

# Women Moving Within Borders: Gender and Internal Migration dynamics in Ghana

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## Abstract

*Internal migration is an inherent part of the processes of development and structural transformation in any region. In Africa, while the focus is often on international migration, internal migration is far more significant for development in terms of the numbers of people moving and their poverty reduction potential and well-being outcomes. In Ghana, as the numbers of women and girls moving independently has been on the increase, a “feminisation” of migration is said to be underway. Many of these young women and girls move independent of their families from rural agricultural communities in the north to urban centres in the south, where they work in low scale, mostly unskilled occupations. Despite the increasing numbers of Ghanaian women on the move as internal migrants, and their gendered implications, very few studies have focused on how the relationship between migration and human development operates in gender differentiated ways, nor on how gender as a social construction that organizes relations between males and females can greatly differentiate the causes, processes and impacts of migration on development thereby enhancing economic growth and reducing poverty. Using mainly secondary data, this paper provides an overview of the gendered nature of internal migration movements in Ghana and discusses how gender relations and gendered power dynamics can significantly affect all aspects of the migration process both at area of origin and destination. It also highlights the policy implications of these gendered dynamics. Its central argument is that people's experiences of gender are central to the patterns, causes and impacts of migration and that gender affects how people are able to contribute to and benefit from the migration process and enhance social and economic development. It also urges the need for a more positive and nuanced view and response to rural-urban migrants by Government policies and strategies to enhance the potential benefits of migration for men and women.*

**Keywords;** Migration, gender, remittances, migrant livelihoods, informal sector

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## Introduction

Migration is an important livelihood strategy for many people worldwide, but especially for poor people. Several studies globally indicate that migration is a driver of growth and an important route out of poverty with significant positive impacts on people's livelihoods and well-being (Murrugarra *et al.* 2011). In Africa in particular, mobility is critical to livelihoods and can have multiplier effects on sending and receiving areas. Internal migration in particular is an inherent part of the processes of development and structural transformation in any region. In Africa, while the focus is often on international migration, internal migration is far more significant in terms of the numbers of people involved and perhaps even the quantum of remittances and poverty reduction potential of these.

Indeed data indicates that about 90% of all migration in Ghana is internal (GSS, 2013). Furthermore, research indicates that a large proportion of the migrants who send remittances back home are internal migrants, and that while the individual sums of money sent by international migrants are usually larger, the sum total of internal remittances may be higher than international remittances (Mckay *et al.*, 2011). This indicates that internal migration can play an important role in poverty reduction and wellbeing outcomes despite occasional negative consequences. However the actual impact of internal migration on poverty depends on a range of economic, social and political factors, and their complex interactions with each other.

One of the important changes in internal population movements in sub-Saharan Africa and in Ghana in particular, has been the rise in the participation of women in migration streams that were previously dominated by men. According to the International Organization for Migration (2010), the number of female migrants in sub-Saharan Africa has seen a steady increase for several decades. In Ghana, available data from the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS 5) and the 2010 Population Census suggests that internal migrants account for over 50 percent of the population, and that slightly under half of these migrants are women (Ackah and Medvedev, 2010; Ghana Statistical Services, 2013). This has led to the conclusion that a "feminisation of migration", that is the increasing number of women in migration streams, is occurring in Ghana.

An important contributory factor to this increasing number of women in migration streams within Ghana has been the increasing number of independent female and child migration in the north – south labour migration streams. Many of these young women and girls move independent of their families from rural agricultural communities in the north to urban centers in the south, where they work in low scale, mostly unskilled occupations such as head load porters in the markets or "*kayayei*" (Awumbila and Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008), domestic work, or petty traders with no regulations or social protection. The migration of these women is widely perceived to be an undesirable phenomenon, and existing studies have focused on the challenges faced by the migrant women at their destinations, and on the ways in which they cope with these challenges, rather than on how their migration experiences can be made more beneficial (Kwankye *et al.*, 2007; Yeboah, 2008).

Despite the increasing numbers of Ghanaian women on the move as internal migrants, and their gendered implications, very few studies have focused on how the relationship between migration and human development operates in gender differentiated ways, nor on how gender as a social construction that organizes relations between males and females can greatly differentiate the causes, processes and impacts of migration on development thereby

enhancing economic growth and reducing poverty. Using mainly secondary data, this paper provides an overview of the gendered nature of internal migration movements in Ghana and discusses how gender relations and gendered power dynamics can significantly affect all aspects of the migration process both at area of origin and destination. It also highlights the policy implications of these gendered dynamics. Its central argument is that people's experiences of gender are central to the patterns, causes and impacts of migration and that gender affects how people are able to contribute to and benefit from the migration process and how, therefore, they are able to achieve the basic goals of both social and economic development.

## **Gender and Migration: An overview**

Worldwide the number of people living outside their country of birth has been growing since the 1960's. Over the past four decades, the total numbers of international migrants have more than doubled but the percentage of the world population migrating has remained fairly constant at approximately 3.3 per cent of the global population and about half of whom are women (UNDESA, 2013). This is despite the common misconception that men are the migrants. Reflecting broad changes in their social and economic status, women around the world have been migrating more in recent decades and as a result have constituted an increasing share of migrant populations almost everywhere. Worldwide, the percentage of female migrants has risen from 46% in 1960 to 47.2% in 1980 to 49.6 in 2010 (IOM, 2010). Furthermore the number of women migrating internationally has been growing at a faster rate than for men.

In Africa, the numbers of migrants has increased from 42.7% to 45.9% in 2013 (UNDESA, 2013), but these statistics on recorded migrant populations do not reveal the true numbers of movements, as they do not take into consideration short-term and seasonal movements, many of which go unrecorded. In Ghana, internal migrants far out number international migrants (GSS, 2012) and women dominate in some migration streams such as cross border movements and in short-term, circular or seasonal migration. Although north-south labour migration stream dates back to the early colonial period (Nabila, 1975, Songsore, 2009) this migration stream which was previously male-dominated has since the 1980s, seen an increase in the migration of women moving independent of their families from rural agricultural communities in the north to urban centers in the south.

Although there is a complexity of factors which may cause individuals to migrate, these often play out differently for women and men. Gender roles, relations and inequalities affects who migrates and why, how the decision is made, the impacts on migrants themselves, on sending areas and on receiving areas. Studies indicate that migration can provide new opportunities to improve women's lives and for those they leave behind. It can have positive impacts on sending and receiving areas and change oppressive gender relations, leading to changes in gendered roles and responsibilities to women's benefit. However, migration also brings risks, and may expose women to new vulnerabilities and may entrench inequalities around gender.

A gender analysis of migration therefore needs to look beyond simple differences in migration behaviour between men and women, and examine the inequalities underlying those differences. It also needs to look at how these are shaped by the social and cultural contexts of the individual, and the influence that membership of social groups and economic and political conditions can have on decisions about migration and on the whole process of migration, which can then impact on the potential benefits of migration. However as Omelaniuk (2003) argues,

the fact that a gendered analyses of the processes of migration, whether within or between countries, is fairly recent, does not mean that such migration by women is new.

### **Theorising Internal Migration, Gender and Development: An Overview**

Although there have been many theories put forward to explain migration, there has been little concerted effort to incorporate gender into migration theorizing. Boyd and Grieco (2003), argue that this is partly because migration theory has traditionally emphasized the causes of migration over questions of who migrates, and thus has often failed to adequately address gender-specific migration experiences. Addressing more gender-sensitive questions will therefore show how a seemingly gender-neutral process of movement is, in fact, a highly gender-specific process which could result in differential outcomes for men and women (Boyd and Grieco, 2003:1).

The earliest theory put forward to explain migration, Ravenstein's laws of migration (Ravenstein, 1885, 1889), highlighted the gendered nature of migration, noting that women were more likely than men to migrate, and to do so within shorter distances compared to men. Despite this, it was not until about the last few decades that some focus began to be put on the role of gender in the migration process. Boyd and Grieco (2003) trace the development of gender in migration to the 1960s and early 1970s, in line with the focus on "women in development" (WID), with its emphasis on the situation of women, which led to questions on the near-invisibility of women as migrants and their presumed passivity in the migration process. Therefore the emphasis was on women migrants mainly as appendages of men.

By the 1980s the "add women, mix and stir" approach became the dominant approach to the discourse on gender and migration. According to Pickbourn (2011), this approach did not question the underlying models used to explain why people moved, where they went, and how they integrated. In the neoclassical economic models and the push-pull models of the 1970s and 1980s, for example, migration was seen mainly as the outcome of the individual decision making process. The potential migrant in the rural area will migrate if rural-urban income differentials are high enough and therefore an increase in the rural-urban wage differential attracts more migrants, further contributing to urban unemployment (Todaro, 1976; Harris and Todaro, 1970). Pickborne (2011:27) further argues that by suppressing gender differences in migration patterns, and treating migration as a gender neutral process, the push/pull models do not explore the possibility that the determinants of migration may differ systematically for men and women.

Household models of migration (Bhattacharya, 1985) emphasized the importance of the family or the household as the primary site of decision making and recognized that the relative control over resources exercised by men and women has a significant and often gender differentiated impact on family consumption. However these were also criticized for effectively substituting the rational, calculating individual in neoclassical economic (push/pull) theories of migration with a rational, calculating household. Critics argue that family/household decisions and actions do not represent unified and equally beneficial outcomes for all members. This is because families and households, as units where production and redistribution take place, represent centers of struggle where people with different activities and interests can come into conflict with one another. When placed within ongoing power relations that operate in families and households, such diverse interests and activities strongly suggest that the interests of men

and women in families do not always coincide and may affect decisions about remittance use and behaviours for example (Boyd and Grieco, 2003, Pickborne, 2011).

More recent approaches of networks theories and transnational approaches to migration have tended to adopt a more gendered approach to migration and emphasized the need to see gender as a core organizing principle that underlies migration processes, and that links country of origin to destination and return. Thus in the last two decades or so, migration theory has become more gender sensitive, moving from the predominant view of female migrants as simply the wives and children of male migrants to incorporating explanations of the unique experiences of both males and females at all stages of the migration process.

### **Internal Migrant Remittances and Gender Relations in Ghana**

Migrant remittances in recent times have been recognized as a very important source of income for promoting development and enhancing the welfare of households in developing countries (Ratha et al, 2011; World Bank, 2011). According to the World Bank (2014), global remittance flows totalled \$542 billion in 2013, of which \$404 billion went to developing countries. Furthermore total remittance flows to developing countries was more than three times the official development assistance (ODA) that these countries received. While there is some evidence that remittance flows and expenditure patterns can be highly gender-specific, there is scant research on the relationship between gender and remittances and gender disaggregated remittances data is hardly available.

In a review of the literature on gender and remittances in Ghana, Awumbila et al (2015b) show that although the significance of remittances to poverty reduction in Ghana has been acknowledged, much of the data has tended to focus on international remittances (Quartey, 2011, Ahinful et al, 2013). The few studies on internal remittances (see Adaawen and Owusu, 2013), have implicitly assumed that patterns of sending and using remittances are gender neutral processes. Except for a few examples (Wong, 2006; Abdul-Korah, 2011; Pickbourn 2011), the gendered dimensions of sending and using remittances in Ghana have not been the subject of much focus. Abdul-Korah (2011:1), argues that “gender received scant attention as a category of historical analysis” in earlier migration studies because women were represented as victims rather than active participants in labour migration.

Recent analysis of household survey data indicates that the total sum of internal remittances in Ghana exceeds international remittances; US\$324 million compared to US\$283 million (McKay et al, 2011). It has been argued that, given that internal remittances are mainly from poorer migrants and reach a larger number of poor source families, the impacts on poverty reduction are likely to be significant (Castaldo, Deshingkar and McKay, 2012).

A study by Awumbila et al (2014a) of remittance behavior in two informal communities in Accra, Ghana, indicates that migrants engage in both in-transfer (receiving) and out-transfer (sending) of remittances. 78% of residents send out remittances compared to only 24% who received remittance transfers. Disaggregated by gender, 81.6% of men and 78.1% of female respondents reported that they had sent remittances within the past year, thus showing that males are just as likely to send remittances as females (Awumbila et al, 2014a). Awumbila et al (2014a) further argue that even when the migrant himself or herself felt migration had not been very helpful in moving him/her out of poverty, sending remittances home was still a top priority. Such remittances take several forms including money for payment of school fees and educational items for family members, food items, clothes and foot wears. Because of this,

women's use of remittances has often been considered "unproductive", because it is largely used on consumption rather than investments (Mazzucato, et al, 2005; Quartey, 2011). However it can be argued that investment in food, education and health are important for alleviating poverty and thus for enhancing development.

### **Gendered Patterns of Remitting**

Recent studies indicate that apart from determining the nature of migration flows, gender affects the amount, frequency, and use of migrant remittances (Orozco et al. 2009; Lopez-Ekra et al, 2011; Pickbourn, 2011). Studies indicate gendered patterns of remittance behaviour in developing countries and that these are influenced by several factors, including, gender, age, education, marital status, and position in the family, as well as opportunities in the destination country (Orozco et al, 2006). At the global level, female migrants in general send approximately equal amount of remittances as their male counterparts, even though migrant women generally receive lower wages than men. This means that migrant women remit a higher percentage of their income to relatives and friends back home compared to men (Lopez- Ekra et al, 2011). They also usually send money more regularly and for longer periods of time (IOM, 2007). Women thus play a central role as recipients and managers of remittances. However because households are marked by power hierarchies, it is essential to look at who receives, manages and decides on the use of remittances, as well as societal aspects such as women's access to banking services.

Awumbila et al (2015b) point out that in Ghana, only a few studies have examined the gendered aspects of the frequency and use of remittances. Adaawen and Owusu (2013) in a study of the migration of the youth from northern to southern Ghana, observed gendered differentials in the amount and frequency of remittances sent by these migrants. They argue that while patriarchal norms have shaped gendered roles and societal expectations that sons must send more money to their parents than daughters, there were no gender differentials in the sending of remittances by migrants. Only the duration of stay at the destination and income levels strongly correlated with the amount and frequency of remitting (Adaawen and Owusu, 2013: 10).

A similar study by Abdul-Korah (2011) examined gendered patterns of remitting by Dagaaba migrants. He observes that even though patriarchal traditions construct sons as more valuable than daughters, female migrants were sending money home more regularly and for longer period of time than male migrants. As a result, most parents now perceived female children as also important to family welfare. Abdul-Korah (2011) further argues that "modern Dagaaba girls are not only confronting the traditional obstacles to their development and autonomy by migrating south to work for wages, but are also taking over roles and responsibilities that were previously thought to be exclusively male" (Abdul-Korah, 2011: 396). The findings of this study, therefore demonstrate that gendered dimensions of remitting can change over time, as has been observed in studies in Asia (Curran and Saguy (2001),

Furthermore studies indicate that in many societies, the gender of the person who sends and receives remittances can influence the use of that cash remitted. Remittances sent by women tend to be used for the immediate needs of households, such as food, health and education, while remittances of men are used for long-term investment in productive businesses and property (Quisumbing 2003; Pickbourne, 2011; Lopez-Ekra et al, 2011). In Ghana, Pickbourn's (2011:152) study in the Savelugu-Nanton District of Ghana, showed that households in which the main remitter or recipient of remittances were women tended to spend more on education of their children than other migrant households. A study in Ghana by

Guzman *et al.* (2008), based on the Ghana living standards survey data (GLSS 4), however, shows that when the remitter is the husband and the recipient who manages the remittance is the wife, the share of expenditure on education increases. However, when the wife is the one sending remittances and the recipient/manager is the husband, the share of remittances invested into children education reduces. Despite the gendered variations in the use of remittances, remittances sent by both men and women can help improve investments in children, education and health.

### **Remittances and changing power relations and gender roles**

Remittances can have a significant influence on power relations between and among spouses and children within the household. Studies indicate that the sending of remittances may improve the position of women in their families and thereby enhance their participation in household decision-making (Lopez-Ekra *et al.*, 2011). Migrant women who send remittances to households left behind tend to influence household decisions because of their new role as important contributors to household income (Guzman *et al.* 2008). Such financial contribution of migrant women and its associated empowerment can also challenge patriarchal norms about gender roles in the household and community (Ramirez *et al.* 2005).

Awumbila *et al.*'s (2015b) study provides several examples in Ghana where the management of remittances by women can also enhance their decision -making powers. For example they cite Abdul Korah's (2011) study among the Dagaabas in northern Ghana, which demonstrates how the sending of remittances by modern Dagaaba women is changing perceptions about traditional gender roles and power relations. Furthermore, Wong's (2006) study among Ghanaian women in Canada also shows that remittances enabled them to negotiate power relations within transnational households. However, Awumbila *et al.* (2015b) argue that there are cases where the absence of husbands and receipt of remittances by women does not necessarily increase women's decision- making powers and may instead, produce conflicts between women and men over the management and use of remittances. They note that in Ghana, studies that examine the relationship between remitting and power relations and gender roles are very few. Most of the studies have focused on changing gender roles of international migrants while away (Asima, 2010, Manuh, 1999) or upon return (Setrana and Tonah, 2013). van der Zee (2012) in a study of remittances and changing power relations and gender roles in Kumasi, Ghana, observes that the empowerment effects of remittances are not the same for all remittance recipients and that the social context plays an important role in determining the impact of remittances on gender roles and power relations (van der Zee, 2012:1).

In general however, women's active role as senders and recipients of remittances can act as a catalyst for change in gendered power relations, by improving women's decision-making, economic status and inclusion in the labour market.

### **Internal Migrants, Gendered Urban livelihoods and the Informal sector**

When migrants move into urban areas, they frequently can only find jobs in the informal sector. In many African countries, over 60 per cent of the labour force works in the informal sector. Formal sector employment represents only a small fraction of total employment in the region. Indeed the informal sectors of Africa's labour markets are said to be the single most important source of employment in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Informal sector activities provide employment opportunities for millions of people beyond the formal economy,

supplying the main source of employment and income for the majority of the poor in urban centres, and poor urban women in particular. Thus, the informal sector has been described as “the big story in African cities” (African Centre for Cities, 2014, Awumbila, 2014b).

In Ghana, the informal share of the workforce rose from 83.9 per cent in 2000 to 86.2 per cent in 2010 (GSS, 2013). Studies indicate that rural-urban migration has contributed to the dominance of informal sector employment in urban areas (Chen, 2006), as many rural urban migrants often have low levels of education. In Old Fadama, which is considered to be Ghana’s largest slum and is inhabited mostly by migrants from the rural north, most residents earn their living from business transactions within the slum itself and mostly in the informal economy. For poor migrants, the first point of arrival in a city is often an informal settlement or slum such as Kibera in Nairobi or Old Fadama in Accra, and their first jobs are often in the informal sector. Because most people moving into urban areas are from poor rural areas, they tend to live in slums where rents are quite low (Awumbila et al, 2014a; 2014b).

In the urban space, female labour migrants are frequently confined to low-skilled jobs in domestic and care work, hotel and catering services, the entertainment and sex industry, agriculture and assembly lines (OSCE, 2009). Additionally, these sectors are quite regularly characterized by poor working conditions, low pay, withheld wages, considerable insecurity and high risk of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse. Awumbila et al’s study (2014a) in Accra shows that 92 per cent of migrant households in the Old Fadama slum do not have access to water in their residences, and 94 per cent of the migrants in the same slums do not have toilet facilities in the residence (Awumbila et al, 2014a). The study also notes that, not only are services generally unavailable in poor migrant communities, but those migrants that do have access end up paying more for these services than do people in rich neighbourhoods.

This domination in informal sector work and care activities makes women migrants less able to obtain the legal protection of workers that would otherwise prevail in the destination area. Such work, especially domestic work, often excluded from the legal framework surrounding work contracts, allows for exploitative work conditions involving long hours without overtime payment and absence of other rights. The ILO (2004) argues that this may explain why women migrant workers on average regularly receive lower wages compared to male migrant workers in similar situations, even when they are equally qualified and engaged in similar or identical activities. A study of migrant domestic workers in Accra Ghana by Awumbila et al (2015a) for example, similarly found clear gendered patterns of employment in domestic work. Although there were instances of exploitation for both men and women domestic workers, men tended to have a stronger agency to negotiate better conditions of work and remuneration than most female domestic workers. They argue that despite the heterogeneity and diversity of the work conditions and experiences of domestic workers in Accra, gender was a crucial factor mediating the experiences of both male and female domestic workers and their impacts on their wellbeing.

Although the informal sector is dominated by women, a significant proportion of men also work in this sector. Awumbila et al’s 2014a study in two informal settlements in Ghana demonstrates that the slums were booming with various forms of entrepreneurial businesses mainly in the informal sector. Type of entrepreneurship in the informal sector was gendered. Migrant women worked mainly as petty traders, food vendors, catering (chop bar) assistants, head porters (*kayayei*), shop assistants and hairdressers, while migrant men work as, among other things, artisans, labourers in the construction sector and operators of motorcycle taxis



(*okada*). A significant proportion of men in Old Fadama were also involved in the collection and sale of scrap metal (that is, the electronic waste, or e-waste, business).

Although the earnings of migrants in the informal sector tend to be irregular and lower than those in the formal sector, some workers in the informal sector earned more than those employed in the civil service. For example, migrants in the e-waste business, despite its risky nature, found it highly lucrative, with daily earnings from 15 cedis (about USD 7.50 ) for scrap collectors to between 40 and 200 cedis (about USD 20 and USD 100, respectively) for e-waste refurbishers, who are higher in the labour hierarchy. These earnings are higher than the salaries of lower and middle level officers in Ghana's public service and certainly several times higher than what they were earning in their home regions. The study also highlights individual cases of migrants from Nigeria who earned as much as one thousand Ghana cedis (about USD 500) on a very good business day as scrap dealers. When one compares these earnings with the income they would have made in their rural areas, there is no question that migration has improved their earning capacity. Awumbila et al (2014a) therefore argue that urban slums are not just places of despair and misery, but places where migrants are optimistically making the most of their capabilities and are trying to move out of poverty, despite the obvious difficulties.

The above discussion therefore highlights the significance of the informal sector for migrant livelihoods. Although the informal sector is often seen as precarious, unregulated and lacking income security, it offers employment opportunities for poor migrants to realise their capabilities and exit poverty despite the negative perceptions of rural urban migration by most African governments.

### **Migration and Well-being**

Despite the lack of support for migrants in urban areas, and the neglect of informal settlements such as Old Fadama, (where rural urban migrants tend to settle in), by city authorities and the state in terms of infrastructure and services, migrants continue to flood these communities. Despite living in a harsh environment, with little social protection, Awumbila et al's 2014a study found that migrants perceived that their overall well-being had been enhanced by migration. 88 percent of households surveyed assessed their overall household well-being to have improved since migrating to Accra. Table 1 and a chi-square test indicates that there were no significant gender differences in terms of their assessment of improvement in the quality of their lives after migrating to Accra. About 85% of both males and females assessed their situation to have improved a lot or improved somewhat after migration (Table 1). The results further indicated that irrespective of community of residence, gender and duration of stay, majority of these poor migrants believed that overall well-being of their households has improved after migrating to Accra.

**Table 1: Assessment of Overall Life of Household after Moving to Accra (%) by Sex**

Responses	Male	Female
Improved a lot	47.9%	29.2%
Somewhat Improved	37.9%	56.3
Remained the same	9.3%	5.2
Somewhat deteriorated	4.3%	9.6
Deteriorated a lot	0.7%	0.0
<b>Total</b>	140	98
<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Source: Awumbila et al, 2014a

Despite this general perception, the discussion has shown that gender mediates the potential benefits from migration as women were found to be engaged in the lower paying informal sector work such as domestic work and headload porters (*kayayei*) and therefore earned less than men. They were also more subject to work under exploitative work conditions compared to men. This implies the need for a more nuanced understanding of the inter linkages between causes and impacts of rural-urban migration and the mediating role gender plays in this relationship.

### Conclusions and Policy Implications

The discussion indicates that migration can be both a source and an effect of greater empowerment of women especially in urban areas and in areas of origin. However despite this potentially positive impact, internal migration and in particular rural-urban migration has been viewed generally negatively by policy makers because of the widely held perceptions that it can lead to negative outcomes for migrants, their families, their areas of origin or destination. This has been largely fuelled by perceptions of migrants from rural areas flooding into cities, swelling the ranks of the unemployed, putting stress on urban services and infrastructure, and contributing to social unrest and civil disorder (Deshingkar and Grimm, 2005), while depleting the rural economy of its more skilled and innovative individuals (Lipton, 1980). Thus in a review of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) from 59 countries, Black and Sward (2009) found that in more than half of the PRSPs, internal migration was seen as a phenomenon to be discouraged.

The State of African Cities 2014 report (UN-Habitat, 2014) indicates that migration patterns in sub-Saharan Africa today are largely rural-urban and intra- regional in nature, and thereby largely internal in scope. Yet the response of governments has been hostile to internal migrants, typifying them as rural dwellers who do not share the “right to the city. In Ghana, attempts have been made to return female head porters operating in urban markets of Accra to their areas of origin in the north of Ghana (Awumbila and Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008), without success. More recently, in Ghana in June 2015, the Accra Metropolitan Assembly demolished the largest informal settlement in Accra, Old Fadama, evicting an estimated 50,000 people, mostly migrants from the northern regions of Ghana and from West Africa. Awumbila and Deshingkar (2015c) argue that forced evictions and other sweeping anti-migration measures taken by central and city governments in general do not provide long-term solutions to urban growth, instead they often worsen the risks of already poor and vulnerable people and create deeper exploitative conditions for migrants. The stigmatization of rural migrants in urban areas also reflects an inability to view rural urban migration as part of a potentially positive process. This

stigmatization also often exacerbates existing gender inequalities, thus eroding further potential benefits of migration in empowering women.

There is therefore the need for a more positive and nuanced view and response to rural-urban migration by Government and city authorities, and policies and strategies devised to enhance the potential benefits of migration for men and women.

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