Transnational mothering among Kenyans in Portugal: Experiences and Perceptions

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Abstract

Title: Transnational mothering among Kenyans in Portugal: Experiences and Perceptions

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Key words: Migration, transnational parenting, transnational motherhood, transnational mothers, Kenyans, Portugal.

This study is vital for social work professionals in Portugal who can use the establishments to comprehend the difficulties faced by transnational mothers and find ways to support them on how to cope emotionally. This is a study among Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal which aimed at exploring the parenting experiences and perceptions regarding parenting at a distance. The aim was to establish how Kenyan mothers in Portugal perform transnational parenting as well as what they perceive to be the roles of a mother. A qualitative methodology was employed using in-depth interviews as the major tool of data collection, alongside micro-ethnography with participant observation. Six participants were selected and interviewed in 2019, with children back in Kenya.

The findings revealed that majority of the Kenyan mothers moved to Portugal in search better paying jobs and this was made possible by the support from migrant networks in Kenya and Portugal. Secondly, the findings further show that the Kenyan transnational mothers depend on communication through WhatsApp messages and video calls, as well as remitting financial help, to maintain their left behind children. Thirdly, the findings present how challenging it is for these mothers to be away from their children as it emotionally drains both the mothers and their left behind children. Regarding perceptions, the Kenyan transnational mothers held views that they are the primary care givers and that as mothers they ought to be present in their children's lives. They also perceived themselves as the ones in charge of moulding their children's behaviours. One of the main findings of the study is that the mothers felt grateful for the opportunity to provide quality education and basic needs for their left behind children. This made them feel empowered as mothers and the heads of their households in Kenya which promoted resilience, especially considering the increase in the quality of life provided to their children (Yamanaka & Piper, 2005). This made the participants so proud thus, expressing the empowering nature of migration for the Kenyan transnational mothers.

 This study is significant to social worker in relation to the need for social and psychological support towards transnational mothers and left behind children. Moreover, social workers may find useful to advocate for policies that avail visits and returns to maintain the human right to family reunification, which may ease transnational motherhood (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012). The aim is to lower the negative effects of parent-child separation and enhance the wellbeing of parents and their children.

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List of Abbreviations

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

IOM: International Organization for Migration

SEF: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras

ACP: African Caribbean and African countries

IFSW: International Federation of Social Work

OFW: Overseas Filipino Workers

Acknowledgements

Chapter One: Introduction

Migration is one of the most commonly discussed topics within and across borders. When people move to a different geographical space, they are faced with new cultures, which connote new ways of thinking and understanding in host societies. This therefore influences the migrant's original attitudes, practices, and norms and thus brings complexities in the ways of doing family and parenting across borders (Grillo & Mazzucato, 2008).

This study is vital for social work professionals in Portugal who can use the establishments to comprehend the difficulties faced by transnational mothers and find ways to support them on how to cope emotionally. For example, Social workers can promote policies that avail visits and returns to maintain the human right to family reunification which may ease transnational motherhood (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012). The aim is to lower the negative effects of parent-child separation and enhance the wellbeing of parents and their children.

When people migrate and leave part of their family behind, they tend to maintain familial relations, thus creating a transnational family. Transnational families are thus defined as those whose members live in two or more countries but are maintained through constant communication and remittances as way of affirming the family relationships (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002).

The way in which Kenyan families manage to maintain family structures across distance is, however, an understudied subject in migration research, which has limited knowledge of the features, experiences, perceptions as well as challenges facing Kenyan transnational families. The aim of this case study is therefore, to establish the experiences and the perceptions of Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal. Additionally, an important question to ask is whether the continuity in the gender-based roles within the family applies to transnational Kenyan families, or whether the uncertainty causes them to accept changes in the structure of gender-based roles and expectations (Borell, Rask, & Warsame, 2014).

Research into transnational families focuses on the experience of economic migrants, and the transnational family form has been considered a result of economic globalization. For example, Borell, Rask, & Warsame (2014) argue that transnational families are a result of the global economy that is reproduced through the means of dependence on a transnational division of labour (p. 1329). However, transnational families are not only a consequence of global economic conditions but also refugee flows caused by political instabilities, environmental disasters (like drought, hurricanes, floods) as well as religious and sexuality persecution (Borell et al., 2014). Transnational families can also be a result of search for higher education and family reunions that may involve more members travelling but leaving some more behind (Lockwood, Smith, & Karpenko-Seccombe, 2019).

The separation of family members affects the relationship between couples and other family members since the distance between family members often changes access to resources, in a way that those that remain in the country of origin are often dependent on those who have employment in the new country (Borell et al., 2014). This change within the family is worsened when family members are no longer able to meet, communicate, and interact face-to-face daily. Therefore, members of a transnational family resort to using long-distance communication through mobile phone calls and social media, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, skype and IMO (Borell et al., 2014; Sørensen & Vammen, 2014).

Transnational motherhood, on the other hand, is a result of women migration, as well as the policies of migration in host countries that restrict family reunification, but also the kind of

jobs taken on, which lead migrant mothers to leave their children behind, in the care of other kin with the support of mothers from a distance (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012). Transnational motherhood can further be attributed to the challenges facing the traditional family, such as the increase in divorces and thus the rise of female-headed households, which leave all responsibilities of child care, provision and protection to mothers who turn to looking for better sources of income to manage their families (Manyara, Mwangi, & Apollos, 2016). The question is also of legal resources, in many countries the divorced parents are obliged by law to give financial support to the children, but this is not the case in Kenya. Research on transnational families has much emphasis on traditional roles within the family establishing that even when mothers migrate, they are expected to forge a way to provide emotional care and raise their left behind children from a distance, as a way to fulfil the expectations from their families and community members (Sørensen & Vammen, 2014).

The researcher had the idea of doing a study on Kenyan transnational mothers after the literature already mentioned and a few interactions in the church she attended, realising that most of the members were distant parents who left their children in Kenya. Additionally, the researcher did a literature background research and realised that no study had ever been done in relation to any East African migrants in Portugal and therefore decided to carry on this innovative research regarding transnational Kenyan mothers in Portugal.

1.1 Problem statement

There is an increase in the migration of Africans from Sub-Saharan African to Europe and the United States and by 2010, it was established that there are at least a million of African migrants in Europe and that in 2017, 47% of migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa are women (Connor, 2018). It was further established that there is a total of 180,000 Kenyan migrants in Europe, Norway and Switzerland, by the end of 2017 (Connor, 2018).

According to Portuguese Service of Borders and Immigration (Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras, 2017), there are seventy-eight (78) Kenyan migrants and the number of females (50) surpasses that of men (28) (Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras, 2017). This indicates that there are more Kenyan women migrating to Portugal than men and this presents an interesting fact which brings about the question of reasons behind migration in Kenyan women and what happens to the family members left behind especially the children. With the increasing number of Kenyan transnational families in Portugal, there is scanty knowledge regarding the experiences, perceptions as well as challenges.

In Portugal, there have been studies conducted (Budal, 2018; Dahal, 2016; Dangol, 2015; Trovao, 2016; Vigil, 2017) in relation to transnational parenting among Nepali, Filipino and African migrants (from Portuguese former colonies such Mozambique and Cape Verde). However, no study among Kenyan migrants has ever been conducted. Additionally, the studies conducted in Portugal were in relation to transnational parenting and none whatsoever in relation to transnational mothering.

1.2 Background and purpose of the study

The Republic of Kenya is in the Eastern part of Africa and it is bordered by Uganda, Tanzania, Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia. According to UNICEF, Kenya has an estimate population of fifty-two million (52) as of 2019 and it is ranked among the poorest countries in the world, with almost half of its population leaving in absolute poverty while forty two percent (42%) of the population lives below the poverty line (UNICEF, 2018).

The high number of populations, high levels of unemployment and high levels of poverty in Kenya contribute to the increase in the migration of Kenyans, both within Kenya and abroad.

Therefore, the Kenyan emigrant community is majorly driven by the search for employment and education opportunities. And that is a result of labour market conditions, such as the wage gap and the supply of labour, which lead young people in Kenya to migrate abroad, in search for employment and thus higher wages than those in Kenya.

Research indicates that the top countries of destinations for Kenyan migrants are: the United Kingdom; the United States of America; African countries, such as the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. Additionally, more Kenyans can be located in other regions of the world like Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, the Caribbean, Oceania, as well as Europe although Kenyan migration to the Middle East in search for jobs is more trending (IOM, 2015).

Research further established that in Kenya, most migrants are male although the number of women migrating within Kenya and to other countries is increasing every year hence, a change in the patterns of Kenyan migration currently (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2012). However, less research has been done in relation to the migration of Kenyan women and what transpires regarding the experiences and perceptions of Kenyan transnational mothers since most studies focus on male migrants (Cotton, 2017).

Kenyan migrants thus contribute to the Kenyan economy, as continuously reported by the Central Bank of Kenya, that compiles reports regarding remittances received through money transfer organizations. For instance, it was found that in 2014, an estimate of 1.4 billion USD was remitted to Kenya, although this figure may be low because there are several other non-formal ways remittances come into Kenya.

The report indicated that majority of the sources of the remittances were North America (55%) followed by Kenyans in Europe (27%). The report highlighted that the Kenyan families that received the remittances used the money majorly to buy food, pay for rent, build homes, as well as constructing houses for rental businesses. The money was also used to pay school fees for children education, buy plots of land and taking care of health services for the family (IOM, 2015). This study established that the Kenyan transnational mothers are part of what make up the Kenyan diaspora that sends remittances back to Kenya, to cater for the children and other family members' wellbeing, as discussed in detail in chapter five of this research.

1.3 Aims of the research
The study aimed at establishing answers to the following research questions.

Main research Questions

1. How do Kenyan transnational mothers perform parenting from a distance?
2. How do Kenyan transnational mothers perceive their roles as mothers?

Sub-questions

1. How do Kenyan mothers perceive gender practices relating to parenting between Kenyan and Portuguese parents?
2. What are the challenges of parenting from a distance?
3. How do Kenyan transnational mothers cope with the challenges of parenting from a distance?
4. What plans do Kenyan transnational mothers have for their left-behind children?

Therefore, the major purpose of the study was to understand the experiences and perceptions of transnational mothering among Kenyan migrants in Portugal. The research further aimed at making use of the theoretical knowledge and skills gained through the Mfamily master's in social work with Families and Children, as well as contributing the existing knowledge base of

social work, migration and transnational mothering from the perspective of Kenyan migrants in Portugal.

The research had the following additional aims.

• To establish the factors behind the migration of Kenyan mothers to Portugal.

• To establish the role of migrant networks in the migration decision of Kenyans to Portugal.

• To explore the influences of the parenting style adopted by Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal.

The research adopted a qualitative methodology to establish answers to the research questions, as well as achieving the aims of the study. A qualitative study is one that aims at seeking to interpret meaning from a data set, as a way to understand the social aspects of the population being studied (Bryman, 2012). The research thus employed qualitative in-depth interviews alongside micro-ethnography, as the tools of data collection. The participants were three Kenyan migrant women with children both in Kenya and Portugal and three Kenyan migrant women with all their children in Kenya.

The secondary data that was adopted for this study was both from international and national databases such Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) in Portugal, United Nations, International Organisation for Migration and the Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics. Additional data was retrieved from the research work that was done by Mfamily students at ISCTE-IUL.

1.4 Significance of the study

According to Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (2000), migration of Kenyans in Portugal is a new phenomenon as Kenyans are seen to have started considering Portugal as their country of destination roughly beginning of 2000. However, since 2000 until today, no study has been conducted in relation to any social aspect or any other field of research among Kenyans in Portugal.

The research contributes to the body of knowledge regarding migration of Sub-Saharan women to Europe, an aspect that is new but also understudied as it explores the experiences and perceptions of women while practicing parenting from a distance. The study further provides knowledge on the migration trajectory of the Kenyan women migrants in Portugal, while highlighting the importance of migrant networks both in Kenya as well as here in Portugal, in facilitation of the choice of Portugal as the destination country, but also in the settlement and the migrant's integration after arrival (Goldin, Cameron, & Blarajan, 2011; King, 2012).

In addition, the research contributes to the knowledge regarding the costs and benefits that are considered by potential migrants (Goldin et al., 2011), before they decide to move to a different geographical space, as this came out very evident for the Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal. For instance, it was established that some of the benefits for mothers in this study were that they were able to earn much more than they used to earn in Kenya and this enabled them to provide for most of the basic needs, but also improve the quality of life for their children and other family members in their care, while the cost was majorly the challenges that arose from leaving children in Kenya.

Additionally, the study contributes to a discussion regarding the traditional gender roles and expectations in parenting. Relating to the situation of distance parenting being the focus of this research, knowledge regarding the extension of these expectations to Kenyan transnational

mother is highlighted, but also how these gender ideologies have been adjusted to include the breadwinning role to the emotional care and support rendered by these mothers.

The research further contributes to the existing knowledge regarding the type of care arrangements employed by transnational parents, but it also highlights how non-universal these are as suggested by most studies (for instance, Carling, Menjívar, & Schmalzbauer, 2012; Parreñas, 2005; Sørensen & Vammen, 2014 among others). This study thus indicates how the care arrangements are dependent on the migration situation, family composition of the migrant, as well as who the migrant parents trust the most with their child's wellbeing no matter the gender of the caregiver.

More to the above, the research contributes to the understudied aspect of parenting styles adopted by transnational mothers and this further makes the study more interesting, as it establishes how Kenyan transnational mothers struggle to remain relevant in the wellbeing of the left behind children but also to ensure the children turn out as responsible adults, as they grow in the absence of their parents and in this case absent mothers.

The study further contributes to the existing body of knowledge relating to the importance of communication in transnational mothering, as it was clearly stated by each of the Kenyan mothers that they majorly identified calling home, as what they depend on to be emotionally present in the lives of the left behind children, through affirmations of love and care (Carling et al., 2012). The research further found that through communication, the Kenyan transnational mothers can send instructions on how to use the remittances to ensure the children's wellbeing, placing communication as the most important role in distance parenting.

1.6 Social Work implication

The International Federation of Social Workers of 2014 defines social work as indicated below.

> Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (IFSW, 2014).

In relation to social work implication, there are several challenges faced by transnational mothers considering the demands from themselves, families and communities in their home countries to maintain the emotional care, support and grooming of the children left behind, as evidenced in all studies of transnational parenting and transnational mothering (ACP Observatory on migration, 2012; Cotton, 2017; Fresnoza-Flot, 2009; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla, 1997; Kufakurinani, Pasura, & McGregor, 2014; Parreñas, 2005).Due to the pressure to be relevant in the lives of left behind children, transnational mothers are involved in constant communication to exchange emotional, moral, alongside financial support between home countries and destination societies, as well as other countries where family members spread out in more than two national borders.

The familial relations across borders may create more opportunities for migration mobility of other family members, as well integration but they may also strain and present challenges.

When the challenges set in, transnational family members at both ends may need support from social workers in the countries where they reside. For instance, transnational mothers may receive support in terms of how to care for their left behind children from a distance. And when

mothers feel stressed out from the demands of care, social workers can support them emotionally and help them find ways of ensuring emotional and physical health to be well equipped to support the left-behind family members especially the children.

Transnational parents can also be supported with information regarding the existing social networks that could ease their integration in the host country for easier integration, as well as finding jobs to help stabilise their economic position much easier. These can be supported to keep their home culture, as well adapting to the host culture to balance their identity and make their stay a more comfortable.

On the other hand, children left behind need much more help like their absent parents. They need to be supported to understand the family situations and reasons behind the migration of their parents to save their world from falling. The absence of parents traumatises children that without professional help and support their world can fall apart. With Social work support, these children can be encouraged to cope with this frustration, stress and emotional challenges and help them get through school and realise their dreams.

Social workers can advocate for flexible immigration policies that support parents with young children to be handled better for the wellbeing of the children and lessening the period of separation between parents and their children.

1.7 Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter one consists of the introduction which presents the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study and the social work implication of the study. Chapter two presents the literature review including books, papers, journal articles, dissertations and reports about migration and transnational parenting and mothering regarding African, Asian, European migrants and Kenyan migrants. Chapter three presents the theoretical framework outlining theories and concepts related to migration networks and transnational parenting that guided the study on transnational mothering among Kenyan migrants in Portugal. Chapter four is composed of the methodology employed by the study, specifically presenting the research design, data collection tools, ethical considerations, and the limitations of the study, while chapter five is consists of the findings, as well as analysis in relation to participants reasons for migrating to Portugal, role played by migrant networks, how they are performing parenting from a distance, what perceptions they hold regarding roles of a mother, their challenges, coping mechanism and future plans as derived from the interviews, as well as the micro ethnography. The dissertation ends with a conclusion that summarises the major findings and suggestions for future research areas.

Chapter Two: Literature

The section below presents literature from previous researches and studies regarding transnational parenting, transnational motherhood and the gaps identified to be filled by this study on transnational mothering among Kenyans in Portugal. The literature contributes to contextualise what has been produced to better understand the topic of the dissertation, Transnational Mothering among Kenyans in Portugal: Perceptions and Experiences.

According to Portuguese Service of Borders and Immigration (Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras 2017), there is currently seventy-eight (78) Kenyans in Portugal, in which the number of women, fifty (50), surpass the number of the men, e twenty-eight (28).
The study will thus focus on transnational Kenyan mothers in Portugal. The concept of transnationalism is defined as:

> Transnationalism involves migrant activities 'that take place on a recurrent basis across national borders and that require a regular and significant commitment of time by participants… These activities are not limited to economic enterprises (such as sending and receiving remittances, or setting up a business back home), but include political, cultural and religious activities as well' (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992).

This means that for a family to be considered transnational, there must be aspects of constant emotional connection and sense of belonging alongside remittances that flow between family members who migrated and those residing in home countries. The difference between transnational family members and migrant families is that these last are not in contact with relatives across the national borders (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002; King, 2012).

2.1 Transnational parenting

Transnational parenting is the process in which one or both parents migrate leaving children in the origin country, but keep engaged in caring for their children from a distance (Haagsman, 2015). Transnational parents are thus, part of what is referred to as a transnational family, which consists of family members living in two or more countries while having kinship ties resulting from reciprocal relations maintained across national borders (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002; Haagsman, 2015; Parreñas, 2005). Transnational families can involve having some or all children below 18 years of age left behind in the home country or a different geographical space from their parents, to be cared for by other family members (Haagsman, 2015).

The decision to migrate is based on several factors in both the migrant parent's country of origin and the intended destination. Some of the reasons may include: the poor economic situation in the home country; the hope for economic benefits in the receiving country; social capital and human resources in both countries, among other motivations (Haagsman, 2015; ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012).
The strict migration policies contribute to the prolonging of transnational family members to keep separate from each other, due to the obstacles of mobility and reunification options. This is the case with Angolan and Nigerian transnational parents in the Netherlands (Haagsman, 2015).

With the current increase in migration from Africa to Europe, there is a great increase in African transnational families and several adjustments in the gender roles depending on who in the family migrates (Konig & Regt, 2010). However, there is limited knowledge regarding

the different experiences and perceptions held in these families, especially from Sub-Saharan Africa, although a few studies have been identified, as detailed below.

In the African cases, international migration of mothers occurs especially in the context of following a migrant husband, or, when they migrate alone, it is mainly single women (Mazzucato & Dito, 2018). Therefore, single women usually leave their children in the care of other kin when they go abroad, as evidenced in the case of West African transnational families (Mazzucato & Dito, 2018).

The African transnational families are thus maintained through communication and remittances sent by family members to be used for child care, provision of food, paying rent, buying assets and starting up businesses in the home country and this the case for African transnational families between Africa and Europe (Caarls, Haagsman, Kraus, & Mazzucato, 2018; Kufakurinani et al., 2014).

However, African transnational families are as well faced with challenges that come with distance between parents and the children and these may include; double expenses resulting from taking care of more than one household. Guilt; stress; criticism from society especially to the absent mothers; deteriorating relationships and children recognising care givers much more than their parents are additional challenges. These were evidenced in the cases of Angolan, Congolese, Ghanaian, Senegalese, and Nigerian transnational families between Europe and Africa (Caarls et al., 2018; Haagsman, 2015), as well as Zimbabwean transnational families (Kufakurinani et al., 2014).

The studies above thus explain the features of the African transnational families however, they focus on transnational parenting and not transnational mothering. Further, none relates to Kenya, in which a gap needs to be filled regarding Kenyan transnational families, specifically mothers, the aim of this dissertation, concerning the Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal.

The sub-themes below further explain the different aspects of transnational families and parenting and they include; gender, care arrangements, class, communication and age of the child (Carling et al., 2012). These themes will be explored in relation to the transnational mothering among Kenyan migrants in Portugal.

2.1.1 Gender

Transnational parenting is influenced by gender ideologies in a way that women and men who migrate experience different experiences in the host country, as well as when it comes to caring for the left-children (Carling et al., 2012). Mothers and fathers both send gifts and money and most times maintain communication however, mothers are expected to provide also emotional care even. Hence in transnational parenting, mothers are accused of undermining the traditional responsibilities of motherhood, as they are not physically available to nurture their children's material well-being (Carling et al, 2012). This was evidenced among Filipino transnational mothers in France (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009) and Mexican transnational mothers in New Jersey (Dreby, 2006).

Children too consider their mothers as the main caregivers and thus blame mothers the most for emotional separation in transnational parenting as evidenced in the case African, Latin American, Southeast Asian and Chinese transnational families (Mazzucato & Dito, 2018).

However, this may happen when fathers migrate as children may display the same emotional pain and behavioural problems as in the case of Asian, American and African transnational families (Jordan, Dito, Nobles, & Graham, 2018).

However, in transnational parenting, the gender ideologies are adjusted as migrant mothers take on the role of breadwinners, as fathers, as they are engaged in the labour markets and send remittances to cover the needs of their children. This takes place together with being distant caregivers, as in the case of Latino transnational mothers in United States (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla, 1997) and among African transnational families between Africa and Europe (Caarls et al., 2018). Thus, gender roles are not static as most studies argue.

Since the African traditional family emphasises a collective effort of child raising, it is not strange to have children being raised by their extended family. Still, as it takes case in other countries of Europe, Latin America and others, the mothers are expected to be the primary care giver and role model to children (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012). Therefore, leaving children behind may cause migrant mothers guilt and criticism for being absent as in the case of Zimbabwean transnational families in Zimbabwe (Kufakurinani et al., 2014).

2.1.2 Care arrangements

In relation to the gender ideologies, mothers are looked at as the main caregivers for children, but also take charge of the house chores, regarding maintenance of the home. When they migrate, the family and children's care is usually handed over to other women in the family, such as grandmothers, aunts, older sisters or female house helps come in to ensure that these still go on (Carling et al., 2012).

The quality of relationship between absent parents and caregivers is very crucial for the well-being of left behind children. This relationship may be affected by reduction or stopping the sending of remittances by migrant parents (Carling et al, 2012) and when migrant parents suspect carers to be using the remittances on other issues other than taking care of the left behind children. When this happens, migrant mothers are affected the most with reports of improper treatment of children left behind (Carling et al., 2012) as in the case of Zimbabwean transnational families (Kufakurinani et al., 2014) although this does not mean that fathers are never affected at all when similar reports of their children's maltreatment are given.

2.1.3 Class

Transnational families are known to have structural power inequalities regarding accessibility of resources, mobility opportunities and decision-making (Parreñas, 2005). Households may have the same class before migration however when family members migrate, this leads to class divisions between households of children left behind and their migrant parents and the households with no migrant member at all (Carling et al, 2012). This is because, the amount of remittances sent to the family left behind are dependent on the migrant's job. For example, remittances sent by professional migrants may be more than what is sent by migrants working as house helps with low wages (Carling et al., 2012).

The family class position also influences the nature of migration experience for individuals. For instance, migrant parents with a low class are most likely to choose moving to a different country to work on less skilled jobs to better the quality of life through remittances (Carling et al, 2012). This was studies in the case of Latino mothers in United States (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla, 1997) and Filipino mothers in France (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009).

However, migrants from privileged families are likely to migrate for better professional opportunities and therefore availing more resources to reunite with their children and families (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002). Therefore, the level of class position largely influences the nature of human and social capital that increase the possibility of family reunions, as well as general wellbeing of transnational families (Carling et al., 2012).

Research on migrant class thus highlights how poverty and marginalisation reduce the chances of family reunions although, less resourced migrants send financial support to their children in the home countries even when it means remaining with nothing but also may save for reunification with less resources as evidenced in the case of Filipino mothers in France (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009) and Latino mothers in United States.

2.1.4 Communication

Transnational families and parenting are majorly dependent on communication as migrant parents strive to keep emotionally present in the lives of their left behind children. However, ensuring the emotional care and presence in the children's lives tends to be demanding in transnational parenting and relationships (Carling et al., 2012). The significance of communication is to share information about the day to day life experiences between migrant parents and their children that involves school, health, as well as giving advice and comfort, together with communicating with caregivers about the children (Carling et al. 2012). This is the case with Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) (Alampay, Raza, & Rye, 2017) as well as Angolan and Nigerian transnational families in Netherlands (Haagsman, 2015).

Communication further enables parents and loved ones to affirm the family relationships, since far distant family relationships demand constant communication as a way of maintaining them to keep the social meaning as evidenced in transnational families in Europe (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002).

However, communication from a distance limits parenting because it does not ensure accurate exchange of information regarding the reality of life situations both in home countries and host countries. For instance, when migrant parents talk to their left behind children through the carer's phone, the children may not feel comfortable sharing bad experiences in the presence of the care giver, and thus may present to the parent that all is well back home while it is not true, as in the case of Zimbabwean left behind children (Kufakurinani et al., 2014).

Migrant parents may further find it hard to guide and discipline their children on phone as it is difficult because the care giver has more influence in the life of the left behind children (Kufakurinani et al., 2014).
In the case of developing countries, studies established that some transnational families do not own smart phones as they cannot afford them. This makes communication harder between family members, worsening the situation of absence, as evidenced in the Zimbabwean left behind children (Kufakurinani et al., 2014), as well in the other African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012).

2.1.5 Age of the children

Left-behind children experience separation from parents in different ways depending on their age and level of understanding. During the parent's absence, children continue to grow and develop as they are exposed to different events at various occasions, which in turn influence

the quality of relationships they have with their absent parents, as well as with their caregivers (Carling et al., 2012). For instance, when the children left behind are young, they may have no memories of their parents other than the pictures and stories told to them. This makes it hard for absent parents to have a solid relationship and proper communication with their left behind children and hence, as time goes on, the children may be more attached to their caregivers and not their birth parents (Carling et al., 2012).

On the other hand, when older children are left behind, they may feel the separation harder on themselves as they struggle to understand why their parents are not with them (Carling et al., 2012). However, these children use technology to communicate with their parents about their needs, worries and plans, as well as report the quality of care received from the caregivers and sometimes suggest to their parents their wishes to move to where the parents settled, which may in turn improve the quality of relationship with their absent parents (Carling et al., 2012).

This means that the age of children left behind determines the kind of care, emotional, attachment and communication demand from the absent parents, which presents different expectations for the absent fathers and mothers as they find it challenging to keep up with the constant and fast growth of the children they left behind (Carling et al., 2012).

2.2 Parenting styles and transnational mothering

This section presents the types of parenting as suggested by Bamrind (1971), namely: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive and the traditional style suggested by Helaine, (2014). These will be discussed in relation to transnational mothering.

Authoritative parenting style is where parents put in place rules to be followed in a home but explain why the rules are there, while giving a chance to the children to give their opinions about decisions made in the family. Thus, authoritative parenting is seen as warm, supportive, encouraging, accepting as well as responsive (Bamrind, 1971). The permissive parenting style is where parents are more soft, compassionate and free to their children's behaviours. Hence no rules are applied to the child's behaviour and the parent is more of a supporter other than the person to shape the child's behaviour (Bamrind, 1971). On the other hand, the authoritarian parenting style is where parents are so hard on the children as they restrict communication and demand obedience to the rules of the house that are physically and harshly implemented (Bamrind, 1971). Therefore, authoritarian parents are never warm and tender to their children.

Additionally, there is the traditional parent and this kind of parent is known to have a strict approach to parenting and spend time with the children but emphasises discipline as well as being religious as a very crucial aspect in the family and the community they belong to (Bamrind, 1971). The traditional parent encourages children to take on the traditional beliefs of the family and these are carried on through the different cultural traditions (Helaine, 2014). However, parents may have predominance of one parenting style but also present characteristics of the other styles depending on the situation or the age of the child.

In transnational parenting, children experience joint parenting from their relatives in the home country alongside support from the absent parents as they communicate and interact with their children during the time away from each other. When parents migrate, they carry with them the norms, beliefs and culture from the sending countries among which are the ways of raising children while at a distance. Migrant culture thus guides transnational parents' beliefs and experiences about modelling and guiding their children's discipline and behaviours as in the case of African-Caribbean mother in United States (Best-Cummings, 2008).

Transnational mothers believe that they are the main supervisors of children's behaviours and encourage care givers of the left-behind children to be mindful of the discipline and behaviours to prevent the children from misbehaving as evidenced among Filipino transnational mothers in Hong Kong (Peng & Wong, 2013) and African-Caribbean transitional mothers in US (Best-Cummings, 2008).

Therefore, transnational mothers often express being actively involved in raising their children as a way of coping with the criticisms from their society for having left children behind. However, they may be compassionate to their children as a way of proving their love for them through explaining to children why rules must be followed. Through the authoritative style, absent mothers ensure that the children carry on good traits as well as personalities into adulthood so that society does not see them as being abandoned and with no role models, as evidenced among Filipino transnational mothers in Hong Kong (Peng & Wong, 2013).

Similarly, Best-Cummings (2008) established that African parenting is based on the traditional parenting style which connotes values of respect, obedience and complete dependence of children on their parents although this is changing in the contemporary world due to influences from the internet, televisions as well as migration.

However, this is not a universal trait among all African transnational parents, as some are seen to be more permissive and softer to their children while parenting from a distance, as evidenced among left behind children in Zimbabwe, where migrant parents were accused of being so permissive regarding moulding their children's behaviours through the many gifts and money that were sent, yet not supervised, thus pushing the children into delinquency and living reckless lives (Kufakurinani et al., 2014).

Therefore, due to the above challenges with communication from a distance, migrant parents utilize the moments they get to interact with the children and this influences the nature of interaction and the parenting style, which may bring about dynamics in the style employed. For instance, migrant parents may be seen striving to keep the relationship between care givers and children as healthy as possible for the safety of their children (Carling et al., 2012) thus trying to be as soft as possible to the care givers and their children (Kufakurinani et al., 2014).

On the other hand, migrant parents may feel insecure while at a distance and this may trigger them to strive to command respect and being in control of their children's lives, especially regarding disciplinary matters and this may lead to use of the authoritative or at worst the authoritarian style as a way to maintain order in the household back at the home countries (Taylor, 2008).

The parenting styles discussed above thus provided a framework for the study on transnational mothering among Kenyans in Portugal. It is however, important to take caution considering that these styles were developed in the western societies and the limited research regarding parenting styles of African parents, including the ones involved in parenting from a distance (Taylor, 2008).

2.2.1 Transnational motherhood
Transnational motherhood refers to a process through which female migrants that leave children behind in their home countries or in another geographical space, create and rearrange themselves to accommodate spatial and temporal separation from their children while

providing cross-border care (Sørensen & Vammen, 2014). In migration, motherhood is perceived as the thoughts and the care as well as protection of one's left behind children by mothers at a distance (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009).

Migration studies explain that female migration is a consequence of male abandonment of family responsibilities that leave women to take care of both emotional and financial family needs (Sorensen N & Guarnizo, 2007). Additionally, women consider the decision to migrate as part of mothering responsibilities to provide for their children even when this means leaving them behind in home countries (Dreby, 2006).

However, single mothers may migrate due to: labour-demand; civil wars; the poor economies of countries especially in Asia, Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa; high rates of unemployment as well as the increase in female headed households. These force women to search for jobs outside their countries while leaving their children behind (ACP Observatory on migration, 2012; Haines, Minami, & Yamashita, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla, 1997). Transnational motherhood can further be attributed in some cases to the increasing domestic violence in homes which pushes women to move in search their safety and independence from their abusive partners, as evidenced among Polish working-class women (Urbańska, 2016). This study further revealed that some women are forced to migrate to fend for the left behind families by their husbands and families (Urbańska, 2016).

Additionally, migration of women can also be attributed to globalisation that has driven women to take on study opportunities to broaden their knowledge and skills that attract better job opportunities in the future (Adepoju, 2011). Similarly, women look at migration as a source of empowerment that enables them to earn their own money, hence contributing to the increase in the family income and betterment of their status in society. This is the case among East and Southeast Asian migrant women (Yamanaka & Piper, 2005), as well as among Africa, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012).

Transnational motherhood thus looks at the pressures of culturally-specific gender norms as women migrate, which challenges the family and gender roles leading to the adjustment to deal with the reality of caring for their left behind children from a distance with all the difficulties in a context of socially defined moralities (Sørensen & Vammen, 2014). For instance, emotional closeness of mother-child relationships are affected hence the perception that mothers are abandoning and putting their children at risk as well as breaking down their families (Sørensen & Vammen, 2014).
This compels mothers to engage in caring from a distance as a way of fulfilling the normative gender roles of mothering through communication, sharing photographs and remittances although these efforts are never seen as adequate as expressed by mothers (Carling et al., 2012). as in the case Latino mothers in US (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla, 1997), ACP countries (African, Caribbean and Pacific countries) (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012) as well as Filipino transnational mothers in France (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009).

However, the need to strike a balance between the mothers' needs and the left behind family needs becomes very challenging in the cases of low wages. This increases the pressure to sustain families at both ends with the inadequate income and thus keeps these mothers in poverty at the expense of the wellbeing of their children and other family members as evidenced among Latino mothers in US (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla, 1997; Sternberg, 2010) as well as East and Southeast Asian transnational mothers (Yamanaka & Piper, 2005).

However, transnational mothers' nature of job determines the quality of time and care provided from a distance. For instance, in the case of live-in domestic helper, it may be hard to find time to care for the children back home as these mothers have limited time, considering that they are working from when they wake up till they go to bed as evidenced among Filipino mothers in France (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009) and Latino mothers in US (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla, 1997).

Mothering at a distance becomes harder for the case of irregular migrants since their status in the destination country is not recognised thus limiting the mothers' contact with children. Further, this limits the mothers from travelling back home for fear of not being allowed to come back, as well as for not having the possibility of reunification (Fresnoza-Flot, 2009). This occurs in the case of over stay East and Southeast Asian migrant women in Japan and Korea (Yamanaka & Piper, 2005).

Amidst the challenges, migrant women cope through mobile texting, chatting and skyping, as part of the social aspect of transnational mothering. However, this may never prevent migrant mothers from feeling inadequate, guilty and worry about not being in their children's lives physically (Sørensen & Vammen, 2014). This is because despite the adjustments in the forms of mothering through migration, the traditional narratives of mothering continue to consider separation as being against the qualities of good mothering, and this makes mothers to fear being judged by their families and communities back home (Lockwood et al., 2019). This was found in the case Chinese transnational mothers (Peng & Wong, 2013).

The studies above focus on both the experiences and perceptions held regarding transnational mothering and this turns them very informative to the study on Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal. For instance, some authors present the gendered perceptions in transnational parenting and how this shapes the experiences of transnational mothers and their left behind children, as Parreñas (2005); Best-Cummings(2008); Caarls et al.(2018); Jordan et al.(2018); Lockwood et al.(2019); Sorensen N & Guarnizo (2007); Groves & Lui (2012) and Lorentzen (2014). Additionally, some other authors focus on how transnational families are formed, as well as what it takes to consider one a transnational family, as Bryceson & Vuorela (2002) and (King, 2012); while other authors present the experiences of transnational mothers in relation to their migration status, as in the case of Filipino and Latino transnational mothers working as domestic servants as Fresnoza-Flot (2009) and Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla (1997).

2.2.2 Transnational mothering in Portugal
Two studies regarding mothering and immigration were identified to have been conducted in Portugal (Korolius, 2017; Trovao, 2016) and none specific of transnational motherhood and of Kenyan migrants.

In the study conducted on mothering double binds and gendered identities within Cape Verdean and Indian migrants in Portugal, it was established that the Hindu families are reconstructed to include interdependency as well as hierarchy (Trovao, 2016). This means that as parents take care of their children in all aspects of life and teaching them their duties and responsibilities, the children are in turn expected to take care of their parents when they become old. In regards to gender ideologies, men are expected to take charge of material provision and security of the families while the women on the other hand are in charge of care taking for the children and family chores (Trovao, 2016).

However, the Cape Verdean and Indian women were seen to be active as labourers in the cleaning sector in Portugal, which empowered them and consequently reduced the pressure

from their kin, caste and the ethnos religious networks regarding their expectations of being family care takers while adjusting the roles to include breadwinning. The financial empowerment also enabled these migrant women to access more opportunities as influenced by the Portuguese values of shared gender roles in raising children and caring for the family, as well as contributing financially (Trovao, 2016). This finding concurs with the East and Southeast Asian women who expressed that seeking employment through migration was uplifting and improved the quality of their lives (Yamanaka & Piper, 2005).

The other studies that have been conducted about migrants in Portugal, focused on transnational parenting in general and transnational fatherhood (Budal, 2018; Dangol, 2015; Mazzucato & Dito, 2018; Vigil, 2017; Grassi & Vivet, 2014). There has been a study about the integration and parental practices of Russian immigrant mothers (Korolius, 2017). However, none of these looked at transnational mothering. The study on transnational mothering among Kenyan migrants will be the pioneer study regarding transnational motherhood in Portugal.

2.2.3 Kenyan transnational families

A family unit in Kenya includes the immediate as well as the extended family that is: aunts, uncles and cousins, as well as parents-in-law who often interact with each other. Thus, raising children is typically a communal duty as the responsibility is shared among aunts, uncles, grandparents and other members of the community or village (Helaine, 2014). Further, children are expected to respect and honour their parents by being responsible in adulthood and care for them in their old age (Moxnes, 2003).

Family life and parent-child relationships in Kenya and sub-Saharan Africa have been greatly challenged by migration, as this has become increasingly feminized. Many of the women in this region migrate for economic reasons and in a way to maintain these bonds, mothers make efforts to care for their children from a distance, through frequent communication and sending of remittances, as well as gifts. This was evidenced among Kenyan migrant women in Kenyan urban areas (Cotton, 2017), as well African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012).

Furthermore, migration research explains that migration decisions in Sub-Saharan Africa are often made for the household, using migration of family members as a survival strategy aimed at improving overall well-being of the household. However, when this happens, migrant mothers such as Kenyan mothers abroad, leave their children to be fostered by female relatives, often aunts and grandmothers (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012; Cotton, 2017; King, 2012).

Kenyan transnational mothers switch to maternal caregiving through provision of emotional, support by use of communication, and financial support by the modern technology. This provides low cost forms of social networks and devices, such as phones, computers, internet-based tools like digital cameras, video chats on WhatsApp, Skype, IMO, Facebook and international phone cards (Cotton, 2017). Still, this is never enough to fill up the physical absence (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012; Best-Cummings, 2008; Cotton, 2017; Kufakurinani et al., 2014).

2.3 Statistics of Kenyans in Portugal

The statistics of Kenyan migrants in Portugal indicate that there was an increase in the number of Kenyans that entered Portugal from 2000 to 2006. However, from 2007 there was a sharp decrease in the entries of Kenyans into Portugal, when the numbers dropped from hundreds to less than one hundred, until nowadays (Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). It is quite evident that the search for employment opportunities is one of the main factors behind the migration of Kenyans to Europe and other destinations (IOM, 2015). This may be the reason behind the increasing number of Kenyans that came to Portugal from 2000, when 284 migrated, till 2006, when the number was 302. Still, when the economic conditions of Portugal deteriorated, many Kenyans may have chosen to leave Portugal and search for job opportunities elsewhere in the world, reducing the number of Kenyan migrants from 2007, when only 11 moved to Portugal, until 2017, when 78 decided to migrate to the country.

Graph 1. Inflow of Kenyans into Portugal from 2000 to 2017
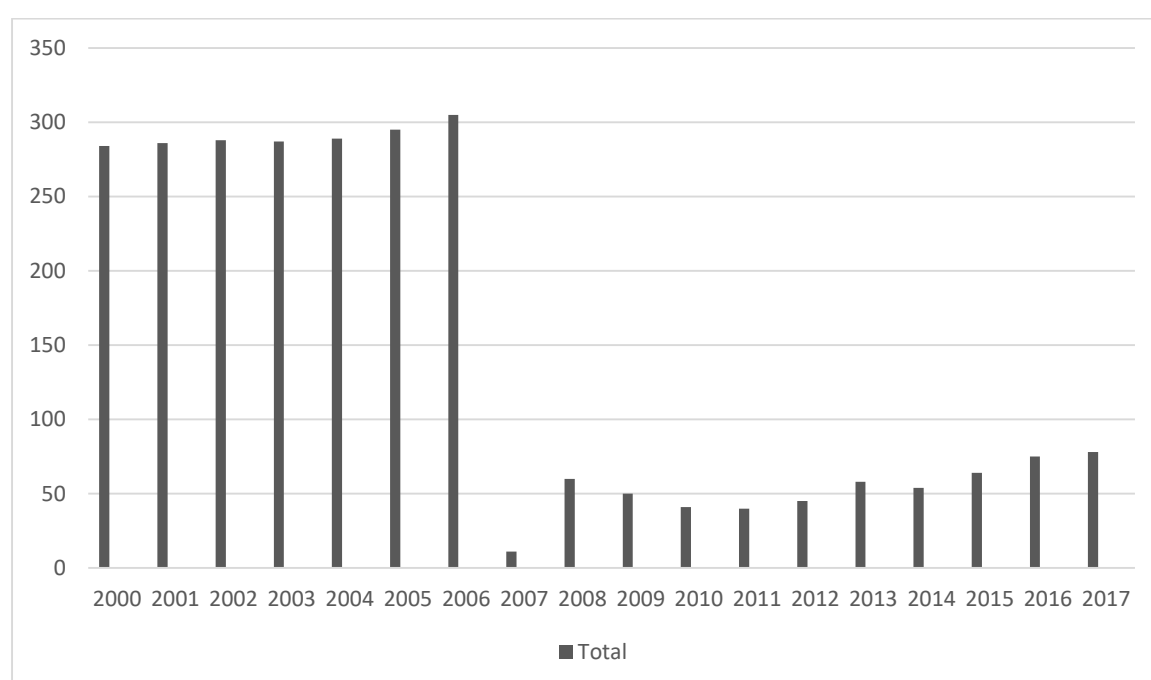
Source: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF)., 2017; de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras, (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).

The graph 2 indicates that in Portugal, from 2000 to 2006, among the total Kenyan residents, there were more males than females. However, beginning with 2007, this fact changed as more women reside in Portugal and this followed through the years. There are currently seventy-eight (78) Kenyan migrants in Portugal according to (Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF), (2017). Fifty of these are female, while the twenty-eight are male. The statistics indicate that more Kenyan women migrating to Portugal in comparison to the men and this brings up the question of who takes charge of their homes and children back in Kenya when they migrate. The study about perceptions and experiences of Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal thus sought to answer this question.

The graph below presents the number of Kenyans entering Portugal between 2010 and 2017, with missing data for the previous years (2000-2009), as this was not found in the yearly reports

for Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF). From this data, we may verify that at least since 2010 there were more Kenyan women moving to Portugal than men.

Graph 2. Inflow of Kenyans in Portugal by sex between 2010 - 2017

Source: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).

Graph 3. Kenyan residents in Portugal by sex, 2000-2017
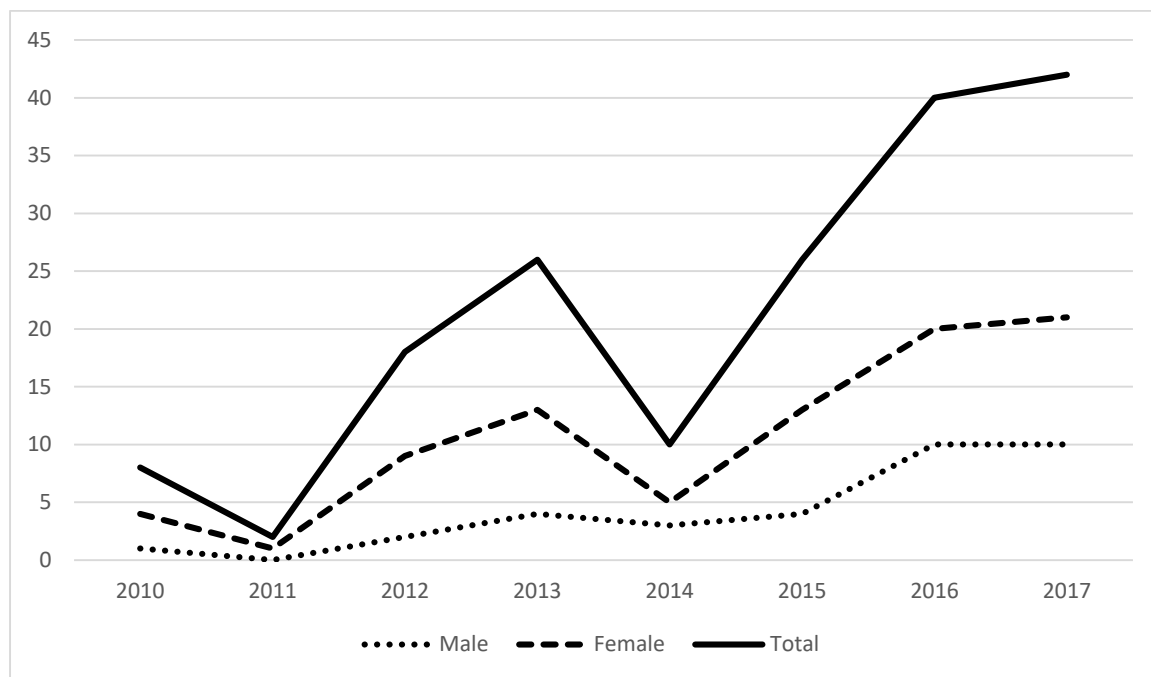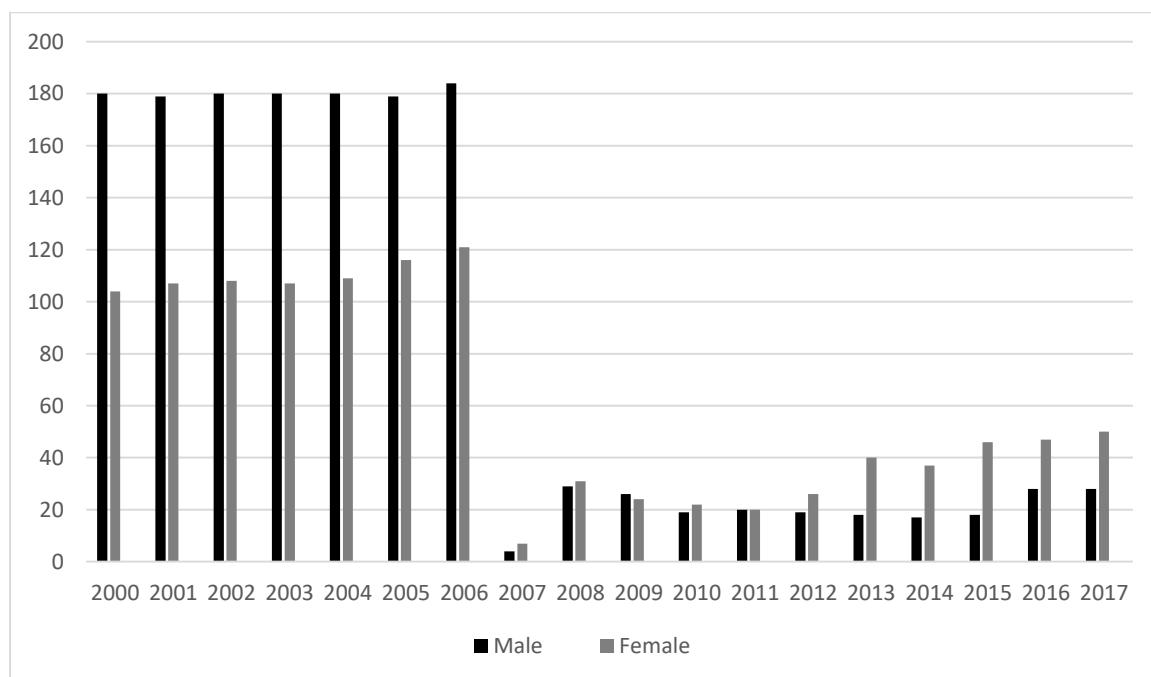

Source: Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017).

Chapter Three: Theoretical key issues

This chapter presents the theoretical structure for the study on transnational motherhood among Kenyans in Portugal. In relation to the problem statement and the literature review identified relating to transnational mothering, there are several theories that contribute to explain the experiences and perceptions in transnational parenting in general, from which the researcher chose three theories to guide the study. The study was therefore informed by macro, meso and micro factors that influence the decision to migrate to new geographical spaces. Additionally, the gender schema theory and the attachment theory also contribute to analyse and better understand the aspect of transnational motherhood among Kenyan migrants.

3.1 Macro, meso and micro factors in the migration decision

The decision to migrate to a new country is usually dependent on the availability of opportunities and benefits measured against the costs and risks for an individual or people intending to move. However, while the theories of migration based on economic assumptions explain the reason to migrate as a quest to search for better paying jobs, research established that some people migrate for other reasons such as: reunification with family members; furthering education, widening life prospects, as well as finding refugee because of political or social insecurities like natural disasters (Goldin et al., 2011).

The patterns of migration explain the economic, social, demographic and political situations of the world where potential migrants come from, as well as where they intend to go, and this explains the push and pull factors on both internal and international migration. Patterns of migration also intend to explain the intentions of migrants in terms of whether they plan to move permanently or temporarily to their intended destination or move back and forth in the migration process. Important to note however, is the fact that migration decisions and processes are determined by several factors that work together at the micro, meso, and macro levels as explained in detail below by Goldin et al (2011).

Micro level: individual and families
At this level, individuals make personal choices depending on what they perceive as the costs and benefits of moving to another country, as well as the psychological and financial risks associated with the decision. However, the decisions to migrate not only are made at individual level but also at the family level, as the intending migrants work with other people especially their family members with whom they usually share the costs as well as the benefits gained from having the family member migrating (Goldin et al., 2011). Additionally, migrants from mostly the developing countries (as Nigeria) are usually on the move as a joint family decision to increase on the family income, as well as improving the quality of life of the entire family (Goldin et al., 2011).

This argument is consistent with Palloni, Massey, Ceballos, Espinosa, & Spittel (2001), who assert that migration decisions are usually jointly made following the model of the need to increase family income. The model explains that members of given households together come up with a plan to have some of the family members migrated in a specific order with an aim of having the highest sum of household income possible.

In agreement with the above authors, King further argues that the decisions to move regarding who is to go, where they are to go, for how long they will be gone, as well as the job they will take on, are decisions taken jointly within the potential migrant's household (2012). Decision-making regarding migration may involve more than just the nuclear family members to include other members of the extended family, as well as community group members, and these may

relate to income increment as well as income diversification to reduce the risk of poverty (King, 2012).

The goal of risk reduction is commonly found in sending countries with poor economies that deal in risky ventures such as farming that can easily be failed because of weather hazards like drought and hurricane, which leads to unemployment. Businesses such as agriculture may not be easily compensated by savings, insurance or credit since these are not available or are not strong in economies where the majority of migrants come from (King, 2012).
As a result of this diversification in families establishing various sources of income, the remittances sent back to the household in the home country can be used to save family business that are failing, but also to take care of the family basic needs, as well as investing in more family assets like houses, land and starting up new business (King, 2012).

Meso level: migrant networks
At this level, the potential migrant networks and social capital like personal networks, family networks and labour networks support the decision to move to another country (King, 2012). King (2012) further draws attention to the gendered nature of migrant networks and he asserts that women play a very active role in creating and maintaining personal networks.

Migrant networks refer to interpersonal relations that link migrants, ex migrants, and people in home countries to each other through kinship, friendship, who are from the same country of origin. These networks raise the chances of movement to international spaces since they decrease the difficulties and risks of migration while on the other hand increasing the benefits that come with migration. For instance, when one has relations to a person that migrated, this builds one's social capital on which one can rely to access resources such as information regarding jobs that have higher pay (Palloni et al., 2001).

Forms of support from the networks include information about existing opportunities like jobs and study offers and visa application process. They may also help with settling, hence, reducing obstacles of migration and consequently making it easier for people to cross-borders (Goldin et al., 2011). Additionally, the networks at the potential destinations give information to people about the likely risks and challenges that may be faced during the process of migration. This thus lowers the emotional challenges associated with moving to new countries (Goldin et al., 2011).

Migrant networks have what is referred to as a multiplier effect as they increase the rates at which migration occurs. However, like social capital, the strength of migrant networks may decrease with time and thus may not continue indefinitely (King, 2012).
However, some migrant networks especially such as the illegal ones, promote the smuggling and trafficking of human beings as these facilitate the transportation of people across borders for the purposes of exploiting them by involving them in drug trafficking, as well as sex trade for the women (King, 2012).

Additionally, social class is crucial in influencing the flow of transnational migration in relation to elites, peasants, among others. This means that individuals and communities with the economic and political power have the most opportunities and possibilities availed to them. For instance, the more skilled an individual is, the more they are likely to have more social capital in terms of networks and consequently mobility capital as result of being able to access resources by being part of a given network or institution. This was evidenced among the

middle-class and educated Israeli migrants in the United States and Britain (Fresnoza-Flot & Shinozaki, 2017).

However, individuals with lower skills and limited economic capital may as well be part of wide social networks that may avail a kind of social capital which provides opportunities to move, as it occurs with the highly skilled and connected individuals. Therefore, the quality of an individual's class is very important in transnational migration (Fresnoza-Flot & Shinozaki, 2017).

Macro level: demographic, economic, and political context
The micro and meso levels are created depending on the context of macro-level systems such as demographic, economic, and political situations that cause the push and pull factors for migration. For example, countries with high incomes, employment opportunities, social securities and hence high development tend to have less push factors for potential migrants. On the other hand, economies with less incomes, employment opportunities combined with high social insecurities tend to increase the migration prospects in search for better life chances (Goldin et al., 2011).

Therefore, migration is influenced by differences in rewards to labour across markets in the world and this can be explained in relation to the level of economic development of a given country and thus the wage offered in different countries is what drives migration rates (Kurekova, 2011). Thus, migration is driven by the differences in labour supply as well as demand in different geographical spaces which determine the differences in wages between labour-rich and capital-rich countries (Kurekova, 2011).

However, research shows that the above argument is not entirely true since there are more factors other than wage differences that influence migration rates and these may include the level of the country's income (Kurekova, 2011). Additionally, since the capacity to migrate is connected with expenses, it is thus not the poorest people that decide to migrate, nor the poorest economies that send the larger number of migrants, since the person needs to have resources (Kurekova, 2011).

Therefore, the macro, meso and micro factors have various influence on the decision to migrate and consequently the migration flows. There is evidence of the push and pull factors at all the three levels (micro, meso and macro) responsible for the migration of Kenyan transnational mothers to Portugal and the study was informed by this knowledge.

3.1.1 Concept of transnationalism and mobility capital
Basch, Schiller, & Blanc-Szanton (1994) defines transnationalism as:

> the process by which immigrants, through their daily activities, forge and sustain multi-stranded social, economic and political relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement, and through which they create transnational social fields across borders (p. 6).

This means that when migrants move, they keep ties with their countries of origin however distant they may be as they figure out the new way of life in the host country. Transnational migrants do this by communicating back home to provide and seek at the same time: social, cultural, emotional, political and moral support alongside financial transactions (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992).

Additionally, transnational migrants are involved in the flow of financial resources as well as intangible remittances such as knowledge, thoughts, sense of belonging, ways of behaving and social capital. These influence the accessibility to resources in both the country of origin and the host country (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2014). This therefore is a result of creation of several relations with individuals, institutions, wider societies and networks in the migrant's home country, region, or community, as well as connecting these to the individuals, organisations, communities and networks in the one's host country (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2014).

The way in which transnational migrants view their experiences of multilateral identities and experiences is influenced by the social, political, cultural religious and economic position of both the sending and host country (Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992). In the cases where migrants are parents, they are then involved in what is referred to as transnational families, which hold residential units across national borders that are flexible and change with time through emigration, immigration and family reunions. Hence the difference in composition of the households over time (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012).

For migration to take place, one of the most important factors is social capital in terms of migrant networks, which are majorly found at the meso level of migration. These networks enable migrants to move through provision of information and support that helps people to reduce the costs and risks of moving to a different geographical space (King, 2012). Further, the networks are taken in a transnational turn considering that they are spread across nation borders as they may include family networks, as well as personal ties. These provide contacts but also direct people to destinations where they can find a place to stay, a job, financial help, as well as emotional support that facilitate international migration (King, 2012). This therefore explains why not everyone may be in position to migrate, as they may not have the mobility capital to enable their migration. For instance, these people may not have the social, familial and cultural structures of mobility in place which limits the possibilities to move.

Mobility can thus be defined as the breaking of national borders and consequently creating an economic, social and political space in which individuals can migrate and resettle with changes as time goes (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2014). Mobility can be divided into two categories that is spatial mobility and social mobility according to Kaufmann, Bergman, & Joye (2004). Spatial mobility refers to the movement of items and people from a geographical space of origin to destination along a process that can be described in form of space and time. This can thus involve the movement of things such as ideas, information, consumables, machinery and or people (Kaufmann et al., 2004). Social mobility on the other hand means the process of resource distribution or social positions of individuals, families or people of a given community and this can include what children inherit from their parents, as well as how individual's positions change with time (Kaufmann et al., 2004). Therefore, social mobility can be measured in terms of changes in occupation sectors of individuals and groups of people which are dependent on the social class divisions in place that thus influence the status, position as well as distribution of resources and consequently access to opportunities (Kaufmann et al., 2004).

Spatial and social mobility work together to influence the possibility, competence and avail capital produced by actors running structures and contexts that in turn limit or increase chances of individuals or group movements, when they weigh the possibilities and constraints that are involved (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2014). This can also be termed as motility capital which

combines the possibility as well as the potential of goods, information or people to be able to move both socially but also across different locations (Kaufmann et al., 2004). This means that in relation to one's context, individual actors, groups and institutions, there is a difference regarding access, competence (such as language learning, employment, educational attainment and relevant "migrant integration") and distribution of resources and consequently chances of opportunities (Kaufmann et al., 2004). The components of mobility capital are therefore what aid the migration of people across various national borders. Hence, the more resources available to a potential migrant the more chances they have to move while less mobility resources lead to low chances of migrating with success (Gropas & Triandafyllidou, 2014).

The concept of transnationalism and mobility capital were very evident in the study on transnational mothering among Kenyan migrants in Portugal and they are discussed in detail in chapter five of this research.

3.2 Gender schema theory

Gender refers to the sociological differences such as beliefs and attitudes about men and women (Teater, 2014). Gender is socially constructed and thus varies from cultures and across time. However, gender roles are the duties and responsibilities assigned and seen as appropriate for women and men which are created and reinforced by the society and these are taught to children to carry on in their adult way of life (Teater, 2014).

The Gender Schema theory is created to understand how in the societies, the individuals internalise the norms and roles attributed to gender. For instance, The theory suggests that children are raised and trained to learn from their society the expectations and roles of a female and a male, which then defines their later evolution of self as well as the ideas of how others should behave themselves (Teater, 2014).

Gender schema theory thus contends that individual's perception of gender is normally shaped and influenced by the social norms from which they were raised and socialised. It is thus the reason as to why several people believe that little girls should wear pink and play with dolls, while the boy children ought to wear blue and play with toys as cars (Teater, 2014).
The gender schema theory further contends that due to the society's gender ideologies, young girls and boys are expected to do different things during their puberty stage in life. The theory explains that while the girls are demanded to be careful about their sexual activities and take charge of birth control, the boys are have more freedom (Teater, 2014). These gender roles are further seen to be carried on to adulthood, where women are expected to experience pregnancy but also be the main caregivers of the children, as well as organising their home duties, while men on the other hand are expected to be providers of financial support and to protect their families (Teater, 2014).

Kenya is traditionally a patriarchal society where men have the responsibility to protect and provide the family while women on the other hand are expected to take charge of the home and child care (Mburugu & Adams, 2005). When the husband is not at home, it is the wife who takes over the decision-making role in relation to property, finances and disciplining children until the husband comes home. In the cases where the wife is working, she is allowed to be the boss at her place of work but when she comes home, she is supposed to carry on as a "good African woman," described as one that carries on her household duties well, raises the children both hers and those born outside her marriage face (Mburugu & Adams, 2005).

However, there has been changes regarding family gender ideologies in the whole world and in Kenya too, due to the rise of feminists and other stake holders working towards promoting gender equality. This has led to sharing of power and authority in households where couples make decisions together. For instance, in Kenya the couples make decisions in different areas of the family life, the wife takes decisions on child-care and in household, while the husband decides on issues as family business and the schools that children go to (Manyara et al., 2016).

Additionally, there are several challenges that are currently facing the family set up today. For instance, the constant family break ups that result into the existence of one-parent families; the increase in cohabitating couples, divorce and separation; the reduction rates of marriage; the increase in the number of children born outside marriages; the increase in teenage pregnancy; the rise of same sex marriages; the increase in female headed households, as well as existence of step family, among other challenges (Manyara et al., 2016). Furthermore, the increase in poverty together with the unemployment coupled with single parenthood resulting from the above challenges is another factor behind the migration of many women from Sub-Saharan Africa, being a strategy to locate better paying employment opportunities that enable them take care of the family needs (Cotton, 2017).

The gender schema theory thus explains that when mothers migrate and leave children behind in their home countries, they continue striving to find ways of maintaining the emotional care to their children, as expected of them from their families and societies (Carling et al., 2012). The study on experiences and perceptions of Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal took the contribution of this theory to better understand the dynamics of the participants as evidenced in chapter five of the study findings.

3.3 Attachment Theory

Attachment refers to the emotion of connectedness between people, with the main function of survival. In the case of children, the care giver avails care that safeguards the survival of the children, making them feel loved by being in close and consistent contact with the same care givers (Bowlby, 1969).

The attachment theory thus contends that the bonds formed by children with their primary caregivers in the early years of the children's growth have an effect on their emotional and social wellbeing throughout their childhood, as well as in the transition to adulthood (Bowlby, 1969). For instance, even when children are assigned with competent caregivers, they may remember their parents leaving as abandonment and start to feel that every other adult taking care of them may also leave them with time (Bowlby, 1969).

When people migrate, they are forced to leave close ones behind most of the times and these may include extended family like the grandparents, but also their immediate family members like spouses and children. Since several migrants have strong ties and meaningful social and emotional connections with their immediate and extended family, having to leave them behind can cause a tremendous loss of social capital, alongside material and emotional support (Lorentzen, 2014).

The situation is tougher when the migrant is a parent of young children, as this becomes much harder to leave them behind, even when the move is hoped to be temporary, although the return date is in most cases uncertain. This leads to the formation of what is referred to as transnational family households that are physically separated by national borders, but also connected by the

social ties which are maintained through frequent communication as well as the remittances sent to the home countries (Lorentzen, 2014).

Migrants that are part of a transnational household usually share plans, dreams, as well as the available economic resources, as they strive to be part of a virtual household, even though physically located in different geographical spaces (Lorentzen, 2014).

When parents decide to migrate (especially mothers) in search for better job opportunities, they are forced to identify replacement care givers (considering that mothers are the main care providers) and these are usually the female kin such as grandmothers, aunts and older girl siblings that step in to help raise the young children (Mburugu & Adams, 2005). Research however reveals that when children are separated from their parents, this greatly affects the emotional attachment as it disrupts the bond between children and their mothers.

As the children continue to grow up in the absence of the parents, this may lead to holding grudges towards the biological parents but also getting more attached to their assigned primary care givers as these are the people that avail them with care on a daily basis (Lorentzen, 2014). For instance, the care givers are the ones that attend the children's school and sport activities, help with their homework, make meals, care for them in sickness as well as providing consistent attention and supervision that is longed for by children (Lorentzen, 2014).

The attachment theory guided the study on experiences and perceptions of Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal. It was established that the left behind children of the participants continue to struggle with the absence of their mothers considering that five of the participants are single mothers who left their children in the care of other kin like grandmother, aunts, brother and grandfather, as well as the female domestic helper. It was also established that these mothers too struggle with feelings of guilt and stress because of being separated with their children who are mostly teenagers and thus in need of parental guidance. The findings regarding challenges that arose because of these mothers leaving their children back in Kenya are discussed in detail in the chapter five of this study.

The theories and theoretical concepts discussed above are related to each other in a way as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 1: Illustration of the theoretical key issues
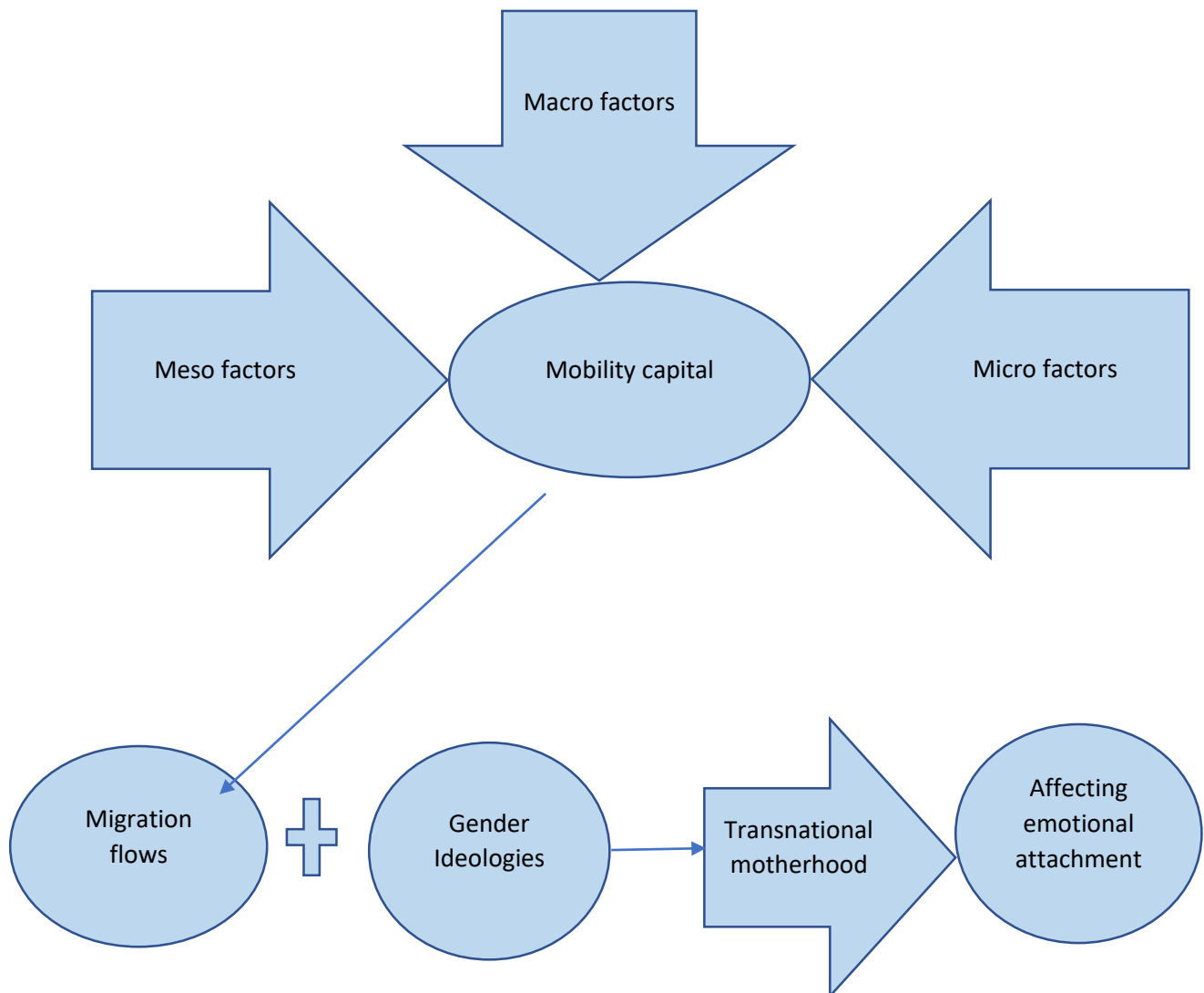
The figure above illustrates the relationship between the theories and theoretical concepts that provided a framework for the study on the experiences and perceptions of Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal. Therefore, the figure illustrates that the macro, meso and micro factors formulate the mobility capital of potential migrants which influences the migration flows to the country of destination. While migration combined with the gender ideologies connote mothers as the main emotional care providers, lead to the formulation of transnational families and in the case of this study transnational motherhood, which consequently affects the quality of emotional attachment between children and their absent parents.

Chapter Four: Methodology

This chapter explains how the research was carried out and thus presents the methodology, that is the research design that was employed. The chapter further stipulates the main steps that were followed when executing the research and selection of the participants. Additionally, the chapter explains the methods used to collect the data, the researcher's self-reflections as well as the ethical considerations of the study. The chapter ends by presenting the challenges and limitations of the research that was conducted.

4.1 Population of the study

The participants of the study were selected using purposive sampling. This method of sampling takes place when a non-probability sample is selected based on the characteristics of the population and relevant to the objectives of the study. This sampling method also ensures unbiased and independent scrutiny (Bryman, 2016). Afterwards, snowball sampling was used, and it involved identifying eligible participants, through whom the researcher was linked to other participants that fitted the study criteria. The researcher relied on networks developed earlier at the Catholic church for English speaking migrants in Portugal, through a Ugandan attendant of the church.

Six female interviewees participated in the research and these were selected based on the criteria to answer the research questions, namely:
1. Kenyan mother with age 20 and above;
2. Stay in Portugal for at least 6 months;
3. Live with or without any family member or partner in Portugal;
4. Has children both in Kenya and Portugal with 17 years of age and below;
5. Has child/children in Kenya aged 17 and below.

The sex of the children that the transnational mother has did not matter for the study and thus, both boys and girls left behind in Kenya and aged 17 years or below were considered. However, the researcher did not include potential respondents who are Kenyan mothers but have no communication or were not in contact with their child/children in Kenya. Kenyan mothers with children in Portugal but with no children in Kenya were also not considered eligible for the study.

4.1.1 Negotiating access

Hammersley & Atkinson (2007) argue that negotiating access requires balancing between ethical and strategic considerations in accordance with the research purpose, timeframe, and existing circumstances. Therefore, for the researcher to gain access to the possible respondents, she contacted a Ugandan man, who knows Kenyan mothers in Portugal, upon explanation of the research topic and objectives. The researcher further contacted a Kenyan church member at the Catholic church and thus explained to her the research intensions as well as the intended research population. Through the interactions, the Kenyan woman informed the researcher that she knew a few other Kenyan mothers that had children in Kenya and were involved in distance parenting after which contacts were shared for further arrangements.

Both the Ugandan man and the Kenyan woman linked the researcher to more Kenyan eligible participants in Portugal. The eligibility criteria of participation were limited to Kenyan immigrant mothers who resided in Portugal for more than 6 months and have children below

18 years that were left back in Kenya or another country but are in contact with them for care purposes. Additionally, the Kenyan mothers that had children in both Kenya and Portugal were included with the aim of identifying if there were any differences or similarities in their experiences of transnational mothering.

After identifying eligible participants, the researcher reached out to them with an introductory letter regarding the topic and rationale for the study as well as the request for their participation role as respondents. All the eight Kenyan transnational mothers that were contacted expressed willingness to participate but one had just been reunited with her children and she therefore turned out not eligible by the time of the interviews, while another was leaving for Kenya to be reunited with her left behind family. The researcher thus decided to go with the six that were eligible and available to participate in the study. These were given consent forms and thus asked to identify which day and time would be most comfortable for them to have the interviews done.

4.2 Research Methodology

The research is a case study and thus qualitative in nature. In this research design, the researcher was aiming at capturing the deeper meanings, understanding and individual accounts of the experiences and perceptions of the participants regarding in transnational mothering (Bryman, 2016). The research was realised using in-depth interviews and micro ethnography, which was majorly participant observation. The researcher obtained information regarding the migration trajectory, education background, occupation, experiences as well the perceptions of Kenyan transnational mothers to Portugal. The use of in-depth interviews enabled the researcher to have direct communication with the interviewees, as well as being able clarify and ask follow up questions that led to a better understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the participants of the study (Bryman, 2016).

The in-depth interviews are also known for being flexible and enabling the researchers to follow the interviewees' story accounts in the most comfortable way possible as it grants them freedom of expression (Bryman, 2012; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

The researcher therefore used the in-depth interviews as the primary form of data collection with a guide that consisted of open-ended semi structured questions. Data collection was carried out between February and May 2019. Additionally, the researcher visited some secondary statistical data from SEF (Portugal), Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and International Organisation for Migration.

4.2.1 Micro ethnography

Micro ethnography is a method of research used to study practices in dynamic social systems through observing participants with an aim of obtaining a better understanding of social conditions during interactions as well as people and their cultures. This method of data collection usually involves focusing on specific aspects of the topic (Bryman, 2016; Wolcott, 1990).

Bryman (2012) contends that in this kind of research method, the researcher makes continuous observations and carefully comments on the behaviour of participants as well as listening and engaging in conversations. The researcher can further interview respondents on aspects that are not directly open to observation or those that did not come out clearly in the interview as well as developing a better understanding of the ways of life of the people's behaviour in the context of their way of life while writing the detailed accounts of the setting (Bryman, 2012).

During the study on transnational mothering among Kenyans in Portugal, the researcher involved herself in the participants' daily activities such as: picking up of children from school here in Portugal; watching and listening to the nature of interactions between the mothers and their children here in Portugal; listening and observing the nature of interaction when calls are being made to the caretakers and children back in Kenya. Additionally, the researcher paid attention to what language of transmission was used between mothers that have children in Portugal as well as during communication to the children back in Kenya.

Furthermore, the researcher was invited several times to attend Kenyan parties where Kenyan migrants in Portugal gathered and shared about their general wellbeing here in Portugal as well as their families left behind. The participants informally discussed about: how challenging it is for them to be far away from home and family; the challenges faced in Portugal; their plans of reunion with family, whether in Portugal or in Kenya. The participants, as well as other Kenyan migrants, further shared about their experiences of having migrated, as well as the opportunities that came with migration and being exposed to a new society.

Through micro ethnography, the researcher was able to meet more Kenyan migrants and transnational mothers and it was revealed that these were the source of informal support to each other as migrants, through acting as a buffer for stress and challenges they faced. Hence, micro ethnography had a significant contribution to the quest of documenting the experiences and perceptions of Kenyan transnational mothers however, majority of the data was acquired through qualitative interviews.

The data collected was transcribed using the naturalization process where the language used represents the real world. Therefore, the transcripts represent speech, while capturing meaning objectively in as much detail as possible. The data was analysed through a thematic analysis method relating to the research questions and building on codes identified in the transcripts to provide the researcher with a basis for a theoretical understanding of data (Riessman, 2008).

4.2.2 Outsider effect

When the researcher was conducting micro ethnography, she acted both roles of covert and overt participant. Bryman contends that for one to take up the covert role, it means hiding from the participants that one is a researcher while on the other hand disclosing one's position is the overt role (2012). The researcher informed the interviewees about the research topic, objectives and request for participation, giving them a consent form, to ensure their permission to be respondents in the study (see Appendix 2).

This however did not stop the interviewees from inviting the researcher into their homes, as well as allowing her during activities such Kenyan parties and picking up of children from school here in Portugal. During these activities, the researcher did participant observation although under a covert role especially during the get together parties where all Kenyans in Portugal were around, and she was introduced by one of the participants as a friend from Uganda studying in Lisbon but never disclosed that I was a researcher too. This helped the researcher to find it easy to interact with the Kenyans because she is Ugandan, a country close to Kenya, and thus is also East African. However, the researcher was always aware of her position and reminded herself all times to be as ethical as possible (Bryman, 2012). For instance, when the researcher was requested by a participant to spend a night at her, she politely declined the offer.

4.3 Data Collection tools

4.3.1 Qualitative Interviews

The study employed an interview guide that was designed based on the informed ideas the researcher got from the literature on migration, transnational parenting and mothering, as well as the Mfamily thesis that were written regarding similar topics (Dahal, 2016; Dangol, 2015; Vigil, 2017). The interview guide was designed for all the six Kenyan mothers in the English language, considering that it is the language shared as an official language in the countries of origin of the researcher and interviewees, Uganda and Kenya.

The interview guide was composed of three major sections. The beginning section is organised into two subsections: personal information and migration trajectory to Portugal. The second section presents how the participants perform parenting from a distance, namely their perceptions, practices and care arrangements. The last part of the interview guide highlights the challenges these mothers face when doing long distance parenting; their coping mechanisms; plans; and their suggestions to mothers and other parents in the same position as them.

During the execution of the interviews, the researcher employed a flexible style of asking questions in more of a conversational format and followed up with questions where the interviewee did not bring out some information clearly. The flexibility utilised during the interview sessions was described by Bryman (2012), who asserts that in qualitative interviewing, researchers can depart significantly from any schedule or guide that is being used and instead ask questions that follow up interviewees' replies, which can vary in the order and even wording (Bryman, 2012 p.470).

The researcher used a voice-recorder during the interviews with permission of the interviewees. This thus helped to increase the accuracy of information used during the data analysis and discussions. Six interviews were thus conducted and while the main interview sessions lasted for a minimum of fifty minutes to a maximum one hour, the follow-up interviews took place for a maximum of thirty minutes, since they were about collecting data that seemed to have been missed out in the first interviews.

4.3.2 Field notes

During data collection, the researcher made use of a field work diary, in which notes were put down regarding the day's goals and activities, outstanding observations and expressions by the interviewees during the participant observation, as well as the reflections regarding the interactions and achievements of the day.

Field notes are very crucial in registering additional descriptive information during participant observation (Bryman, 2016). The researcher took these field notes during informal interactions that took place in house gatherings, birthday parties and church gatherings, like the Sunday café gatherings for the English-speaking community in Lisbon. Therefore, the fieldnotes proved to be insightful with the small pieces of information gathered during moments when the participants felt completely free, considering the neutral situation of gatherings with other friends.

4.3.3 Literature Review and Secondary Data

In the search for literature regarding transnational mothering, the researcher found it quite challenging to get studies on East Africa and Kenya, since most were about Latin America and

Asian transnational mothers. There seems to be a knowledge gap regarding transnational mothering among East African Countries, that is, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi.

However, the researcher found a few studies done in Portugal (for instance Trovao, 2016), relating to African transnational mothers majorly from Portuguese former colonies such as Angola, Mozambique and Cape Verde and thus it contributed to better understand better the aspect of transnational mothering among Kenyan migrants in Portugal. The researcher further used the studies conducted by Mfamily student in Portugal about transnational parenting among Asian and Russian migrants (for example Budal, 2018; Dahal, 2016; Dangol, 2015; Korolius, 2017; Vigil, 2017), to guide the study in relation to Kenyan transnational mothers.

The secondary data used in this study was derived from Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras, (2017) (SEF) (Portugal), United Nations, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, International Organisation for Migration as well as PhD research from different universities.

4.4 Data Analysis

The data gathered from the interviews and participant observation was analysed through thematic content analysis. The stories regarding the mothers' experiences and perceptions were recorded and transcribed carefully, a process that led to identification of patterns in the responses from the participants. The themes generated are related to the sections of the interview guide that was used to obtain responses regarding the research objectives. The themes identified include: reasons for migration; care arrangements; importance of communication; role of remittances; perceptions (regarding motherly roles, parenting styles and gender differences between Kenya and Portugal), as well as the challenges, coping mechanisms and plans of the participants (See Appendix 3).

During data transcription and consequently the analysis, the researcher was able to identify words that were commonly used by the interviewees when sharing about different aspects of parenting from a distance. The researcher further looked out for the main fragments from the interviews and field notes and these too contributed to the themes identified during data transcription and analysis. Additionally, the researcher paid attention to the common expressions and more themes that came up during the informal interactions in participant observation, remembering the emotional expressions that arose during the interviews.

Thereafter, the themes were organised in relation to the main research questions: how Kenyan mothers perform parenting from a distance; and what Kenyan mothers perceive to be their roles as mothers in transnational parenting. The themes were further organised to accommodate the sub-research topics that included: challenges, coping strategies, parenting styles, as well as plans, as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 2: Themes that emerged from data transcription and analysis

Reason for migration	•Search for better job •Take care of sick husband
Care arrangements	•Female kin •Female non-kin •Male kin
Importance of communication	•Affirm familial relationships •Monitor children progress •Send instructions to care givers
Role of remittances	•To provide basic needs •Cater for school fees •Cater for gifts
Perceptions	•Roles of a mother •Parenting styles •Gender differences between Kenya and Portugal
Challenges	•Difficulties of parenting from a distance •Coping mechanisms •Plans

4.5 Ethical considerations

The ethical issues are discussed in detail in relation to: avoiding harm to participants, acquiring informed consent for participation in research, doing what it takes to avoid invasion of privacy and deception to participants. This was considered to ensure transparency, self-determination, confidentiality and autonomy in the study, as proposed by Bryman (2016, p.129-134).

Participation of all the interviewees in the research was entirely voluntary and was carried at times when it was comfortable for the participants, to respect their rights and wishes. The participants received an invitation letter together with a consent form, which stated their rights to accept participating or not, withdrawing at any point they felt uncomfortable to continue with the interview, as well as being informed of the research objectives. Additionally, the right to privacy was clearly stated and participants were informed of how fictitious names would be used instead of their exact names to protect their identities. Thus, fictitious English Christian names were randomly selected and used instead of the interviewees' real names since all participants had English Christian names.

The researcher informed the participants in detail regarding what the research was about and what it meant for the researcher herself but also the interviewees, as a way of avoiding deception. The researcher further explained the topic, purpose of the research work and what was expected of the respondents during the research process. This was done to ensure that respondents were aware of the sensitivity the topic of study and questions to be asked and thus feel free to decide whether they wished or not to continue with the participation. Additionally, the researcher clarified and confirmed with the respondents if the information shared during the interviews is what they meant to share as a way of verifying with the participants.

This study having focused on experiences of mothering from a distance is a very sensitive study, which requires that ethical issues are put into consideration. For instance, the research involved gathering personal information from the respondents regarding: family life situation; parent-child relationship; parenting styles and roles; expectations and emotions. Hence, the

researcher ensured the need to be aware, sensitive and careful when delving into the subjects and always sought the participant's consent to share the private information.

In addition to the above, due to sensitivity of the topic, when participants got very emotional when sharing their stories, the researcher suggested to have a short break and only continue with the interview when the respondent felt ready and willing to continue. This was a way to reduce harm to the participants as well as acknowledging how challenging it was for the mothers to talk about leaving their children behind.

Furthermore, the recorded interviews, field notes and all transcriptions have been stored safely in a place that is only accessible to the researcher and the supervisors. The researcher also worked continuously to maintain trust with the participants, as well as keeping in mind the need for respect and maintaining the right to privacy of the respondents both during the interviews, participant observation, as well as during the informal gatherings that went on after the end of data collection.

4.6 Self reflections

It was during the researcher's first semester of her master program in Lisbon, when she identified a Catholic church that has mass in English on Sunday, that she had the idea for the present topic of the dissertation. The researcher went to mass at this church and that is when she met several worshippers from English speaking African countries, as Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya and Uganda. Thus, during the coffee gatherings held occasionally after prayers, the researcher got a chance to interact with several members of this community and to know that most of them were parents that left their children in the home countries.

However, because the researcher comes from East Africa she became eager to learn about the experiences of mothers from East Africa. Since she got to know that there were only two Ugandans in the church community and that they did not know about any other Ugandans in Portugal, the researcher decided to instead study the Kenyan mothers. She was informed that the few she met at church new some more others that were in the same situation of parenting from a distance.

The researcher thus used the church community as a gate to access Kenyan transnational mothers. The mothers were willing to let the researcher into their private space, such as homes for birthday parties, and during activities, such as picking up children from school, for the mothers with children here in Portugal, but also involved in parenting another child back in Kenya. These mothers were comfortable with the researcher's presence during the time of making phone calls back to Kenya to check on the children and other family members. This was done because the researcher based on the literature insights of Bryman (2016) and Wolcott, (1990), thought that it would be interesting to learn more about the mothers' experiences and understand their situations during participant observation of informal day to day activities, as an addition to the interviews that were conducted.

The researcher was very grateful to the mothers who volunteered to share their experiences as they expressed how happy they were to have someone interested in knowing their stories of mothering from a distance. The mothers shared that they would gladly participate even though it would be so sad to put into words their everyday struggles of being distant parents. The mothers were organised in showing up for the interviews at the time and place agreed upon in advance, which made the data collection a lot easier and much more productive.

4.7 Challenges and Limitations of the study

Language

The participants of the research are Kenyan nationals whose national and native language is Kiswahili, although English is their official language. Therefore, the participants would have expressed themselves better in Kiswahili being their commonly spoken language. The interviews having been conducted in English may have limited the richness of data gathered from the interviewees.

Participants schedule

The researcher found it challenging to get hold of some of the participants who worked 24/7 as domestic workers, as these barely had time to meet up for the interviews. Other participants worked every day of the week to earn an extra income, still the researcher succeeded with time.

Emotional

The researcher found the interviews emotional as mothers almost shed tears when sharing of how hard it was for them to walk away from their children, so they can provide a secure future for them. They further expressed feelings of guilty and wondering what kind of mothers they were having left their children to work for money. This made the interview a bit challenging to conduct while listening and observing the expressions of sadness, wishes and regrets.

In addition to the above, the limited time provided for the study to be carried out, limited the data collection to semi-structured interviews and micro ethnography. This consequently limited the amount of data and information that could be acquired in such a small period, as well as limiting various possible ways the study could have been conducted.

Chapter Five: Findings and Discussion

The chapter five presents an analysis regarding experiences and perceptions of the six Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal. The chapter begins by presenting information about each interviewee, followed by the themes that came up during data transcription and analysis. The chapter further presents excerpts of the interviewee's narratives from interviews that were carried out in English. These interviews were further transcribed.

During transcription and analysis of the interviews conducted, six main themes were identified, and these include: reason for migration; care arrangements; importance of communication; role of remittances; perceptions (regarding roles of a mother, parenting styles and gender differences between Kenya and Portugal); challenges, as well as coping mechanisms and plans.

5.1 Profiles of the participants and family information

This section presents information regarding the family background of the participants, while explaining the setting of their transnational family and migration trajectories, as well reasons for migration, time of migration and the length of separation from the children in Kenya. This information is presented in a table (table 1) and suggests that four of the Kenyan mothers that participated in the study migrated to Portugal majorly for economic reasons, whereas one came to reunite with her husband and the other to pursue higher education.

The study revolved around six participants, of which three are mothers that have children both in Kenya and Portugal while the other three mothers have all their children in Kenya. The six mothers are aged between 32 to 52 years and they have children below 18 years of age. Additionally, all the six participants qualified as transnational mothers because they were all involved in caring for the left behind children through daily communication and sending remittances to cater for the basic needs.

Five out of six participants are single mothers, whereas one of them is married. Three of the six mothers have children back in Kenya in the care of female kin, such as grandmother, auntie and elder sister. However, two of the mothers have the male kin that is grandfather, and another has the uncle taking care of the children, while another has female non-kin (paid domestic helper) taking care of the children. Further, three of the left behind children are enrolled in boarding school.

One mother completed a master's degree and another completed university, while the other four all completed secondary school (translated as Form four in Kenya) (see table 1). Three of the mothers are domestic workers and part-time, cleaners while one of the mothers is a waitress and the other a policy administrator. The married participant works as cleaner but most times she is housewife at her home.

Nearly all the participants migrated as single women from Kenya to Portugal with the help and guidance of the Kenyan friends in Kenya, who connected them to other Kenyans that settled in Portugal before them, although one migrated to join her husband who was not well at that time.

Comparing the participants' former jobs in Kenya, some of the mothers had better professional jobs in Kenya, although with less pay compared to their wages in Portugal, even when most are working in a low-skills sector job. The information above has been summarised in the table below.

Table 1. Social demographic characteristics of

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Educational Attainment	Father involved	Father in Kenya or Portugal	Occupation in Kenya	Occupation in Portugal	Length of stay in Portugal (Years)	Number of children in Portugal	Number of children in Kenya	Age and sex of children in Kenya	Main Care giver
Rita	34	Secondary	No	Kenya	Seller of small goods	Waitress in hotel	7	2	1	13 F	Grandfather (in boarding school)
Mercy	45	Secondary	Yes	Portugal	Owner of restaurant	Housewife	2	1	2	14 F 11 M	Grandmother
Sarah	47	Secondary	No	Kenya	Sales officer of telecommunications	Domestic worker	3	1	2	13 F 15 M	Son in boarding school; Daughter with female house help
Veronica	52	Secondary	No	Kenya	Care taker of older people	Domestic worker	6		4	17 M 15 M	Sister
Lydia	36	College/university	No	Kenya	Domestic worker	Domestic worker	2		2	10 F 15 M	Aunt (Son in boarding school
Cathy	32	Masters	No	Kenya	IT personnel	Policy administrator	4		1	6 F	Grandmother

Below is a summary of some of the basic information about the participants of the study.

Rita

She is 34 years old, born and raised in Kenya. She is a single mother with three children (2 in Portugal and 1 in Kenya). The father of her daughter in Kenya also stays in Kenya but they separated, and he is not involved in the life of her left behind child. The father to the children in Portugal is also not involved in the children's lives. Her household in Kenya consists of her father and her daughter while the one in Portugal comprises of her and her two children. Rita left her daughter at the age of 7 when she migrated to Portugal in 2011 to search for a better paying job. It has thus been 7 years that she has been separated from her daughter and family in Kenya. The daughter in Kenya is under the care of the grandfather (Rita's father). Rita completed 12th Grade (Form 4 in Kenya) and she was running a small business of selling clothes in Kenya. In Portugal however, she works as a waitress in a hotel in Lisbon. She is involved in distance mothering through communicating daily to Kenya to ensure her daughter is well via the grandfather's mobile phone and she sends money for her daughter's school fees and other basic needs.

Mercy

She is 45 years old, born and raised in Kenya and married to the father of all her three children. One son stays with her here in Portugal with her husband, while two of their children were left behind in Kenya under the care of their maternal grandmother. The father of these children is fully involved in all their lives. Mercy migrated to Portugal in 2017 with their first-born son after her husband had moved first to come and do his PhD but he fell sick and she migrated for the first time to take care of her husband that was bedridden at the time.

However, Mercy ended up staying longer (1year) until she started going to Kenya once every year for the two years she has been in Portugal, to check on the left behind children and run the family business (restaurant) in Kenya. She left for Kenya on 25th of February and will be back in July 2019. Mercy completed 12th Grade and joined the family restaurant business that she continued running till today. While in Portugal she is a housewife but also takes on small jobs like babysitting and cleaning when opportunities come. Through these small jobs she contributes financially to the wellbeing of the family here in Portugal and the children in Kenya but also makes constant calls to the grandmother to check on them.

Sarah

She is 47 years old, born and raised in Kenya and a single mother to three children (two in Kenya and one in Portugal). She separated from the father of her children before she migrated to Portugal in 2016 and he is not involved in the lives of all the three children. Sarah has therefore been separated from her two children in Kenya for three years who were 10 (female) and 12 (male) at the time she moved to Portugal with the 5 years old son by then to search for a better paying job. The two children in Kenya are under the care of a paid female domestic helper. Sarah completed 12th Grade and used to work as a sales person for IT gadgets company in Kenya however, she works as a domestic worker in Portugal and takes on jobs such as cleaning and babysitting whenever available. She communicates to the house helper every day to find out the needs and progress of the children and sends financial help to cater for school fees and other necessities through her brother.

Veronica
She is 52 years old, born and raised in Kenya. She is a single mother to four children that are all in Kenya, but only two below 18 years of age. She was separated from the father of her children before she moved to Portugal in 2013 and he is not involved in the lives of the children. Veronica completed college in Kenya after which she worked as an elderly caretaker in a hospital in Kenya as well as a domestic worker in one home. The children that were left behind (17 female and 15 male) are under the care of her first-born daughter who is 34 years old with the help of Veronica's sister.

Veronica has been in Portugal for six years but has travelled to Kenya once in 2015 for her first-born daughter's wedding and checking on her other family especially the two children in the care of her daughter. Here in Portugal, she is a domestic worker and takes care of a home. She communicates daily to her children through morning texts on WhatsApp and video calls over the weekends and sends financial help to pay the rent and school fees for the two children in school.

Lydia
She is 36 years old, born and raised in Kenya. She is a single mother to two children all left behind in Kenya. Lydia left Kenya in 2017 and has thus been separated from her children for 2 years. The father of her children is in Kenya but not involved in the lives of the children however, the children are taken care of by their aunt (Lydia's sister).

Lydia completed 12th grade and while in Kenya she worked as a domestic worker and here in Portugal she still works as a domestic worker. She also communicates back in Kenya whenever she can find the time and sends school fees as well as gifts for her children whenever possible.

Cathy
She is 32 years old, born and raised in Kenya. She is a single mother to one child a 12-year-old girl that she left in Kenya. Cathy left Kenya in September of 2013 when she got a scholarship to do a Master's in Information technology in Portugal and she decided to find a job and stay in Portugal after her graduation. Cathy's daughter is in the care of her uncle (Cathy's brother).

Cathy worked as an Information technology personnel in a University in Nairobi and here in Portugal, she works as a policy administrator for an Insurance company in Lisbon. She is constant communication with her daughter in Kenya through a phone that she bought her and goes to Kenya every December to check on her.

5.2 Themes that emerged from the data
The section below explains the themes identified from the findings as well as the theoretical insights and these themes are classified in relation to the topics that came up during content analysis. The themes are related to the main research questions: a) How are the experiences of Kenyan Transnational mothers in Portugal? And b) How do Kenyan mothers perceive their roles in transnational parenting?

The themes are as well related to the sub questions regarding parenting styles, challenges, coping mechanisms in transnational mothering as well as plans for their children and family in general.

The themes thus include: reason for migration; care arrangements; importance of communication; role of remittances; Perceptions (regarding mothering roles, parenting styles

and gender differences between Kenya and Portugal); Challenges, coping mechanisms as well as plans and they are explained in detail below;

5.2.1 Reasons for migration

All the Kenyan transnational mothers in this study communicated that they migrated alone and did not follow a relative or husband, since the five were single apart from one that is married. This finding is consistent with (Mazzucato & Dito, 2018) who established that African women migrate to reunite with the husbands or are single women who migrate alone.

The participants expressed similar reasons that compelled their decision to migrate from Kenya and settle in Portugal. They contend that the main factor that pushed them to move was the social, political and economic situation of their home country (macro level). The interviewees further explained that insecurities in Kenya regarding politics and poor economic conditions compelled them to search for opportunities abroad to be able to provide and take care of their families (micro level) (Goldin et al., 2011). Below are the excerpts of the responses regarding the factors that influenced of the interviewees to migrate;

> You know the situation back home in our countries, how our governments have made it hard for us to stay in our countries, it's almost impossible to provide food or school fees for our babies. The government has put us in position where you have to decide whether to stay and watch your children go hungry and get no education or choose the most painful thing to do, leave then behind and go fend for them for their future. (Lydia, 36).

> After separating with my husband, I was left with our children to take care of their needs, like everything, school fees, food, medication all by myself. Sometimes I would fail to sleep at night because I didn't have a good job and could not provide the best for my babies, I would even cry in the hiding because they could ask for simple things like ice cream, but I could not afford. So, one day a friend of mine knew another Kenyan in Portugal who said she could help me find a way to come and pay when I come find a job and settle and however hard it was for me to leave my babies behind, now am able to provide for almost all their basics. Now they go to a private school, I can afford their rent and even the ice cream they asked for and of course dressing them in nice clothes and shoes. (Sarah, 47).

> Back home in Kenya, I tried as a mother, did all jobs you can imagine, wash people's clothes, worked as a housemaid in some homes but I could still not afford to provide a decent life for my children, so I decided to start looking for opportunities abroad, in the gulf and Europe and before I knew it God helped and I was told by a friend in Portugal that there was a chance for me to come and visit and she could help me find a job before my visiting visa expired so that's what I did and here I am. I am now able to pay my children's school fees in time and I try to provide for anything else they need. (Rita, 34).

It thus came out clearly that the participants major motivation of migrating is the search for better paying jobs, as they conveyed that while they did their best to look for jobs in Kenya, they could not find them and the few available were not paying well a factor that constrained the well-being of their families.

The interviewees further expressed how important it was for them to have networks with Kenyans that had migrated before them (meso level) as these provided information regarding

the available opportunities in Portugal, such as the cleaning and housekeeping jobs, which in this case are part of the pull factor in the migration of Kenyan mothers. The migrant networks further assisted the participants regarding how to go about the visa application process and even when they arrived, these friends helped in settling in, by helping them to learn the way around in Portugal, as stated below by one interviewee.

> A friend of my friend that was already here told us about the possibility of coming to visit and trying to stay by finding a job, so I gave it a try and even when I arrived that same Kenyan friend took me in and I stayed with her as she helped to ask around for a job. I was so lucky because in in two weeks she had found a family that needed a permanent house help and so she introduced me to them and they gave me the job. But she never stopped to guide on how to use the different things like machines and transport system. She also helped me get a smartphone that I use to communicate to my family and children back home. (Veronica, 52).

The findings above agree with Goldin et al (2011) who explains the three important levels that accommodate the push and pull factors which influence migrants' decisions to migrate and these include the macro, meso and micro level. According to the interviewees, they chose to migrate to escape the poor socio-political and economic condition factors that fall in the macro level while they also expressed the social capital and resources in terms of information from the Kenyan migrants in Portugal, which confirms the role played by the meso level factors that influence migration as presented by Goldin, Cameron, & Blarajan (2011); King, (2012); and Palloni, Massey, Ceballos, Espinosa, & Spittel (2001).

This further explains the transnational mobility capital of Kenyan transnational mothers in terms of the migrant networks such as the Kenyan friends in both Kenya and Portugal that provided resources like information about the jobs available as well as providing emotional support after the arrival. This therefore explains why some Kenyans are able to migrate to Portugal while others do not have this possibility as argued by ACP Observatory on migration, (2012); Gropas & Triandafyllidou (2014); Kaufmann, Bergman, & Joye (2004) and King, (2012).

In addition to the above, the participants weighed the costs and benefits of migrating. In this case, the cost being leaving their children behind against the benefits of accessing better paying jobs that meant being able to provide a better life for the left behind family and this what influenced their decision to move to Portugal, thus confirming Goldin et al (2011)'s argument of factors behind decisions to migrate.

However, two of the participants' primary reason of migration were other factors. For instance, while one migrated to pursue higher education, the other came to Portugal following her husband who was sick by then. These two ended up staying and searching for jobs, which later caused their settlement in Portugal.

This finding concurs with authors who assert that female migration can as well be attributed to the search for higher education and consequently better job opportunities, which give women a sense of empowerment through improvement of their status in society such as Adepoju, 2011; Lockwood, Smith, & Karpenko-Seccombe, 2019 and Yamanaka & Piper, 2005.

5.3 Transnational mothering experiences

This section presents the themes regarding mothering at a distance while focusing on how the interviewees do their transnational families and the themes to be discussed, including: care

arrangements; role of communication; remittances; perceptions (regarding roles of a mother, mothering styles and parenting gender differences between Kenya and Portugal) and challenges; coping mechanisms as well as plans.

5.3.1 Care Arrangements

All participants expressed that before they migrated to Portugal, it was very important for them to identify who was to be the care taker of their children after they leave. They explained that leaving their children behind was devastating for both the parents and the children and that there was need to find an adult to help the children have their lives going that is feeding, schooling and one that addresses their needs during the mother's absence.

Five of the participants are single mothers who had separated with the father to their children and these fathers are not seen participating in raising the children at all. Thus, when the mothers moved to Portugal, the children were left with no biological parent available, but all the mothers identified an adult to take charge. The left-behind caregivers were majorly female kin that included grandmother, aunt and elder sister. This finding is in support of Carling et al (2012), who established that when mothers migrate, the family and children care shifts to other female kin that is grandmothers and aunts.

However, three of the participants had the children cared for by female domestic helper, grandfather and uncle respectively while three of the left behind children were enrolled in the boarding school. This therefore means that it is not entirely true that caregivers of left behind children are always the female kin as suggested by most studies about transnational parenting. For instance, Carling et al, (2012) emphasises gender ideologies and thus, connotes that women are at the centre of children and family care even in situations where mothers migrate while men are looked as at breadwinners and family heads.

This finding thus supports Mazzucato and Dito (2018) who contend that care arrangements are not universal and are thus dependent on the family composition of the migrant. Hence it is the reason why in some cases of the study it is the female non-kin but also male kin such as the grandfathers and uncles that took on the caring roles in the absence of the mothers.

However, the two participants whose main caregivers to the children were the female non-kin and male kin expressed that they could not find a female kin because both had lost their mothers and both were the only girls in their families which left them with no choice but to ask the grandfather and the paid domestic helper (supervised by an uncle to the children) to take over in the respective situations as expressed below;

> Actually, I am the only girl in a family of six but unfortunately, I separated with the father of my children and lost my mother. So when time came for me to travel and leave my kids behind I was puzzled on who would take over and so I asked my brother to take over with the help of his wife which is of course is a lot of work for him and the wife but this is when I wish that I had a sister or that my mother was around because women always find a way to manage. My brother is not so close to my children and my daughter doesn't feel so comfortable sharing some female issues you know so it's basically hard for my children and my brother's family, but I have no other choice other than him of course. (Sarah 47).

> I had my daughter when I was still so young like at 19 and so my parents took me in and helped me raise my kid although my mother passed on a year before I left for

Portugal. But even then, I still stayed with my father and my kid. So, when I got a chance to travel I didn't see why my daughter would not be okay with her grandfather after all she was close to him and knew him ever since she was a baby, so I left my daughter with him. But of course, sometimes she has issues as a girl and am so far away and again I don't have a sister that would talk to her. I know it's so hard for her but what can I do? Nothing you know. (Rita, 34).

This therefore means that these two interviewees believe that women could perform better as caregivers of their left behind children and this highlights their perception of women being natural care givers and not the men.

However, in the case of Cathy, she explained that she had an elder sister, but she felt more comfortable with assigning her brother (the daughter's uncle) as the main care giver because she felt like he was much closer to her daughter and that he paid more attention to her than the daughter's auntie.

> …my youngest brother is the main care giver for my daughter. I know you wonder why it's my brother I entrusted with my daughter but it's because he is the nicer one of my siblings. He takes much interest in the wellbeing of my daughter and so I said why not work with him to raise my daughter while am away and up to today I don't regret because my daughter likes him too and she shares anything bothering her or if she needs anything she knows he is there for her even though we talk on phone every day. (Cathy, 32).

The expression above further confirms the research that explains non-uniformity in care arrangements of left behind children. This therefore means that care arrangements mostly depend on the circumstances surrounding migrant families (Mazzucato and Dito, 2018).

5.3.2 Importance of Communication

When asked what the most important role that enables participants to care for their children from a distance, the response from all the mothers was the importance of frequent communication. The participants expressed that, as part of their daily routine while in Portugal, they communicate back home in Kenya through smartphones and majorly use WhatsApp messages during week days but make video calls during weekends where both the mothers are free from work and the children free from school activities. Below are the expressions from the participants;

> Calling is the most significant role as a mother from a distance because then you get to share with her what's going on in her life, what she wants what she feels when you're not there. Sending money is because she needs it for school fees but the most important of all is being there for her which I can only do on phone. (Rita, 34).

> I think calling my children is the most important thing for me. If you don't call even if you send money and make sure they have everything else in the world and you don't have a word with them I don't think it's a good thing. You have to build the motherhood, so communication is more important because for me money cannot buy my children's love. (Lydia, 36).

Communication is the most important for me because then am very present and I know what takes place in their lives while am away. (Mercy, 45).

Since some of the participants have their children enrolled in boarding schools, they communicate to them mostly during visitation days when the caregivers get to see them once every end of the month. However, some of the mothers have a good relationship with the class teachers of the children in boarding school and thus on some weekends the teachers help the mothers to communicate with the children using the teacher's phone.

The participants whose children are not in a boarding school, expressed that they talked to the children through the phones of the care givers, however two of the mothers acknowledged that they bought phones for the children to enable them to communicate more at ease as they worried that it was not possible for the children to freely talk to them in the presence of the caregiver when they had to use the caregiver's phone. The participants expressed that without communication, parenting from a distance is impossible.

The excerpts below further explain in detail the role of communication in transnational mothering among Kenyan migrants in Portugal.

> From here I speak to my daughter on phone, I bought her a phone and we talk, and I ask her about how her schedule is going, her progress at school and I send instructions if there is any specific thing that comes up… I usually talk to my daughter every day at 8pm Kenyan time before she goes to bed and after I have left work because the time difference is kind of a challenge. But over the weekend I have video chats with my daughter and brother because I am off work and she doesn't go to school either over the weekend…Talking to her, calling her and telling her am always here for you I may not be there with you physically but if you need anything at all, anything bothering you feel free to text me any time, we talk about everything on the phone, we play on the phone that's why I bought her the phone so she can have her freedom to tell me anything. (Cathy, 32).

> …my daughter is in a boarding school and I can only talk to her through her class teacher on Saturdays. But also, I have a cousin brother who helps me visit her on the visitation days one Sunday in three months and he also pick her up when the school term ends. I make phone calls, I make video calls, I talk to her on WhatsApp through my dad's phone. (Rita, 34).

> Every day I text my mother in the morning to find out if everything is okay like if my kids woke up well and went well to school before I do anything else. In the evening I receive reports on how the day went and if there are any needs that arose at all. On the weekends then I have the video calls because we can talk and talk and talk since they don't have school we just talk about anything that is on our minds. Sometimes my husband also calls to check on them but mostly I feel the pressure from home being their mother, I must care more. (Mercy, 45).

> In the morning when I wake up I send a message to them saying good morning, I can't call because its busy for all us… I communicate with them every day in a message but

during weekends we video chat. I see them, see my daughter, my sister with her colleagues at school and we just feel each other's presence in the video. (Veronica, 52).

In fact when I talk to them I feel like am with them and feel so good but with my kind of work sometimes am so busy that I barely have time to call home I try my best to talk to them especially the one at home but then my son in boarding I can call once in a while I call the class teacher and talk to my son during the weekend. (Lydia, 36).

…the older one of my children is in a boarding school, they are not allowed phones, so we don't talk a lot we just talk when he is in holidays or on visitation days which my brother does everything and the younger one we speak on WhatsApp using the house girl's phone. (Sarah, 47).

In relation to the expression above, the participants conveyed that through communication, they can monitor the progress of their children regarding school, health and the arising needs. Additionally, the participants explained that through the daily text messages, sharing photographs and weekend calls, they can see how the children have grown, their looks and smiles, as well as affirming their love for their left behind family aspects that are very personal for mothers at a distance as they see this to emotionally care for their children while physically absent. This finding is in agreement with Fedyuk (2012), who established that one way of transnational mothering is through the sharing of photographs between mothers and their left behind children.

The participants further expressed that through communication, they send instructions to care givers on what they would wish to be done for the children, for instance when remittances are sent, which portion is to cover school fees, clothes, gifts or outing among other needs as evidenced in the excerpts below;

I send instructions if there is any specific thing that comes up but otherwise I can send like one schedule and it works for the whole year. (Cathy, 32).

Calling, calling, calling, it's quite expensive but I don't care because I cannot stay for more than two days without calling home and just say I called to say I love you and when she says I love you too mum, that means the whole world to me. Or sometimes they wanna show me how they look like in their new clothes and shoes yeah. Calling majorly helps me a lot to care for my children even I am so far away. (Sarah, 47).

The participants further contend that through communication, they can explain to their children the reasons as to why they migrated, and this is to ensure a future for the children through provision of quality life for example taking them to good schools as well as providing for their food, cloths, shelter among others as expressed below;

But whenever I call I tell them that I came here to make your life better and to make sure you become what you wanna be. But one time I remember my daughter asked me but why can't you work here, why did you go that far so I had to explain, she is young and has not yet come to terms as to why mum left. Sometimes now she asks whether am picking her up soon to stay with her and I say yes of course I will bring you where I am but let me look for money, so I can come and be able to get you a passport and ticket. (Lydia, 36).

> The most important thing in raising children is being present in their lives, and this is only possible through calling and talking to them every single day possible. I let them know what is happening in my life too, I keep them updated so they know mum is not just having fun in Europe… (Sarah, 47).

The findings are thus in agreement with authors who established the importance of communication in transnational parenting as sharing information regarding day to day experiences of the children and their absent parents, but also as a way through which parents affirm their love for the children and the family relationships such as ACP Observatory on migration (2012); Alampay, Raza, & Rye (2017); Bryceson & Vuorela, (2002); Carling, Menjívar, & Schmalzbauer (2012) and (Haagsman, 2015). This further confirms that distance parenting is majorly dependent on communication without which it becomes impossible to care for the children from a distance.

However, it was evident in the study that even when mothers strived to communicate as frequently as possible, they felt like it was never enough, and this resulted in feelings of stress and depression. Participants expressed that communication at times made things worse as they realised how much they longed to be present in their children lives and not just through phone calls. The participants also conveyed that they felt like they failed their children by walking away from them and wondered what kind of mother does that and thinks a phone call or text will raise their children as evidenced in the except below;

> Sometimes I even ask them do you think am a good mother being a way. And they are like, we thank you for everything you are doing for us, you are a good mother but for me I keep thinking am not a good mother because I left them sometimes I think why did I leave them but then I think if I stayed maybe I could not provide for them like I do now . It's not easy but you have to bare it and pray a lot. And then you have to make yourself stronger for them because stress will kill you. (Veronica, 52).

This finding concurs with authors who established that transnational parents often express a feeling of inadequacy no matter the constant communication and huge sacrifices of sending large amounts of remittances to their left behind families, especially children and that neither communication nor remittances could ever replace the physical presence of parents in the lives of left behind children as Carling et al.(2012); Haagsman (2015) and Kufakurinani, Pasura, & McGregor (2014).

5.3.3 Role of remittances

Five of the Kenyan transnational mothers that were part of this study were single mothers who were solely responsible for their children's needs because none of the fathers to their children was supporting in any way. The mother who was married acknowledged that she took on cleaning jobs sometimes to contribute to the family income and wellbeing of their children.

Therefore, all the participants conveyed that they send home financial help every month to be used by care givers to provide for their left behind children. The mothers expressed that the money was majorly meant to pay for the school fees, since all their children were enrolled in private schools but also using the money to pay rent, provide food, clothes, upkeep, health services and any other things that the children needed as evidenced in the excerpts below.

The advantage I have is that yes, the money is never enough but I am able to pay for their education, I am also able to maintain them when am here not like when I was in Africa maybe I could never be able to maintain them in school all at the same time. (Veronica, 52).

I am the only person in charge of my daughter, so I send money for her school fees and birthday cake and gifts and when there is a Kenyan going I request them to help me like sometimes I send some gifts, dresses and bags, because am not there with her I have to make up for the distance somehow through the gifts to make her feel that she is loved, not that she is neglected and I had another two kids when she is around. So, I must make her feel loved. (Rita, 34).

Apart from communication I take care of my children financially, I pay their school fees, buy their food and clothes I try. I think am in a better position to take care of them because the salary is better here. (Lydia, 36).

I am my daughter's main provider, I pay her school fees and send money every month for upkeep. She never lacks and literally never has so much to ask for because I ensure that she gets all she needs at home and at school. I try to do things that I imagine I would be doing while am with her and that's providing everything she needs as long as I can afford it. (Cathy, 32)

What I do is, after paying my rent, my bus pass, I send the rest home. Look at me here I need my children to have a good life I want them to be comfortable, I want them to have this idea that although mum is not around she is trying to make a life for us. So, what I do, whenever there is someone going back to Kenya I try as much as I can to buy some stuff for them but about money, I have to send money monthly for their school fees, shopping and food and they are in private schools, so they also need upkeep (Sarah, 47).

…me and my husband ensure that we send the school fees in time and when I travel I buy shoes and clothes for my boys you know they ask for the latest fashions, so I have to find them and carry them to Kenya. (Mercy, 45).

In addition to the above, all the participants expressed that because of being distant mothers, they felt the need to send as much financial help as possible, even when this meant remaining with no money at all. They expressed that it is the only way to cover up for not being physically there for their children and thus hoped that if they gave their children all that they needed, the children would not feel so bad about being left behind.

However, some of the participants explained that even when they did their best to fill up for not being physically present, it was not enough for some of their children as they were seen acting out by learning bad habits of smoking as expressed by one mother.

… when my son was in form two and he smoked. That time I was feeling like flying. I wanted to ask him in person why he would do that after all the sacrifices and my

daughter also when she refused to go to the school we chose for her because she wanted to go to the one where her friends were. (Veronica, 52).

Additionally, another mother expressed that her daughter still asked why she cannot go and work from Kenya instead of Portugal. All this made the participants feel worse about having left their children behind.

But one time I remember my daughter asked me but why can't you work here, why did you go that far so I had to explain, she is young and has not yet come to terms as to why mum left. Sometime now she asks whether am picking her up soon to stay with her and I say yes of course I will bring you where I am but let me look for money, so I can come and be able to get you a passport and ticket. (Lydia, 36).

The findings above are in consistent with Jordan, Dito, Nobles, & Graham (2018) and Lockwood, Smith, & Karpenko-Seccombe (2019) who contend that mothers involved in distant parenting usually send financial help to take care of their left behind children and that they send almost the major portion of their income, as a way to try and compensate for being away from their children. And that even when transnational mothers sacrifice their income for the wellbeing of the children, these mothers are seen to feel a sense of inadequacy as they are not physically present in the lives of their children and feel like nothing can replace a mother's presence in a child's life (Jordan et al., 2018; Lockwood et al., 2019).

Furthermore, some participants expressed that it is so expensive for them to maintain their household in Portugal and set aside a portion to be sent to Kenya for the children's needs. The participants conveyed that some of the caregivers and family members in Kenya had an impression that they have a lot of money and demand for things without knowing that it is not the case something that frustrated the participants as evidenced in the excerpts below.

But problem is back home in Africa as long as you are in Europe hey expect too much from us remember I have a baby here too and the daughter at home in Kenya, they think because am here I have a lot of money and it's not like that because I need to provide for all of my children here and my daughter, I need to send school fees and gifts to make up for the distance. It's quite challenging because they expect a lot back home. (Rita, 34).

…the amount you send for the children's school fees and upkeep is never enough, because you see when you leave your children with somebody, that means you have to take care of that person's household too, so it's not enough and our relatives think we have bags of money in Europe, they do not know how much we go through to save even the little we send to them you know. (Mercy, 45).

Sometimes I feel so drained financially, of course I don't mind sending money for my children's needs but my relatives are so unfair they think I have a tree of money here in Portugal where I pluck money so when they over ask me I tell them that I work under harsh conditions to send what I send but they don't understand at all. (Sarah, 47).

These findings therefore agree with Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla (1997) and Yamanaka & Piper (2005) who expressed that for transnational mothers working in the low wage sector jobs such as house helpers, it becomes hard and expensive for them to financially cater for their families

and children in the home country, while maintaining their own needs in the host country which adds to the challenges of being distant caregivers.

Additionally, the participants further expressed that because of the responsibilities, they are not able to visit their left-behind children as it is expensive for them to cater for the air tickets to Kenya considering how much they spend on the basics needs while in Portugal but also maintaining the households in Kenya. Some of the participants were noted explaining as below;

> Since I came I have never gone back to Kenya, for 7 years, it's quite some time. I just wanna go back to see my daughter because I miss her a lot, it is killing me a lot because I left her when she is 7 years until now haven't seen her. But it's so expensive for me how do I get to save over 800 euros with everything I have to pay for here and in Kenya (Rita, 34).

> I have gone back to Kenya once in 2015, because I had to go check on my children, but it also happened that it was my daughter's wedding in that period although it is very expensive, since then I have never gone back you know it's so expensive you would rather send the money and make sure they have almost everything they need than paying for a ticket but am saving may in in a few years I can afford to go see them again. (Veronica, 52).

> I haven't gone back to Kenya and its killing me inside, it's really crazy having to stay for a long time without seeing your children and you know you imagine I have a daughter and I imagine having a lot of things to say, you know she is thirteen, I feel she needs me around its really difficult but again when you look at the financial situation it's just impossible to get up and decide you are getting a ticket to go back home. (Sarah, 47).

However, the findings above relate to the aspect of the role played by the migrant's class and position as in this case, it is evident that mothers employed in the low pay sectors, such as cleaning, waiting and domestic work, are forced to choose to be separated from their families for longer periods of time due to not being in position to afford flights to their home countries but also slow family reunification as established by Carling et al.(2012); Fresnoza-Flot (2018) and Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla (1997).

On the other hand, there are two participants who conveyed that they were in position to visit their left behind children at least once every year and it was established that these were in better positions to do so, for instance the married transnational mother as well as the mother that worked as a policy administrator as evidenced in the excerpts below.

> I go back every six months to take care of our children that we left behind but also monitor our family business even though not always but like once in a year and even now am planning to go to see my family, because my children are still there it is quite expensive but the business in Kenya is doing well and my husband earns well here in Portugal so yeah we can. (Mercy, 45).

> Every December my company allows me to go back for holidays because I told them I have a child back home and they accepted me to go for one month every December and I come back the first week of January I know I am so lucky not every distance mothers gets that chance plus my ticket is paid for by my company. (Cathy, 32).

It is therefore evident that the migrant job and consequently the income influences the decision to be separated with the left behind family and the family reunification as established in this research.

5.4 Perceptions regarding roles of a mother

This study further aimed at establishing what the participants perceived as roles of mothers in their children and family lives. The participants thus expressed the following perceptions of the roles of mothers.

The participants explained that the major role of a mother is being physically present in the lives of their children and thus felt so frustrated for being absent as evidenced in the excerpts below.

> …the most important thing about raising children is being there for them. Even from far I want to be the best mother to them even though am not physically present. When am here I don't see them every day to know what they are doing, how they are sleeping, what they are eating, how they dress, how they go about their duties in the morning, I have not seen that in a long time. When I was in Kenya I am the one that prepared their breakfast, I wake them up I see that yes, they have woken up, all of them, they are in good health. I send them off to school, after they come home, they meet me they are happy, they tell me about their day, we talk we chat like that but now you can imagine no mother in the morning to make tea they have to do it on their own… (Veronica, 52).

> As a mother you have to take care of your kids. I have a lot of goals because I need to provide for all of them, I must give them attention, my time, I have to be there for them every time to take care of them, like my five-year-old sometimes she wants to eat but am not always there. The other one in Africa is also, you know she is an adolescent so I also find it quite challenging because sometimes she doesn't want to talk to anybody in the house, sometimes she says I just wanna talk to my mother, sometimes she is even rude, and she says am not talking to anybody unless my mother is here so at times am required to call and put her on phone for a very long time to advise her for most of my time. I think the most important aspect of being a mother is being there for your children physically, just need to know what your kids want and provide whenever possible, taking time with them. (Rita, 34).

> The first role of a mother is to be there with their children whenever they need me. I am supposed to be there to take care of them, to see them grow, to see them pursue their life dreams and career yeah. (Mercy, 45).

> …I am not happy because my happiness would be being with my children watching their day to day growth you know, doing things with them that I used to do, stuff like this, but now it's not possible and there is nothing I can do about it for now. So, am not a happy person because of this distance mothering thing, sometimes I even feel ashamed, it's very stressing for mothers at a distance because I feel like I have failed, you don't qualify to be a mother, do you understand? You feel like you don't qualify to be a mother because you are not there with them. (Sarah, 47).

In relation to the revelations above, it is evident that the participants perceived themselves as the main care givers and that being away from their children was very frustrating as they

perceived a good mother as one that is physically present in the lives of the children to watch them grow and care for them. Additionally, the expressions further revealed the guilt felt by mothers while they judged themselves as not good enough.

However, two of the participants expressed that the other roles of a mother are moulding, guiding the children discipline as well as being the number one cheerleader for the children as one supports and encourages them to become what they want to be in adulthood as indicated below;

> The most important thing when raising a child is to make sure they become what they wanna become by struggling in all ways, supporting them to achieve their dreams, through financial support, taking them to school, encouraging them and through prayers just to make sure they become what they wanna be. (Lydia, 36)

> Well I think mothers play a very important role if not the most important for the child as they grow. And for me the most important one is to mould and guide the child as they grow, show them the right way to go, to basically be a role model as they grow and probably you already know that children take on what they mostly see and carry on what their parents tell them. The other role of a mother in a child's life is to be their number one cheer leader, to encourage them in their pursuits in life, tell them they can do and that they can make it. (Cathy, 32).

The revelations above thus agree with several studies regarding transnational parenting and mothering who explain that in relation to gender ideologies, mothers are considered to be the main care givers to children and taking care of the homes while the men are expected to be providers and protectors, as stated by authors such as Budal (2018); Caarls, Haagsman, Kraus, & Mazzucato (2018); Carling et al.(2012); Lorentzen (2014); Parreñas (2005); Peng & Wong (2013) and Sørensen & Vammen, (2014). And that men and women who migrate face different experiences regarding parenting from a distance and thus explain that mothers struggle more since they are traditionally perceptioned as the main caregivers in most societies, even when they are away. This is further emphasised by the gender schema theory that highlights the gender roles passed on to children to be carried in adulthood, for instance, the raising of girl children as mothers of the future (Teater, 2014).

This means that when mothers migrate while leaving children behind, they feel guilty because of these expectations from themselves, their families and well as communities as evidenced in the findings above. This explains why participants were seen emphasising how much they would have preferred to see their children each day specifically to monitor their health, feeding, sleeping, schooling as well as their general wellbeing.

Additionally, the participants revealed how hard it is for them to express their love for the left behind children as they wished to hug them every single day and affirming how much they loved the children. The participants mentioned that it did not matter how much they called back in Kenya to check on the children, as well as how much money and gifts they sent home to the children as these would never replace a mother's physical presence in a child's life. Therefore, since the participants were all distant mothers, they are seen to express feelings of being unfit and inadequate mothers because of not being physically present as well as feelings of constant worries about the wellbeing of the children.

This finding shows a shift in gender ideologies from women being mainly family care givers to being breadwinners too. This thus concurs with authors who established that in the contemporary world with various factors affecting families, there is a rise in female-headed households that has impelled women to take up the provider role for the survival of their family, in addition to providing emotional care to their children even from a distance Caarls et al.(2018); Dreby (2006); Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla (1997); Parreñas (2005) and Sorensen N & Guarnizo, 2007).

5.4.1 Mothering styles

The participants expressed the perception that moulding and guiding well in life is one of the important role mothers play and that this directly relates to the aspect of disciplining children. As the participants shared this point of view, they highlighted their style of parenting while at a distance, as indicated in the excerpts below.

> Discipline for me is very important but at the same time the friendship. You know I want my children to be my friends like they feel free to tell me anything because that way I can know what is going on in their lives. But at the same time, they must be well behaved. In Africa we don't spoil children, so I am a bit strict when it comes to how they dress, talk to people but I give them the freedom as well and I explain why I tell them not to dress indecently and why they should respect people. (Rita, 34).

> I think discipline is very important no matter which part of the world you are. So, for me, my sons have to be very respectful to us their parents but also to whoever is older than them no matter how big or successful they will be in life but also fearing God and being hardworking. I think society expects a well-groomed child also. (Mercy, 45).

One of the mothers stated that she did not agree with the way children are raised in Europe.

> I really think I don't agree with the way Europeans raise their kids in our country back its very different, children grow up being respectful and not so exposed like the children here, but here a 10 year old child is like an adult, they shout at their parents, I really cannot let my kids disrespect me or other elders like that because without discipline they will be nothing but I didn't beat them when I was in Kenya, I talk to them because I want them not to fear me I want us to be friends and understand each other. (Lydia, 36).

> …my ideas of parenting are interesting because the way I was raised is not the way am raising my child. My mother was like a disciplinarian like super disciplinarian sometimes when I think about it when I talk to people I tell them my mother used to terrorise me. But I prefer my way, discipline my child but while showing her a lot of love. I am not the kind that raises a voice to my child, I prefer to talk to my child I have raised her like that from day one… (Cathy, 32).

> I won't say that I disagree with their way of parenting but I would like my children to maintain their culture and our culture is about raising a disciplined child but of course I don't believe anymore in shouting or beating children so I talk to my children with

respect because that is what I what them to give me too but not forgetting my major role is to mould and guide them (Sarah, 47).

The expressions above point to dynamics in the parenting styles employed by the Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal. It is therefore evident that these participants commonly employ the authoritative parenting style explained by Bamrind (1971), which involves parents being warm, supportive, encouraging, accepting, as well as responsive to their children. This is expressed by all the mothers who acknowledged the importance of moulding their children's behaviours but doing this through talking to their children with respect and explaining to them why they need them to follow certain rules in their lives.

Additionally, some of the participants are seen expressing the need to have their children carrying on the Kenyan traditions, as well as the belief in God and this finding connotes the traditional parenting style established by Helaine (2014), which emphasises the passing on traditional values, norms and religion when raising for them to carry on in adulthood.

When asked what influences their ideas of mothering and parenting roles, all the participants conveyed that they had learnt from their parents, especially watching the values their own mothers had emphasised while bringing them up. They further expressed that their cultural norms and traditions influenced their ideas of raising children as evidenced in the excerpts below

> You know where I was brought up in Africa from a place called Mombasa so in Mombasa we have morals brought up like in a Moslem way of religion, so we have a dressing code, you have to dress in no short clothes so different when I came in Portugal here it's so different because you dress according to the weather so sometimes in summer you can see people wearing short clothes, but in our country different codes of dressing. (Rita, 34).

> I get the views of parenting from my mum, but of course I was raised by a very busy mother because she was a midwife, but it didn't matter how busy her schedule was she did her best to take care of us single handily. So, from her I learnt how a mother should be that whatever happens a mother does her best to be in her children's lives… (Sarah, 47).

> …I think of what my culture suggests when it comes to raising my children, but culture is fading like we used to listen to our parents, but I think now it's different now, most of us parents we are listening to the children, its different from when we were young. Yeah but I try to teach them some of our traditions because they need to know their background. (Mercy, 45).

These findings thus agree with the gender schema theory which explains that gender roles are passed on to children regarding how girls/women ought to behave and, on the other hand, how boys and men are expected to act. In this case, the participants connote the values carried from their childhood as girls trained to be mothers of tomorrow by their mothers.

However, it was evident that most of the mothers did not believe anymore in the corporal punishment to discipline their children except for one participant. Therefore, the majority believed in the balance between love and disciplining of children and expressed promoting this by making friends with their children while encouraging free talks amidst them.

The participants further believed that since they were away from their children, it was important to them to work towards a smooth relationship that could help the children feel free to communicate to their absent mothers about anything that worried them or that was not going on well. At the same time, the mothers were vigilant of their children turning out as responsible and disciplined citizens to reduce the criticisms from society to the absent mothers for having left behind their children. This thus contributed more to the dynamics in the parenting styles employed by the participants.

5.4.2 Gender differences regarding parenting between Kenya and Portugal

When asked about what participants think about gender roles and expectations regarding parenting in Kenya and Portugal, the participants communicated that they think this aspect is very different in the two countries as expressed below.

> When it comes to gender roles here, it is clear that here both parents have equal duties and responsibilities and it doesn't matter whether the parents are married, divorced or separated, unlike back home in Kenya where separation sees most fathers never in the lives of their children. That's why most of us now are single mothers. (Cathy, 32).

> Gender roles in Portugal are similar according to me, you see here when a couple has children every parent does everything like you can see a father carry the child, I know that they even help their wives at home with the house chores, but back home or let's say in Africa I don't know men that help at their homes they leave every work to the women even when they know you also get tired but here I think that's why they are happier in their marriages because they help each other. (Rita, 34)

> Gender roles and expectations may be don't even exist in Portugal because for me I see people doing everything together, when you walk around you see fathers playing with the children while the mother is shopping, or even fathers dropping their children to school and my Portuguese friends also tell me that in their home everyone whether father or mother does everything from child care to cooking to laundry but come to Kenya everything about children is left to the mother fathers only bring in money and now for us single mothers they are useless they don't offer anything. (Sarah, 47).

> I think in Portugal and Europe parents support each other same way fathers help with caring for the babies, mothers also pay some bills, you know parents help each other not like at home where they think women must do everything and worst of men these days don't even fulfil their own duties of providing as fathers and so there is no meaning of being with a useless partner who leaves everything to you. (Mercy, 45).

> If there is something I admire about Europe and Portugal it is how helpful parents are when it comes to raising children, like even when they separate, they have days to take care of the children in turns but in Africa I don't know who cursed our men because they don't help at all but some women are lucky their husbands help but those almost don't exist in Kenya. You know I am raising my sons to be great and helpful fathers to their wives I tell them a woman is human too who gets tired and need help with child care and keeping the family happy. (Veronica, 52).

> Oh my it is so different, in Kenya men are bosses in their homes they barely help with caring for the children when the baby cries all they say is take your child like I made the child all by myself, here parents help each other they all take turns to care for the

babies even when they cry their daddy can help soothe it I really admire how things are done here how much support and care fathers give to their wives and children. We need to improve in this area otherwise more single mothers are joining us because men leave everything to us they don't help anymore not even with financial support. (Lydia, 36).

All the participants perceived that the aspect of gender roles and expectations in families were so different between Kenya and Portugal, as they perceived Portuguese families to be almost equal when it comes to parental roles, especially child care but also sustaining a family, as they feel that every partner does everything or contributes equally to the family needs. However, the participants expressed that in Kenya, it was still very patriarchal, where men are the bosses in their homes and are expected to provide and protect their families, while the Kenyan women are expected to take care of house chores and child care as established by Helaine (2014) and Manyara, Mwangi, & Apollos (2016). The participants thus expressed frustration resulting from their Kenyan partners not being responsible fathers anymore and that these left the participants to take care of everything which forces the participants to separate from the fathers of their children, leaving them to be heads of their households.

These findings agree with authors who established that one of the reasons behind the increased female migration is the rise in challenges facing the traditional family setting, resulting in female headed households ACP Observatory on migration (2012); Helaine (2014) and Manyara, Mwangi, & Apollos (2016). This leads women to migrate in search for jobs, to take care of the familial needs, and this leads to the changes in the gender roles, as women take on men's former roles of providing for the family, as evidenced among the Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal.

5.5 Challenges of mothering from a distance

All the participants in this study conveyed that it is very challenging to be a mother from a distance and that this took a toll on their wellbeing as mothers constantly worried about their left behind children, as expressed in the excerpts below.

My biggest challenge; not being there for my kid, sometimes I feel the guilt conscience inside me that she is far from and I would love to be in Kenya with her or have her staying with me here. Challenge is I have to be stable first to be able to bring her but that takes a lot of time before she can come. (Rita, 34).

.It is really challenging to be away from your children because remember out of sight means out of mind and so when they know their mum is not around you don't impact that much anymore in their lives like the person that stays with them, they grow day after day , the way I used to bring them up when I was with them is different now that am caring for them from a far, just talking to them through the phone yeah. So, there are some limits to being a parent from far because a parent is supposed to be there for their child as the child grows up but any gap between always brings up problems… (Mercy, 45).

…not being with them to know and see every bit of their lives, dealing with them myself. when am here I don't see them every day to know what they are doing, how they are sleeping, what they are eating, how they dress, how they go about their duties in the morning, I have not seen that in a long time. When I was in Kenya I am the one that prepared their breakfast, I wake them up I see that yes they have woken up all of them, they are in good health, I send off to school after they come home they meet me they are happy, they

tell me about their day, we talk we chat like that but now you can imagine no mother in the morning to make tea they have to do it on their own… (Veronica, 52).

I cannot do to them what I would love to as a mother, taking them out, sharing a meal with them, I am not there to know and understand what they are going through. You know when you are a parent even just looking at your kid you can know if all is well with them or not so now that am not there I have no idea. I am not able to do anything for them even if I talk to them on phone I don't make as much impact as possible like the person staying with them. And, that distance love is a gap. (Lydia, 36).

Feeling like a failure, when I walk in the park and see parents with their children it is killing me to know I can't do that for my babies…I know even if they don't tell anybody may be when they see their friends' parents especially mothers around they wish I was with them too like on visiting days at school. They feel my absence. (Sarah, 47).

Just the absence, being absent physically, you know I would love to watch her grow and do all the things I used to do for her as a mother watch her wake up and go to school and listen to her school stories when she comes home but now I get all that just through texts and calls on the phone and it's not the same at all. There are days I miss her so bad and I imagine how much she misses me and would like to give her a hug…Well the other challenge is I am a single mother so her father is not anywhere in her life but I really wish one of us would be physically present with our daughter I think it makes a difference but yeah. (Cathy, 32).

The expressions above are evidence of the difficulties faced by participants while involved in parenting from far. The participants conveyed their utmost wish to be physically present in the lives of their children, as they assert that neither communication nor remittances can fill the gap. Additionally, all the participants expressed that they felt guilty and stressed by not being in their children's lives and were worried that they don't have much impact on their growth, like the caregivers, have since they are the ones doing what the participants would like to be doing to and with their children.

These findings concur with all studies about transnational mothering, who contend that transnational mothers usually express feelings of guilt and shame for not being physically present in the lives of the left behind children, even when they strive to communicate and send financial help to care for the children's emotional and basic needs, as argued by Carling et al.(2012); Parreñas (2005) and Sørensen & Vammen (2014).

Below are some of the examples of situations in which the participants felt distressed for not being present in their left behind children's lives.

…her performance at school is an issue and a little bit challenging sometimes she doesn't want to go to school. Like she expects that at least in holidays I could be with her, but I can't afford that or go to pick her, but I try to make her understand that it's not easy here and that I never abandoned her. (Rita, 34).

When my son finished Form 4 he did not perform very well, there needed somebody to confront him, there was no body he would listen to like if it was me his mother confronting him, plus he was going through a lot of things and that was so hard on me as a mother, so

it takes most of our time, we don't sleep well because you are thinking of your babies back home, like what will become of him. (Mercy, 45).

…I do have moments of feeling disappointed in myself. For example I remember when my son was finishing KCP national exams I wished I was there because I had promised him that when you finish class eight I will be the one there to carry your box, carry your bag and then finding myself here that am not in a position to do that for my son I felt so bad and discouraged. And, in my culture, when you finish class eight for the boys, they go through the right of passage and still I was not there to cook for my son escort him for the ceremony encourage him. Remember this is something that happens once in a boy's lifetime, so I was not there for him to see him go through it just crossing this rite of passage I really felt so bad. And the time he was joining high school I was still not there. (Lydia, 36).

Last year my daughter suffered from chicken pox and my brother that's closest to her was doing his law tests and exams and was so busy to give her much care and attention. I wished so bad that I could be there for her it was only three days thank God, but it felt like forever not being there with her to tell her I love her and that she will be well almost killed me. (Cathy, 32).

My daughter got very sick, she was going back to school, she was not okay but insisted on going, that day she fell by the road side, she fainted, she had no phone, and no one knew her because our house is rented it's not like a village not everyone knows you. So, but she had uniform and so they called her school she had to be admitted. That is when I really felt an emptiness, it was too much because I was imagining how can a child be admitted in hospital without a mum being around I mean like holding her, just opening her eyes to see me there would have made her well. It gives her a lot of comfort. Makes her feel safe. It even interfered with my blood pressure I almost lost focus because I was losing it. That is when it hit me properly, but the doctor advised me to stop stressing. (Sarah, 47).

Relating to the expressions above, it is evident that the reason behind the participants feelings of inadequacy, guilt and shame is the inability to be able to take part in the daily experiences of their left behind children. For instance, when the children fall sick, transitioning to higher levels of school, cultural initiations, most of which take place once in life, and therefore missing out on them is losing out forever on this aspect of the children's life. Therefore, this constrained more the relationships between the participants and the left behind children resulting from this absence. This thus relates to the argument of the attachment theory, specifically the need for consistent care and caregivers, if healthy attachments in children can be developed for their psychological, emotional and consequently physical wellbeing, as established by Bowlby, (1969).

Therefore, the participants emphasised their main wish to be the ones taking their children through life experiences and defined this as the major role of mothers. However, the separation between them and their left-behind children was worsened by the costs of tickets to Kenya, which the participants expressed were so expensive in relation to their incomes and hence prolonged the absence and consequently the challenges that come with the situation.

It is further evident in the findings above that the absence of the mothers had negative effects on the children left behind, for instance, falling sick, emotional challenges, asking the mothers

when they will join them and acting out through smoking and refusal to talk to the caregivers. This shows that the children were struggling to understand why their mothers were away and that this was stressing them, a finding that is consistent with the establishments of Caarls et al., 2018 and Kufakurinani et al., 2014 among left-behind children in African countries.

In addition to the above, all the participants expressed that they felt being judged as bad mothers by their communities in Kenya. They further asserted that they do not understand why the Kenyan people think any mother would walk away from their child and that the participants never wished this on themselves but that they had no choice since they could not afford to care for their children while in Kenya.

This revelation thus relates to studies on transnational motherhood such as Dreby (2006); Parreñas (2005) and Sorensen N & Guarnizo (2007), which have all established the judgement of transnational mothers from their families and communities for having left their children behind and thus looked at as unfit mothers.

5.5.1 Coping mechanisms

Regarding coping strategies, all the participants expressed the role played by their extended families back in Kenya, as well as the network of Kenyan and other friends from Africa that provide emotional support and that this is what keeps them going. The participants further emphasised that communicating home frequently was of help in dealing with the pressure, stress and worries involved in caring from a distance. Below are some of the expressions regarding coping strategies employed.

> I call whenever I can and explain to my daughter why I had to leave and try making her future better and she seems understanding. But my father also helps me a lot as he comforts her and explains to my daughter the sacrifice I made as her mother, so she tells me sometimes how much she appreciates what I do for her and that keeps me moving. It is very important for me to have the extended family back home, I really do not know what I would have done without them. (Rita, 34).

> My family is always there to help me like my sister and brothers they stand in for me whenever needed. (Mercy, 47).

> I do have friends here from Kenya we share a lot and talk about our children and this helps to relieve the stress a lot. (Veronica, 52).

> My children keep me going because they have never let me down, so I don't regret my hard work and apart from my sister my family really helps and supports me a lot. Everything that happens they all stand with my children. And my children are very free with them they do help them a lot. At least I have a backbone and a shoulder to lean on and I have friends from Kenya but it's just that we come from the same country and just try to be there for each other. (Lydia, 36).

> One thing I really try to do is call and call as much as I can, and it feels so better whenever I travel back home every year because my employer is so understanding, and they give me this month to see my daughter ever year. (Cathy, 32).

These revelations further cement the importance of communication in maintaining transnational families, as established by ACP Observatory on migration (2012); King (2012)

and Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton (1992). The expressions also highlight the role played by migrant networks as the friends to the Kenyan mothers in this study in reducing the costs of migration through the emotional support (King, 2012).

However, it was evident that the participants never tried to seek any kind of professional help from either social workers or psychologists, in the case for the children left behind in Kenya. This may be due to low development of social work services in Kenya, while in Portugal, the participants may have never thought of seeking this kind of help, which made the process of transnational motherhood more challenging than it would be with support.

5.5.2 Future plans

All participants in this study revealed that they were saving up resources as they plan to be reunited with their children. While some of the participants were planning to apply, so that the children join them in Portugal, others were planning to put up a business in Kenya, so that they could go back to their children as self-employed, due to fear of unemployment that resulted in their migration. Below are some of the participants' expressions regarding plans.

> I am in the process of applying to have her come here and that is before she turns 18 because then it becomes hard and impossible, but the procedures to bring her are also challenging and a year from now she may be able to come although I need a lot of money that I don't have but am saving something I know I will make it come true for her and for me of course (Rita, 34).

> My plans are to go back to Africa, but I have applied for my two youngest boys to come for university may be and they can have the rest of their life here am planning to bring my last born because he is underage and also am planning to invite my other son who is 19 because I was told if he is below 21 he can still get documents to stay but me I want to retire in Africa. (Veronica, 52).

> My plan is to stay with them wherever God makes a way whether in Kenya or Portugal but for now I am saving some money so that I can have an apartment before I apply for reunion of my children but since I work as a live-in house help it is still hard for me but am trying. (Lydia, 36).

> For now, I want my daughter to complete primary seven and I plan to bring her as soon as her documentation is approved. I am working on it this year because she will be through next year. (Cathy, 32).

> It really depends, like I don't care where I am I just wanna be with my kids my wish is to be with them. But my plan right now is if they perform well I can save up and bring them to do their university here although right now I earn just enough for their school fees and basic needs but later in life if I get a better job being with them here is my greatest wish and goal. (Sarah, 47).

According to the revelations above, it is evident that all the participants were working towards being with their children again. However, since four of the participants were employed in the low wage sector, they expressed that currently they could not afford to bring their children, and

this was worse for the participants that worked as live in house helps who had no space to accommodate their children.

Despite their current jobs and challenges, the participants too had hopes, as they confessed that they were saving up, so they could afford an apartment later and were therefore working on putting in place what is required by immigration for them to be allowed to bring their children to Portugal.

These findings agree with authors who established that migration position regarding the legal status and nature of jobs migrant parents take on, influence the quality of time availed to provide care from a distance, as well as the possibility of family reunion as established by Fresnoza-Flot (2009); Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla (1997) and Yamanaka & Piper (2005). In this case study, it is evident that most of the participants were limited to bring the children sooner due to the expenses involved that the mothers could not afford now.

This chapter presented the findings and analysis of the data collected during the six in-depth interviews and participant observation regarding the experiences and perceptions Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal. The chapter thus explored how the participants performed parenting and maintaining the families in Kenya, as well as the perceptions held regarding motherly roles. The results of the study concurred with the findings of the previous researches especially regarding the experiences of transnational mothering as well as the perceptions of roles of mothers. The findings established how challenging it is for transnational mothers to be away from their children, but also the effects they perception to have on their left behind children.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This study aimed to characterise experiences and perceptions of Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal. The significance of the study was to contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding (i) transnational parenting, (ii) and mothering among African migrants in Europe.

The study focused on six Kenyan transnational mothers who migrated to in Portugal, for at least in the last six months and have left behind children in Kenya. It also difficult to find a study on Kenyan transnational parenting in Europe. This study is a pioneer study on Kenyans in Portugal, as well as transnational mothering among Kenyan migrants.

The main research questions of the study were: How do Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal perform parenting?; and How do Kenyan mothers perceive as motherly roles?. These topics are particularly insightful for researchers of migration and social work, to better know this social reality and intervene.

The study was guided by literature from previous studies on transnational parenting and transnational motherhood, such as ACP Observatory on migration (2012); Carling, Menjívar, & Schmalzbauer (2012); Dreby (2006); Fresnoza-Flot, (2009); Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla (1997) and Parreñas (2005), among others. Most of the available theories and studies regarding transnational motherhood are based on migrants from Europe, Asia and Latin America. For instance, Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla (1997); Parreñas (2005) and Yamanaka & Piper (2005) while the ones on African transnational families are fewer such as: Best-Cummings (2008; Grassi & Vivet (2014); Haagsman (2015) and Mazzucato & Dito (2018), which limits the understanding on these dynamics. This thesis contributes to fill this gap.

The methodology used in the study was qualitative in nature as it aimed at understanding the experiences and perceptions of Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal as guided by Bryman (2012) who explains that a qualitative study aims at characterizing, understanding and describing social phenomenon. The methodology chosen was micro-ethnography, in which the data was collected majorly through in-depth interviews and participant observation, as well as field notes.

The study also employed secondary data from Portuguese statistical institutes. One of the weaknesses of the study methodology was the limited time to engage in ethnography thus limiting the study to a micro-ethnography and in-depth interviews that may have limited, the data gathered. The interviewees were so busy with their work, since three of them worked as domestic workers and reside in the house of their bosses, while the other three worked all the days of the week in different jobs, to maximise their income and this made it hard to find time for the interviews. Similarly, since the first language of the interviewees was Kiswahili, this limited their expressions when sharing the experiences of mothering from a distance.

The research reached some findings concerning transnational mothering. First, the participants migrated to search for better economic conditions, while they experienced loss in relation to challenges involved in leaving their children behind as established in the micro, meso and macro levels of decision making presented by (Goldin et al., 2011). Secondly, it was established that the participants had mobility capital, in terms of migrants networks that were based both in Kenya and Portugal, and these played a vital role in making the migration costs lower, through provision of information and emotional support during the migration process,

as well as during settlement of the participants in Portugal, as explained by Gropas & Triandafyllidou (2014); Kaufmann, Bergman, & Joye (2004); Palloni, Massey, Ceballos, Espinosa, & Spittel (2001) and Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton (1992).

On the other hand, it was revealed that the gender schema theory was confirmed in the finding which conveyed that the participants perceived themselves as the main care givers for their left behind children and that this was learnt from their own mothers who educated them on the roles and expectations of a Kenyan woman in her family and hence the participants carried this on in their adulthood as established by Helaine, 2014 and Teater, 2014. This thus explained why all the participants were troubled with worries and thoughts of being far away in separation from their children as well as judgement from their families and communities.

Thirdly, in relation to the attachment theory, the findings revealed that the participants were constantly concerned about the relationship between them and their left behind children, as they conveyed that they felt like the children were closer to their primary care givers, who are available to provide the emotional care and nurturing. This thus explains why the participants expressed that being away from the children meant that they did not matter anymore in their children's lives, which distressed the participants much more (Bowlby, 1969). .

Fourth, transnational mothering was found to depend on the frequent communication between Kenyan mothers and their left behind children, through WhatsApp messages and video, calls as well as sending of remittances to the care givers to be used for the basic needs of the family. Care arrangements were seen to be non-universal as both female and male non-kin were selected as the main care givers of the left behind children as established by Carling et al., (2012).

One of the main findings of the thesis is that the mothers experienced simultaneously guilty feelings, for not being physically present with their children, reproducing the gender norms on mothers, already researched among other transnational mothers (Carling et al. 2012), as well as feelings of gratitude for being in position to provide quality education and basic needs for their left behind children. This made them feel empowered as mothers and the heads of their households in Kenya which promoted resilience, especially considering the increase in the quality of life provided to their children (Yamanaka & Piper, 2005). This made the participants so proud thus, expressing the empowering nature of migration for the Kenyan transnational mothers.

Regarding coping with the challenges of being distant mothers, the participants conveyed that their extended families played a great role in supporting their children, but also communication allowing them to follow up on the children closely. Additionally, the Kenyan migrant networks in Portugal provided emotional support through conversations during informal gatherings as friends.

Relating to the future, all participants conveyed their longing and plans to be reunited with their left behind children, as they felt it was a possibility in Portugal, although they cannot afford the requirements yet. While some were saving to get apartments in Portugal, as required for family reunification, others were planning to set up businesses in Kenya so that they could have an income when they return to their children.

In addition, there were no clear differences between mothers that have children in Kenya and Portugal with the ones that have all their children back in Kenya, they instead shared in

suffering the same challenges of being distant mothers. However, the mothers with children in both countries were more troubled as they had to divide the care and financial support for the children here in Portugal and in Kenya.

This study is important for social workers in Portugal that can use the findings to understand the challenges faced by transnational mothers and devise ways through which to support them on how to manage emotionally, physically and financially. For instance, Social workers can advocate for policies that enable visits and return to uphold the human right to family reunification which may make transnational motherhood easier (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012). The aim is to better reduce negative effects of parent child separation and promote the wellbeing of parents and their children.

Social work in Kenya is relatively new and still underdeveloped however, there is an increasing number of Non-Government Organisations in place that support and strengthen families and child protection from violence and maltreatment (Onyiko, 2017). Kenyan social workers can use the findings to understand the costs and effects of parental absence on children and thus put in place child care services to support care givers and families of migrant workers to cope, as well as promoting a healthy relationship between the children and their absent parents (ACP Observatory on Migration, 2012).

The Kenyan government can benefit from this study by using the findings to put in place support centres, projects and programs specific to reduce unemployment of Kenyan single mothers, who will otherwise be led to migrate in search for employment abroad.

A main finding was that most of the participants of the study are single mothers, whose children's fathers are not involved in child care, with exception of one that is married. This finding relates to the perception held by the participants in relation to gender ideologies that men and fathers in Kenya most times leave the domestic work of childcare and house chores to the Kenyan women. Moreover, in the case of single mothers, the children's fathers never rendered financial help, as they no longer reside in the same household. This made the researcher to ponder on whether this was the main factor behind Kenyan female migration and consequently transnational motherhood resulting from the increase in female-headed households in Kenya, which leave women with the sole responsibility of child care and home maintenance. However, this is an area that requires further research. The important is that Kenyan single mothers "naturalised" the fact that they must migrate alone and keep separated from the children, to be able to have resources to raise them. Still, this is not "natural" and this thesis contributes to deconstruct the challenges the mothers face.

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Appendix 1: Interview Guide

A. Personal Identification:

(Ask these in preference at the end of the interview)

1. Please write your chosen pseudonym in this interview _____
2. Age _____
3. Country of birth_____
4. Father of the children if in PT or Kenya and if he is involved in the children's lives or not
5. Educational Attainment:
6. How many children do you have?
7. Where are the children PT/ Kenya?
8. Ages and sex of your children.
9. Length of stay in Portugal/ separation from children.

B. Migration Trajectory

1. How did you end up in Portugal?
2. When did you come to Portugal?
3. What were your reasons for coming to Portugal?
4. Did you come with anyone to Portugal? If yes who?
5. Where in Portugal do you stay?
6. With whom do you stay in Portugal
7. How often do you go back to Kenya (if you ever got back)?
   a. What are your reason/s in going back to Kenya?
   b. When was the last time you went back to Kenya?
8. What was your job before you left Kenya?
9. What is your job here in Portugal?
10. Who are those living in your household in Kenya.
11. Who are the ones living in Portugal?

C. Perceptions, practice and care Arrangements

1. Who takes care of your children in Kenya?
2. Is the father of your child/children involved in taking care of them? If yes how?
3. Tell me about your daily routine when you were in Kenya?
4. Could you say your routine in weekdays? And in weekends? (You get up, …)
5. In your week days, do you communicate with your children? If so, when?
6. In weekends time? If so, when?
7. Apart from communication, what else do you do to take care of your children from a distance?
8. What do you think are the main differences between being their mother in Kenya and being their mother while migrated in Portugal?
9. What do you consider to be the most important things when raising your child/ children?
10. What do you think influences your ideas/views about parenting/mothering being from Kenya?

11. Being exposed to Portuguese community and culture, more importantly on the way they do their parenting, does this influence your own way of doing parenting?
12. What do you think about gendered parental roles in Kenya and Portugal?
13. What do you think is the most significant role that considerably helps your child/children now that you are here in Portugal?
14. In general, what are your plans for the child/children?

E. Challenges and coping

1. What do you consider as the main challenges/difficulties of parenting from a distance?
2. Can you give me an example of a situation where parenting from a distance was challenging to you?
3. Tell me about how you overcome the challenges in your parenting roles?
4. What or who helps you overcome those challenges? Do you share it with your work friends? Or family?

F. Suggestions

1. What advice do you give to those who also have the same situation as you in long distance parenting?
2. Do you have any suggestions for any stakeholders whether here or in Kenya about Transnational parenting? Anything you would like to be worked on?

Appendix 2: Consent Form

Good day

I am Rose Namuleme, a Ugandan student pursuing the master's in Social Work with Families and Children at Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL), Lisbon Portugal. I am currently in the last part of my course and in the middle of my research work which is one of the pre-requisites to obtain the degree.

This study researches the experiences of Kenyan mothers in Portugal that are involved in transnational parenting particularly how they perform parenting from a distance as well as what they perceive as their roles and expectations in parenting.

The research is coordinated by Rose Namuleme, she is the researcher doing the interview whom you may contact (nrose899@gmail.com), in case you would like to share any doubt or comment.

Your participation, which will be highly valued, consists of giving an interview, which may last between thirty minutes to one hour. There are no significant expected risks associated with participation in the study. Although you may not benefit directly from participation in the study, your answers will contribute to better understand the experiences and perceptions of Kenyan transnational mothers in Portugal.

Participation in this study is strictly **voluntary**: you may choose to participate or not to participate. If you choose to participate, you can discontinue participation at any time without having to provide any justification. In addition to being voluntary, participation is also **anonymous** and **confidential**. Data are only for statistical treatment and no response will be analyzed or reported individually. At no point in the study do you need to identify yourself. Given this information, please indicate whether you agree to participate in the study:

<div align="center">Accept ☐   Do Not Accept ☐</div>

Name: _____   Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 3: Matrix

Table 2: Matrix Content Analysis

No.	Theme	Sub-theme		Quote
1	Reason for migration	i.	Search for better job	Rita: "I came to Portugal in 2011, for greener pastures."
		ii.	Take care of sick husband	Mercy: "My husband came here as a student, he is pursuing a PhD, yeah in Biology, so I came to see him and then he was having a problem with his health and so he had to stay with somebody to help with medical needs, so I had to stay with him."
2	Care arrangements	i.	Female kin; Grandmother, Auntie, Sister	Mercy: "My mother takes care of both our children with the help of my sister and brothers. But my mother majorly."
		ii.	Female non-kin; House help	Sarah: "I hired a house girl to take care of the children although my brother also helps once in a while."
		iii.	Male kin; Grandfather and Uncle	Cathy: "my last brother is the main care giver for my daughter."
3	Communication	i.	WhatsApp texts	Veronica: "In the morning when I wake up I send message to them say good morning, I can't call because its busy for all us…"
		ii.	Video calls	Sarah: "I video chat with my daughter and the maid too I buy credit for the house girl phone, so she can reach me in case of any emergency."
4	Remittances	i.	School fees	Rita: "I am the only person in charge of my daughter, so I send

		ii.		money for her school fees and birthday cake and gifts."
		iii. Children needs		Cathy: "I am my daughter's main provider, I pay her school fees and send money every month for upkeep, I try to do things that I imagine I would be doing while am with her and that's providing everything she needs as long as I can afford it."
		iv. Gifts		Mercy: "when I travel I buy shoes and clothes for my boys you know they ask for the latest fashions, so I have to find them and carry them to Kenya."
5.	Perceptions	i. Roles of a mother		Cathy: "Well I think mothers play a very important role if not the most important for the child as they grow. And for me the most important one is to mould and guide the child as they grow, show them the right way to go, to basically be a role model as they grow…" Cathy: "The other role of a mother in a child's life is to be their number one cheer leader, to encourage them in their pursuits in life, tell them they can do and that they can make it.
		ii. Mothering Styles		Rita: "Discipline for me is very important but at the same time the friendship. You know I want my

			children to be my friends like they feel free to tell me anything because that way I can know what is going on in their lives. But at the same time, they must be well behaved in Africa we don't spoil children, so I am a bit strict when it comes to how they dress, talk to people but I give them the freedom as well and I explain why I tell them not to dress indecently and why they should respect people."
		i. Gender differences between Kenya and Portugal	Cathy: "When it comes to gender roles here it is clear that here both parents have equal duties and responsibilities and it doesn't matter whether the parents are married, divorced or separated unlike back home in Kenya where separation sees most fathers never in the lives of their children. That's why most of us now are single mothers."
6	Challenges and coping strategies	i. Challenges; guilt, inadequacy, loss of control, depression, constant worry	Lydia: "I cannot do to them what I would love to as a mother, taking them out, sharing a meal with them, I am not there to know and understand what they are going through. You know when you are a parent even just looking at your kid you can know if all is well with them or not so now that am not there I have no idea. I am not able to do anything for them even if I talk to them on phone I don't make as much impact as possible like the person staying with them. And, that distance love is a gap."

			Veronica: "Sometimes I even ask them do you think am a good mother being a way. And they are like we thank you for everything you are doing for us, you are a good mother but for me I keep thinking am not a good mother because I left them sometimes I think why did I leave them but then I think if I stayed maybe I could not provide for them like I do now . It's not easy but you have to bare it and pray a lot. And then you have to make yourself stronger for them because stress will kill you."
		ii. Coping mechanisms; explain to children, help from extended family, share with friends in Portugal, enrolment in boarding school	Veronica: "I do have friends here from Kenya we share a lot and talk about our children and this helps to relieve the stress a lot. Sometimes our children are lying because they don't want to tell us the truth about their performance."
		iii. Plans	Cathy: "For now I want my daughter to complete grade eight and I plan to bring her as soon as her documentation is approved. I am working on it this year because she will be through next year." Veronica: "My plans are to go back to Africa but for the boys to come here but me I want to retire in Africa."

Source: From transcripts