

Paths to Viability: Transnational Strategies among Ghana's Small-scale ICT Entrepreneurs

Linnet Taylor¹

¹University of Sussex, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, UK

ltaylor@ids.ac.uk

This paper uses fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) to investigate the relative importance of mobility in the formation and viability of the small-to-medium businesses (SMEs) that are responsible for most local internet access in poor countries. It is based on a study of Ghanaian commercial internet cafes, the majority located in the country's remote northern regions, with a second group of cafes studied in the capital city, Accra. The findings presented here demonstrate that both migrant and nonmigrant cafe owners in Ghana are using transfers from abroad of all kinds, especially physical capital and knowledge, to create and sustain their businesses. They also show that for those whose presence in the sector is marginal and precarious, i.e. the smallest businesses and those belonging to younger and poorer entrepreneurs, these transfers represent an essential strategy in maintaining a viable enterprise.