry that fathers/husbands are incapable of carrying out their roles as male breadwinners and have simply become ceremonial heads of households.

Some males were cognizant of their eroded status and so would allow their daughters to leave home. As Amina, a female adult we interviewed puts it, "they [the elders] are not doing anything about it because they are also swimming in the pools of poverty, they cannot provide their heart's desires when these people ask for it hence, they have to allow them to go." Similarly, Hassan, a male adult interviewee noted, "Because of poverty, if you have money to provide for her needs she wouldn't go but if you say she shouldn't go and cannot provide for her, she will tell you that you don't have anything to offer her." Others, however, were not so inclined. A few of the interviewees in our sample for example were adamant that they would not let their daughters migrate. Daughters could not necessarily tell beforehand whether the patriarchs in their households would be supportive of their decision or not. Rather than find out the latter and have their desires suppressed in the interest of the common good then, women in such households chose to keep their migration plans a secret. As a female informant in one of the focus group discussions put it, "sometimes if they know that the parent will not agree for them to migrate, they will move and call later to inform the father or mother." Similarly, Joana, a female adult interviewee discusses the manner in which the children in her household migrated as follows, "Most of them when they were going to migrate, they didn't tell us, they went and then called to tell us and we couldn't go there to tell them to come home."

Not telling parents about the decision to migrate was disrespectful. However, it was far better than defying parents' express requests to stay at home. In doing the latter, which would be considered outright disobedience, a daughter risked being disowned, while in the former case of disrespect, disappointed parents could eventually be won over with remittances, frequent visits home or success down south. These young women therefore chose the lesser of two evils so to speak.

5.0   Cultural Language and Cultural Grammar Changes wrought by Migration

Confrontation of the migrants' own culture of origin with foreign culture [or cultures] and social conditions encountered where migrants settle results in migratory cultural changes

and identity-related transformations. These processes are experienced and influenced by women in specific ways…

(Knorr and Meier 2000: 10)

Cultural mixing, or hybridisation, the idea that in an increasingly globalised world, cultures are indeed a melange of cultures is as old as the earth. Particularly for postcolonial countries like Ghana that have had interactions with the West since the Portuguese landed on the coast of Elmina in the late 1400s, it is difficult to discuss pristine cultural values. In the previous section, we outlined the ways in which social change taking place within the confines of Northern Ghana was leading to an emigration of Northern Ghanaian women. In this section, we interrogate the ways in which exposure to a world outside of the Northern region reconfigures the ways in which Northern Ghanaians think and behave. We argue that unlike the deep seated socio-cultural changes that encourage migration, both deep seated and surface level cultural changes are evident upon migration. We argue, however, that much of what Northern migrants adopt from Southern Ghana are the surface elements of Southern Ghanaian culture although some deep seated cultural norms have also undergone changes among young Northern Ghanaian migrants. We illustrate these changes in the section below:

5.1   Changes in surface level cultural practices

Our interviewees and focus group discussants pointed to three major changes in the behaviour of return migrants; changes in their sense of fashion, changes in eating habits and changes in their language. These surface level cultural practices set the return migrants apart from their non-migrant counterparts, a fact that the non-migrants generally resented. It seemed to be that non-migrants were particularly suspicious of the migrants' attempts at embracing modernity. They seemed to recognise it as a 'modernity bluff' (Newell 2012) and one that would fade pretty quickly.

With respect to fashion, two main issues were discussed; dress sense and hairstyles. Northern Ghana is predominantly Moslem and Northern Ghanaian women are expected to wear ankle length gowns with sleeves that go all the way up to their wrists as well as a hijab, a headscarf that covers their heads and chests when they go out in public. And indeed, once in the northern part of the country, the distinctive dress style is obvious. The exceptions are likely to be Christians who like Southern Ghanaians dress in more Western style clothing even in public; knee length skirts and dresses as well as shorts and trousers are all possible clothing choices in southern Ghana as well as among Christians in northern Ghana. However, respondents noted that Moslem women upon interacting with southern Ghanaians over a long period of time adopted their way of dressing. And, from the tone of their voices, the loss of modesty was one that the non-migrants resented. Faisal, a male interviewee notes:

In the Dagbon tradition, a woman is not supposed to wear trousers yet they wear and even pull "otto"[4] like men which is not acceptable in our society as Northerners. We all know it as men's clothing and when they wear it here it is seen as strange but when they went there [to the south of Ghana] they saw that both sexes wore it and was normal and so they have changed their Northern ways of dressing. When some of the women return, you can't find any traditional wear in their clothing like the veil, they prefer trousers or even miniskirts which is not long enough to cover them properly. In fact the religion prohibits it.

Barikesu, a female interviewee says in a similar fashion, "their mode of dressing, the way we dress as Northerners is different from how the Southerners dress. Those who go there for about 5 years or more, their dresses would be short, it would not reach their knees and then the arms too, the sleeves would be short." Rural Northern Ghanaian rejection of the violation of rural sensibilities regarding the appropriate dress for return migrants stands in contrast with Thorsen's (2014) findings in neighbouring Burkina Faso where young rural folk viewed the materiality of migration expressed in the conspicuous consumption of the young return migrants more favourably.

Besides wearing clothes that exposed much of their bodies, some Northern Ghanaian migrants had abandoned the use of the hijab. Instead of covering up, they were exposing their hair and doing it up in all manner of hairstyles. Some had resorted to putting relaxers in their hair to make it straighter and ostensibly easier to manage. Others were braiding it and wrapping it in all manner of styles. Men were also getting haircuts that were considered to be unacceptable. As with their style of dress, non migrants were unimpressed and in fact downright disdainful of migrants for such changes in hairstyles.

The other ways that return migrants had changed was in their food cultures. Both what they ate and drunk had ostensibly been modified upon migration. Respondents discussed with much disgust the pretentiousness of those who could supposedly no longer eat foods traditionally associated with Northern Ghana such as millet and sorghum based dishes. Instead, they professed a preference for fried rice and other foods more likely to be available in southern Ghana. Hussein, a young male interviewee pointed out that return migrants now "drink tea, eat fried eggs and fried fish…They will go drink their malt, grow some pot bellies." Ali, an 18 year old male interviewee describes the airs of return migrants with respect to their food and drink culture when he describes them in the following manner, "They were even saying they don't drink well water anymore and they were drinking pure[5] water but after some days, they started drinking the well water."

There was also the matter of language. Most of the interviewees in our sample were Dagombas who spoke Dagbani. To interact with Southern Ghanaians for work purposes,

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[4]To wear low riding pairs of trousers which expose one's underwear in the back. This practice is named after Otto Pfister, the German coach of the Ghana national football club, the Black Stars, during the period 1989 to 1995 who was known to wear such pairs of trousers.
[5]Purified water sold in sachets.

however, these migrants had to learn the predominant language in use in the south of Ghana, Twi. Now bilingual, Northern migrants would inflect their conversations with Twi phrases, much to the chagrin of their non-migrant friends and relatives in the north of the country. As Ali notes, "My brother went and returned and when he came he was speaking while infusing the Dagbani with Asante Twi. He understands Dagbani but most of his replies were in Asante Twi."

Return and circular migrants were introducing surface level changes in Northern Ghanaian society. As described above, in terms of fashion sensibilities, hair aesthetics, food choices and language choices, these migrants were introducing new ways of being into Northern Ghanaian society. This was not without conflict. In general, non-migrants rejected these new ways of being and viewed the migrants who behaved as such in largely negative ways. Nonetheless, these migrants opened up possibilities for new ways of being in their communities of origin.

5.2   Changes in deep seated cultural norms

Unlike the surface level changes in behaviour that were typical of only return migrants, changes in deep seated cultural norms were observable both among the migrants in their place of destination and non-migrants in their communities of origin. With regard to the migrants in their place of destination, the major cultural norm that had undergone change was norms regarding both whom to marry and how to enter a marriage. Rules of exogamy and endogamy exist in all cultures, be it subtle or explicitly stated. In Northern Ghana, the rules of endogamy limit marital choices to people sharing at the very least similar religious if not ethnic identities. Both inter-ethnic and inter-faith marriages are frowned upon. Secondly, if an inter-ethnic marriage should occur, a marriage among Ghanaians from the broad northern part of Ghana is preferred over a marriage between a Northern and Southern Ghanaian. With migration to Southern Ghana, where the majority of people are neither Moslem nor of ethnic Northern origins, these Northern Ghanaian migrants are as likely to interact with and enter into relationships with people from different religious/ethnic backgrounds as they are to do same with people with whom they shared similar religious and ethnic backgrounds.

A second change that non-migrants observed about migrants was the fact that they had the sequence regarding pregnancy and marriage all wrong. In Northern Ghana, the norm was to first get married, then cohabitate and eventually have a baby. What was beginning to happen, however, with migrants was that young men would cohabitate with a woman, get her pregnant and then ship her off back home to his family for the extended family to take care of her and then go ahead to conduct the marriage rites on his behalf. In one focus group discussion, a participant described this process as follows, "When these girls get pregnant the boys just direct them to their villages and then tell their fathers that they have sent them a bag of maize and so they should go to the station to pick it up, but they end up going to meet a pregnant woman standing there." In other cases, young women who moved to Accra would actually have children with Southern Ghanaian men before

informing their parents back home. The focus group discussions revealed that although most parents are not happy with these social changes, they are unable to enforce the traditional rules of marriage which require that parents know and approve of their children's choice of a partner before they enter into marriage and then sexual relations with these partners.

In the communities of origin, the major change that migration had wrought was in the decision-making powers that were now accorded women. As Talatu, a female interviewee explains, "The father is usually responsible for decisions in the house in consultation with the senior male children." Upon migration of the patriarch, however, the mothers would replace the fathers and take decisions in consultation with the older sons in the household. Rabi, a female in a migrant household describes the decision making practices in her household in the absence of her husband as follows, "my husband is not home so everything rests on me and their elder brother…"

This shift in gender roles with respect to decision-making was also observable with respect to household chores. Men took on the roles typically assigned to women if women were absent and vice versa. For example, Amina, a female interviewee alluded to the fact that although there were fixed rules about who was supposed to harvest what, increasingly, men might take on women's roles such as harvesting pepper and okro if the women were absent and waiting for them would mean that the crop will rot on the tree. Abdul notes, "It is possible [for gender roles to change] because sometimes when the females migrate, the young boys may be asked to also wash bowls and do other girls' work like sweeping the rooms and court yard."

Similarly, women were taking on the roles typically assigned to the men who had migrated. Hamdia, a 24 year old female whose husband had migrated in explaining who had taken over the labour responsibilities on her husband's farm notes, "They [husband's brothers] do if they have time, and if they don't have [time], I go". Similarly, Lariba, a female from a migrant household, noted an increase in the likelihood of women carrying out tasks previously assigned to men in the following words:

> Yes, it does happen because if the weeds in your father's farm are too much you cannot just leave him like that. If there is a lot of weeding in the farm the lady can go and help the father to do the work. And if the boy is also around he can go and help the father to do the work, and if it is the ladies too they can also go and help their father to do the weeding. It happens most of the time because there cannot be weeds in someone's father's farm and she will be sitting without helping him.

It was not only farm work originally expected of men that could be undertaken by women if the need arose. Women could also take on roles expected of men regarding various rites of passage as well. Hassan, a male adult return migrant noted that women could pay men's contributions to rites of passage and retrieve their incomes afterwards.

There were, however, some exceptions to this. Rabi, whose husband had migrated noted, "For instance if a household member wants to get married, it becomes a problem for that household member because the household head is unavailable and I can't represent at such an important occasion." Males were also the ones most likely to confront authority figures in formal institutions who were overstepping their bounds. In their absence, families left behind suffered the consequences of such abuse in silence. Fifty year old Memuna recounted how one of her daughters had dropped out of school because of a conflict with the headmaster which in her opinion would have been resolved if her sons were present in the household.

Marital choices and decision making among marital partners had undergone fundamental shifts among migrants in the destination communities and non-migrants in the communities of origin respectively. Unlike the surface level changes wrought by migrants that were viewed in a largely negative fashion in Northern Ghana, non-migrants had more neutral attitudes towards the deep seated changes that were taking place as a result of migration.

6.0   Conclusion

In this paper, we make three contributions to the body of work on internal migration and social change. We have shown that the relationship between migration and social change is not unidirectional; deep seated social changes within the northern part of Ghana, we argue, have precipitated large scale migrations of women unprecedented in Northern Ghanaian history and in the same vein, migration has caused both surface level and deep seated changes both among migrants in destination cities as well as in the communities of origin. We identify three key deep seated changes that account for the influx of young single female Northern Ghanaians into Southern Ghana; increasing consumerism amidst grinding poverty; the increasing inability of household heads to carry out their roles as breadwinners and finally the erosion in patriarchal authority linked in large part to the inability of household heads to fully provide the financial needs of their households. In traditional Northern Ghanaian society, women are subjugated both politically and economically. Ouedraogo (1995) in discussing the motives for female labour migration in Burkina Faso has suggested that women escape the political and economic marginalisation they face in their home communities by migrating. We argue differently. Migration is not a result of women rejecting political and economic domination by men; it is a result of a decline in men's political and economic domination as evident above and women taking advantage of the opening that such a decline in domination provides. These changes make it possible for women to migrate in response to the worsening economic circumstances in which they find themselves. In reflecting on the deep seated socio-cultural changes that engender the migration of females in Ghana, we break away from the heavy emphasis on economic (Pickbourn 2011; Whitehead 2002, 2006; Yeboah and Appiah 2009) and environmental factors (Abdul-Korah 2007; Pickbourn 2011; Van der

Geest 2011; Whitehead 2002) as the explanatory variables for the migration of these women.

Secondly, just as social change engenders migration, the reverse is also true. We find in this paper that two forms of cultural changes are taking place; the more surface level changes, specifically changes in fashion, food habits and language in the case of migrants and more deep seated changes in norms and values regarding rules of endogamy as well as the idea of premarital sex among migrants as well as changes in the rules about gender roles both in terms of household chores and decision making.

Finally, this Northern Ghanaian case study speaks to the temporality of social change and its linkages with migration. The deep seated social changes that underpin migration in Northern Ghana have taken place over a long period of time, roughly half a century. Persistent environmental and economic shocks over a number of decades have produced a context where practices that were unacceptable/completely unheard of two generations ago are now the order of the day. Such changes that take place slowly and in some ways insidiously over a long period of time produce contexts that then engender migration as noted in the Northern Ghanaian case. The changes that take place upon migration, on the other hand, occur over a shorter time frame. Northern Ghanaian communities are finding that new ways of being – in terms of how to dress, how to wear one's hair, what to eat and what language to speak – as well as new ways of thinking – about marital choices and decision making – are being introduced over a much shorter time frame. These changes are taking place not over generations but within one generation. To think about what kinds of social change engender migration or the kinds of social change that migration creates thus requires an interrogation of the temporality of social change as well.

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About the Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium

Migrating out of Poverty is a research programme consortium (RPC) funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID). It focuses on the relationship between migration and poverty – especially migration within countries and regions - and is located in five regions across Asia and Africa. The main goal of *Migrating out of Poverty* is to provide robust evidence on the drivers and impacts of migration in order to contribute to improving policies affecting the lives and well-being of impoverished migrants, their communities and countries, through a programme of innovative research, capacity building and policy engagement. The RPC will also conduct analysis in order to understand the migration policy process in developing regions and will supplement the world-renowned migration databases at the University of Sussex with data on internal migration.

The *Migrating out of Poverty* consortium is coordinated by the University of Sussex, and led by CEO Professor L. Alan Winters with Dr Priya Deshingkar as the Research Director. Core partners are: the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) in Bangladesh; the Centre for Migration Studies (CMS) at the University of Ghana; the Asia Research Institute (ARI) at the National University of Singapore; the African Centre for Migration & Society (ACMS) at the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa; and the African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC) in Kenya.

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