

POLICY BRIEF



North-South Migration in Ghana: What Drives it?

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Key messages

1. Understanding migration complexities is vital for balancing benefits and challenges in northern to southern Ghana.
2. Climate variability and LULCC primarily drive migration, affecting northern livelihoods, especially in agriculture.
3. To address migration challenges, promote sustainable agriculture, invest in irrigation, provide support, and offer training.

Introduction

According to multiple research studies, people's migration from northern to southern Ghana can be attributed to various factors. While migrants perceive benefits associated with migration, such as the ability to send remittances to their families back home, this phenomenon also brings forth several challenges.

On one hand, out-migration depletes the potential workforce in the northern regions, while simultaneously contributing to an increase in the southern regions. Striking a balance between these trends could help alleviate ongoing impoverishment in the north and overpopulation in the southern destinations. Therefore, identifying the root causes of this migration is crucial in developing effective mitigation strategies.

However, the primary challenge lies in pinpointing the specific drivers behind this population movement. Even though the migration of people from the north may appear voluntary, it is influenced by subtle push and pull factors that can compel individuals to leave their places of origin.

For example, when people's livelihoods become unsustainable, they are inevitably driven to seek better opportunities elsewhere. In this context, a study was undertaken to determine the primary drivers of migration in northern Ghana.

Approach

The study was undertaken, employing snowball sampling to intentionally identify northern migrants in specific communities within Accra, Kumasi, Techiman, Kintampo, and Babato.

In total, 402 respondents, comprising 214 males and 188 females, were interviewed. Their pre-migration sources of livelihood were determined, as outlined in Table

Furthermore, migrants were questioned to ascertain the primary driver behind their decision to migrate, choosing among three options: climate variability, land use land cover change (LULCC), and socio-economic factors.

Key finding

Table 1: Employment of respondents before migration

Occupation	Male	Female	Total
Farmer	151	115	266
Self-employed	25	29	54
Menial Jobs	17	12	29
White collar jobs	5	4	9
Unemployed	15	28	43
Student	1	0	1
Total	214	188	402

The majority of interviewed migrants were previously engaged in farming (refer to Table 1), indicating their dependence on successful agricultural yields for their livelihood.

Additionally, most of them cited climate variability as the primary factor, followed by LULCC-related push factors, for their decision to migrate from northern to southern Ghana (see figures 1 and 2).

Agriculture in the northern region of Ghana is primarily subsistence and rain-fed, making it highly susceptible to the adverse effects of both LULCC and climate variability. According to key informants, such as Agricultural Extension officers, and corroborated by some of the interviewed farmers, crop cultivation in the northern part of the country has witnessed a significant decline over the years due to unpredictable weather conditions and land degradation. Moreover, the financial burden associated with farming, including the cost of purchasing fertilizers, has become a major disincentive. The findings also highlight that, comparatively, a reduction in rainfall stands as the primary factor driving most individuals from the north to the southern regions of the country.

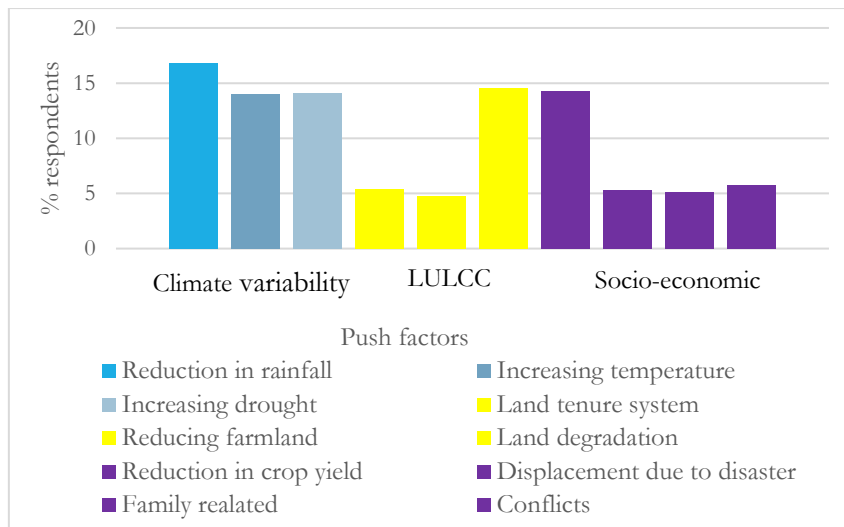


Figure 1: Push factors for northern migrants

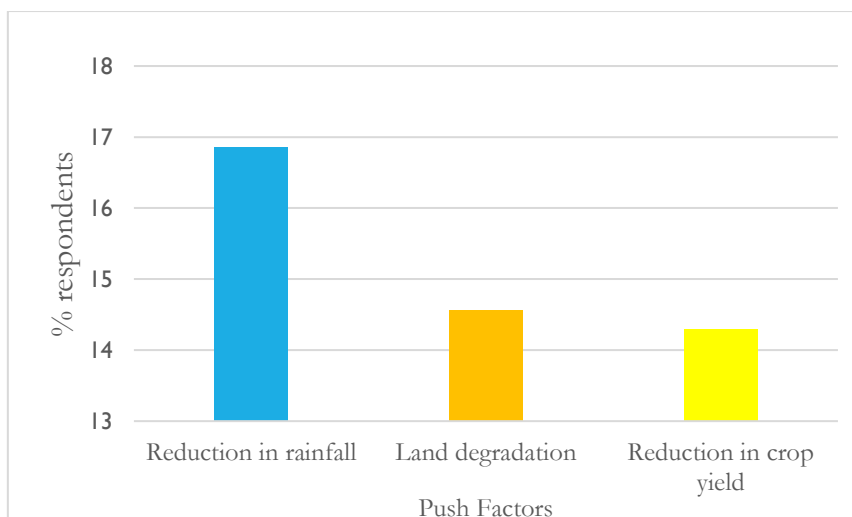


Figure 2: Comparison of major push factors of northern migrants

Conclusion



Source: google

Amidst the voluntary nature of migration, there exist underlying push factors that shape the movement of people from northern to southern Ghana.

While these factors exhibit variation, the study identifies the most compelling drivers as those directly impacting the livelihoods of the northern population. These primary drivers are climate variability and LULCC.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that an increasing number of women are becoming a part of this migration narrative.

Recommendations

- Enhancing farming practices and systems should be prioritized, capitalizing on policies like "Planting for Food and Jobs." Implementation of agriculturally advanced practices, such as mechanization, is essential to transition from subsistence farming.
- The establishment of irrigation infrastructure, such as dams (one village, one dam), is imperative to supplement the unpredictable rainfall patterns.
- Availability of funding and support systems is crucial to incentivize farmers to remain engaged in agriculture.
- Providing training in sustainable alternative livelihood strategies is particularly important for women and youth.
- Further research should be conducted to confirm the presence or absence of climate variability and LULCC threats in northern Ghana.

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