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Translocal reciprocity: unpacking translocal livelihood in parts of Ghana

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Migration is a common, but complex phenomenon. While there are several studies on rural-urban migration in Ghana, only a few have employed the concept of translocality for analysis. Thus, there was limited understanding of the embeddedness and networks of people in the translocal socio-economic field, the direction and intensity of translocal practices, how socio-cultural factors affect translocal ties over time, and the future migration aspirations of translocal migrants. To elucidate these topics, we employed the concepts of translocality and reciprocity, using empirical data collected and analysed through mixed methods. We found that migrants and their household members are strongly embedded in a translocal socio-economic field due to sense of belonging and familial reasons. Migrants use networks composed of family and friends, and by virtue of migration, they have connected their households in their place of origin to the place of destination and the spaces in between. We also found reciprocity of translocal practices between migrants and their household members, and their networks, except that migrants tend to send more than they receive. Thus, translocality sustains social capital across space through reciprocity. Also, translocal and reciprocal practices have contributed to diversifying economic activities and improving the livelihood of translocal households. Consequently, most migrants intend to live in the city and continue to have close relations with household members in the community of origin. While a few male migrants intend to return to their origin someday, the sense of belonging to the natal household for female migrants seems to wane after marriage.

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Introduction

Rural-urban flow is one of the dominant types of migration in Africa, which is caused mainly by historical antecedents and disparities in rural and urban development (Jarawura et al., 2024). Concentration of development in the urban centres leaves rural economies agrarian and undiversified. A less diversified rural economy means that livelihood opportunities there are limited, compelling those with the capacity to migrate to urban areas. Besides, in recent times, where socio-economic and environmental challenges pose significant threats to rural livelihoods (Danso-Abbeam et al., 2021; Teye et al., 2021; Teye and Nikoi, 2022), rural-urban migration has intensified and become an integral aspect of livelihood in Africa.

Far from being a complete exodus or a unidirectional movement of people from one place to another, rural-urban migration is an initiation of a complex livelihood strategy that is stretched across space over time. In most instances, not every member of the household migrates, and migrants do not sever ties with their origin, thereby creating a translocal household. Steinbrink and Niedenführ (2020: 44) define translocal household as “a socially recognized, jointly economising collective, whose members do not permanently live in one place, but do coordinate their activities of consumption, reproduction, and resource use over a long period of time”. Rural-urban migration facilitates translocal livelihoods whereby many households spread their socio-economic risks to survive, accumulate, or redistribute resources. Translocal householding (maintaining household across space) requires exchange of ideas and resources, and any “exchange necessarily implies some form of reciprocity” (Bruni et al., 2008: 2). Reciprocity is the exchange of resources between people, in this case, between migrants and their households in the areas of origin.

Although the concept of translocal livelihood or translocality has rarely been employed in rural-urban migration research in Ghana, analyses in many migration studies in the country usually exemplify some forms of translocal realities. For instance, remittance, which is the material form or the physical expression of translocal livelihood (Ospina et al., 2019; Djurfeldt, 2022), has been a subject of many migration studies in Ghana. Awumbila et al. (2014) studied the role of rural-urban migration in reducing poverty, but they focused on migrants at the destination, cash and goods remittances, and silent on the non-material remittances such as ideas. Teye et al. (2019) reported that remittances from migrants contributed to the “well-being” of the household members left behind. Some studies focused on only flows to migrants at the destination. For instance, Armah et al. (2025) studied the role of food remittance on food security of West African migrants in Ghana. Awudu et al. (2019) also looked at how remittances from the left behind to migrants in Obuase, a mining town in Ghana, help to consolidate social ties.

Although these studies are important, we need to go beyond the unidirectional perspective when analysing the flow of remittances. Flows from either node (origin or destination), no matter how intangible or minute they might seem, are rooted in complex reciprocal relations and play crucial roles in cohesion and resilience of the household. For example, Yeboah et al. (2021) work on onward and reverse remittances contribute to understanding reciprocity between migrants and their households in the origin, but within the context of transnational migration and with less explicit focus on the moral dimensions of remittances.

Without employing the concept of translocality in analysing livelihood and connections of households that are stretched over space, there is a limited understanding of how households are embedded in the translocal socio-economic space, the extent of network that creates and facilitates translocal livelihoods, the nature of reciprocity, and the outcome of translocality. In

response to the limited empirical research on the increasing translocal livelihood to guide policy formulation, this article draws on the insights of the theory of reciprocity and the concept of translocality to examine the structures, drivers, practices, and outcomes of translocal livelihood as well as future aspirations of migrants. Specifically, the analysis in this article is guided by the following questions: How embedded are migrants and their households in the communities of origin? What is the extent of interdependencies and the direction of flow of resources between migrants and their households? What are the impacts of migration and translocality on households? What are the future migration aspirations of current migrants?

By employing the concept of translocality, we make two significant contributions to the migration discourse. First, we highlight that migration is not a one-time unidirectional movement of people from one place to another. Rather, migration embeds households in a socio-economic space that is stretched beyond boundaries. Second, we elucidate that translocal practices of remittances, communication flow, and visits are bidirectional between migrants and their household members in the origin, and are informed by norms and moral obligations. These are more or less visible and tangible structures of direct in indirect reciprocity that shape socio-economic spaces in both areas of origin and destination. Following this introductory section are the discussion of the concept of translocal reciprocity and the methods employed before the results are presented and discussed, and conclusions drawn.

Translocal reciprocity

Translocal reciprocity is based on the tenets of translocality and reciprocity. Translocality, as we shall soon elaborate, is the flow of people, technologies, ideas, resources, and the networks that have fuelled and sustained these flows across space and time. Reciprocity is the return of a deed. Conventionally, household members are supposed to stay together, pool resources, and make decisions for the collective good of the members (Tufuor et al., 2015). Migration, therefore, breaks the physical bond and creates space between the left behind and migrants. It is, therefore, through reciprocal exchanges between the left behind and migrants across space that embed the household in a translocal socio-economic field, sustain social ties, and enhance the resilience of the household (Simoni and Voirol, 2021). The reciprocal exchange across space is informed by the moral economies of the household, which are “systems of transactions which are defined as socially desirable because through them social ties are recognised and social relationships are maintained” (Cheal, 1989: 19, as cited in Tufuor et al., 2015: 23). Below are the tenets of translocality and reciprocity.

Translocality is “the emergence of multidirectional and overlapping networks created by migration that facilitate the circulation of resources, practices and ideas and thereby transform the particular localities they connect” (Greiner, 2011: 610). Thus, translocality is a concept for “exploring connectedness in place of division” (Parsons, 2019: 677) as it provides the lens for understanding interaction of phenomena at different places. A central tenet of translocality, therefore, is that interrelations between actors are expressed in multi-faceted and complex spatial mobility of people and resources as well as socio-economic connectedness across space (Oakes and Schein, 2006; McLeman et al., 2016; Dame, 2018).

Another tenet of translocality is that different places are not completely independent. So, rigid categorisation of a place as if it is self-contained and independent from any other place does not reflect reality. Mobility of humans, resources, information and

emergence of socio-economic connections have blurred boundaries of places but the uniqueness of a place is undisputable (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013) because in the course of these mobilities, there is some form of “situatedness” (Brickell, 2011:3). Therefore, translocality simultaneously challenges spatial boundedness of phenomena and weaves back the importance of place-based differences (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013; Drake and Liunakwalau 2022). Consequently, conceptualising translocality revolves around the concepts of *place*, *network*, and *locales* (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013).

Place is one of the aspects of translocality (Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013; Greiner et al., 2014). It is a location, which is unique in terms of meaning and history, where local interactions emerge and transform (Tuan, 1979; Greiner et al., 2014). Prior to translocalisation, the origin of migrants is often a place concentrated with social ties through daily interaction (Steinbrink and Niedenführ, 2020). During translocalisation, the destination become another place. Place is, therefore, a node where migrant networks and interconnections are rooted (Greiner et al., 2014). In terms of translocal livelihoods that emerge from rural-urban migration in Ghana, the rural sending communities and the destination receiving centres are the basic places in the translocal social field.

Another aspect of translocality is network, which comprises the interconnections, associations, and interdependencies that create and sustain mobilities (Greiner et al., 2014). Networks are both precondition and outcome of mobilities (Steinbrink and Niedenführ 2020) as they facilitate movement of people and resources (van Eerbeek and Hedberg 2021), which results in creation of other connections for interdependencies (Etzold 2016). Thus, network is the backbone for and of translocality. Practically, people rely on their networks for information on migration to inform and facilitate their movements. After migration, people still rely on their network for support, such as accommodation, food, and to find jobs, while creating more networks.

Locale is the setting or space where mobilities and interconnections take place. We envisage locale as synonymous with space, which is not only about distance, but also about diversity (Ward, 2020). Space is “the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist” (Massey, 2005: 9). Space is made up of a heterogeneous terrain of independently unique places. However, interactions and exchanges of migrants and non-migrants, for example, blur the boundaries and shrink both distance and time between places in space due to fast communication and transportation technologies. This is what Marx calls “annihilation of space by time” in his *Grundrisse*. The “routine activities through which migrants and non-migrants interact across space eventually transform locales into *translocales*” (Greiner et al., 2014: 27). We now turn to the tenets of reciprocity.

Reciprocity is about giving and receiving gifts (Mauss, 1966). Receiving gifts or things from people naturally makes the recipient feel morally indebted and would want to pay by reciprocating, even if it is not in the same measure (Kolm and Ythier, 2006; Torche and Valenzuela, 2011). The feeling of moral obligation to give or return gifts is the core of social cohesion and the moral economy of the household (Narotzky, 2007; Tufuor et al., 2015). In order to foster long-term social relations, reciprocity is not immediate, so that the relapse time before reciprocation is when relations and bonds are created (Torche and Valenzuela, 2011). Instantaneous return of things would be tantamount to transactional relations where one person pays for goods and services provided by another, which is typical of trading.

Reciprocity conveys instrumental and symbolic values (Molm et al., 2007). The instrumental values are the actual or quantifiable benefits of things received, while the symbolic values are the

qualitative attributes, such as respect, love, and recognition conveyed by the things exchanged (Molm et al., 2007). Crespo (2008) argues that reciprocity is more about the values or ends associated with, and less of the means or “exactness” of the exchange.

While translocality provides a lens for understanding how actors are embedded at multiple places, their connections, interactions, and interdependencies as well as the outcomes of those activities (see Greiner, 2011; Steinbrink and Niedenführ, 2020), it does not make explicit the nature of reciprocity across the translocal socio-economic space. Based on the insights from translocality and reciprocity, we propose the concept of translocal reciprocity to enhance the analysis and the understanding of the nuances of migration and translocality. It must be emphasised that reciprocity is central to translocal practices. Reciprocity is expressed in long-term relationships or sporadic ones (Sethi and Somanathan 2003). In terms of translocal reciprocity, long-term relationships and bonds usually exist between migrants and their household members or with old established networks, and sporadic ones are those that migrants exploit as and when the need arises. Translocal reciprocity provides an analytical urge for understanding the nature of exchanges between migrants and their household members at the origin, as well as the networks that are established across space by exacting the instrumental and the symbolic values of exchanges.

Locations and methods

Study communities. The study was conducted in five communities in three districts in the Eastern region as the places of origin of migrants. These communities are Dadetsunya, Owuratan, (Fanteakwa South district), Feyiase, Besebuom (Fanteakwa North district), and Frimponso (Atiwa East district) (see Fig. 1).

A detailed description of these study communities has been provided elsewhere (see Narh et al., 2023; Narh et al., 2025). Suffice it to stress that these are rural communities with populations between 500 and 900 people. In the 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC) conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), almost 60% of the population in the Eastern region was in rural areas (GSS, 2021). However, compared to the 2010 PHC, rural population in the Eastern region has reduced by 4.7%, and by almost 5% in some of our study districts (GSS, 2021). Rural-urban migration is the main reason for decreasing population growth in the study districts. Indeed, although the Northern Regions have been in the limelight of rural-urban migration in Ghana, the 2021 PHC revealed that the Eastern Region is among the negative net-migration regions in the country (GSS, 2023). Therefore, our study contributes to broadening understanding of rural-urban migration in areas that have not received equal attention in migration studies in Ghana.

The economy of these communities is largely agricultural-based. People try to process cassava into gari (roasted cassava dough) or engage in petty trading to diversify their livelihood. With an increasing scarcity of farmland (Narh et al., 2023) and diminishing interest in agriculture, the youth migrate from these communities to urban centres to, among other things, engage in non-farming activities.

The Greater Accra region is another location for our study. From our baseline survey, the Greater Accra region is the most popular destination outside the Eastern region for migrants from our study communities. The capital town of the Greater Accra region, Accra, doubles as the national capital of Ghana. Almost all formal businesses in Ghana have their headquarters in Accra. The Greater Accra is one of the leading regions with industrial concentration in Ghana. In addition to a formal economy, there are thriving informal economic activities that attract many people from other parts of the country to the region. Although the region

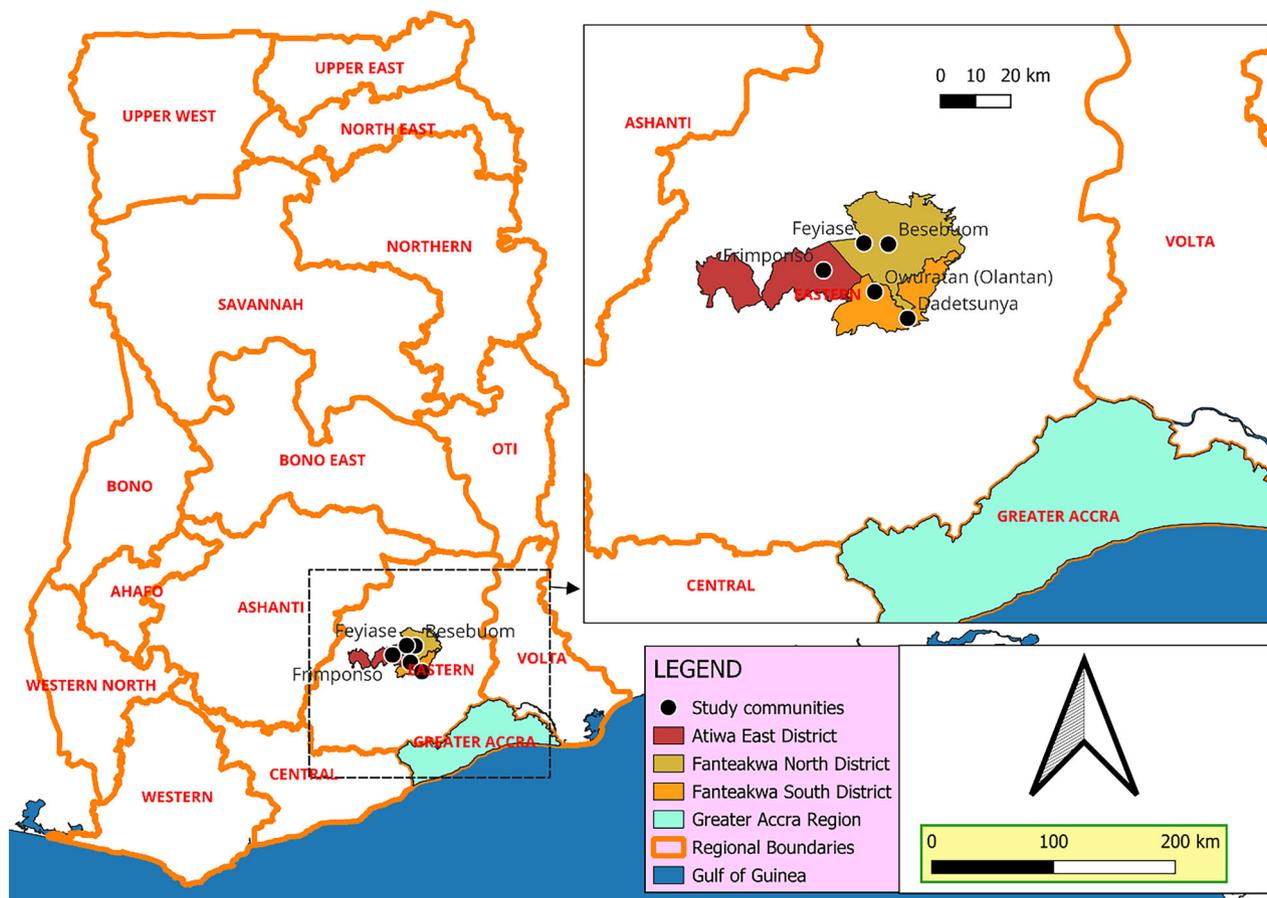


Fig. 1 Regional map of Ghana showing the study districts and their respective communities.

is relatively smaller in size, it has highest percentage of 17.7% of the total population of almost 31 million (GSS, 2021). Almost 50% of urban population growth in Ghana in the last decade occurred in the Greater Accra region, and the main factor for this high rate of urbanisation in the region is the influx of migrants (GSS, 2023).

Methods. In acknowledging the fluidity and intensity of global interactions, Marcus (1995: 105) argues that some aspects of the world system “cannot be thoroughly researched through single-sited ethnographic observation”. It would be quite difficult to fully understand subjects and objects that are constantly on the move and impacting, and being impacted by, two or more locations if we study them at one place. As geographers who are concerned with human-environment linkages and feedback loops, single-sited mono-methods may not offer in-depth insight in understanding phenomena through the prism of translocality. This is because changes in one location can have a significant impact on processes elsewhere, and there are potential difficulties in explaining the impact of translocality by analysing data collected from only one place (Zoomers et al., 2016; Zoomers, 2018; Bott et al., 2020). Using migrants in the destinations only for a translocal study without going to their areas of origin or vice versa is likely to provide half of the story, which is a departure from the central argument of translocality. Therefore, to understand the flow of migrants, networks, and translocal householding, we adopted multi-sited mixed methods sequentially.

The praxis of mixing at multiple sites involved the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data at the areas of origin and destination of migrants (see Fig. 1). We performed community entry where we officially informed opinion leaders and the

communities about the purpose of the study and asked for their permission and co-operation. A listing exercise was conducted to ascertain the number of migrant and non-migrant households to determine the sample interval. At the end of the listing exercise, the total households and population (excluding migrants) of the five communities were 678 and 3998, respectively. Given that the total population of the communities was less than 5000, with a 10% margin of error, a 250-sample is representative of the population and enough to do a meaningful quantitative analysis (Conroy, 2015). Given our focus on translocality and reciprocity, and based on the listing information, we used stratified simple random sampling to select more migrant households than non-migrant ones (Narh et al., 2023). In the end, 286 households (217 migrant and 69 non-migrant households) in the communities of origin were selected. We administer the survey to any capable adult (18 years and above) member of the selected household. Where there were two or more qualified members available, we encouraged them to collaborate to answer the survey to enhance the data.

Based on their telephone numbers obtained during initial survey in the communities of origin, we sampled, followed, and surveyed 50 migrants of translocal households¹ at their destination in the Greater Accra region (Narh et al., 2023). We selected migrants in the Greater Accra Region randomly from the list. We called the migrants and explained how we got their numbers and the purpose of the study. We found out that some of the telephone numbers were not active. If a selected migrant’s contact was inactive, we moved to the next person on the list. We followed 50 migrants who were available for the study.

Additionally, the lead author used purposive sampling to select 35 individuals for in-depth interviews: 30 translocal and non-

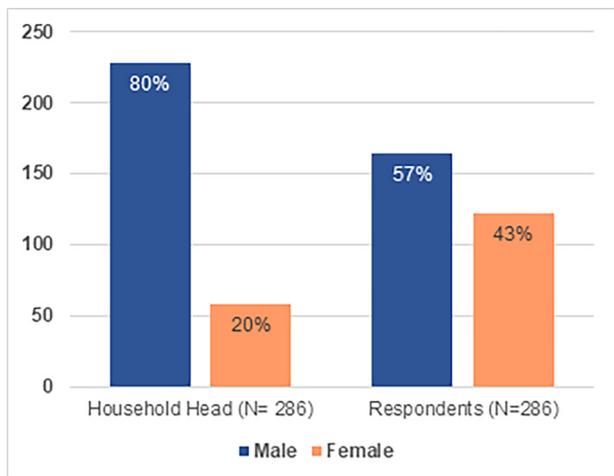


Fig. 2 Gender of household heads and respondents.

translocal households in the communities of origin, and 5 migrants at the destination. He also conducted one focus group discussion in each of the communities of origin involving 11–12 adults. The focus group discussions lasted between 30 and 90 min, and each was audio-recorded with permission from the participants. All the interviews were conducted in local languages (Dangme or Twi).

The questions glean data on the socio-demographic characteristics and economic activities of all household members aged 10 years and above, household income, migration history of returned migrants if any, migration trajectories, destination and telephone numbers of current migrants, reasons for migration, translocal practices such as frequency of phone calls between migrants and left-behind, visits, and exchange and use of remittances (for the detailed questions and the survey data, see Wehner et al., 2025).

We linked the data of the 50 migrants interviewed with their respective households’ data using household identification codes assigned during the listing and survey based on the house and household numbers at the area of origin. Following Narh et al. (2023), we used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to generate contingency tables on the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents and household members, economic activities of households, frequency of visits by migrants to household members at communities of origin and vice versa, exchange and use of remittances for a descriptive analysis. We also did bivariate analyses using cross tabulations to check relationship between some variables. Additionally, the interviews were transcribed, and textual data were subjected to content analysis. The transcripts were read several times before manual and deductive coding was conducted. Any part of the transcripts that is relevant to this study was highlighted and assigned a code. For example, any part of the transcripts where participants talked about remittance was assigned the code “remittances”. We then break codes into subcodes using distinctive highlights. We created subcodes of “cash”, “material”, and ideas” for remittances. We repeated this manual coding for other codes such as “visits”, “migration reasons”, etc. Then, similar content areas, based on the codes, were put together to identify patterns. We used the qualitative results to triangulate and also to explain the quantitative findings in detail.

Results

In this section, we present the results of the socio-economic characteristics of household members, translocal relations and networks, as well as translocal practices. We also present the

Range of household sizes (N=286)

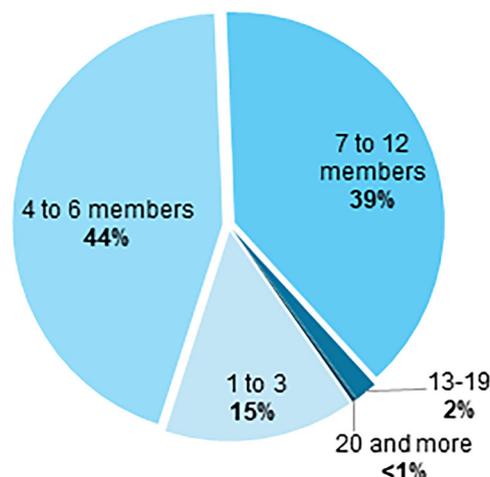


Fig. 3 Range of household size.

Migrants per household (N=217 Households)

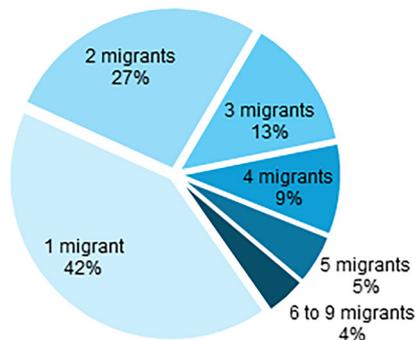


Fig. 4 Number of current migrants in households.

impact of migration and translocality, and the future migration and translocality aspirations of migrants. The surveys show that the average household size is 6 people, and most of the households own less than 4 hectares of land and are engaged in farming in the communities of origin. Migrants in Accra are not involved in agricultural activity, but they are largely working in the informal sector. Furthermore, almost all the migrants we followed have a strong sense of belonging to their households in their communities of origin. Also, migrants depend largely on their family members and friends for support and to manoeuvre their daily activities in their destination. Moreover, there is intense interdependency between migrants and the left behind, which is manifested through exchange of visits, resources, and ideas, contributing to improving the socio-economic conditions of translocal households. Finally, most migrants would like to stay in their destination and continue to have close relationships with the members of their households at the community of origin. We present these results in detail below.

Socio-economic characteristics of surveyed households. The quantitative dataset from the five communities of origin is henceforth referred to as the baseline data. The baseline data revealed that almost 80% of household heads are males (Fig. 2). This is not surprising because in the Ghanaian culture, a household or a family is usually headed by a man, especially in our communities of origin with patriarchal social structure. A woman becomes head of a household when her husband dies or when she divorces.

However, the sex disparity between males and females was reduced by chance during the baseline survey, as 47% of our respondents were females, as represented in Fig. 2.

There was a total of 1765 people in the selected households. Excluding children below 10 years, there were 1,319 people, and males represent 53.4% of the total number. The average household size (also including children below 10 years) is 6 people (Fig. 3). Most of the households (59%) have up to 6 people. The proportion of these households with up to 6 members increases to 82% if children below 10 years are excluded.

Our study revealed a higher average household size than the 3.2 reported for the Eastern Region and the districts in the 2021 census (GSS 2021) because we have included migrants. The baseline data revealed that of the total number (1765), there were 488 migrants. Thus, on average, each translocal household has 2 people who were absent in the study communities. We present the number of migrants per household in Fig. 4.

Our baseline data shows that 68% of the translocal households have up to 2 migrants, and 91% of the households have up to 4 migrants. The baseline data further revealed that 57% of the migrants were males and 43% were females. Thus, although there is feminisation of migration in Ghana (Awumbila, 2015), rural-urban migration is dominated by males in our study communities.

Regarding economic activities, our baseline data revealed that most of the selected households are involved in agricultural activities. Agriculture is the main activity for 44% of all the people above 10 years in the respondents' households. For those living in the study communities, 58% engage in agriculture. Next to agriculture is trading, which is the main economic activity for 12% of the people. We also found that 17% were students and only support their parents or guardians in their main economic activities. Farming is the main economic activity for 50% of returned migrants. Before migrating, farming was that main economic activity for 41% of migrants, 24.8% were schooling, 4% were trading, and 4% were unemployed according to the baseline survey. The rest were apprentices of various skills or construction workers. These economic activities are consistent with the situation in rural Ghana, where agriculture dominates due to availability of land and the lack of economic diversification in remote areas.

The data from the area of destination (AoD) survey is consistent with the baseline data, as farming was the main occupation of 64% of the migrants, and 28% were students before they migrated. Again, of the migrants surveyed, 4% were trading, and another 4% were unemployed at the time of migration.

Regarding the main occupation of migrants at the destination, we relied on the survey in Accra (hereafter, AoD data) because respondents at the baseline survey may not be fully aware of their economic situation at the destination. Sometimes, migrants tell only the stories that their household members want to hear and not the challenges they face at the destination (Diallo et al., 2022). We found that none of the migrants in Accra is engaged in agriculture. This is expected because Accra is the capital and largest city of Ghana, as well as a major centre for commerce and manufacturing, attracting migrants seeking employment opportunities outside of farming. Trading, metal and machinery work, and transportation and storage were the main jobs for 20%, 16%, and 12% of migrants, respectively.

The occupation of migrants is largely a reflection of their educational backgrounds. The AoD data, which was consistent with the baseline survey, revealed that 78% of the migrants had Junior High, Senior High, or other second-cycle education, which we grouped all to be commercial/vocational 10% of migrants have primary education, while another 10% have tertiary education. Trading provides occupation for migrants across the educational

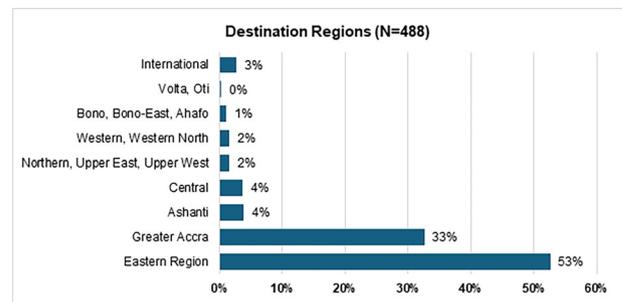


Fig. 5 Destination of Migrants (Region).

spectrum. In other words, trading provides job for migrants irrespective of their educational background. The engagement of economic activities that are different from what migrants used to do before migration indicates a desire to diversify the livelihood of the household. Our findings also support the report that rural migrants in urban centres mostly work in the informal sector (Awumbila et al., 2014).

Where are the migrants, and why have they migrated?

We asked about the current destination of migrants, their migration history, and the reasons for migration. The baseline survey revealed that 53% of migrants stay in the Eastern region, which is their region of origin. The Greater Accra region hosts 33% of the migrants, while the Ashanti and Central regions host 3% and 4% migrants respectively (see Fig. 5). To avoid confusing translocality with commuting, we decided to select popular destination outside the region of origin, and that is the reason why we use the Greater Accra region as the destination.

The baseline data revealed that before migrating to their current destinations, 23% of the migrants had previously migrated. The AoD data revealed even a higher number (38%) of migrants who had previously migrated. The AoD survey further shows that of migrants who have previously migrated (19), 79% moved once and 21% moved twice before their current destination, and 32% returned to their communities of origin before remigrated. The previous destinations are vital nodes in the migration trajectories as they can provide migrants with valuable networks and experiences.

People migrate for various reasons, and for our study, work is the most important cause of migration, as we show in Table 1.

The baseline data has shown that 66% of migrants migrated to look for jobs at their destination. Almost 80% of the people who migrated for family reasons were females. The AoD data also confirmed that work (80%), education (12%), and family reasons (16%) were the major reasons for migration. A migrant gave the main reason why he migrated from Besebuom as:

If you are in the village, you have no option but to farm. Farming is difficult, and earnings are small. The weather is increasingly changing, and it is affecting crop yield. I do not want to be a poor farmer in the village. So, I migrated here to hustle. Even though hustling is equally difficult, I prefer it to staying and farming in the village because I earn more money here (Dema, 37 years, Accra, 2023).

In Olanthan, too, a farmer narrated a similar reason why people migrate out of the community. He said:

There is no other job in this community apart from farming. Farming is a difficult economic activity, and the price for our produce is very low. So, farmers here are poor. Our children do not want to become as poor as we are, so they have migrated out to find better jobs to do. Some of the young men have migrated out to learn skills, such as driving, and they stay there to work.

Table 1 Reasons for migration (multiple response).

Reasons for migration	Percent of cases (Migrants)	Percent of answers	Answers
Work	84%	66%	378
Family/Personal reasons	19%	15%	87
Education (University, Boarding school, etc.)	15%	11%	66
Changes in farming/agricultural conditions	9%	7%	40
Other	1%	1%	6
N	488	577	577

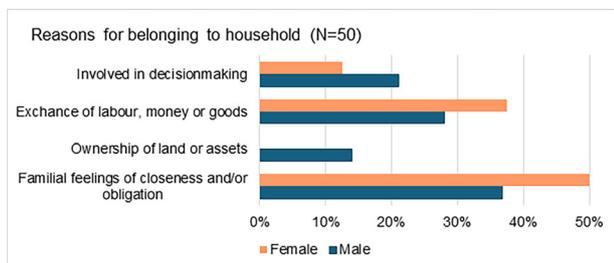


Fig. 6 Reasons for being part of the household.

The ladies also go to learn skills, and others go to engage in petty trading to make a living (Kono, 62 years, Olantán, 2023).

These quotations show that migration decision is often based on several factors. They also show that climate change is affecting farming activities of rural people in the Eastern region, a place that is not often the hotspot for climate research in Ghana (Teye et al., 2021). Besides, there are qualitative reasons for migration. During a focus group discussion, a participant said:

Migrants are accorded higher respect when they come to visit. During Christmas, funerals, or marriage ceremonies, when they usually visit, they come with money to support the occasion, they wear nicer clothes, and we respect them. This entices other young ones to follow in their footsteps and migrate to the cities (FGD, Dadetsunya, 2023).

Therefore, the psychological feeling of being respected also contributed to migration.

Translocal relations and networks

Translocal relations and networks are the pivots around which translocal livelihood revolves. During the AoD survey, we mentioned the name of the household head to the migrant to ascertain if s/he belongs to that household. We found that 98% confirmed their allegiance to the said household. Figure 6 presents the multiple reasons why migrants feel they are part of the household in the community of origin.

Figure 6 shows that family is a major cohesive factor that maintains and holds the household as a unit. There are gender dynamics in that more males are involved in important decision making than females. Married female migrants tend to disentangle themselves from their parent’s households: when they start a family, females get attached either to their husband’s household or practice more modern, urban family figurations of the nuclear family. They do not consider going back to the village.

We also sought to find the relationship between migrants and their household heads. According to the AoD data, 64% of migrants are sons or daughters, 14% are sisters or brothers, 8% are nephews or nieces, 8% are parents, and 2% are grandchildren to the household head at the origin while 4% are household heads themselves. The AoD data further revealed that 44% of the migrants are married (monogamous), 40% are not married, 12% are living together, 2% each are divorced or widowed. While none of the married female migrants is separated from her husband,

Table 2 People who helped migrants to find main job (multiple response, N = 50).

Who helped to find main job/contact for jobs ^a	Male	Female
Relatives	19%	22%
Without support	39%	50%
Friends from the same area of origin	26%	6%
Friends from another area	12%	6%
Other	4%	11%
N.A.	0%	6%

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.
^aGroup.

13% of married male migrants left their wives at the community of origin.

To understand the nature and the extent of network of migrants, we asked them how they found jobs and accommodation, who they live with, who helped them the last time they needed financial or other assistance, who they spend their spare time with, and whether they have helped others from their communities of origin or elsewhere to migrate. The data revealed that that irrespective of sex, 62% of migrants look for their main jobs at the destination by themselves.

Table 2 shows that 20% of all migrants relied on relatives from same households to get their main job. While none of the female migrants we followed relied on relatives from the same village or community of origin and only a few on friends from elsewhere, male migrants tend to get jobs through other relatives and friends from the same community or from elsewhere. The reliance on people outside the household supports the argument that households are embedded and draw support from wider networks within a moral economy (Tufuor et al., 2015).

Apart from 40% of the migrants who looked for accommodation themselves, the rest relied on family and friends for accommodation in the destination. This depicts the exploitation of moral economy and reciprocity for accessing accommodation. Cultural practices, morality, and norms demand that household members support one another. The assistance offered to a household member or a friend is often reciprocated in other forms. Some of the migrants (10%) were charged by agents to help them find accommodation to rent. This is largely transactional and not based on the principles of reciprocity. The AoD data also shows that 30% of the migrants live alone, 56% live with their spouses and or their children, 6% live with other people, such as friends. While none of the female migrants live with extended family members, 8% male migrants do.

Further, while women contribute financial support to the well-being of their household at the area of destination, more men tend to give rather than receiving support for food and rent. A male migrant revealed during an in-depth interview that he is the man, and it is his responsibility to take care of his wife and children. So, although his spouse supports him financially occasionally, he would rather borrow money from her to provide basic needs for their upkeep than to shed his responsibility to his wife.

Frequency of phone contact (N=50)

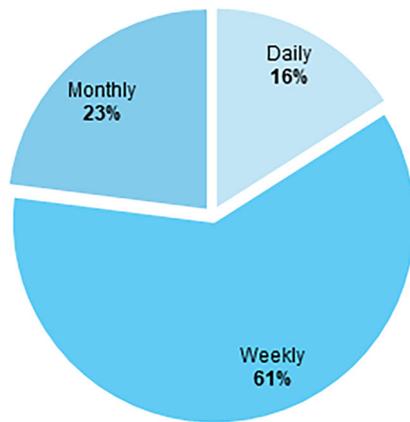


Fig. 7 Frequency of telephone communication between migrants and household members.

This conforms with our findings that the last time migrants needed help regarding money or food, 34% had it from their spouses or partners, 30% had it from relatives of the same household, relatives from the same community (7.5%), same region (6%), or from another place (2%). The rest could not remember the last time they needed help (13%) or could not get help from anyone (7.5%). Here again, this is a show of household moral economy, as money lent to household members is often without interest. This kind gesture is often reciprocated in other forms, and lenders today may find themselves as borrowers in the future. This enhances household resilience and fosters social ties.

Just as many migrants request help within their households, 44% spend their spare time with their family, 22% with friends who also migrated to Accra from other places, 18% with friends from the same community. Only 10% extend their network beyond the translocal sphere and spend their free time with people born in Accra, people of unknown descent (5%), or stay indoors, according to the AoD data. Moreover, 36% of the migrants socialise themselves within their new urban environment: they belong to religious organisations (churches and mosques), cooperatives, labour unions, and savings associations. Furthermore, 58% of the migrants surveyed at the AoD revealed that they have facilitated the migration of others from their communities of origin through financial support, provision of accommodation, helping them to secure jobs, or offering free advice. Supporting community members is a norm and moral obligation in Ghanaian societies. This is often translocalised to destination areas where migrants need support to survive and establish. In return, migrants also support, usually in kind, their benefactors in their businesses (Tufuor et al., 2015; Awudu et al., 2019). The need for support or reliance on network contributes to the formation of migrant enclaves in destination areas.

Translocal practices. Telecommunication, visits, and sharing of resources are the sustaining factors for translocal relations and livelihood. In this section, we present the results on the frequency and purpose of telephone calls, visits, and remittances between migrants and their household members at the community of origin.

Telecommunications. The AoD data revealed that most migrants (61%) have telephone conversations with their household members at the community of origin at least once a week, as shown in Fig. 7.

There are times when migrants communicate with household members several times in a day. During an in-depth interview at Olantan, a household head said:

We communicate on the phone almost every day. I or my wife communicates with at least one of our (migrant) children every day. So, we have very frequent communication over the phone. We spoke to one of them twice today, and the call I just received is from one of them (Kono, 62 years, Olantan, 2023).

The frequency of telephone conversations between migrants and their household members in the community of origin is not regular. The qualitative interviews, both at the community of origin and the destination, revealed that most communications occur as and when the need arises. There are no strict agreements between migrants and their household members as to when a telecommunication should take place. However, communication occurs mostly between migrants and their parents. Also, telephone conversation is initiated by either a member at the origin or the migrant, as there are no rules as to who should place a call. In addition, the baseline data revealed that 5% of households communicate with migrants through text message and WhatsApp. Our data do not show any significant relationship between male and female migrants regarding the frequency of telephone calls.

The qualitative interviews revealed that the purposes of telecommunication in translocal households are to check how migrants and household members are faring and to stay in touch with one another to minimise the emotional burden, or the homesickness that is created by migration. It is not only migrants who feel homesick; household members at the origin also indicated that they sometimes have nostalgic feelings for their absent members. The qualitative data further revealed that other purposes for telephone calls were to ask for remittances and to inform parties about a new development, to solicit for advice, and to help take critical household or even personal decisions. The exchange of telephone calls between migrants and their members is informed by principle of reciprocity, and the communications are bidirectional. Checking on one another is an emotional need and a moral obligation for household members. In contexts where members are living in different places, it is more necessary to make sure that everyone is safe. These conversations help to bridge the spaces between the migrant and those left behind to stay connected.

Visits. There are times when getting in touch through telecommunication is not enough, so migrants and their household members exchange visits. The AoD data revealed that people in the household visited 40% of the migrants in the past year. The AoD data revealed that 50% of the migrants have received visits at the destination from household members from the community of origin within one year to data collection. The AoD data further showed that of those who received visits, 4% received visits more than once a month, 8% received visits monthly, 36% received visits 4 to 5 times in the year, 48% received visits yearly, and 4% received less visits yearly. In a multiple response, almost half received visits from their siblings (brother/sister), 32% were visited by their parents, 8% each from niece/nephew and other relatives, and 3% from spouse/partner.

For the purpose of visit, we found most household members in the community of origin visit for multiple reasons. The AoD data revealed that the top 4 reasons for visiting in order of importance were for just seeing each other, bringing money/goods/food to migrants, being with family, and attending to family matters like childcare and picking up money/goods or food. During in-depth interviews, emotional and rational aspects were revealed: migrants long for left behind household members, but work does not permit them to visit frequently. Besides, when they visit

their communities of origin, they need to go with gifts, so leaving their jobs behind and visiting results in double costs. Thus, they prefer inviting household members to visit them. Also, picking up money or food is mostly an implicit reason for receiving visits because visitors know that they would always get at least an amount from the migrants that is higher than their cost of transportation of the round trip. The qualitative interviews have also shown that when migrants give birth to a new child, they often invite their mothers or mothers-in-law to come to the city to help with childcare for some time. This is a moral obligation to support with child care, especially when a migrant produces a newborn baby (Tufuor et al., 2015).

Migrants also visit their communities of origin. The baseline data on visits shows that the most popular period that migrants visit their community of origin is quarterly, yearly, or monthly.

The AoD data revealed that 78% of migrants visit their community of origin one year to the data collection. Only 7(14%) migrants neither received visits from members of the household nor returned to the community of origin for a short visit.

According to the AoD data, migrants visit their communities of origin for multiple reasons, but the top three are to attend weddings and funerals, be with the family and tend to family matters, pick money/goods/food, and to work at the family farm. During an interview with a migrant, she said:

At the end of the year, I need to go to the village and celebrate Christmas. To me, Christmas is more enjoyable in the village than in Accra. There, I have family members and friends, and others who have migrated also return to make the celebration a memorable one. I visit them during Easter as well. But there are times when I go just to visit to check how they are faring...When the price of foodstuffs is higher here, I go to the village to get foodstuffs because there is no car coming directly from my village that my family members can send me food items through the driver (Ahemlem, 31 years, Accra, 2023).

Ahemlem's narration reveals her purposes for visiting her community of origin (Feyiase), which indicates that holidays and picking foodstuffs, and the need to be with family are the main reasons for visiting. Most of the migrants are children of the household head in the community of origin, and it is a moral obligation to visit home to check on the elderly and maintain social ties. The "memory of home" also encourages migrants to visit their origin (Marschall, 2017). In most Ghanaian societies, and particularly in the Dangme² culture. A migrant who refuses to visit home is regarded as a deviant and referred to as *e no nga*, which literally means the migrant has remained in the wild. There are even some cultures in Ghana that demand that someone who dies elsewhere be brought to the hometown for burial. This signifies how important visiting home is to many Ghanaians. However, there are times when migrants decide to remain at the destination more than expected. Cultural norms and moral obligation demand that migrants give money and material things to family and friends when they visit. So, many migrants do not visit or feel reluctant to return when they do not have enough money (Barone, 2025). Elsewhere, even if migrants do not send money, they have to give money when they visit home (Stodolska and Santos, 2006). This brings us to the practice of remittances.

Remittances. Remittances are the "livewire" connecting migrants and the left behind (Yaro, 2008; Awudu et al., 2019). It enables the resilience of migrant households and fosters social ties (Awumbila et al., 2014; Awudu et al., 2019; Yeboah et al., 2021). Our study shows that there is exchange of resources between migrants and their household members in the community of origin. 54% of respondents of the baseline study indicated that the household or a member of the household received cash remittances from absent household members. 36% did not receive

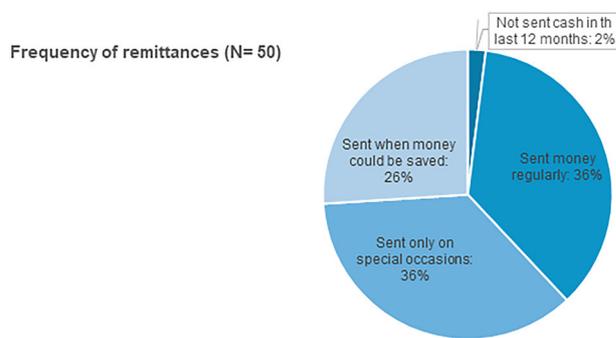


Fig. 8 Frequency of Remittances from migrants' perspective.

remittances in the last 12 months prior to the survey. 10% are not sure or not aware any cash flow between migrants and the household. The baseline data further shows that respondents do not know the frequency at which 46% of the migrants send cash remittances to members of the household. Of the remaining 54%, respondents indicated that 65% send remittances regularly (monthly or quarterly), 6% of them send money yearly, and the remaining 29% send money as and when there is a need, during visits, or once in a while. The percentage of migrants who sent cash to household members could be higher, as respondents may not be aware of every remittance sent. The respondents at the area of destination were well aware of the frequency of their contributions, as shown in Fig. 8.

While migrants share cash remittances during visits, mobile money is the main medium for sending money to people in the community of origin. In a multiple response, the AoD data revealed that 81% of migrants send cash remittances to their parents, 31% to other relatives such as siblings, and family members who are not technically part of the household (friends, uncles/aunties, cousins, and nephews/nieces), and 4% to their spouses. Migrants explained during in-depth interviews that they sometimes send money to friends and other people to address pressing needs like paying for hospital bills and for food when they request for it. Thus, just as migrants draw support from friends to obtain jobs and access accommodation, they also support people who are not their household members

The AoD data is consistent with the baseline study that basic food, health care, agricultural investment and hiring labour, funerals or marriages, and education are the top five item that remittances are sent for (Narh et al., 2023). Simoni and Voirol (2021) reported that sometimes, the left behind do not use remittances they receive judiciously. So, we asked migrants if they take decision on how the remittances they send must be spent. We found that many migrants leave the decision to the remittance recipient to make. One migrant said this during an in-depth interview:

If I send them money to do something for me, I give them explicit instructions on how it must be used. On the other hand, if they request or if I voluntarily send them money, I do not care much about how it is spent. I know my parents will not waste my money, so I am fine with whatever they spend it on (Kwame, 29 years, migrant in Accra, 2023).

Most of the recipients are the parents of the migrants, and the remittances are meant for basic needs, so there is no point taking part in the decision-making. However, for a major project like house construction, migrants are actively involved in the decision-making process. The most important thing, however, is that for both migrants and respondents of the baseline survey, the top 5 items on which remittances are spent on are the same.

Further, our study shows that migrants also receive cash remittances from their household members. According to the

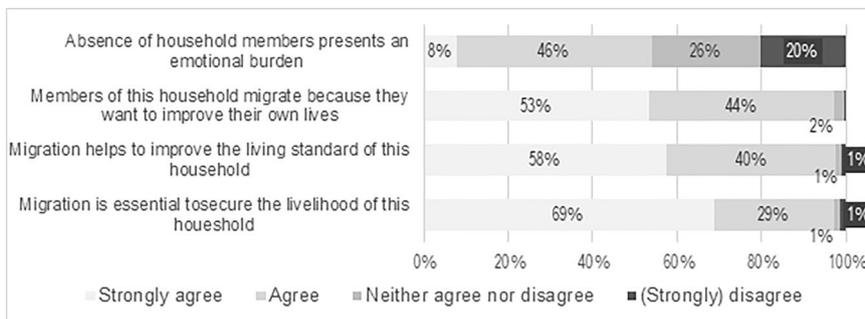


Fig. 9 Opinion on economic and emotional effects of migration.

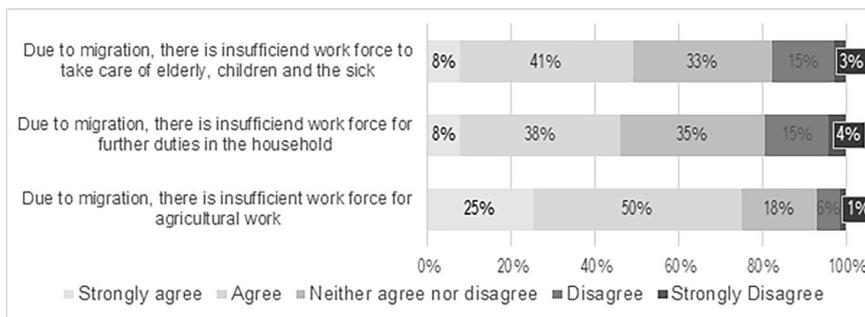


Fig. 10 Effects of migration on labour in the household.

baseline data, members of the household sent money to 14% of the migrants during the past year. The AoD data also shows that 10% of the migrants received money from household members in the community of origin. 80% of migrants who received cash remittances were male.

Regarding non-cash remittances, both the baseline and AoD data revealed that household members in the community of origin sent food to migrants. According to the AoD data, 56% of the migrants received food from household members. It is worth mentioning that the migrant who did not send cash remittance received food from members of his household in the community of origin. This shows that the household is keen on ensuring the welfare of every member, whether present or absent, in order to foster resilience, cohesion, and fulfil moral obligation. Migrants also reciprocated the goods they received from their communities of origin. The AoD has shown that 50% of migrants sent non-cash remittances to household members in the community of origin. While migrants received only food items, they sent varied items to their household in the communities of origin. In order of importance, the main items received by household members in the communities of origin were food, clothing, school items, medicines, household items, and mobile phones. Exchange of remittances shows reciprocity and household moral economy (Tufuor et al., 2015; Simoni and Voirol, 2021). The exchange of remittances ensures that, despite distance, household members remain cohesive and ensure the welfare of everyone. Local goods sent to migrants enable them to preserve their culture and identity, even or especially in spaces beyond the local (Awudu et al., 2019; Yeboah et al., 2021).

Aside from cash and material resources, migrants also share ideas with their households and people living in their community of Origin. The AoD data revealed that 50% of migrants believe that members of the household or the community have benefited from ideas or skills they acquired during their migration experience, 34% did not believe that they have made any such impact, and 8% do not know if someone from their community of origin has benefited from their experience. The 50% indicated

that they have imparted household and community members skills to improve housing, agricultural innovation, business skills, established useful contacts, and facilitated migration of many to the city. A migrant from Dadetsunya (who is now a mechanic) said:

Just as my brother brought me to this city, I have helped a lot of young people from my village to come to Accra. Whenever I have news that someone is looking for a house help here (Accra) and I know the person is not wicked, I go to my village and bring a lady to the person. After working for a period as house helpers, they learn skills or become traders. For the young men, I trained a lot to also become auto mechanics, and through me, others came to learn other skills (Ahuno, 38 years, migrant in Accra, 2023).

Ahuno’s assistance is largely what Tufuor et al. (2015) call “moral community economy,” where individuals are morally obliged to offer help to people who are not necessarily their household members.

Impact of migration and future aspirations of migrants.

Migration contributes to poverty reduction in Ghana (Awumbila et al., 2014; Teye et al., 2019). Our baseline data shows, as we present in Fig. 9, that most respondents strongly agree or agree that migration and translocality are essential to secure their livelihood and improve their standard of living. However, migration has also created emotional burden and labour shortages (Fig. 10) for many households due to the absence of household members.

Migrants also stated that they migrated to improve their own lives, and migration has enabled them to secure livelihood for their households and improved their income. Also, migration has improved quality of life in general and networks in their current location. Migrants also stated that migration offers them a higher degree of personal independence and freedom. However, 30% of the migrants stated that they have lost networks in their home region, and 12% said that their housing situation is worse in the destination as compared to the one in the origin. The qualitative interviews with migrants revealed that migrants who are

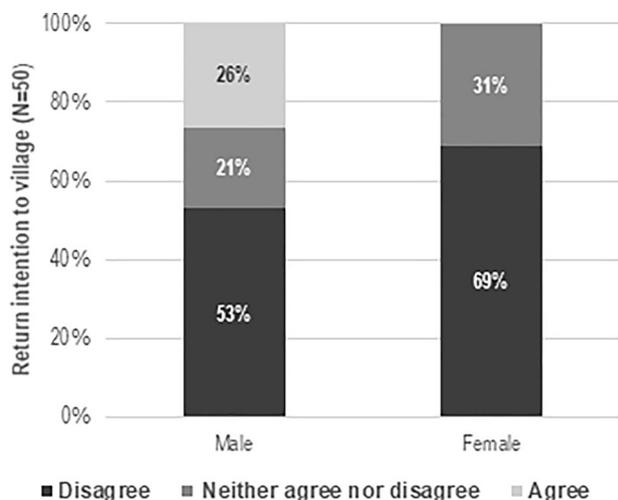


Fig. 11 Migrants’ intention to return to community of origin.

undergoing skills training as apprentices and do not have money to rent decent housing sleep at the workshops. For those people, their housing condition in the communities of origin was better than their current situation. The reciprocity of remittances, communication, and visits has enhanced household moral economies and fostered social resilience.

For their future aspirations, 98% of the migrants want to stay in the city and continue the close relations with the household in the community of origin. In Fig. 11, more than 50% of the migrants were emphatic that they do not intend to return to their community of origin someday.

While none of the female migrants intend to return to their community of origin, 26.5% of the male migrants intend to return someday. During qualitative interviews, female migrants revealed that they are married or hope to marry in Accra and will need to stay with their husbands. Some migrants, on the other hand, explained that the village is their home and they need to go back because they have land there and need to represent their families someday when their parents pass on.

Discussion

Our study shows that migrants and their household members in the communities of origin are strongly embedded in what Steinbrink and Niefenführ (2020) call translocal social field. Migrants’ community of Origin is one place in the translocal social field (Greiner and Sakdapolrak 2013). Steinbrink and Niefenführ (2020) conceptualised that out-migration of a person creates *networks*, which transcend territorial boundaries, connecting *places* of origin and destination. Before migration, migrants were mostly involved in the household’s economic activity, which was mainly crop farming, to secure their livelihood. In the community of origin, would-be migrants have day-to-day interactions with household members, family, friends, and other community members. Dissatisfaction with the economic activities at the community of origin, the yearning to further education, and the need to join family after marriage contributed to people migrating from their place of origin.

Once people have leveraged on their network to migrate and for the fact that they needed to go to the city to have access to higher education, they have sustained and created more networks, as many of the migrants were supported and or are supporting others to migrate from the community of origin. Some have also migrated to other places before their current destinations. In all these, networks were created. At the destination, while most migrants make active efforts to look for accommodation and jobs

by themselves, they also rely on family and friends for support. But there are gender dynamics to establishing networks. Male migrants tend to be more adventurous as they have wider networks outside their family than female migrants because the former relies more on people whom they are not linked by blood, such as friends from elsewhere that they met at the destination, than the latter. Thus, as other studies reported that women mostly migrate when they have good connections at the destination, and men migrate even when they do not have an established network at the destination (Teye et al., 2019; Zaami, 2020), male migrants are more likely to create and rely on networks of people that are not related by blood than female migrants.

Migrants, with their connection to non-family members by virtue of migration, have created and connected their households at the area of origin to their networks for translocal livelihoods. This is because some migrants got jobs through their network, and from that job, they earn money and remit to the household members in the area of origin to improve their livelihood. Besides, since migrants also spend time with friends from other places who have also migrated to, or were born in, Greater Accra region, our respondents could rely on them for help and manoeuvre any challenge that they cannot get support from their household members or families, which could inure to the benefit of members of their households in the community of origin. Furthermore, since many migrants have migrated once, and a few have moved twice before their current destination, their current networks and socio-economic conditions are likely influenced by the past migration. Those places are the spaces between the place of origin and current destinations, into which migrants draw their households into and benefit from, on the established networks. This shows that the concept of translocality enables analyses beyond the “container-space” dichotomies of rural-urban divide to understand connection across different scales (Oakes and Schein, 2006: 20 Steinbrink, 2009; Carmo and Hedberg, 2019). This does not undermine the assumption in geographical thought that “humans create distinctive boundaries around spatial units within which they live, work, and draw meaning” (Gillen et al., 2022: 189). Rather, it emphasises that places are “dynamic and nuanced, not rigidly defined, while simultaneously [acknowledges] place-based differences” (Drake and Liunakwalau, 2022: 83).

People embark on rural-urban migration to look for job opportunities, join family, further education, and due to changes in farming and climatic conditions, which is also directly linked to job opportunities, because most migrants were engaged in farming prior to migration. Most of the people who migrated for family reasons were women, and this is not surprising because in Ghana, it is mostly women who move to their husbands after marriage or even when they are just living together. But drivers for migration are complex, and others migrate, among other reasons, to earn more respect and enhance their social status, just as Filipino migrants in Metro Manila feel famous by virtue of migration (Ayeb-Karlsson and Uy, 2022). That notwithstanding, migrants still have a strong sense of belonging and attachment to members of their household in the community of origin by virtue of family, ownership of landed assets, and their role in decision making, which are largely informed by moral economies of norms, culture, and moral obligations.

Migrants and members of their households express their embeddedness in the translocal social field, sense of belonging and interdependencies through telecommunication, visits, and remittances. The availability of telecommunication technology and the fact of blood relation provide the structures for translocal livelihood. Other studies have also reported that telecommunication plays a crucial role in translocal householding. For instance, Porter et al. (2018) found that in Ghana, Malawi,

and South Africa, migrants and members of their households use telecommunication to stay in touch and maintain emotional well-being. Lam (2013) also found that Chinese migrants use information communication technologies to maintain family solidarity while on the move. Besides, migrants and members of their household exchange visits for emotional support and to share resources. Telecommunications and visits are not unidirectional; they are reciprocated. There is translocal reciprocity as migrants and household members return one another's telephone calls, text messages, and visits to manage the homesickness created by migration. Translocal reciprocity in telecommunication typifies the symbolic value of reciprocity as they show respect, caring, and recognition for one another.

Furthermore, translocal reciprocity of cash remittance facilitates livelihood of both migrants and their household members in the community of origin. While most migrants sent cash to members of the household, only a few received cash remittances from household members in the community of origin. This is expected because the main reason why most migrants migrated was to find job opportunities in the cities, which indicates that migrants want to diversify the source of livelihood of their households. With limited job opportunities aside from farming in the community of origin, it is natural that cash will flow more from the migrants in the cities to their households in the community of origin to sustain livelihood, health, education, and their ability to contribute to ceremonies. Besides, migrants have moral obligations to send cash to their aging parents and support their siblings, and this kind gesture is reciprocated when migrants also face financial challenges in the destination. Besides, as Crespo (2008) argues, reciprocity does not require exactness in the exchange of things, and although cash remittances from the household members in the community of origin to migrants are less than what they receive from their migrant members, the symbolic value of exchange is very important. Studies in other parts of Ghana have also reported that migrants send remittances to their household members in the community of origin (Teye et al., 2019; Teye et al., 2021). Even the female migrant who no longer sees herself to be part of her natal household by virtue of marriage sends cash remittances to that household. Also, sharing of remittances goes beyond the household as migrants send money to family and friends, which exemplifies sporadic interactions of reciprocity (Sethi and Somanathan 2003). Thus, migrants' cash remittances contribute to maintaining relationships not only with their household members, but also with family and friends. While there is no gender difference in sending cash remittance, more male migrants tend to receive money from their household members.

In terms of non-cash remittances, migrants receive more and only food from, and they send food and other items to their households at the origin. As agriculture is the main economic activity in the communities of origin, a significant amount of cash remittances is invested in farming and hiring labour. The migrants we followed need to buy every food item they consume, unlike those still in the communities of origin. So, members of the household share farm produce with them mostly when they exchange visits. This is in tandem with Djurfeldt (2022) finding that food transfer is an intensifying translocal practice as a socio-economic insurance due to the limited formal social welfare systems in six African countries, including Ghana. The migrants who could not send remittances in the past year have received food from his household, an expression of support (instrumental) and solidarity (symbolic) from his people. Thus, the flow of people and resources based on the created networks between the place of origin (locale) and place of the destination (another locale) has transformed the places into what Greiner and Saksdapolrak (2013) and Greiner et al. (2014) call *translocales*.

However, migration has created emotional burden and shortage of labour for agricultural activities and to care for the elderly, but they are managed through translocal practices of exchange of visits, cash, food, and clothing. Generally, translocality has contributed to improving the socio-economic conditions of households, which have informed future migration aspirations of the migrants. Most migrants intend to stay in their destination, but with their strong sense of belonging and for the sake family, they want to continue to maintain ties with members of the household in the community of origin. No female migrant intends to return to her community of origin in the future because after marriage, the woman will move to her husbands' place. It also means that none of the female migrants intends to marry someone who is currently living in their community of origin.

Conclusions

We sought to understand how embedded migrants and the household members in their communities of origin in the translocal socio-economic field, the drivers of migration and translocality, the structures and practices of translocal livelihood, and their impacts, as well as future migration aspirations of migrants. We found that migrants and their households are strongly embedded in a translocal socio-economic field with a strong sense of belonging and familial ties. It is clear from the discussion of the aspects of place, network, and locales that "translocality deliberately confuses the boundaries of the local to capture the increasingly complicated nature of spatial processes and identities, yet it insists on viewing such processes and identities as place-based rather than exclusively mobile, uprooted or 'travelling'" (Oakes and Schein 2006: 20).

Also, drivers of migrations are varied, as most migrants migrate for several reasons. However, work is the main reason why most people migrated, and since those we followed in the Greater Accra region are not engaged in farming, migration has enabled many translocal households to diversify their livelihood. Risks are spread and livelihoods are diversified through engaging in many economic activities and sharing of monetary and non-monetary resources. For instance, many household members who migrated out are engaged in economic activity that is different from what the household depended on in the origin, thereby diversifying their livelihood conditions to reduce vulnerability risks. The exchange of ideas and cash remittances contributes to improving the living conditions of the household. Therefore, translocality enables the distribution of both risks and resources. The diversification of household economic activities through migration and exchange of resources has enabled many translocal households to secure their livelihood, improve their standard of living, and the lives of migrants in particular. The general impact of migration is encouraging migrants to continue to live in the destination, and most of them do not have intention to return.

Migrants leveraged on networks to migrate, and they are creating more after migrating, as they do not live as islands in the destination. They have created networks and interdependencies with family, friends, and co-workers. Migrants depend on such networks for socio-economic support, as many get jobs and accommodation through their networks, thereby exposing their households to resources that would not have been possible without migration. Migrants and their household members continue to stay in touch through exchange of visits, remittances, and telecommunication. Translocal households have forged long-term relationships, and their expression of translocal reciprocity does not involve exact number of things. While migrants send more money, their household members in the community of origin reciprocate with more food items. Indeed, "as people move, local

place-based affinities are not obliterated but instead become extended, multi-layered and transformative” (Thu, 2020: 532).

However, translocal reciprocity between friends and migrants is generally sporadic. Besides, female migrants’ sense of belonging to the natal household seems to wane gradually with marriage, which could affect translocal reciprocity in the future. While some male migrants aspire to return to their communities of origin someday, none of the female migrants intend to. This implies that gender could play a crucial role in weakening translocal ties over time. Finally, many migrants aspire to remain in the destination and maintain strong translocal ties with those left behind, an indication that migration is having a net positive effect on them.

The policy implication of this article is that development projects should not be based on static population figures at a place. For instance, rural communities with low populations in situ should not be deprived of good roads and telecommunication networks because there are actually many people who originated from those places and still stay connected to their household members there. These infrastructures are vital for translocal practices to spur local development. Likewise, urban planning should not be based on headcounts. The flow of people and resources in and out of the city should be given equal attention for the city to be able to absorb the repercussions of translocal practices.

Although this article makes significant contribution to migration and translocality discourse, there is a potential weakness in the limited number of migrants followed for the AoD survey. The sample size of 50 migrants, and being a cross-sectional study, it could not allow for a detailed analysis of how translocal ties weaken over time. Future studies could address this challenge through a larger sample size in a longitudinal research.

Data availability

Quantitative data is deposited at GFZ Data Service. The qualitative data are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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Notes

- 1 Translocal households are household in which there is intensive interactions and frequent exchange of resources between or among migrants and their households in the areas of origin (Wehner, Stefanie 2022: **Operationalizing translocality: Conceptualizing a translocality index from a field survey in West Africa:** Conference Paper Tropentag, Download)
- 2 Most of the study communities are dominated by the Dangme ethnic group

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Author contributions

J.N. Conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data collection, data curation, formal analysis, writing—original draft, writing—review and editing, visualization. S.W. Writing—review and editing, supervision, project administration, methodology, data curation, and visualization.

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Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Ethical approval

This study was performed in line with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. The questionnaire and methodology for this study were approved by the ECH-UG with approval number ECH 066/ 20–21 on 18th December 2020.

Informed consent

We have obtained oral informed consent from all our research participants to participate before interviewing them, and they have freely agreed to the subsequent publication of the information. We obtained informed consent in August 2022 and January to March 2023, respectively, for the baseline and AoD data collection. We use pseudonyms to keep our research participants anonymous throughout our reports.

Additional information

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