



Unpacked narratives on migration governance and gender in West Africa

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Much of the narratives on West African migration ignore gender perspectives or tend to focus on women as gendered, while men are portrayed as, perhaps unwittingly, neutral, or ungendered. These narratives present different perspectives on how migration and gender intersect in the region. Unfortunately, narratives on migration governance and gender that perceive female migration as disempowering and a breakdown of traditional family systems have dominated the West African regional migration narratives and shaped how male and female migrants and migration are perceived and understood, and they have had considerable influence on policy approaches. Migration narratives from West Africa tend to focus on the migration of males as the so-called bread winners and, therefore, the movers at the expense of females as the stayers; this restricts understandings of the complexity of the region's gender issues. To decolonize knowledge production on such narratives, this presentation unpacks the discourses surrounding the linkages between migration governance and gender for a better understanding of the narratives framing debates and policy, the actors of such narratives and the effects of those narratives on shaping migration governance and gender issues in the region.