Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa

Department of Sociology

Migration strategies in Africa:
The role of Gender, Households and Social Networks

Sarah Bove

Dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of a Masters in Development, Local Diversities and Global Challenges

V Mestrado em Desenvolvimento, Diversidades Locais e Desafios Mundiais

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Resumo

Esta tese é uma reflexão sobre as relações que se estabelecem entre o género, o agregado familiar e redes sociais, realçando a forma como se articulam, através do espaço e do tempo, para caracterizar os padrões da migração rural-urbana na África Subsariana. A migração interna e externa não será diferenciada aqui, sendo que os migrantes vêm a migração intra-regional e intra-continental como extensão do movimento interno.

Partindo do pressuposto que a migração é uma construção social que influencia e é influenciada pelo género, a contribuição desta tese é realçar o papel do género nos processos migratórios, e acentuar como afecta cada fase das estratégias de migração do agregado familiar e das redes sociais em África. Até agora, estas estratégias dinâmicas foram concebidas à luz de padrões de migração de fluxos migratórios da América Latina e Ásia para América do Norte e Europa; enquanto as migrações Africanas são normalmente analisadas numa perspectiva mais estática**,** tendo por base explicações históricas, económicas e de desenvolvimento.

A perspectiva genderizada da migração mostra como o género penetra várias identidades e instituições ligadas às migrações, e como esta estabelece as bases para analisar os factores estruturais, como o agregado familiar, que condicionam as relações de género. Uma perspectiva genderizada da estratégia do agregado familiar, da teoria das redes sociais nas migrações e do transnacionalismo demonstra como as relações de poder dentro do agregado formam os processos de decisão, redes sociais genderizadas e as ligações entre amigos e família que facilitam e sustentam a migração feminina.

Palavras -chave: género, África, estratégia do agregado familiar, a teoria das redes sociais nas migrações, migração feminina, migração rural-urbana, transnacionalismo.

Abstract

This thesis is a reflection on the complex relationships that are established between gender, households and social networks, highlighting the way in which they come together, across space and time, to characterise rural-urban migration patterns in Sub-Saharan Africa. Internal and international migration will not be differentiated in this dissertation, as migrants tend to regard intra-regional and intra-continental migration in Africa as an extension of internal movement.

Based on the premise that migration is a social construct that influences and is influenced by gender differentiation, the contribution of this thesis is to highlight the role of gender in migration processes, and stress how it affects every phase of household and migration network strategies in Africa. Until now, these dynamic strategies have been conceived in light of migration and assimilation patterns of migration flows from Southern Europe, Latin America and South Asia into North America, Europe, and other traditional countries of immigration; whereas Sub-Saharan African migrations have usually been analysed in view of a more static historical, economic or development perspective.

A gendered perspective of migration shows how female and male gender permeates various practices, identities and institutions related to migration and how it lays the foundation for analysing the structural factors, in this case households, which condition gender relations. A gendered perspective of household strategy, migration network theory and transnationalism demonstrates how intra-household relations of power shape migration decision-making processes, the gendered nature of social networks and the ties between friends and family that facilitate and sustain female migration.

Key Words: gender, Africa, Household Strategy, Migration Network Theory, female migration, rural-urban migration, transnationalism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction 2

1. Presentation of the subject: objectives and contributions of the thesis 3
2. Methodology and Structure 5

Chapter 2: The State of the Art 8

1. Theories of Gender and Migration 9
2. Migration theory in social sciences 14
3. Female migration patterns in Sub-Saharan Africa 21

A brief historical description of Migration patterns in Africa 21

Traditional Female Migration in Africa 22

Chapter 3: Gender in Household Migration Theory in Africa 27

1. Household Migration Strategy 28
2. The Relevance of Gender in Household Strategies 30
3. Households and Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa 35
4. Household Strategies: an analysis of case studies within the African context 40

Chapter 4: Gender and Social Networks in Africa 47

1. Migration Networks Theory, Transnationalism and Gendered Networks of Obligation 48
2. Social Networks in the African context 53
3. Women, Social Networks and Migration in Africa 55
4. Female Social Networks: an analysis of case studies within the African context 61

Chapter 5: Conclusion 68

Bibliography 74

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The objective is to show "how differences between men and women´s motivations and risks, social networks and household relations come together to influence the decisions, processes of migration and assimilation"
Sara Curran and Abigail Saguy 2001: 54.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. Presentation of the subject: objectives and contributions of the thesis

This dissertation is a reflection on the complex relationships that are established between gender, households and social networks, highlighting the way in which they come together, across space and time, to characterise migration patterns in Sub-Saharan Africa[1].

Based on the premise that migration is another social construct that influences and is influenced by gender differentiation, the contribution of this thesis is to highlight the role of gender in migration processes, and stress how it permeates and affects every phase of household and social network migration strategies within the African context. Until now, these dynamic inter-level and inter-temporal strategies have been conceived in light of migration and assimilation patterns of migration flows from Southern Europe, Latin America and South Asia into North America, Europe, and other traditional countries of immigration; whereas Sub-Saharan African migrations have usually been analysed in view of a more static historical, economic or development perspective.

Economic and political parameters that have been identified for explaining migration in Sub-Saharan Africa include colonialism, the Independence wars in the 60s and 70s and Europe´s successive recruitment of labour from its old colonies, the World Bank´s and the International Monetary Fund´s questionable Structural Adjustment Programmes and current labour recruitment of professionals (Adepoju 2006, 2009; Bilsborrow 1998:7; Mafukidze 2006; Oucho and Gould 1993; Todaro 1980). Other significant literature on migration in determining migratory causes, patterns and consequences in Africa is based on individual and psychological reasons (De Jong 2000; De Jong and Gubhaju 2009), or focuses on socio-cultural factors.

African societies are defined by a strong sense of family, kinship, extended households and social networks. In addition, though women may have more informal obligations and responsibilities towards providing for their family than in other developing regions, their role in society in general and in the migration process in particular is still undervalued, both in terms of quantity and quality (e.g. its influence on the household and the migration fluxes themselves). For this reason, these concepts are

[1] This thesis focuses on gender and migration strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa; however, for the sake of simplicity Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa will be used interchangeably.

particularly pertinent to the African context, though little analysis has been done so far on their relevance for the region.

Therefore, this thesis´s main objective is to show how gender influences migration strategies and secondly, how these migration strategies can be adapted to the African context, to shed a new light on African women´s decision-making and actions in the migratory process, and interpret the many case studies under a common theoretical framework. Women actually constitute 47% of migrants on the continent (Zlotnick 2004), in order to understand this increasing trend, this thesis will focus on the women who migrate, and not on those that are affected by migration in terms of male emigration.

A third objective is to reflect on how migration in some cases is a coping strategy for households and how it is maintained by social networks, through their provision of information, money, shelter, support and feeling of safety. Though questioning what the impacts of migration on gender relations are *is* certainly enticing, the effort of sorting out the effects from causes of gender relations and migration in Africa, and separating cross-cutting issues of social change from those that are country-specific, would be a mammoth task too big for this dissertation. Because there are so many intersecting causes and effects, the result would doubtfully be accurate or complete. Consequently, the focus of this thesis is on the migratory decision-making and processes, rather than on its causes and effects, though they are obviously intimately linked.

Studies on migration as a household strategy demonstrate that the ways in which individuals respond to political, economic or development structural migration pressures and opportunities is often determined by the socio-economic situation of their households. Indeed, migration is often viewed as a household strategy to survive and improve their quality of life, and diminish risks, as a result of underdeveloped markets, insurance and government welfare. By sending off of a migrant, the family is actually investing in its welfare, as they expect a certain amount of remittances that will compensate the loss of an able hand, and provide some security against the uncertainties of modern life. This system works because there is an implicit contractual arrangement that binds families and migrant to non-migrant members of a household. Households decide who migrates, when and where, depending on the sex of the migrants, their age, marital status, class and so on (Boyd 1989; Curran and Saguy 2001; Collinson and Kubaje

2006; Kearney 1986; Mafukidze 2006; Massey et al. 1993; Massey et al. 1998; Stark and Lucas 1985, 1988; Stark 1991).

These households and communities establish networks of information, assistance and obligations that connect migrants and non-migrants across time and space, between the destination societies and the communities of origin. These networks permit the transference of information, money and social capital between both areas, and facilitate migration as they ease the risks and costs and assist with integration in the receiving area, providing shelter, job opportunities and so on to the newly arrived migrants. Once begun, migration flows often become self-sustaining - the reasons are developed in the thesis (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton 1995; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Malher 2001; Massey et al.1993; Massey et al.1998; Portes 2003).

A gendered perspective of migration shows how female and male gender permeates various practices, identities and institutions related to migration (political, legal and economic) and how it lays the foundation for analysing the structural factors, such as family, sexuality, education, the economy, the state, that actually condition gender relations. A gendered perspective of households and social networks, on the other hand, demonstrates how intra-household relations of power shape migration decision-making processes, the gendered nature of social networks and the ties between friends and family that facilitate female migration and may contest patriarchal authority (Chant and Brydon 1989; Curran *et al*. 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000; Hugo 2000; Malher and Pessar 2001; Pedraza 1991; Tienda and Booth, 1991).

2. Methodology and Structure

This thesis is based on an interdisciplinary bibliographical review of anthropological, sociological and development perspectives on gender, social networks and households in migration theory. It does not seek to develop an in depth theoretical analysis of the concepts at hand in light of the academic concerns of each discipline. Rather, it seeks to illustrate these concepts through published case studies, to show the complex realities and strategies of female migratory processes in the Sub-Saharan African context.

Though the dissertation was written during the final year of my Masters in Development, Local Diversities and Global Challenges, in 2009, I have been developing and researching the idea since January 2008. The final theme took shape as the result of two years coordinating a "Migration and Development" project ("Educação ao Co-desenvolvimento, a Dupla Oportunidade Norte - Sul") at INDE- Intercooperação e Desenvolvimento, a Portuguese Non-Governmental Organisation. Thanks to our continuous, in-depth work with African immigrant communities and associations, the project allowed me to understand some of the processes, concerns and dynamics of African immigration into a European country. The most noteworthy of those is the extent to which immigrants, even after decades of having lived in Portugal, retain strong transnational ties to their country and community of origin through their involvement in hometown and cultural associations in Portugal, remittances (social and monetary), visits and contribution to development projects in their community of origin. They effectively pertain to two worlds.

However, what peeked my interest and is at the origin of this dissertation is the active role of the women immigrants in this process. Through their life stories, I got a sense of what the immigration and assimilation process is like in Portugal, and how, amidst the many difficulties and added stress, it has given them access to means to voice their opinions, experiences, concerns and ambitions. However, I had little information about what migration was like for women who stayed in Africa, and about the decision-making processes, actions and strategies that enabled them to migrate. In addition, I knew little about how the fact of them being women, and subjected to heavy gender differentiation, would affect their experience. Therefore, I decided to complement my practical knowledge of African immigration in Portugal, with theoretical knowledge about the (gendered) processes on the continent.

This dissertation is a mix of extensive bibliographical research on theoretical concepts about gender, gender and migration, migration and African studies, and a range of field studies of gendered examples of migration processes that involve both household strategies and social networks, in order to illustrate the adaptation of these theories in the African context. The academic research was broad so that I would be able to fully grasp the context around the theme and its particular relevance for Africa, without myself having undertaken a field study.

Contributions of various disciplines have enabled a cross-disciplinary approach of the topic at hand. The anthropological view provides a detailed account of women´s personal experiences, views and thoughts on their migratory trajectory. The sociological paradigm is important in looking at the social networks and household strategies of the migrant women, and how these are maintained and serve them in their place of destination, as well as continuing the ties to their home community. The development perspective briefly looks at the consequences, either positive or negative, these migration processes have on women and on the communities of origin and of destination, in terms of socio-economic, demographic and cultural impacts. Though the latter has helped to frame the topics into a wider, more concrete light, it will only briefly be discussed.

The thesis is divided into three main parts, and the introduction and conclusion. The first part, *Chapter 2 - The State of the Art*, is the theoretical contextualisation of gender and migration, migration and African studies to date. It describes the theories, usually in chronological order from their arrival into the discourse, so as contextualise the main topics of the dissertation.

The second part, *Chapter 3 - Gender in Household Migration Theory in Africa* describes the household theory and how it relates to gender within the African migration context, using case studies of women´s migration experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa to show how their role and responsibilities within the household conditions their migration patterns.

The third part, *Chapter 4 - Gender and Social Networks in Africa* is a complement to Chapter 3. It extends the discussion to how social networks and ties of obligation are highly gendered, and illustrates the theory with case studies in Sub-Saharan Africa that show how women´s social networks gives them a sense of continuity, safety and support during the migratory process, in turn influencing the migration of other women.

The final part, *Chapter 5 – Conclusion* shows how this thesis has contributed to an innovative perspective on the relation between gender, household and social networks within Sub-Saharan Africa, and will open the discussion to other points that would need to be developed during further research.

CHAPTER 2: THE STATE OF THE ART

"Migration is indeed both a mother and a daughter of inequality"

Wendy Izzard 1985:280

CHAPTER 2: THE STATE OF THE ART

1. Theories of Gender and Migration

Gender transcends all major areas of life: sexuality, family, education, economy and the state, with conflicting interests and hierarchies of power and privilege at every level (Curran et al 2006). It is a social construct that intimately permeates every level of our existence, but has remained hidden by naturalistic ideologies which have concealed the social basis of gender relations (Chant 1998; Ortner 1974)[2]. Gender is a core organising principle of social relations in all societies (Baden 1997; Friedman 1992; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000; Pessar and Malher 2001; UN 2004) and it distinguishes between male and female domains in terms of productive and reproductive activities (Boyd 1989, Pedraza 1991; Pessar and Malher 2001,). It "organizes our behaviour and thought, not as a set of static structures or roles - but as an ongoing process that is experienced through an array of social institutions from the family to the state" (Pessar and Malher 2001: 442). People are socialised to view gender as natural, but it is not fixed nor biologically determined; rather it is a human construct, a process in which humans perpetuate social differences and relations of power between men and women.

Gender also organises the social relations and structures that affect every aspect of migration: "its causes, patterns, processes and impacts at every level, including the subjective personal experience of migrants" (Curran et al. 2006; Penson 2007a: 5). A gendered perspective must look beyond the differences or similarities of women and men´s migration, and must shed light onto how patriarchy organises family life, law, labour, public policy and so on, and how migration may reinforce or challenge gendered

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[2] Sherry Ortner´s theory on the secondary status of women inherent in society is largely based on Simone de Beauvoir´s "The Second Sex" (1953). It seeks to analyse why women in almost every society have been relegated to a secondary position – although this has changed greatly in many "developed" countries in the last fifty years. Because the reflections of the general patriarchal structure of most societies are expressed in such a wide display of customs and beliefs, she has come up with a woman:nature and man:culture dichotomy as one possible explanation. She purports that because a higher percentage of a woman´s body is dedicated to reproductive functions more of the time, they are seen as "closer" to nature. In contrast, man´s physiology allows him to take up the projects of culture. In addition, "woman's body and its functions place her in social roles that in turn are considered to be at a lower order of the cultural process than man's and" lastly "woman's traditional social roles, imposed because of her body and its functions, in turn give her a different *psychic structure,* which, like her physiological nature and her social roles, is seen as being closer to nature". She states that because women´s subordination is so pervasive, profound changes must take place in the psyche of society (Ortner 1974).

inequalities. It views the migration of women and men as influenced by cultural beliefs and expectations about appropriate male or female behaviour towards each other and towards society, which are reinforced in economic, political and social institutions (UN 2004). One should not forget however, that in addition to gender, other factors that characterise one´s identity, such as class, ethnicity, culture and age, play an important role in the migratory process, and that women as such should not be victimised, but viewed in respect to other factors that characterise their identity and position in society.

Most theories on gender and migration have been developed in the United States, as a result of the increasing international immigration - both in terms of numbers and their impacts on the destination and origin country - of migrant women from countries such as Mexico, Dominican Republic and Haiti. These theories are crucial to understanding the analysis of the role of gender in shaping migration processes, and in providing directions for a change of policies, laws (labour, migration, marriage) and development priorities. Throughout this thesis, the theories will be adapted to fit the local context of African migration, which is dominated by internal and inter-regional cross-border migration.

Migration is thus one of many social processes that influence and is influenced by gender relations. When the feminist discourse on migration and gender studies began in the 1970s in the United States, women had been treated, until then, exclusively as dependents of male migrants, playing a passive role as “tied” migrants. This first stage of the discourse, which can be called “Women and Migration” sought to address the virtual absence of women in migration studies, and remedy the assumptions that women were either too traditional to migrate or else that they migrated only as dependants. At the time, the novel idea was fought by intellectuals as being individualistic, un-scientific and detracting the focus from the real issue which was migrant labour exploitation caused by capitalism (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000: 113; Reh and Ludwar-Ene 1995).

A first step of the effort was adding women as a variable in research. At this point, they were not included as a central theoretical concept (Pedraza 1991), they were still not assumed to be acting in economic or structural contexts. Studies investigated the characteristics of immigrant women, the timing and volume of their migration, and their integration process at destination (Curran et al. 2006: 200). This was more of a demographic approach to the study of women in migration. Other studies, on the contrary, exclusively focused on the immigration experience of women based on a static

sex role theory, assuming that women were automatically attached to the domestic sphere and men to the public sphere. They did not address the concepts of gender as a social system, of power relations or social changes, crucial for understanding migration processes for all (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000: 114).

In the late 1980s to early 1990s, feminist thinking matured and evolved from a woman-centred analysis to providing what Stacey & Thorne call a "gendered" understanding of all aspects of human culture -one that traces "the significance of gender organization and relations in all institutions and in shaping men's as well as women's lives." (Stacey & Thorne 1985 in Pedraza 1991: 305). The main findings were the heightened awareness of the intersectionality of gender, class and race relations in understanding migratory patterns and the recognition of the variability of gender relations, namely how migration can reconfigure or perpetuate systems of gender (inequality), and how gender relations can influence the course of migration (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000: 115). Sherri Grasmuck and Patricia Pessar´s book about Dominicans female migrants in New York, "*Between 2 islands: Dominican international migration" (1991),* and Hondagneu-Sotelo´s *Gendered transitions: Mexican Experiences of Immigration (1994)*, were two of the main contributions to this discourse (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000: 115).

The new theoretical frameworks that emerged prioritised the household economy as being a critical site for revealing the relationship between migration and women (Curran et al. 2006: 201; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000). Researchers particularly discussed intra-household relations of power that shape migration decision-making processes, the gendered nature of social networks and the ties between friends and family that facilitate female migration and may contest patriarchal authority. They argued that though economic and political contexts were at the origin of migration flows, "the ways the individuals respond to these migration pressures and opportunities are often determined by what happens in families and communities" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000: 115). Investigators also showed how migration processes changed gender relations, mainly between spouses. According to Curran et al, some studies implied that migration tended to reinforce gender asymmetries via the tensions between reproductive labour and productive labour markets (Tienda and Booth, 1991; Zlotnik, 1993); others suggested that migration created opportunities for positively re-negotiating gender relations (Pedraza, 1991); while others were inconclusive, highlighting the need for more research about the context of migration (Curran et al. 2006: 201; Hugo, 1993).

The limitation of the second discourse is that it focused exclusively on the family and the household, thus implying that gender is somehow enclosed in the domestic arena, leaving out other arenas and institutions: workplaces, labour demand, citizenship, immigration policy and public opinion (Curran et al. 2006: 204; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000: 117; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2005:2; Pedraza 1991).

The final stage tried to address this lapse, discussing gender as a "constitutive element of migration" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000:117), as a "key organizing lens in any study of migration" (Curran et al. 2006: 204). The framework looks at how female and male gender permeates various practices, identities and institutions related to migration (political, legal and economic) and how it lays the foundation for analysing the structural factors, such as family, sexuality, education, the economy, the state, that actually condition gender relations (Curran et al. 2006: 204; Malher and Pessar 2001: 442). Emphasis has also been placed on immigrants´ civil and political rights, and on the importance of creating their own social civil movements or participating in hometown associations (Curran et al. 2006: 216). New studies may include a focus on sexuality and migration, for example examining parents´ moral values on their children´s sexuality compared to the host society´s (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000).

Recent research within the third discourse includes developments of the transnationalism concept. Sarah Malher and Patricia Pessar speak of "gendered geographies of power" to stress that gender operates simultaneously on multiple *spatial and social* scales (e.g., the body, the family and the state) across transnational terrains (Malher and Pessar 2001:5). Malher and Pessar developed this framework for analysing people´s social agency given their own initiative (and resourcefulness) as well as their positioning within multiple hierarchies of power which they have not constructed, and that confers on them certain advantages and disadvantages. These hierarchies, as mentioned before, include class, race, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality and gender, and are created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based, and other socially stratifying factors.

The authors address the fact that transnational or translocal actions, though often associated with the erosion of the nation-state or the community´s power, can indeed fortify it and in so doing also reaffirm assymetrical gender relations. Concrete examples are those of Haitian (Fouron and Glick Schiller 2001) and Cuban (Pedraza 1991)

women in the United States who, although they have gained employment and independent income while living abroad, continue to embody the view that women´s priority is the family, whether that means caring for the children at home or self-sacrificing and migrating to remit money. Work is therefore an opportunity to contribute to the family, and is not necessarily meant as a tool for self-realisation, at least not on a conscious level (Malher and Pessar 2001). The gendered status system is intimately linked to a national or communal identity and may continue to subordinate women even when they have left their community or country of origin. Indeed people´s values are linked to their social moorings, they are a form of cultural politics, embedded in power contexts. The challenge is to see how these translocal actions may challenge or affect the power contexts. These social fields are indeed so strong that they may extend to a "transnational cognitive space", in which the imaginary of the experience is so real that even individuals who have not migrated change their behaviour at home (e.g. they may stop attending school or purposefully remain unemployed) because they envision migrating soon (Malher and Pessar 2001: 456).

Notwithstanding the increasing interest and concern in gender and migration studies, which has grown commensurate with demographic trends, the basic conceptual framework has still not changed. It is still marginalised in research, surveys conducted with immigrant men still purport to *all* immigrants and more importantly, "gender is scarcely recognized or understood as having anything to do with relations of power. To the extent that gender is understood at all, it is seen within the framework of traditional sex roles" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000:119, UN 2004). Studies still fail to survey pre and post migration experiences and contexts, or to compare migrants with non-migrants (Curran et al. 2006)[3].

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[3] In her article "Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial Discourses", Chandra Mohanty calls attention to the danger of ethnocentrism in the feminist discourse on women in the "developing" world. She iterates that women in the "developing" world are not a homogenous group, they are also identified by class and ethnicity (Mohanty 1988: 76). By regrouping women as being poor, passive and unaware of their rights, oppressed in contrast to the "norm": women in "developed" countries, such as the feminist scholars themselves, who are educated and aware, may just be another form of condescending western cultural imperialism. She calls for a particular attention to specific historical generalisations in response to specific complex realities. Lastly, Mohanty raises an important issue about power. Generalising women across classes and ethnicities against one common group in power, which is men, turns them into the opposite group, the powerless. This binary concept of power, whereby there is power and its response, opposition, means that if women want to fight for power and eventually gain it, the new society would reproduce the existing organisation of power, but with an inversion of what already exists (Foucault 1989 in Mohanty 1988: 79). Women would not be reaching equality but domination, which is not the objective.

Sara Curran et al. observe that there has been an improvement in the type of research that sociologists are undertaking, including both qualitative and quantitative migration scholarship. The normative pleas of migration scholars until recently prevalent, showing how gender in migration processes is experienced and observed, are now complemented with quantitative data. Quantitative methods include statistical data and may also offer evidence-based gendered explanations for some of the paradoxes in the current quantitative literature on migration. One way of improving quantitative research methods is by comparing, across a wide breadth of countries, the ways in which gender operates in distinct migration systems and streams where origins and destinations are gendered. These systems have distinctive sets of gender relations, gender welfare and employment policies in legal (divorce), policy (welfare), employment, and demographic (age and sex composition) contexts, that uncover differences in the mobility of women versus men. Future research questions should also provide designs to follow migrants over time, and better comprehend the gendered impacts of migration in origin and destination communities, so that significant findings by gender and migration ethnographic scholars will be more completely incorporated into quantitative migration studies, and therefore into mainstream discourse (Curran et al. 2006).

2. Migration theory in social sciences

The last half of the 20th century has been an age of migration (Brettell and Hollifield 2000). Migration studies started to expand in the 1960s, a decade that saw a massive migration from rural to urban areas (Brettell and Hollifield 2000; Todaro 1980: 364). At the time migration was equalled to questions of urbanisation and development (Kearney 1986). In Africa, the subject of this thesis, rural-urban migration is still the main focus – even as rural-rural migration dominates the continent – for it represents a crucial factor in socio-economic change (Bilsborrow 1998; Martin 2003: 13). Internal migration theory in Africa is more descriptive and quantitative than analytical and often tends to be studied as a discipline of demography (Bilsborrow 1998:7; Oucho and Gould 1993). The importance of defining internal and international migration becomes blurred when speaking about Africa, for many of its boundaries were arbitrarily drawn

up and people tend to regard intra-regional migration as an extension of internal movement (Adepoju 2006: 26). Seasonal, circular and "step" migration - whereby migrants undertake the migration process in steps, moving from town to city- are the main features of migration on the continent (Adepoju 2009; Izzard 1985).

The theory shifted from an urbanisation standpoint to an international one during the boom of labour migration in the 60s and 70s, from the Mediterranean countries to Western Europe, Mexico to United States and the old African colonies to Europe. Ever since, internal and international migration have become the subject of various disciplines in social sciences, and present a variety of levels of analysis on the topic (political, historical, economic, demographic) (Brettell and Hollifield 2000: 1; Micaelo 2008: 9). The macro level approach (legal, political and economic) looks at how these structures shape migration flows, while anthropologists and sociologists study, at what can be described as the micro or meso level, how these larger forces shape decisions about selectivity and duration of migration and the actions of individuals and families, and how they affect social changes in communities (Brettel and Hollifield 2000: 8; Chant and Brydon 1989: 124); focusing on social networks as the causal and sustaining factors influencing migration process.

The theory of modernisation or macro economic theory was popular in the first half of the 20th century. Its most famous proponent is Michael Todaro, who developed the Todaro Model, originally inspired by the rural-urban migrations of Eastern Africa (Todaro 1980: 368). The macro economic theory proposed that migration was caused by geographical differences in supply and demand for labour, and the resulting large wage differential caused individuals to migrate (Massey et al. 1993: 433). The expected result was for wages to go up in sending communities, as there is less competition for labour, while supply of labour increases and wages fall in the destination country, causing an equilibrium across both societies (Kearney 1986: 336; Mafukidze 2006: 105; Todaro 1980: 360).

It evolved into the neoclassical micro-economic theory, or "modernisation" theory (Kearney 1986), which is based on an individual´s (usually assumed to be male) rational decision to migrate. The decision is caused by a financial and psychological cost benefit calculation of migration in terms of expected net return in comparison with the present income, and taking into account the probability of actually finding

employment (Massey et al. 1993: 435; Todaro 1970, 1980, 1989). It is an individualistic and psychologistic theory, based on the "pull" of economic and employment opportunities in the cities or abroad, and the "push" factors of low socio-economic conditions of the potential migrant´s place of origin (Kearney 1986: 338). The Modernisation model defends the dichotomy between traditional/modern, "developing"/"developed", and implicitly, between rural/urban; basing itself on a Victorian view of modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation as progress (Boyd 1989; Chant and Brydon 1989: 123; Kearney: 334). Its "culturist" elements imply that there is a culture of underdevelopment and backwardness, which may be reversed with the move to "developed" cities[4]. The migrants can then become agents of change in their home community, enriching it with the income, knowledge, change of values and goods they have aquired in the city or abroad (Kearney 1986).

However, starting from the 1970s, it became clear that urbanisation was not bringing about development. Even Todaro stated that migration became a cause of underdevelopment and not a solution for it, and by creating an urban surplus labour force it was causing unemployment (Amin 1995: 32; Kearney 1986: 335; Todaro, 1980: 363). Another problem with the model was its unit of analysis: the individual, which did not reflect the reality of migrant communities. Migrants do not become individualised nor lose their kinship, social and cultural ties when they move to the cities (Kearney 1986: 335). After a series of attempts to theorise this reality, researchers on sight of the sending communities, many of which were in Latin America, and watching the negative effects of migration, came up with the structuralist or dependency theory. It is a neo-marxist macro-approach that highlights migrations as forced responses to capitalist forms of production and labour markets (Kearney 1986: 337).

What Andre Gundre Frank, the Dependency model´s main proponent, actually did was to "find modernization theory standing on its head and to turn it onto its feet" (Kearney 1986: 338). Whereas modernisation theory was a view of history from the perspective of "developed" urban life, dependency theory came from the other end of

[4] In Africa, the model operates in utterly different circumstances. Up until now, emigration from the countryside is not followed by an improvement in productivity, but usually by its stagnation, or degradation. Rapid urbanisation creates an impoverished countryside, with few people and low agricultural production. The towns to which people flee have little industry, and finance this development with difficulty by tapping an agriculture that is itself undergoing a rapid progress. Migration to local towns is often a poor substitute for an international migration that is limited (Amin 1995: 38).

the rural-urban spectrum and called attention not to development but to the "development of underdevelopment" which, according to Frank, was the result of the colonial encounter (Kearney 1986: 338). The rural and the urban were not seen as two distinct economies but were linked by dependency, and served the needs of the "core": the main cities and employment and economic centres of the world, which characterised the capitalist world system. The rural areas became known as the "periphery", heavily exploited in terms of raw resources and labour for the enrichment of the "developed" countries (Brettel and Hollifield 2000: 9; Massey et al. 1993: 445)[5], while "brains" (more skilled and resourceful individuals) and labour move to better off places to develop those areas instead of their own regions (Adepoju 2006; Mafukidze 2006: 107), and to aquire cash to meet the exigencies of the colonial and post-colonial state: "the migrant is victim rather than entrepreneur" (Chant and Brydon 1989: 123).

This historical-structuralist approach shifts the motivations for migrating from psychological to structural. It allowed researchers to situate the circumstances of local communities within broad historic and structural contexts. Saskia Sassen, a dependency theorist, brings in the issue of women and their entry into unfair gendered labour markets. These are usually low paid and low status manufacturing jobs, or are concentrated in the informal sector, which can be a place of abuse and trafficking (Sassen 2000: 503). A result of this model is the "dual labour market theory", proposed by Piore in 1979, in which the core cities attract both highly professional migrants and lowly qualified migrants, creating an uneven, bifurcated economy (Massey et al. 1993: 435)

However, the dependency approach does not give due attention to the social ties of migrants, nor to how the ties of dependency are reproduced through social and cultural norms, visits and remittances[6]. It is almost exclusively concerned with flows of cash, goods and labour into the centre, and not so much with these moving to the periphery, their impacts on the sending communities or their eventual role in development (Gmelch 1980: 136; Kearney 1986: 341; Oucho 1993: 266).

[5] In Africa, this was particularly true as the colonialist and then the capitalist labour and production systems controlled the raw resources and labour, namely in South Africa, Zimbabwe or Kenya, ousting the rural communities into even poorer regions and keeping those regions impoverished, so they were "forced" to purvey migrants on a vast scale and at low cost (Amin 1995: 33).

[6] The term remittances includes the sending home of information, money and ideas, practices, identities and social capital- which are termed "social remittances".

The need to develop dynamic formulations that trace how micro-level decisions affect macro-level processes and vice versa, and to study the social links that connect migrants in the destination place with non-migrants in their place of origin, became apparent in the 80s (Massey et al. 1998)[7]. These news studies sought to move away from a reliance on official statistics and aggregate data towards household surveys, life histories, in depth community studies, and comparisons with non-migrants and of first migrants with those that follow. These frameworks emphasised migrants´ interactions with their environments and with external structural forces, showing that individuals rarely make decisions in a vacuum (Brettel and Hollifield 2000: 9).

As a result, new theories emerged in the 80s and 90s. One such theory was Michael Kearney´s "articulation" theory (Kearney 1986). The idea was to transcend the psychologistic limitations of modernisation theory while at the same time examining relationships of dependency, but not only as result of unequal exchange in the capitalist economic world system, but also as non-capitalist relations of production and reproduction in local settings from which and to which people migrate, namely at the household level (including gender and power relations), which bridges the gap between social (historical and macro) and individual (micro and psychologistic).

Another crucial theory for this thesis is the "New Economics of Migration" model, pioneered by Oded Stark in the 80s (Stark 1991). It is also referred to as the "Household Strategy" theory. The model proposes that migration is a household strategy for improving the households´ needs, in which decisions about migration are made by families or households, and not just by individuals. It analyses how these decisions to migrate are linked to and affected by global socio-economic structural contexts (Boyd 1989: 641; Collinson and Kubaje 2006: 159; Curran and Saguy 2001: 54; Massey et al. 1998: 21; Stark 1991; Stark and Lucas 1985, 1988). Households fluctuate between and maintain both a rural and an urban place of residence, in order to diversify income from traditional rural production to wage earning. The strategy intends to maximise expected

[7] Social psychological Theory proposed by De Jong (2000) and Gardner (1981) balance out the economics theory by stressing the role of non-economic factors in triggering migration. Instead, they are interested in the role of migrant decision-making factors, such as background and personal aspects linked to migration intent and behaviours, and the individual and family expectancy that migration will be followed by a given consequence. Such perceptions in turn affect migration intentions and migration behaviour (Boyd 1989: 641).

income, minimise risks when market, crop, retirement security fails, and increase exposure to social resources like education and health services (Collinson and Kubaje 2006: 159; Mafukidze 2006: 107; Stark 1991)[8]. In turn, the upholding of social ties allows the migrants to have a home to retire to if migration fails or at the end of their migratory path, providing a system of reciprocal obligation between the migrants and the non-migrants through social networks (Friedman 1992; Stark and Lucas 1989). As the family is a natural social network, its normative behaviour is indeed that of reciprocity and mutual aid (Massey et al. 1993: 436; 1998: 22; Root and De Jong 1991: 232). The Household Economics framework also allows for a gender perspective, showing how gender influences family decisions and migration behaviour (Mafukidze 2006).

Stark and Taylor also developed the theory of "Relative deprivation", in which individuals are sent to migrate not only to improve their actual income, but to increase their income in relation to other households, thereby reducing their "relative deprivation" (Brettell and Hollifield 2000: 16; Massey et al. 1998: 439; Stark and Taylor 1989).

The Household Strategy is intimately linked to the Social Networks theory popularised by Douglas Massey and his colleagues in the 80s (Massey et al. 1993: 436; 1998: 22). The Networks model was formulated in an attempt to identify why certain countries have higher migration rates than those of their neighbours, and why flows move to certain areas and not others (Massey et al. 1998: 8, 9)[9]. The answer rested not only in structural contexts (better employment opportunities or politico- historical

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[8] Authors in their research on Migration and Africa have used the theories of social and family networks to explain the various flows of migration across the continent: rural-urban migration and international migration within the continent. The concept of the family, kinship and ancestor worship tied to the community of origin highlights the particular relevance of these theories on the continent. The strength of these social and kinship ties are not purely solidarity ties, but are also an important strategy for survival, as they diminish risk and responsibility to small units of individuals: nuclear family, and spread them across wider groups: extended households and communities.

[9]According to Samir Amin, there is little study on the country migrants leave, and on the individuals who do leave (they are not necessarily the poorest). Examples: The Bassari of East Senegal are among the most destitute but do not migrate whereas the Serer, whose income is considerably much higher, do emigrate. In Tanzania, the poor Masai do not emigrate, but the farmers of rich Kili do. Pull factors cannot be reduced to a single factor that income in urban areas is higher than that of rural ones. Push factors, such as poverty and low income, do not have the same force from one rural area to the next, a force independent of the average income. These push factors are closely linked to the kind of social transformations that the rural areas of the world are undergoing as a result of their integration into the global capitalist system (Amin 1995: 31).

links), nor individual decisions, but also, and especially, in the social networks that link migrants with non-migrants. As Monica Boyd so succinctly put it, the study of "networks, particularly those linked to family and households, permits understanding migration as a social product-not as the sole result of individual decisions made by individual actors, not the sole result of economic or political parameters, but rather as an outcome of all these actors in interaction" (Boyd 1989: 642).

The basic premises are the following: "migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. They increase the likelihood of international movement because they lower the costs and the risks of movement and increase the expected net returns to migration" (Massey et al. 1993: 448). Networks lower the costs of migration because they facilitate the integration process of the newly arrived migrants, by offering shelter and facilitating employment contacts. Through the establishment of networks of information, assistance and (socio-cultural) kinship and friendship obligations, developed between migrants in the host society and friends and relatives in the sending area, they connect individuals between space and time and become conduits of information and social and financial assistance (Boyd 1989; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Malher 2001; Massey et al. 1993: 449). Social networks are also maintained by visits home, participation in hometown or cultural associations and marriages (Boyd 1989:650)

Once begun, migration flows often become self-sustaining, because social networks facilitate migration by lowering its costs and provide security at the destination area. In addition, "every new migrant expands the network and reduces the risks of movement for all those to whom he or she is related, eventually making it virtually risk-free and costless to diversify household labor allocations through emigration" (Massey et al. 1993: 449). This self-sustaining migration becomes independent from the original factors that caused the migration in the first place, whether they were institutional or individual. Because of the stable base networks provide at arrival, they often provide stronger motives than economic factors (Massey et al. 1993: 450). They also shape migration outcomes, ranging from no migration, immigration, circular or return migration or the continuation of migration flows (Boyd 1989:639).

Transnationalism is similar to the Migration Networks theory in that it focuses on ties between the community of destination and that of origin. This theoretical perspective, conceived by Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton, first emerged in anthropology in the early 90s, but it is widely used by sociologists and political scientists (Micaelo 2008: 11). Transnationalism is a "new perspective of an old phenomenon" (Portes 2003: 875), whose process has been greatly facilitated by improvements in the speed and the price of transportation and communication.

Like "Return" theory, it purports that in the mind of migrants, emigration does not necessarily equal a definitive move from home (Brettell and Hollifield 2000: 16; Gmelch 1980). "Transnationalism is a process by which the new migrant, or "transmigrant", forges and sustains maintains simultaneous multi stranded relationships that link the societies of origin and destination[10]. They are "immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across transnational borders and whose public identities are configured in relationship to more than one nation state" (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton 1995: 48). They are incorporated into the economic and political institutions of the destination society but are engaged, through reciprocal obligations and mutual supports, in the community of origin, through associations, remittances, development projects. These actions can influence local and national culture, political events and even economies (Portes 2003: 878)[11]

3. Female migration patterns in Sub-Saharan Africa

A brief historical description of Migration patterns in Africa

Spatial mobility has determined some of the fundamental social and historical aspects of African life, webbing inter-ethnic, - cultural and - economic ties between the regions. However, colonialism deeply affected a new set of migration patterns, reflecting

[10] Social networks and Transnationalism theories are extremely pertinent in Africa. Migrants who migrate to urban areas or to neighbouring, more "developed" countries (e.g. Southern Africa) have a strong attachment to their homes, and contribute from afar to their place of origin (Chant 2003; Dodson 2008). The rural-urban migration is also a process whereby the local entity of the village is extended to a "translocal" community settled in the city. Here, kinship authority may be deployed for defining rights and responsibilities in relation to disputes over urban resources such as rights of residence and urban employment (Gugler 2002).

[11] For more information on transnationalism and transnational social fields, see Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004)

each regions´- West, East, Southern and Central Africa´s – production and exporting opportunities. Colonialism and its introduction of a market economy, institution of taxes, creation of administrative and official political country capitals and so on, pushed individuals, either by force or necessity, to migrate in order to serve the development of the colonial governments and capital markets; heavily impacting on the socio-economic, cultural, political and demographic development of Africa (Adepoju 1995: 90; 2009).

The first labour migrants were primarily men. They migrated to work on the gold and diamond mines of Southern Africa (De Vleter 2007; Dodson 2000: 121; Gwebu 2006: 188, Izzard 1985: 258), the cash crop plantations, chiefly in West and East Africa (Adepoju 1995, 2006; Amin 1995; Pedraza 1991) or as clerks in the cities' administrations across the continent to pay the taxes and the new commodity goods. Colonial policies discouraged the permanent establishment of Africans in towns (see next section). Migration was therefore regulated by strict temporary employment, living residence rules and immigration policies that prohibited family reunification (Gugler 1989: 348; Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995: 260; Gugler 2002: 348; Olurode 1995: 292).

Most of these geographical internal and inter-regional labour migration patterns have persisted into the present era, following the labour and employment opportunities to the centres of production, and in large part in response to existing imbalances and inequalities in development (Adepoju 2009). The most predominant centre of industrial production was and continues to be South Africa, which has become a major migration destination from all corners of Africa since the early 90s (Mafukidze 2006: 117). Apart from Botswana where rural-urban migration- and Ghana where urban-urban migration are prevalent, the rest of Africa is dominated by rural-rural migration. However, this migration is hardly researched, and will not be the focus of this dissertation. International migration within Africa is prevalent. According to the United Nations Population Division, the total number of international migrants in Africa rose from nine million in 1960 to 16 million in 2000 (Zlotnik 2004).

Traditional Female Migration in Africa

While the men migrated to the cities during colonial times, women and children traditionally stayed in the rural areas where they were responsible for the production of subsistence crops (Adepoju 1995: 92). Land was communally owned, but crops

belonged to each family who worked that particular plot of land, therefore families could not afford to abandon the field altogether, as they would lose the right to cultivate it (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995: 260). In addition, because Africa has a relatively low density population, intensive farming of the same fields was never needed. Ploughing and heavy labour was rare, and therefore women could manage the work on their own, allowing for male mobility (Boserup 1989; Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995: 260). This may be one of the single reasons why, because women in Africa are so tied to the land, they migrate little compared to other regions in the world (Chant and Brydon 1989).

The nature of the land tenure and agricultural production arrangements lead to the "feminisation of subsistence agriculture" (Chant and Bydon 1989: 129). Women stayed in the villages, while the men migrated to complement the household survival strategies with low waged urban or mining employement. This gendered divison of labour was reinforced by the colonial governments and employer policies, which pushed for a sexual discrimination in urban labour markets, such as confining women to the lower cadres of employment (informal, commerce, distributive trade) due to their lack of education (Adepoju 1994, 1983). The colonial governments´ objective was to deter female urban migration, as their important contribution to subsistence production and reproduction in the rural areas subsidised the low wages, lack of retirement and healthcare plans and childcare that they did not provide their workers (Boserup 1989; Chant and Brydon 1989: 183)[12]. Therefore it sought to protect traditional systems of male control in marriages and avoid the creation of permanent black population in white areas, so as to perpetuate the submission of black labourers to the white colonisers. In practical terms, it enforced circular labour migration

Circular labour migration was established to profit the colonial and capitalist governments. By thrusting the responsibility of caring for workers on rural households, and by rendering workers contract labourers, employers were relieved from their

[12] A "material" explanation for female oppression is women´s role in capitalism. Indeed, when they do participate in formal employment, they provide a cheap labour force (the excuses are that because they have babies, their real duties lie elsewhere and they are not as efficient or available as men) and they are excluded from participation in trade unions. Most importantly, their isolated unpaid reproductive labour serves to lower the cost of reproduction of male labour power, as it helps to sustain the dependents of male migrants and stretch their grossly inadequate wages (Bozzoli 1983: 142; Boserup 1970 (1989): 66; Malher 2001).

responsibilities (minimum wage, healthcare, paid holidays and retirement) (Boserup 1989; Bozzoli 1983; Izzard 1985:280). This capitalist penetration of colonialism created the need for labour circulation of men and women between towns and villages. The role of labour circulation on the poverty level of the household is one of cause and effect. “Migration is indeed both a mother and a daughter of inequality”.

Independent female migration has been increasing since the post-colonial era of the 1960s, motivated by much the same economic and socio-psychological reasons as men (Adepoju 2006: 33; Tienda and Booth 1991: 57). 47% of international and internal migrants in Africa are women, which is just under the average percentage of women migrants in “developing” countries, at 49% (Zlotnick 2004). However, because women were so often assumed to be passive migrants, official data is hard to collect on a topic of movement and in addition it is very unreliable in Africa, there is a lack of concrete knowledge on this topic (Hugo 2000: 288). Rapid urbanisation and the expansion of employment opportunities in both the formal and informal urban sectors have facilitated female migration to the towns (Chant and Brydon 1989: 127; Oucho and Gould 1993). The 90s have really seen a surge of female autonomous migration (Oucho and Gould 1993).

Women traditionally participated in migration a great deal more than is commonly thought (Izzard 1985: 258). Short-distance, rural-rural migration, mainly for joining their husband´s families in patrilocal marriages, was the chief pattern (Hugo 1993: 292; Izzard 1985: 259). There is a large category of young unmarried women who typically go to town to work as domestic help with their relatives. This pattern is seasonal (dry season) and temporary (De Haan, Brock and Coulibal 2002; Gugler 1995: 261; Ouedraogo1995: 313). This saved the parents the cost of daughters’ education and skill training, but did not provide them with any remittances (Chant and Brydon 1989:127). Once they reach the age of marriage, they are usually sent back to their village.

In addition, women in certain regions, namely Western and Southern Africa (Izzard 1985: 258), have traditionally migrated to cities for their own economic reasons (Adepoju 1994; Landau 2006: 261; Mafukidze 2006: 117), and women from Eastern Africa have participated in significant international migration (Adepoju 2006: 33). These regional specific female migration patterns determined by particular socio-economic, geographical, cultural and historical characteristics, have influenced, to a certain degree its present day nature, extent and consequence.

The Southern African region was heavily marked by massive male labour migration towards the mines, commercial farms and cities of South Africa, since the mid-1800s. This signified that most of the households left "behind" were in the practical sense, "de facto" headed by women, meaning extra work but also new responsibilities and decision-making power (Chant and Brydon 1989: 131; Dodson 2000: 121; Gugler 1989: 350) (see Chapter 3). Agriculture tends to decline in production when men are absent, since women do the necessary heavy work that is periodically required with more difficulty, and if the men do not return for these periods, or send the necessary funds to pay for hired labour, women, children and the elders must produce as best as they can. Since the 1960s, insufficient wages sent home from the men and poor agricultural production have thus contributed to a massive redistribution of primordially young women and their families from villages into the cities in the Southern African region, especially in Lesotho and Botswana (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995: 258; Gwebu 2006:189; Izzard 1985: 258; Mafukidze 2006). However, contrary to stereotypes of fluxes of illegal (female) migrants into South Africa, Belinda Dodson found that the women who were part of her study in Southern Africa have a higher incidence of legal migration than men (Dodson 2000).

East Africa, on the other hand, was characterised by large scale agriculture, which, by creating landlessness and therefore a distancing from women´s traditional roles as farmers, increased their income-generating opportunities (Tienda and Booth 1991). For example, in Uganda up to 1/3 of women had migrated alone (Obbo 1980 in Tienda and Booth 1991: 60). Intensive cash-cropping in West Africa led to the high involvement of married women in trading activities. They have historically and culturally been quite active in migration (Pedraza 1991). However, in both East and West Africa, urban migration usually took place with husbands (Tienda and Booth 1991).

Due to the obstacles of attaining formal employment in towns, and the lack of childcare offered by the state, urban female migrants often work in the informal sector, which is more flexible in terms of location (can work within or close to home) and hours, so they can take care of their children and household activities for which they are still responsible (Baden 1997; Hugo 2000).

Different motives and patterns of male and female migration arise from structural determinants and constraints for African women, in the social and economic fabric of source and recipient countries. Women's access to the resources and opportunities required to achieve their full economic potential is restricted through a variety of

mechanisms: they own less property, have less access to capital and information about the migratory process and the conditions at destination, and are less educated, through socially institutionalised gender discrimination (Dodson 2000: 142).

In Africa, these gendered differences in access to human capital are due to three factors. The first is historical. Men had head start in education during colonial days, as they were offered clerical work in the urban areas, while women were maintained in the rural areas, to provide reproductive labour for the household and conform to the Victorian ideal of domesticity. The second is economic: it is seen as frivolous to invest in girls´ education as they contribute about 85% of all labor needed for household maintenance, between 50- 80% of subsistence farming and 60% for livestock care-taking, and 100% for fetching water and fuel for cooking, taking care of the children. The last factor is cultural: parents worldwide have higher aspirations for their sons (Agesa 2003). This in turn has affected women´s success in joining formal employment or starting businesses.

CHAPTER 3: GENDER IN HOUSEHOLD MIGRATION THEORY IN AFRICA

"As a woman, I appeal to all the young girls not to stand with their arms crossed, waiting for happiness to fall from the sky. We must fight". (Rose, waitress)

Jean-Bernard Ouedraogo 1995: 318

CHAPTER 3: GENDER IN HOUSEHOLD MIGRATION THEORY IN AFRICA

This chapter focuses on the theories of gender and households tying them in with examples of female migratory experiences, to get a sense of the realities that affect the migration patterns and life of African women, when, why and how they migrate. The emphasis is on the process of the migratory process which is influenced by gender relations within the household, and less on the causes or results. One of the most important results of migration on households and gender relations is female headed households, due to male labour migration. However, this chapter, while addressing the reality of female-headed households, focuses on the minority of women who migrate, not on those who stay, to illustrate some new trends of migration in Africa.

1. Household Migration Strategy

For the sake of simplicity, and based on the bibliography used in this dissertation, the terms households and family will be used interchangeably in the following chapters. Households are generally viewed as a spatial unit characterised by shared residence and reproduction, and ensures its maintenance by generating and allocating a common pool of resources including labour and monetary income (Boyd 1989: 645; Chant and Brydon 1989).

In the case of migration, households are "stretched" across space and time, to include the households of the migrants at destination and their relationships and dynamics with their household at place of origin (Boyd 1989: 641; Dodson 2000: 142). These are linked by social networks and exchanges of goods, services and money; analysed in the Household Strategy Approach, the Social Networks theory and the Transnationalism model (see Chapter 2). In the words of Monica Boyd, in her article "*Family and Personal Networks in International Migration*": "families represent a social group geographically dispersed. They create kinship networks which exist across space and are the conduits for information and assistance which in turn influence migration decisions. Shadow households in the place of destination consist of persons whose commitments and obligations are to households in the sending area. Such persons may be especially likely to assist in the migration of other household or family

members or to remit funds to the family members remaining behind" (Boyd 1989: 643). These remittances may include payment of school fees, or investments in land and businesses (Boyd 1989: 651).

The migration as a household strategy approach (or the "new economics of migration" (Massey et al. 1998: 436) purports that decisions to migrate are often made by families, households and even communities - as opposed to individual actors - as an attempt to meet the challenges that accompany underdevelopment and economic and political transformation in the "developing" world (Massey et al. 1993, 1998; Pedraza 1991: 308; Stark and Lucas 1988; Stark 1991). Migration represents a family strategy to diversify its sources of income through remittances and to spread the risk of incomplete insurance (crop, retirement, unemployment) and capital markets that may cause unforeseen crises, of weak state welfare and social policy, and of environmental and political instability. Family members are thus deployed over a range of jobs and locations, within and outside the country, as a form of investment on the part of the household, one that is expected to be paid off with the sending of remittances (Stark 1991; Massey et al. 1993, 1998; Hugo 2000: 301). As studies indicate, "migration is not a haphazard movement of poor people. Instead, it is a calculated movement, designed to relieve economic pressures at various stages of the life cycle" (Boyd 1989: 642).

The household therefore decides whether migration will take place, for whom and when, what resources will be allocated, what expected remittances or household members are to return, and whether the migration will be temporary or permanent (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991 in Pedraza 1991: 308). "As sustenance units (families and households) have their own structural characteristics which condition the propensity to migrate and the pattern of migration. A number of studies show that the motivation and the ability to migrate as well as the pattern of migration are influenced by the resource levels of households, the age and sex structure of the family/household and the stages of the family cycle" (Boyd 1989: 642). For example, studies show that middle level households are more likely to migrate; while households with either few adults or many dependent children are less likely to because there are no candidates and because income generating capacity is low for the household members left behind (Boyd 1989: 642). Although in the original formulation of the theory, Stark did not take into account how gender is an influencing factor, the following sector will address this lapse.

What Stark and Lucas found is that families are bound by an implicit cooperative contractual arrangement which guarantees reciprocity. This bond is obviously stronger among family members, especially if it is a cohesive traditional family, but it is at the basis of all migrants´ social networks (see Chapter 4). It is based on a model of altruism ("tempered altruism") and partial self-interest ("enlightened self-interest") (Lucas and Stark 1985; Stark and Lucas 1988), meaning that migrants maintain these bonds especially if they are likely to return to and settle in their place of origin. Boyd reinforces the idea that "as socializing agents, families transmit cultural values and norms which influence who migrates and why. Families also transmit norms about the meaning of migration and the maintenance of familial based obligations over space and time" (Boyd 1989: 643). Indeed, normative behaviour of reciprocity and mutual aid is inculcated in the very concept of family (Root and De Jong 1991). This allows for the household migration strategy to work, as family members tie the networks between sending and receiving areas, ensuring sustenance through remittances. These are key to understanding how migration modifies the lives of those who remain behind, and how the modification of general structures and practices may stimulate further migration and ensure continuing ties and remittances to the place of origin. These remittances are a sort of support, which encourage and sustain migration (Root and De Jong 1991: 224). Lucas and Stark however, did show how bonds may erode, especially if migrants settle in the area of destination, start a family there or if their family joins them (Stark and Lucas 1988).

2. The Relevance of Gender in Household Strategies

The "household strategies" approach to gendered migration, first articulated in the work of Sarah Radcliffe, was born from a dissatisfaction with the way in which social relations within households were glossed over in conventional neo-classical and Marxist theories of rural-urban mobility, and drew instead on insights arising from behavioural analyses that considered the ideological and cultural constructs which influenced men's and women's responses to changing socio-economic and environmental conditions" (Chant 1998: 9).

It thus became clear in migration theories that household dynamics as an explanation for migration outcomes could no longer be understood without taking into account men´s *and* women's behaviour (Curran and Shafer 2006: 201). Indeed, gender is central to the decision to migrate as a family strategy and in the formation of migratory networks (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991 in Pedraza 1991: 308; Ramirez 2005:10); and these decisions are guided by prescribed kinship and gender roles as well as by the hierarchy of power within the household (Hondagneu- Sotelo 2000: 115). As the household is arguably the smallest political and economic unit, establishing links between society and individuals (Leandro 2004: 99), it is thus inevitable that gender differences and inequalities start here, influencing other such social constructs like migration (Friedmann, 1992). The household has even come to be described as "the basic unit generating and reifying gender inequalities" (Tienda and Booth 1991:53), representing an "institutional arena in which gender roles, relations and identities are shaped and influenced in fundamental ways", especially in "developing" countries (Chant 1998). In addition, family redistribution processes are structured by asymmetries of authority, where men and women have uneven access to resources (Gugler 2002)[13].

Sylvia Chant, in her article "*Households, gender and rural-urban migration*", argues that such as gender is not a fixed construct, neither is a household: "households are not `natural´ units with fixed forms and meanings across space and through time, but are socially constructed and inherently variable" (Chant 1998: 7). However, despite huge diversity in household composition and headship across time and space, male headed households are widely construed as being the norm (Chant 1998). This widespread association between masculinity and household headship in "developing" societies has been attributed to various reasons: the dominance of men in kinship networks; the import of Eurocentric ideals of nuclear, patriarchal family organisation during colonialism; and men's assumed positions as major breadwinners and/or principal decision-makers within households (Chant 1998).

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[13] In his book "Empowerment. The Politics of Alternative Development", John Friedman states that women´s restricted access to resources and bases of power (income, land ownership, property rights) and their limited structure of opportunities, under a patriarchal regime: early pregnancies, low levels of education, training and knowledge of outside world, domestic isolation, all serve to maintain woman´s submission in the public sphere, and continue her role in the domestic sphere. This implies contributing all her time to the reproduction of the household and upholding the embedded cultural values of a patriarchal structure that subordinates them (Friedman 1992: 113-114).

Therefore, when speaking about migration as a household strategy, it is important to note that families are not necessarily harmonious units, where decisions about consumption, production and reproduction are made collectively. Indeed, the whole family does not always benefit from the shared interests of all its members, nor do family members pool resources based on economic rationality. The misconception of a household as a unitary structure hides the role of power and the potential vulnerable position of the oppressed members (Chant 2003: 24; Collinson and Kubaje 2006). This will become clear when looking at migration as a household strategy in Africa in the next sections.

According to Sarah Radcliffe, the "household strategy" approach must thus take into account these questions of power within households, divisions of labour and access to resources in evaluating how they affect the propensity and freedom of individuals to engage in urban migration, according to gender, age and their relationships to other household members (Radcliffe 1986 in Chant 1998: 7). She also reiterates that regional variations in gender-selective migration and gender differentiated access to economic resources (land, tools, employment, income and so on) should not divert the attention from three crucial and interrelated issues. These are: that gender differentiated access to resources is *socially* determined, that *household circumstances and organisation have a critical role* to play in the process of negotiating resources and migration decisions and that within the household domain, *gender intersects with other axes of difference and identity* such as age and marital status to create conditions which directly and indirectly influence movement (Chant 1998: 9). These factors, such as age, life cycle, number of children and socio-economic resources (income, land ownership) affect the migration type and flow (Boyd 1989: 641; Root and De Jong 1991; Trager 1995).

Joanne Nowak´s study of Ghanaian nurses shows how age is a significant factor in challenging the gender norms and responsibilities (Nowak 2009), while Wendy Izzard´s study of migrant mothers in Botswana shows the importance of life cycles for migration (Izzard 1985; Tienda and Booth 1991: 69). In addition to these factors, Sara Maher and Patricia Pessar believe that the "social location" of individuals, in other words: people´s positions within power hierarchies, created through political, economic, geographic, kinship-based, and other socially stratifying factors, affect women´s access to resources and mobility across spaces but also their agency as initiators and transformers of these

conditions. Agency is affected not only by extra-personal factors but also by individual characteristics such as initiative and resourcefulness (Malher and Pessar 2001: 447).

After having reviewed how migration decision-making is highly gendered, and how household leadership is assumed to be male, it is interesting that women's self-made identities often continue to be constructed in terms of their familial and care giving roles (Malher and Pessar 2001; Penson 2007a). This is reflected in the very fact that when feminist research literature emphasises the role of the household in the decision-making process that leads to female migration, it does not do so in the case of male migration (Chant 1998; Penson 2007a; Radcliffe 1986 in Chant 1998: 12). This may underestimate women's personal agency, on the one hand, and the role of family and household on men's migratory decisions, on the other, ignoring that Stark´s model of Household Strategy was originally founded on male labour migration (Penson 2007a; Stark 1991). Indeed, "even in instances where women ostensibly make their own decisions to migrate, it is hard to abstract household conditions from the process especially when, as unskilled female peasant labour, they have rather limited employment options in towns" (Chant 1998: 12; Hugo 2000: 301).

Sometimes, it is the women themselves who accept their position and are accomplices in the perpetuation of gendered inequalities within the household. Several explanations may shed a light on this point. In a recent study with Dominican women in the United States, Patricia Pessar found that households provided members of immigrants with a social and cultural mooring with which to resist societal discrimination and exploitation of the receiving country. Thus households can also be a refuge, and therefore explain why, though women may negotiate some domestic tasks with their husbands, the cultural patriarchal traditions are withheld as in the country of origin (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Pessar 1995: 39).

In this case, the concept of cultural norms and home may be stronger than a desire for emancipation. Indeed, migration, instead of eroding assymetrical gender relations of the community or country of origin, can actually fortify them (Pessar 199). It is what Portes and Sensenbrenner´s coined the "bounded solidarity" type of social embeddedness, which is triggered in particular situations where a common threat is recognised "as a result of their shared identity, circumstance, or history". Their common situation facing the threat binds individuals together (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993 in

Curran and Saguy 2001: 55). Another explanation is the entrenched patriarchal values engrained in our psyche, which are not easily shaken off (Ortner 1974), or again, that social (production, political) structures in some regions are not ready yet to accept gender changes, mainly because there has not yet been a feminist movement[14].

Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo is concerned with the fact that gendered institutions are not questioned (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000, 2005). Therefore, she attempted to redirect scholarship on gender and migration away from households into other domains. She feared that the issues of gender would only be understood in terms of the domestic sphere, obscuring the fact that gendered as a constitutive concept within migration theories takes place at every level of society, from the household to the market, civil society and state institutions. She stated that "a primary weakness of much of that research (gender and migration research from the 80s and 90s) – and my own book *Gendered Transitions* (1994) exemplifies this debility – is that it remained focused on the level of family and household, suggesting that gender is somehow enclosed within the domestic arena. Consequently, many other important arenas and institutions – jobs, workplaces, and labor demand; notions of citizenship and changing immigration policy; public opinion and the Border Patrol, for example – were ignored by feminist research and appeared, then, as though they were devoid of gender" (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000: 117; Hondagneu-Sotelo 20005: 2).

The need to understand how gendered inequalities pervade social institutions beyond the household´s - in an effort to address these issues - became a preoccupation with many feminist authors. Indeed, "the theoretical claims and empirical evidence previously described lays a strong foundation and expectation for gender to be a key organizing lens in any study of migration" (Curran and Shafer 2006: 204; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000). For, even if there are benefits for female migrants at the individual level, these can be limited by the persisting gender hierarchies that occur in society. An

[14] Maxine Molyneux, in her article "Analysing Women´s Movements", highlights two important points: that of including women in decision-making about women´s interests at every level, and that of not generalising the women´s interests across the globe, for every context and culture is different (Molyneux 1998: 78). Both these ideas reflect Friedman´s theory that to attain a proper feminist movement, where women become fully aware of their rights and are able to enforce them, it must be wrought within a specific community or country, if not, the ideas will be discredited. Indeed, the movement must be understood within the local cultural parameters, so that it makes sense to the women, basing it on their own life experiences, as the fabric of meaning must continually be rewoven. For example, maybe some women see public male authority as reassuring, as it allows them to cultivate bonds with their children, which represent in most societies, a way out for their situation, such as a safety net in old age (Friedman 1992: 115)

example is the highly gendered labour market, which continues to relegate a huge amount of women to unskilled, informal jobs (Tienda and Booth 1991: 70)[15]. Even the assumption of men being the "natural" heads of households suggests the many ways in which gendered inequalities are accepted throughout public (as opposed to private, domestic) social institutions. Indeed, "governments and development agencies already play their part in supporting an idealized male headed household structure (and its attendant intra-household gender divisions) in a range of ways – through `family codes´ specifying men's primary responsibility for breadwinning and/ or decision-making, through labor legislation which provides maternity leave but not paternity leave entitlements or which excludes women from certain jobs, and through development projects which target resources such as land, housing and credit to male household heads" (Chant 1998: 18).

Despite the importance of recent feminist concerns and studies, and although this thesis acknowledges the crucial dimension of gender as a structuring concept throughout the whole of society, including public institutions, nonetheless, it will focus on the role of gender in households and social networks, since these are the chosen conceptual frameworks used to analyse African migratory processes and patterns in this dissertation.

3. Households and Migration in Sub-Saharan Africa

Migration as a household strategy plays a significant role for migration motivations and patterns in Africa. Indeed, not only do households and families play a noteworthy part in the survival strategies of family members - expressed through elaborate rituals and customs that keep individuals linked to their community of origin and their land - but the role of women is crucial in the reproduction, sustenance and

[15] Monica Boyd claims that a gender division of labour must be included in any account of the social relations of production of a society and of its reproductive activities which demean work of women in eyes of society, and relegate them to a secondary status in the labour market (Boyd 1989). Though there is a predominance of women in some areas and men in others, the value placed on the sexual division of labour is misplaced, whereby women are considered oppressed if they only partake in certain activities (Mohanty 1988; Chant 1989). Women do have informal power at home in many societies, and their reproductive and productive work in the domestic sphere needs to be valorised, as it is crucial to the survival of the household and to the upholding of the men in their formal labour activities (Molyneux 1998: 80).

survival of households. Therefore, family decisions about migration will heavily affect women´s roles and responsibilities, whether they actually migrate or stay in the rural areas, and whether this change of responsibilities actually goes noticed or not.

The fact that African women are often entitled to cultivate land, that they usually have fewer opportunities than men in urban labour markets and that the primary function assigned to women through marriage is still to manage the daily reproduction of the household unit, means that incentives for female migration in Africa may not be as pronounced as in other "developing" areas such as Latin America and South East Asia, where women's participation in farming tends to be low and urban areas tend to offer women a greater range of jobs, such as in domestic service and factories (Chant 1998: 21). Adult married women's migration from rural households to urban areas in Sub-Saharan Africa *is* lower compared with that of husbands, sons and single daughters.

One significant aspect of male-dominated migration is the growing number of female-headed households in Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia and Kenya, among others[16]. In Lesotho, 75% of rural households are headed by women, in Zambia up to 50% are (Adepoju 1995: 96). This leaves women increasingly, and solely, contributing to the production and reproduction activities for the household (Gadio and Rakowskj 1995: 441). Women are responsible for subsistence agriculture for feeding the family, agriculture is "feminised" in Africa. For example, in some districts of Zambia between 50 and 70 per cent of smallholder farms were managed by women; whereas in eastern and central province of Kenya, the proportion rose to 90 (Adepoju 1995: 96). Rural African women are farmers *par excellence* (Boserup 1989: 4). However, they are rarely entitled to the land they grow, nor have the final say about how they may use the income from their excess crops (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995: 262). Women are equally responsible for partaking in trade in the informal sector, and for being the sole family members responsible for child-bearing, child-caring and caring for the sick[17].

[16] See Conclusion for effects of AIDS on female-headed households.

[17] Reproduction: reproductive activities that tend to fall upon the shoulders of women, and remain outside the domain of public life and politics. Here are a few examples of the divison of labour: 1. biological (child birth, lactation) 2. physical: daily regeneration of the wage labour force: cooking, cleaning, fetching water and fire wood for cooking 3. social: maintenance of ideological conditions which reproduce class and gender relations and uphold economic status quo. Production: income-generating. In Africa, women constitute at least half of agricultural subsistence labour. In general its production is for household use, but in crises, the sale of excess crops provides income for exchange and savings. This along with unpaid services for their work is a form of production (Chant and Brydon 1989).

There is evidence that children´s education and nutrition may benefit in female headed households, because women tend to be more assiduous about allocating income for the children (Chant 2003: 23). Research on a cross-section of the population in a range of countries shows that women-headed households are just as likely to be present among middle- and/or upper-income groups as among the poor (Chant 2003: 16). However, in Sub-Saharan Africa, ultimate power over household production and livelihood still remains with the (absent) men. Their power is enforced through their kinship ties to ensure patriarchal interests are upheld and that their wives at home are behaving in a "correct and respectful" way (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995; Hugo 2000). Women´s role in the reproduction of the household in Africa is therefore fundamental, but it is largely unrecognised on a public, institutional level, because the domestic realm is often considered "lower" than the male, public realm (Hollos 1991: 853; Ortner 1974).

In Africa as in most regions, men´s life strategies have depended on rather acute culturally prescribed asymmetries in gender relations that have allowed them to exploit women's labour for their benefit. Migration processes are no different. Migrant men have traditionally controlled the monopoly of cash, either when women have also migrated or when they stay on the farms in the rural areas (Tienda and Booth 1991: 60). Stephen Lubkemann´s study on Machazian men (see Chapter 4.4) illustrates this reality, where men from Mozambique migrate to South Africa and keep their lives completely distinct from the one they share with their wives in Machaze. They actively seek to keep their wives in ignorance about the opportunities in South Africa, in order for them to keep taking care of their relatives, the farm and the home in case of retirement. One man even stated: "In Machaze, there must always be suffering to live. Women must always suffer. If the women from Machaze come to South Africa, they will become corrupt like the South African women are. They will always spend money. Once you feed a dog from a plate it will never again eat off the floor" (Interviewee, Lubkemann 1999: 13)[18].

18 The risk of victimising women, especially in the "developing" world, is extremely tempting. Most social structures in Africa, from households to national laws on labour, migration, property rights or marriage, for instance, are heavily biased towards men. Women are structurally poorer: they are less educated, have less access to resources while having a greater need for healthcare, and have fewer rights than men (Friedman 1992). However, they are not passive victims of poverty or of their social systems (Mohanty 1988). They work hard to provide their children with a better life than they have. Many migrate on their own to look for a better life, while forsaking the risks to which they are vulnerable (segregated labour market, few skills to enter formal employment). There is much evidence that shows that if they find a better quality of life in their place of destination, women are reluctant to return to their village and the confining social structures (Hondagenu-Sotelo 2000).

Notwithstanding these clear gender inequalities in the household in terms of access to resources, according to studies, African women in rural areas *do* have more freedom concerning access to production and income allocation compared to other "developing" regions such as Latin America (Chant and Brydon 1989). Some authors, such as Ester Boserup, Marida Hollos and Elizabeth Francis believe that as long as women are still responsible for family reproduction and care, whether by cultivating the fields or earning an income for the family through migration, they do have a certain power within the household, the domestic, private realm. It is when they lose this role that their position in African society dwindles. This occurred with the massive social changes in the 20th century, when Victorian ideals of domesticity were introduced through colonialism as were cash crops and wage labour, which replaced the importance of subsistence agriculture. Women thus lost some of their bargaining power within society (Boserup 1989; Francis 1995; Hollos 1991).

Recent economic and political crises of the past thirty years have seen women regain their role as providers, and their contribution to household survival has become essential, as men are often unable to provide sufficiently for the whole household (Francis 1995). As men lose their jobs in cities, mines and farms, women in very poor communities are forced to seek additional income-generating activities to support their families, therefore changing the gendered division of labour. (Adepoju 2006: 33; Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995; Landau 2006: 261). However, because of the ideological and practical dominance of male household headship, many women are still unlikely to be in a position where they have sufficient resources or access to them in their own right to sustain livelihood in the countryside, whether through absence of title to land or through shortages of labour and finance.

Consequently, and as a result of male absenteeism, cash-cropping, declining land quality (Tienda and Booth 1991), permanent rural underdevelopment and dire poverty, women may have little choice but to migrate to urban areas if they seek to maintain economic and residential independence and ensure the sustenance of their families (Adepoju 2006; Chant 1998: 14; Collinson and Kubaje 2006). Indeed, many women must migrate while still child-rearing, even when they would have preferred not to do so, as a household strategy to ensure the well-being of their children (Jones Dube 1995: 36). Households may send off unmarried women to temporarily work in the informal, domestic or service sector in towns, as a means to reduce the risks subsistence

agriculture pose. Migration in Africa can be a collective entreprise, a domestic strategy to cope against the ups and downs of modern life. Two studies carried out on migrant women in Burkina Faso and Mali respectively found that social movement has become so engrained in those societies that it has become a “rite de passage” not only for them men but for the women as well (De Haan, Brock and Coulibal 2002: 38; Ouedraogo 1995:312). In some Southern African countries, female rural—urban migration is even outnumbering men´s, while men are more and more undertaking international migration (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995:264 .

“Women – single and married – are migrating independently, in search of secure jobs in rich countries as a survival strategy to augment dwindling family incomes. As they do this, they are redefining traditional gender roles within families and societies” (Adepoju 2006: 33). Some women in Elvyne Jones Dube´s study on “Non-Metropolitan Migration in Botswana with an Emphasis on Gender” stated that the limited control over their lives, in terms of unemployment and non-work or family related activities, as well as the pettiness and jealousy of village life were significant deterrents to staying in the village. “Out-migration or circular migration, with the possibility of a fuller life and employment adequate to maintain their households are an irresistible alternative to a lifetime of hard work for minimum returns in rural areas, poverty and stagnation” (Jones Dube 1995: 36).

On the one hand, this shows the difficulty and the strain with which women are faced in order to provide for themselves and their families and lead a decent life. Indeed, in Africa, migration is often a survival strategy against poverty. On the other hand, because survival strategies are conditioned by gender relations and, at the same time, the imperative to survive leads to adaptation of gender norms and roles, this growing female migration shows how women are finding ways to question and defy the heavily gendered system they live in. (Baden 1997), reflecting the previous ideas that migration is not only an adaptive reaction to external conditions but the result of gendered interactions and power relations within households concerning the socially constructed ideas of masculinity and femininity (Ramirez 2005:10; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000: 1994; Pedraza 1991).

Age and education are other catalysts for migration, in addition to gender relations. Thus 40 per cent of the female rural–urban migrants in Burkina Faso are aged

20–24 years, and in Kenya, 38 % belong to that age group (Adepoju 1995: 95). Younger men and women migrate more than married women (De Jong and Gubhaju 2009). Migration could also be part of a broader transformation: that of emancipation of the young from the elders, which has been gathering strength for several generations, since the introduction of individualistic norms that found expression in colonial law and Western education. Earning money in the city gives the young economic independence from the elders´ control over who they marry and other matters of their sexuality and employment (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995).

Lastly, male and female migration bears significant consequences on the structure of households. A large body of empirical research demonstrates that households in both rural and urban areas in "developing" regions are far from being dominated by the male headed nuclear family stereotype. Indeed, de *facto* female headed households may form in rural areas as a result of male migration, and that *de jure* female headed households may move to cities because of their inability to survive in rural areas (Chant 1998: 35).

4. Household Strategies: an analysis of case studies within the African context

The first case study, "*Migrants and Mothers: Case-Studies from Botswana*", was undertaken by Wendy Izzard in Botswana. Her main arguments are the importance of migration as a household strategy for female headed households; the strength of family ties, especially between mothers and daughters, during migration, not only as simply altruistic motives, but also because they serve the welfare and survival of both parties; and the role of life cycles in determining the type and the timing of migration. According to the author "the consideration of migration within a familial context and as a process rather than an event has emphasised the contribution of mobility to the developmental cycle of the household (that is, the way in which its size and composition changes through time) and, in turn, to the observed differences in wealth and income within Tswana society. It is the purpose of this article to demonstrate the importance of migration to explanations of the social and economic factors which differentiate

between those households in Botswana which are headed by women" (Izzard 1985: 260).

Wendy Izzard´s article clearly shows how urban migration became a household strategy for female headed households, and how the marital status, position in household and in life cycle and age influenced their decisions. Up to 50% of households in Botswana are either "de facto" female headed households, because of men´s extensive absence spent in migrant labour, or "de jure", because of widowhood (nowadays, the latter is often as a result of AIDS, see Chapter 5: Conclusion). Women in the latter situation may be in a stronger position to make their own choices over migration as they do not have to consult to a male partner (Chant 1998: 14). However, Botswana is one of the few countries in Africa which does not depend on agriculture since the soil is poor, which means that it has diversified its economy to other areas that women may have access to, such as services. Therefore, women who are left in rural areas with declining land productivity, if they must migrate to the cities at certain points in their lives to assure the survival of their households in the usual absence of paternal support, actually have more opportunities in the cities than neighbouring countries whose labour opportunities are not developed because of their continued reliance on agriculture and therefore rural female labour (Izzard 1985; Trager 1995).

Migration often happens when women are no longer child-rearing and the children are old enough to be left with their grandmothers, or when women are taking a break from their reproductive life cycle (Izzard 1985; Trager 1995). The age of the household head is determinative in terms of the extent to which she may have access to resources, help and the obligations she must perform. Generally, mothers leave their children with their grandmothers in the village, while they temporarily migrate to towns to earn wages. The money remitted from the city serves to pay for the children´s food and basic goods, as well as for hiring labour to help the primarily old and young members of the household cultivate the fields. Indeed, adult migration in Botswana has caused a "*bimodal age distribution*", whereby primarily young and elder individuals reside in the rural areas, causing dependency on working adults.

This translocal household strategy, of adult women working in the city and sending money home while being based in the rural areas with their female kin, represents a household strategy that ensures both the mothers and grandmothers with benefits. Grandmothers are guaranteed to receive money and financial security from their

daughters for taking care of their children, while the daughters are assured safe childcare as well as a secured retirement home when the next generation, especially the daughters, can, in turn, provide financial support by migrating to the cities and sending remittances home (Gugler 2002; Izzard 1985). It is safe to say that the long term security of many Batswana women lies with their children. In this case, migration represents "both one of the causes and one of the effects of changes in the status of women in Tswana society", migration brings about change within the women, while a growing awareness of women´s rights and capabilities is influencing more women towards migration (Izzard 1985: 261). This study is an example of how households in Africa are no longer dominated by the male-headed nuclear family stereotype (Chant 1998: 14).

Izzard´s case study also serves to illustrate the concept of "investment strategy". The latter is distinguished from the coinsurance household strategy, which aims to diversify risks for migrants and their rural households in the shorter-term. The investment strategy, on the other hand, serves to facilitate longer-term consumption patterns through "inter-temporal, intergenerational arrangements", between migrants and their parents (Luke 2007). Here, the direction of the resource flow is determined on the migrants' stage in the life cycle. Migrants send remittances during their productive years in the city to re-pay parents for investing in their education and often for taking care of their own children. At the same time, by doing so, they ensure a portion of their inheritance, which will support the migrants in old age (Luke 2007).

The second study, "*Migration, Education, and the Status of Women in Southern Nigeria*", was carried out by Marida Hollos. She addresses the issues of gender inequalities and relations between husbands and wives within and outside of households, and analyses how class and status influence these relations and migratory processes. The author focuses on women migrants that have moved to the cities either to pursue further education and meet a husband or to join their husbands. Sending young family members to the cities in order to pursue higher education has been a household strategy for many rural families in Nigeria, to secure income and higher status through their children (Hollos 1991: 854). It is important to note that when families are well-off and have a high public status, migration is no longer a strategy of survival, but rather of life improvement, to increase their professional prospects and enjoy the social and cultural aspects of city life.

Hollos´ focus is on how these upper class women that have arrived in the urban areas in Nigeria and Benin, eventually lose their private power within the household, compared to lower class migrant women or the women who stayed in the home towns. She addresses the issues of patriarchal values and gender inequalities within and outside of households. The author argues that while women from upper classes may have more social status and power within the community, they lose it in the domestic realm. This is explained because even though, thanks to urban migration, professional women may experience upward mobility, success in their professional career and access to new opportunities and goods made, their powerful public roles will continue to remain below those of their husbands. In many African societies, such as this one in Nigeria, but also across the globe, it is still not accepted to have powerful women at the same public level as their husbands or men of the same position (Hollos 1991; Raimundo; Trager 1995).

At the same time, these women see their domestic power within the household, erode. Indeed, women´s traditional role as a substantial provider for the family (subsistence agriculture, trade, care-taking and reproductive activities) conferred a certain bargaining power for women (Boserup 1989). However, the upper class women in this study spend most of their income on luxury and superfluous goods, while the husbands´ is dedicated to household reproduction matters (children´s education, health and food expenses) (Hollos 1991: 863). The women no longer significantly contribute to the upkeep of the household, and their role therefore diminishes in importance in the household. Men have more freedom to do as they want, such as engage in extra-marital affairs, without the (few) benefits of the rules of polygyny (Hollos 1991: 961). Hollos did note that younger educated women were experiencing more equal relationships with their husbands within the household (Hollos 1991: 867)

However, the women who migrated and improved their professional lives by becoming teachers, nurses and so on but did not reach a high public status were able to uphold or even gain more domestic power. The independent source of income gained through urban migration gave them a leverage and freedom of income allocation within the household, and responsibility over household decisions. For Hollos, domestic power in Africa may be higher and more important than what is expected, whereas the institutional situation is still not ready to accommodate for publicly powerful women (Hollos 1991; Raimundo). This and the following case studies on how class and education (respectively) influence intra-household gender relations, household strategies

and migration processes, are rare in the usual gender and migration studies in Africa, which concentrate on poor, lower-skilled women (Levitt and Glick schiller 2004; Malher and Pessar 2001; Martin 2003; Massey et al. 1998; Mohanty 1988; Pedraza 1991; Pessar 1995; Ramirez 2005; Tienda and Booth 1991).

The last case study carried out by Joanne Nowak presents a novel perspective on female migration and household strategies, developed in her research "*Gendered perceptions of migration among skilled female Ghanaian nurses*" (Nowak 2009). Her study focuses on the perceptions of professional Ghanaian women on international migration, and how their position in their family determines their migratory actions. She states that the fact that skilled women are not a research focus suggests an assumption that understandings of migration differ little between lower- and higher-skilled groups, and her study attempts to underscore this assumption by demonstrating how skilled migrant women are positioned outside both dominant narratives of skilled men and those of lesser skilled women (Nowak 2009: 270). Though she acknowledges the strength of family and patriarchal values in determining their migration and the household´s migration strategy, she believes these may be evolving due to recent economic and political changes that offer them more opportunities for income, professional development and a means to fulfil their rights and personal ambitions as women, and not only as the members of households responsible for reproductive tasks.

Gender norms in Ghana, as in the rest of Africa, ascribe chief responsibility for the financial well-being of the family to men, while stressing that women have primary responsibility for daily work within the home, even though many Ghanaian women do actually work outside the home to complement the family's income. These responsibilities have restricted female mobility. Most of the nurses interviewed confirmed that their views of migration are highly influenced by gendered notions of women placing family responsibilities over personal desires. Despite their considerable level of professional training, even the married women respondents described child-rearing and domestic duties as their chief responsibilities, and many of the women have accepted the gendered expectations and restrictions on their mobility, such as early marriages (Nowak 2009: 272). In addition, many had to obtain permission to migrate from their fathers, if single, or from their husbands, if married, decisions which they respected (Nowak 2009: 274).

These findings illustrate that skilled women are confined by gender norms in similar ways to less-skilled women. This has important economic implications, given the lucrative opportunities available for skilled female migrants and the benefits that migration as a household strategy could bring to their families (Nowak 2009: 274). However, these ideas are being called into question by the growing numbers of women who consider migrating as skilled professionals and value their professional interests. Some women are finding ways to adapt these gender norms to fit their desires to migrate, aware that gender norms are flexible, rather than unchanging. Many of the younger ones are not concerned with these cultural expectations at all. Consequently, over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the emigration of highly educated women, and independent women migrants in general from West Africa, but also from Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe or South Africa, among others (Nowak 2009: 275).

Scholars suggest that flexibility in gender norms is related to changing political and economic conditions, as economic stress obliges families to consider how best women and men can contribute to livelihoods, which in turn may loosen the strength of entrenched gender norms in general, and with regards to female migration in particular (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000). Where communities experience increased female emigration, they may gradually accept women's augmented mobility and economic independence, seeing migration as a permissible, even positive, option to secure their livelihood. Some women are beginning to see themselves as breadwinners, rather than relying on their future husbands or fathers (Nowak 2009: 276). This process illustrates what Massey, Curran and others have described as a culture of migration, which gradually affects understandings and perceptions of migration, in this case, among these nurses (Curran and Saguy 2004; Massey et al. 1993, 1998).

In addition, professional training and experience were a significant motivation for these women, who saw migration as a positive means to achieve this, because the lack of government investment in hospital equipment and materials prevented them from being able to serve patients adequately in Ghana (Nowak 2009: 277). Migration may offer them a high income, giving them more responsibility as bread-winners at home. This positive side of migration has been largely overlooked in a literature that concentrates more on lower-skilled migration.

As the chapter has shown, household strategies are important in Africa, and gender relations within the households affect the different outcomes of migration. A further study based on this concept could involve a reflection on whether or how migration as a household strategy has an impact on gender relations within households. Will these increasing changes in household composition and bread-earning responsibilities ultimately be reflected in changes in attitudes in relation to women, and their role in households and society? (Gadio and Rakowskj 1995: 441; Malher and Pessar 2001: 456). As Ortner stated, the gender prejudice runs deeper than at the level of sexist institutions and policies, it is a socially embedded notion, whether at the individual, household or macro level (Ortner 1974: 68). However, prejudiced gendered systems and thoughts have changed, or are still changing, in Western societies over the last half century, and they have started to in the rest of the world. Could migration be one of the ways in which African women will eventually find their emancipation?

Nowak believes that changes in the political and economic conditions may question the gendered norms of labour division and migration roles, as families are forced to consider how best women and men can contribute to livelihoods (Nowak 2009). In terms of female migration, the absence of men during the migration process may give women more freedom to enter a wider range of employment, not only through allowing them to make their own decisions but also through reducing their domestic labour loads (Chant 1998). Perhaps the fact that migration has impacts on conjugal relations, facilitating men to have more girlfriends in rural and urban areas, may even give wives more freedom and autonomy, escaping from the traditional control of mother-centred units, and allowing an easier separation, as these marriages are less strong, and they do not have the kinship strength of the olden days (Oppong 1997). These reflections would provide ample information for future research.

CHAPTER 4: GENDER AND SOCIAL NETWORKS IN AFRICA

"No matter where you are, you have to continue to maintain contact with home"

(Ijesa migrant woman)

Lillian Trager 1995: 281

CHAPTER 4: GENDER AND SOCIAL NETWORKS IN AFRICA

This chapter complements the chapter on *Gender in Household Migration Theory in Africa*, as it is virtually impossible to talk about strong social ties without talking about family and kinship ties, or about analysing family strategies without mentioning social networks of obligation. This chapter therefore highlights the complex relationship between gender, social networks and gendered networks of obligation, and their role in influencing women´s migration processes in the African context. Migration network theory and later transnationalism theory were originally developed in light of inter- continental migration flows, often from "developing" to "developed" countries. However, as it has been stated in Chapter 2, the differentiation between internal and international migration is not of primordial importance in Africa, and migrants tend to regard intra-regional and intra-continental migration as an extension of internal movement (Adepoju 2006: 26).

1. Migration Networks Theory, Transnationalism and Gendered Networks of Obligation

Social networks link migrants, return migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through socio-cultural ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin. These networks facilitate the flow of money, information and knowledge and assistance, thereby increasing the likelihood of migration as they lower the costs and risks of movement, and increase expected net returns of migration (Massey et al. 1993: 448). They are absolutely vital for migrants´ strategies, often providing stronger motives for migration than economic factors (Massey et al. 1993: 450). Theoretical discourse however has lent too little attention to the role gender relations play in determining social networks and how they are influenced by networks (Boyd 1989: 655; Grasmuck & Pessar in Pedraza 1991: 308). Transnationalism has started to address the issue of gender in social networks and translocal spaces.

Chapter 2 introduced the theory of Transnationalism, as another recent migration theory that seeks to explain the perpetuation of movement across time and space. Like

the Networks theory, Transnationlism purports that migrants are linked to friends and relatives in the community of origin through thick social and cultural networks. While migrants are incorporated into the area of destination, they maintain strong ties with the community of origin, through hometown associations that share the same language or ethnicity, remittances, participation in local politics and so on. They can thereby hold on to their cultural values and part of their identity (Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton 1995: 48; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). The model seeks to show that migrants are not uprooted, but maintain strong ties with their home (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004). Indeed, these thick social networks allow migrants to live simultaneously in two societies, placing them in translocal "social fields", which are a set of "networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices and resources are equally exchanged, organized and transformed" (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 9). These social fields are divided into ways of being and belonging. The first refers to individuals that live within a social field (a particular culture) but do not consciously choose to, whereas the second refers to individuals that feel they are part of the homeland, and show this by participating in certain associations or through nostalgia and memories (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004).

Transnationalism has brought the focus of international social networks onto gender. In developing the concepts of "gendered geographies of power" to explain how gender operates on multiple levels (body, family and state) across spaces, Malher and Pessar show how the gendered status system continues to be linked to an identity tied to the community of origin, even across generations and space (Malher and Pessar 2001:5). Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller add that transnational kinships reflect the ways in which family networks across borders can be marked by gendered differences in power and status, and that kinship networks can be used exploitatively through class differentiation (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 5) Even employers may take advantage of networks, especially female kin-based ones, to recruit labor (Curran and Saguy 2001: 69). Indeed, Sarah Curran and Abigail Saguy discuss the potential of networks to reinforce the gender selectivity of migrant streams through the provision of information. For in the place of origin, a decision to migrate may depend on whom the information comes from. Offers of assistance from female friends and relatives to potential migrants may in effect facilitate migration intention (Curran and Saguy 2001: 69). In a context

where gendered social moorings are strong and unequal gender relations are perpetuated even after the migratory movement, can migration challenge these power contexts?

What is the nature of the ties within actual networks that binds individuals together, sometimes even across continents and decades? How are these ties heavily gendered? Sara Curran and Abigail Saguy, authors of "*Migration and Cultural Change: A Role for Gender and Social Networks?*", suggest that migration theories, to be more complete, must consider the meaning of the ties binding individuals within a network and the motivations for forming those network ties (Curran and Saguy 2001). By doing so, it becomes apparent that not all network ties are the same for all migrants. Indeed, they present significant differences between men and women´s behaviour, resulting in different impacts on the sending community. The difference in ties is intimately related to how gender identity is strengthened and challenged by migration. "Men's and women's identities not only motivate migration differently, but the networks themselves serve to reinforce these identities, creating divergent patterns of remittance to the place of origin and investment in the place of destination" (Curran and Saguy 2001: 71). In order to explain how these social networks are actually enforced by the migrants, the authors focus on the concept of *networks of obligation* in linking individuals. While "*relative deprivation* motivates migration", and "*trust* structures the content and formation of migrant network ties", "*networks of obligation* link individuals" (Curran and Saguy 2001: 62).

Similar to Stark and Lucas´s theories of "tempered altruism" and "enlightened self-interest" (Lucas and Stark 1985; Stark and Lucas 1988) as explanations for the bonds that tie migrants to non-migrants (see Chapter 2), the concept of networks of obligation purports that the migrant will fulfil his/her duty and remit the expected income, goods and information, depending on the degree to which he/she feels a sense of obligation towards the family and on his/her understanding of kinship and trust. Indeed, networks and remittances are based on culturally determined kinship obligations, and serve the interests of both non-migrants and migrants, thereby becoming self-enforcing (Massey et al. 1993; Stark 1991). The concept of "relative deprivation", on the other hand, refers to the shifting of values and ideas, where people´s perceived needs and desires, as a result of seeing what others possess, are no longer satisfied by the resources in the community of origin (Massey et al 1993; Stark and Taylor 1989). Curran and Saguy therefore believe that different kinds of identity, understood here as gender,

influence the experience of relative deprivation and the nature of ties of obligation, and that cultural meanings of gender may result in distinct patterns of migration motivation, behaviour and processes (Curran and Saguy 2001: 59, 63; Malher and Pessar 2001: 446).

How do kinship obligations become self-enforcing? Curran and Saguy suggest that "this process is mediated by the characteristics of the network (e.g. density and composition) and the transmission of norms" (Curran and Saguy 2001: 65). They draw on Portes and Sensenbrenner´s four types of trust to explain how these networks of obligation sustain themselves These are: a) assurance based on embeddedness in dense social networks, b) goodwill based on cognitive bias (based on childhood experiences, e.g. if there was a positive attitude towards women in household, then goodwill and gratefulness will be higher towards family), c) process, based on past interactions, and d) bounded solidarity or identification with a group (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993 in Curran and Saguy 2001: 67). The way in which religious beliefs and practices of certain communities reinforce moral systems based on obligation and reciprocity between the sexes, serves to illustrate the last concept. For, above all, these beliefs facilitate the perpetuation of local identities and transnational ties and practices under conditions which might otherwise threaten their endurance (Pessar and Malher 2001a). The authors complement their justification of concepts of obligation with definitions of trust by Yamagishi and Zucker (Yamagishi 1994 and Zucker 1986 in Curran and Saguy 2001: 66)

Curran and Saguy particularly focus on Portes and Sensenbrenner´s "bounded solidarity" and the "goodwill" type. The former type offers a sense of belonging among group members, which arises "in particular situations where a common threat is recognized by many as a result of their shared identity, circumstance, or history" (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993 in Curran and Saguy 2001: 55). The commonality, invoked by cultural symbols, reinforces the network ties of obligation. "Migrant embeddedness in dense social networks offers resources and opportunities that motivate an individual's sense of obligation and commitment to the group as well as his or her identification with the group and its needs" (Curran and Saguy 2001: 65). Curran demonstrates that a migrant is more likely to remit wages back home when she or he came from a place that has had a high level of migration to that same destination (Curran and Saguy 2001: 65).

How does this sense of obligation affect women differently? Gender influences the different experiences of relative deprivation, of notions of obligation and the strength of kinship ties within a network, thereby affecting migration processes (Curran and Saguy 2001: 62). As a result of the traditional feminine role that is expected of women (e.g. dedication and care for household and family), it is presumed that women's networks are composed of stronger and more kin-based ties than men's, and that women establish longer-lasting and more intense contacts with their relatives, especially when they are their children´s care-takers (Ramirez 2005: 25). Consequently, households may prefer that women, rather than men, migrate, because they will be more tightly linked to the household and maintain the common expectations of social support (Curran and Saguy 2001: 66; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000: 113; Malher and Pessar 2001: 441). One such example is Wendy Izzard´s article on the Batswana women, who were preferred over men for sending money home to their mothers (Izzard 1985: 274).

The authors use the concept of goodwill to show that this is not necessarily the case. They argue that if the opportunities in the place of destination are better than in the place of origin, and women grew up in a demeaning and negative atmosphere, they may lack goodwill towards their family and will thus be reluctant to maintain strong ties with the household in the community of origin, send remittances or eventually return. Indeed, some studies indicate that women have a higher tendency than men to stay in the country of destination. Fieldwork conducted by Patricia Pessar with Dominican immigrants showed that women tend to prefer to purchase expensive durable goods rather than save money for their return home or to be sent as remittances. Contrary to this, men prefer to live in more austere conditions and save money in order to assure their return to Dominican society and culture (Pessar 1986 in Pedraza 1991: 310). Dominican women grew up in a sexist environment where women were not respected, therefore when they found better conditions of employment and freedom in the United States, they did all they could to stay (Curran and Saguy 2001). In addition, because migrant networks are circular and self-sustaining, as are the cultural norms that flow through them, then if gender expectations shift in such a way that women are thought of as autonomous beings, as "modern women" rather than "dutiful daughters," they may continue to migrate but remit less.

In contrast, if girls are raised in a way that makes them believe that their families essentially treat them fairly, they are more likely to feel a sense of goodwill towards their household, and remit more. Therefore, Curran and Saguy´s theory of gendered

networks of obligation, and their use of the concept of goodwill, explain this difference in the differential pattern of women´s remittances (Curran and Saguy 2001).

Network ties (size, composition, and density) also serve to challenge or reinforce cultural forms of organisation, particularly gender relations. Indeed, gender identity shapes the kinds of ties within networks (goodwill), while network characteristics and macro changes brought about through migration, in turn, influence cultural expectations about gender (ideas of a modern woman). Therefore, "this circular process shares the dynamism described by the theory of migration networks, while attributing more nuanced meanings and variable consequences to networks" (Curran and Saguy 2001: 71).

2. Social Networks in the African context

In Africa, migration involves as much the movement from one place to another as the maintenance of ties between those who move and those who do not. Individual migrants are considered within the broader contexts of family and community. Many short and long-term extended households in urban areas, take in rural relatives who move to cities, thereby showing the strength of traditional social and kinship obligations (Chant 1998: 38). Therefore, examining the ways in which migrants continue to be tied to, and maintain connections with people and institutions at home (rural areas) and destination (cities) through social networks, is crucial. The Networks theory is thus helpful in understanding the actions and motivations of the people involved in the migration process and the implications of those actions for other societal processes (Trager 1995: 269).

Thanks to strong kinship and friendship ties, African migrants are able to work in the cities and abroad, while maintaining very tight relationships with those at the community of origin. The process is what Joseph Gugler coined the "one family- two households" model (Gugler 2002: 30), but it is also referred to as a "translocal" or "transnational" household – the latter in the case of cross-border migration (Glick Schiller 2004; Hugo 2005). The dual system of maintaining a significant commitment to the rural community, towards kinship groups and ancestral lands while working in the city, offers permanence. For many Africans, village is permanence, home, where the

body is buried, under the auspices of traditional burial rites (Gugler 2002: 24). This security is not as fulfilled through a nuclear family, whose ties may sever when the last person dies.

Consequently, permanent settlement in the city is still rare in Africa. Most Africans rely on social networks to connect them to the security the village provides. In the city, few migrants are entitled to pension, social security or urban property. And for the lucky who have that, political upheaval can destroy such security overnight, whereas they can return to their village anytime, build a home and farm the land (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995; Gugler 1989: 351). Indeed, crises that affect urban low-income households are cushioned by relatives in the rural community (Martin 2003; Simone 2003). Because of the extent that African households fully rely on informal strategies of coping with crises, this has perversely placed very little pressure for social security legislation from the part of the government (Chant and Brydon 1989: 183).

African migrants and their families thus continue to sustain these strong translocal relationships through social networks, not only out of solidarity or nostalgia, but also because both parties will obtain important resources from these networks, which often act as significant support systems necessary for survival strategies (Luke 2007). Indeed, social networks between kin are valuable for migrants who are settling in a new social and spatial identity (Ouedraogo 1995: 313). They are vital not only for facilitating migrants to arrive in that new place: by providing information about routes, transportation and financing the journey, but also when the migrants arrive at destination. There, the already established migrants help the newly arrived ones with finding a job, while providing shelter and emotional support (Gugler 2002). These practices thus confirm Massey et al´*s* theory that social networks diminish the cost and risk of migration, thereby increasing its flow (Massey et al 1993, 1998).

Remittances are one such proof of the existing and enduring social networks between migrants and non-migrants and play a significant role on the African continent. They are indeed. This thesis however, does not purport to discuss the developmental, or lack thereof, effects of remittances in Africa in detail (Crush and Fayne 2007), but a quick look will show their importance in maintaining ties between destination areas and communities of origin. Remittances may be monetary and in kind but they are also social: transferring knowledge and capacities and also valuable information about migration processes (Boyd 1989: 647). As it was explained in Chapter 3.1, they are

useful as a household strategy in the community of origin, where they are chiefly used to buy consumer goods, but also to pay children´s school or health fees or to invest in businesses or land. However, despite their importance for the lives of non-migrants, they are still a relatively untapped and misunderstood social and economic force for the place of origin (Boyd 1989: 647) To illustrate the importance of their numbers, Africa received 23 billion USD in 2007 through remittances (IOM 2007: 406), and 10% of Cape Verde´s GDP originates from migrant transfers (Ramirez 2005: 14). As a social consequence of massive emigration on the part of Cape Verdians, where more than half of the population lives abroad (IOM 2009), the country presents extremely pronounced syndromes of a "culture of migration" and of "relative deprivation", and the social field of the individuals who have stayed in Cape Verde is heavily marked by a cognitive transnational space (Malher and Pessar 2001; Massey et al. 1993; Stark and Taylor 1989).

However, the strength of kinship ties and social networks is changing in some areas. While household dependency on remittances and intra-household transfers has increased, migrants are less concerned about using their labour to help families to remain in place (Simone 2003: 83). Ouedraogo remarks that in the case of Burkina Faso, the extended family is narrowing (Ouedraogo 1995:313).

3. Women, Social Networks and Migration in Africa

Social networks are thus extremely important in migration strategies of survival in Sub-Saharan Africa for both men and women. They provide support, security and a link with the community of origin, which is still, in Africa, synonymous to stability and permanence (Purkayastha and Subramaniam 2004). This section will show how social networks are crucial for women´s survival strategies in the cities, especially as they are more vulnerable in face of the labour market and patriarchal social rules. These networks include participation in associations in the urban areas, and remittances to their children who have stayed in the rural communities. It will also look at the growing tendency of women who have found some freedom, financial stability and social support in towns and thus prefer to stay in the city.

As an attempt to deal with the difficulty and isolation of migration, one strategy has been for migrant women to join or start new social networks, while in the urban destinations. These offer emotional or psychosocial support, crucial for their ability to deal with the stress of transition and integration. Support systems for women in urban areas, whether formal or informal, often replace traditional familial systems of solidarity and assistance. This participation in associations illustrate Portes and Sensenbrenner ´s concept of “bounded solidarity”, which takes place where a common threat is recognised and binds individuals together because of their shared identity and circumstance. In this case, the fact that they are migrant women brings them together (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993 in Curran and Saguy 2001: 55).

The groups may vary from home-based associations - providing them with a sense of community with their home area - to religious congregations, cooperatives, and informal groups, which cut across kin, locality and ethnic lines, and share living, working and friendship experiences. What is crucial for these associations, is that they are vehicles for raising awareness about their situation and their rights as migrants and as women, and that they answer to some recreational, income-generating or solidarity need (Hugo 2000: 300). Indeed, associations provide women with a sense of belonging and continuity in their identity, whether it is as a woman or being from a certain region or ethnicity. They can also offer cross-border solidarity, and feelings of belonging and identity formation while abroad, introducing new subjectivities, such as feminist ones (Sassen 2005: 509). Organisations also provide women with significant social contacts and resources during crises in the cities (Gadio and Rakowskj 1995; Olurode 1995; Ouedraogo 1995).

The fact that many African women actually join church congregations allows them to adopt a universalist commitment to being women - binding them by their identity as women - , to transcend their place of origin or ethnicity, and thereby enables them to dissociate themselves from their patrilocal village (Ludwar-Ene 1993; Reh and Luwar-Ene 1995; Stoeltje 1995). Indeed, because Africa is mainly patrilocal, women must move to their husband´s village, making their position more precarious in terms of access to resources and to decision-making. As a result, women may have weaker ties to the rural areas, and the concept of “home” is not always straightforward. In addition, in towns, they also usually stay with patrilineal networks. These factors highlight the importance of joining women´s groups and the role they play in providing women migrants with emotional and logistical support (Gugler 2002).

West Africa has a long tradition of participation in associations, as migrants maintain close ties with their kin and the community through home-based organisations (Trager 1995: 269). These purport to contribute to local development of their home community. One migrant woman stated in Lillian Trager´s article, "*Women migrants and Rural Urban Linkages in South-Western Nigeria",* that "we are just sojourners here; whereas our place of abode is at home. Attachment to home is always there" (Trager 1995: 283). Trager highlights the importance of social status for members of hometown associations. The author noted that 50% of return migrants in South Western Nigeria were members of hometown associations. The participation of women in the associations depended on their class: about 20% of the lower class contributed to the development of their hometown, whereas almost 100% of the higher class women had made contributions and were members; thereby ensuring their higher status at home (Trager 1995: 277).

The previous example illustrates how remittances are another means that maintain social ties with home areas. In addition, they may act as an empowerment tool for women. Indeed, remittances may help to change their roles whether they are senders or receivers of remittances. In the first case, they become bread-winners and gain respect in the community for their contribution to the household´s maintenance. In the second, they are placed in a position to manage them, thereby acting as the heads of households. "Migrant women send money to their households; thereby acquiring new roles and transmitting new images, which have an effect both on their families and their communities. Women who stay behind also experience changes in their roles, as they assume more responsibilities and acquire greater autonomy in deciding how remittances are to be used. Any attempt to analyze the link between migration and development cannot exclude the impact that migration, and more specifically remittances, have had on social relations, gender roles and on the empowerment of women" (Ramirez 2005: 36). In addition, empirical evidence tends to show that employed migrant women remit up to 25% more than employed migrant men. However, as women migrants generally earn less wages, the total revenue for remittances is lower" (Martin 2003:7).

In general, the stronger the social ties to the family and home community, the higher the propensity to remit is and the higher the level of financial assistance (Stark 1988; Luke 2007). Female social networks and remittances between rural and urban areas are particularly strong if children continue to live and be reared in the rural areas by their relatives. As repayment for the services provided to the migrants, resources are

transferred to the countryside through monetary remittances, gifts, goods, education and healthcare fees, construction of houses and raising money for village development (Gugler 2002: 26; Izzard 1985). These networks are maintained by an increasingly feminised circular rural-urban-rural labour migration (Chant and Brydon 1989: 132; Hugo 2000: 289; Izzard 1985; Jones Dube 1995). In Izzard´s case study (Chapter 3.4), the grandmothers who stayed in the rural areas with their grandchildren admitted that while remittances were sometimes inadequate and irregular, the majority of the women agreed that their daughters were more dependable than their sons (Izzard 1985: 274). This reflects the expected pattern of support between the generations of a female-headed household that pursue migration as a household strategy through kinship between mothers and daughters. These ties of obligation satisfy responsibilities to their mothers and offspring until the next generation (particularly the daughters) can provide support. In this case, their propensity to remit because they have been valued by their mothers, and feel grateful to them for taking care of their children, may illustrate an example of "goodwill" on the part of the migrant women (Izzard 1985: 274; Curran and Saguy 2001).

Throughout this thesis, the importance of the rural areas for migrants, and their ultimate plans to return to their home village has been emphasised. However, there is a clear difference between women and men´s plans on returning "home", and women, more often than assumed, sever their ties with their rural village. Part of the difference can be explained by Curran and Saguy´s use of goodwill, whereby if the women were not treated with respect in the place of origin, and if the destination offers better access to resource and freedom, women may prefer to stay in the town or abroad (Curran and Saguy 2001). This reluctance is greater when conditions in the patrilineal area of origin are oppressive and offer little access to resources for women, especially when marital relations have broken down, and women are in a vulnerable towards their husbands´ families (Lubkemann 2000: 55). If, for example, a woman is abandoned, separated or widowed, then the village has little to offer her (Gugler 1989: 350). Indeed, the security village offers is also more problematic for women than men.

Another explanation for women´s reluctance to return to their village of origin - compared to men - is that migrant women (cleaners, domestic servants, gardeners) would stand little chance of eeking out a living in the countryside, while the men (carpenters, plumbers, masons) have skills that are in demand or can start own

workshop even in the rural home (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995: 264). In sum, the harshness or pettiness of rural life, the social network built up during the years of urban living, along with its greater opportunities for trade and economic independence may discourage return (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995: 263; Ouedraogo 1995). Women, it seems, are more urban than men (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995).

In South Africa, for example, the number of male immigrants who want to return to live in their country of origin is greater than that of women (Dodson 2000: 130). In South Western Nigeria, evidence shows that there is a weaker attachment to rural areas for women then for men, and that the attachment is based more on personal relationships rather than a preoccupation for the well-being of the home community (Trager 1995: 272). Evidence from Sierra Leone, Ghana Nigeria and Zaire shows that more women than men indicate that they intend to stay in cities permanently or retire to them (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995: 264). The difference can be huge 29% of blue collar women want to stay in town in Nigeria (but only 3% of men). In addition, both single women migrants and widows tend to stay in town permanently (Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995: 264). In Lai Olurode´s study of the Iwo region in Nigeria, half of the women interviewed were undecided about staying or returning to their home village, whereas almost all the men wanted to return and settle in their home village (Olurode 1995: 298).

This evidence shows thus that perhaps there is an increasing awareness on the part of women migrants about opportunities of employment, education, capacity-building and socialising in urban areas. More women than men seem to want to stay in the cities and not return to their villages. These findings do vary of course, depending on whether it is a time of market crisis, what the conditions in the home village are and what the familial situation of the woman is (Gugler 1989: 350). Indeed, return migration is still persistent in Africa (Oucho and Gould 1993: 266; Schultz 2000) and women are still “expected” to have stronger ties to the village (Dodson 2000). The results therefore, depend on an infinite number of factors: the woman´s culture, age or class. Trager for example, in her study in South Western Nigeria, believes a female migrant´s closeness to her village is proportional with her social class. The women who are from a lower class, are less involved in their village´s development plans, and thus less likely to want to return to settle there. Higher class women, on the other hand, are more involved in the village activities, and are thus more likely to want to return home. Their success,

achieved through migration, has enhanced their status in their hometown and has led to their participation in a variety of hometown activities, even though they must step down from the public stage to let the husband assume public power (Trager 1995: 204).

Ouedragao, in his study on Dagara migrant women in Burkina Faso, states that there are three main ambition streams for women concerning staying in town or returning to their village: "1) return to the village, disappointed, and conform to the 'traditional woman's role; 2) stay 'where you are' and seek less precarious employment 3) express a determination to break with village egalitarianism and demand continuous social mobility for oneself" (Ouedraogo 1995: 319). According to the author, the labour migration trajectories demonstrate quite clearly that women are clamouring for an ever greater degree of autonomy from the home village.

Although women are increasingly partaking in rural-urban migration, setting out new patterns and consequences of migration on women´s everyday lives and positions, rural-rural migration in Africa is still dominated by women. Indeed, as most societies in Africa are patrilocal, women are expected to move to their husband´s village while maintaining strong ties with their village of origin (Olurode 1995). Consequently, women have been participating in rural-rural and circular migration for a very long time (Schultz 2000). This means women must identify with two worlds simultaneously, making them natural translocal migrants. The fact that they must migrate according to patriarchal standards defines their public, social lives as depending on men´s. Indeed, "since identity is, to a great extent, determined by social relations and spatial ties, and continuity, in this respect, serves to strengthen identity, in patrilineal and patrilocal societies, men have a significant advantage over women: throughout their lives they invariably define themselves through their fathers and can thus build up a constant identity. This is not the case of women whose socially prescribed lives require them to continually redefine their identity: as children through their father´s family, as adults through their husband´s family and in old age through their sons" (Reh and Ludwar-Ene 1995/4: 9).

For African women therefore, the definition of 'home' as area or place of origin may become a complex issue which partly relates to gendered identity. It is not clear in some instances whether area of origin is defined as the last place a woman lived in, or her birth place (Baden 1997). This provides a source of social identity and of social connections that influence actions regardless of where the individual from the region lives. An example of this gendered identity which is linked to a place is the fact that

Yorubaland, a region in South Western Nigeria means "where the *father´*s lineage is from", or "hometown" (Trager 1995: 273). Ijesa people from Yorubaland feel that natives of the region who live away, should effectively maintain strong ties to the father´s homeland, through remittances, building a house there, funding projects and so on (Trager 1995). On the other hand, in the case of women in Botswana, 'home' strictly refers to their place of origin (Izzard 1985: 287).

Social networks may also be used to control women and to maintain the traditional values of authority and gendered obligations across time and space (Curran and Saguy 2001; Gadio and Rakowskj 1995; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000; Hugo 2000; Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004; Malher and Pessar 2001; Martin 2003: 10; Ramirez 2005). It is important to remember that men are not the only ones to actively seek to control women, women themselves may engage in the process for the sake of traditional values and norms of authority (Gadio and Rakowskj 1995: 441) (See Chapter 3.2). According to Graeme Hugo however, control over distance is often limited and over time it tends to erode (Hugo 2000: 301). Yet, effects of diminishing social networks on the urban and rural households are still unknown. Sally Baden, in her article "*Post-conflict Mozambique: Women's special situation, Population Issues and Gender Perspectives*", adds that the female social networks of support, particularly for those in urban areas, are considerably weakened as a result of displacement and familial breakdown, as well as rising levels of urban poverty (Baden 1997: 13). And lastly, according to Nancy Luke in her article "*Competing Commitments: Sexual Partners in Urban Africa and Remittances to the Rural Origin*", the propensity of Kenyan men to remit to their family in the rural areas proportionally decreases once they start living in the city and engage in extra-marital relationships. This may give greater freedom to women in household-decisions but may also prejudice the rural households´ livelihoods and survival strategies (Luke 2007: 11).

4. Female Social Networks: an analysis of case studies within the African context

The first case study, undertaken by Coumba Mar Gadio and Cathy Rakowskj´s, "*Survival or empowerment? Crisis and temporary migration among the Serer millet*

pounders of Senegal", provides some concrete insights about the strength of social network ties in a West African context, and how these influence continuous migration flows and normative values within the Serer community in Senegal.

Serer women enjoy relative freedom in the rural areas, where they represent 60-80% of farm labour and earn their own income, which they use for household expenses to complement their husbands´. Having once been a matriarchal society, they continue nevertheless to cultivate strong ties with their female kin in other villages, with which they share farming and child-rearing chores. Since the economic crisis that began in the 80s due to the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), they have started to migrate to Dakar, while the husbands stay on the land, as part of a family strategy to diversify the risks of economic crises and droughts. One of the women explained that "when my husband failed in supporting the family and because of the drought his field did not produce very much, he sold out all his cattle. The only solution left for him is to send his wife to Dakar so the family can be rescued" (Gadio and Rakowskj 1995: 436). For them, their migration to Dakar is an extension of their domestic duties in compliance with their husband´s authority. This reinforces the themes of migration as a household strategy, female domestic responsibilities and unequal gender relations within the household that were developed in Chapter 3.2.

Their migration however, is facilitated by a complex network of female rotational migration, designed to allow every woman to take part in income-earning activities, for a limited amount of time. While in Dakar, the migrant women rely on the women left in the village to take over their farm and domestic activities, as they earn some extra income for their husbands and their own household. They do pay these women at home in cash and kind, and when they return to the village they will inverse roles (Gadio and Rakowskj 1995: 439).

This system of circular migration sustained through women´s solidarity networks allows women to gain some experience, informal training, credit and skills while in the city. This enables them to fulfil their domestic roles, meet the practical needs of their families, and reinforce their traditional networking and established patterns of female cooperation, organisation and control over migration thanks to their thick social networks among themselves in Dakar and with the women back home (Gadio and Rakowskj 1995: 438). This continuous circular migration represents Massey´s concept of "cumulative causation", whereby the migration process itself encourages more migration, and eventually starts affecting the community of origin

(Massey et al.1993, 1998; Ouedraogo 1995: 309). Indeed, some men and children were starting to join their wives in Dakar, permanently settling there, a rare feat from that village before the creation of the cooperative in Dakar.

By developing women's entrepreneurial activities, the collective has improved their skills, self-esteem, and control over income (Gadio and Rakowskj 1995: 441). The Serer women have gained respect in the community for their role as providers, for which they take great pride. One lady confessed: "my husband doesn't stop thanking me for what I am doing to keep the family alive. My other friends thank me for bringing gifts to them. I feel very happy that I can keep my family together and I get a lot of respect and recognition from my husband" (Gadio and Rakowskj 1995: 440). Thus thanks to the women´s organisation, migration strategies and reciprocal arrangements, they were able to take advantage of the economic opportunities in Dakar *and* fulfil their domestic obligations in the village. The women´s social networks and sense of belonging to a group have allowed them to meet their strategic needs; for example, by defending women from harassment in the city, or by coming up with innovative means for lowering the cost of food (Gadio and Rakowskj 1995: 438)[19].

Though the Serer migrant women enjoy considerable decision-making power and control over household resources, earned through their circular migration strategies and solidarity ties with other women, the women still emphasise men´s role in decision-making and responsibility. Through the interviews, the group´s continued ties to a traditional form of organisation, subordinating individual welfare to group welfare was apparent. According to them, this subordination can be rationalised as either the inherent rightness of sacrificing individual interests to group welfare, or believing that individual welfare as inseparable from social responsibility and group welfare. Therefore, despite their practical empowerment (independent work, income and

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[19] Maxine Molyneux believes the process of woman´s emancipation must go through two stages: that of fulfilling practical and strategic interests. Fulfilling the first may increase the chances of fulfilling the second. Nevertheless, struggles that challenge the structures of gender inequality are not always fruitful (Molyneux 1998: 78). Practical interests should be formulated by women themselves in response to immediate needs that pertain to women´s day-to-day lives. Class plays a role here, as poor women have more immediate concerns than wealthier women do (Molyneux 1985: 232). Strategic interests revert to a breakdown of patriarchal structures that continue to keep women in a position of subordination, through the abolition of sexual divisions of labour, alleviation of domestic burden, freedom from sexual violence, attainment of political equality and so on (Molyneux 1985: 233). The differentiation between these two interests does reflect two distinct ways of reasoning about gender relations. In the formulation of practical interests, a compliance with the existing gender order is assumed, while in the case of strategic interests, there is an explicit questioning of that order and of the compliance of some of the women within it (Molyneux 1998: 78).

decision-making over allocation of resources), the authors believe that ultimately, the women have only met their "practical gender needs", and not their "strategic" needs by challenging the prevailing forms of gender subordination, and giving them more autonomy in other areas of their lives (Molyneux, 1985: 232, 1998; Gadio and Rakowskj 1995: 441). *When* and in what conditions will the migration cycle be able to satisfy their strategic needs?

The second case study, "*The Girls of Nyovuuru- Dagara Female Labour Migrations to Bobo-Dioulasso*", takes place in Burkina Faso. The author, Jean-Bernard Ouedraogo, focuses on the network ties and idealised images of migration that encourage and perpetuate the migration of young women from their rural village to Bobo-Dioulasso. The young girls are originally from a matriclan (Ouedraogo 1995: 305). However, colonialism, cash income and massive male emigration have eroded the delicate social fabric, making men more powerful in the community and exploitative in the household, while diminishing women´s positions. As women are "excluded from the ownership of the means of production, and kept away from indispensable rural modernisation (agricultural techniques, credit/loan systems, the commercialisation of cotton and groundnuts), [they] are obliged to find other strategies for self-advancement. Emigration has become a sort of female 'industry'" (Ouedraogo 1995: 308).

Indeed, male emigration has given a taste of another world to the young ladies, and they dream up a fantasy world of what migration is like, and the opportunities it will provide them. One young waitress stated "I was fascinated by the way of dressing of my friends who were returning from the town, especially the boys coming back from Côte d´Ivoire, so I said to myself, there is a world that´s different from my village" (Ouedraogo 1995: 309). Girls have started to migrate as well, following, what was initially a male migration route to Bobo-Dioulasso, but has now become female; while the men move on to Côte d´Ivoire or Ouagadougou. The first female Dagara migrants drew other young girls into similar paths, and this has become so common that it is a sort of rite de passage in the community (Ouedraogo 1995: 309). The concept of a "culture of migration", fostered by the thick ties between the women in Bobo and the ones in the village, clearly defines the social processes that the villagers are undergoing.

The women migrate as a survival strategy, they hope to find employment and receive a salary (Ouedraogo 1995: 312). When they arrive in Bobo, they rely entirely on social and kinship networks in the town to provide them with shelter and job

opportunities, which are concentrated in the restaurant sector. These networks are highly valued as they are the key to survival in town. Ouedraogo comments that traditionally, distance did little to diminish the strength of kinship bonds between the young migrant women and their community of origin. He argues that "despite their [women´s] evident desires to break away, and perhaps because of them, these ruptures will never be more than partial; their identities are still largely centred on the old society" (Ouedraogo 1995: 313).

However, if young women do not have the luck of having strong networks in the city, they often resort to prostitution (Landau 2006; Ouedraogo 1995: 314). Therefore migration can offer both freedom from village life, a chance of self-realisation, or a place of exploitation and isolation. Reports from the girls have been both positive and negative. The following two extracts illustrate the double facet of this urban migration, the continuing social ties with home and the importance of remittances: "I send gifts to my mother. I've helped to pay the school fees for one of my brothers. He's through school, Thank God, he works well. He's taking the entrance test for the Tax Office. With the help of the bar manager, I've opened a savings account. I will have money when I go back to the village". This experience highly contrasts with that of another young lady interwviwed. She states that "in the bar, you work, your salary is 15,000 CFA; but maybe you earn 4,000 CFA. Sometimes the managers are crooks. I never imagined I would find myself in this situation, but I can't go back without any goods. It's very shameful, so I've got to work under miserable conditions to reach my goal". Migrants that return home are often proud that they can buy goods and send them home, as these confer the illusion of having achieved betterment and a sense of achievement. They therefore enact the migratory expectations even if it has been at great personal cost. Through the feeling of "relative deprivation" they are creating among the women in the community of origin, they are ensuring continuous migration to Bobo (Ouedraogo 1995: 318).

Strong social networks in the town represent these women´s coping strategies, allowing them to settle in and find employment. However, if traditional social networks fail, or in order to complement their support, many of the girls join associations. These associations give some practical as well as moral support and a sense of belonging to which they can identify. These are especially relevant if they have little family or if they have been shunned because they have resorted to prostitution (Ouedraogo 1995: 317). The author claims that in the case of Burkina Faso, the extended family and kinship ties are indeed narrowing, and the standards of hospitality and of clan solidarity are

undergoing change in response to the availability in urban life, which is becoming "individualistic and money-based" (Ouedraogo 1995:313).

The last case study is Stephen Lubkemann´s example of "transnational social field", that of transnational polygyny: "*The Transformation of Transnationality among Mozambican Migrants in South Africa*". This article refers to the women who have stayed in the rural area, and not those who have migrated; however it addresses the notion of networks of obligation between the sexes with a different perspective, that of religious retribution. Lubkemann shows how Machazian women left in Mozambique ultimately lose power in the household as a result of changing migration patterns, civil war and male emigration to South Africa where they have found new wives. Before the war men had migrated temporarily to South Africa to help support their families and, sometimes, to accumulate funds to marry several wives. Polygyny enhanced the men's social status back in their home communities and was often endorsed by the first wife. However, as war wore on and economic opportunities worsened, migrant men came to transform the practice of polygyny (Lubkemann 2000: 44). Increasingly, they elected to maintain two households, one in Mozambique and one in South Africa, as their life strategies (employment, permanent residence) are not possible in Mozambique. This new form of "transnational polygyny" has transformed the very meaning and practice of marriage. According to Stephen Lubkemann, it allows men to reconfigure their lives in ways based on the idea that `total social lives' in Machaze and South Africa are not mutually exclusive options (Lubkemann 2000: 50).

While transnational polygyny has augmented men's options, it has severely reduced those of their wives residing in Mozambique. These women's mobility is severely constrained by husbands who view a potential relocation as an unwanted drain on their incomes. Indeed the men are quite explicit in stating that "they wanted to keep Machazian women insulated from urban life and anything that might lead them to question their role as subsistence producers" (Lubkemann 2000: 44). Moreover, owing to men's added domestic obligations and the Machazian wives' lack of physical proximity to their husbands, the "stay-at-home wives" generally suffer a marked reduction in their share of migrant husbands' resources. To make matters worse, these Machazian wives are subject to competition for those reduced resources from both co-wives and the husbands' parents.

The resulting conflict often ends in suspicion of witchcraft which, in turn, further exacerbates intra-household hostilities. Although wives are losing their leverage over polygynous migrant husbands' incomes and their willingness to return, the fear of spirits of dead ancestors is still binding. To persuade errant men to maintain their ties to their families and home communities, the latter assert moral authority backed by the threat of spiritual retribution (Lubkemann 2000: 55). This example underscores the importance (and insufficiently studied role) of religion as an institutional force relevant to the reaffirmation across transnational space of gender ideologies and relations. In this case, religious beliefs and practices appear to reinforce moral systems based on obligation and reciprocity between the sexes. Moreover, these beliefs and practices serve to perpetuate local identities and transnational ties and practices under conditions which might otherwise threaten their endurance.

This chapter has shown the reasons why networks of obligation become self-enforcing and how social networks allow women to best cope with migration processes. In the cities, both kinship-based networks and friendship-based – through associations - offer them shelter, job opportunities and a sense of identity. Migrant women are usually able to uphold work in the city and a family in the rural area, by sending remittances, both monetary and in kind. In addition, their propensity to remit is much higher when they have children who have stayed behind with their relatives. Social networks and ties of obligation are very strong in Africa, and most migrants do want to return to their homeland eventually, for family, security reasons and their attachment to the ancestral lands (Lubkemann 2000). However, it was shown that when the situation in the village is oppressive, women may decide to value their social networks in the city more than those in the rural area, and return there less often. Some case studies illustrated women wanting the freedom of the cities; others showed how social networks and circular migration were temporary survival strategies for women; yet others showed that although women may have found some liberation, capacity-building opportunities and empowerment in the city, the cultural subjugation of women has continued to dominate the psyche, and they return to their rural villages. Will the migration cycle ever be able to satisfy their strategic needs? As always, depending on the cases, the class, age, marital status, life cycle, culture, “it depends”.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

"A nation which divides itself into two categories if people, each living their separate lives- on the one side the men, on the other side the women- will always be a weak nation"

Mustapha Kemal

Georges Fouron and Nina Glick Schiller 2001: 549

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The main focus of this thesis was the analysis of the complex relation between gender and household and network migration strategies under a common framework, in light of the *African* context. Indeed, until now, there has been little research on gender and migration studies in Africa compared to the wealth of information and analytical thought that has proliferated in response to the Latin American and South Asian cases. The case studies that span the Sub-Saharan African region and the last two decades have offered many insights into the complexity of gendered migration strategies in Africa, into how household migration strategies, facilitated by social networks, both influence and are influenced by gender.

One of the conclusions of this research pertains to the cyclical relationship between gender relations and migration. Indeed, migration, through its access to new opportunities of employment and socialising may cause a change in gender relations, therefore representing a *cause of social change with regards to the status of women*; or it may be the result of a shifting of values within communities and women´s psyche that pushes them to start migrating, thereby representing an *effect of social change within the status of women*. Though this may seem self-evident, it shows that their relation is a dynamic process, one which may keep evolving. Thereby, the cyclical and dynamic nature of the process may be positive, in the sense that it demonstrates how gender relations are not fixed, and may constantly be evolving. This evolution may, in some cases be for the worse, but also for the better. Migration processes are changing: African female migration is rising and women migrants are becoming more reluctant to return to their communities of origin, preferring the new opportunities of urban life. The very fact that *migration survival strategies are conditioned by gender relations* and, at the same time, the *need to survive leads to adaptation of gender norms and roles*, this rising female migration shows how women are finding ways to question and defy the heavily gendered system they live in.

As migration is cumulative and self-sustaining, it eventually creates a "culture of migration", where the population is expected to migrate. But can this "culture of migration" actually change gender roles? The case studies demonstrated that where

communities experience increased female emigration, they may gradually accept women’s augmented mobility and economic independence, seeing migration as a permissible, even positive, option to secure their livelihood. This “culture of migration” gradually affects understandings and perceptions of migration. Migration can bring about women´s change of values; indeed, they may acquire a growing awareness of their rights and capabilities. This, in turn, is influencing more women towards migration (See case studies of Gadio and Rakowskj 1995; Nowak 2009; Ouedraogo 1995).

Can migration as a household strategy have an impact on gender relations within households? Will these increasing changes in household composition and bread-earning responsibilities ultimately be reflected in changes in attitudes in relation to women, and their role in households and society? Do the vulnerable situations women face during migration compensate for their new role as providers for the household, in the eyes of the household and community? These questions will arouse different answers according to one´s stance in relation to migration theory in Africa: there are no absolute answers.

One of the limitations of the migration household strategy is precisely that it focuses on the household as a space of gender inequalities, and does not focus on the different levels of society that presents gender inequalities, such as educational economic, legal, political, state and international institutions. Therefore, even if women have gained awareness of their rights and capabilities through migration, and even if they have also gained respect within the household and community, as the case studies showed, society in general may not have a place for this emancipated women, whether it be at the market or political level (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2000, 2005). As it was seen, society is still heavily gendered, and though women may gain some power, it is still far below that of her husband´s (Hollos 1991). In addition, women´s migration may be seen as an extension of their domestic duties, complying with their husband´s authority. And because of strong ties of obligation to their household in the community of origin, they are still linked to their patriarchal societies, even if they are separated by distance. According to Ortner, the gender prejudice runs even deeper than at the level of sexist institutions and policies, it is a socially embedded notion, whether at the individual, household or macro level (Ortner 1974).

Nevertheless, it is not because institutions are heavily gendered that they will stay so. As it has been discussed, gender is not a fixed force (Malher and Pessar 2001),

it can be challenged. And social change, here represented through female migration, is one such way of challenging strict notions of gendered divisions of power, resources and labour. In addition, other changes in political and economic conditions may question the gendered norms of labour division and migration roles, as families are forced to consider how best women and men can contribute to livelihoods (Nowak 2009). Even if the change takes some time, there is a cumulative effect, whereby migration fosters more migration, and a change of ideas spreads to other women, however slowly. It has changed in Western societies over the last half century, and it has started to in the rest of the world, why can this breakdown of heavily gendered roles and institutions not eventually spread to Africa? Perhaps migration is one of the ways in which African women will eventually find their emancipation? Maybe the absence of men during the female migration process gives women more freedom to enter a wider range of employment, by giving them the space to make their own decisions and reducing their domestic labour loads (Chant 1998)?

The cyclical relation of gender and migration is extended to networks of obligation and social ties, where *gender identity shapes the types of ties within networks*, and *network characteristics and institutional changes* brought about through migration, in turn, *influence cultural expectations about gender* - such as introducing ideas of a modern, working woman (Curran and Saguy 2001). Therefore, if women feel a sense of “goodwill” and trust towards their family, or if their children have stayed with their relatives in the community of origin, they continue to remit; but in the case of oppressive patriarchal societies, to whom they may not feel a sense of gratefulness, their propensity to remit diminishes, thereby differentially impacting the sending community. Though social networks are crucial in migration strategies and in other aspects of African society, the nature of these are changing faster for women than for men, where more women than men are showing signs of staying in towns. This shows how, through migration, women migrants may be questioning their position and their life choices. Perhaps there is an increasing awareness on their part about opportunities of employment, education, capacity-building and socialising in urban areas (Gugler 1989; Gugler and Ludwar-Ene 1995; Olurode 1995; Oucho and Gould 1993; Ouedraogo 1995; Dodson 2000)?

Kinship and friendship networks, networks of obligation and reciprocity, ties that link extended families through space and time, are crucial for these migration strategies,

because they are crucial for the very survival strategies throughout Africa. Life in many parts of Africa is still uncertain: agriculture depends heavily on droughts or floods, the capital market is unreliable, government welfare is practically absent and conflicts are numerous. In this context, ties of reciprocity and the fact of valuing the collective over the individual act as security nets against these insecurities, as a sort of informal welfare system (Gadio and Rakowskj 1995). These thick social ties are part of a social fabric that can also protect women, by providing friendship and support with the many daily domestic chores and reproductive activities and guarantee shelter and food in periods of crisis. However, if these social ties do erode, because of the very processes of migration (Ouedraogo 1995; Stark and Lucas 1989; Gugler 2002), there may be a general weakening or loss of this informal welfare and protection system. In addition, if there is a weakening of social networks, how will these "social networks" and "household strategies" continue to facilitate and sustain migration as a survival strategy? How will they provide security against the crises in the cities for the migrants, and in the rural areas for the non-migrants? In extreme cases, women may suffer more than men with the loss of these networks, as institutions are still biased, hindering their access to jobs, education, income and resources they need for survival (Baden 1997). Extreme cases include trafficking and prostitution (Ouedraogo 1995; Ramirez *et.al* 2005; Sassen 2000; Simone 2003). They may gain individual autonomy, but they lose important social moorings (Pessar 1995).

Gender and migration studies are very complex, and the processes and impacts of migration on gender relations depend on a number of factors, such as class, ethnicity and age, income and marital structure within the household and external socio-politico-economic factors. However, this thesis concentrated on the role of *gender* in migration, as it is one of the most important components of human identity and transpires across all social fields; and it focused on migration *strategies and actions*, rather than causes and results, to illustrate the *dynamic processes involved in migration*, as a social construct that is constantly evolving.

Future directions

Along this discussion, several aspects were pointed out as potential directions that work on this subject could take. Three points will be discussed here, they are all a basis for more empirical and concrete research. The first is on the role of migration for

"development" in Africa, showing how remittances, whether monetary or social, can be used positively for constructive projects and investments in the community of origin (Crush and Fayne 2007; Penson 2007b), and the role women can play, from the sending of remittances, to participating in the conception of the community projects to managing them.

The relationship between AIDS and migration is another potential direction for this work. Indeed, AIDS was traditionally associated to migration, especially male labour migration, as the rapid spread of AIDS was facilitated by mobile migrant labourers. Recently, "HIV/AIDS has dramatically altered household structures and traditional patterns of income distribution and social support across Africa. High urban HIV prevalence rates have produced a reverse flow of migrants who depend on the rural family for physical, emotional, and financial support during their illness and for the spouses and children they leave behind after death. This increased dependency burden makes rural households further reliant on remittances" (Luke 2007: 4). In addition, where women have poor support during their migration, they enter prostitution, putting them at a high risk of contracting the virus (Chant and Brydon 1989; Ghosh 2009; Gugler 2002; Landau 2006; Oppong 1997).

Last but not least, the processes of female inter-continental African migration in Europe would provide interesting findings. Indeed, studying the role social networks play in facilitating these trans-continental movements, the power of these ties in maintaining the culture when integrated into a completely different society. Even after decades of not having returned to their country of origin, immigrants continue to contribute to the maintenance of their households and sometimes, to the "development" of their country of origin, through their remittances. However, the efficiency of these "development" contributions.is questionable. Analysing how African women´s roles change in these circumstances and through transnational networks, would complement this discussion on internal and international female migration processes within Africa.

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