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A Gendered Perspective On Migrant Women Farmers' Lived Experiences In The Brong-Ahafo Region Of Ghana

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Abstract

This thesis examined the lived experiences of migrant women in rural areas of the Brong-Ahafo Region (BAR) of Ghana. Notwithstanding the depth of research on internal migrations in Ghana, little is known about women who have migrated from the Upper West Region to rural settlements in BAR to farm. Using 30 in-depth interviews, 5 focus group discussions and 10 key informant interviews, the study investigated migrant women's productive and reproductive challenges, how they navigate these limitations, and the current state of livelihood improvement interventions. The findings revealed that migrant women's livelihoods may not have improved as they had expected pre-migration, due to structural and cultural barriers which inhibit their effective utilisation of economic, health and social resources. Given their overwhelming constraints, migrant women tend to work more as there are few interventions to support them.

Key words: Migration, Women, Agriculture, Reproductive Activities, Brong-Ahafo Region, Ghana

Co-Authorship Statement

This thesis consists of two manuscripts which are at different stages of being processed for publication. (*see* chapters 4 and 5). Chapters 1 and 2 provide an outline of the study problem, research objectives and literature around women and migration, with a focus on internal migration dynamics in Ghana. The methods employed in conducting the study are presented in chapter 3. Chapter 6 provides a summary and conclusion of the study. It also highlights the contributions of the study to literature and methods, as well as policy implications and directions for future research. The research manuscripts are as follows:

Chapter 4: Baada, J.N., Baruah, B., & Luginaah, I., Running with Poverty: Interrogating the Paradox Embedded in Migration as a Livelihood Improvement Strategy among Migrant Women Farmers in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.

Chapter 5: Baada, J.N., Baruah, B., & Luginaah, I., The Strangers We Are: Examining Migrant Women Farmers' Reproductive Health and Child Care Dynamics in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.

While all the manuscripts are co-authored with my thesis supervisors, their role was restricted to providing guidance and reviewing drafts of the chapters. As the first author, I conducted the actual research including problem identification, literature review, data collection and analysis, and writing.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

Using three interconnected objectives, this thesis examines the lived experiences of migrant women farmers in the Brong-Ahafo Region (BAR) of Ghana. Specifically, it seeks to understand how women farmers' productive (economic) and reproductive (childbirth and child care) activities play out in rural migrant locations. These dynamics are examined within the broader context of changing internal migration patterns, influenced by lack of opportunities in origin areas and increased environmentally induced out-migration.

This chapter provides a rationale for the study by identifying where the thesis fits within the literature around women and migration. It also presents the research objectives and explains how the research is situated within the field of geography. Finally, it demonstrates how the two manuscripts of the thesis are conceptually related and concludes with an outline of the thesis chapters.

1.1 Background to the study

Climate change has led to environmental variability in many regions around the world. Although the impacts of climate change are expected to worsen over the next few years, these consequences are unevenly distributed globally and regionally (IPCC, 2014). Among the many impacts of climate change include effects on human activities, infrastructure and natural resources, of which agriculture is crucial. (IPCC, 2014; Lobell et al., 2008) Given the gradual decline and unpredictability of rainfall patterns due to climate change, most affected regions around the world have had to rely on other modes

of agriculture such as irrigation, genetically modified seeds among others (Lobell et al., 2008).

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is one of the regions expected to bear a disproportionate burden of climate change, as most livelihoods in the region rely heavily on rain-fed agriculture (Cooper et al., 2008). This is because the majority of farmers within the sub-region are peasant smallholder farmers who are unable to afford irrigation systems or lack access to appropriate technology, drought resistant seeds and sustainable agricultural methods (Kurukulasuriya & Rosenthal, 2013). As a result, these farmers depend on other adaptation strategies, among which migration ranks highly (Meze-Hausken, 2000; Tacoli, 2009).

Migration - both international and internal - has become a necessary adaptation strategy as a response to the impacts of climate change (Luginaah et al., 2009; Meze-Hausken, 2000; Tacoli, 2009). Hence, the newly launched United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) place importance on migration in an effort to improve the lives of people around the world. SDG 10, which seeks to reduce inequalities within and between countries, identifies migration as one of the ways to achieve this objective. This goal deals with how to facilitate the smooth mobility and settlement of migrants within and between countries. It is intended that creating suitable environments for migrants will facilitate their integration in new destinations, help improve their overall standards of living and reduce poverty.

Although migration is a highly studied phenomenon, several aspects remain understudied in various contexts. For example in many developing countries, migration research focuses predominantly on rural-urban migration (Awumbila et al., 2014;

Brueckner & Lall, 2015). This is due to the long history of this pattern of migration and the sheer numbers involved. Also, many of these studies, particularly in SSA, tend to focus on men because many societies recognise male-migration as a rite of passage to adulthood (Abdul-Korah, 2008; Monsutti, 2007). Irrespective of these studies and their usefulness in providing understanding for migration, they do not outline a holistic picture of current migration dynamics. Recent evidence suggests that rural-rural migration is gaining prominence in certain areas (Eliasson et al., 2015; Stockdale, 2016), although rural-urban migrations continue to be most dominant (Awumbila et al., 2014; Brueckner & Lall, 2015). Additionally, the growing participation of women migrants has largely been understudied (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 2006). Yet, the many factors including limited economic opportunities, climate variability and food insecurity that are responsible for these changing dynamics in migration in many parts of SSA are gendered and therefore need to be examined as such (Rademacher-Schulz et al., 2014; Warner & Afifi, 2014).

The Upper West Region (UWR) of Ghana is one area currently undergoing severe impacts of climate change (Kusakari et al., 2014; Nyantakyi-Frimpong & Bezner-Kerr, 2015). Climate variability has led to land degradation, reduced and unpredictable rainfall, aridity and land infertility in the region. This has created widespread food insecurity as rain-fed agriculture is the major source of food and livelihood for most residents of the region (Kuuire et al., 2013; Luginaah et al., 2009). The UWR; the second smallest region in the country in terms of land size, following colonial and subsequent national governments' neglect, is the poorest region in Ghana and has high illiteracy rates (GSS, 2013; Kuuire et al., 2013). As a result, there are few economic opportunities available to

residents outside of agriculture. Consequently, in recent decades, many peasant farmers in the region have resorted to migration to the middle belt of the country to engage in subsistence farming (Kuuire et al., 2016; Luginaah et al., 2009).

Migration from northern to southern parts of Ghana has long been in existence due to colonial policies which treated the northern regions (UWR, Upper East and Northern) as labour reservoirs, while developing the southern sector of the country (Abdul-Korah, 2007; Songsore, 1979). Yet, recent migrations from the UWR are assuming new patterns. First, unlike previous migrations, which were towards urban locations, mining centres, and cocoa and timber producing towns in the south, recent migrants are relocating to rural farming areas in the middle belt of the country – mostly the BAR. The BAR of Ghana is a popular destination choice for these migrants due to the presence of fertile arable lands, biannual rainfall seasons and its relative proximity to the UWR (Abdul-Korah, 2007; van der Geest, 2011). Secondly, previous migrations which were seasonal (as young men tended to move from the north to south after the farming seasons, when the rains ended), are becoming permanent in nature (Abdul-Korah, 2007; Kuuire et al., 2016). Finally, there is a growing participation of women in the new patterns of migration from not only the UWR, but the two other northern regions as well, whereby women either migrate with their spouses or on their own (Abdul-Korah, 2011; van der Geest, 2011; Awumbila & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008).

Although some studies have looked at the economic benefits of internal migration in Ghana, these studies have mostly focused on the experiences of rural-urban migrants or rural migration origins (Awumbila & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008; Kuuire et al., 2013; Rademacher-Schulz et al., 2014). As such very little is known about rural to rural

migration patterns and their effects. Relatedly, the experiences of women in rural migration destinations in Ghana remain largely unknown. Invariably, we now know that migration is a gendered phenomenon that impacts men and women differently (Mahler & Pessar, 2006). For instance, although migration may be found to be a beneficial adaptation strategy for men from the UWR by providing them with better agricultural opportunities and the ability to remit to their families in order to alleviate food insecurity back 'home' in the UWR, these benefits may not accrue to their women counterparts equally (Kuuire et al., 2013). Given the structural and cultural practices in most parts of Ghana and in the UWR and BAR in particular which inherently limit women's ability to own and use property, as well as expectations surrounding women's domestic responsibilities (Lobnibe, 2008), it is important to investigate how women farmers navigate these cultural spaces in their new migrant environments. In addition, social support (from friends and kin) is known to play an important role in women's general and reproductive health in the cultural context of the UWR (Ganle et al., 2015). Additionally, considering that the majority of migrant women farmers from the UWR who are in BAR tend to settle in remote rural areas due to poverty and the relative ease of securing farmlands in these areas (Kuuire et al., 2013), it is imperative to examine the impacts of such settlement patterns on women's general and reproductive health, in a migration context.

This thesis, therefore, contributes to the literature on women and migration by examining the productive and reproductive challenges of migrant women farmers in a rural context. It is also the first of its kind to investigate these lived experiences of women in an agrarian migration destination. Findings from the study may be useful for

understanding the particular needs of migrant women farmers in Ghana and the Global South, and provide ways of empowering these women in line with UN SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5 and 10.

1.2 Study Objectives

This thesis comprises of two manuscripts which together address the following three interrelated objectives:

1. To investigate the productive and reproductive challenges which confront migrant women farmers in BAR.
2. To examine the strategies women employ in order to navigate the identified challenges
3. To identify interventions available/needed to improve migrant women farmers' livelihoods.

1.3 Geographies of Health

This research straddles two sub disciplines; health geography and feminist geography. Health geography evolved from medical geography which for the most part of its existence did not consider the importance of place in shaping health (Litva and Eyles, 1995). This was largely due to its orientation which was based on the biomedical disease model (Kearns, 1993). Thus, apart from applying positivist and reductionist methods in studying disease, it also relied on epidemiological and quantitative analysis in studying health (Luginaah, 2009). Medical geography therefore reduced human health to etiology, prognosis and numbers. It received criticism for this approach and particularly for its

atheoretical nature (Litva and Eyles, 1995; Rosenberg, 1998). This subsequently led to the development of health geography, which emphasized the importance of health and place (Eyles 1989; Dear & Wolch 1989).

In the 1970's and 1980's, health research bordered on two schools of thought; disease ecology, and access and utilisation of health care. Disease ecology primarily dealt with the spatial distribution of disease while access and utilisation focused on the enabling and constraining factors that inform people's health seeking behaviour (Eyles 1993; Rosenberg, 1998; Yiannakoulis et al., 2007). By the 1990's, the mandate of health geography was challenged and it was advocated that a more holistic approach towards health be adopted. This cause was heralded by both external and internal forces like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and theory driven debates among social scientists (Kearns, 1993; Parr, 2002). According to Kearns (1993), the assumptions of medical geography that human health is generic and static were flawed as human health is impacted by macro and micro level influences including structure, institutions, contextual factors and individual agency.

Health geography is, therefore, concerned with the impacts of politics, culture, socioeconomic status and gender on health. Thus, the discipline asks questions about psychosocial health, women's health and the social construction of the body (Luginaah et al., 2002). Health geography also advocates for multidisciplinary research and the inclusion of theoretical frameworks such as political ecology which examine the role of power, politics and environment on health outcomes and experiences. In using this approach, it arrives at answers that encompass individual experiences (Dyck, 1995; Taylor et al., 1991; Williams and Garvin, 2004). In addition, due to health geography's

mandate of examining health holistically instead of focusing on the presence or absence of disease, it has embraced the use of multiple methodologies (Elliot, 1999). This is to ensure that varying experiences of people and groups are captured in a rich and inclusive manner.

Going forward, health geography seeks to promote social justice by reducing health risks that emanate from social inequalities and investigate context specific determinants of health, including migration (Luginaah, 2009). For instance, an International Organisation for Migration (IOM) background paper authored by Davies and colleagues (2009) indicates that:

Migrants go through several experiences which ultimately affect their health particularly in settings where they face a combination of legal, social, cultural, economic, behavioral and communications barriers during the migration process. Social inequities which exist in every society and between different societies mean that the freedom to lead flourishing lives and enjoy good health is unequally distributed...and migrants frequently find themselves amongst those most negatively affected by these imbalances (pp.4).

It is worthwhile to note that in addition to broad societal contextual and biological factors, migrants may experience specific health challenges due to their migrant status. Studying these dynamics with emphasis on migrant status in health geography is generally pursued using theoretical perspectives described as *migration as a social determinant of health*. Thus, health geography presents an adequate lens for examining how key factors such as location, gender and migrant status impact on health outcomes and health seeking behaviours.

1.4 Feminist Geographies

As this thesis examines the lived experiences of women in migration, it is essential to draw on feminist theories within the field of geography to help in explaining migrant women farmers' realities. Feminist geography which began in the 1980's employs the methods, theories and critiques of feminism in studying phenomena (McDowell, 1992).

Feminist geography gained prominence for two main reasons: firstly, it sought to make the field of geography more friendly to women researchers by advocating equitable hiring and secondly, it recognised the importance of including gender in academic scholarships (Massey, 1994; McDowell & Sharp, 1997). The assumptions of feminist geography, like those of health geography, are that social differences such as gender, race, class, ethnicity among others shape experiences in space and place, and space and place in turn shape differences (Dyck, 2003; Mattingly & Falconer-Al-Hindi, 1995).

Feminist geography is also concerned with oppression of marginalised groups. Similar to health geography, it relies on theoretical frameworks such as feminist political ecology that help explain how power dynamics within societies influence the lives of individuals on a macro and micro scale (Valentine, 2007). In effect, feminist geography considers the role of environmental, political, economic, social and cultural components critical in creating realities.

Feminist geographers advocates for inclusive and participatory methods of research as a way of evening out power between researchers and participants, and making sure that participants have the loudest voice. Thus, feminist geography places as much importance on meaning and depth of data as it does, numbers (Jones et al., 1997; Kitchin

& Tate, 2013). In effect, although feminist geographies recognise the differences and importance of acknowledging individual experiences, it places emphasis on how space and place shape gender relations and impact the daily lives of marginalised populations (McDowell, 1993). The sub-disciplines of health geography and feminist geography are, therefore, complementary in understanding the lived experiences of migrant women farmers in the BAR.

1.5 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised around six chapters. Chapter one is the introduction and outlines the background of the study, research objectives, and situates the research within the fields of health and feminist geographies.

Chapter two builds on the background of the study by discussing extensively global migration trends and women's involvement in it, the economic and reproductive outcomes of migration for women, the history of migration in Ghana and changing trends in these local migrations.

The methodology of the study is discussed in chapter three. This chapter explains the research design, sampling procedure, tools of data collection and process of data analysis. It further provides the rationale for adopting particular research methods.

Chapter four presents the first manuscript of the thesis which examines the challenges migrant women farmers face in carrying out their economic activities in the BAR. The paper used in-depth interviews (n=30) and focus group discussions (FGDs) (n=5) with women farmers, as well as key informant interviews (n=10) to explore

migrant women's economic challenges and the interventions needed to help them. It also draws on a feminist political ecology framework to help explain women's experiences.

The second manuscript which focuses on women's health — particularly women's experiences of reproduction and child care dynamics in the BAR — is presented in the fifth chapter. This manuscript also employed in-depth interviews and FGDs with migrant women, and in-depth interviews with key informants. It uses Andersen's behavioural model of health care utilisation to understand the extent to which migration impacts on women's reproductive and general health. It delves into the influence social support plays on women's utilisation of health care in Ghana, and the coping mechanisms employed by migrant women in dealing with health challenges in the absence of such social support.

Chapter six of the thesis discusses the findings from the study. It ties together the two manuscripts of the thesis to highlight the structural and individual challenges migrant women face in carrying out their economic activities, and the trade-offs between economic livelihoods and social support in a rural farming community. This final chapter also highlights policy implications of the study, with regards to women and migration, for policy makers in Ghana and the Global South.

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CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY AND DISCOURSE OF AGRARIAN WOMEN AND MIGRATION IN GHANA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter delves into literature relevant to the history and discourse of agrarian women and migration in Ghana, in order to situate this thesis research in its context. The chapter begins by exploring how migration research has evolved over the years, the historical antecedents which have contributed to the north-south migration in Ghana, and the emerging shifts in migration trends especially those that relate to women. The chapter concludes with an overview of the migration destination area; the (BAR).

2.2 Women and Migration

Migration refers to the movement of populations across borders (International) or within a territory/country (Internal), driven by push and pull factors and for varying lengths of time (IOM, 2004). Push factors may include wars, unemployment, environmental degradation and famines, which make a migrant's current place of residence unfavourable, thereby compelling them to relocate or risk facing certain perils. Pull factors on the other hand are characteristics of an area that makes it attractive to migrants. These may include economic opportunities and improved livelihoods which may motivate people to move to such areas (Mayer, 2016). Climate change recently emerged as a push factor as migrants try to move away from unfavourable climatic environments. Push and pull factors may be classified under environmental, political, economic and social reasons. In addition to push and pull factors, other factors that influence people's

decision to migrate include gender, age, socioeconomic status and proximity of migration destination (IOM, 2004; Mayer, 2016).

Migrations may be temporary, cyclical or permanent. Temporary migration refers to a situation where migrants move to a different area for a defined period of time and return to their original settlements. Cyclical migration, also known as seasonal migration involves the movement of people to certain locations at specific times of the year, to engage in economic activities in these destinations or escape unpleasant conditions in migrant origins. For instance, there is extensive literature that discusses seasonal migration from northern to southern Ghana during the dry season, with migrants returning to their origins at the beginning of the rainy season to cultivate farmlands for their families. This seasonal migration tends to be repeated on an annual basis (e.g., Abdul-Korah, 2006). With permanent migrations, however, migrants settle indefinitely in receiving destinations (IOM, 2004; Portes, 2009). Migrations have increasingly become a common occurrence, where an estimated 191 million people are currently living outside their countries of origin (Baruah & Cholewinski, 2006; Smith & Qian, 2010).

Human population movements date back to as early as 70,000 BCE, when early Homo sapiens began to move into Eurasia (Fisher, 2013). Although both men and women take part in migration, this has historically been dominated by men (Fisher, 2013). Castles and colleagues (2013) attribute this situation to the reproductive roles of women in migration origins which ensures continuity of these societies. Women were, therefore, encouraged to stay behind while the men migrated in search of economic opportunities and in turn remitted to their families back home.

This trend has since changed as an almost equal number of men and women now participate in international migration. For instance in 2005, international women migrants numbered almost 50%, with most international labour migrants from Asia being women (Smith & Qian, 2010). Data, however, suggests that unlike male migrants, the majority of women migrants are younger, unmarried and more educated than their counterparts who remain in migration origins (Smith & Qian, 2010).

Research on migration peaked in the late 20th century due to the mass movement of people between countries (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). Migrants around this period ranged from refugees and peasants to well-educated and skilled workers. Popular destination areas for this period included the United States, the Caribbean and Latin America (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Massey et al., 1999). Despite the extensive research which accompanied these migrations, most scholarships have tended to focus on the experiences of men, with the findings generalised to women (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). Research that purported to study women migrants only depicted them as associational migrants to their male counterparts, thereby lacking agency in the migration decision process (Castles et al., 2013; Pessar, 2005).

Studies that directly focused on women and migration began to gain prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with the emergence of feminist research. Although the initial surge in women's migration research was to address the exclusion of women from previous migration research, this process was not without limitation. For instance, earlier migration works employing quantitative methods treated migrant women as quantifiable variables similar to education and income (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003; Pessar, 2005). In addition, the attempts to include women in migration research led to a narrow focus on

women as one homogeneous group thereby ignoring variations in gender, culture and geography. Consequently, this produced skewed scholarship on women's migration experiences (Donato et al., 2006). Following this, there was a depiction of women's role in relation to migration as complementary to that of men, which suggested that decisions in the migration process were agreed upon by all parties involved. This portrayal was problematic as it ignored the relations, privileges and power dynamics embedded in male-female relationships in different sociocultural contexts (Boyd & Grieco, 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 2006).

Notwithstanding this, subsequent works have sought to address these gaps by taking a more holistic approach in understanding gender interactions in migration (Sassen, 2002). Studies such as Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) and Mahler & Pessar (2006) have highlighted how gender shapes and is shaped by migration, thereby producing different realities for the people involved. This also emphasises the fluidity of gender and how these gendered patterns of migration could (re)produce inequality for men and women in migrant destinations

In addition to these new gendered perspectives in women's migration research, there was also an embrace of qualitative methodologies. This was partly to escape the reductionism characteristic of quantitative methods and its claims of objectivity and scientific neutrality, and address the need for methods that better capture the unique, contextual and everyday experiences of women migrants (Donato et al., 2006; Iosifides, 2013). Thus, contemporary studies on women and migration began to consider gender an important defining component of migration. These scholarships, therefore, examine the extent to which gender permeates identities, institutions and livelihoods in migration.

2.3 Women as Economic Migrants

Like their male counterparts, women are economic migrants as well. Migration has been identified as an important avenue for economic livelihood improvement as evidenced by its inclusion in the recently launched United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). SDG 10 identifies migration as one way of reducing inequalities between and within countries. In effect, some of the targets of this goal include to facilitate safe and organised entry of migrants and subsequently their smooth settlement and integration into migration destinations. SDG 10 also aims to reduce high costs associated with the migration process and eliminate discrimination based on race, religion and economic status in migrant destinations. It also seeks to reassess laws and policies that inhibit migrants' effective integration into society. Finally, SDG 10 aims to cut down remittance costs to ensure that migrants reap maximum economic benefits considering remittance is one of the major reasons behind migration (UN SDGs, 2015). This goes to further elaborate the importance of migration as a means of securing better economic opportunities for both men and women.

In fact, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) observed that the process of migration and migrant destinations tend to be gendered. As a result, employment in migration destinations is mostly classified into men's or women's work (Tyner, 1999). Consequently, although migrants in general tend to be predisposed to subordinate positions in migrant destinations, migrant women are more likely to engage in unappealing menial jobs and receive lower wages than men (Sassen, 2002; Sassen-Koob, 1984). In more developed contexts, common jobs engaged in by migrant women, particularly unskilled ones, include domestic help, care work and sex work (Agustín,

2007; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2010). In developing contexts, migrant women may not even have the luxury of such menial jobs, and may therefore be caught in migration destinations where their lives are worse than what they were in migration origins. Where migrant women end up with better economic opportunities than their men counterparts, it has been suggested by Menjívar and Salcido (2002) that this can sometimes lead to conflict within the household, contrary to earlier claims that such dynamics resulted in an egalitarian relationship in migrant households (Menjivar, 1999; Parrado & Flippen, 2005). The literature on this, however, remains complicated. In spite of these economic constraints, studies have shown that migrant women contribute substantially to the economic development of receiving areas through the provision of cheap labour, and to their origins through remittances. Moreover, migrant women have also been found to remit more than their men counterparts (Boyle, 2014; Curran & Saguy, 2001). Given the complexity of low wages and higher remittances, migrant women may be working more hours to the detriment of their health in order to meet their needs and fulfill obligations back home.

2.4 Women's Reproductive and Child Care Activities in Migration

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2009) identifies migration as a social determinant of health. According to Davis et al. (2009), the legal, economic, social, cultural and behavioural experiences of the migration process may impact the health of migrants. As such, migration can be a source of health inequalities. Nevertheless, access to quality health resources for migrants in receiving areas would ensure that migrants are able to lead fulfilling lives and contribute significantly to the host destination.

There is increasing interest in understanding the reproductive and fertility issues among migrants as this has a tendency to affect the population dynamics of receiving locations (Smith & Qian, 2010). This interest seeks to address the limited research on non-communicable diseases centred around reproductive and mental health, given that existing studies examining migration and health have primarily focused on infectious diseases (Carballo & Nerukar, 2001; UNFPA, 2006). For women migrants especially, access to reproductive and child care services can greatly impact on health and wellbeing. Invariably, migration has been found not only to delay the age of first marriage, but may delay childbirth and lower fertility rates (Chen et al., 2010). More importantly, migrant women's autonomy is further impacted as limited resources imply fewer reproductive health choices.

Migration is also known to be associated with health inequities by influencing the access and utilization of health care services. The lack of access to health care services is often complicated by the fact that migrants may be residing in unfavourable geographical locations (Davies et al., 2009). For instance, contraceptive use among international migrants is lower compared to native populations. This has been attributed to the lack of access and the limited knowledge by a majority of migrant women in rural areas where health information is generally poor. This poor contraceptive patronage has also been associated with the low socioeconomic status and educational backgrounds of migrants, compared to their counterparts in urban receiving areas (Yuan et al., 2013). Apart from low contraceptive use, migrants are also at higher risks of contracting sexually transmitted illnesses (STIs) than their non-migrant counterparts (Anarfi, 2005). This is in part due to the mobility associated with migration which might lead to migrants keeping

multiple sexual partners. As well, social norms which foster misconceptions of fidelity especially among married migrant women or women whose partners have migrated may affect their inability to negotiate safer sex. These misconceptions could also lead to a denial among women, of the sexual risks associated with migration (Hirsch et al., 2002; Smith-Estelle, & Gruskin, 2003).

Moreover, as most labour migrants come from low economic backgrounds, the majority tend to either settle in urban slums or the peripherals of major towns/cities (Beguy et al., 2010). Settling in these areas constrains access to health care due to the absence of facilities or pressure on existing ones. This has implications for migrant women's reproductive health as limited health access is associated with pregnancy complications, low birth weights and maternal mortality (Fotso et al., 2009). In addition, the cultural context and practices of migrant origins and destinations significantly influences women's reproductive decisions. For instance, immigrant women in China may be compelled to re-think family sizes, given the history of the country's 'one-child policy' (Liang et al., 2014). Furthermore, language barriers, cultural understandings of health and social capital determines migrant women's tendency to utilise health care in migration destinations (Darj, & Lindmark, 2002; Flores, 2006). Consequently, as the number of women involved in migration continues to rise, it is imperative that the changing behavioural, cultural, gender and social dynamics involved in migration be understood as well.

2.5 Shifting Migrations

Most studies that have explored the economic benefits of migration and women's reproductive health have been based on the context of rural-urban migration (Lall et al., 2006; Smith & Qian, 2010). These studies focus on the experiences of migrants in urban areas given the dominance of this form of migration over the years. According to the *World Migration Report 2015*, more than 54% of the world's population live in urban areas. It is estimated that this population will peak 6.4 billion by the year 2050, with migration to urban areas contributing significantly to this number. For instance, in Canada, new immigrants alone made up 21.80% of the country's population by 2015. Despite the overwhelming numbers of urban migrations, emerging studies suggest migrations to rural destinations are becoming increasingly common (Eliasson et al, 2015; Simard, 2016). Among other things, the limited economic and infrastructural opportunities in urban centres to cater for the skyrocketing urban populations have been observed to be responsible for this migration trend (Eyo & Ego, 2013; Simard, 2016).

African countries are not exempted from these trends as residents of the continent continue to resort to both internal and international migration in the quest for economic opportunities and livelihood improvement (Awumbila et al., 2014; Warner & Afifi, 2014). For most migrants in Africa, urban destinations have been the preferred choice of settlements, similar to migration trends in other part of the world (Awumbila et al., 2014; Brueckner & Lall, 2015). However, congestion in urban centres has necessitated alternative forms of migration. Aside the lure of economic opportunities for most migrants, negative consequences of climate change are gradually becoming a major push

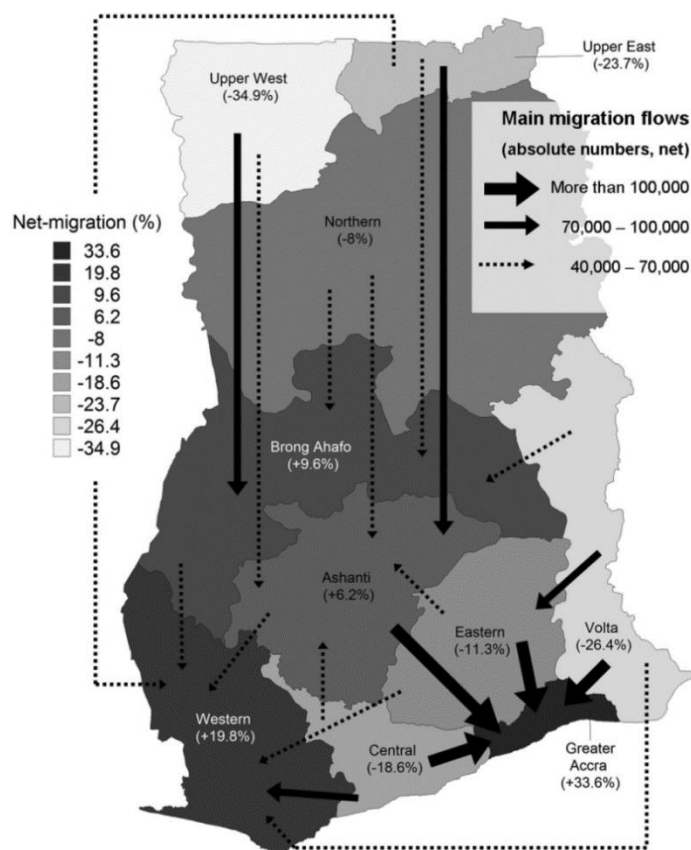
factor of migration in African communities (see IPCC, 2014; Warner & Afifi, 2014). In most developing regions including SSA, out-migration has often been employed as a means of dealing with environmental degradation, rainfall variability and food insecurity (Luginaah et al., 2009; Warner & Afifi, 2014). Given that agriculture is the major employer and mode of sustenance for a majority of the African population, these alternative migrations take into account the availability of arable lands for agriculture (Abdul-Korah, 2006; Kuuire et al., 2016).

This gradual gravitation towards rural migration settlements raises salient questions such as the presence of economic opportunities for migrants, social and cultural assimilation into these communities, population growth on receiving rural areas, among others (Eliasson et al, 2015; Simard, 2016). Despite all of these uncertainties, rural in-migration still continues to receive less scholarly attention compared to urban migration (Simard, 2016). This situation is even more compelling for rural migrant women as scholarship on women and migration in itself is still gaining grounds in mainstream migration research.

2.6 North-South Migration Dynamics in Ghana

Like many other countries across the globe, internal migration is an age-old phenomenon in Ghana. The majority of migrations in the country have been from the northern to southern sector of the country. Ghana's north-south migration trend, however, cannot be explored without first understanding the structural complexities that have led to the current interregional inequalities which propel this trend of migration. Disparities in Ghana's regional development can be traced back to a capitalist influence, which marked

initial developments in the country (Songsore, 1979) (*see* Figure 1). According to Songsore (1979) between the 8th and 15th centuries, prior to the arrival of Europeans in Africa, the Sahel zone which include northern Ghana was mainly organized on traditional state lines to facilitate smooth running of commerce in this area. This transaction called the Trans-Saharan trade was mostly between Sahelian states and North Africa. The Mamprusi, Dagomba and Nanumba Kingdoms located in present-day northern Ghana were among the first centralised states that greatly benefited from this trade. Other states such as the Wala and Imola of present-day Upper West Region (UWR) soon joined the successful states of the Sahel (Amin, 1972).



(Source: Van der geest et al., 2010)

Figure 2- 1: Map of Ghana Showing Internal Migration Flows

However, these good fortunes were short lived when European traders arrived. The presence of precious minerals such as gold and other trade goods of interest in the south, as well as its proximity to the sea made southern Ghana the new hub of international trade (Garrett, 1980). This came with changing political and economic dynamics as trading with the Europeans was capitalist inclined. Thus, the presence of resources like cocoa, gold, timber, and diamonds in southern and coastal Ghana saw the growth of new trading routes in those areas. In this regard, Northern Ghana was at a locational disadvantage with regards to these new trade systems, as it wasn't endowed with trade goods that the British traders sought. Moreover, the introduction of slave trade amidst concomitant wars further weakened and destroyed most of these prosperous Sahelian states (Songsore, 1979). Consequently, the Ashanti region - located around the middle belt of the country - thrived due to the presence of gold and its role in coordinating trade between Northern Ghana and the southern/coastal areas (Marshall, 1972).

At a point, British colonists saw the need to centralise their rule over the country and created Accra as the administrative capital (Songsore, 1979). In a quest to enhance trade, the Colonists established railways, roads, health and educational facilities among other social infrastructure in these merchant towns in coastal and southern Ghana (Garret, 1980). These infrastructural developments were to the neglect of the northern sector of the country given that there was no incentive to do so (Owusu, 1970; Bening, 1977). Instead, the northern territories were treated as a labour reserve to feed the emerging industries in the south. Hence, part of the reason for neglecting the development of the

northern sector was a colonial state policy to compel inhabitants there to move to southern Ghana as cheap labour. In some instances brute force was used to recruit this northern labour force to serve in the army, mines and plantations of the South (Songsore & Denkabe, 1995)

After independence, this trend of development continued. Post-colonial governments still implemented development policies that further widened regional inequality and marginalised the northern sector of the country, as a way of maintaining this labour force. This formed the antecedents of the north-south migration trend in Ghana albeit this time without the brute force that characterised earlier colonial times (Bening, 1977; Songsore, 1979). Instead, people from the northern area saw the need to migrate down south as most economic and educational opportunities were concentrated there. Residents of the UWR were not excluded from these new migrations.

Subsequently, motives for migrating included not just the pursuit of better living conditions but also, the quest to explore. These migrations, however, were mainly dominated by men due to cultural factors like patriarchy which limited women's participation in these migration trends. Hence, for the most part of the 18th and 19th centuries, migrants from the north were mainly men and popular destinations were urban areas in the south which hosted the mining, lumbering and plantations industries (Abdul-Korah, 2006).

2.6.1 Shifts from Urban to Rural Migration Destinations

From the late 1970s, migrations from northern to southern Ghana began to shift from rural-urban, to a rural-rural focus. Major reasons for this switch include the worsening environmental impacts of climate change in the northern sector (van der Geest, 2011).

Northern Ghana - comprising of the Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions (see figure 1) – is located in the Guinea/Sudan-Savannah vegetation. This vegetation is characterised by grassland interspersed with drought resistant trees. From April to September each year, this area experiences an annual rainfall of about 957.6mm (Armah et al., 2011) Over time, however, the rains have become unstable, sometimes beginning in June and ending at as early as August (Nyantakyi-Frimpong & Bezner-Kerr, 2015; Rademacher-Schulz et. al., 2014).

In addition to environmental variability, Ghana implemented the World Bank's backed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in the 1980s due to excessive economic hardships caused by prolonged droughts, and huge government debts (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000). The SAP was therefore introduced to stabilise Ghana's economy by reducing national spending and promoting international trade. As part of the measures to reduce government's expenditure, most agricultural subsidies were removed (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Hutchful, 2002). This was detrimental to farmers especially those in the northern sector as the majority were peasant farmers who relied heavily on these subsidies for affordable agricultural inputs (Sarris & Shams, 1991). Moreover, as the SAP was pro-export, agricultural interventions were targeted at cash crops such as cocoa and coffee, which were mainly cultivated in southern Ghana. Food crops like groundnuts, bambara beans and millet which were the staples primarily produced by farmers in the northern regions were neglected by these policies (Quaye, 2008). This further widened inequalities within the country as cash crop farming made up just 18% of Ghana's agricultural sector and was concentrated in the south, as against the dominant subsistence

farming which formed the source of livelihood for most people in northern Ghana (Konadu-Agyemang & Adanu, 2003).

Considering that the majority of natives in the UWR are into rain-fed subsistence agriculture, the decline in agricultural productivity coupled with existing high poverty and illiteracy rates implied limited economic opportunities in the region (Kuuire et al., 2013; Luginaah et al., 2009). With increased unemployment in the UWR, migrating to rural areas with better farming conditions in southern Ghana became an adaptation strategy in coping with worsening poverty and food insecurity (Abdul-Korah, 2006). Until recently, however, these migrations were temporary and cyclical where young men annually travelled to the BAR, engaged in farming and saved up enough money and food to take back home or remit to their families in the UWR (Kuuire et al., 2013).

From the 1980s onwards, these migrations started to become permanent in nature. Reasons for settling permanently in the BAR included the drive among some migrants to accrue enough economic resources to avoid the shame of being labelled as failures when they returned home. Others felt alienated from their culture, and doubted their ability to reintegrate into their communities back home after being away for too long. Finally, some migrants preferred to remain permanently in the BAR given its better farming conditions (i.e. biannual rainfall and fertile lands) and to avoid the costs associated with seasonal migrations (Abdul-Korah, 2006).

As migrations assumed a permanent nature, more women started to migrate from the UWR to the BAR with their partners or families. Prior to this, few women were involved in migration as customs and economic factors privileged men's migration over that of women. For instance, it was widely perceived that women who migrated alone

were promiscuous (Grier, 1992; Koenig, 2005). Although younger, unmarried women began to migrate from the 1970s onwards, they tended to settle in urban areas and worked as head porters or engaged in menial jobs in restaurants (Abdul-Korah, 2011). Apart from the autonomy that came with settling in urban areas, these unmarried young women were also attracted to these urban centres because of the diverse economic opportunities compared to only farm work in rural areas. It is, however, asserted that women's educational attainment may influence their choice of migration destination in the BAR, as those completing higher education tend to settle in the urban centres. In contrast, the majority of women migrating from the UWR to rural areas of the BAR to engage in farming activities are more likely to be married women with lower levels of educational attainment (see Abdul-Korah, 2011; Awumbila, & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008).

2.7 The Study Context

2.7.1 The Brong-Ahafo Region

The BAR was carved out of the then Ashanti Province in 1959. It is the second largest region in the country and currently has 27 administrative districts with Sunyani serving as the regional administrative capital. Like the rest of the regions in the country, the BAR is headed by a regional minister and district chief executives who are appointed by the president, and chiefs who form the traditional authority in the region. By 2010, the BAR had an estimated population of 2,310, 983, representing 9.4% of Ghana's total population. Of this number, women constituted 50.4% while men made up 49.6% (Abdul-Korah, 2006; GSS, 2013).

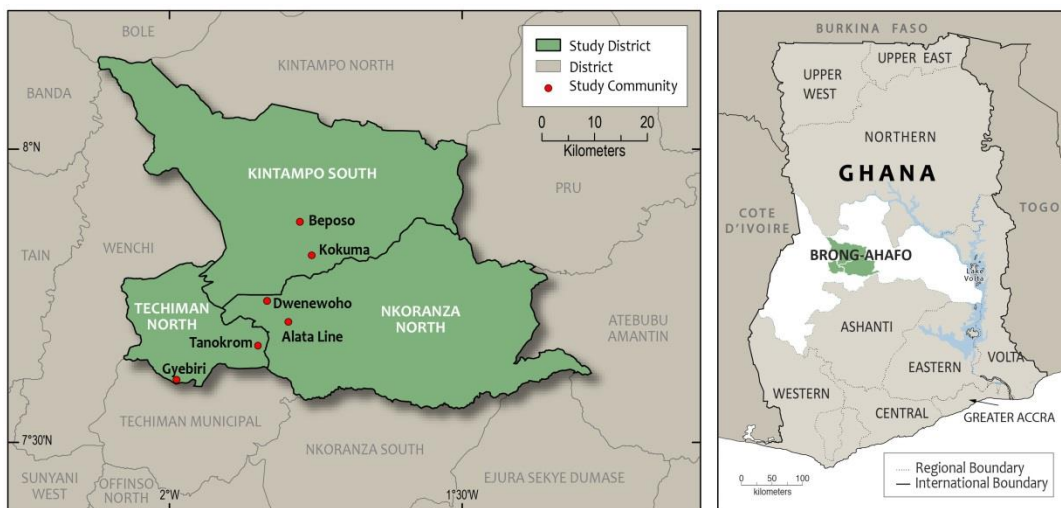
The BAR is currently the highest receiver of migrant population from the UWR. Data from the Ghana Statistical Service estimates that 23% of the region's total population is made up of migrants. The Mole-Dagbon people who are mostly migrants from the UWR constitute 15.4% of this migrant population (see GSS, 2016). The BAR is the preferred migration destination for most natives of the UWR due to its better climatic conditions including fertile lands and a biannual rainfall season (van der Geest, 2011). The region has a tropical climate with a mean temperature of 23.9°C (75°F). Rainfall in the region ranges from 1000 mm to 1400 mm. The region borders two ecological zones; namely the Guinea Savannah and the Semi-deciduous Rainforest. This area is therefore suitable for the cultivation of commercial products like timber, cashew and cocoa, as well as food crops like yams, maize and tomatoes. The BAR alone produces up to 30% of Ghana's food needs. Aside agriculture, the region is also known for its tourist, mining and trading activities (GSS, 2012; Owusu & Waylen, 2013).

In addition to its agricultural lure, the BAR is also popular due to its geographical proximity to the UWR which makes it easily accessible to prospective migrants (see figure 1). Located in the middle belt of Ghana, the BAR lies on 7°44'59.99" North and 1°29'59.99" West. The region is bordered to the north by the Black Volta River and the Northern Region, and to the south by the Ashanti, Eastern and Western Regions. It is also bordered by the Black Volta to the east and the Ivory Coast to the West. The BAR occupies a land mass of 39,557km², constituting 16.6% of the country's total land size (GSS, 2013).

Natives of the BAR are of Akan ethnicity, speak the Bono dialect and have a matrilineal system of inheritance. Migrants from the UWR on the other hand are mainly

of Dagaaba, Sissaala, Brifo and Waala ethnicity, and practice the patrilineal system of inheritance. The region has an illiteracy rate of 49%, 72.2% are Christians and 65.3% of households are headed by men. Despite having a regional poverty head count of 28.6%, some districts like Kintampo-South record poverty rates of up to 78.3% (GSS, 2012; GSS, 2015; GSS, 2016).

The study districts: Kintampo-South, Techiman-North and Nkoranza-North were selected because of their high migrant population (*see* Figure 2). Although the number of migrants of Mole-Dagbon descent in the BAR is estimated at 15.4%, anecdotal evidence from interviews with migrant women and key informants suggests that this number may be as high as 80% in rural areas of the region (GSS, 2013; Field Data 2016).



Source: Karen Vankerkoerle, Department of Geography, Western University

Figure 2- 2: Map of Study Area

New migrants from the UWR gain access to resources such as land in the region through existing social networks made up of friends and family who have previously lived or currently reside in the BAR. Migrant social networks identify good areas for settlement based on climatic and economic conditions, as well as links to prospective

land owners. These social networks also help new migrants assimilate into the migration destination by providing some form of cultural education and social support (Kuuire et al., 2016; Lobnibe, 2008).

Due to economic difficulties in accessing housing in their new environments, most migrant farmers in the BAR build temporal structures using straw, bamboo and mud on their acquired farmlands. These structures are mostly dispersed and located in secluded areas (Adjei & Kyei, 2013; Lau, 2011). Not only is this living arrangement risky, it also has implications on migrant women farmers' access to basic amenities, health care and social support (Adarkwa & Oppong, 2007; Lobnibe, 2008).

Migrant farming in the BAR is done either on economic lease or sharecropping basis (Luginaah et al., 2009). Economic leasing involves some formal process of land acquisition where money is exchanged for the use of land, for a specified period of time. Amounts paid range from GHS 100.00 to GHS 500 (CAD 30-167) per acre, for a year (Field data 2016). In sharecropping, a landowner rents the land out in exchange for a percentage of food crops cultivated on the land. The most common sharecropping arrangements in the BAR are the *Abunu* and *Abusa* terms. *Abunu* involves splitting farm produce in a 2:1 ratio for the farmer and landowner, whereas the *Abusa* system uses a 3:1 ratio for farmer and landowner, respectively. Typically, new migrants utilise the sharecropping arrangement until they've raised enough money to rent land. In addition to these sharecropping deals, migrant farmers are sometimes tasked with managing cash crop farms and using available space on these farms to cultivate their own crops (Codjoe, 2006; Luginaah et al., 2009; Field data 2016).

2.8 Summary

This chapter provided background information on the basis for the thesis project. First, it explored the history of research on global migration, as well as women's inclusion in migration scholarships. While both women and men have always participated in migration, earlier studies primarily focused on men. The emergence of research on women and migration was characterised by flawed descriptions of them being associational migrants to their male partners, or as variables to measure men's experiences. Although still limited, contemporary research on women and migration have sought to address these shortcomings by studying women as migrants with agency, emphasising the fluidity of gender, and highlighting the gendered nature of the migration process. Second, literature was reviewed on the impacts of migration on women's economic and reproductive activities in receiving areas. Some challenges faced by women in undertaking everyday activities in migration destinations were identified, as well as how this shapes their realities. Next, the chapter discussed changing global migration trends from mostly rural-urban to rural-rural as a result of increasing populations in urban areas, as against diminishing economic opportunities in these urban receiving areas. Finally, the history of internal migrations in Ghana was examined in order to help readers gain understanding of the context of population movements from the UWR to the BAR. As well, women's participation in these internal migrations and the dynamics of rural migration patterns were explored. The chapter concludes with an overview of the study area. The next chapter presents the methods that guided the study.

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CHAPTER THREE

STUDY DESIGN, METHODS AND RATIONALE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, participant selection procedures, tools and processes of data collection, data analysis, and related ethical considerations. The methods are built around a constructivist paradigm given that the lived experiences of migrant women farmers are subjective and contextualised in socially embedded realities. In this respect, they can best be examined using a hermeneutical approach, which has the advantage for examining phenomena beyond face value (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.2 Research Design and Methodology

The study was tailored to understand the productive and reproductive challenges of migrant women farmers from the UWR in the BAR of Ghana and the coping strategies they employ in addressing these challenges. The study also explored avenues for empowerment that can be used to improve migrant women's economic production, health and wellbeing. Informed by the desire for depth and context, the study employed a qualitative approach to capture these subjective perspectives on the lived productive and reproductive experiences of migrant women. A qualitative methodology allows for the use of multiple methods, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and observation of research participants and their surroundings, which ensures triangulation.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggest that the use of multiple methods promotes in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study. Given that lived experiences are

subjective realities which are shaped by time and space, it is important that migrant women farmers are given the opportunity to engage and delve into their everyday lives with the researcher as a facilitator. In effect, these women must have the loudest voice in the study, and qualitative methods are well suited for this kind of study. Besides taking into account the social processes that shape everyday experiences, qualitative methods are also useful for studying phenomena that have received limited contextual investigation (Giacomini & Cook, 2000).

3.3 The Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach is borne out of the premise that people are influenced by their culture and environmental settings which shape their lives and define their realities. Hence, for research to be beneficial to any studied group, it is important to understand and situate the research within the context of the people being studied (Van Maanen, 1979). Thus human actions and inactions are predicated on intentionality, rationality and reflexivity, as opposed to the positivist view which treats human agency as causally determined (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005).

According to Van Maanen (1979), qualitative methods encompass a multitude of interpretive techniques which aim to describe, decode and translate phenomena *in situ*, in order to arrive at its deep meaning. Therefore, the primary aim of data collection in a qualitative study is to provide description, taking into account the territories and context where such descriptions are created. Van Maanen recommends that, qualitative researchers should physically position themselves closer to their study territory/subjects in order to minimise artificial distances such as labels and pre-formulated research plans.

In view of its ability to capture the depth of a phenomena in a given context, qualitative data have been described as “rich, full, earthy, holistic and ‘real’ and provide an avenue for serendipitous findings which aid in theory creation.” (Miles, 1979: 590)

3.4 Qualitative Research in Health and Feminist Geography

In addition, the study design is informed by feminist methodologies in health geography given that migrant women in this context are a marginalised and vulnerable group in the BAR (Baruah, 2010; Connell & Walton-Roberts, 2016; Hesse-Biber & Yaiser, 2004).

As argued by Ley (1985), humanistic geographies - including health geography - should focus on the human experience, as health goes beyond the presence or absence of disease to include the effects of one’s socio-cultural environment on wellbeing. With the subsequent emergence of health geography from medical geography, there was an urgent call for methods that captured human health more holistically. Thus, qualitative methods in health geography have been regarded as producing contextual knowledge that is cognisant of the interaction between socio-cultural factors and the physical environment; with health being viewed in a holistic manner which contrasts with the positivist reductionist methods employed by medical geography (Dyck, 1999).

The use of qualitative methods in health geography therefore rose to prominence over the last two decades in an effort to give more voice to participants in research, and to emphasise “place” over “space” in the conceptualisation of health. Aside shifts in theory that characterised the emergence of health geography, there were also calls for methods that better explain the promoters or inhibitors of health (Elliot, 1999; Luginaah, 2009; Sofaer 1999). In effect, to better understand gendered health experiences in the context of

space, place and time, it is important to use methodologies that help generate comprehensive knowledge which takes into account the roles of political structures in shaping personal experiences of men and women.

Invariably, the use of qualitative methods in feminist geography was necessitated by the need to break away from the western male dominated research and knowledge production built on the assumption of unbiased science. Feminist methods emphasise reflexivity in research by deconstructing the claim that quantitative methods produce neutral and objective knowledge. From the feminist perspective, therefore, methods of enquiry and knowledge production which does not take into account gender, culture, class and race cannot claim truth (Gregory, 1987; Haraway, 1991; Nicholson, 1990). In addition, feminist methods in geography place qualitative methods above quantitative in the quest to redirect the focus of enquiry from a biomedically driven understanding of health to a social constructionist perspective of health in geography (Gessler & Kearns, 2002; Kearns & Moon, 2002; Parr, 2002).

Despite the varying views on feminist research methodologies, there is consensus that there is nothing intrinsically feminist about any particular method. Instead, the epistemological viewpoint of a study informs the method used for the enquiry which makes it feminist (Riddell, 1989). Feminist methods further acknowledge that research questions should determine which method is appropriate in answering the question. Hence, it may be necessary to have multiple methods capable of answering particular research questions (Elliot, 1999).

Qualitative methods, therefore, provide a tool to highlight women's positionality and produce context specific knowledge that, unfortunately, may not be generalisable to

other contexts (Mattingly & Falconer-Al-Hindi, 1995). Nonetheless, qualitative methods also appeal to feminist methodologies due to their inclusive, collaborative and non-exploitative nature. These methods include in-depth interviews (IDIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), ethnography, photovoice and participatory action research (PAR). To answer the research questions, the study employed IDIs and FGDs.

3.5 Qualitative Rigour

Qualitative methods rely on depth and meaning rather than causal relationships and generalisability as pertains in quantitative methods. Consequently, the qualitative research approach ensures rigour of data through different procedures which contrast the processes of validity and reliability employed by quantitative researchers. Qualitative rigour may be described as the process of ensuring that data is: credible (authentically represents experiences); transferrable (capable of being applied in similar study contexts); Dependable (consistent interpretations) and confirmable (through recognising the researcher's motivations, personal perspectives and biases) (Baxter & Eyles, 1997).

The following sections explore how rigour was achieved before, during, and after data collection. It also explains how rigour was applied in data collection and analyses through the use of multiple methods of data collection, data reduction, triangulation, thematic saturation and researcher positionality and reflexivity.

3.5.1 Data Reduction

This study followed data reduction as one way of ensuring rigour. Data reduction refers to a type of preliminary analysis aimed at refining and revising frameworks iteratively in

order to provide leads for further thematic development of data (Miles, 1979; Sieber 1976).

Sieber advocates that, to ensure good analysis, four rules should be observed in a qualitative study. First, there should be an intertwining of analysis and data collection, where preliminary analysis informs subsequent data collection. The second point to note is the formulation of classes of phenomena, which involves the categorisation of observations into new or abstract concepts. Next, is the identification of themes which involves drawing linkages between concepts, paying particular attention to regularities which permeate discussions, and arouse the curiosity of the researcher. Themes are also developed using an “if-then” hypotheses. The final rule to be observed, according to Sieber (1976), is the provisional testing of hypothesis. This process emulates the methods of quantitative data by ruling out confounding factors.

Miles (1979) further recommends that data, and subsequently findings, be shared with study participants for validation. This process of validation, also known as member checking, involves inviting participants to correct errors and misrepresentations in final results, and provide clarity or alternative interpretations of the study findings.

3.5.2 Triangulation

Methodological triangulation was another way of ensuring qualitative rigour in the study. Thus, the use of two methods in this research; in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were complementary. According to Baxter and Eyles (1997), using more than one method builds rigour in a study and strengthens credibility. Using more than one method allows for data to be triangulated in order to obtain varying perspectives on a topic and ensure validity (Olsen, 2004; Mathison, 1988).

Investigator triangulation is also crucial in ensuring rigour during data analysis (Patton, 1999). To strengthen analysis and understanding, two other researchers with experience in qualitative research were consulted as extra pair of eyes to review initial and final coding. This served as a way of reducing subjectivities in the coding process that might have been missed by the primary investigator.

3.5.3 Thematic Saturation

Although qualitative research does not seek to generalise findings, it is still important to establish internal validity. Thematic saturation is one way of achieving internal validity. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967), data saturation occurs when no new information requiring distinct categories have emerged after a certain number of interviews.

It is worthwhile to note that different themes may have different saturation points. For instance, while prevalent themes such as dwindling rainfall, discriminatory land tenure systems and difficulty accessing formal health care reached saturation by the 15th interview, other themes such as squabbles with neighbours began to emerge after 25 interviews. As more data was gathered, thematic sampling was used to create new categories until all prevalent themes were exhausted (Baxter and Eyles, 1997).

3.5.4 Positional Spaces of Interaction and Reflexivity

Before embarking on any research, it is important to reflect on power dynamics between the researcher and the researched, and how this could potentially affect data collection and findings. This is important as it will determine ways through which skewed power dynamics can be evened out to make participation more inclusive (England, 1994).

Being a woman who hails from the UWR and having previously resided in the BAR for eight years, I knew that I shared some things in common with migrant women.

These include a common ethnicity, culture, language and barriers associated with land ownership and acquisition in this new space. This, however, did not blind me to the fact that my lived experience also varied from those of that of these women in a number of ways. For instance, I had a higher level of education, belonged to a different socioeconomic status and had grown up in a different geographical space.

Understanding my positionality in relation to research participants was important for a number of reasons. Apart from using the shared characteristics to help me gain entry into research communities and built rapport with the women, I was also able to anticipate the challenges I might face and so I came up with ways to circumvent them. For instance, my positionality made some of the women more relaxed and forthcoming during interviews. This trust accorded me may have been a result of the typically negative experiences they encountered with researchers of southern origin.

As mentioned earlier, the eight years spent in the BAR gave me fair knowledge of the geography of the region as I had previously been to some of the research communities. Hence, a lot of time was saved conducting preliminary field visits. This advantage also helped me easily identify migrant hub communities. Once these migrant communities were identified, I used my ethnic and language familiarity to engage with community leaders which made them willing to listen to details about my research. It is worth mentioning that people in most of these rural communities suffer from research fatigue and a lack of trust from previous encounters. This was evident in comments like, “You researchers come and ask us questions about what we want you to do for us, and then you never show up again”. This led some participants to remark that they would not have participated in the research but for the fact that I was ‘one of their own’. Finally,

once IDIs and FGDs were scheduled with migrant women, gender and culture were used as icebreakers in order to make women comfortable enough to discuss their experiences with me. For instance, a discussion on culture brought to light the fact that I shared similar experiences with some participants, despite hailing from different districts in the UWR.

On the other hand, my gender, education and socioeconomic status posed challenges for me. For instance, although gender was an advantage when interviewing women, it sometimes served as a hindrance to gaining access to them. This is because community members - most of whom were men - believed I was one of the 'elite' women who usually came around their communities to brainwash their women and turn them against their spouses. This issue was addressed by patiently explaining to the men that I was a student who wanted to help 'my people' by bringing to the attention of policy makers their plight and challenges as migrants in their communities. This was only possible by gaining more knowledge about their challenges. Furthermore, I pointed out to them that the results from my study could help empower women, and empowering the woman was beneficial to the entire household. In addition, some participants felt that given my level of education and socioeconomic status, I would not be able to relate to their experiences. I, therefore, reiterated to participants that the purpose of my research was to tell their stories using their own voices.

Research Assistants (RA) who served as translators for dialects I did not speak were also thoroughly trained to respect these cultural sensitivities during the data collection process; and to be cognizant of the fact that participant confidentiality and informed consent were to be enforced throughout the research process.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Characteristics of respondents are presented in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: In-depth Interviews Respondent Characteristics (30)

Characteristics	Number of Respondents (n=30)	
Age	18-29	4
	30-39	11
	40-49	6
	50-59	4
	60-69	3
	70-80	2
Location	Dwenewoho	5
	Alata-Line	5
	Gyebiri	5
	Kokuma	5
	Tanokrom	5
	Krobo	5
Ethnicity	Dagaaba	13
	Brifo	7
	Waala	4
	Sissala	6
Education	No Education	21
	Primary Education	5
	Junior High School	3
	Senior High School	1
	Training College/ Tertiary	-
Occupation	Farming	26
	Trading	2
	Not working	2
Marital	Never Married	2
	Married	22
	Divorced	2
	Widowed	4
Type of family	Nuclear	11
	Polygamous	6
	Extended	7
	Female Centred	6
Number of children	None	2
	1-5	9
	5-10	15
	Above 10	4
Length of Stay	Less than 2 years	4
	2-5 years	9
	5-10 years	7
	10-20 years	7
	Above 20 years	3

3.6.1 Study Sample

A total of 80 participants took part in all three sections of the study. These included 30 migrant women for IDIs, 10 participants for key informant interviews, and 40 participants for five FGDs, with an average of eight women in every group. Participants included migrants of Sissala, Waala, Brifo and Dagaaba ethnicity from the UWR. IDIs with migrant women and FGDs were made up entirely of women. IDIs with key informants, however, comprised of both men and women. Target populations were women who had migrated from the UWR to the BAR with their spouses or families for agricultural purposes. As a result, the majority of women selected for the study were engaged in farming.

However, of the 30 women selected for IDIs, four women, representing 13.3% of the sample reported they were not engaged in farming. Of these four women, one was previously a farmer but had to quit due to the onset of a disability. Another said she was not engaged in farming or any other economic activity. The remaining two women were engaged in petty trading. In effect, 86.67% of migrant women participants were farmers (see table 1).

All participants were aged between 18-80 years and comprised never married, married, divorced and widowed women. Participants also included mothers and women without children; and women with varying educational backgrounds, although the majority had low levels of education. Respondents were required to have been resident in the BAR for at least two years.

3.6.2 Respondent Selection

Respondents were selected from three districts – Techiman-North, Kintampo-South and Nkoranza-North – in the BAR. These districts were selected because they have high numbers of migrant population from the UWR, according to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2013). Two communities in each of the selected districts with dense migrant concentrations were chosen. These communities include Tanokrom and Gyebiri in the Techiman-North district, Beposo and Kokuma in the Kintampo-South district, and Dwenewoho and Alata Line in the Nkoranza-North district.

Key informants were selected from governmental and non-governmental organisations which dealt directly or indirectly with migrant women. The organisations that participated include the Department of Social Welfare, Gender Desk, Women Integrated Development Organisation (WIDO), the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC).

Letters detailing the purpose of the study and containing contact information of the primary researcher were given to community leaders of the selected communities and organisations. Community leaders and heads of organisations were asked to disseminate information about the research to community members and staff, and provide them with the contact information of the researchers. Interested prospective participants were then asked to contact the primary researcher first. After initial contact was made, the primary researcher followed up in order to schedule interviews with participants based on their availability. This procedure was followed for both IDIs and FGDs.

3.6.3 In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews may be described as conversations between a researcher and participants which are of a fluid form and take into account the interests, opinions and experiences of participants. In-depth interviews are dialectical rather than interrogatory in nature (Valentine, 1997). Likewise, Eyles and Smith (1988) refer to in-depth interviews as conversations with a purpose.

Interviews may take three forms, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structured interviews, also known as standardised interviews are of a formal style and require short, specific responses to questions. Unstructured or unstandardised interviews on the other hand do not use predetermined questions. Instead, questions are developed and adapted as the conversation goes along (Berg, 2007). This study used the semi-structured interview, which is situated between the standardised and unstandardised formats. According to Berg (2007), semi-standardised interviews use a number of predetermined questions structured around specific topics. Questions are asked in a consistent form but allow room for further probing. This method facilitates the sharing of knowledge between individuals in an interactive manner (Miller & Crabtree, 2004).

The semi-structured interview was used as a form of data collection in this study as it prioritises participants sharing their experiences taking into account locational and cultural factors that have shaped them. Thus, in-depth interviews offered participants the platform to tell their stories regarding the challenges they faced in carrying out their productive (economic) and reproductive activities (childbirth and child care) as migrant women in the BAR.

As shown in table 1, a total of 30 in-depth interviews were conducted in the three districts identified above. Five interviews were held in each community. Interviews were facilitated with a semi-structured interview checklist (Appendix D) that asked questions on women's motives for migrating, how they gained entry into rural farming communities of the BAR, challenges they faced in undertaking their productive and reproductive activities, how these challenges differed from those they experienced back home in the UWR, and the interventions they believe are needed to help improve their livelihoods.

Interview times were scheduled based on respondents' availability. Interview venues were also selected based on participants' preferences. Scholars have stressed the importance of recognising context when interviewing (Flowerdew & Martin, 2005; Robson & Willis, 1994). As a result, most interviews were held in the homes of participants at a time they deemed convenient. This is important in this research context as it is considered a sign of respect in Ghanaian culture to call at the homes of people whose help you solicit. However, in some situations women requested that meetings be held elsewhere. In such cases, meetings were held behind closed doors in open places such as church buildings and community centres.

Interviews with migrant women were conducted in Dagaare, Sissaali, Waali and Twi, the major dialects spoken by migrants in the region. Participants were assured the confidentiality of their participation and informed of their rights, including the right not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without consequences. Written or verbal consent was sought from all participants before interviews commenced. All interviews lasted between 15 minutes and one hour, and were audio recorded with permission from

respondents. Recordings were played back to participants at the end of each interview to offer participants the chance clarify or further explain responses during the interview.

3.6.4 Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews may be described as the process of interviewing individuals who can provide important information and insights about a particular topic (Kumar, 1989). Key informant interviews in this study refer to conversations with officials who work directly or indirectly with migrant women farmers, and have deep knowledge about the agrarian activities and challenges of migrant women in the BAR. In line with this, 10 in-depth interviews were held with key informants to find out the common challenges migrant women reported facing in performing their productive and reproductive tasks in the BAR. Ten interviews were enough to reach thematic saturation (Baxter & Eyles, 1997), as no new information emerged after the tenth interview.

Some key informants who were interviewed include personnel from governmental and non-governmental organisations such as the Gender Desk of the district assemblies, the Department of Social Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, Ghana Health Service, Ministry of Education, Women Integrated Development Organisation (WIDO), and Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC).

Key informants were selected from all three districts in the BAR. Letters of invitation outlining the purpose of the research, and describing the qualifications and contributions required of key informants were dropped off at the various district offices. Information on how to contact the researcher was included to enable interested personnel contact the primary researcher. After initial contact had been established, face-to-face appointments were booked to schedule interview dates and times. Interviews were

conducted in offices of key informants behind closed doors. A semi-structured guide (Appendix E) was used to facilitate interviews with questions on key informants' perspectives on motivations for migrating from the UWR to the BAR, major economic activities engaged in by migrant women, how they gained access to health care, and the challenges they encountered in undertaking these activities. Interviews were conducted in English, audio recorded and lasted between 20 minutes to an hour. Participants were guaranteed confidentiality and were also informed of their rights in the research. Written consent was obtained before interviews began.

3.6.5 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions are a type of interviewing which involves small groups of individuals who engage on a specific topic using a discussion style, led by an investigator (Schutt, 2011). Although focus groups are not as popular as other methods and therefore receive limited attention in textbooks on methodology, they nonetheless are gaining widespread recognition in developed countries and the social sciences (Conradson, 2005). Focus groups are an important form of data collection as they allow researchers gain insight into differing views that emerge during interviews (Conradson, 2005). FGDs were conducted in this study in order to triangulate the findings with those from IDIs.

A common critique of FGDs is that discussions might be dominated by active members thereby sidelining more reserved participants. To address this problem, FGDs were carefully moderated to afford every member the chance to express their views. In addition, FGDs constituted women of similar socioeconomic and educational backgrounds which provided them a cordial environment to share their opinions.

A total of five FGDs were held. These were in Beposo and Kokuma, in the Kintampo-South district; Dwenewoho and Alata Line in the Nkoranza-North district and Tanokrom in the Techiman-North district. Each focus group constituted six to ten women, as this number was large enough to get varied opinions, yet small enough to moderate (Krueger & Casey, 2014). FGDs were scheduled using the same procedure as the IDI's. Once interested participants contacted the primary researcher expressing interest in the study, interview venues and times were scheduled based on the availability of all members of the constituted group. FGDs were conducted in predominantly Twi, with clarifications in other local dialects where necessary. FGDs were facilitated with semi-structured guides (Appendix F), audio recorded and lasted between one and two hours. Written and verbal consent was sought from all participants before discussions commenced, and participants were advised to keep participation within the group confidential. Quotes from all findings are presented using pseudonyms, participants' ages and methods of data collection.

3.7 Data Analysis

All recorded interviews were translated directly from local dialects to English language, after which transcripts were reread while listening to recordings to ensure no information had been missed or distorted. Once transcripts were read and edited, hard copies were printed for the identification of salient themes using open coding. Open coding is the process whereby initial ideas are noted down beside text, in order to get familiarised with the material and avoid missing important data. Apart from getting to know the data, open coding offers the researcher the opportunity to generate ideas about possible meanings of

the data. This is useful in identifying recurring themes worth further investigation (Crang, 2005).

Initial themes that emerged from reading were recorded in the margins of transcripts and categorised based on similarities. Notes were also written to serve as a reminder of the ideas that were sparked going through the transcripts. These notes also served as a thematic base that guided further development of codes and other ideas (Baxter & Eyles, 1997).

When open coding was completed, soft copies of transcribed data were uploaded into the NVivo qualitative data analysis software. NVivo is a management tool that aids in data analysis. Although analyses still have to be personally done by the researcher, NVivo helps in the storage and sorting of large volumes of data (Zamawe, 2015). The themes that emerged from open coding were assigned parent nodes in NVivo. These parent nodes included: “women’s autonomy in family planning decisions, “women’s access to maternal and general health care services” “support and care for children” “coping strategies” “challenges confronting women farmers” “lack of economic opportunities outside of farming” “control over food resources” and “potential interventions strategies”. These themes were organised into clusters that captured the reproductive and productive aspects. This served as the basis for the two manuscripts of the thesis. FGDs, IDIs with migrant women farmers and interviews with key informants were coded in separate cases as well.

Once nodes were established, sub-themes that emerged were further identified under the major themes. As the coding process progressed, new nodes were created where a theme was dominant enough to stand on its own and similar themes merged with

already existing ones. Dominant themes were identified based on the extent to which they appeared within coded texts. Sandelowski (2001) warns qualitative researchers against the questionable use of numbers due to over counting, misleading or acontextual information which could result in skewed or biased results. To address this issue, transcripts were constantly referred to, where information appeared ambiguous. This ensured that themes were not assigned where they did not belong, or coded when they were not strong enough to stand on their own.

Themes developed through coding helped to understand why women migrated from the UWR to the BAR. It also shed light on how migrant women utilised resources in migration destinations, the challenges they encountered in carrying out their daily activities as migrants, coping strategies employed to deal with these challenges and the interventions needed to improve their livelihoods in the BAR.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter described the study design and methods employed in arriving at the results of the study. Specifically, this research adopted the qualitative approach in examining the lived experiences of migrant women in the BAR. This chapter justified the use of qualitative methods as they are well suited to addressing the study objectives. Qualitative methods are useful for studies that focus on depth and meaning. The use of multiple methods also allowed for the comparison of data emerging from different sources. This chapter also outlined how study populations and participants were selected, as well as how IDIs and FGDs were conducted. In addition, it explored how the researcher's positionality influenced the study and how rigour was maintained to ensure that results

were valid/reliable. The chapter concluded with a description of how data was analysed to arrive at salient themes.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RUNNING WITH POVERTY: INTERROGATING THE PARADOX EMBEDDED IN MIGRATION AS A LIVELIHOOD IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY AMONG MIGRANT WOMEN FARMERS IN THE BRONG-AHAFO REGION OF GHANA

Abstract:

Migration to the Brong-Ahafo Region (BAR) of Ghana is a popular adaptation strategy employed by subsistence farmers in Upper West Region (UWR) in coping with environmental degradation, high levels of deprivation and food insecurity. As migration trends become increasingly permanent, more women are joining their partners in rural farming areas of the BAR. While there has been extensive work on migrant households, these have frequently focused on men. Informed by a Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) perspective, this paper uses in-depth interviews (n=30) and focus group discussions (FGDs) (n=5) with migrant women farmers, and key informant interviews (n=10) in examining the lived experiences of migrant women. The findings show that migrant women reap limited economic benefits from migration as an adaptation strategy. This is mainly due to economic, structural and cultural barriers that hinder women's autonomy and their effective utilisation of agricultural and food resources in the migration destination. Based on findings, there is the need to reassess current laws around land ownership and use in Ghana, to encourage utilisation among women. In addition, agricultural intervention programmes should involve both migrant men and women, and take into account cultural contexts. Finally, providing alternative sources of income for migrant women outside of farming would help empower them economically.

Key words: gender, migration, agriculture, FPE, Brong-Ahafo Region

4.1 Introduction

Climate change poses significant threat to livelihoods across the world, particularly locations with fragile environments. Subsistence agriculture and other livelihoods that depend on the natural environment in many developing countries are beginning to experience negative consequences (Jones & Thornton, 2003; Morton, 2007). In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the people whose livelihoods are threatened by climate change tend to have high levels of deprivation and their vulnerability is frequently compounded by the lack of social safety nets. Consequently, many resort to various strategies including migration to destinations perceived to have the potential of providing improved livelihood (Meze-Hausken, 2000; Tacoli, 2009).

Over the last two decades, environmental degradation and unreliable rainfall patterns attributed to climate change have increasingly made farming in the Upper West Region (UWR) of Ghana unproductive and unreliable for smallholder farmers (Luginaah et al., 2009; Nyantakyi-Frimpong, 2015). The UWR is the poorest region in Ghana with poverty rates of up to 96% in some communities, when the national average is 39%. The region also has high illiteracy rates with very limited economic opportunities outside of farming (GSS, 2013; Kuuire et al., 2013). Hence, with the declining agricultural productivity in the region, most residents have resorted to migrating to the southern and middle belts of the country in search of fertile lands and other economic opportunities (Kuuire et al., 2013; Luginaah et al., 2009; van der Geest, 2011). Within the last two decades, the preferred destination of migrants from the UWR is the Brong-Ahafo Region (BAR) due to the presence of fertile farmlands, biannual rainfall seasons and its relative proximity to the UWR (van der Geest, 2011).

Migration from the northern to the southern sector of Ghana has a long history due to colonial policies which have led to more development in the southern regions of the country compared to the northern regions (Abdul-Korah, 2007; Songsore, 1979). However, recent migration patterns in the UWR are assuming a new dimension. For instance, in addition to migration assuming a rural-to-rural pattern instead of the previous rural-urban movement, the seasonal nature of migration is becoming permanent involving the movement of entire families from the UWR to the BAR (Abdul-Korah, 2007; Kuuire et. al., 2016). As a result of the changes in migration, more women from the UWR are migrating with their spouses and families, a phenomenon which did not exist until recently. One of the prime motivations for more women migrating includes the perceived economic benefits of migrating as a family (Lobnibe, 2008).

Studies have shown that migration plays an important role in alleviating food insecurity in the UWR through food and cash remittances (Kuuire et al., 2013). Thus, the importance of migration as an adaptive strategy to environmental degradation for migrants in the BAR and their families in the UWR cannot be underestimated. Existing evidence based on the experiences of recent migrant men also suggests that farming in the BAR is relatively lucrative due to the availability of more fertile lands and bi-seasonal rainfall unlike in UWR (Kuuire et. al., 2016; Nyantakyi-Frimpong & Bezner-Kerr, 2015). However, most existing literature of recent migration from UWR and the other northern regions have tended to focus on men.

Despite the increasing migration of women to farming communities in the BAR, there is a dearth in research on their experiences. This limits our understanding of how structural, cultural and social mechanisms produce gendered experiences that may create

different realities for migrant women farmers than their men counterparts in the BAR (Baruah, 2007). In addition, scholars suggest that environmental issues and their spin off effects, such as migration, should not be examined in isolation. Instead, the political, economic, cultural and gendered dimensions of the phenomenon should be considered as these shape everyday experiences for women (Rocheleau, et al., 2013).

Although some studies have outlined the economic benefits of migration for migrant women in urban centres (Abdul-Korah, 2007; Awumbila et al., 2015), the experiences of these women may differ from those of their counterparts in rural migration destinations. For example, most women who migrate to rural farming communities are less educated than urban migrant women. Moreover, while most urban migrant women are young and unmarried (Awumbila & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008), the majority of women who migrate to rural farming communities do so with their spouses or families.

This paper therefore seeks to examine the agriculture and livelihood experiences of migrant women farmers from the UWR in rural migration destinations in the BAR of Ghana. The paper has the following specific objective: to examine how issues of access to and utilisation of agricultural inputs are peculiar to the women; to understand the usefulness of migration as an adaptation strategy to climate change for women farmers in the BAR; finally, to explore the current state of economic interventions and support avenues available to migrant women farmers in the BAR. Findings from the study will help to suggest ways in which migrant women's livelihoods could be improved in line with the United Nations Development Goals (UN-SDGs) 1, 5 and 10.

4.2 Migrant Women and Agriculture in the BAR

4.2.1 Migration in Ghana and women's increasing participation

Colonial and neo colonial policies in Ghana have led to more development of the southern sector compared to the northern part (Songsore, 1979). Prior to British colonisation, the northern kingdoms located in the Sahel region were fairly successful as they engaged in and mediated trade between North Africa and other regions (Amin, 1972). With the advent of the colonists, however, attention was shifted to mineral and resource rich southern coastal regions. Importantly also, southern Ghana's proximity to the Gulf of Guinea made it suitable for trade between the then Gold Coast and European countries where European merchants operated from forts and castles along the Atlantic (Garrett, 1980). As a result, the southern and coastal regions received investment in infrastructure which facilitated development and entrenched their role with the trade with Europe. Northern Ghana on the other hand was left undeveloped as it lacked natural resources and raw materials needed for trade by the British (Owusu, 1970; Bening, 1977). Therefore, the northern territories under colonial rule were treated as a labour reserve where people —mostly young men — were recruited to work in gold mines and plantations in the south (Songsore, 1979). After Ghana gained formal independence, national policies still reinforced these development inequalities as a way of continuing the north-south drift to ensure labour availability for economic growth (Bening, 1977).

In the 1980's, Ghana underwent the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) due to the pronounced economic hardships resulting from climate related droughts, exorbitant loans by the government and resulting inflation (Konadu-Agyemang, 2000; Hutchful, 2002). SAPs came with strict conditions which greatly affected the agricultural sector as

most subsidies were withdrawn. Agrarian societies - the UWR included - were some of the hardest hit due to existing poverty and environmental degradation in the area (Sarris & Shams, 1991). As most residents in the region were peasant farmers, migration to farming communities in the southern sector became a major coping strategy (Van der Geest, 2004). This led to a shift in migration trends from mostly rural-urban, or mining and lumbering towns in coastal Ghana, to rural-rural (farming communities in the middle belt) (Lobnibe, 2010).

The BAR became a popular destination for most migrants from not only the UWR but the other two regions (Upper East and Northern) as well after the 1980s, due to its arable lands, biannual rainfall and geographical positioning (van der Geest, 2011). The dominant seasonal migratory pattern during this period had begun to assume a more permanent form towards the end of the 20th century. An important development which also characterised this shift was the increasing numbers of women migrants from UWR to BAR. Formerly, among the people of the UWR, like most other West African societies, it was considered culturally inappropriate for unmarried women to migrate alone (Grier, 1992; Koenig, 2005). However, as migration from UWR assumed a more permanent character, an increasing number of women migrated to join their spouses. Even though Abdul-Korah (2011) asserts that women from the UWR in recent times have gained more independence to make decisions concerning migration, it could be argued that formal education has a role to play in this. Consequently, unmarried women with some form of education who decide to migrate prefer to settle in urban areas of the BAR where they could engage in paid labour such as waitressing or head porter jobs since this gave them more autonomy over choice of job and utilisation of income (Abdul-Korah,

2011; Awumbila et al., 2015). Compared to their urban migrant counterparts, most women who migrate to farming rural communities are uneducated, and do so with their spouses/families (Abdul-Korah, 2007; Abdulai, 2016).

4.2.2 Agrarian Women in a Migration Context

Although an estimated 80% of women in semi-arid areas depend on the environment for produce like shea and firewood to sustain their livelihood, only about 20% of them own land (FAO, 2012a; GSS 2013b). This implies that women from these areas are some of the hardest hit by environmental degradation and unfavourable land tenure systems as they gradually lose their food and income sources (Shiva, 1988; Codjoe, Atidoh, & Burkett, 2012). For instance, Ahmed et al. (2016) found that patriarchy built on local customs led to gender inequality with regards to decision making on land, which might be extended to farming resources. In Ghana, and the Global South in general, women play a significant role in agriculture although they are usually considered as helpers to their spouses and labour is generally unpaid (Avotri & Walters, 1999; Donehower et al., 2017). Consequently, an estimated 72% of women engaged in rural agriculture fall within the low income bracket compared to just 48% of rural men (FAO, 2012). Due to the limited returns of subsistence farming, most women in agrarian societies rely on other economic ventures to augment their incomes (Quaye, 2008). As a result, scholars have called for a gendered examination of the varying realities responsible for observed inequalities in efforts at tackling climate change adaptation strategies — of which migration ranks highly (Ahmed et al., 2016).

At the heart of the proposed gendered examination of sources of inequalities is access to land. In Ghana land is acquired in three main ways: through allodial rights

which is through early settlement of people, thereby bestowing the land to chiefs or clans in a society; usufructuary rights which are given to individuals or families through inheritance; and share-tenancy or licenses where money is exchanged for temporary or permanent rights to land. About 80% of lands in Ghana are allodially owned (Campion & Acheampong, 2014) which may automatically disadvantage women due to the patriarchal nature of land inheritance in Ghana.

In the UWR, most women farmers make use of usufructuary /inherited land rights (Yaro, 2010). In the BAR, however, migrant women access land through share-tenancy or licensed lands which they lease from landowners. Farms are either given to migrant farmers in exchange for money, a share of cultivated crops, or both (Campion & Acheampong, 2014). However, women may again be at a disadvantage with this form of land acquisition. As with other property ownership, women may lack the time, economic and political means to complete the necessary formal processes of ownership (Baruah, 2007). In addition, it is considered culturally inappropriate for women to solicit land on their own. Hence, women require permission from their husbands or other male figures in their household to access such lands (Agbosu et al., 2007). Another barrier to women's utilisation of land in migrant destinations is the fact that migrants rely on existing social networks for identification of landowners and the access to such lands. Invariably, social networks among UWR migrants in farming communities of the BAR revolve around men (Kuuire et al., 2016) potentially increasing women's vulnerability with regards to land access and use. Research from the BAR shows that migrant men are sometimes forced into exploitative relationships with landowners (Kasanga, & Kotey, 2001; Sward, 2017). This situation may even be worse for women because of the cultural practices and norms

which for the most part limit their ability to own and negotiate for land. Such circumstances may further marginalise women by limiting their access and use of resources such as farm produce accrued from these lands. It is within the preceding context that we examine migrant women's utilisation of resources and economic livelihoods in the BAR.

4.3 Theoretical Framework

4.3.1 Feminist Political Ecology

This paper is situated within the Feminist Political Ecology (FPE) theoretical framework which merges political ecology with feminist theories to understand the emerging dynamics of women and agriculture in a migration context. FPE interrogates how gender interacts with environmental, political, economic and social factors to produce outcomes (Rocheleau, et al., 1996).

Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) in conceptualising political ecology first discussed environmental relations in terms of power dynamics. Political ecology makes three core assumptions; 1) that the effects of environmental change are unevenly distributed due to political, economic and social disparities; 2) changes in the environment produce consequences which reinforce social and economic discrepancies within and among societies; 3) the reinforcement of unequal environmental burdens has political associations (Bryant & Bailey, 1997).

Political ecology is therefore important in helping policy makers and governments understand the role environment plays in development, as well as the actions or coping strategies that communities adopt in addressing the concomitant social, economic and

political consequences of environmental change (Adger et al., 2001; Robbins, 2011; Rocheleau et al, 1996).

Feminist theory on the other hand is concerned with explaining inequalities that result from gender, with patriarchy being a prevailing subject (Ahmed, 1998; McDonough & Harrison, 1978). The theory seeks to shift attention away from the western male lens that have long characterised academic research. Feminist geography, which borrows extensively from feminist theory, investigates how space and place produced gendered inequalities (Sharp, 2009). It attempts to understand how women's experiences differ from those of men within specific geographical contexts by examining unequal gender division of labour and how existing patriarchal structures sideline and marginalise women. Such expositions provided by the theory are significant for analysing the experiences of migrant women farmers due to the numerous barriers that tend to be associated with women's participation in economic activities (McEwan, 2001). In effect, FPE views women's involvement in environmental issues through a systems thinking lens. Thus, outcomes are not standalone results; instead they are influenced by political, social, economic, social and cultural factors, which they in turn influence as well.

According to FPE, these multiplicities of factors interact in complex ways and manifest themselves from the macro level down to the individual level and disadvantage women (Rocheleau et al, 1996). For migrant women farmers these dynamics may operate in specific ways through social, economic, environmental and institutional factors to inhibit their effective access and utilisation of land resources for agriculture productivity. Thus, FPE provides a tool to examine inequalities created by environmental, political,

economic, social and cultural factors, and how women in a rural migration destination are affected by these.

4.4 Study Context

4.4.1 Migrants' Background

The Upper West is the poorest region in Ghana with poverty rates of up to 96% in some communities (Kuuire et al., 2013). Established in 1983, it is also the youngest region in the country, and was carved out of the then Upper Region, currently the Upper East Region. With a land size of 18,478km², it makes up 12.7% of the total land mass of Ghana and is the third smallest region in the country. The UWR currently has 11 districts. The major ethnic groups in the region are the Dagaaba, Sissaala and Waala. Agriculture is the mainstay of the region and it is estimated that up to 72% of the active population are into farming and agriculture related activities. Major food crops cultivated in the area include millet, corn and groundnuts (GSS, 2013).

The region also has the Guinea-Savannah vegetation; mainly grassland interspersed with drought-resistant trees. It experiences one rainfall season a year, which previously span April to September. However, rainfall patterns in the region in recent years have become unpredictable, sometimes beginning as late as June and ending as early as August (Nyantakyi-Frimpong & Bezner-Kerr, 2015; Rademacher-Schulz et. al., 2014). As a result of these emerging rainfall dynamics together with declining soil fertility, agriculture as a means of livelihood has become unsustainable. The prevailing high poverty incidence and absence of other viable economic activities in the region push residents to adopt migration as livelihood adaptation strategy. Available evidence based

on census data shows BAR as the most popular destination of choice among migrants from UWR due to its fertile lands, biannual rainfall season and relative proximity to the UWR (Kuuire et. al., 2016; van der Geest et. al., 2010) (*see* figure 1 in chapter 2).

4.4.2 The Brong-Ahafo Region (BAR) – Migration Destination

The BAR lies in longitude 7.9559 degrees north and Latitude 1.6761 degrees west. It was created in 1959 and is the second largest region in Ghana. The region has 27 administrative districts with a land size of 39,557km², representing 16.6% of the total land mass of the country (GSS, 2013).

The BAR is one of three regions with two ecological zones; the guinea savannah and the moist semi-deciduous rainforest. It experiences two annual rainfall seasons receiving up to 1400 litres per square metre in a year (GSS, 2012) (Owusu & Waylen, 2013). It has very fertile lands making agriculture in the region productive. An estimated 66.4% of the active population is engaged in agriculture. Major food crops grown in the region include yam, cassava, plantain, maize, cocoyam, rice and tomatoes. In addition to this, cash crops such as coffee, tobacco, cocoa, timber and cashew are also produced in the area.

The region is attractive to migrants from diverse ethnicities and many locations due to the numerous opportunities in agriculture and agro-based industries. The major ethnic groups in the region are the Akan (62.7%) and the Mole-Dagbon (15.4%) (GSS, 2016). The Dagaaba of the UWR are the dominant in Mole-Dagbon group, in the BAR. The BAR has an illiteracy rate of 49%; of which 41.1% are male and 56% female (GSS, 2016). In addition to direct engagement in agriculture, women also engage in the trade of

farm produce in the many popular food markets in the region, particularly the Techiman market.

The study districts: Kintampo-South, Techiman-North and Nkoranza-North were chosen due to their high migrant population. The number of UWR migrants in the BAR is pegged at 23% (GSS, 2013). However, anecdotal evidence from discussions with key informants puts the figure at as high 80% in rural farming communities in the northern parts of the region. Although the BAR has a poverty headcount of 28.6% there are in-region disparities, with districts like Kintampo-South recording up to 78.3% (GSS, 2015).

Due to poverty and an inability to secure lands for farming in urban areas, most migrants from the UWR prefer to settle in remote areas of the BAR, where there is an abundance of arable land. Migrants gain entry into these communities using social networks (Kuuire et. al., 2016). The details of land tenure arrangements tend to be complex and depend on a number of factors including land size, crops to be farmed and the length of period the land will be cultivated. These factors are however situated with broader cultural practices of land rent which some scholars describe as exploitative (Kasanga & Kotey, 2001; Sward, 2017). In the BAR, the cultural practices around land rent guarantee men's rights to lease land and curtail women's ability to access land directly, unless done through their husbands or male-figures (Agbosu et al., 2007).

The common land tenure agreements for peasant farmers in the BAR are economic lease, *abunu* and *abusa* system, and farming under commercial crops in exchange for caretaking services (Luginaah et al., 2009; Field work 2016). Economic leasing involves exchanging money for access to a plot of land for a period of time. Amounts paid for plots of land vary from GHS 100.00 to GHS 500 (CAD 30-167) per

acre, for one year (Field work 2016). *Abunu* and *abusa* system on the other require splitting farm produce in a 2:1 (*abunu*) or 3: 1 (*abusa*) for farmers and landowners, respectively (Codjoe, 2006; Luginaah et al., 2009).

4.5 Methods

The research used qualitative methods to investigate the lived experiences of migrant women farmers in the Brong-Ahafo Region. Qualitative methods were chosen as the research sought to elicit depth and meaning, as against generalisability. Qualitative methods were also used as they facilitate the use of more than one method (Guba& Lincoln, 1994; Hay, 2000). Respondents were selected using purposive sampling in six communities of three districts in the Brong-Ahafo Region (BAR) of Ghana. The communities include: Dwenewoho and Alata-Line in the Nkoranza North District; Kokuma and Beposo in the Kintampo-South District; and Tanokrom and Gyebiri in the Techiman-North District.

A total of 45 interviews were conducted as this was enough to reach data saturation (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). More specifically, in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs); (n=30) and (n=5) respectively were conducted with migrant women farmers. In addition, in-depth interviews (n=10) were conducted with key informants. Interviews with migrant women farmers mainly asked questions about their reasons for migrating and how they gained access into farming communities in the BAR. Questions pertaining to their lived experiences in the BAR were also asked, as well as the challenges they faced in carrying out their productive (economic) activities. Finally,

interviews explored the similarities and differences in agriculture and other economic activities in the migration origin (UWR) and destination (BAR).

Apart from interviews with key informants which had participants of both sexes, all other interviews were conducted with women farmers. Participants comprised of women aged 18 - 80, widowed, single and married, as well as women from nuclear, polygamous and extended families. Key informants included officials from governmental and non-governmental organisations such as the Department of Social Welfare, Gender Desk, Women Integrated Development Organisation (WIDO), the ministry of health, ministry of agriculture and Microfinance and Small Loans Centre (MASLOC).

Interviews were conducted in either the homes of participants or in private, accessible places based on the preference of participants. All interviews were conducted in English, Dagaare, Sissaali and Twi; the main dialects spoken in the research area. In-depth interviews lasted between 15 - 45 minutes, whereas FGDs lasted one hour and 15 minutes on average. Interviews were audio recorded, and written or verbal consent was sought from all participants.

Interviews were transcribed directly into the English language from local dialects and analysed with the help of QSR software for qualitative analysis; NVivo. Transcripts were fed into NVivo and coded line by line in order to extract emerging themes for analysis based on research questions and theoretical constructs. To ensure rigour, transcripts were re-read while listening to audio recordings, in order not to distort meaning (Baxter & Eyles, 1997; Crang, 2005). Results were complemented with notes from a field research journal kept by the primary researcher during data collection.

4.6 Results

This section presents findings from the study. The results are presented under four broad themes which capture the experiences of women farmers. The themes are: agricultural challenges confronting migrant women; lack of economic opportunities outside of farming; limited control over food resources; and potential interventions available/needed to support migrant women in the BAR. We use quotations from our IDIs and FGDs to illustrate the emerging themes. All names have been replaced with pseudonyms.

4.6.1 Agricultural challenges confronting migrant women

The first theme deals with the agriculture-related challenges that migrant women face. This broad theme is further distilled into four sub-themes which pervade participants' descriptions of their farming experiences. We present these sub-themes in order of their prominence.

Discriminatory land tenure system

All women farmers interviewed in this study discussed their experiences with land leasing in the BAR and indicated this as their most daunting challenge. Women felt that land tenure systems in the BAR were biased against them because of their migrant status and gender, a kind of double jeopardy. For instance, although there were traditional rules like the *Abunu* and *Abusa* governing sharecropping in the area, (*see* chapter 2) some landowners took advantage of women's lack of knowledge to demand more than was required:

When we first moved here, the landowner told me that I had to pay an initial renting fee of 200 cedis (CAD 70) a year, after which proceeds would be shared equally between us. I later learnt that the

same landowner had more flexible terms for a young man who arrived here in the same year. If I knew these were not the rules, I would not have agreed. (Ama, 22, IDI)

In addition to splitting farm produce unfairly, the benefits some landowners offered their tenants were incommensurate with the amount of work the tenants put into their farms, as one participant stated:

They make you farm under their cashew trees on condition you take care of the cashew plantations. You do so, but in the end they still insist on sharing your scanty food crops with you (FGD 3)

Apart from the unequal power dynamics between landowners and migrant tenants which affect migrant farmers' effective access to and use of land, women also added that ethnic differences affected their utilisation of land in the BAR. They indicated that land lease in the BAR was greatly affected by nepotism. With landowners usually giving their best lands to their friends or relatives, leaving migrants with lands that had lost or were close to losing their fertility. The women also reported that there were instances where they got kicked off their lands prematurely because the owner's friend/relative needed the land:

Of course, they (landowners) would prefer to give lands to their own people. We (migrants) get the leftovers (Ayo, 27, IDI)

Sometimes you finish farming, your crops are halfway maturing and the landowner comes to tell you that his brother who travelled is returning and so he needs his land (FGD 2).

Migrant women farmers generally agreed that the challenges associated with utilising farmlands in the BAR were further complicated by their gender and roles within the household. It emerged that even these discriminatory land practices differed among migrants based on gender. For instance, with regards to farming under cash crops, when men cultivate their crops under similar conditions, they were usually rewarded for taking care of the cashew plantation— a benefit which women do not enjoy. Women farmers observed that these issues are pronounced among them because they are women and also not natives of the area. In effect, individual land ownership among women was not encouraged. As a result, they either had to agree to the unfavourable conditions stipulated by landowners or search for land elsewhere. This was challenging due to social networks among landowners who had similar practices which made it difficult to get land from a new landowner if you fell out badly with one:

These land owners know themselves. So if you have a problem with one of them, the others will hear about it and you'll not get land around here. In the end you'll either have to move to a different district or go back home to the UWR. (Connie, 43, IDI)

The participant in further remarks indicated that she might have had better terms of lease if her husband had agreed to lead her in the negotiations. Several other participants expressed similar sentiments which indicated that the few women who had the support of their husbands to own smaller farms obtained favourable land lease conditions because of the involvement of their husbands.

When my husband agreed that I should own a small farm for cultivating household vegetables, he went with me to speak to the landowner on my behalf. If it weren't for my husband, the landlord

would not have given me the flexible terms I now have. I have the same terms as other men unlike women who negotiated for themselves and have to give away most of their farm produce to landowners (Connie, 43, IDI).

Culturally, men in Ghana and particularly the UWR are regarded as household heads and breadwinners of families. As a result, it is expected that men spearhead major household decisions such as land leasing. In fact, leasing land without permission or in their own names could lead to household tensions between women and their spouses:

If you go for land without your husband, he'll say you're trying to usurp his position so he will take you back home so that you can marry yourself and come back to BAR (FGD 3)

This shows that in addition to challenges relating to their ability to negotiate the structural barriers which limit their direct access to land from landowners under fair conditions, women also face challenges within their households with respect to leasing land.

Similar to studies in other developing world contexts (*see* Basu, 1999; Jackson, 2003), it is interesting to note that migrant women farmers expressed misgivings about owning land as a woman. Further probing revealed that these sentiments were built on cultural norms among the people of the UWR, which consider land ownership among women inappropriate. As a result, most women felt that there was more security when their spouses or male sons handled land issues. This led to a disapproval of women owning land, even among women:

What is a woman doing with land? And what happens when you get married or die? Then the land is gone. Land matters are best left to the men of the house. (Afi, 22, IDI)

Divorced and widowed migrant women lamented that they were especially hard-hit by these unfavourable land tenure systems as they were sometimes forced off their lands once they lost a spouse, and encountered a lot of difficulty securing new ones:

Once you lose your husband, they come for their land. If you are lucky to have sons who can fight on your behalf, good for you. If you're unfortunate to have only daughters as in my case, then you have to resort to working *by-day*¹ for a living (Pat, 67, IDI)

Yet, even when migrant women are able to manoeuvre their way around these discriminatory land practices, they still have to endure other crises which contribute to the unprofitable nature of farming in the BAR. The increasingly unpredictable rainfall is one of such.

Looming Crisis: Erratic rainfall patterns in Ghana's breadbasket

Declining rainfall in the UWR is one of the major push factors of migration among migrants in the BAR. Unfortunately, migrant women farmers, especially the ones who had resided in the BAR for over five years observed that rainfall in the region was also dwindling as well. They added that since their arrival in the region, the rainfall seasons appeared to be getting shorter every year:

When we first arrived, sometimes even by February you begin preparing your farmlands and by March you are planting. You

¹ By-day is jargon used to refer to the process whereby peasant farmers labour on other people's farms for a daily wage.

harvest the first batch for food and by October you are harvesting the second batch to sell. But now things are different, the rains are beginning to resemble those of the UWR (FGD 1)

Apart from the dwindling rains, the women also complained that the lands were gradually losing their fertility as well, requiring them to invest more financially, to be able to reap good harvests:

Years ago we weren't farming with fertiliser. All you needed were your hoe and seeds, and you were assured a bountiful harvest. But now you have to buy bags upon bags of fertiliser, pesticides, weedicides and many more. At the end of the day you still carry home one basket of tomatoes (Kula, 42, IDI).

This led one participant to comment:

What we were running from is what we're facing again (FGD 4)

In addition to the macro-level barriers which inhibit women's ability to make the most out of their farming activities in the migration destination, other micro-level factors such as access to agricultural inputs further constrains them.

Difficulty securing farm inputs

The majority of migrant women farmers described their inability to secure farm inputs as one of the biggest challenges they faced in carrying out their productive activities in the BAR. These inputs include cutlasses, hoes, fertilisers, seeds, pesticides and weedicides. The women discussed various reasons why they have difficulty securing farm inputs. Many of the women explained that given the current decline in food production, they

barely generate enough food for their subsistence, with very little left to invest in farm inputs:

This small small we're doing, after paying for a plot of land for GHS 200, where will I get another GHS 300 for fertiliser? How much do I even get from the farm at the end of the day? (Felicia, 28, IDI)

Participants mostly agreed that their migrant status and remote locations of their settlements also hindered their access to and utilisation of some agricultural interventions created by government:

Because of where we're located, even when they bring the fertiliser and seeds, the people in town rush for them at the offices. By the time you get there, everything is gone. If the inputs manage to get to this village, the chief first shares them to his people. If we're lucky and there's surplus, then we get some. But that's very rare (FGD 5)

Finally, the women lamented that, as if these barriers were not enough, their spouses sometimes stand in the way of their utilisation of the few agricultural interventions that came their way. They explained that since agriculture is regarded as mostly dominated by men, their spouses handled most of such interactions. On the other hand, their spouses were skeptical of interventions that targeted just women farmers:

When they bring the hoes and cutlasses, they call the men together and they discuss everything. We don't know what goes on there (FGD 3)

If you hear that they're sharing seeds and you go for some, your husband will complain that you're dragging his name in the mud

because you went behind his back to beg for food... Sometimes our husbands even say that the people are teaching us to rebel against them by sidelining them (Ziniyel, 26, IDI)

Despite the challenges faced by farmers in terms of declining farming conditions and the struggle to acquire farm inputs, participants still talked at length about how food continues to be wasted during harvests.

Post-harvest loss due to poor infrastructure

Due to the remote location of most migrant communities and the bad transportation networks in such areas, migrant women farmers indicated they encountered a lot of food spoilage during harvest times, due to their inability to transport farm produce from their rural areas to the urban towns to sell. There was low patronage for sale of food crops in the rural settlements because of the small markets and the fact that most of the other community members were most likely into farming as well. Therefore, in order to accrue some income out of their agricultural activities, it was best to transport farm produce to urban markets to sell. However, the poor road networks and lack of vehicular transportation served as a barrier to this:

The drivers complain that our roads damage their cars. At first we had this driver who used to come every market day to pick our produce to town but he stopped after a while (FGD 2)

As a result of the bad roads and unwillingness of many drivers to ply such routes, the few drivers took advantage of this to charge exorbitant fees to convey food crops from the farming areas to markets. A participant remarked:

Tricycle owners will charge a fare of GHS 20.00 (CAD 7) per head and GHS 5.00 (CAD 1.67) per bag of maize just to take you to

town. On top of that they still overload us in the tricycles like sardines... Your only other option is walking about 20 km with heavy loads on your head (Antiri, 58, IDI)

The women generally agreed that often times, they ended up investing more income into their farms than they got out of them, due to the lack of storage facilities and marketing options during harvest:

You rent land, buy farm equipment, fertiliser, weedicides and pay people to help you farm (if you can afford it). After harvests, you pay more money to send your food to market towns and they end up paying a meagre amount for them. Sometimes I just feel like folding my arms and doing nothing... It's painful! (Rita, 44, IDI)

After paying GHS 300.00 (CAD 100) for the land, we can't afford to pay anyone to help or buy fancy things for the farm. My husband, children and I do the farming all by ourselves. Once we harvest, the children and I carry the perishables on our heads to sell in town. Last year we got GHS 75.00 (CAD 25.00) for our tomatoes, okro, peppers and a little corn... You either make do with the GHS 75 or sit here with your produce and watch them rot (Ayo, 27, IDI)

The women added that despite the increasingly unproductive returns of subsistence farming in the BAR, the options for alternative sources of income were limited for them.

4.6.2 Lack of economic opportunities outside of farming

Apart from farming, most women in the UWR usually engage in other economic activities like *pito*² brewing, making bean cakes, shea butter or charcoal burning to supplement household needs. In the current destination, migrant women said that such opportunities were not available. Further discussions revealed that because they were not indigenes in their new settlements, they could not collect dry wood and twigs freely to burn for charcoal as doing so could be considered trespassing:

At home we could go behind the house or down to riverside and gather dry wood and twigs to come use for cooking. We even used to burn some as charcoal to sell. But here, if you go about gathering firewood, you'll be labelled a thief who is going around stealing from people's farms (Ansong, 39, IDI).

The women also talked at length about the fact that living away from trusted friends and relatives took away their social capital. As such, it was difficult for them to get start-up capital in the form of monetary loans or food supplements to use for their businesses:

Back in the UWR, In addition to the farming, you could easily ask a friend to lend you money to start something with. You could even go to your grandfather's house to beg for beans flour or millet flour to start your koose or pito business with. It's not the same here (FGD 2).

Apart from the difficulty accessing resources for other economic activities, the women also said that even when they struggled to come up with capital to start a business

² Pito: A beer popular among the people of northern Ghana, brewed using fermented sorghum/millet.

on the side, the businesses did not last very long due to poor patronage. This was in part due to the dispersed settlement patterns and a lack of customers.

Even when you prepare the bean cakes, you don't get anyone to buy. No Dagara woman will walk a kilometre to come and buy your bean cakes when she can make some herself (FGD 4)

These people (indigenes) don't drink pito very much. And the Dagaaba people here too, now they don't want to drink pito, they want beer and *akpeteshie*³. So when you brew pito, you drink it with your children (Gina, 46, IDI)

As a result of the struggles associated with accruing income from farming and other economic activities discussed above, migrant women sometimes ended up having little control over resources within the household.

4.6.3 Limited control over food resources

Many of the women interviewed were of the opinion that they did the same amount of work, if not more, on the farms as their spouses; even when they had separate farms of their own. Furthermore, besides farm work, these women were also entirely responsible for household work. Yet, despite their enormous contribution toward farm work, this did not reflect in the control of food resources once they are harvested. There was a general consensus that women had a limited say over harvested crops, how produce is used, as well as how the accrued income from the sale of food crops will be managed. Within a patriarchal cultural system, the overall agreement among women was that the expectation

³ Akpeteshie: An alcoholic spirit made from distilled palm wine or sugar cane juice

of men as heads of households makes them responsible for household decisions. In the comment below, Gowma elaborates on the notion:

We all sweat in the hot sun to make sure that food comes to the house. In fact, once the man clears the land for planting, he's done. It's you the woman that will sow, weed around the crops, harvest and dry them. Once the produce is ready, one afternoon he'll tie a bag of maize on his bicycle and tell you he's coming. He returns home in the evening without the bag and you can't ask him where it went (Gowma, 38, IDI)

Some of the participants indicated that they tend to have no idea where the monies from the sold produce usually go, although some of them suspected that the men used the money to drink in town and chase other women:

If you say I shouldn't touch the food without permission, that's okay. But at least let me know what you did with the money you got from selling it. The harvest will be reducing rapidly and there will be nothing to show for it; I still have to struggle to pay the children's fees and get money to buy herrings and salt for soup (Jane, 49, IDI).

They take the money to town to drink with their friends. And some of them also have mistresses they take care of in town (FGD 3)

The women added that these dynamics in decisions of access to and use of household resources sometimes led to domestic issues between them and their spouses:

... He comes home from town late at night smelling of alcohol. If you try to talk, he either slaps you or threatens to send you back home (Vini, 38, IDI)

Although sometimes, the household squabbles arose without any provocation from the women:

After a hard day's work, you go to bed and struggle to sleep because you're thinking about what your children will eat tomorrow and this man comes from his roaming sprees, wakes you up and begins insulting you. Sometimes he even extends it to the children (Domi, 23, IDI)

The unequal control over food resources also impacted women's ability to participate in remittance to their family members in UWR. Remittance of food to family members in the UWR emerged strongly in discussions regarding how these migrant families keep their links with the relatives 'back home'. The extent to which women had little control over food resources led to a feeling of powerlessness despite their desire to send remittances (food and cash) to family members in the UWR.

Remitting food

Although agriculture in the BAR is not as productive for most migrant farmers as they anticipated it would be, they are still expected to remit food and cash back to their families in the UWR. Food remittance is one of the major reasons most farmers from the UWR migrate to the BAR (*see* Kuuire et al., 2013; Atuoye et al., 2017). Food remittance also serves as an important source of household food consumption among many families in the migrant origin (Kuuire et al., 2013). As a result, migrant women in the BAR were faced with the tasks of making sure that their families back at home got food amid their own delicate situations in dealing with men who tend to control the food they harvest:

We're also struggling here, but our people will never believe that. So if you get two tubers of yam, you have to send them one and keep the other... You have to be strict on your husband to remit his family regularly or else your in-laws will accuse you of brainwashing him (FGD 5)

The women also added that due to their limited control over household resources, remitting food to their own families in the UWR was sometimes a challenge. This can sometimes lead to strained relationships between them and their family of origin, and also with their spouses:

In our culture, once you're married, you have little to do with your parents and siblings. Everything you do goes to your husband and his family. But the truth is, once you're in 'Kumasi', your family expects you to do something small for them every once in a while... The last time I tried sending food to my family, my husband accused me of stealing his resources to build a house for my father back home (Lucilla, 46, IDI).

Taking into account the above-mentioned challenges, migrant women lamented that they sometimes felt helpless as there was limited external support coming their way. Key informants as well expressed their inability to help migrant women due to infrastructural and logistic barriers. All participants mentioned some potential interventions that could help improve the livelihood of migrant women in rural areas.

4.6.4 Interventions available and potential strategies

Given the numerous challenges faced by migrant women in the BAR, participants were asked about the current state of interventions for migrant women within the region, as well as potential ones that could help improve their livelihoods. Findings indicate that there are currently no regional or national level interventions specially tailored towards improving the livelihood of migrant women in the current context. As such migrant women farmers were forced to depend on other general services which cover them. Some of these blanket interventions include the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Microfinance and small loan services which were targeted at traders, the *susu adaka*⁴ initiative which encompasses all women in rural communities of the BAR or routine agricultural educational and support schemes which were aimed at supporting farmers in the BAR. Migrant women and key informants spoke to this:

I've been here 16 years and never heard of any assistance specifically meant for us, non-natives. Usually if there is any help we can benefit from, it covers everybody; Bono, Dagaaba, Sissaala... (Antiri, 58, IDI)

I can't pinpoint any specific programme that targets migrant women, particularly the farmers. However, I'm sure some of them come here for loans as well, even though we are primarily focused on traders... We don't record ethnicities, but I have interacted with migrants from the UWR here (Key Informant 6, IDI)

⁴ *Susu adaka* is a new initiative in most rural communities of the BAR where women pool together little amounts of money which they can borrow from when in need. Members are organised into groups of 10-40 members with regular meetings held to record contributions. Contributed monies are put in a safe which is kept by one member of the group and the keys to the safe by another member.

Most key informants reported that interventions directed at migrant women were difficult to implement as a result of where these women are located. They attributed this to the remoteness of migrant settlements, poor housing, bad roads leading to such communities, poor health facilities and lack of basic amenities in these areas. They added that even when health, educational and agricultural personnel were posted to work in these communities, they refused to go:

My sister, it is difficult to get the help to them. You should see the way they're living; they are cut off from civilisation. Which teacher or nurse will want to go and live in a place like Alata Line?
(Key Informant 2, IDI)

Key informants noted that even when there were social, health and agricultural interventions that they thought migrant women farmers could benefit from, infrastructural and logistic barriers such as bad roads, inadequate equipment, means of transportation and limited funding to power those equipment prevented them from actually getting these interventions to the women in the communities:

We try to help them, but we just don't have the means. The last motorbikes that were given to us by the government were of poor quality; you go on one trip and they break down. Sometimes we don't even get *imprest*⁵ for a whole year. How then do we work?
(Key Informant 3, IDI)

In general, it was almost unanimous among key informants that migrant women farmers were likely better off back in the UWR than in the BAR. They made these assertions based on the fact that most poverty alleviation programmes were being rolled

⁵ Imprest: periodic funds used to run organisations

out in the UWR because it was recognised as the poorest region in the country. Hence, attention is being paid to improving health, economic and general livelihoods of residents in the region, with emphasis on women. Some key informants therefore suggested encouraging migrant women to return 'home' for better living standards:

You know, I hail from the UWR myself so I know the region really well. I can confidently tell you that our women are better off back home. It's true that the rains are bad, but the government is trying to improve that by subsidising animal husbandry for them. They are also putting up a lot of Community-Based Health Planning and Services (CHPs) compounds in the region. Most of all they have their friends and families there; never underestimate the importance of that... These farmers think they are running away from poverty by migrating here, but what they are actually doing is running with the poverty. They transport it here with them (Key Informant 4, IDI)

Migrant women and key informants discussed the importance of improving infrastructural and logistical amenities in their communities as a major way of improving their economic livelihoods. For instance, participants mentioned roads, health facilities, electricity, grinding mills, boreholes and vehicles as some of the interventions needed to help facilitate delivery of external help to these remote communities as well as ease the burden on migrant women:

If we at least had good roads, boreholes and grinding mills within the community, it would spare us the hassle of having to carry heavy loads to town to sell or mill. Time spent journeying to other communities to fetch water can also be spent doing something else (FGD 2).

I think that the only way we can better serve women in settler communities is with the support of government. We need a constant supply of logistics in order to do our jobs as mandated (Key Informant 9, IDI)

Migrant women also talked passionately about the need to sensitise natives of the BAR to the fact that they are all one people, despite hailing from different regions. They believed doing so would eliminate some of the discriminatory practices they faced in the region due to their migrant status:

You people need to let them know we are brothers and sisters. We may speak different languages but we all bleed red. They should see us as their relatives and treat us as such (Ansung, 39, IDI).

A similar sentiment was echoed by key informants, who advocated the need for education of both migrants and natives in rural areas. According to them, this education should include environmental, economic, health and cultural components of wellbeing improvement. This, they believed would not only help in bettering the living conditions of migrants but also, promote cohesive living:

I believe that education is very important for these communities. We take for granted that they already know some things but they probably don't. We need to educate them; on family planning, good farming practices, disadvantages of tribalism... (Key Informant 1, IDI)

Finally, most migrant women agreed that providing them with alternative sources of income would reduce their dependence on farm harvests and also on their husbands to provide for them:

If you teach us how to make baskets, dressmaking, or open a gari factory for us, we can also afford to pay our children's school fees even in the dry season (Jane, 49, IDI).

The majority of migrant women observed that many of the issues they were currently facing in the BAR were not ones they had anticipated before migrating. Yet, regardless of these challenges, most of them still preferred to remain in the BAR rather than return to the UWR.

4.7 Discussion and Conclusion

We examined migrant women's economic experiences in the BAR using feminist political ecology. The findings highlighted both structural and individual constraints of migrant women in the BAR. Among the many challenges identified, difficulty in accessing land was the most prominent due to ethnic and gender based discriminatory practices. The role of gender in women's access to land was manifest at the household level and within the broader structures which regulate leasing of land to migrants. Similar to other locations, patriarchal-induced structural norms surrounding land ownership and use inhibit migrant women's utilisation of land resources in the BAR (Kalabamu, 2006). Such land ownership and lease practices ensure women remain disadvantaged even when they are willing to engage in land-based economic activities such as farming. Acquiring land through licenses and share-tenancy is a challenge for migrant women as the majority are ill-informed about lease practices and also lack economic means to acquire land.

Cultural customs among many societies including the UWR prevent women from participating in certain activities by categorising them as taboos. For instance, some

societies, including the Dagaaba of the UWR, considered it a taboo for women to farm with men's equipment (*see* Bryceson, 1995). As well, the cultural dynamics of land ownership among migrants in the BAR further reveal that men are typically not supportive of standalone women farmers. It is, therefore, not surprising that women in the study were hesitant to recognise themselves as farmers. This is regardless of realities where women perform almost the same amount of farm work as their men counterparts but considered it inappropriate for women to own farms in households headed by men. These cultural beliefs are so deeply entrenched among migrant women farmers that the majority of them said they would prefer to have men in the household own/take decisions concerning land. This supports previous research which show that longstanding customs compel women to decline opportunities of owning land/property in order to gain family and societal approval (Baruah, 2004; Basu, 1999; Jackson, 2003). These gendered dynamics in land ownership create platforms for limiting migrant women's decisions over food resources. For some of the women, it led to abuse within their domestic households in the BAR, and caused rifts with their extended families back in the UWR, as these extended families felt they had been neglected by their daughters in the BAR. This finding is consistent with Rocca et al. (2009) who contend that the need to utilise social and economic resources could put women at risk of abuse.

Given that the BAR, affectionately called 'the breadbasket' of Ghana (Amanor, 1993; Kuuire et al., 2016) is also experiencing erratic rainfall patterns as reported by these migrant farmers, it is a disturbing trend that needs government attention. A number of explanations can be given for this emerging phenomenon: massive deforestation for plantations, persistent cutting and burning of trees for farming and other economic

purposes, the destructive effects of illegal mining and a general shift in weather patterns as a result of climate change. Although most migrant women were aware rainfall patterns and land fertility were gradually declining in their new settlement areas as well, they did not attribute this to bigger global occurrences. Migrant women farmers indicated that applying more fertilisers to crops is the best way to solve the problem of low yields. This is, however, problematic as the majority cannot afford these fertilisers. Additionally, they also lack knowledge of other non-fertiliser methods of soil improvement and agroecological methods which have been found to be effective in several locations (Kangmennaang et al., 2017; Snapp et. al., 2010). This lack of knowledge about environmental degradation and its resulting effects is also evidence that the reach of agriculture-based education is limited in Ghana, especially in rural areas (Canagarajah et al., 2001). Unfortunately, this happening is likely due to multiple factors including the assertion by key informants that infrastructural barriers such as poor roads and lack of transport prevented them from getting interventions – public education programmes included – to rural areas. Women’s inability to secure farm inputs due to barriers like their remote location are further inhibited by their lack of autonomy and the fact that they need to seek permission before acquiring productive resources (Malapit & Quisumbing, 2015) including farm inputs.

The apparent gendered nature of farming practices in the BAR where women are systematically treated differently; from the acquisition of land to the utilisation of food resources within the household, makes them reap limited economic benefits from migration. This is further compounded by their inability to engage in alternative sources of income generation.

These findings are consistent with Truelove (2011) who found that everyday practices around water use in India are tied to gender and class, which tend to produce and reinforce social differentiation and inequality. Although the author was mainly referring to daily water practices in urban India, it is important to extend this to the ways in which gender shapes everyday farming practices in a rural migration destination. Similarly, Kerr (2014) argues that initiatives to address the needs of vulnerable regions must take into account the interconnectedness of gender and other subjectivities in creating agricultural outcomes. Despite the fact that Kerr's study focused on lost and found crops, this could be applied to our study as well in order to understand how migration interacts with gender to produce different realities in a migration destination. It is also useful for understanding how successful interventions for migrant women farmers need to take into account the cultural contexts of the phenomenon; for instance patriarchal customs and land utilisation.

A key finding of this study was that, although the majority of migrant women farmers believed they were escaping poverty in the UWR by migrating to the BAR, they were in actual fact transporting the poverty from one destination to another. A close observation of migrant women's livelihoods revealed that their living conditions in the BAR seem to mirror those of the UWR and in certain cases, were less favourable due to the lack of social support, among others. As well, there was a trade-off between their economic and reproductive/child care dynamics in the BAR, as the majority ended up without social support systems, an important component of child care among societies of the UWR.

Several policy options can be pursued based on the findings from this research. For example, there is a disconnect between climate change initiatives at the national level and knowledge dissemination at the grassroots. There is, therefore, the need for context specific education on climate variability which ties these events to the broad concept of climate change. This knowledge needs to be specially tailored with information on farming practices like bush burning, which further degrade the environment. In addition educating migrant farmers on improved farming methods and providing them with drought resistant farm inputs would help to increase farm yields.

Government's commitment to developing rural infrastructural amenities such as roads, would make migrant communities easily accessible to government and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) workers, and increase their motivation to work in such areas. It would also make it easier for rural farmers to convey food produce to urban towns, thereby reducing post-harvest loss among peasant migrant farmers and giving them returns for their hard work. In addition, equipping agricultural extension officers with the needed materials would ensure that they are able to service remote areas, where the majority of peasant and migrant farmers are located. In addition to this, regular monitoring is required to guarantee that workers assigned to rural areas carry out their duties as expected.

Given the relative contribution of migrant farmers to tackling food insecurity in Ghana, government needs to work with the chiefs and people of BAR to facilitate supportive food production. To achieve this, land and other agricultural resources should be made easily accessible and affordable for peasant farmers, particularly migrant

women. This would ensure that migrant women reap enough benefits from their agricultural work while also contributing to food production in the region.

In rolling out agricultural interventions for rural farming communities, it is important to involve both men and women. Targeting one gender creates a platform for unequal benefits and skepticism towards these interventions. As well, as asserted by Baruah (2009), it is important to consider specific political, economic, social and cultural contexts in implementing poverty alleviation policies, including agricultural interventions for migrant women farmers in Ghana, as a failure to do so might render them unsuccessful.

Finally, this research also brings to light the fact that although internal migration is meant to be an adaptation strategy towards poverty and food insecurity, it impacts on women differently from men. Further, it emphasises how social inequalities may be reinforced through migration as migrant farmers, particularly women living away from family and kin, find themselves in more vulnerable situations with regards to land ownership and use. In order to address this, it is important to re-evaluate national land tenure laws. Education targeted at breaking cultural barriers of land use, and subsidies on land rental for poor women farmers would also ensure that women living away from family who lose their rights to usufructuary lands can still benefit from other types of land tenure systems.

4.8 References

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE STRANGERS WE ARE: EXAMINING MIGRANT WOMEN FARMERS' REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND CHILD CARE DYNAMICS IN THE BRONG-AHAFO REGION OF GHANA.

Abstract

Climate variability has led to increased aridity, land degradation, and worsened food insecurity in the Upper West Region (UWR) of Ghana. Consequently, residents of the region migrate to the Brong-Ahafo Region (BAR) in search of livelihoods, mostly farming in rural areas. Although previous migration patterns from the northern to middle and southern parts of the country were seasonal, recent ones have become permanent which has seen more women migrating with their spouses. Despite this increase, little is known about its impact on women's reproductive health in a rural migration destination. Using in-depth interviews (n=30) and focus group discussions (n=5) with migrant women farmers in the BAR, we examined women's lived experiences on the dynamics of accessing and utilising reproductive health services, the challenges they encounter in caring for children and how they navigate these challenges. Findings from the study show that major challenges migrant women face include limited autonomy in family planning decisions, access to maternal and general health care services and support and care for children. These migrant women find themselves overburdened with tasks both on the farm and in the household in order to cope. The findings from this study contribute to the literature and draw the attention of policy makers to the unique reproductive health challenges of migrant women.

Key words: Gender, Migration, Reproductive Health, Child Care/Support, Food Security, Ghana

5.1 Introduction

This paper examines women's reproductive health and childbearing dynamics in the context of rural-rural migration in Ghana. Reproductive health as used in the paper refers to procreation-related health/hygiene processes at all stages of life. These include the ability to have safe and satisfying sex lives, the autonomy to make reproductive decisions, as well as reproductive work centred on family care (WHO, 2008; Zontini, 2004). The last few decades have been characterised by a large flow of migrants from the Upper West Region (UWR) to the Brong-Ahafo Region (BAR) of Ghana. This is as a result of increasing aridity and land degradation in the UWR caused by climate change, which has worsened food insecurity in the region (Luginaah et. al., 2009). North-south migration in Ghana has been happening for close to a century now due to geopolitical factors which have left the northern regions of Ghana less developed compared to southern regions.

Recent migrations are, however, different in a number of ways. First of all, most migrants are moving to the middle belts of the country in search of arable farms, as compared to previous migrations which were towards mining towns in the southernmost part of the country. Secondly, migration patterns between the UWR and the BAR have shifted from rural-urban to rural-rural settlements since farming is the main purpose of migrating. Thirdly, unlike the previously seasonal patterns of migration, recent migrations are becoming permanent in nature as push and pull factors in the UWR and BAR respectively continue to increase. Finally, recent migration trends have seen the involvement of more women due to the permanent nature of recent migrations (see Abdul-Korah, 2008; Kuuire et. al 2013).

Even though more women have begun taking part in migration, most scholarly work continue to focus on men's experiences (Hongdaneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 2006). The few studies that look at women and migration either focus on the experiences of women in migration origins or women in urban areas such as head porters (*see* Awumbila & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008; Kuuire et al., 2013). Similar to other gendered phenomena, rural-rural migration impacts women differently from men. Hence, it is important that the experiences of women who have migrated from the UWR to rural areas of the BAR to engage in farming be studied.

The International Organisation on Migration (IOM) recognises migration as a social determinant of health (IOM; 2009). Studies have suggested that health of migrants tend to be impacted by the structural, economic, social, cultural and behavioural experiences of the migration process. For instance, as most people migrate in search of better livelihoods, migration could lead to health inequalities in receiving areas, as migrants may have limited access to quality health services due to their poor socioeconomic status (Davis et al., 2009).

These migration dynamics may be more complex for migrant women as they have different health needs from men. Thus, the growing interest on the effects of migration on women's reproductive health is to address gaps in migration and health research which have mostly focused on communicable diseases (Carballo & Nerukar, 2001; UNFPA, 2006). For instance, migration has been shown to delay age at first marriage, lower fertility, and produce smaller family sizes (Chen et al., 2010). Migration is also observed to increase the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) especially among migrant women. This is in part due to the mobility associated with migration, and the limited

autonomy of migrant women to negotiate safer sex with their migrant partners (Anarfi, 2005; Hirsch et al., 2002; Smith-Estelle, & Gruskin, 2003).

Despite these factors, migrant women are reported to record low patronage of reproductive health services and contraceptive use, compared to their counterparts in migration receiving areas. This situation has been attributed to the remote location of migrant communities which impedes their access to health facilities, lower levels of educational attainment resulting in poor reproductive health knowledge, as well as cultural and language barriers (Davies et al., 2009; Flores, 2006; Yuan et al., 2013). However, ineffective utilisation of these reproductive services can result in severe negative health outcomes among migrant women including pregnancy complications, low birth weights, and maternal and infant mortality (Fotso et al., 2009).

Furthermore, settling in these remote locations directly impacts migrant women's access to maternal and general health care services, access to basic social amenities, as well as access to social capital and social support (Atuoye et al., 2015). The ability to access and utilise these services are important in ensuring good health of migrant women especially during pregnancy and childbirth.

Notwithstanding the substantial existing literature on women's maternal and reproductive health (Atuoye, 2015; Rishworth, 2014), little is known about women's reproductive wellbeing in the context of rural-rural migration in Ghana. Thus, as migrations from the UWR gradually shift from rural-urban to a rural-rural focus, it is important to understand how migrant women navigate their reproductive health and child care activities in their new destinations. This paper, therefore, examines migrant women's child bearing and child care dynamics in the BAR, in the context of rural migration.

5.2 Literature Review

5.2.1 Access to Health Care

Access to health care services remains a huge challenge confronting many women in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The continent is still plagued with high maternal mortality rates which are attributed to low health facility use. For example, only 46 percent of women in sub-Saharan Africa give birth in health facilities compared to 90 percent of births in East Asia, Latin America, Pacific and the Caribbean which happen in health facilities (Ganle et al., 2015). According to the 2010 WHO report, maternal mortality in Ghana stands at 350 per 100,000 live births, significantly higher than the global average of 216 per 100,000 live births. It, therefore, comes as no surprise that maternal mortality is the second leading cause of death among women of childbearing age in Ghana, accounting for 14% of deaths, with infectious diseases being the first (Ganle et al., 2015). One of the major hindrances of maternal health is access to health care services.

According to Ganle et al. (2015), although skilled births in Ghana have increased, some women especially in rural areas, still lack access to health facilities. Several factors including infrastructural, economic and sociocultural reasons account for this. Women in rural areas are cut off from health facilities due to the nature of roads leading to such communities, and sometimes, lack of transportation to and from such areas. Even in situations where health facilities exist in such communities, the service is usually of poor quality due to poor, malfunctioning equipment, lack of motivation on the part of health workers and inadequate monitoring of health personnel (Moyer et al., 2014; Sacks et al., 2015). Economic barriers also prevent women in rural areas from accessing health care

even when they need it. Migrant women in the BAR are no exception as economic factors compel them to settle in some of the most secluded areas of the region to be able to farm.

Notwithstanding interventions such as the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) and the Maternal Exemption Policy (MEP) aimed at encouraging health care utilisation by reducing maternal and general health care costs to the barest minimum, other hidden costs still make access challenging for rural women. These include transportation fares, registration fees and the opportunity cost of foregoing economic activities (Rishworth, 2014). This is especially pronounced in a mostly patriarchal society where women do not control sources of income despite contributing toward them. For the migrant woman in rural BAR, the situation is even worse as the absence of social support means that the opportunity costs of seeking health care are even greater, juxtaposed with little financial support coming her way.

Finally, sociocultural factors are some of the biggest determinants and inhibitors of women's health care utilisation, as argued by Ganle et al. (2014). These sociocultural factors include religious beliefs and cultural norms that warrant women to seek permission from household heads before any decision can be made. Nigatu et al. (2014) using a cross-sectional study further argue that women's patronage of maternal and child health care services is strongly influenced by women's autonomy. The UWR is a good example of this, since it practices the patrilineal system of inheritance which reinforces patriarchal tendencies leading to women being less autonomous.

5.2.2 Safer Sex Negotiations and Reproductive Autonomy

Women's autonomy concerns their ability to control their bodies, make decisions concerning their health and reproductive functions, and use resources without having to seek permission before doing any of these (Nigatu et. al., 2014). Yet, research suggests that women in SSA have limited control over their reproductive and general health (Bloom, Wypij, & Das Gupta, 2001; Woldemicael & Tenkorang, 2010).

An important indicator of women's reproductive autonomy is their ability to negotiate safer sex with their spouses and make family planning decisions. Most women in Ghana are still unable to ask for condom use in conjugal relationships and even in risky situations, due to fears of being accused of infidelity, or a lack of trust (Amoyaw et al., 2015; Tenkorang, 2012; Tores & Daly, 2007). This is problematic as married women in Ghana are about three times more prone to contracting HIV than never-married women, with over half of all HIV infections in Ghana being among women (Rombo, 2009; UNAIDS, 2008). Moreover, the ability to make family planning decisions is important in regulating childbirth (Eliason et al., 2014). Due to the sociocultural importance placed on childbirth in African societies, especially patriarchally inclined ones, and the expectation that men decide when and how many children to have, women are left helpless with regards to sexual negotiation. This is even more pronounced among the people of UWR, as it is culturally upheld that payment of bride price confers a woman's reproductive privileges to her spouse (Lobnibe, 2008).

Such sociocultural norms and practices informed by patriarchy produce skewed intra-household dynamics. This puts power in the hands of men, leaving women

vulnerable regarding reproductive decision making (Ganle, 2015). Moyer et al. suggest that in situations like these, decisions to access maternal and general health care services are made by spouses, in-laws and other household heads on behalf of the women (Moyer et al., 2014). It has also been argued that women's autonomy is influenced by economic and educational factors (Tenkorang, 2012). Considering most migrant women in rural BAR are illiterate and lack sources of income independent of their spouses, they may exercise little control over household and reproductive health decisions. This could lead to their inability to access reproductive and general health care, or negotiate safer sex with their spouses.

In rural areas of BAR then, it is highly likely that because the majority of migrant women farmers are uneducated and engaged in peasant farming, economic factors may play an important role in their ability to negotiate for safer sex and access maternal and reproductive health care. However, migrant women's economic livelihoods tend to depend on the amount of social capital they have in their environment (Curran & Saguy, 2001).

5.3 Theoretical Framework

5.3.1 Andersen's Health Utilisation Model

The Andersen's health care utilisation model was used as a guide for the study. This model was useful in explaining health-seeking behaviour among agrarian women, and factors which promote or inhibit their active usage of health services in a migration context in Ghana (Andersen, 1995).

Andersen's model has evolved over the years in response to criticisms of earlier versions for failing to include the complex mosaic of social and structural health access determinants in understanding health access and utilisation (Aday & Andersen, 1981). Designed in the late 1960s, the first model sought to predict and explain the use of health services among families, provide definitions and measurements of equitable health access and aid in the development of policies that promote this equitable access to health care. This model was also primarily concerned with the utilisation of formal health care services. Subsequently, Andersen's model has shifted its focus from family to individual health seeking behaviours. Reasons for this include the difficulty in measuring family as a unit, given its heterogeneity (Andersen, 1968). Andersen's model has been used extensively over the years to explain health outcomes within populations, including women's utilisation of reproductive health services (Amin et al., 2010; Kuuire et al., 2017; Mosiur Rahman et al., 2011). This study uses the most recent phase of the model (the fourth) developed in the 1990s as it presents a more comprehensive analysis of factors influencing health-seeking behaviours than earlier versions.

The fourth phase of the Andersen's model posits that usage of health services is influenced by three groups of factors: predisposing, enabling, and need factors. Andersen (1995) explains predisposing factors as those relating to sociocultural characteristics of an individual prior to ill health. Within this group are social structural elements such as race, ethnicity, education and occupation; demographics including gender and age; and health-beliefs. These factors shape perceptions of health and health care. Enabling factors provide an individual with the means to actualise health access need. These enablers may include wealth stock of individuals or financial support available to reduce the cost of

accessing health care. For instance, Ghana's pro-poor national health insurance has been acclaimed a key enabling factor in health care utilisation (Dixon, et al., 2014; Jehu-Appiah, Jehu-Appiah, et al., 2011). Others include health facilities and road infrastructure, which impact on physical access to health care; and social support from family and friends. Need on the other hand refers to circumstances like health issues that cause an individual to require health care services. Need may be perceived; based on an individual's experiences of ill-health, or evaluated; from a professional standpoint (Andersen & Newman, 1973).

In a study context where migrant farmers settle in rural locations for the purpose of accessing fertile farmland (Abdul-Korah, 2011; Kuuire, et al., 2016), understanding their access to and utilisation of health care services would require examining perceptions of health and health care, how decisions to seek health care are made in households, physical and financial dynamics in accessing health, and the stock of social support available to support health care access. The Andersen's model provides a lens for examining the influence of these factors within the context of migrant women's reproductive health seeking behaviour.

5.4 Study Area

The Brong-Ahafo is the second largest of ten regions in Ghana and is located in the middle belt of the country. It has a land size of 39,554 km² representing 16.6 % of the country's total land area. The region had a population of 2,310,983 as at 2010 and this figure was estimated to rise to 2,660,642 by 2016 (GSS, 2016). The BAR also has an urban population of 44.5% compared to the Upper West Region (UWR) which has just

16.3% of its population being urban (GSS, 2012). The Brong-Ahafo Region (BAR) is bordered by the Northern Region to the North, Cote D'Ivoire to the West, the Volta and Eastern Regions to the east and the Ashanti and Western Regions to the South. It has a Forest-Savannah Transition vegetation, a biannual rainfall season and rich soil fertility.

According to the 2010 Ghana Population and Housing Census report, in-migration accounted for 457,571 of the total population of the region, with people from the UWR making up 23% of total migrants in the region (GSS, 2013). During interviews with key informants in the region, however, the figure was reputed to be between 60%-80%, especially in the rural areas. The Brong-Ahafo Region (BAR) is a popular destination among migrants from the UWR due to its relative proximity to the UWR (Abdul-Korah, 2007), biannual rainfall seasons which last longer than the single rainfall season the UWR experiences, and the abundance of arable lands in the region (Van der Geest, 2011).

Due to the difficulty of securing land in urban areas and also the need to live in areas where large tracts of lands are available for farming, most migrants from the UWR are forced to settle in remote areas of the BAR (Kuuire, 2013). Migrant settlements are easily identifiable by the wood, mud, bamboo and thatch using for housing. Migrants choose to put up these cheap temporary structures because they do not consider themselves permanent residents and might easily relocate if land in their present settlement becomes unavailable.

Settling in such remote areas has implications for migrants, especially migrant women, as they are cut off from health care and other social amenities like schools, roads and electricity. In situations where these services exist, they are usually of poor quality.

In addition, some migrant locations are so dispersed that access to social support and social capital becomes difficult. These living arrangements have dire implications for migrant families, especially women and children as their health, education and wellbeing are greatly impacted.

5.5 Methods

5.5.1 Design

This study used qualitative methods to understand the lived experiences of migrant women farmers as these are subjective to every woman and are best understood using an interpretive approach. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), qualitative methods are suitable for understanding phenomena beyond face value. Qualitative methods also allow for the use of more than one method, which produces rich data and deep meanings of experiences. Since qualitative methods are concerned with generating rich data using narratives, they usually aim to explore rather than confirm. Qualitative methods are also concerned with understanding and generating context specific knowledge rather than generalising.

5.5.2 Respondent Selection and Data Collection

Respondents were selected using purposive sampling. The target population was women who had migrated from the UWR to the BAR either alone or with families to rural areas of the BAR. Participants included single, married, divorced and widowed women. Participants were selected from six communities in three districts of the BAR. The communities were Dwenewoho, Alata Line, Tanokrom, Gyebiri, Beposo and Kokuma. Two communities were selected from each district. In addition to their rural nature,

selection of these communities was informed by anecdotal data which show these locations as preferred destinations for migrants from UWR in BAR.

Table 5.1: Community characteristics of residents' locations.

District	Community	Proximity to road	Health Facility	
			In Community	Outside Community (<5km)
Nkoranza-North	Dwenewoho	On main road	No	No
	Alata-Line	None – Remote	No	No
Kintampo-South	Beposo	On main road	No	No
	Kokuma	Side road	No	No
Techiman-North	Tanokrom	Side road	No	No
	Krobo	On main road	Community Health Post	Yes

Focus group discussions (FGDs) (n=5) comprising between six and ten women, and in-depth interviews (IDIs) (n=30) were conducted with migrant women farmers in order to understand some of the challenges they face in carrying out their reproductive responsibilities in the BAR. Two FGDs were conducted in the Nkoranza-North and Kintampo-South Districts, and one in the Techiman-North District. Five IDIs were conducted in each of the identified communities. Some characteristics of the study communities are presented in Table 1. All FGDs and IDIs comprised solely of women.

A total of 80 respondents were selected for the study. These included 40 migrant women in five FGDs, 30 migrant women for IDIs and 10 key informants were also interviewed. The two methods (i.e. IDIs and FGDs) were adopted to ensure triangulation.

It allowed me to compare emerging themes across board. Different participants were recruited for all FGDs and IDIs.

IDIs and FGDs were held in community centres closed off from non-participants. This was to ensure confidentiality of participation. Participants were informed of their rights and roles in the research. Written and verbal informed consent was sought from each participant before interviews were carried out. IDIs lasted between 15 and 45 minutes, whereas FGDs lasted between one to two hours. Semi-structured interview guides were used to facilitate discussions in order to understand some of the challenges migrant women faced with regards to their reproductive activities. Questions included motives for migrating to the BAR, intra-household dynamics, women's health seeking dynamics and child-raising in the BAR. Questions were structured in a manner that encouraged participants to talk at length.

In order to know if any support services presently existed to aid migrant women farmers in carrying out their reproductive activities, IDIs with key informants asked questions on migrant population characteristics, health and wellbeing concerns of migrant women and the status of local and national strategies for addressing migrant women farmers' concerns. Key informants were made up of officials of governmental and non-governmental organisations involved in social, agricultural and gender work, and comprised both sexes.

Interviews were conducted in English, Dagaare, Sissaali and Twi; the dominant languages spoken by migrants in the BAR. All interviews were audio recorded with permission from respondents. Ethics approval was sought from the Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (REB) before data collection commenced.

5.5.3 Analysis

Interviews conducted in local dialects were transcribed into English. Translated transcripts were proofread and cross-checked with audio recordings to ensure that meanings were not distorted. NVivo, the QSR software for analysis of qualitative data was used as an organisational tool for coding transcripts. Line-by-line coding was done in order to extract emerging themes. This is known as open-coding, which involves the assignment of ideas to text beside sentences as they emerge (Crang, 2005).

Results were thematically analysed based on the research questions the study sought to answer as well as relevant theoretical underpinnings. During analysis, reference was also made to journal notes taken during fieldwork, so as to better contextualise data. IDIs and FGDs were analysed using the same coding scheme in order to identify similarities and differences.

5.6 Results

This section presents the findings of the study regarding the challenges migrant women farmers face in carrying out their reproductive and child raising responsibilities in the Brong-Ahafo Region. Results have been structured around the four major thematic areas found in the IDIs and FGDs. These themes are: women's autonomy in family planning decisions, women's access to maternal and general health care services, support and care for children and coping strategies employed in managing these challenges.

Direct quotes from IDI and FGD transcripts have been used to punctuate themes. Quotations have also been identified with methods of data collection, pseudonyms and

age of participants in order to provide respondents' background. (See table 1 in chapter 3 for characteristics of interview respondents).

5.6.1 Women's Autonomy in Family Planning Decisions

The majority of migrant women farmers indicated that they were not autonomous in issues regarding contraceptive use and family planning. Further probing revealed that their lack of control over contraceptive use centred on culture-laden reasons. Among the Dagaaba and Sissala people of the UWR, payment of bride price confers a woman's reproductive privileges to her spouse (Lobnibe, 2008). Although this tradition is not as pronounced in the migration destination (BAR) due to its matrilineal inclination, migrants who settle in the BAR still uphold this tradition from their origin. This leads to skewed power dynamics in relationships, which in turn affects migrant women's ability to negotiate (safer) sex, as well as spacing and number of children. In fact, some of these women indicated that they are not even able to negotiate for safer sex when they suspected their spouses may be having affairs with other women.

Most of them agreed that even though they knew condoms were useful for family planning and helped to prevent STDs, they could not request that their spouses use protection as their husbands would accuse them of engaging in extramarital affairs:

We know condoms prevent pregnancy. When we go to the hospital, the nurses tell us to use them. They said it even prevents HIV. But who are you to bring condoms home? If your husband catches you with them, that'll be the end of the marriage. Because he'll say you're either cheating or implying he is (FGD 5)

The women added that due to their inability to negotiate sexual relations with their spouses, they also are unable to decide when to have sex. This limited autonomy sometimes led to unplanned pregnancies and large family sizes. Despite the cultural prestige and economic benefits of having many children for migrant families, having a large number of children has its own challenges:

The man marries the woman and not the other way round. He therefore decides when you'll give birth... But giving birth to a lot of children is good. Your husband will not have to beg or pay people to come and help on the farm. Except if the children are many, the mouths to feed are also many. So are the school fees, hospital bills and others. If you do something for one of child, you have to do it for all of them (Gata, IDI, 32)

Tied to the number of children is spacing of childbirth. Women generally agreed that given the option they would allow more intervals between childbirth. Unfortunately, the decision was not theirs to make as doing so would cause tension between them and their spouses. On the other hand, not heeding to the health workers' advice to use contraceptives led to them getting queried by health workers when they went for antenatal check-ups:

We're the ones who get tired and burdened. Immediately this girl stops breastfeeding, my husband will impregnate me again. When you go to the hospital, the nurses get angry and ask how you got pregnant again in just one year. They say we don't listen to their advice on contraceptive use. But if you heed the nurses' advice, your husband will chase you away. (Angelina, IDI, 29)

The women also observed that they were sometimes forced to keep giving birth against their will particularly if they have children of the same sex. Traditionally, among the people of the UWR, men are considered heads of households and the source of lineage continuity. Women on the other hand are seen as a source of wealth as they can be married off for their bride price (Abdul-Korah, 2011). In this regard, if a couple has no or few children of a particular sex, the man could insist that they keep trying until they got a preferred sex:

I have six strong young men and their father is happy. But when they're ready to marry where do we get the cows to secure their wives? My husband wanted us to keep trying but menopause set in.
(FGD 2, mother of six boys)

The majority of respondents complained that the burden of combining housework, farm work and child care in these remote locations often led to general feeling of distress. Unfortunately, such distress is not considered serious enough to warrant medical attention. Some women indicated that this extreme fatigue tends to lead to decreased libido. Yet, due to their inability to negotiate sex with their spouses, they cannot refuse them sex even when they are not in the right frame of mind:

You wake up some days and you're just so tired. You feel the aches right down to your bones. But you have to ignore them and go to the farm. You come back home and have to cook. By the time you finish, you're so exhausted and wish you could go straight to bed but no, your husband expects you to perform your duties in bed as well. (Ziem, IDI, 41)

Overall, the women agreed that challenges associated with their reproductive and child raising activities are exacerbated by the fact that they had left the comfort of their home region. They observed that back home in the UWR, relatives or the elderly in the household could easily intervene but being alone in the BAR increases the vulnerability of these women. Some also added that the pressures of having a particular sex or number of children is not as pronounced in the UWR as children were considered communally owned and not belonging to an individual:

Over there if your husband is chasing other women, you can plead with an elderly family member to help. They'll sit him down and talk to him because even though he's an adult, he's still their child (FGD 4).

Back home, children don't belong to an individual. So even if you are barren, your sister, in-law or even neighbours' children are still yours. If you have only women, your extended family will provide men of the house. But here, we're all alone (Linda, IDI, 27).

Apart from the concerns about negotiating safer sex and family planning with their partners in a rural migration context, women also talked at length about some of the structural, economic and cultural impediments that interfere with their decisions to seek health care.

5.6.2 Living on the Farm as a Child Bearing Woman

Accessing maternal and general health care was one of the challenges participants reported facing. They attributed these challenges to a number of factors including financial, infrastructural, structural and cultural; which are further complicated by their migrant status.

The women of childbearing age reported that it was difficult to seek antenatal care as this comes with the opportunity cost of having to forego farm work. Thus, even when they were pregnant, they had to make the decision to either go to the farm or travel to seek antenatal care. In the comment below, Ayo explained how this often led to delay in first antenatal visit, which is considered essential to the health of both mother and baby:

You can't leave farm work and go to the hospital. Unless, of course, you want to starve that day. If you choose to go to the hospital instead of working, you will still come back home to the same workload. So it's better to work and only go to the hospital if your condition is serious. (Ayo, IDI, 33)

Given that these women live on the farms with their spouses, they are basically expected to do their share of the farm work on a daily basis. The participants reported that these expectations do not diminish even when they are expectant. In effect, migrant women are denied the much needed rest or health care required of pregnant women, which sometimes led to pregnancy complications:

The men don't care if you're pregnant. If you used to go to the farm at dawn and come home at night, they expect you to continue in the same way even when you conceive. I lost my third pregnancy four months into my term because the work was just too intense. (Vida, IDI, 31)

Even when one wants to go and seek health care, you tend to be discouraged not only by the lack of transportation but also the nature of the very bad roads in the area:

Even if you decide to go to hospital, you either have to walk the entire journey which takes almost half a day, or you spend the

entire day waiting for a vehicle which might not show up. By the time you get to the hospital you realise your sickness is even worse off. (FGD 3)

As a result, some of them resorted to home delivery and herbal medicine as this was less tedious for them than trying to access formal health care. In general, migrant women agreed that their experiences in accessing maternal and general health care services in the BAR differed from the UWR. They observed that most of the infrastructural challenges experienced in the BAR were further compounded by the location of settlements. Since farming is the biggest motivation for migrating to the BAR, they usually have to settle in remote areas so as to be able to access farmlands. As a result, they were cut off from health facilities due to bad roads. In communities where health facilities are available, the participants describe the quality of health care provided as poor:

There is a small hospital here, but when you go, all they give you is paracetamol. They wait for the situation to get worse before they refer you to the big hospital. If we were indigenes, we could also afford to live in town, close to the hospitals. But since we're strangers, we have to go and hide in the outskirts and earn our livelihoods (FGD 1).

Besides the infrastructural challenges that make health care utilisation difficult for migrant women in remote areas, there was also an absence of other enabling factors such as social support. This further limited women's ability to actively seek health care even when they needed it.

5.6.3 Limited Support and Care for Children

Lack of support from community:

A major theme that emerged during interviews with these migrant women was the challenge of caring for children in the BAR. The women complained that settling in the BAR was not friendly for nurturing their children compared to the UWR. They attributed this to inadequate social support and the busy nature of farm activities in the BAR. They noted that back in their region of origin (UWR), there was always someone to help care for their children right from pregnancy until they were fully grown. This support included asking other women who were friends or family to help with housework while they attended antenatal care:

You could easily beg an extended relative or neighbour to come watch over your home while you go to the hospital. But here, are you going to tell your landowner's daughter to come and work for you? (FGD 5)

Women also recounted that back in the UWR, family and friends usually brought baskets of gifts such as detergents, baby clothes and even food, when a woman delivered. This helped cushion new mothers financially. Newly delivered women would typically also have elderly women bathe the new born baby and treat the woman's childbirth sores until she was strong enough to take over. Subsequently, women in the UWR could easily ask that a relative's girl child come live with and help around the house if they were overwhelmed with work. All of these, however, were missing in their new environment:

Back home, sometimes you don't even learn to bathe a child until your second or third birth... Besides, back home, even if you don't have any money, you are not worried when you go into labour

because you know that as for *dawadawa*⁶ and soap, your baby would get some. Here in the BAR, as your due date draws near, you begin to stress (Faanye, IDI, 48)

Migrant women who were divorced or widowed lamented that their social capital/support system was worse off than that of their married counterparts. They attributed this to the fact that the economic systems such as land tenure and trading of food crops in BAR were not friendly toward women heads of households. They added that once you lost a spouse, it became difficult to secure land for farming as they either could not afford it financially, or ended up getting ripped off when they attempted to. It was especially challenging if you had young children to take care of. No support was received from their extended families back in the UWR because family ties were weakened once they lost their spouses:

Once your husband dies you're no longer part of their family because you have nothing to offer them. Sometimes they ask you to pack your bags and come home. But the children are in school, you can't disrupt their education. Even if you go, whose hut will you live in? (Julie, IDI, 55)

Finally, women mentioned other cultural challenges of bringing up children in the BAR as a huge challenge they faced as migrant mothers in the BAR. They explained that their children, especially the adolescents sometimes felt alienated to both cultures of the UWR and the BAR, which led to frustration. Sometimes, these frustrations escalated into waywardness and deviant behaviour among their children. They believed that the situation would have been different had they remained in the UWR as that feeling of not

⁶ Dawadawa: A local protein-rich spice made from the beans of the African Locust tree

belonging would not develop. In addition, living in these remote settlements deprived women of the typical family support they would get back in the UWR. In the unfortunate situation that their spouses are unable to support them, things tend to fall apart in terms of bringing up the children:

Down here, they know that they're different from their colleagues in school. When they go home too, they can't speak the language and the elderly chastise them for it so they don't like going home. (FGD 4)

My eldest son smoked weed till he went mad. My husband died when he was just a little boy and I was always busy trying to get *by-day*⁷. If we'd been back home, his uncles and other relatives would have pumped some sense into him (Connie, IDI, 60)

This led some women to also comment on the state of support they received from their spouses in the BAR.

Lack of support from spouses

Participants went further to add that, although migrating away from the UWR took away most of their social capital and social support, their spouses failed to recognise that. In effect, the men expected them to perform the exact, or even more, roles as they did back in the UWR. They added that intra-household dynamics among migrants were very different from those of the indigenes:

Sometimes you're stirring *TZ*⁸ and your husband tells you to stop and come mash *Sabkuo*⁹ for him, because culturally men are not

⁷ See chapter 4

⁸ TZ: A traditional Ghanaian dish prepared from corn flour

⁹ Sabkuo: A beverage made from mashed TZ

supposed to dip their hands in the TZ storage pot. Meanwhile you find the men from down-south here even washing clothes with their wives. You wonder whether our men cannot learn. (Afia, IDI, 24)

In addition, the women lamented that the majority of their children's educational burden fell on their shoulders. Although the women expected the men to be more involved in their children's education, their spouses perceived their role in children's education as that of financial providers and nothing else. They added that in some instances, even the financial responsibilities were shirked by their spouses as well:

Once they pay the school fees, that's it. They don't care if the kids eat before they go to school, if they have uniforms to wear, or even if they're performing well in school. Even the fees sometimes you have to chase them around before they pay... We're uneducated, if our children bring home their school books, how will we know what's in them? (FGD 1)

In the midst of all these challenges, migrant women had to devise mechanisms to manage these outcomes and ensure their daily expectations as farmers, wives and mothers were met.

5.6.4 How Migrant Women Navigate Their Everyday Reproductive Challenges

An objective of the study was to find out how migrant women farmers addressed the challenges they faced in carrying their reproductive and child nurturing activities. Interviews revealed that the majority either chose to rely on the divine for intervention or keep their issues to themselves due to mistrust for people around them; indigenes and other migrants alike. Some of the women also mentioned that they relied on local

associations for economic help although sometimes the interventions went beyond economic needs. Also, most of the women mentioned that to cope with challenges, they had to find effective ways of ensuring that all their duties were met.

Practicing time-management and multitasking were some of the coping mechanisms that migrant women farmers employed in addressing the challenge of juggling multiple roles as farmers, wives and mothers. This may be considered a contrary coping mechanism as women had to work longer hours to satisfy work commitments and make additional time for other activities. In doing so, they ended up with no leisure time, which has implications for their health and wellbeing.

Even if you're tired you cannot rest when the work will still be lying there waiting for you. Sometimes what you can do is to go to the farm earlier than you usually do, so that you can finish sowing early and come home. But even when you come home, you'll see another task that has been waiting for you for days (FGD 3).

The limited avenues for social support led to migrant women's dependence on some community groups for assistance. '*Susu Adaka*', literally translated Savings Box, was another major theme that emerged as a coping mechanism among migrant women in the BAR. The *susu adaka* is a community based initiative which encourages women to save, no matter how small the amount. The idea behind it is to get rural women to pool together resources that they could borrow from and pay back with little interest, when faced with financial difficulties. Women were usually organised into groups of 10 - 40 depending on the population of the community and the number of willing participants. A secure money safe was provided to each group; one woman kept the safe and another the keys, to ensure that the safe could only be opened as a group. Monies from the *susu*

adaka were used to support one another's farming and trading activities. The *susu adaka* was therefore a good source of social capital for migrant women. However, despite being an association initially tailored for economic needs, some women reported soliciting for non-financial help such as advice, babysitting and other forms of social support from other *susu adaka* group members:

You have no option, these women become your family. Sometimes if you or a family member is not feeling well, you can ask your colleagues if they have any leaves or barks you could boil and drink (FGD 1)

You could always scout for other women who are harvesting at the same as you are, and beg them to let you dry your maize with theirs so their children can look after it (FGD 3)

Perhaps the most significant theme across all women was relying on the divine for intervention. Many migrant women cited God as their source of relief when faced with challenges. Thus, when asked about the last time they received health care, the popular response was, "*By God's grace I have never been sick*". Although religion and spirituality have been found to have a positive influence on mental health and general wellbeing (Weber & Pargament, 2014), the reliance on spiritual or divine interventions can sometimes result in some sicknesses going undetected or getting worse without the necessary checkups:

By God's grace me and my children have never been sick in all the years we've been here. If one of us has a headache or fever, we just boil some herbs and drink. The next day we're strong enough to go back to work (Kaunsob, IDI, 49)

They recently told me that I have hypertension when I experienced severe headaches and got hospitalised. But this comes as a shock because even from childhood I have always been a very healthy person. If you ever saw me in the hospital, then I probably escorted someone there (Jane, IDI, 65)

Unfortunately, Jane does not recognise that the elevated levels of stress she was currently experiencing in the BAR could be a possible cause of her hypertension.

It was also evident from discussions with the women that a major reason most of them preferred to commit their problems unto a divine being rather than seek help from friends, neighbours or professionals was because of a general feeling of mistrust. Most migrant women considered themselves outsiders in their communities and as such did not trust that people they confided in would care enough to help their situation or keep information they provided confidential:

If you go and beg someone for food, the next day the entire community will know that you're lazy. If you go and narrate your problems to someone you consider a friend, before you realise they've exposed you to outsiders. Isn't it better to just leave all your problems to God who takes care of you unconditionally? (Atame, IDI, 47)

Notwithstanding all of these obstacles affecting migrant women's reproductive health and child care activities, the majority still believed residing in the BAR was more favourable than returning to the UWR, as the BAR experiences relatively better rainfall and has more arable lands compared to the migration origin.

5.7 Discussion and Conclusion

Findings from the study show that migrant women in the BAR possess limited autonomy which is reflected in their inability to negotiate for safer sex with their spouses, decide on the number of children to have and independently make visits to health facilities. In cases where migrant women decide to seek health care, physical and economic barriers hinder them from doing so. Moreover, poor service delivery at health centres, bad road networks, lack of transportation and financial constraints also impede migrant women's health care utilisation in the BAR. In the midst of limited social support in this migration destination, women in the study context are also bedeviled with a lot challenges in bearing and raising children.

Drawing on Andersen's health care utilisation model to situate the reproductive challenges of migrant women in the BAR, it was revealed most of their coping strategies to these challenges are counter-productive and tend to inhibit their effective utilisation of reproductive and general health care services. Discussions with the women showed that in many cases, most of them did not think they needed health care irrespective of their health conditions. As 'need' is considered an important component and driver of health seeking behaviour, belief that one's condition does not require any form of medical attention will ultimately reduce a person's chances of seeking health care. Considering the fact that most migrant women in this study context only perceive threat to their health when they begin to develop physical symptoms to a disease or complication, it may not be surprising that most do not perceive the need to seek medical attention even when their condition requires them to. Furthermore, most of these women attribute some

symptoms of illnesses with fatigue, and in an attempt to avoid being labelled as lazy by their families and larger community, they tend to ignore these symptoms. This usually results in late diagnoses as diseases and complications reach advanced stages with life threatening consequences. This finding is consistent with an earlier study in China where migrant women perceived themselves to be more resilient and therefore refused to seek care for 'minor illnesses' due to their cultural understanding of health and health care (*see* Feng et al., 2005).

The study further reveals that, even where the need to seek health care was present, factors including poverty, poorly resourced clinics, bad road networks, difficulty securing transportation, and limited social support discouraged migrant women from doing so. These challenges are amplified in the study context as migrant communities in the BAR are in remote areas, thereby denying migrants access to basic health facilities located in the more urbanised areas (Atuoye et al., 2015). Besides, findings show that most social relationships in migrant communities are not well developed, which limit avenues to seek social support. For instance, although migrants may all hail from the same region, there are still differences in dialects and districts of origin. In addition, some migrants prefer to socially seclude themselves from the larger migrant community due to a lack of trust for other community members whom they do not consider friends or kin. Apart from limiting their bonding, cultural and language barriers also impede migrant women's patronage of health services due to the difficulty in communicating with health workers. A similar trend is reported by Carballo (2005), who found that cultural and language barriers delayed the use of maternal health services among migrants in Denmark.

Although women's autonomy in making independent reproductive decisions is generally poor in Ghana (Ganle et al., 2015), this situation is worse and more nuanced for migrant women in rural areas of BAR. Given their low educational and socio-economic status, coupled with limited familial relationships within migrant destinations, migrant women are incapacitated in taking assertive decisions about their reproductive lives. For instance, these women are less reluctant to negotiate safer sex or ask for the use of birth control with their partners which is premised on the belief that, should this result in domestic disputes, there would be no immediate extended family member to intervene. Additionally, elderly women traditionally play roles of balancing the power of male household heads back home in the UWR. As this is mostly missing in migration destinations, migrant women feel disempowered with regards to their 'bargaining power' in negotiating for their reproductive rights in the household. This situation is further worsened by the cultural desirability for larger family sizes, preferably male children which is seen as expanding family labour and building social capital. This supports findings by Moyer et al. who assert that women's decisions to utilise reproductive health services including family planning are largely influenced by husbands, mothers-in-law and other household members, with women themselves possessing limited autonomy to influence this decision (Moyer et al., 2014).

It is evident that the coping strategies employed by migrant women in managing these challenges are inadequate. Whereas multitasking, depending on economic organisations and relying on the divine are beneficial in mitigating some of their problems (Weber & Pargament, 2014), they do not detract from the importance of reproductive health care for migrant women. Timely and regular antenatal visits are

important in the early detection and prevention of pregnancy related complications, low birth weights, as well as maternal and newborn mortality (Kuuire et al., 2017). Economic organisation, however, form just one aspect of the enabling factors that encourage women's utilisation of antenatal health care. Also, while relying on 'divine intervention' provides migrant women farmers some form of emotional support, it could be detrimental to their long-term health, as it reduces women's need to seek health care. In addition, working longer hours leads to increased stress which could create health challenges or worsen existing health conditions.

Given these findings, it could be argued that migrant women's reproductive health and wellbeing is generally worse off in the BAR as findings further revealed the absence of health facilities within five kilometres of most migrant settlements (*see* table 2). This finding sharply contrasts with WHO recommendations which state that, for effective quality health care delivery, health facilities are to be located within a five kilometre radius of residential communities (Nyonator et al., 2007). Following prolonged hours on the farm, in addition to household chores, little time may be devoted to travelling long distances to seek health care, unless complications occur. It may, therefore, be argued that agrarian women's health needs are better catered for in the migration origin. Given the UWR's poorest region status, more health interventions including the Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS) compounds, fee waivers for health care and other public health campaigns targeted at reducing disease burden are being rolled out in the region (Dixon et al., 2014).

Interestingly, most migrant women preferred to remain in the BAR despite some of these reproductive hardships they faced. Other studies have reported similar findings

where they suggest that women may prefer permanent migration compared to men (Grasmuck & Pessar, 1991). Similarly, Abdul-Korah (2007) reports that migrant farmers from the UWR perceive opportunities in their destination communities as relatively better, and may also want to avoid being tagged failures upon their return home. Additionally, most migrants do not look forward to going back to the UWR and scrambling for the few unfertile lands available in the region (Abdul-Korah, 2007)

Recommendations

To address some of the reproductive and child care challenges faced by migrant women farmers in the BAR of Ghana, this paper suggests improving their socio-economic conditions. This could be achieved through income generation activities which create a better enabling factor for their health care utilisation. One way of doing this is to train women in trades such as crafts making, dressmaking or hairdressing to ensure that they have sustainable livelihoods outside of farming. As observed by other scholars (Tenkorang, 2012), financial autonomy would better position these women to negotiate (safer) sex with their spouses and partake in family planning decisions. In line with this, it is also pertinent to roll out educational and sensitisation campaigns about socio-cultural practices that may be deleterious to the health and general wellbeing of these migrant women. This will help restructure belief systems, gender norms and intra-household dynamics and provide women more support and control over their bodies.

Following the success of the CHPS programme in increasing health access in the UWR, it will be beneficial to replicate this concept in remote migrant communities in the BAR. Effective and regular monitoring of such health facilities, once in place, will ensure staff are at post to attend to the health needs of their communities.

Infrastructural development of settler communities in the BAR would also help improve migrant women farmers' livelihoods and wellbeing. This includes provision of potable water to reduce the workload of women. As well, building good roads will enhance trade with urban centres and ease the burden of accessing health facilities in urban centres during medical complications such as obstructed delivery.

Setting up social organisations which encourage migrant women to socialise and bond would increase women's networking opportunities and access to social support. It would also help reduce hostility among migrants and create platforms to solicit social support from other community members when needed.

Finally, infrastructural development of the UWR would encourage the return of migrant farmers to the region and reduce out-migrations to the BAR. For instance, given that the BAR has become a popular destination due to its biannual rainfall season, the provision of irrigation facilities in the UWR would assure residents and prospective migrants of sustained economic livelihoods year round and reduce the push factors of migration (Kuuire et al., 2013). This would encourage the retention of human capital within the region and forestall the unpleasant conditions migrants, particularly women, face in their rural migration destinations.

5.8 References

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CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This research examined the lived experiences of migrant women farmers in the BAR of Ghana. Specifically, the study explored the challenges migrant women farmers from the UWR face in their productive and reproductive activities in a rural migration destination; the BAR. It also examined the strategies migrant women employ in addressing these challenges, and the needed policy interventions to help improve the lives of migrant women in rural destinations.

As the impacts of climate change continue to worsen, it is projected that regions which depend mainly on rain-fed agriculture will be among the hardest hit globally (IPCC, 2014; Lobell et al; 2008). For instance, Sub-Saharan Africa has been identified as one of such regions given that up to 90% of its peasant farmer population rely on rain-fed agriculture for food and other economic needs (Cooper et al., 2008; Rosegrant et al, 2002). In order to cope with the effects of climate change including erratic rainfall and food insecurity, adaption strategies such as migration are employed by residents in affected communities (Meze-Hausken, 2000; Tacoli, 2009).

In the context of Ghana, residents in the Upper West Region (UWR) are increasingly becoming vulnerable to food insecurity as environmental variability, land aridity and unpredictable rainfall patterns make agriculture unproductive for most households who live on agriculture (Atuoye et al., 2017; Luginaah et al., 2009). Considering that the UWR is the poorest region in the country and is also plagued with high illiteracy rates, there are limited economic options available to inhabitants outside of

agriculture. Residents, therefore, resort to migration to southern parts of the country as a way of dealing with poverty and high food insecurity in the region (Abdul-Korah, 2007; Kuuire et al., 2013). Given its proximity, abundance of arable land, and biannual rainfall season, the Brong-Ahafo Region (BAR) of Ghana has been a popular destination for migrants from the UWR over the last few decades (van der Geest, 2011).

In recent years, however, migrations from the UWR to southern parts of Ghana have assumed new dimensions. For instance, in addition to the switch from urban and mining centres to rural farming areas, new migrations are also becoming permanent (Abdul-Korah, 2007; Kuuire et al., 2016). Thus, in contrast with previous migration trends from the UWR which were dominated by men who migrated seasonally for food and other remittances to families back home, the changing dynamics have led to the involvement of more women in migration from the region. Notwithstanding this, the increasing participation of women in migration has largely been understudied (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Cranford, 2006). Although researchers have explored internal migration in Ghana, the majority of such studies tend to focus on the experiences of migrant men and women in urban destinations, men in rural destinations or ‘left-behind’ families in migration origins (Abdul-Korah, 2008; Awumbila & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008; Kuuire et al., 2013; Rademacher-Schulz et al., 2014).

While the benefits of migration cannot be understated in the context of the UWR, most studies have drawn these conclusions based on the experiences of migrant men in agrarian destinations of the BAR (*see* Kuuire et al., 2016) or migrant women in urban centres (Abdul-Korah, 2011). However, migration, like other gendered phenomena, impacts men and women differently (Baruah, 2007). For instance, residing in rural areas

does not only impact women's livelihood options, but also their access to quality health services including maternal health care (Lemke et al., 2016). Hence, as migrations from the UWR to the BAR assume a new trend, it was necessary to investigate the lived experiences of migrant women in a rural destination.

Informed by feminist theories which emphasise the importance of the interaction between gender and everyday occurrences to produce realities, this study used the feminist political ecology framework and Andersen's socio-behavioural model to understand the experiences of migrant women in a rural destination. Feminist political ecology was relevant in explaining how environmental, structural and individual factors shape the everyday experiences of migrant women farmers (Rocheleau et al., 2013). Andersen's behavioural model on the other hand helped shed more light on the structural and individual factors that impact migrant women's ability to utilise reproductive and general health care, and child care support (Andersen, 1995).

Findings from the study revealed that migrant women reap limited economic benefits from migration due to environmental, structural and cultural barriers they face in their destination communities in the BAR. Furthermore, migrant women receive limited social support from family and kin in the BAR, compared to what they enjoyed back 'home' in the UWR. This greatly affects their reproductive health and child care support in the BAR.

As lived experiences are subjective realities shaped by space and place, the study employed a qualitative approach and was guided by the following objectives:

1. To investigate the productive and reproductive challenges which confront migrant women farmers in BAR.

2. To examine strategies employed by migrant women to navigate their identified challenges.
3. To identify interventions available/needed to improve migrant women farmers' livelihoods.

The three main objectives are answered in the two integrated manuscripts:

- I. **Running with Poverty: Interrogating the Paradox Embedded in Migration as a Livelihood Improvement Strategy among Migrant Women Farmers in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.**
- II. **The Strangers We Are: Examining Migrant Women Farmers' Reproductive Health and Child Care Dynamics in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.**

6.2 How the Findings from the Two Manuscripts are Integrated

Both manuscripts in this thesis examined the lived experiences of migrant women in a rural destination from a gendered perspective. Using feminist political ecology, the first manuscript explored the economic challenges of migrant women in the BAR, and the presence of support services to help improve their livelihoods. Drawing on Andersen's health care utilisation model, the second manuscript investigated how migrant women navigate their reproductive and general health care needs in their new spaces, and how these experiences differ from their previous experiences back in the UWR. The second manuscript also explored the coping mechanisms that migrant women employ in dealing with their challenges. Both manuscripts reveal that apart from reaping limited economic benefits due to biophysical/climatic factors, societal hierarchies/norms and infrastructural constraints which inhibit their effective utilisation of economic resources, migrant

women also have to endure a trade-off between their economic livelihoods and reproductive health and wellbeing. Considering migration implies living away from close family and kin, migrant women lose access to some of the enabling factors which influence their ability to utilise health care in the BAR.

6.3 Summary of Findings

6.3.1 Manuscript One

Running with Poverty: Interrogating the Paradox Embedded in Migration as a Livelihood Improvement Strategy among Migrant Women Farmers in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.

Using in-depth interviews (n=30), focus group discussions (FGDs) (n=5) and key informant interviews (n=10) the first manuscript sought to investigate challenges confronting migrant women in carrying out their productive/economic activities in the BAR, and the potential policy interventions needed to improve their livelihoods (See chapter 4).

From a Feminist Political Ecology perspective, findings revealed that migrant women encountered some difficulties in the BAR due to macro and micro level influences which limit economic returns from their productive activities. For instance, dwindling and erratic rainfall, and worsening land infertility in the BAR have impacted greatly on migrant women's economic activities given that the majority migrate for farming purposes. Moreover, migrant women face discriminatory land tenure practices due to their gender and migrant status. This is further worsened by the difficulty in securing farm inputs. Where migrant women farmers are able to successfully raise

enough crops for the market, the lack of transportation to urban market centres due to the poor nature of roads, leads to food loss with its associated economic burdens for migrant women.

Aside their challenges related to agricultural production, migrant women are also unable to secure alternate economic opportunities outside farming. These greatly affect economic productivity for migrant women as they lack the educational and economic means to navigate some of these barriers.

The remote nature of migrant settlements in the BAR further hinders the effective provision of services to such areas. Apart from structural inhibitors such as bad roads leading to such communities, governmental and non-governmental organisations that may be mandated to assist migrant women in rural areas lack the needed logistics such as vehicles and fuel to facilitate movement to these secluded locations.

Despite the above-mentioned challenges, some migrant women insisted that agricultural activities were still relatively more productive in the BAR as they had access to a biannual rainfall and fertile lands. This opinion is corroborated by studies (see Kuuire et al., 2013; Luginaah et al., 2009; van der Geest, 2011) which identify rural-rural migration among peasant farmers as an important adaptation strategy to environmental degradation, food insecurity and poverty in the UWR. In contrast to this view shared by migrant women, most key informants believed migrant women are vehicles of poverty who transport their deprived livelihoods from migration origins to destinations. These opinions harboured by key informants may be due to the fact that other economic activities outside of agriculture appear worse off as well for migrant women in the BAR. This is mostly due to their settlement locations which do not facilitate activities such as

trading and their inability to secure loans/materials needed to venture into other economic activities. Findings from this manuscript further highlight how factors such as gender, educational level, socioeconomic status and cultural customs impact on migrant women's effective utilisation of agricultural inputs/resources.

Migrant women and key informants alike agreed that providing alternative sources of livelihoods in the form of trade and crafts making could help empower migrant women economically. Improvement of infrastructural facilities of settler communities was also identified as a means of bridging the urban-rural gap in order to facilitate smooth trading between urban and rural centres, and improving the socioeconomic livelihoods of migrants. Finally, training and equipping governmental and non-governmental organisations that interact with migrant women with needed resources and logistics would ensure that they carry out their outreach services as expected.

6.3.2 Manuscript Two

The Strangers We Are: Examining Migrant Women Farmers' Reproductive Health and Child Care Dynamics in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.

Migrant women's reproductive challenges were examined in manuscript two (see chapter 5), using Andersen's health care utilisation model as the theoretical framework. This manuscript also addressed the mechanisms migrant women employ in managing these health care access challenges, in the BAR.

In relations to their reproductive and child care activities, the major challenges migrant women encountered include limited autonomy in making family planning decisions, difficulty accessing maternal and general health care services, and inadequate social support in raising children. It was observed that, these challenges are amplified in

the context of rural migration as women settle away from family and kin, and in areas which lack basic amenities. Although women reported facing similar challenges back in the UWR, what they encounter in their current destination differed from those of the origin in three ways. First, considering that these women now mostly reside in very remote farming locations, the ability to access 'quality health care has been severely compromised. Most of these women tend to be cut off from good health facilities mostly located in urban centres. Second, the absence of extended family members to intervene and help solve intra-household conflict sometimes led to the escalation of these conflicts which adversely affected migrant women given the patriarchal nature of social relations. Lastly, migrant women in the BAR had few trusted friends and relatives from whom they could solicit social support. The combined effects of the above issues ultimately led to poor psychosocial health of these migrant women.

In relation to health care among migrant women, Andersen's health care model posits that utilisation of health services goes beyond just the personal need for health care, to include predisposing and enabling factors which encourage active seeking of health services (Andersen, 1995; Bradley et al., 2002). Gender is an important factor which predisposes their increased health care needs (Buor, 2004). However, enabling factors such as support from family and friends, infrastructure and health insurance; which promote active utilisation of health services in the face of need are absent for many migrant women in rural areas of the BAR.

In the midst of these challenges, migrant women employ certain strategies aimed at minimising their daily hustles including putting in additional efforts to complete all tasks on time, depending on their membership of economic associations in the settler

communities for health-related help and relying on ‘divine interventions’. However, these coping strategies are mostly not sufficient in mitigating the plethora of challenges migrant women are confronted with in their reproductive and child care roles. For instance, working longer hours on the farm and in the household in order to make time to seek health care, compounds women’s stress. This has the potential for further damaging health outcomes. It was, therefore, not surprising that women talked a lot about relying on divine support.

These findings here are supported by Ganle et al (2015) who found that in addition to availability, proximity and affordability of maternity services in Ghana, sociocultural practices also impact on women’s effective utilisation of health care services. These sociocultural practices include traditional customs and some religious beliefs which limit women’s autonomy to make health care decisions. In addition, Asante (2012) found that the presence of social support mitigates depression and other stress related issues especially among vulnerable populations including women.

Yet, notwithstanding all these constraints outlined by migrant women in rural agrarian communities of the BAR, and the limited support avenues available to them, many of the women did not consider going back to the UWR or relocating to other regions in southern Ghana as an option.

6.4 Reflections on why Migrant Women remain in the BAR despite Persistent Challenges

Irrespective of the numerous challenges that permeated migrant women’s everyday activities in the BAR, the majority still reported that they preferred to remain in the BAR rather than return to the UWR. Some of these reasons are outlined below.

Firstly, despite the observation by migrant women that rainfall patterns and soil fertility in the BAR are gradually declining as well, the situation in the region is still much better compared to the environmental degradation of the UWR which began much earlier and peaked decades ago (Abdul-Korah, 2006). As a result, agriculture in the BAR is still relatively lucrative. Considering that the majority of rural migrants are peasant farmers, it implies that their economic livelihoods may be better off in the BAR, although these economic benefits may not accrue equally for men and women.

Secondly, migration to the BAR has been identified as a huge contributor towards alleviating food insecurity for many households in UWR (Kuuire et al., 2013). This is achieved through both cash and kind remittances from migrants in BAR, to their families in the UWR. In fact, studies have shown that remittances from the BAR serve as a reliable source for meeting food needs for some households in the UWR (Atuoye et al., 2017; Kuuire et al., 2013). The absence of this cushion jeopardises the food security situation of families which rely on remittances. Hence, in addition to the desire of migrant women in BAR to enjoy the economic benefits of migration, they remain conscious of the significant contributions of their activities towards food security strategies in households in the UWR.

Thirdly, despite residing in rural areas, being in the BAR provides other opportunities to migrant families. For instance, migrant women held the opinion that their children in BAR stand a relatively better chance of escaping the traps of poverty and securing other livelihoods outside of agriculture. This is mostly through their interaction with indigenes and also their exposure to other employment skills.

Moreover, the idea of settling in the southern part of Ghana is accorded some form of prestige by people in the UWR. This is evidenced by some earlier and even present migration patterns, which were primarily a rite of passage meant to explore opportunities (Abdul-Korah, 2008). As a result, despite the fact that migrant women's realities do not meet their pre-migration hopes of livelihood improvement, they prefer to remain in the BAR rather than return to the UWR. This could be due to the fact that they do not want to be labelled failures who could not stand the pressures of living in migrant destinations (Abdul-Korah, 2006), and also because they want to maintain the prestige and associated privileges that southern dwellers enjoy when they visit the UWR.

Furthermore, other regions in the southern sector may have equally or probably more fertile lands than the BAR. However, as earlier mentioned, the BAR is relatively close to the UWR in terms of geographical positioning. Moving farther south of the country means that migrant women's distance away from their hometowns and extended family members increases. As a result, the majority prefer to remain in the BAR rather than relocate to other regions in the south, in order to reduce the cost and time burdens of travelling to the UWR whenever necessary.

Finally, it is worthwhile to note that as most migrant women in rural farming communities of the BAR migrate with their partners or families, it is highly unlikely that these women can take the sole decision of returning to the UWR, despite the overwhelming challenges they may be faced with in the BAR.

6.5 Contributions of the Study

This study makes a significant contribution to the literature on migration in Ghana and the context of developing countries. The scope of previous studies on migration from the northern sector of Ghana have mostly focused on the economic benefits of migration for both men and women in urban areas, and the contribution of remittances from urban areas in alleviating food insecurity in deprived areas such as the UWR (*see* Abdul-Korah, 2008; Awumbila & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008; Kuuire et al., 2013; Rademacher-Schulz et al., 2014).

This study therefore builds on the literature by examining the impacts of rural-rural migration on the productive and reproductive activities of migrant women from the UWR in the BAR, in the face of changing migration patterns. The findings show that while migration to rural areas of the BAR for agricultural purposes may be associated with some economic benefits for men from the UWR (Kuuire, 2013; Luginaah, 2009), the situation is different for their women counterparts as they face additional structural and individual barriers that impede their effective utilisation of economic resources, resulting in limited economic gains. Particularly, migrant women also undergo a trade-off between their economic pursuits and reproductive health and child care. In fact, living away from close friends and kin in secluded parts of the BAR cuts them off from social support and good health services. These findings are explained by the contextual structural and cultural factors which work to produce varying realities for these women migrants in their new destination (Sward, 2017). The structural and cultural constraints such as discriminatory land tenure systems tend to limit women's ability to access and own agricultural resources (Baruah, 2007; Quisumbing et al., 2001). Migrant women in

effect find themselves constantly submerged in persistent poverty which implies they never really escaped from the livelihood struggles that pushed them out of the UWR in the first place.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study is the first of its kind to investigate the lived experiences of migrant women in an agrarian destination. As lived experiences are subjective, the study utilised qualitative methods in capturing these experiences. The study findings support existing literature to an extent as they reveal that migration to rural farming communities is an important adaptation strategy employed by environmentally fragile communities in Ghana, in dealing with the consequences of this environmental change such as severe food insecurity (van der Geest, 2011; Kuuire et al., 2016; Luginaah et al., 2016). It also corroborates previous research on women's utilisation of maternity services as findings show that enabling factors such as family, friends, community and the presence of health facilities all impact on women's ability to utilise health care (Buor, 2004; Ganle et al., 2015). Findings of the study are applicable in other agrarian migrant communities in Ghana, and similar contexts within the Global South.

This study also provides a methodological contribution to research. With the dominant use of positivist methodologies in studying climate change and its consequences (Feenstra, 1998; Naish et al., 2014), this study demonstrates the importance of applying a qualitative approach in understanding the varying impacts of climate change. It shows the extent to which impacts of climate change – including degradation of the physical environment and food insecurity on vulnerable communities – differ based on context. The use of qualitative methods also shed light on how adaptive

strategies – such as migration – towards climate change may shape and produce different realities for diverse groups of people.

6.6 Policy Implications

Increasingly, researchers have advocated for the formulation of grassroots policy, thus a bottom up approach, in the bid to combat poverty among marginalised populations. This is to avoid the disconnect that usually exists between policies created at the national level and the target populations for which these policies are created (Blanchet, 2015; Dixon et al., 2011).

Findings from this study suggest that migrant women farmers face environmental, structural, cultural and individual constraints which affect their productive and reproductive livelihoods in the BAR. Migrants from the three northern regions in the BAR form a significant food producing block and the findings in this study suggest the need for policy actions. Consequently, based on the voices of these migrant women farmers, a number of policy options are suggested below.

As the impacts of climate change spread and worsen within the country, there is the need to mitigate its burden on peasant farmers by bringing them up to speed on drought-friendly farming methods. In line with this, there should be a promotion of selected drought-resistant crops, provision of appropriate agricultural machinery and irrigation systems. This would go a long way towards improving agricultural productivity among agrarian farmers, especially those facing the immediate consequences of climate change.

Furthermore, a re-assessment of Ghana's land tenure system is crucial in ensuring that women, particularly poor agrarian women, have improved access to land resources in a dominantly patriarchal society. There is the need to reduce the economic, formal and bureaucratic processes of land acquisition in the country. This would ensure easy access to farm land for migrant women irrespective of their financial and educational status. In addition, governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) need to work with landowners in the BAR in order to come up with ways of making land utilisation more inclusive for migrant women.

Moreover, a commitment to improving rural infrastructure would provide migrant women farmers with basic amenities such as schools, electricity and potable water. The provision of health facilities in settler communities is also an important step towards increasing women's utilisation of health care services as access is considered a major enabling factor for health care utilisation (Atuoye et al., 2015). In relation to this, removal of hidden costs of health care services including late insurance renewal penalty fees and compulsory 'delivery items' for expectant mothers will reduce barriers to health care (Dixon et al., 2011). Improving road networks to migrant communities will also ensure that pregnancy and delivery complications are referred to better equipped hospitals in the urban centres on time. Furthermore, good roads to these settler communities is critical in facilitating trade with the urban areas thereby reducing food wastage associated with transportation challenges.

The findings further suggest that, policy interventions on health, economic and agriculture need to be culture sensitive. One way of addressing this cultural sensitivity is to include men and other household heads in intervention and outreach programmes

intended for migrant women. This would create a communal understanding of the purposes of such programmes and reduce skepticism from household heads. For instance, explaining to male household heads the need to help out with domestic chores encourages dialogue between partners and stands better chances of success than sidelining men during information sessions.

Government departments mandated to work with migrant agrarian populations need to be equipped with the necessary logistics to perform their duties satisfactorily. These include the recruitment of qualified and competent staff, provision of transportation resources and supply of information materials. This would ensure that they are able to reach secluded migrant communities. When equipped, there needs to be constant monitoring to ensure that resources are put to the right use.

Organisations working in migrant communities need to introduce programmes that encourage bonding among migrant women groups. This would help reduce the hostility among migrant women and provide them avenues to solicit social support from each other.

With poverty and severe food insecurity remaining major push factors of migration in the UWR (Kuuire et al., 2016), a political commitment towards agricultural and infrastructural development of the region would reduce out-migration and lessen the current pressure on the BAR. This can be done by providing agricultural-based facilities such as irrigation dams and farm inputs. The provision of other economic opportunities outside of farming for natives of the region would help improve livelihoods in the region and discourage out-migration.

Finally, other policy options would be a valorisation of agriculture in Ghana. This may include fixing a guaranteed pricing mechanism for farm produce, establishing insurance schemes to take care the impact of environment variability on agricultural productivity, and phasing out of SAP imposed restrictions which limit competitive pricing for local farm labour and produce. This will hopefully improve the livelihoods of smallholder migrant farmers.

6.7 Limitations of the Study

Despite the essential contributions this research makes to the literature and policy, it is not without limitations. A major limitation was the timing of data collection. Data were gathered during the farming season in the BAR. As the majority of participants were farmers, scheduling meetings with participants for interviews was a huge challenge as many were not willing to forego their farm work to participate in the research. For participants who agreed to take part in the research, interview times were mostly scheduled to take place either early in the morning before they left for the farm or in the evenings when they returned from their farms. This may have affected the depth of some interviews as some participants were sometimes in a rush to complete interviews due to their time constraints.

Another limitation was the huge challenge in reaching some participants in remote locations due to transportation barriers. Most of the study communities were located in secluded areas with bad road networks. Due to the poor nature of the roads, some of these communities had no regular vehicles going in and out of these areas. As a result, I largely depended on motorbike transportation provided by one of the research

assistants (RAs). This transportation challenge was further compounded by the scheduling problems encountered during data collection.

My positionality within the research was another limitation associated with this research. Given that I am a woman from similar ethnicity and culture as most participants, some of the questions that were posed to research participants were sometimes considered absurd and patronising as the women assumed I should know the answers to those questions. For example, when questions on their motives for migrating to the BAR were asked, they felt the answer to this was obvious as I was expected to know what is happening in the UWR. Furthermore, most participants seemed surprised when I asked whether their husbands helped them with household chores. I had to repeatedly reassure the participants that asking these questions were to ensure that important information was collected without any presumptions.

Additionally, as this is self-reported data, it stands the risk of recall bias. Participants during interviews were sometimes expected to compare some experiences in the BAR with similar experiences back in the UWR. Given that some participants had migrated to their current communities decades ago, they sometimes had difficulty recalling details of their experiences back 'home' in the UWR. To minimise this potential limitation, several probes were incorporated into the interview process.

Finally, participants reported research fatigue and this emerged as a potential limitation to this research. The complaints about research fatigue permeated both migrant women and the key informant interviews as most participants expressed cynicism about the usefulness of the study. Research participants explained that they are frequently asked to participate in studies conducted by governmental and non-governmental organisations

and individuals but have not really seen any benefits of such studies. Thus, they saw no need to participate in more studies. Moreover, some migrant women and men alike believed such studies were aimed at causing intra-family rifts by turning women against their spouses. These views sometimes produced hostile interview environments for the research team which could affect the depth of information collected, although the researcher took some time to dispel such notions.

6.8 Directions for Future Research

Although this research achieved the purpose for which it was designed - to examine the lived productive and reproductive experiences of migrant women farmers - it has also raised critical questions and opened up avenues for future research. In view of the fact that some of the women had migrated over 10 years ago, a comparative study between women in the BAR and those in the UWR would provide a nuanced understanding and contextualise the realities of migrant and non-migrant women to better understand the motives and benefits of migration for women.

As this study was qualitative, it would be beneficial to have a mixed methods research which employs a longitudinal approach in studying migrant women's experiences right from their time of arrival into migrant communities. A study of this nature would offer the opportunity to document the trajectory of migrant women's standards of living. This would help address the issue of self-reported data and recall bias. It would also create a clearer picture of the impacts of migration on women's productive and reproductive activities.

Finally, an observation during this study was that women had limited control over food resources and tend to get into conflict with their spouses when they try to utilise some produce. Therefore, further work could be carried out on the relationship between household food insecurity and domestic abuse. This could also take the form of a comparative study between migrant households in the BAR and non-migrant households back in the UWR to know if experiences differ.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL



Research Ethics

**Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board
NMREB Full Board Initial Approval Notice**

Principal Investigator: Dr. Isaac Luginaah
Department & Institution: Social Science/Geography, Western University

NMREB File Number: 107877
Study Title: A Gendered Perspective of Migrant Women Farmers' Lived Experiences in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.

NMREB Initial Approval Date: September 29, 2016
NMREB Expiry Date: September 29, 2017

Documents Approved and/or Received for Information:

Document Name	Comments	Version Date
Western University Protocol		2016/09/26
Recruitment Items	Letter of Invitation - Community Leaders	2016/09/02
Recruitment Items	Study Announcement	2016/09/26
Letter of Information & Consent	Surveys	2016/09/02
Letter of Information & Consent	Key Informants/Community Leaders	2016/09/02
Letter of Information & Consent	Interviews	2016/09/02
Letter of Information & Consent	Focus Groups	2016/09/02
Other	Confidentiality Agreement	2016/04/13
Instruments	Survey	2016/04/29
Instruments	Interview Guide - Key Informants/Community Leaders	2016/09/02
Instruments	In-depth Interview Guide for Migrant Women Farmers	2016/03/17
Instruments	Focus Group Discussion Guide	2016/04/29

The Western University Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB) has reviewed and approved the above named study, as of the NMREB Initial Approval Date noted above.

NMREB approval for this study remains valid until the NMREB Expiry Date noted above, conditional to timely submission and acceptance of NMREB Continuing Ethics Review.

The Western University NMREB operates in compliance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA, 2004), and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario.

Members of the NMREB who are named as Investigators in research studies do not participate in discussions related to, nor vote on such studies when they are presented to the REB.

The NMREB is registered with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services under the IRB registration number IRB 00000941.

Ethics Officer, on behalf of Dr. Riley Hinson, NMREB Chair

Ethics Officer: Erika Basile ___ Nicole Kaniki ___ Grace Kelly ___ Katelyn Harris ___ Vikki Tran Karen Gopaul ___

Western University, Research,
London, [REDACTED]

**APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND INVITATION TO
PARTICIPATE IN STUDY (IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW)**



**Project Title: A Gendered Perspective on Migrant Women Farmers’
Lived Experiences in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana**

Principal Investigator: Dr. Isaac Luginaah (Supervisor)

Department of Geography, University of Western Ontario

Primary Researcher: Jemima N. Baada (Master’s student)

University of Western Ontario

Invitation to participate in In-Depth Interview

I am Jemima Baada, a Master’s student working under the supervision of Dr. Isaac Luginaah in the Department of Geography at the University of Western Ontario, Canada. We are currently conducting a study which seeks to examine the lived experiences of migrant women farmers in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana, in order to understand some of the challenges they face with regards to their productive and reproductive lives, how they cope with these challenges and the services or support available to these women. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

This study is important because it seeks to understand the challenges that women who have migrated from the Upper West and are currently resident here in the Brong-Ahafo face, in farming and managing your reproductive lives. Although there are no direct benefits or compensations to be derived from the study, for you, the findings from the study may help propose ways of empowering migrant women farmers in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the findings may inform the design of interventions and social policies to protect and empower migrant women farmers in Ghana.

The study uses in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and survey. By this letter, you are being invited to take part in in-depth interview only. If you agree to take part in this study, you are agreeing to be interviewed by the researcher for a maximum time of two hours. With your permission we will audio record the interview, but you may still grant the interview even if you do not agree to be audio recorded, In this case, the researcher will take down notes instead. Interview recordings would be transferred from the recorder into an external drive that is

password protected. Personal identifiers such as your voice, name and location/address are required for audio recordings, arranging interviews and making follow ups where necessary. The principal investigator and the primary researcher will be the only people with access to identifiable information. The information collected will be used for purposes of this study only and all data will be encrypted and stored on a password protected hard drive for a maximum of 5 years after which they will be permanently deleted. Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study related records to monitor the conduct of the research.

Participating in this research means that you are 18 years or older and have voluntarily agreed to take part in the study. There are no known risks or harm associated with this study. However, it is anticipated that some participants may feel uncomfortable talking about their personal lives. Your participation in this research is entirely of your own volition and you have the right not to answer any questions you don't want to answer. You also have the right to withdraw from the study at any point and there are no consequences to doing so. The information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. A copy of this letter of participation and consent will be made available to you, as well as final results of the study. You do not waive any legal right by signing this consent form.

A summary of results will be given to Dr. Galaa, Dean of Faculty of Integrative Studies at UDS who may then disseminate findings to communities where the study was conducted through community meetings. Detailed reports on the research findings will be published in journals and developed into policy briefs for policy makers and larger audience. You can also contact Dr. Isaac Luginaah if you are interested in getting feedback on the study results.

Should you need more information, clarification of issues or verification of information, you can contact the primary researcher (Ms Jemima Baada) or her supervisor, Dr. Isaac Luginaah using the contact information below.

Thank you for considering participating in this study. Please proceed to the next page if you agree to participate.

Dr Isaac Luginaah

Department of Geography

The University of Western Ontario

Jemima N. Baada

Department of Geography

The University of Western Ontario

CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator: Dr. Isaac Luginaah (Supervisor)

Department of Geography, University of Western Ontario

Primary Researcher: Jemima N. Baada (Master's student)

University of Western Ontario

A Gendered Perspective on Migrant Women Farmers' Lived Experiences in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of study explained to me, and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate

Do you agree that we can audio record your interview: Yes No

Do you give permission to allow for the use of de-identifiable quotes collected from this interview? Yes No

Participant Name _____ Participant Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's Name _____ Researcher's Signature _____

Date _____

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Dr Isaac Luginaah

Department of Geography

The University of Western Ontario

Jemima N. Baada

Department of Geography

The University of Western Ontario

**APPENDIX C: LETTER OF INFORMATION AND INVITATION TO
PARTICIPATE IN STUDY (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS)**



**Project Title: A Gendered Perspective on Migrant Women Farmers’
Lived Experiences in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana.**

Principal Investigator: Dr. Isaac Luginaah (Supervisor)
Department of Geography, University of Western Ontario

Primary Researcher: Jemima N. Baada (Master’s student)
University of Western Ontario

Invitation to Participate in Focus Group Discussion

I am Jemima Baada, a Master’s student working under the supervision of Dr. Isaac Luginaah in the Department of Geography at the University of Western Ontario, Canada. We are currently conducting a study which seeks to examine the lived experiences of migrant women farmers in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana, in order to understand some of the challenges they face with regards to their productive and reproductive lives, how they cope with these challenges and the services or support available to these women. I would like to invite you to join in a focus group discussion as it would help to create understandings about the ways in which farming livelihoods are changing and the ways this is impacting your access to food. Each focus group will have about six to eight people.

This study is important because it seeks to understand the challenges that women who have migrated from the Upper West and are currently resident here in the Brong-Ahafo face, in farming and managing your reproductive lives. Although there are no direct benefits or compensations to be derived from the study, for you, the findings from the study may help propose ways of empowering migrant women farmers in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, the findings may inform the design of interventions and social policies to protect and empower migrant women farmers in Ghana.

If you agree to participate in the focus group discussions, you and the other people within the group would be asked to answer a series of questions. Personal identifiers such as your voice, name and location/address are required for arranging interviews and making

follow ups, where necessary. The information you provide will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Personal identifiers such as your voice, name and contact address will be available only to the principal investigator and primary researcher mentioned above. The discussion will be audio-recorded and transferred into an external drive that is password protected. If you would not like to be audio recorded, you cannot participate in the focus groups. However, you may participate in a one-to-one in depth interview, where your responses will be written instead. The focus group discussion should take approximately 2 hours to finish and would be stopped on reaching this time limit. All the information collected will be used for purposes of the study only. Information will be kept in a secured cabinet and password-protected computer, and will be destroyed five years after the study is completed. The findings will never reveal what individual people said and we will make all efforts to maintain confidentiality. You do not waive any legal rights by signing this consent form.

Representatives of The University of Western Ontario Non-Medical Research Ethics Board may require access to your study related records to monitor the conduct of the research.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this focus group discussion, apart from discomforts related to talking about any personal opinions and experiences. Focus group members will be asked to keep everything they hear confidential and not to discuss it outside of the meeting. However, we cannot guarantee that confidentiality will be maintained by group members.

Taking part in this study means that you are 18 years or older. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time. There is no consequence for withdrawing or not answering any questions. You may keep a copy of this information sheet. There are no financial benefits for participating in this focus group discussion. However, findings of the study will be available to policy makers and community stakeholders, providing areas for improvement. A copy of this letter of participation will be made available to you, as well as final results of the study.

A summary of results will be given to Dr. Galaa, Dean of Faculty of Integrative Studies at UDS who may then disseminate findings to communities where the study was conducted through community meetings. Detailed reports on the research findings will be published in journals and developed into policy briefs for policy makers and larger audience. You can also contact Dr. Isaac Luginaah if you are interested in getting feedback on results.

Should you need more information, clarification of issues or verification of information, you can contact the primary researcher (Ms Jemima Baada) or her supervisor, Dr. Isaac Luginaah using the contact information below.

Thank you for considering participating in this study. Please proceed to the next page if you agree to participate in the study.

Dr Isaac Luginaah
Department of Geography
The University of Western Ontario

Jemima N. Baada
Department of Geography
The University of Western Ontario

CONSENT FORM

Principal Investigator: Dr. Isaac Luginaah (Supervisor)
 Department of Geography, University of Western Ontario

Primary Researcher: Jemima N. Baada (Master's student)
 University of Western Ontario

A Gendered Perspective on Migrant Women Farmers' Lived Experiences in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of study explained to me, and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate

Do you give permission to allow for the use of de-identifiable quotes collected from this focus group? Yes No

Participant's Name _____ Participant's
 Signature _____

Date _____

Researcher's Name _____ Researcher's
 Signature _____

Date _____

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

Dr Isaac Luginaah
 Department of Geography
 The University of Western Ontario

Jemima N. Baada
 Department of Geography
 The University of Western Ontario

APPENDIX D: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE (MIGRANT WOMEN)**Instrument 1A: In-depth Interview Guide for Migrant Women****Respondent's ID #****A. Basic Information**

1. Age
2. Level of Education
3. Marital Status
4. Location
5. Number of children in household
6. District of Origin (In Upper West Region - UW/R)

B. Motives for Migrating

7. What are your reasons for migrating to the Brong-Ahafo Region (BA/R)?
(Probe: Of all the reasons, which would you say was most influential to you moving here?)
8. How did you or your household arrive at the decision to migrate here?
9. How long have you been in the Brong-Ahafo Region and how long do you intend to stay?
10. Has migrating here changed any of your life goals? How?
(Probe: Marriage, childbirth, economic career?)

C. Intra-Household Dynamics

11. How are decisions made in your household?
 - Decisions to sell and purchase food
 - Decisions to access health care
 - Decision to enroll child(ren) in school
 - How are decisions made about your travel?
(Probe: What happens when you travel without permission?)
12. How are roles in your household distributed?
(Probes: Between you and your husband? Other family members?)

13. Do other household members help you on your roles and how do they feel about helping you?
(Probes: Do they usually require prompting to help? What are their reactions when you do?)
14. Do you help other household members in performing their household duties?
How often?
(Probes: Are you prompted by them to help? How do you feel when they prompt you?)
15. How are disagreements in the family handled?
16. How are the above relationships different from relationships with household members back in the Upper West Region?

D. Women's Agricultural Concerns

17. Would you want to own your own plot of land?
(Probes: If yes, why? If no, why not?)
18. Have you ever lost your farmland to land grabbing?
19. What are your experiences with losing land
(Probes: How did it affect you? On your family as a whole?)
20. Has land grabbing always been present in this community?

E. Mother-Child(ren) Relationship

21. Have you had any child(ren) since you moved to the BA/R and how different is the experience from the child(ren) you had before moving here?
(Probes: Under what (health) conditions did you give birth to the children? What kind of social support has been available to you? How different are all of these from back in the UW/R)
22. How is it combining farming and raising children/managing a family?
(Probes: How does this affect your economic wellbeing and your health?)
23. How do you ensure that your child(ren)'s needs are met?
(Probes: Educational, health, nutritional)

F. Women's Health Seeking Dynamics

24. How do you access health care?

(Probes: Where do you seek health care and why? Who decides where and when to seek health care? What factors inform your choice of health seeking behavior? How do you get access to transport there? Who pays for the health care?)

25. How often do you use contraceptives? And who decides when to use it?

26. What other health support do you get and from where? How different is this from when you were in the UW/R?

27. What challenges do you encounter in seeking health care? Are these challenges different from when you were in the UWR? How do you address these health seeking challenges?

G. Women's Economic Role in the BA/R

28. How are farming roles and responsibilities apportioned and how do you arrive at the decision of who should do what?

29. How do you come by the farmland?

(Probe: Whose name is the land in? When was the farmland acquired and how long are you allowed to use it?)

30. What crops do you farm, why do you farm them and how do you decide what crops you should farm?

31. How are your farm produce utilized?

(Probes: By you? And your husband? Another member of the household? For food? For the market? Etc.)

32. What other activities do you engage in for your upkeep? How do you arrive at the decision to undertake these other economic activities? How are these economic activities funded and how is the profit utilized?

33. How are these economic roles different from when you were back in the Upper West Region?

34. What challenges do you face in engaging in economic activities (e.g. Farming)? And how do you address these challenges? Are these challenges different from when you were in the Upper West Region?

H. Proposals on Initiatives

35. In what ways can NGOs and other development partners support you to address challenges you encounter?
(Economic challenges and health access challenges)
36. In what ways can your local and national government support you address challenges you face?
(Economic challenges and health access challenges)

Thank You

APPENDIX E: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDE (KEY INFORMANTS)**In-depth Interview Guide for Key Informants****Respondent's ID #****A. Basic Information**

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Number of years in current position
4. District

B. Migration motives and migrant population characteristics

5. Why do you think people migrate from the Upper West Region (or the Northern part of the country) to the Brong-Ahafo Region?
6. What kind of areas do migrants from the UWR (or Northern Ghana) settle in, in your district?
7. In your estimation, what proportion of the population in your district are migrants from the Northern part of the country, and the UWR?

C. Agricultural concerns of women

8. Have you received any complaints of migrant farmers losing their land to commercial agriculture/mining?
9. What are their (migrant farmers) experiences of losing land?
10. Do land grabbing experiences differ for native farmers and migrant farmers?
How?
11. Do land grabbing experiences differ for men farmers and women farmers?
How?
12. Has land grabbing always been present in this community?
13. Do you think women would want to own their own plots of land?
(Probes: If yes, why? If no, why not?)

D. Wellbeing Concerns of migrant women farmers

14. What interactions does your office have with migrant communities, and migrant women farmers?
15. From your work, what challenges do migrant communities face?
16. What are the challenges of migrant women farmers?
(Probe: challenges relating to farming and engagement in other economic activities, domestic violence, social stigma, and health concerns)
17. What are the most common reported challenges from migrant women farmers? What issues do migrant women usually seek help for? (Probe: issues relating to their economic activities, violence, and health)

E. Health concerns of migrant population

18. Describe what you think may be the health concerns of migrant communities in your district?
19. What are the most common sources of health care for migrant women farmers? Why do you think migrant women farmers in your district patronize those sources of health care?
20. How do migrant women farmers access formal health care?
21. Where does the migrant woman farmer deliver? And why?
(Probe: home, or health facility? By a Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA), trained or untrained; or by a nurse, midwife or doctor?)
22. How do migrant women farmers access health information?
(Probe: are there health sensitization sessions on reproductive health in migrant communities?)
23. Are migrant women's health needs different from those of the native population? And why?
24. Are there differences in health access between the migrant woman farmer and indigenes? Why?
25. What challenges does your organization face in providing health care in migrant communities?

26. How difficult is it to provide health care services to migrant women farmers in your district?

F. Local and national strategies and policies promoting health access and economic wellbeing for migrant women farmers

27. What specific actions are you (your organization) implementing to improve health access and economic wellbeing of migrant women farmers in your district?

28. What targets do you (your organization) have towards improving health access and economic wellbeing in migrant communities and for the migrant woman farmer?

29. What are some of the local opportunities available for improving health access and economic wellbeing of migrant women farmers? How can the migrant women farmers utilize these opportunities if they do exist?

30. What policies are in place to increase health access and economic wellbeing of migrant farming communities and migrant women farmers?

31. How differently should health access and economic wellbeing be approached to improve health access and economic wellbeing among migrant communities and migrant women farmers?

(Probe: Community, District, and national level initiatives and strategies)

Thank You

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE (MIGRANT WOMEN)

Focus Group Discussion Guide – Migrant Women

A. Basic Information

1. Age
2. Level of Education
3. Marital Status
4. Community
5. District
6. District of Origin (In Upper West Region - UW/R)

B. Motives for Migrating

7. What are your reasons for migrating to the Brong-Ahafo Region? (Probe: Of all the reasons, which would you say was most influential to you moving here?)
8. How did you/your households arrive at the decision to migrate here?
9. How long have you been in the Brong-Ahafo Region and how long do you intend to stay?

C. Intra-household dynamics (Changing roles and power dynamics)

10. How would you describe your relationships with family members here in the Brong-Ahafo and how does it differ from when you were in the Upper West Region? (Probes: Have your roles in household activities changed? How and why? How different are these new roles from the ones you played in the Upper West Region?)
11. How are decisions made in your household?
 - Decisions to sell and purchase food
 - Decisions to access health care
 - Decisions to enroll children in school
 - How are decisions made about your travel? (What happens when you travel without permission?)

12. How are roles in your households distributed between you and members of the family? Why? (Probes: Which specific activities do your husbands do? And how regularly?)
13. Do household members help you on your roles and how do they feel about helping you? (Probes: Do they usually require prompting to help? What are their reactions when you prompt them?)
14. Do you help other members in performing their household roles? How often? (Probes: Are you prompted by them to help? How do you feel when they prompt you to help?)
15. How are family disagreements handled?
16. How are the above relationships different from your relationships with household members back in the Upper West Region?

D. Women's Economic Role in the BA/R

17. How do you come by the farmland? (Probe: Whose name is the land in? When was the farmland acquired, and how long are you allowed to use it?)
18. How are farming roles and responsibilities assigned?
19. What crops do you farm, why do you farm them and how do you decide what crops you should farm?
20. How are your farm produce utilized? (Probes: By you? And your husbands? Other household members? For food? For the market? etc.)
21. What other activities do you engage in for your upkeep? How do you arrive at the decision to undertake these other economic activities? How are these economic activities funded and how is the profit utilized?
22. How are these economic roles different from when you were back in the Upper West Region?
23. What challenges do you face in engaging in economic activities (e.g. Farming)? And how do you address these challenges? Are these challenges different from when you were in the Upper West Region?

E. Women's Agricultural Concerns

24. Would you want to own your own plots of land?
(Probes: If yes, why? If no, why not?)
25. Have you ever lost your farmlands to commercial agriculture?
26. What are your experiences of losing land?
(Probes: What was the effect on your husband? On your family as a whole?)
27. Has land grabbing always been present in this community?

F. Migration and changing dynamics of child bearing

28. How is childbirth in the Brong-Ahafo Region? How different is it from back home in the Upper West? (Probes: Under what (health) conditions did you give birth to the children? What kind of social support is available to you? How different are all of these from back in the UW/R)
29. How do you ensure that your children's needs are met?
(Probes: Educational, health, nutritional)
30. How is it combining farming and raising children?
(Probes: How does this affect your economic wellbeing and your health?)

G. Women's Health Seeking Dynamics

31. How do you access health care? (Probes: Where do you seek health care and why? Who decides where and when to seek health care? What factors inform your choice of health seeking behavior? How do you get access to transport there? Who pays for the health care?)
32. How often do you use contraceptives? And who decides when to use it?
33. What other health support do you get and from where? How different is this from when you were in the UW/R?
34. What challenges do you encounter in seeking health care? Are these challenges different from when you were in the UWR? How do you address these health-seeking challenges?

H. Proposed Initiatives: What could be done to improve the situation?

35. In what ways can NGOs and other development partners support you to address challenges you encounter? (Economic challenges and health access challenges)
36. In what ways can your local and national government support you address challenges you face? (Economic challenges and health access challenges)

Thank You

CURRICULUM VITAE

Jemima Nomunume Baada

Department of Geography
Western University

Education

- August 2017 (Expected) **M.A., Geography and Global Health Systems. Western University**
Thesis Title: A Gendered Perspective on Migrant Women Farmers' Lived Experiences in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana
- May 2012 **B.A., Sociology. University of Ghana**

Research Interests

Gender and Migration; Agriculture and Food Security; Global Health; Women and Property Ownership

Teaching Experience

January 2017 to Present: Teaching Assistant, University of Western Ontario
Course Title: Geography of Tourism (Geog 2144A)

September to December 2016: Teaching Assistant, University of Western Ontario
Course Title: Geography of Tourism (Geog 2144A)

January to April 2016: Teaching Assistant, University of Western Ontario
Course Title: Geography of Tourism (Geog 2144A)

May 2014 to December 2015: Part Time Tutor: University of Ghana; Institute of Continuing and Distance Education (ICDE), Sunyani- Ghana

Course Titles: SOCI 201/221 Basic Concepts in Sociology
SOCI 202/222 Comparative Social Institutions
SOCI 203/223 Traditional Ghanaian Social Institutions
SOCI 204/224 Social Structure of Modern Ghana

Research Experience

June 2016- Present: Master's Thesis Research

- Designed study, survey and semi-structured interview guide for data collection and currently analysing the data collected from the field.

August 2013 – 2015: Research Assistant, Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG).

- Assisted in data collection on the extensiveness and satisfaction of HIV/AIDS education among prisoners in the Brong-Ahafo, Northern and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana.

Jan-May 2006

Undergraduate Thesis Research

- Gathered and analysed data, and wrote thesis titled, "*Public Perceptions of Punishment for Crimes: The views of the Public and the Police in Legon*".

Grants and Awards

- 2016-17 Western ROLA Fund, \$5,000
 2016-17 Canadian Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Scholarship, \$5,000.
 2016-17 Western Graduate Research Scholarship, Western University, \$54,600

Publication

Chai, X., Sano, Y., Kansanga, M., Baada, J., & Antabe, R. (2017). Married Women's Negotiation for Safer Sexual Intercourse in Kenya: Does Experience of Female Genital Mutilation Matter? Submitted to *Journal of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare*.

Papers in preparation

Baada J. N., Baruah, B., Luginaah, I., Running with Poverty: Interrogating the Paradox Embedded in Migration as a Source Livelihood Improvement among Migrant Women Farmers in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. For Submission to *Gender, Place & Culture*.

Baada J. N., Baruah B., Luginaah I., The Strangers We Are: Examining Migrant Women Farmers' Reproductive Health and Child Care Dynamics in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. For Submission to *Health and Place*.

Conference Presentations

- 2017 Baada J., Baruah, B., Luginaah, I., Navigating Reproductive Health Dynamics: Experiences of Migrant Women Farmers in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) Annual Meeting. York, Toronto
- 2017 Baada, J., Baruah B., Luginaah, I. The Strangers That We Are: Migrant Women Farmers' Lived Experiences in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. American Association of Geographers (AAG) Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts.
- 2016 Baada, J., Baruah B., Luginaah I. A Gendered Perspective on Migrant Women Farmers' Lived Experiences in the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. African-Western Collaboration Day, Western University, London. (*Poster Presentation*).
- 2016 Baada, J., Sano Y., Antabe R. Number of Lifetime Sexual Partners among Men and Women in Ghana. An Analysis of Ghana Demographic and Health Survey. Canadian Association of Geographers Ontario Division (CAGONT) Annual Meeting, Waterloo, Ontario.

Relevant Voluntary Experience and Community Involvement.

- 2016-Present** **Ghana Association of London and Middlesex (GALM)**
Member of Communications Committee
- December 2016** **Holiday Community Outreach Event, Global Health Systems (GHS) Class**
- 2016-Present** **Geographers Graduate Society at Western (GEOGRAD)**
Representative to the Society of Graduate Students (SOGS)