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**Migrant Home Town Associations (HTAs) in Ghana:
*Their Role in Migrant Integration and the Negotiation of
Labour Market Conditions in Ghana***

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Migration in Ghana

- ❑ Migration has long been an enduring feature of the life narratives of many people in Ghana.
- ❑ Pre-colonial migration associated with factors including wars, trade, colonization of new lands and slavery (Boahen, 1975; Anarfi, et al., 2003).
- ❑ Colonial recruitment and development policies reshaped the migration dynamics in Ghana.
- ❑ These policies led to immigration of some foreign nationals, mainly Africans but also Europeans, into the country.

Migration in Ghana (cont'd)

Foreign Populations in Ghana by Origin: 1921, and 1931 Census Years

Country	1921	1931
<i>Africa</i>	48,300	289,200
Liberia	12,600	6,800
Nigeria	21,200	67,700
Other West Africans	14,500	199,100
Other Africans	----	15,600
<i>Europeans</i>	1,883	2,385
British	1,609	1,825
French	79	153
German	2	76
Italian	59	103
Swiss	80	141
Others	54	87
Total	50183	291585

Source: Kay and Hymor, 1972

Migration in Ghana (cont'd)

- ❑ **1960 population census of Ghana:** migrants accounted for **12 percent** of the enumerated population; many of them (**98%**) **West Africans** (Anarfi, et al., 2000; Anarfi, et al., 2003). **Ghana as migrant recipient country**
- ❑ **Mass out migration** in Ghana 1980s (political, economic and educational reasons).
- ❑ In 1983, Ghanaians constituted **81 percent** of all ECOWAS nationals legally resident in Nigeria (Adepoju, 1988)
- ❑ **A tenth** of Ghanaians live abroad (Peil, 1995); Ghanaian migrants as **Ghana's other exports** Gagakuma (1984); Ghana as **one of ten countries** globally producing 'new diasporas' (Van Hear, 1998). **An Eleventh Region of Ghana?** (Manuh (2006)

Migrant HTAs in Ghana

- ❑ Migrant HTAs in Ghana created through **migrant social networks** (Tonah, 2005a; Antwi Bosiakoh, 2008)
- ❑ In Ghana, migrant HTAs existed during colonial times, but the post independence period provides better understanding of these associations (Busia, 1950; Acquah 1958; Little 1965).
- ❑ Migrant HTAs serve as fellowship platform for migrants, help in finding jobs and housing and have a focus on hometown development (Acquah, 1958). They also maintain and reinforce ethnic identities and hometown loyalty (Little, 1965).
- ❑ Formed mainly around **larger units** (ethnic groups, district or administrative regions of origin).

Migrant HTAs in Ghana (cont'd)

- ❑ However, **with increased population**, they fragment into smaller village, town, professional or even social groupings (Little, 1965; Tonah, 2005a; Obeng, 2010)
- ❑ Asante, Kwahu, Nzima, Frafra, Bono or even Northerners are typical examples (Tonah, 2005a).
- ❑ Membership sizes vary greatly between larger and smaller associations.

Nigerian migrant associations in Northern Ghana (Eades, 1994), *Mainly Traders*

Town unions or the *Parapo*: four main towns, Ogbomosho, Igboho, Shaki and Igbetti. **Membership** of all but Igbetti was **restricted to married men**. Membership size ranged from 83 for Shaki *parapo*, the smallest, to 170 for the Ogbomosho *parapo*, the largest. *Parapo* were governed by an executive body (chairman- *alaga*, secretary- *akowe* and treasurer- *akapo* together with their deputies. They held regular meetings.

Religious organizations (churches and mosque): Eades accounts on the Yoruba migrants in Tamale suggest that, **two-thirds** were Muslims and the remainder Christians. Muslims worshiped in the Sabon Gida mosque or the Hausa Zongo mosque. **A Koranic school** specifically for Yoruba children in Sabon Gida established in late 1960s; mainstream population of 250, and evening class population of 180.

Nigerian migrant associations in Northern Ghana (Eades, 1994) **cont'd.**

- ❑ Many recognized **Yoruba mallams** were also in Tamale providing all manner of services (divination, ritual, amulets and prayer) for the migrants and Ghanaians.
- ❑ Of about 12 churches in Tamale at the time, 3 had almost exclusively, Yoruba congregations. **The First Baptist Church**, the largest had a membership of about **400**, the **United Missionary Church** had a membership of about **200**, all from – Igbetti, and the **Second Baptist Church** had membership of about **100**, was made up of Yoruba migrants from Ogbomosho, Igboho, Ilesha and Shepeteri.
- ❑ There were **similarities in the organization** of all the three Yoruba churches in Tamale. Most congregation members belonged to some sort of **society (egbe)**.

Nigerian migrant associations in Northern

Ghana (Eades, 1994) cont'd.

- ❑ Royal Ambassadors (boys and young men), Women's Missionary Union (married women), Girls' Auxiliaries (girls) and Egbe Lydia (young educated unmarried women).

The Yoruba Community Committee (Ilu Pejo): brought together representatives of all Yoruba towns with migrants in Tamale. Started with informal meetings and developed into a formal organization with its own officials and representatives from the Yoruba towns with migrants in Tamale. 16 Yoruba towns were represented.

- ❑ Ilu Pejo focused mainly on **disputes between members from different towns** as those between people from the same town were handled by town parapo. Ilu Pejo also sent delegations to different events and activities in town.

Nigerian migrant associations in Northern Ghana (Eades, 1994) **cont'd.**

The Nigerian Community Committee: served as a bridge between Nigerians in Tamale and its environs and the Nigerian High Commission in Accra. It was created as an attempt to coordinate the activities of the various groupings in the area. Initially, the NCC consisted of members of the three largest Nigerian ethnic groups – Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo. When in 1969 the Ghanaian government asked missions of foreign governments in the country to issue their nationals with passports, the Nigerian High Commission registered Nigerians nationals through the NCC.

The Oboman Kuo (Obeng, 2010)

The Oboman Kuo: It is an umbrella association for the people of Obo (a rural community in the Eastern Region of Ghana) who have migrated to Accra and Tema mainly for trade. It is a domestic migrant association, formed in the 1960s and serves to coordinate a number of smaller associations (Obo Humble Ladies, Kakyire Youngsters, Friends of Presby, Adehyemma Fun Club, Obo Youth Association and Obo Biakoye). Membership is about 500.

□ Since its formation, Oboman Kuo initiated development projects including: the Kwahu Water Project, construction of a 48 shed market, community centre, renovation of the girls' dormitory of secondary school and re-roofing of the community clinic, initiation of efforts to establish tertiary educational institution in Obo, provision of street lights, paving of some access roads and establishment of scholarship scheme for brilliant but needy students.

The Bantari (Tonah, 2005), *Cattle herders*

- ❑ **The Bantari:** Fulani ethnic association in Wungu, northern Ghana. Formed in 1992, with 2005 membership size of 25, the association is organized around the survival and expansion of cattle herd.
- ❑ It has executive body, and regular meetings times but with no written constitution. The association provides financial and material support to members.
- ❑ In recent times, Bantari has been involved with conflict resolution in Wungu and its environs.

Nigerian Migrant associations in Accra, (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010)

- ❑ Since 2008, my research has focused on **three Nigerian migrant associations** in Accra, namely the **Nigerian Women association**, the **Nigerian Committee of Brothers association**, and the **Edo State association**.
- ❑ In terms of membership, they fall into ethnic (the Edo), national (the Nigerian Women) and a semblance of brotherhood or charity (the Nigerian committee of Brothers) associations.
- ❑ The associations were formed to maintain ties and provide assistance to each other.
- ❑ They have durable organizational structures and well defined tenures of leadership

Nigerian Migrant associations in Accra, (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2010), **cont'd**

- New migrants show higher leaning to the associations, but leadership responsibilities are mostly entrusted in the hands of older migrants

Association	ESA*	NCBA**	NWA***
Sex	Males & Females	All-Male	All-Female
Membership	75	Over 200	Over 100
Yr. of Est.	2006	2004	2001
Meeting Place	Hse. No. 31, 1 st Race Course Link, Lapaz	Rotational	Nigeria House, Accra
Location	Abeka Lapaz	Madina	Accra

Edo State Association (also Edo Association) **Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association *Nigerian Women Association*

Migrant associations and migrant integration in Ghana

Although migrant integration is a task by individual migrants, increasingly, the role of migrant associations is becoming important. As Acquah (1958) has observed, migrant associations are created to provide integrative and supportive environment for new arrivals. For this reason we explore the integration role of the associations discussed.

- The existence of the **Yoruba associations** allowed new migrants to enter into **ready-made social networks** on their arrival in Tamale.
- They also served as **friendship networks** within which migrants spent much of their time, and also received **support for personal, family and other problems**
- **Cases of marriage between Yoruba migrants and Ghanaians** were also observed by Eades (1994:160).

Migrant associations and migrant integration in Ghana, **cont'd**

- ❑ In the case of **Bantari**, members were helped as individuals and families to find a community, Wungu; achieved economic stability and self-sufficiency through jobs provided by Alhaji Iddrisu Mahamadu, the president and his relations; and learnt the new social and political system of Wungu and Ghana in the process.
- ❑ For **Oboman**, it provided its members a platform for uniting natives of Obo in Accra/Tema as a measure to ward off individualism and the *lack of belongingness* that characterise urban life.
- ❑ The **Edo Association** helps members deal with the problems they encounter with immigration officials.

Migrant associations and migrant integration in Ghana, cont'd

- ❑ The **Nigerian Committee of Brothers Association** takes interest in the initial settling problems its members encounter (eg. Accommodation). Also, participation in association activities stimulates civic participation
- ❑ The associations also serve as vital sources of financial assistance for taking care of medical cost, as well as housing and accommodation problems.
- ❑ Members are encouraged to show pride in their culture by expressing, promoting, and preserving their traditional songs and dances as well as dresses and foods.
- ❑ The unity and confidence brought by these cultural activities help the associations and their members to mobilize resources and pool their energies together to deal with the challenges they face in Ghana.

Migrant associations and the negotiation of labour market conditions in Ghana

- ❑ Cattle herding, the economic activity of Bantari members, comes with a lot of risks (bad weather and climatic conditions and high rate of loss of livestock to disease and livestock rustlers).
- ❑ When these happen, Bantari provides both financial and material supports to such members 'to bring them back to their feet'.
- ❑ 'Livestock may be loaned out to members', and for new arrivals, the association ... assists *them* to locate Mamprusi cattle owners searching for hired herdsman. In other cases, the association helps establish contact with cattle traders (Tonah, 2005a:268).
- ❑ Bantari also mediates and actually resolves farmer-herder conflicts between its members and farmers within and around the Wungu area

Migrant associations and the negotiation of labour market conditions in Ghana, **cont'd**

- ❑ As traders, Nigerian migrants in Ghana came into conflict with the law/authorities. Here membership in **parapo** or any of the associations became important (Eades, 1994; Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009a):
- ❑ *Senior members had links with the police and other officials and could intercede on the member's behalf. If a member was arrested, one of the big men would be contacted and he would set off to the police station to try and settle the matter' (Eades, 1994: 145).*
- ❑ The **Ilu Pejo** also intervened and reached agreement on market stall charges for its members. Meetings of **Ilu Pejo** also discussed issues pertaining to the trade activities of its members. Eades reports that, for these meetings, women were made to attend.

Migrant associations and the negotiation of labour market conditions in Ghana, **cont'd**

- ❑ When Nigerian migrants in Accra get into trouble with the Ghanaian Ports, Customs and Police officials (which occurred from time to time), some of cases end up in law courts.
- ❑ In these situations, the associations offer assistance by intervening to find a solution on behalf of the troubled member. In many cases the associations attempt finding legal counsel for the member.
- ❑ These intervention acts help members in their economic activities and **'...remain outstanding, unmatched by any other activity'**.

Migrant associations and the negotiation of labour market conditions in Ghana, **cont'd**

- ❑ The **Nigerian Committee of Brothers** intends establishing a transportation business to generate funds for other projects and also to offer employment to some of its members.
- ❑ The **Nigerian Women Association** also hopes to set up a viable economic venture to provide jobs for some of its members (Antwi Bosiakoh, 2009a)

All of these intentions, when materialized, would also come to add to the way and manner the associations aid their members to participate in the Ghanaian labour market.

Summary/Conclusion

- ❑ The major pre-occupation of this paper has been to discuss the role of migrant associations in migrant integration and the negotiation of labour market conditions in Ghana.
- ❑ In doing so, the paper first provides brief history of migration in Ghana, and discusses the emergence of migrant associations in the migration process.
- ❑ Different dimensions of different migrant associations in Ghana have been discussed. Two specific highlights have been made, namely how the associations help their members integrate into Ghana through the activities, programmes and services they provide for them, and how the associations help their members to participate in the Ghanaian labour market.

THANK YOU