

**GENDER CONTESTATIONS IN THE MIGRATION SITE: THE CASE  
OF NIGERIAN MIGRANTS IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a PhD in Gender Studies at the University of Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Claudine Anita Cassandra Hingston, hereby declare that this thesis is my own unaided work and has not been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other university. All references, citations, and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged.

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**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my mother, the late Mrs NAOMI MODUPEH DINAH BECKLEY.  
You made me who I am today. Your legacy lives on. Rest in peace Mum.

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## ABSTRACT

At the end of the apartheid era in 1994, South Africa attracted a large number of migrants from other parts of Africa such as West Africa. The declining political and economic situation in the West African country Nigeria after the early eighties, led to increased migration of Nigerians to post-apartheid South Africa, where they either pursued higher education or sought employment in both formal and informal sectors. However, like any other migrants, they found themselves positioned in a new gender regime as gender regimes differ across countries. As such, they were faced with gender specific problems and challenges and their prior gender roles, relations and identities underwent some transformation. It became even more complicated as men and women are affected differently by these challenges and they respond differently as well. They therefore had to frequently contend with gender issues and they struggled to either adapt to or resist their new gender regime. Very little research however had been done in this regard and there was a need to provide knowledge on this subject. To this end, a qualitative methodology was employed in this research to explore the gendered lives of Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa. The research explored the ways the migrants adjust in their new gender regime and the gender issues they had to grapple with. It also examined the gender challenges they encountered and their responses to them. Significant findings from the research are that Nigerian male migrants in Durban use religion to keep their women subordinated and that even though the migration site generated new gender perspectives for some of the migrants, the realities involved were complex. Further findings showed that migration impacted greatly on the gender power relations in the households of the migrants and that Nigerian migrants were more prone to xenophobic attacks than other African migrants and there were gender dimensions to it. This research advances that gender cannot be separated from the migration process. It further advances that the migration site is one of struggle and contradictions in which the migrants gender identities are constantly being challenged, negotiated and reinforced.

**Keywords:** Nigerians, Migration, Gender, South Africa.

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## **ACRONYMS**

FAO: Food and Agricultural Organisation

IFAD: International Fund for Agriculture Development

IOM: International Organisation of Migration

NDHS: Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey

NELM: New Economics of Labour Migration

PRB: Population Reference Bureau

SADC: Southern Africa Development Communities

UNDESA: United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UN: United Nations

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This study focuses on the gendered lives of Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa. South Africa attracted a large number of migrants from other parts of Africa such as West Africa at the end of the apartheid era in 1994. From a country whose migrants were initially male labourers from other countries in Southern African, it now encompasses migrants from the whole of the African continent (Ojong, 2002). McDonald (2000) asserts that there has been a dramatic increase in cross border traffic from other African countries into South Africa at the end of apartheid and this has resulted into a change of the quantitative and qualitative composition of migrants and immigrant activity. Castles and Miller (2003) argue that Africans from as far away as Ghana flocked to South Africa as they viewed it as a sort of 'Eldorado' (wealthy city or country). The primary reasons given for moving to South Africa were employment, escape from war, conflict, study, business, live with relatives/friends, poverty at home and the need to live in a democratic country (Maharaj and Moodley, 2002).

The declining political and economic situation in Nigeria after the early eighties saw an increased migration of professional Nigerians to post-apartheid South Africa, where they found employment in the universities and other sectors (Adepoju, 2005). These professionals set the trend for other Nigerian migrants to the extent that in recent times, Nigerians have been migrating to more diversified destinations within Africa like South Africa (UNDP and Development Prospect Group, 2005). As a result, there are now a number of Nigerian migrants in various parts of South Africa such as Johannesburg and Durban.

Just like all other migrants, these migrants find themselves positioned in a new gender regime which as a matter of fact differs across countries. According to Connell (1987), a gender regime is a group of practices which are characteristically ideological and material and which in a given social context acts to construct various images of masculinity and femininity. Therefore, the state of operation in gender relations in a given institution is its gender regime (Connell, 1987). Similarly, Donato et al (2006) observes that migrants often only become aware of the relational and contextual nature of gender as they attempt to fulfil expectations of identity and behaviour that may differ sharply in the several places they live. Notably, gender is an important component of migration. Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationship between men and

women as well as relations between men and those between women (UN Women, n.d). Furthermore, these attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through processes of socialization. The above definition of gender is an indicator that differences exist within men as a group and women as a group. For instance, the gender experiences of a black African illiterate woman born in a rural village in Sierra Leone may be very dissimilar from a white European educated woman born in the United Kingdom. As can be seen, gender intersects with other identities such as race, nationality, class, age, ethnicity and sexuality and the intersectionality approach within gender studies has gained prominence over the years. According to Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) gender is not simply a variable to be measured, but is a set of relations that organizes migration and facilitates or constrains the migration and settlement of both women and men. In this light, gender is one of the most important factors shaping migrants experiences and is more important than their country of origin or destination, their age, class, race or culture (International Organisation of Migration, 2004)<sup>1</sup>. Gender ideologies permeate the entire migration processes as migrants (men and women) experiences are dissimilar (Menjívar, 2009). Similarly, IOM (2004) states that the social context in which migration takes place is strongly influenced by gender relations and men and women migrate for different reasons and are not only using different channels but also have different experiences. Notably, the importance of gender in migration was overlooked in early migration studies (cf. Morakvisic, 1984) and over the years scholars have made efforts to redress this situation (cf. Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Kibria, 1993; Pessar and Grasmuck, 1991). This fact notwithstanding, there is still a need for more research to be conducted in this area.

Dodson (2000) argues that the gender element in African migration to South Africa is important as it reveals a complex set of gender relations and gender specific behaviour. Even decisions of the South African state to admit people as legal migrants are motivated by gender relations, identities and roles (Dodson, 2000). Although most societies are rooted in gender differentiation mainly of male hegemony and female subordination (patriarchy), gender roles, relations and identities undergo transformation in the migration site. Nigerian men and women, like other categories of migrants, struggle to either adapt to or resist their new gender regime. Although the gender regime in South Africa is patriarchal to some extent, South Africa has a progressive constitution that upholds gender equality and promotes female empowerment. The gender regime in South Africa is steeped in cultural traditions that

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<sup>1</sup> International Organization of Migration will hereafter be abbreviated as IOM.

gives power to men and discriminates against women on one hand but yet has an enabling environment that fosters gender equality and promotes women's rights and empowerment on the other hand. The migrants face gender specific problems and challenges in this new gender regime and as a result, they have to frequently contend with gender issues. It becomes even more complicated as men and women are affected differently by these challenges, hence their different response thereto.

This study, therefore, examines the ways in which Nigerian migrants adjust in their new gender regime and the gender issues they have to grapple with. The study also examines the gender challenges they encounter and their responses thereto. As migration is a transnational process that involves multiple moves and relationship in which migrants establish social fields that cross geographical, cultural and political borders (Sharpe, 2001), this study also engages with the transnationalism process and the different ways in which male and female Nigerian migrants experience it. Transnationalism, as described by Basch et al (1994), is the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.

Gender and migration studies have advanced in many directions but research in this area is still far from over. Hondagneu-Sotelo (2011) argues that there is acute deafness from scholars who work in areas such as segmented assimilation, transnationalism, immigrant religion and citizenship efforts and this need to be remedied. Thus, there is therefore, a need to continue examining gender and migration issues within these and other areas especially within the African continent. This study advocates the view that gender cannot be separated from the migration process. Additionally, it is advocated that the migration site is one of struggle and contradictions in which migrants' gender identities are constantly challenged, negotiated and reinforced. In this study, therefore, the continual battle with gender issues in the host land runs across the various chapters.

## **1.2 Background and Outline of the Research Problem**

History has shown that apart from the Trans-Saharan trade between West and North Africa (cf. Boahen, 1996), migration within Africa was mainly inter-regional. Examples of these are West African migrants to the mining areas of Ghana and the cocoa farms of western Nigeria (Ojong, 2002) and labour migrants from Southern African countries to South Africa to work in the mining and agricultural sectors. In fact, as McDonald (2000) asserts, cross border migration between South Africa and its neighbours is not new as most of the workers

recruited during the apartheid period to work in the gold mines were from these regions. Adepoju (1998a) notes that intra-regional migration is often viewed as an extension of internal migration. The main aim of all these migrants then was to trade or work and it was male dominated. Later on, factors such as wars, local political upheavals, unfavourable climatic conditions and the generally harsh environmental and economic conditions initiated population movements over wide geographical areas in the continent (cf. Clarke and Kosinki, 1980). African migrants were therefore forced to look elsewhere from 'their traditional regional destinations to alternative destinations' (Adepoju 2006:27). As a result, African migrants started migrating to 'unconventional destinations to which they had no prior linguistic, cultural or colonial ties' (Adepoju 2006:27). An example of this is migrants from West Africa to South Africa.

There are significant numbers of West African migrants in South Africa, especially from Nigeria who have settled in different parts of the country including Durban. Durban is located in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal and is one of the four major urban industrial centres in South Africa. It became a new destination for legal and undocumented African migrants in the 1990s (Maharaj and Moodley, 2002). However, researchers in the field of African migration to South Africa tend to concentrate on migrants from other Southern African countries (McDonald, 2000). There is, therefore, a need to promote research on migrants from other parts of Africa especially those who have no linguistic, cultural, social or regional ties with South Africa. This is one of the reasons why Nigerian migrants from far away West Africa were chosen for this study.

Regardless of whom they are, all migrants go through a process of acculturation in varying degrees and forms (Harris and Moran, 1991) as they try to adapt, integrate or assimilate in their new cultures. The term adapt is explained in the Merriam Webster dictionary as a change in one's behaviour to make it easy to live in a particular place or situation. According to the Free Online dictionary, assimilation involves absorbing into a prevailing culture whilst integration is explained as joining or uniting with something else. These terms according to Fomunyam (2012), are used to describe people's response to their experiences in other cultures. Also, gender ideologies and practices change as human beings cooperate or struggle with each other, their past, and the structures of changing economic, political and social world linked through their migrations (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, 2003; Mahler and Pessar, 2001). Like all other migrants, therefore, Nigerian migrants not only had to adapt and integrate into their host country but also had to grapple with gender issues in many areas such

as in their household, social life, settlement, social networks, and employment. However, as a result of their nationality, ethnicity, cultural background and social constructions of gender, their experiences may be dissimilar from other groups of migrants and their experiences need to be documented.

There are very few focused studies on Nigerian migrants in South Africa such as Singh and Saussi's (2010) study on remittances and voluntary associations of Nigerian migrants in Durban and Adeagbo's (2013) study of intermarriage between Nigerian male migrants and South African women. Whilst the latter has gender implications, the focus has not been strictly gender. Also, like most studies on gender and West African migrants in South Africa, studies about Nigerian migrants seem to be mostly limited to one sex (cf. Fomunyam, 2014; Ojong, 2005). In studies on African migrants in South Africa that include Nigerians, details are limited as space needs to be given to the other migrants as well (cf. Isike and Isike 2012; Muthuki, 2010; Ojong and Muthuki 2010, Ojong, 2002). Although West African migrants cannot be said to be a strictly homogenous group, a study of Nigerian migrants helps to fill in the gaps in studies on West African migration to South Africa. The main aim of this study, though, is to provide knowledge on the gendered lives of Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa and fill in the gaps in Nigerian migration to South Africa.

### **1.3 Personal Reasons for Choosing this Topic**

Being an African migrant in Durban, South Africa, brought a keen awareness to me of how gender is an integral part of life, even when one is away from their homeland and in a different country. Gender is ever present in all societies and every country has its own gender regime which can be similar to or different from another. As such, migrants are at times faced with or exposed to new gender ideologies and practices and they in turn may have to cope with these, adapt to them, reject them or make adjustments. Although one can generalise that migrants have to contend with gender issues, it is inappropriate to generalise that the gender experiences of all migrants are the same as they come from different backgrounds and settle in different countries. It is an insurmountable task, however, to fully document gender and migration issues as migration is a global phenomenon and there are migrant communities worldwide. Gender and migration scholars have, however, made strides in this direction and there is a need to complement their efforts.

As an academic and a migrant from West Africa living in South Africa, I realized that very little research has been done on migrants from that region, especially on gender issues. My

initial focus was to research on West Africans living in Durban, South Africa, but as that would have been an enormous task, I narrowed it down to one group, Nigerians, as they were in the majority of all the West African nationals in Durban and their gender experiences have been not well documented. I attempted to explore their gendered lives from the time they left Nigeria to their settlement and integration in the South African society. As Nigerians come from a background where men are the dominant sex, I was curious to find out how Nigerians assert themselves in the South African community that is both liberal and conservative at the same time. Although the South African constitution provides for gender equality for all and mechanisms are put in place to realise this, the country, on the other hand, is steeped in cultural practices which disadvantage women. How did the migrants then integrate in such a multi-faceted country which in one sense promotes gender equality and yet uphold cultural practices that discriminate against women? How well were they able to cope in the new gender regime? What impact did the new gender regime have on their homeland gender construction? What are some of the gender challenges they faced? What are the coping mechanisms adopted? To what extent is the new gender regime different from the old? How does it impact on the different sexes? Finding the answer to such questions inspired me to engage in this study.

#### **1.4 Thesis Hypothesis**

The central hypothesis of this study is that when migration occurs, gender situations change as they differ from that of the country of origin. The study, therefore, explored former gender constructs, perceptions and experiences alongside present ones and teased out the changes and challenges and the migrants' response to them.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study examines the different aspects of the gendered lives of Nigerian migrants in Durban such as the relations in their households, their transnational lives and their integration and settlement into the South African society as opposed to focusing on just one area as is common with most migration and gender studies. Furthermore, it sheds light on how former gender status, roles and relations of Nigerian migrants are affected in the migration site and how they renegotiate, redefine and reinforce gender. It also brings out how patriarchy is refashioned in immigrant situations. As such, a significant factor of this study is that it adds to the body of knowledge on the gendered lives of African migrants as well as to that of



gender relations within Africa. It is also significant in that it adds to the knowledge on patriarchal operations within Africa.

This study throws light on migrants from West Africa, specifically Nigerians living in South Africa, as there are very few studies on migrants in South Africa from those countries (cf: Adeagbo, 2013; Fomunyan, 2014; Isike and Isike 2012; Ojong, 2002; Singh and Saussi, 2010). As such, the study is significant as it provides knowledge on migrants from West Africa to South Africa thereby contributing to knowledge on migration issues in South Africa.

Most of these studies identified above, also either lack a gender perspective or not strictly examined under a gender lens and at times focuses on one sex only. This study differs from them as it employs a gender lens throughout the study and focuses on both sexes. This study is therefore significant in that it assists in filling in the gaps in studies of West African migrants in South Africa.

A main significance of the study is that it adds to the body of knowledge on the interface between gender and migration thereby contributing to academic research on gender and migration. A final but important significance is the contribution of the study to academic knowledge on intra Africa as well as international migration studies.

### **1.6 Objectives of the study**

Study objectives define the focus of a study. The objectives of this study are as follows:

- (a) To investigate how gender organizes migration from home to the host country.
- (b) To examine the gender experiences of male and female Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa.
- (c) To examine the similarities and differences of gender structures in the migration site and home country and the effects on the migrants.
- (d) To analyse migration and how it shapes the migrants' perception of gender in the migration site.
- (e) To examine migrants' reinterpretation, redefinition and renegotiation of gender in the migration site.
- (f) To analyse the importance of including gender in migration studies.

## **1.7 Research Questions**

A research question is the specific query addressed by the research and it sets the parameters as well as suggests the methods for the research (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The following research questions guided and grounded this research:

- (a) How do Nigerian migrants view the gender power relations in their households?
- (b) How does the gender regime of their host country differ from that of their country of origin?
- (c) How does the migration site challenge or reinforce existing gender relations and roles?
- (d) How do Nigerian migrants respond and deal with the changing gender situations in the host country?
- (e) What are the different ways Nigerian male and female migrants experience transnationalism?
- (f) How do Nigerian male and female migrants perceive the impacts of migration at the individual, household, community and national scale?
- (g) What are the distinct ways male and female Nigerian migrants shape and experience South Africa?

## **1.8 Limitations**

This study is limited to Nigerian migrants whose experiences may be different from those of other African migrants and might have been enriched by comparing Nigerians in Durban with those in other areas of South Africa. However, because of the proximity of the research area and financial constraints, it was limited to Durban. This study would have greatly benefitted if I had been able to study other African migrants, particularly those from West Africa to be able to compare and contrast the gendered dimensions in their lives. This would, however, have been an insurmountable task. The choice of Nigerian migrants has been influenced by the fact that they are one of the largest groups of West African migrants in South Africa and they have a large and established community in Durban which guaranteed the availability of the research subjects. Also, Nigerian migrants in Durban are mainly from the Igbo and Yoruba ethnic groups and as such the sample population was not inclusive of all the ethnic groups in Nigeria. Despite these limitations, this study serves as a model on gender and migration research and Nigerian migration to South Africa.

## **1.9 Structure of the Thesis**

### **Chapter One: Introduction**

As with any introduction, this chapter provides insight into the research. It starts with a brief introduction and then presents the background and outline of the research problem, research questions, research objectives, rationale for choosing the topic, significance of the study, research hypothesis, limitations and structure of the thesis.

### **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter contains a comprehensive survey of literature on the topic and provides background and context to the research. Information related to this research was identified, analysed and then constructed as a literature review. The literature was drawn from books, journals, published and unpublished thesis/dissertations and electronic materials and it spans from early writings to the most recent to show how the understanding of concepts and issues change over time and the views of different authors. This chapter starts with an introduction and then presents the literature in three main sections.

### **Chapter Three: Research Methods and Methodologies**

This chapter presents the methods and methodologies utilised in the research. It first advances a case for the use of qualitative research methods to elicit data and then discusses the data collection methods and the sampling process used in the research. It further explains the theoretical frameworks utilised, the ethical issues involved and the way in which the data was analysed. In addition, this chapter profiles the research participants to provide knowledge on the people who participated in the research. Finally, the gender dynamics during the data collection process is discussed as well as the researcher's reflection on the field work.

### **Chapter Four: Gender Politics in Nigerian Migration and Settlement in Durban, South Africa**

This chapter examines the gender politics at play from the time the decision was made to migrate to South Africa to the migrants' integration, adaptation and settlement in the new country. It starts with an introduction and then gives an overview of migration from Nigeria. It goes on to tease out the gender dynamics in migration decisions and then examines the immigration process and the migrants' settlement, adaptation and integration through a

gender lens. It further examines the migrants' participation in transnational activities and the role of social network and voluntary association and demonstrates how these have gender underpinnings. I also explore the use of xenophilia as a gendered survival strategy, the use of the psychological function of religion as a coping mechanism, the re-creation of 'home' through food, the gender dynamics in the art of hustling and the formation of families in the home and host land. The chapter ends with a conclusion. This chapter speaks to the research objective of investigating how gender organizes migration from home to the host country.

### **Chapter Five: Gender Power Relations in the Household**

This chapter discusses the gender power relations in the migrants' households. It starts with a brief introduction and then looks at the relationship between gender and power and between gender power relations and households. It then examines gender power issues in Nigeria and the migrants' expectations upon migration in this regard. It further examines power relations in the migrants' households, patriarchal influences, challenges to and reinforcement of gender power relations, conflicts arising, power struggles, gender based violence, changes in the gender structure of the household and the migrants' reinterpretation, renegotiation and redefinition of gender in the households.

### **Chapter Six: Religion as a Vehicle for Male Dominance and Control in the Migration Site**

This chapter explores how Nigerian male migrants use religion to maintain their dominance and control over women. It interrogates the role of religion in the reinforcement of gender relations amongst the migrants and highlights how Nigerian men perceive themselves and the extent to which they can go to hold on to their *status quo*. It further investigates whether women undergo change when they migrate. The chapter also documents the experiences of the female migrants to conceptualise their thoughts and views on the subject of religion and female insubordination and gives space to the researcher to add her voice. This chapter also ends with a conclusion.

## **Chapter Seven: The Migratory Context as a Platform for Generating New Gender Perspectives: Complex Realities**

Research has shown that the migration site can generate new gender perspectives for migrants. This is, however, a simplistic view as the realities involved are complex. This chapter, therefore, first investigates whether migration does generate new gender perspectives for migrants and goes on to examine some of these new gender perspectives. It then teases out the complexities in areas such as gender relations in the household, female empowerment and gender identities.

## **Chapter Eight: Intersections of Gender, Nationality and Xenophobia**

This chapter interrogates the concepts of xenophobia, ‘Afro-phobia’ and ‘Nigeria-phobia’. It seeks to bring to light some of the problems faced by Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa, and how these are gendered. This includes attitudes of locals, gender based violence, sexual harassment, harassment by the police and access to reproductive health facilities.

## **Chapter Nine: Conclusion**

The conclusion starts with an overview of the research. It then presents the findings and contributions of the study and makes suggestions for further research. It ends with recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of a literature review according to Kaniki (2006) is to put the research project into context by showing how it fits into a particular field and this involves the identification and analysis of information resources and literature related to one's research project. Additionally, this process includes identifying potentially relevant sources, an initial assessment of these sources and the construction of an account that integrates and explains them (Kaniki, 2006).

This literature review draws on previous relevant studies and works and thus leads to a better understanding of the topic. Literature review, therefore, contains pertinent literature on the research topic. The literature in this chapter has been drawn from books, journals, published and unpublished thesis/dissertations and electronic materials. To facilitate a focused reading, the literature has been structured and systematically presented. The literature review in this study has been thematically utilized and spans from early writings to the most recent. Thus, it provides insights into how the understanding of concepts and issues change over time and the views of different authors. This literature review is informed by the research questions and objectives and is presented in three sections namely, Migration, Nigeria and Nigerians and Gender.

#### **2.2 Migration**

##### **2.2.1 Conceptualizing Migration**

Lee (1969) defines migration broadly as a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence and that no matter how short or how long, every act of migration involves an origin, a destination and an intervening set of obstacles. Beijer (1969) claims that the following four factors are responsible for migration:

- (a) Ambition, better job opportunities.
- (b) Hope, better future for the children.
- (c) Courage, for a new beginning or zest of adventure.
- (d) Better economic opportunities.

Beijer (1969) further argues that the migration phenomenon cannot be understood without analysing the dynamics and the interplay of demographic, economic, social and many other factors. Beijer's analysis is one sided as it does not take into account that migration can be involuntary or forced. Since then, many definitions of migration have been forwarded. Skeldon (1990) views migration as involving permanent or semi-permanent change of residence. Similarly, the National Geographic Society (2005) defines human migration as the movement of people from one place in the world to another for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence, usually across a political boundary. Kok et al (2003) sum it best by stating that migration involves both a change of residence and the crossing of a boundary. Thus, human mobility is an integral part of the globalized world and is one of the ways in which the exchange of talent, services, skills and a diversity of experience are achieved (IOM, 2011). As argued by Castles and Miller (2003), migration is one of the most important factors in global change. They also asserted that millions of people seek a new home or safe place to live outside their countries and that this movement can take many forms. In this regard, reference is made to people migrating as manual workers, highly qualified specialists, entrepreneurs, refugees or as family members of previous migrants (Castles and Miller, 2003).

Van Naerssen et al (2008) assert that migration is becoming very complex because of the various types of migrants. These migrants are categorised as follows: voluntary migrants, coerced migrants, circular migrants, long and short distance migrants and permanent and temporary migrants. Van Naerssen et al further argue that migrants can be further sub categorised by gender, age group, education, skill and generation and these all assume diverse links with their home country resulting in different impact on development in their home country. Cross et al (2006) identify a number of different kinds of migration which range from being voluntary, forced and those caused by economic determinants, conflict, human trafficking, rural to urban interchange to environmental factors. Migration, therefore, can be voluntary as people move across borders for work, education or family reasons or forced as in situations when people flee from wars and civil unrest (Hunter and Skinner, 2003). Other forms of migration are step migration, chain migration, circular migration, seasonal migration, internal migration and external (international) migration (National Geographic Society, 2005). International migration can be intercontinental (migration to a country in another continent) or intra-regional (migration to a country within the same continent) whilst

internal migration is migration within a state or country and is mainly from rural to urban areas (National Geographic society, 2005).

Castles and Davidson (2000:9) observe that ‘migration is definitely not a new phenomenon, but what is different today is the number and scale of migrants and their global impact. Kapur (2003:7) notes ‘that as many as 150 million migrants are crossing borders’ and the numbers are increasing as a result of various political, economic and social phenomena. The total number of international migrants was estimated at 214 million people in 2010 (IOM, 2011).

### **2.2.2 Dynamics of Migration**

Eisenstadt (1954) observes that migrants start from an already social base. As a result, a migrant to a new environment carries along much of the old and this depends on age, socialization, the circumstances of departure, personality and other factors (Jackson, 1969). Berry (1997) states that there is a complex pattern of continuity and change in how immigrants go about their lives in the new society. It is, therefore, not surprising that Espin (2000) notes that when immigrants cross borders, they also cross emotional and behavioural boundaries as becoming a member of a new society stretches the boundaries of what is possible in more than one way. As a result, life, roles and identities change. These changes in societal expectations, according to Espin (2000), lead to transformations in identity because the identities expected and permitted in the home culture may no longer be expected or permitted in the host society. Boundaries are crossed when new identities and roles are incorporated into life but most migrants, however, are not fully aware of all the emotional and behavioural boundaries they are about to cross (Espin, 2000). As Van Naerssen et al (2008) assert, once people decide to settle in other countries, their personal life and that of the families they leave behind profoundly change economically, socially and culturally as well as the people with whom they live and communicate with.

Migration also fosters migrant network, remittances and transnationalism. Massey et al (1994) describe migrant network as sets of interpersonal ties that connect the migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in origin and destination through ties of kinship, friendship and shared community origin. They are, according to the above authors, spatially based and connect at least two or more areas. Social networks are based on relationships of trust between people who have pre-existing ties of kinship, friendship and shared community



origin (Massey et al, 1994) which is why Arango (2000) argues that networks are cumulative in nature. For Phojola (1991:439), “networks entail social stratification as well as support”.

Most migrants, particularly African migrants, have families that they support back home. As a result of these ties, migrants send remittances home. Remittances link migrants and home at family, community and national levels by providing assistance to poor family members and assisting development projects within their communities (Oucho, 1990). This is why Adepaju (2006) attest that remittances give migration the characteristics of a family rather than an individual activity and as such, African migrants rarely sever their ties with home. According to Adepaju (1995) the sending of remittances by migrants is identified as one of the strongest and most pervasive phenomena in Africa’s migration systems.

A revolution in transport and communications and the increasing disparity between earnings in rich and poor countries, according to Sharpe (2001), makes a transnational existence far more common than before. A number of scholars have engaged with the concept of transnationalism and attempted to contextualise it (cf. Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Levitt, 2001; Mahler, 1998; Portes et al, 1999; Smith and Guarzino, 1998). Glick Schiller et al (1992, p.1) defines transnationalism as the ‘process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement’. Levitt (2001) views transnational spaces as dense and widespread because of the accelerated flow of people, capital and social remittances. Transnationalism is thus seen in more recent times as taking place within fluid social spaces that are constantly reworked through the immigrants’ immersion in more than one society (Levitt and Schiller, 2004).

Zinn (1994) posits that most societies equate migration with men as is evident in the case of the Senegalese people who interrelate manhood and construction of adult gender identity with travel and knowledge. This view has been upheld in early migration research wherein migration has been documented as a masculine activity and women migrants viewed as dependants. Phizacklea (1983) asserts that it was particularly easy to ascribe inferiority to female migrant workers just because their primary roles in patriarchal societies were defined as wives, mothers and dependants of a male breadwinner. In recent times, however, the number of women migrating has increased which has led to the concept of feminisation of migration. Women now account for approximately half of all global migrants in recent times (Sharpe, 2001). Women migrants are now recognized not only as dependants, part of the family reunification process, or as forced migrants in displacement situations, but also as

independent agents and family supporters or strategists (IOM, 2004). Gender relations and particularly conflict are a key part of understanding why women migrate (Moore, 1986).

Feminist research has shown that the ways in which women experience social and economic pressures differs from men and this has led Chamberlain (1994) to argue that men and women's language about the migration experience can be very different. For instance, as Chamberlain (1994) observes, whereas men present the decision to migrate as autonomous, women conceive of migration as a more collective endeavour and represent the experiences within a set of family relationships. Adepoju (2006), however, argues that women, especially African women, single as well as married are now migrating autonomously to fulfil their economic needs. Southern African women in particular are very mobile leading Barnes (2002) to refer to them as 'agents of the new, perhaps the unconventional and sometimes the outrageous'. However, there has been a further shift from the feminisation of migration to bringing in gender within migration. This is because the migrant is a gendered subject embedded in a wide range of relationships and complex patterns of division of labour (Waldinger et al, 1990). Migration scholars are now insisting that migration itself is a gendered phenomenon that requires more sophisticated theoretical and analytical tools than studies of sex and roles and of sex as a dichotomous variable allowed in the past (Donato et al, 2006). The engendering of migration is examined in a later section.

### **2.2.3 International Migration**

As indicated earlier on, migration can be internal or international. As this study is based on international migrants, this section provides a synopsis of international migration. International migration has been an integral part of human history and achievement but its alleged capacity to dislocate and change economic and social systems within a short period has only recently become an issue of major international concern (Appleyard, 1991). International migrants can be categorised as follows; permanent (settlers), temporary contract workers, temporary professional transients, clandestine or illegal workers, asylum seekers and refugees (Appleyard, 1991). Group migration can also occur internationally as was manifested when labour migrants were recruited in droves from particular regions and villages in Mozambique and Lesotho to work in the mines and farms in apartheid South Africa (Milazi, 1998).

International migration has increased in volume and significance over the years. It has also increased globally (cf. Adepoju, 2006; Massey 2006). Hunter and Skinner (2003) observe

that international migration is a phenomenon that shows no sign of receding as there are millions of people globally who are either living or trying to live in countries that are not their own. International migration is, therefore, still one of the key issues today and it is becoming increasingly important. Massey (2006) asserts that international migrants come from regions and countries that are undergoing rapid change as a result of their incorporation into global trade, information and production networks. According to a report by the International Organisation of Migration, the number of migrants in the world has doubled between 1965 and 2000, from 75 million to 150 million (IOM, 2000b). Crossette (2002b) also observes that by 2002, the UN Population Division (UNPD) estimated that 185 million had lived outside their country of birth for at least twelve months which is just over two percent of the world's population. By 2005, it was estimated at 191 million (UNDESA, 2009) and at 214 million in 2010 (IOM, 2011). The African continent is said to be the principal source of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of ethnic conflicts and civil wars in many African countries such as Somalia, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sierra Leone and Burundi (cf. Adepaju, 2006; Hunter and Skinner, 2003; Landau et al, 2005). Notably, international migration takes place in many directions and the bulk of international migrants are from the poorer parts of the world and from war torn areas.

#### **2.2.4 Theories of International Migration**

The earliest theory of migration was Ravenstein's 'Laws on Migration' formulated in 1885. This was reformulated by Everett Lee in 1966 to include the push and pull factors. Lee (1966) posit that:

Migration tends to take place within well-defined 'streams', from specific places at the origin to specific places at the destination, not only because opportunities tend to be highly localized but also because the flow of knowledge back from destination facilitates the passage for later migrants (Lee 1966, pp 54-55)

The push and pull theory is one of the earlier and popular theories of both internal and international migration. Obiala and Meseckaite (2008) explain 'push', on the one hand, as those factors which influence people to leave their homes such as poverty, unemployment, natural disasters, poor quality of life and political instability. 'Pull' factors, on the other hand, are those factors which attract people to a new region such as job opportunities and

better quality of life. The push and pull theory, however, does not take into account how migrants perceive their worlds and relate to their kin, friends, and community members (Cross et al, 1998). De Haas (2008) even questions whether it should be considered as a theory as it is a rather descriptive model in which the different factors playing a role in migration decisions are enumerated in an arbitrary manner.

There is now a wide array of theoretical frameworks from which to analyse international migration at micro and macro levels (Castles and Miller 1998, Grieco and Boyd 1998). International migration theories, according to De Haas (2006), are classified under three categories and these are micro, meso and macro theories. Micro theories stress the individual's decisions and choices to migrate, meso theories focus on migration systems and networks whilst macro theories are concerned about the structural factors such as the economic and political aspects that influence migration (De Haas, 2006). Existing theoretical frameworks, such as the neo-classical migration theory with micro and macro level variants explain the process of international migration in divergent ways (Massey et al, 1993). For example, the macro level variant of neoclassical theory perceives the process of international migration as a result of wage differentials and disequilibrium in labour supply and this cause workers to move from low-wage, labour-surplus regions to high-wage, labour scarce regions (De Haas, 2008). Migration, according to the neo classical theory, is driven by geographic differences in labour supply and demand and wage differences between labour rich and capital rich countries (Kurekova, 2011). Skeldon (1990) argues that in the neo-classic model, individuals search for places of higher potential advantage as compared to their present locality and then make the decision to migrate. De Haas (2008) further contends that at the micro-level, the neo-classical migration theory views migrants as individual, rational actors, who decide to move on the basis of a cost-benefit calculation. This individualistic and economic nature of the theory has brought it under criticism despite Massey et al (1993) assertion that the neo classical theory is probably the best known migration theory.

Reitzes (2004) argues against the neo-classical approach by asserting that migration is not purely an economic phenomenon and cannot be understood solely in terms of economics. Another criticism raised by Adepoju (2006) is that within this theoretical perspective, migration impacts positively upon all stakeholders although this does not happen always. Also, as migration does not take place in a social, cultural, political, and institutional void, it makes actual migration patterns difficult to explain within a neo-classical framework that

mainly focuses on expected income (De Haas, 2008). It is, therefore, not surprising that Van Naerssen et al, (2008) argue that the theories based on the neo-classical approach are optimistic on the impact of migration on sending areas since it is expected that unemployment, poverty and overpopulation will be reduced and cites the balanced growth approach as one such optimistic theory. Other theories used to explain international migration are the dependency theory, world system theory, migration systems theory, new economics of labour migration theory and the network theory.

Dependency theorists like Wallerstein' (1974) argue that migration results from the economic forces of a western-dominated world system which in turn results in migrants developing their host countries rather than their home countries. The dependency approach also argues that the benefits secured by individual migrants should be viewed in relation to the social cost incurred by the sending community (Adepoju, 2006). The dependency school views migration as one of the main causes of underdevelopment, rather than as a path towards development (De Haas, 2008). The world system theory is similar to the dependency theory as it posits that migration occurs because of structural changes in the world market and as such migration occurs because of globalization (Massey et al, 1993; Skeldon, 1997). According to these theories, migration is conceived of mainly as a way of mobilising cheap labour (Castles and Miller, 1998). Both the dependency and world system theory utilise the historical structural approach. The historical approach, according to de Haas (2008), posits that individuals have no true choice in making migration decisions as they are pressured into moving because of broader structural processes. The historical structural approach perceives migration as 'one of the many manifestations of the increasingly unequal terms of trade between developed and underdeveloped countries and capitalist penetration' (Massey et al, 1998:36).

The New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) was introduced to challenge both the neo-classical and structural approach (Van Naerssen et al, 2008). The new economics of migration approach emerged as a critical response to and an improvement of the neo-classical migration theory (Massey et al, 1993:4). It argues that the decision to migrate is not made solely by individuals but by households and as such, the decision to migrate is influenced by factors in the home country (Kurekova, 2011). This is buttressed by Crush (2001) in his argument that migration is usually practised as a household strategy and not as an individual isolated behaviour. The new economics approach proposes that other factors apart from

individual income maximization can influence migration decision-making (De Haas, 2008). According to this approach, once constraints are overcome, migration is assumed to have a positive impact on development in the long run (Massey et al, 1998 cited in Van Naerssen et al, 2008). The migration systems theory, on the other hand, examines both ends of the migration flow and studies the linkages between the places concerned (Fawcett and Arnold, 1987). Mabogunje (1970) defines it as a set of places linked by flows and counter flows of people, goods, services and information. De Haas (2008) argues that this theory posits that migration alters the social, cultural, economic, and institutional conditions at both the sending and receiving ends. According to Castles and Miller (1998), this theory focuses on international relations and involves two or more countries in the exchange of migrants. The above authors also argue that this theory not only emphasises international relations but also political economy, collective action and institutional factors. A popular contemporary theory is the network theory which mainly focuses on the relation between migrants and non-migrants. As Appleyard (1992) argues, the formation and presence of an established migrant community at a particular destination can lead to subsequent migration to that particular place. The network theory focuses more on what sustains migration rather than what initiates it (Massey et al, 1993).

As a result of the diversity and complexity of international migration, however, there is no complete theory generated as yet (Obiala and Meseckaite, 2008). Also, the existing migration theories have their strengths as well as weaknesses. One weakness identified by Adepoju (2006) is that they fail to deal with forced migration from war, natural disasters and other factors. This is very disturbing when one thinks about the number of people who are forced to leave their homes. As Findlay (2001:275-278) argues by 1997, 'there were almost 17 million forced migrants, inclusive of nearly four million refugees'. The existing theories have also largely ignored the elements of gender.

Cheng (1999) suggests that gender as an organising principle of social relationships of power should be a fundamental analytical element within the comprehensive approach of theoretical conceptualization in the field of international migration. Similarly, Boyd and Grieco (2003) argue that gender is an integral part of the migration process and theories of migration should incorporate it. However, there has been little concerted effort to do so. Theoretical approaches were initiated by the United Nations to examine issues related to migration, women and gender and they were incorporated into programme activities that were initiated

from a developmental and feminist perspective (IOM, 2004). For instance, the Women in Forced Migration Theory (WIFM) and Gender and Forced Migration Theory (GAFM) were developed to address forced migration situations, assess impact on women and gender and were applied to emergency programming (IOM, 2004). However, as Boyd and Grieco (2003) assert, developing a complete gendered theory of international migration is difficult because various disciplines focus only on certain types of migration and have different explanations for them. It is further argued that it is essential as it will help explain the unique experiences of men and women at all the stages in the migration process. Thus, it can only be effectively and appropriately incorporated into international migration if account is taken of the subtle and obvious factors that result in the different experiences throughout the migration spectrum (Boyd and Grieco, 2003).

### **2.2.5 Migration in Africa**

According to Clarke and Kosinki (1980), Africa has been involved in long distance migration both within and outside the continent for a very long time. These authors cite the slave shipment to the Americas and the Middle East as an early example of international migration from Africa to the outside continent. International flows can also be confined to the continent. It is also argued that factors like war, slavery and local political upheaval, unfavourable climatic conditions and the generally harsh environmental and economic conditions forced the dispersion of populations over wide geographical areas in the continent before the era of colonialism (Clarke and Kosinki, 1980). Boahen (1996) avers that the trans-Saharan caravan routes between West and North Africa is an early example of international migration within the continent. As Mafukidze (2006) asserts, migration between the years of colonial expansionism and the end of colonization in Africa started with trade, then slavery and later by the migration of Europeans to Africa. Economic development policies of colonial governments had a strong influence on intercontinental migration during colonial times and immediately after independence in many African countries (Adepoju, 2005). International migration within Africa, however, can be best examined within three eras; pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial as this will provide a holistic picture.

While it is true that Sub Saharan Africa generates a significant outflow of intercontinental migrants mainly to Western Europe and the Arab region, the vast bulk of international migrants from Sub Saharan countries stay within the continent (Castles and Miller, 2010).

One of the main features of African history, according to Adepoju (2005), has been the almost continuous migration of people across space and time in response to the changing conditions on the continent and presently, South Africa is one of the largest importers of African labour from surrounding countries such as Lesotho, Mozambique, Malawi, Botswana and Swaziland. The South, particularly South Africa and Botswana, seem to be dominating present day migration within Africa and migrants to these countries are coming from all corners of Africa and are engaged in varied forms of employment (Mafukidze, 2006).

Intra-African migrations are mainly to countries with the highest real income and rates of economic growth such as South Africa (Appleyard, 1991). According to Arango (2000), economic disparities between and within African countries strongly influence migration within the continent. As Adepoju (1998a) argues, the overriding drive is usually the migrant's search for greater economic wellbeing. Therefore, where there are spectacular economic differences such as between South Africa, Gabon and other poorer parts of the region, migratory flows are directed from the impoverished countries to the core attractive nodes (Adepoju 2000c).

Adepoju (1998a) avers that intra-regional migration is often viewed as an extension of internal migration probably because migrants on opposite sides of national borders have a close affinity. However, 'as fewer migrants are unable to find stable employment in traditional regional destinations, circular and regional migrations have expanded to a wide variety of alternative destinations' (Adepoju, 2006: 27). It is further argued that as a result, African migrants, especially those from West Africa are now migrating to 'unconventional destinations to which they had no prior linguistic, cultural or colonial ties'. Some social scientists believe that Africa with one quarter of the world's land mass and one tenth of its population is the continent with the most mobile population' (Curtin, 1997: 63-4), although it is hard to verify or disprove this as credible statistics are deficient. However, as Parnwell (1993:53) observes, 'where there are wide differentials in income and economic opportunities, considerable flow of people can be expected to result'.

Adepoju (2006) claims that Africa is the one region which is most grounded in poverty as compared to the rest of the world and this coupled with politics and ethno-religious clashes fuels emigration. He further claimed that migration work in Africa need to take account not only of economic conditions on the ground but also of social conditions that determine who can migrate and which families have access to the kind of resources and connections that



facilitate migration. In most parts of Africa, migrants often originate from rural areas and settle and work in rural areas at destination, such as in the case of seasonal immigrants from rural Lesotho who work across the border on asparagus farms in South Africa (Adepoju 2003a).

Cross et al (2006) are of the view that African migration can only be adequately conceptualised if migration between sub regions is defined and compared with migration in other sub regions. This is because different forms of migration characterise the different sub regions such as refugee flows within eastern and increasingly in western Africa, labour migration from eastern and southern African countries to South Africa and clandestine migration in West and East Africa (Adepoju, 1991a, 2006). Adepoju (2006) argues, however, that these are changing dynamically as evidenced in the current trends of feminisation of migration, diversifications of migration, emigration of professionals and huge remittances flow. There is also an overall trend from labour migration in Africa towards commercial migration by self-employed entrepreneurs especially in the informal sector (Adepoju, 2003). The traditional pattern of male migration in sub Saharan Africa is becoming increasingly feminised as women even the married ones are migrating independently to fulfil their own economic needs and as a family survival strategy both within and across national borders (Adepoju, 2006).

In this twenty first century, governments are beginning to address migration as a priority in Africa and worldwide and this stems from fears of destabilising consequences of human flows at different scales (Cross et al, 2006). A recent trend in migration in sub Saharan African is xenophobia. African societies as observed by Adepoju (2006) used to be very hospitable to strangers, but some countries such as South Africa are now becoming increasingly xenophobic. Xenophobic practice in South Africa is mainly against other Africans by black South Africans (Landau et al, 2005). According to Matsinhe (2011), on the one hand, African foreign nationals are feared and hated not because they are really different but because they resemble the former victims of apartheid. Harris (2002), on the other hand, suggests that negative representation of Africa and African foreigners by the media and government/public officials is perhaps the most plausible cause for this practice. Migration in Africa has been conceptualised as a continuing process that usually begins and ends at 'home' (Oucho, 1990), although this could be argued against as it is not all African migrants who uphold their ties with home or have aims of returning to their homes of origin.

### **2.2.6 African Migration to South Africa**

South Africa has a long history of cross-border migration and this history has been well researched and documented within the Southern Africa region. Most of the workers recruited during the apartheid period to work in the gold mines were from these regions (McDonald, 2000). Similarly, Castles and Miller (2003) assert that most of the workers recruited during the apartheid period were from Mozambique, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Malawi and they worked in South Africa's gold mines. They further asserted that migration to the Republic of South Africa has been mainly labour based and that the roots of recruitment go back to the colonial period. Historically, the mining and agricultural sectors in South Africa have been dependent on migrant labour from Southern African countries (Maharaj, 2004). In fact, Crush (2000) argues that migration to South Africa for employment pre-dates the drawing of colonial borders by the colonial powers in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Massey (2006) claims that even in recent times, most of the migrants to South Africa are from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries especially those that share physical boundaries. Migration to South Africa was and remains, a survival strategy used by members of poor households in Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland and other neighbouring countries (Adepoju, 2003b). It is further argued that there have, however, been major changes in the scale and diversity of the origin of present day immigrants, who are eager to explore prospects in one of Africa's most buoyant economy. According to Cohen (1997), there are six global trends in migration patterns that relate to post-apartheid South Africa. These are refugee migration, immigration shopping, undocumented workers, independent female migration and unskilled contract worker. Each of them has specific gender implications relating to particular historical and geographical contexts and the last category almost entirely male is at present the most common form of migrants in South Africa (Cohen, 1997).

South Africa at the end of the apartheid era was considered to be more full of opportunities than other countries in the sub region and it attracted a large number of migrants from other parts of Africa such as West Africa. Zambia used to attract such migrants but with the collapse of its economy and the demise of apartheid in South Africa, South Africa started attracting them (Adepoju, 2003b). According to Maharaj (2004), Africans from other parts of the continent perceive South Africa as the land of economic opportunities and hope after the 1994 elections. South Africa was viewed by migrants as the new place to trade, seek work, shop, and seek asylum (cf. Mafukidze, 2006; Peberdy and Rogerson, 2000; Rogerson, 1997).

One problem the post-apartheid government faced though is a rise in unauthorised migration from other African countries. Maharaj (2004) argues that as long as widespread poverty and high levels of inequality prevail in the African continent, South Africa will continue to attract African migrants. The number of people moving into and out of South Africa, according to Crush (1999), has increased since 1990 to over seven million a year although the actual number of migrants entering South Africa in recent years is not known.

The composition of migrants has also changed. Not only are there more female migrants nowadays, but as Castles and Miller (2003) observe, Africans from faraway places are flocking to South Africa. While Adepaju (2006) confirms that there has been an increase in the number of migrants from other countries in East and West Africa, Ramphele (1999) argues that South Africa is attracting different categories of African migrants such as asylum seekers, long distance traders, entrepreneurs, professionals and students. There is an influx of self-employed entrepreneur migrants from various parts of the region into South Africa that is unlike the older flow of mostly unskilled mineworkers and farm labourers from traditional source countries (Adepaju, 2003). These include street vendors and traders who employ and train locals, although over the past decade skilled professionals have also been migrating to South Africa relatively buoyant economies and are working in tertiary institutions and in the medical establishments (Adepaju, 2006).

The feminisation of migration in Africa is inherent in the migration trend to South Africa. There has been an increase in the number of women migrating to South Africa nowadays for a broad range of social, productive and reproductive activities (Dodson, 1998). However, although there are more female migrant nowadays to South Africa, African migrants are composed of more males than females (Dodson, 1998). For Maharaj (2004), this can be a result of the dangers and cost of travelling and numerous other obstacles involved in travelling.

According to Ngwenya (2010), while migration within contiguous borders remains dominant in the case of migration to South Africa, a significant percentage of African migration originates from outside the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. In alphabetic order, these are Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan and these are notable examples of countries outside SADC that have significant migrant stocks in South Africa. Ngwenya (2010:11) adds that the attraction to South Africa “may be attributed to South Africa’s economic strength on the continent”

whilst others may argue that 'South Africa is an attractive transit country for Africans wishing to emigrate to Europe and the United States. Although the number of migrants from other parts of Africa into South Africa has increased and there are now different categories of migrants, the focus continues to be given to labour and cross border migration (Parnwell, 1993). Johannesburg is no longer the main area of attraction for migrants, and they are to be found in different areas in South Africa such as Durban. Durban has become a major destination point for African migrants. Maharaj and Moodley (2002) observe that the Durban experience is distinctive primarily because it becomes an end point for immigrants disillusioned with life elsewhere in South Africa or in search of greater economic freedom and opportunity. Some of the reasons advanced by migrants who moved to Durban were that the city has more jobs and better business opportunities, is safer/less violent, has more study opportunities, relatively tolerant of foreigners and it is easy to integrate with other people there (Maharaj and Moodley, 2002). The above authors further argue that the 1990s witnessed three major changes in African migration to Durban and these are that the number of immigrants in Durban from other African countries increased, the number of source countries for immigrants now encompassed the entire continent and thirdly, that many did not come directly to the city from their home countries.

Recent studies on migration to South Africa tend to concentrate on identity as well as coping, integrating, adjusting and adapting strategies of African migrants as opposed to former studies that focused mostly on migration patterns. Naidu and Nzuza (2013) study for instance explores the importance of traditional or home food for Sierra Leonean migrants in Durban. Home food according to the authors helped Sierra Leoneans to maintain their identity and to reconnect emotionally with their home country. Fomunyan's (2012) study on Cameroonian migrants in Durban captures the experiences of Cameroonian migrants in Durban as they adjust, interpret, adapt and redefine their lifestyles in the host space. More examples of such studies are Muzvidziwa (2012) study on Zimbabwean cross-border traders and Ojong's (2012) study on the pragmatic and symbolic negotiations of home for African migrants in South Africa.

## **2.3 An Overview of Nigeria and its People**

### **2.3.1. An Overview of Nigeria and its People**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria is located in West Africa and it has an area of 923,768 sq. km (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). It is further asserted that Nigeria's capital is Abuja

and the other main cities are Lagos, Kano, Benin City, Port Harcourt, Maiduguru, Zaria and Ibadan. Nigeria was initially a British protectorate that gained independence in 1960 but between 1969 and 1999, it was ruled by several military dictators who came to power through coups (De Haas, 2006). De Haas (2006) also argues that the country has experienced several minor and major violent inter-ethnic conflicts, the bloodiest being the Nigeria civil war (1967-1970), commonly known as the Biafra War.

According to the Central Intelligence Agency (2010), Nigeria has natural resources such as oil, tin, columbite, iron ore, coal, limestone, lead, zinc and its main agricultural products are cocoa, palm oil, yams, cassava, sorghum, millet, corn, rice, livestock, groundnuts and fish. The above agency also cites that Nigeria's official currency is the Naira and that the country can boast of various types of industries such as textiles, cement, food products, footwear, metal products, lumber, beer, detergents and car assembly.

Nigeria is said to be the most populous country in Africa, the biggest country in West Africa and its population over one hundred million (Falola, 2001). According to Falola (2001), Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation with about two hundred and fifty different ethnic and linguistic groups and the two principal religions are Islam and Christianity. He also adds that the majority ethnic groups are the Hausa, Igbo, Fulani and Yoruba and that a variety of languages is spoken in Nigeria, amongst them English, Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba and Fulani. The most widely spoken Nigerian language however is 'Pidgin' and it cuts across ethnicity, region and religion (Faraclas, 1996). Nigerians tend to employ the use of proverbs and sayings to enrich what they are saying although this is influenced by the linguistics and socio-geographical experiences of the diverse ethnic groups (Omoera and Inegbeboh, 2013).

The Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups constitute the sample population of this study. The Yoruba's are based in the south western parts of Nigeria and are mainly city dwellers and the majority of the Igbos stay in the south eastern areas with a small proportion living in the south west area (Falola, 2001). According to Afolayan et al (2008), Nigeria has a youthful population, with 43 per cent of its total population under 15 years old. As it is the young and active that usually migrates, this means that the large percentage of the Nigerian population will have the predisposition to migrate either internally or internationally (PRB, 2007). A survey by Esipova et al (2010) reveals that 48 percent of adult Nigerians reported that if given the opportunity they will move to another country permanently. As it is, even though

Nigeria is traditionally an important destination for migrants in the region, there are more people emigrating from, than immigrating to, Nigeria (Afolayan, 2009).

As a result of the variety of customs, languages, and traditions among Nigeria's two hundred and fifty ethnic groups, the country has a rich diversity. Falola (2001) observes that the customs and cultures of Nigeria are rich, varied and changing and despite colonial contacts and the introduction of Islam and Christianity, many aspects of Nigerian culture, customs and traditions have survived such as age grade societies, secret societies and chieftaincy systems. Additionally, within the household, the younger is supposed to respect the elders and the wives are advised to obey their husbands. There are certain etiquettes that are expected to be observed in Nigerian societies such as respecting the aged and as such, old people are usually greeted and served first and are expected to make decisions in the best interest of the group (Kwissential, n.d). Even family relationships are guided by seniority and hierarchy. The extended family is also an integral part of family life in Nigeria and social standing and recognition is achieved through it (Kwissential, n.d).

There is gender inequality inherent in the Nigerian society, despite the Nigerian Constitution provisioning that there should be no discrimination on the grounds of sex. The Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) (2013) reveals that women in Nigeria are disadvantaged compared to men in terms of both education and earnings and one reason for this is that women marry much younger than men, which limits their educational and earning potential. This survey also states that violence against women is a common practice in Nigeria and that married women have less control over their own lives than married men do. As argued by Makama (2013), the Nigerian society is patriarchal in nature and it is a major feature of traditional society. In most Nigerian cultures, children are taught that men should be in a position of control and women should submit to the authority of a man (Ako-Nai, 2013). According to Makama (2013), women in Nigeria are reduced to mere infidels, second class citizens and the belief that their place is in the kitchen. Similarly, Ako-Nai (2013) asserts that Nigerian women are put on a level with domestic workers and of no relevance within society. In addition, Nigerian women are often denied rights to land ownership and can hardly be found at the top of the hierarchy in many establishments. Salaam (2003) claims that cases like wife battery, marital rape and termination of employment because of pregnancy are not considered serious enough by the police. As such, they are usually not reported, let alone get to a court of law (Ako-Nai, 2013). This led Ako-Nai (2013) to claim that the traditional systems of gender relations colludes with institutions to maintain the status

quo thereby making it hard for women to escape violence, discrimination and gender equality. Nmadu (2000) observes that the Nigerian society has peculiar cultural practices that are detrimental to women's emancipation, such as early/forced marriage, wife-inheritance and widowhood practices. Added to culture, the dominant narratives of religion in both colonial and post-colonial Nigerian society also privilege men at the detriment of women (Makama, 2013.). Despite such gender disparities and inequalities in the Nigerian society, the country continues to be the 'big' brother' of West Africa and ranks as one of Africa's largest economy. As a result of its status in the continent, Nigerians are fond of saying that when Nigeria sneezes, the rest of Africa catches a cold.

### **2.3.2 Brief History and Culture of the Igbo and Yoruba People**

Since my research participants were either Igbos or Yoruba, it is fitting to provide literature on these groups of people which in turn will provide an understanding of how their culture informs gender relations and their adaptation in their new social, geographical and economic environment in South Africa.

According to Nzimiro (1972), the Igbos are one of the largest ethnic groups in Nigeria and they speak a common language which forms part of the Kwa group of West African languages. He adds that their territorial distribution covers the Cross River area and farming especially of yams and cassava is their predominant traditional occupation, although they engage in fishing as well. Present day Igbos however, are scattered in various parts of Nigeria as well as globally. In an essay on the Igbo ethnic group, Ohadike (n.d) attempts to document the history and culture of the Igbo people. According to him, a striking feature of traditional Igbo societies is the lack of centralised political structures as they are ruled by elders and organised into patrilineal ages. In addition, their social and political structures revolve around cross cutting institutions, the five most important ones being the council of elders, age groups, councils of chiefs, women associations and secret societies.

Initially, the Igbos practised African traditional religion and believed in a supreme being known as 'Chukwu' which they communed with through spirits and ancestors (Ohadike, n.d). Colonialism and missionary activities however affected this traditional faith as many Igbos after initially resisting, eventually succumbed to European civilisation and religion (Okwu, 2010.) As such, the majority of Igbos are Christians, though some still practice the traditional religion and others embraced Islam. The Igbos faith in a supreme being regardless of the type of religion they practised is still evident as most Igbo names stem from an understanding of

God and the universe (Mbubuike, 1996). Names such as Amaogechukwu (God's time is the best) and Chukwukelu (God is the creator) express the Igbo's religious beliefs (Ohadike, n.d). Personal names are also given to children in line with Igbo cultural heritage and one can connect an Igbo name to a particular family lineage, clan or ethnic groups (Mbubuike, 1996).

Nwoko (2012) states that within the Igbo culture, power is wielded in men and inheritance and positions of authority are seen as the preserve of men. The Igbos believe in the primacy of men as family heads and the continuation of the ancestral line (Mere, 1976). As such, importance is attached to a male child than a female even more than a full grown woman (Nwoko, 2012). Sons are also seen as power recourse in the family because they have inheritance rights (Mere, 1976). Men are accorded status and respect according to seniority, the first son for instance is regarded as the head and custodian of the family (Nwoku (2012). Thus, within Igbo families, women have subordinate and lower status than men (Mere 1976). In light of the above discussions, Igbo families can best be described as patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal (Mere, 1976).

Marriage is taken seriously by the Igbos as it brings households, lineages and even towns together and bride price is paid to the family of the bride (Ohadike, n.d). It is an acclaimed status symbol that the majority of Igbos aspires to (Mere, 1976). According to Nwoko (2012), Igbo marriages are either polygamous or monogamous with polygamous husbands being accorded more respect and accorded a high social status. The author adds that Igbo marriages are not always between adult men and women as child marriages do take place as well as marriage between two women but that Igbo marriage between women should not be seen as a lesbian relationship.

Igbo families are usually extended and large with the traditional living arrangement being one or more extended families of the same kindred living together in a compound (Mere, 1976). She adds however, that that there is a decline of the extended family size over the years because of the demand for urban employment and building plans in urban towns are not designed to accommodate large groups of people. Despite the changes socially and politically within Igbo land, the very substance of Igbo culture, their perception of the world and kinship issues still remains (Nwagbara, 2007).

The Yorubas occupy the Western and Lagos states as well as parts of Kwara and Midwestern states of Nigeria and the Yoruba language is very rich in expressions and terminologies (Oso, 1975). They make up around 20 per cent of the Nigerian population (Labeodan, 2005)



ranking them alongside the Igbos as one of the largest groups in the country. Labeodan (2005) adds that the Yoruba have the highest number of people who are formally educated and attributes it to the fact that they were the first to establish Christianity. The Yoruba traditional faith is known as Orisha Ifa (olaoluwa n.d) and it is still practised by some. Contemporary day Yorubas however, are mostly Christians or Muslims, the largest group being Christians (Labeodan, 2005). It was customary for the Yoruba people to belong to many traditional community associations based on age, religion, occupation and sex (Zeitlin et al, 1995) although as Aronson (1980) points out, new associations are overtaking the old based on alliances like modern religious groupings, neighbourhood friendships and credit associations.

The traditional Yoruba family is a large patrilineal and patrilocal extended one, with the head usually being the most senior male (Zeitlin et al, 1995). Additionally, the concept of family for the Yoruba starts with the descent group or lineage, which stresses group loyalty rather than individual independence. Marriage is inimical to the continuity of the Yoruba family. Yoruba marriages can be monogamous or polygamous and modern forms of marriage vary from the English-style weddings to marriage by Yoruba customary law and from simple parental consent and blessing to casual and temporary mutual consent (Zeitlin et al, 1995). The authors add that the husband is considered to be the family head and provider for the family whilst the wife (wives) is responsible for household chores. They conclude that on the whole, women are considered to be subordinate to men as the Yoruba social system gives men greater seniority and control than women. Yoruba husbands and wives in urban areas however tend to operate more as a team than they would in rural areas where gender roles are more rigidly defined (Aronson, 1980). Also, in contrast to the traditional Yoruba household where members of a descent line live together, in urban areas, Yoruba family types are now modified and consist of the nuclear family, the polygynous family and the modified extended families, all of which could include house help and foster children (Zeitlin et al, 1995).

Yoruba and Igbo culture and history is extensive and this section therefore cannot claim to have fully explored it. The purpose of this section is basically to shed light on these cultures and how they inform gender relations. It also sets the stage for understanding Igbo and Yoruba men and women adaptation processes in their new social and economic environment in South Africa.

### **2.3.3 International Migration from Nigeria**

Nigeria is a key player in African migration both within and outside the continent. It is becoming increasingly involved in international migration to Europe, the Gulf countries and South Africa (De Haas, 2006). International migration from Nigeria to South Africa, however, cannot be well examined without looking at the history of international migration from Nigeria. According to Afolayan et al (2008), the history of international migration from Nigeria should be best examined within the following three main eras: pre-independence, independence and post-independence era, as the migration process change over space, scale, direction, category of movers and reasons for moving among others.

Afolayan et al (2008) claims that international migration from Nigeria started even before the colonization of Nigeria as legitimate trading, nomadic herding of livestock and pilgrimage to religious places in the Arabian Peninsula brought about diverse human mobility across borders of existing kingdoms. The cross Atlantic slave trade also contributed to a ‘truly international migration par excellence across the ocean to an entirely new place’, dislodging thousands of people across the Yoruba and Hausa Fulani Kingdoms’ (Afolayan et al, 2008:9).

During the colonial period and shortly after independence, a large number of Nigerians immigrated to other countries. Nigerian workers went to work on rail lines in the Tema-Takoradi area of the Gold coast and the Cotonou-Paraku in Dahomey and after the completion of the rail lines, some left for Ivory Coast (Adegbola, 1972; Afolayan, 1994; Afolayan, 1998). International migration from Nigeria was mostly to other West African countries, though a few Nigerians went to Britain for educational pursuits (Afolayan et al, 2008). The Biafra war in 1967 also resulted in large scale migration of Igbos to various countries. As Afolayan et al (2008) observe, the Biafra war between 1967 and 1970 led to massive displacement of people in the northern part of Nigeria to the south-eastern and south western parts as well as to other countries such as the Republic of Benin and the islands of Sao Tome and Principe.

There was increased migration of Nigerians to diversified destinations during the post-colonial era. According to the Labour Migration Policy of Nigeria (2010), unfavourable socio-economic conditions and high unemployment rates led to increased emigration from Nigeria, especially among young, educated persons in search of employment opportunities within and outside the continent. Adepoju (2005) asserts that the migration of professional

Nigerians increased after the early 1980s because of the declining political and economic situation in the country and additionally, post-apartheid South Africa attracted some of these highly skilled Nigerian professionals to staff their universities and other sectors. The Labour Migration Policy of Nigeria (2010) states that by 2009, over five million Nigerians were living abroad, half of them in sub-Saharan Africa. The Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo ethnic groups constitute the bulk of Nigerian international migrants but whilst the Yoruba and Igbo tend to migrate to Europe, the Hausas who are predominantly Moslem favour the Gulf States (De Haas, 2006). According to the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty, it is estimated that 1,041,284 Nigerian nationals live abroad (DRC, 2007).

Obiala and Meseckaite (2008) identify the following five factors as being responsible for present day migration of Nigerians to other countries: poverty, lack of safety, education, corruption and unemployment. As such, Nigerians are increasingly migrating to African countries such as Ghana, Cameroon, Gabon, Botswana and South Africa (Adepoju, 2000a, 2000b). According to Afolayan et al (2008), the top ten countries that Nigerian migrants moved to were Sudan, followed by the United States, Great Britain, Cameroon, Ghana, Niger, Germany, Burkina Faso and Guinea. In more recent times, Nigerians have been migrating to more diversified destinations within Africa such as South Africa, Botswana and Gabon (Adepoju, 2000) and distant places like China in Asia. Haugen's (2012) article on Nigerians in China demonstrates the high mobility of Nigerians.

For Nigerians to migrate to these countries, it is envisaged that they have certain 'pull' factors which make them more attractive than Nigeria. Economic opportunity in South Africa for instance is a pull factor. South Africa is now ranked as one of the major destinations for migrants from various African countries amongst which are Nigerian migrants (Haas, 2006). Adepoju (2004b) argues that skilled Nigerian professionals have found South Africa's booming economy as a convenient alternative to Europe, the United States and the Gulf states. According to Morris (1998), Nigerians who migrated to South Africa before 1993 came to work or study and most of them were young and single males. The number of Nigerian migrants to South Africa steadily increased during and after the 1990s due to continuous religious crises, high rate of unemployment, political instability and insecurity in the country (Adeagbo, 2011b). In their examination of Statistics South Africa Census data and other immigration data on Nigerian immigrants in South Africa, Segatti et al (2012) in

Adeagbo (2013) reported that approximately 36,000 Nigerians entered South Africa annually between the year 2004 and 2010. Nigerians can now be found in various areas of South Africa including Durban. According to Maharaj and Moodley (2002), the South African city of Durban has a favourable economic environment as well as relative tolerance toward foreigners which makes it a popular destination for migrants. As such, many African migrants, including Nigerian migrants have been drawn towards the city, the majority of which are young males (Maharaj and Moodley, 2002).

Isike and Isike (2012) observe that Nigerians living in South Africa have stimulated ordinary South Africans and other African migrants through their clothing, food, music and movies into taking an interest in Nigerians and their culture. Some Nigerian men have even gone ahead to inter marry with South Africa women and Adeagbo (2013) has attempted to document their experiences

## **2.4 Gender**

### **2.4.1 The Construction of Gender**

As gender is an integral part of the migration process and the main thrust of this study is to examine the gendered lives of Nigerian migrants, it will be fitting to provide literature review on the gender concept and relevant gender issues. Gender is defined by the Food and Agricultural Organisation as the perceptual and material relations between men and women which are not determined biologically but are constructed socially (FAO, 1997). It further states that gender is a central organizing principle of society which often governs the processes of production, reproduction, consumption and distribution. Feminist theory posits that gender is a matrix of identities, behaviours and power relationships that are constructed by the culture of a society (Boyd and Grieco, 2003). In most societies, there are differences and inequalities between men and women in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources as well as decision making opportunities (UN, 2000). According to Garrett (1987), being born as a male or a female is of major consequences for all aspects of one's life, no matter what society one is born into.

Social constructionists argue that gender is an organizing principle of social orders that divide people into two major categories namely, men and women and as such they are expected to be different, resulting in the justification to treat them differently as they would have become different (Lorber, 2008). Lorber (2008) also argues that throughout our lives we do a

gendered dance and through the dance we are gendered. These social processes, she observes, reflect and sustain the gendering of all the institutions of society. According to West and Zimmerman (1987), these social processes are carried out without thinking and because we are gendered we do gender and doing gender constructs our behaviour, identities, work and family lives. Lorber (2008) asserts that the concept of gender as a social construct has two main themes. Firstly, gender is a process whereby people construct gender for themselves and those they interact with by performing or doing gender. The second theme is that gender is a structure, regime or institution wherein gender divisions and the gendered organization of social worlds are seen as iron cages that allow for little resistance or rebellion. These two themes as Lorber (2008) argues, complement each other in that processes create and maintain structures but at the same time are in conflict as structuration delimits process. For feminist theorists, gender is a constitutive relation in the symbolic construction of the society based on the sexualised division of roles between men and women in the family (Halkias, 2004, Yuval-Davis, 1997).

Various theories have been advanced over the years to explain the development and construction of gender in children. Gilligan (1982) argues that the core of gender identity development rests with the mother child relationship whereby the female child connects and finds gender with the mother, whilst the male child finds identity by separating himself from his female caregiver. This is implicit in the psychoanalytical theory which posits that on discovery of the genital organ differences between men and women, children then identify with and learn from the same sex parent (Bem, 1983). The social learning theory takes a different view. This theory advanced by Bandura (1997) posits that people learn from one another through imitation, modelling and observation. As such, children learn from observing and modelling their care providers (Bem, 1983). Similarly, Mischel (1996) argues that in terms of the social learning theory, children learn gender related behaviour from their social contacts primarily their peers and parents.

In opposition to this theory, Kohlberg (1996) asserts that as children mature, they gain understanding of gender roles and social identity without external reinforcement and as such children socialise themselves into feminine or masculine identities as they progress through stages of mental ability. This can be viewed as the cognitive development theory developed by Jean Piaget (1936) which advances the view that the child is the primary agent of his/her own sex role socialization. The gender schema theory is a blend of the social learning theory and the cognitive development theory in that it proposes that sex typing by children is a result

of the child's cognitive process and is also derived from the sex differentiated practices of the social community (Bem, 1983). These theories all point to the fact that gender is not only socially constructed but as Chodrow (2005) observes, it is also a personal and cultural construction.

#### **2.4.2 Gender and Culture**

The concept of culture is very vital in the construction of gender. Although society varies, they are all organized on the basis of gender differences between men and women and this creates the link between culture and gender. Expectations about attributes and behaviours appropriate to men and women and about the relations between them (gender) are shaped by culture (Government of Canada, 2001). Gender identities and gender relations are key aspects of culture because they shape the way daily life is lived in the family, in the community and the workplace (Government of Canada, 2001). Yoburg (1974) defines gender identity as an individual's image of the self as a male or female and is convicted what membership in that group implies. This definition is similar to that of the American Psychological Association (2006) which defines gender identity as one's sense of oneself as male, female or transgender. Katz (1986) however, states that although gender identity could basically be defined as an individual's experience of being masculine or feminine, it is a concept that is hard to precisely define as it is difficult to assess another person's internal experience. Like gender identity, gender relation is also difficult to define. In simple terms, gender relation is the relation of power between men and women but it is more complex than that (Argawal, 1997). It is complex because it embodies both material and ideological perceptions about men and women which are revealed not only in the division of labour and resources between men and women but also in ideas and representations (Argawal, 1997). This complex nature of gender relations is re-echoed in Flax's (1987: 628) assertion that 'gender relations is a category meant to capture a complex set of social relations to refer to a changing set of historically variable social processes'. Gender relations therefore are complex and unstable processes and a study of it entails analysing gender both as a thought construct or category and as a social relation (Flax, 1987). As gender relations and identity are key aspects of culture, it is evident that gender and culture are intertwined and therefore impossible to discuss or explain gender issues without alluding to culture. What then is culture?

Smith (2000) argues that culture can be a slippery and even chaotic concept and that it has several meanings, connotations and uses. Barker (2002) defines culture as an assemblage of imaginings and meanings that are generated by a given social group and this group may be formed around a broad gradient of human communities, activities and purposes. The most popular definition and interpretation of culture, however, is the one below which was adopted at the World Conference on Cultural Policies in Mexico in 1982:

Culture is the whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value system, traditions and belief (World Conference on Cultural Policies, Mexico, 1982).

According to Williams (1961 in Smith 2000), there are three ways of thinking about culture. Thus, culture can be conceived of firstly as the ideal which is the embodiment of perfect and the universal values, secondly, culture as documentary in which human thought, language, form, convention and experience are recorded and thirdly culture can be conceived of as social, as way of life whereby the structure of feeling of a social group is expressed. Barker (2002) posits that the central concept of culture does not represent an entity in an independent object world but is best thought of as a mobile signifier that enables a series of different ways of talking about human activity which stresses divergent use and purposes. In light of this, it is understandable that Sarte (1967) refers to culture as a product of man through which he projects and recognizes himself. Culture, like gender, is not biological as it is determined by society. Gender functions as an organizing principle for society because of the cultural meanings given to being male or female (Government of Canada, 2001). When gender is culturally constructed, the conception of gender can either be changed or reconstructed (Ivy and Backlund, 1994). Culture and gender are not static and can change over time.

#### **2.4. 3 Engendering Migration**

Like gender and culture, which can change over time, migration studies have also undergone change over the years. Male migrants were the focus in earlier migration studies. This is because of the traditional assumption that international migrants largely consists of male workers and that women migrate only to join their husbands abroad (DeLaet, 1992). As such, earlier studies focused exclusively on male migrants whilst women were presumed to play passive roles as companions (Pessar and Mahler, 2001). Surdarkasa (1977), for instance, argues in her study of West African female migrants that international labour migration was

male dominated and that the majority of female international migrants were married. Early migration studies also focused on economics whereby men were seen as the main economic players and women as passive followers (IOM, 2004). According to Tickner (1992), most scholarship in international relations neglected the lived experiences and viewpoints of women, and as a result reflects a masculine bias which provided an incomplete and inaccurate representation of global politics. As Remennick (1999) claims, the experiences faced by male and female migrants are as different as they are in other life contexts. Migration scholars, therefore, needed to make women visible in order to enhance the understanding of the causes of international migration (Kelson and DeLaet, 1999).

The realisation that women do not only migrate as passive companions to their migrant husbands and that their migration experiences differed from those of men later changed this male bias in migration studies. Women migrants were brought into the limelight and one of the commitments made in the gender mainstreaming policy of the International Organisation of Migration in 1995 was to 'ensure that the particular needs of all migrant women are identified, taken into consideration and addressed by their projects and services'.

Migration studies started revealing that women can be and often are the principal movers and applicants in the migration of their families, especially among the highly skilled (Raghuram, 2004). They are not always dependants or refugees/asylum seekers, beyond having been primary movers historically in feminised, care oriented occupations such as nurses and domestic workers (Yeates, 2004a). African women were also shown to be participating actively in migration, challenging the traditional pattern where migration used to be male dominated, long distance and long term and women only migrated to join their spouse or other family members (Adepoju, 2004b, Adepoju, 2006c). According to Adepoju (2006c), African women were now migrating independently to fulfil their economic needs and thus both men and women participated in migration as a family survival strategy. The need to bring out the experiences of female migrants, however, led to the unfortunate consequences of men's experiences being under researched (Pessar and Mahler, 2001).

Focusing on one sex, therefore, was not enough and some scholars such as Grasmuck and Pessar (1991) called for gender to be a theoretical concept in migration studies. Peterson and Runyan (1993) argue that a gender sensitive lens is necessary to provide a more complete and accurate portrayal of world politics given the fact that the decisions to migrate have gender implications. This was why Hondagneu-Sotello (1994), one of the pioneers of bringing



gender into migration, argues that gender organises migration and that it was necessary to examine how gender relations facilitate men and women's migration and settlement. As a result of such arguments, there was a shift towards engendering migration. A working definition of engendering migration is the inclusion of gender in migration studies. Engendering migration involves treating gender as a central organising principle of migration and bringing gender to the foreground of migration studies (Pessar, 1999). She adds that when gender is brought in, other significant topics emerge and that migration studies have benefitted greatly from the inclusion of gender.

A focus on gender, according to Palmary et al (2010), illuminates accounts and positions of both women and men that would otherwise have remained invisible. Gender is vital in migration as it shapes the particular contours of the process as well as the diverse experiences particular to people situated in different locations along social hierarchies (Cheng, 1999). Muthuki (2010) argues that gender is a core principle within the migration process in that it both facilitates and/or constrains movement and related processes such as adaptation to the new country, continued contact with the home country and possible return. Gender is very important in migration studies and this is why Indra (1999) lamented the lack of attention to gender in migration. However, there is now a gradual appearance of gender in migration writings in contemporary times (cf. Anthias and Lazaridis, 2000, Jolly 2005). The importance of gender in migration is becoming increasingly visible. The significance of gender in migration can be seen in the fact that the IOM adopted a gender mainstreaming policy in 1995 and has claimed that gender is an important factor in shaping the experience of migrants and it is more important than their country of origin or destination, their age, class or culture.

#### **2.4.4 Transnational Migration and its Engendering**

According to Castles (2002b), migrants in past times chose between permanent migration and temporary labour migration in their host country. They can now choose a third option which is transnationalism (Castles, 2002b). Basch et al (1994:6) define transnationalism as 'the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement'. This definition is also re-echoed by Glick Schiller et al (1995). As such, even though migrants move across international borders, and settle in a new country, they maintain ongoing social connections with their country of origin (Glick Schiller and Fouron, 1999). Technology has enabled migrants and their families to

have double loyalties, to travel back and forth, to relate to people, and to work or do business simultaneously in distant places (De Haas, 2005). Rapid improvement in the technologies of transport and communication has made it easier for migrants to maintain close links with their areas of origin which in turn facilitates the growth of repeated mobility (Castle and Miller, 2003). As a result, some scholars maintain that earlier transnational practices are different from present day practices (Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt, 1999). Thus, whereas Basch et al (1994) conceive of transnationalism as the process whereby migrants take on a multiplicity of identities that are a combination of both country of origin and host country, Levitt and Schiller (2004) conceive of transnationalism as taking place within fluid social spaces. Morawska (2007:153) suggests that present-day transnationalism encompasses a much greater diversification of form and content.

Glick Schiller et al (1992) refer to immigrants who develop and maintain multiple relations that spans borders as transmigrants. Bhabha (1990) and Soja (1996) describe transnational migrants or transmigrants as deterritorialized, unbounded social actors functioning in a space between nation states, an imaginary third space. Smith and Guarnizo (1998) are, however, critical of this assertion as it implies total disconnection from local constraints and social moorings. Transnationals are now regarded as agents for development and finance and their knowledge and skills should be mobilized (Van Naerssen et al, 2008). Migrant communities are said to be transnational when the migrants maintain extensive economic, cultural and social links between their country of origin and the destination country to the extent that they can be regarded as citizens of both such as Mexican immigrants in the United States (Goldring, 1998). Van Naerssen et al (2008) argue that studies on transnationalism have clarified that international migration entails the development and maintenance of multifarious economic and non-economic relationship between home and host country. These authors further argue that with migrants trying to reproduce their socio cultural practices abroad, an extended international market is formed that fosters the development of migrant businesses in both the country of origin and destination. Mahler (1998) avers that most of the literature on transnationalism is empowering, democratic and liberating, and suggests that this image needs to be tested consistently.

Mahler and Pessar (1996) introduced gender into transnational studies leading to the development of the gender geographies of power framework to examine gender across transnational spaces. The inclusion of gender in transnational studies resulted in

transnationalism becoming an engendered concept. As Dannecker (2005) observes, transnational practices and activities are not gender neutral as they are influenced by gender relations in the home country as well as that in the migrant community abroad. George (2005), however, argues that overall, attempts to theorize the effects of gender in migration do not give enough attention to the important ways in which the ongoing connections to the native country shape the discourses and practices of immigrants and adds that transnational connections can reproduce and strengthen existing hierarchies and tie migrants to a sending community with its attendant shared beliefs and practices.

#### **2.4.5 Insights into Gender and Migration in South Africa**

It is evident in the migration patterns to South Africa from other Southern African countries that men and women have different access to power and resources and thus face different opportunities and constraints in their mobility (cf. Bozzoli, 1993; Murray, 1981). However, Bozzoli (1993) argues that although migration between Southern African countries and South Africa has been ongoing, the link between this and gender in the region is poorly understood. Some efforts have, however, been made to explore the gender dimensions in migration to South Africa. Chant (1992), for instance, makes the following gender observations about migration to South Africa:

- (a) Migration to South Africa is still heavily male biased with a far lower incidence of migration among female respondents.
- (b) Married older women tend to have migration experience than the young single ones as opposed to men who come from a wider group age and marital statuses.
- (c) Female migrants also tend to be better educated than their male counterparts.
- (d) Men and women migrate to South Africa for different reasons.
- (e) Women migrants are more exposed than men to extreme vulnerability especially those who travel.

According to Calavita (2006), the laws which structure much of the state's response to migration evoke the social constructions of masculinity and femininity. Dodson and Crush (2006) argue that the present South African Immigration Act, though gender neutral in its terminology and having no explicit gender discrimination, embodies a subtle form of gender discrimination that favours men. This led them to conclude that the South African Immigration policy is a case of 'state masculinism'.

Despite the Act's tendency to favour men, it does have gender related problems for both male and female migrants especially as immigration officers are also influenced by gender notions (Dodson and Crush, 2006). For instance, Palmary (2003) observes that asylum officers are affected by gender notions and this influences their response to a situation. There is a tendency, for instance, to dismiss gendered claims as personal and common and, therefore, less serious (Middleton, 2010). In South Africa, undocumented migrants find it hard to access the asylum system and lodge claims (cf. CORMSA, 2009) and a way out is to cohabit with the locals in the hope of eventually obtaining South African identity documents. However, female migrants cohabiting with local South African men are more prone to abuses and domestic violence than their male counterparts as they are usually caught in an unequal power situation (Emerson 1981). In fact, some migrant women have little or no decision making power regarding various aspects of their lives (Pulerwitz et al, 2000). Notably, despite substantial evidence on gender being an integral part of migration, most migration-related policies and regulations are not influenced by gender and this can have consequences for women in particular (IOM, 2004). For instance, when a receiving country view migrant women as dependent and the men as independent, there is a tendency for the migration policy to place women in a family role rather than a market role and this can reinforce the vulnerability of migrant women (Boyd and Grieco, 2003). The following UN report shows how gender ideologies influence migration laws:

Throughout the world, the formulation of migration laws and regulations is influenced by prevailing conceptions of the family and of the roles that different family members ought to play. Women as spouses, daughters are traditionally assumed to have primarily non-economic roles under the assumptions that their husbands as or fathers are responsible for satisfying the family's economic needs. These perceptions are translated into immigration regulations that in some circumstances, can actually favour female migration by facilitating the admission of dependants. On the other hand, in countries that either restrict or discourage family reunification, or which admit mainly migrant workers, the migration of women will tend to be smaller than men (United Nations, 1994, p.69).

#### **2.4.6 Case Studies of Gender Challenges and Changes in the Migration Site**

A good example of how the migration site challenges and changes existing gender relations can be seen in Pellow's (2003) article on the architecture of female seclusion in West Africa,

with particular reference to the SabonZongo community in Accra, Ghana. This community, according to the above author, comprises migrant Muslim Hausas from Northern Nigeria who practised 'kulle' (wife seclusion). 'Kulle' refers to the practise of married women keeping to their domestic compound (Robson, 2000:183). Their original houses built in SabonZonga followed the Kano (Northern Nigeria) archetype design to enable the practise of 'kulle'. The domestic buildings were arranged as rooms around a central open space surrounded by a high wall and the house is entered through an entrance hut (zaure) with offset entries that obstruct direct view to the house (Robson, 2000). However, although the houses were built to enable the practice, 'kulle' is no longer practised. Pellow (2003) puts this down to the social and economic change in the migration site, which in turn has culminated in the social and spatial behaviours that make 'doing 'kulle' impossible. Operating in a new geographical space as can be seen resulted in the migrants changing their previous gender space divide.

Ojong's (2009) study on *Gendered spaces: Men in Women's Places*, gives an account of how gender roles are renegotiated and redefined in migration situations. She focuses on Ghanaians in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa and explores how Ghanaian men have now entered the hairdressing industry which is mostly the domain of women in Ghana. In Ghana, men and women are socialised about their roles in society and there is a tendency to strictly adhere to it. However, upon migration and especially when there is a lack of employment opportunities, Ghanaian men are not averse to taking on 'female roles and occupations' in this case hair dressing. Survival becomes the most important factor and culture and male ego are given a back seat. The number of Ghanaian men in the hairdressing industry in KwaZulu-Natal has steadily increased and there has been a renegotiation of the once gendered hair dressing space. Also, since most Ghanaian females are heavily involved in the hair dressing industry, they have become financially strong and are able to provide for themselves and their families. As such, this group of Ghanaian women are no longer subordinate to their husbands in terms of earning capacity and the men lose their traditional role to provide for their families.

In her article on Chilean Refugee Women, Eastmond (1993) examines the gender changing patterns of refugee Chilean women and men. A military coup in 1973 led to the imprisonment of Chilean left men and subsequently their exile. While their husbands were in prison in Chile, the women learnt to be independent and in exile in the United States of America (USA), they were unwilling to revert to dependency on their men folk. The new skills acquired by the Chilean women refugees when they entered the job market in the USA

also increased the women's self-confidence and domestic authority. The gender relations between the men and women including the traditional division of labour gradually altered. Men were compelled to share domestic duties with their working wives. These changes placed a heavy strain on many marriages resulting in domestic quarrels, violence and divorce in some cases. Notably, being in a new society provided alternative models of gender relations and women began to question traditional male privileges.

However, it is not always the case that gender patterns are changed by migration or yield positive gains for women. Abdulrahim (1993) examines the definition and transformation of gender relations among Palestinians in West Berlin by arguing that gender and social relations are historically specific. They are, she argues, determined by social, economic, class, political, legal and ideological factors as well as cultural and religious ones. Palestinian women in Berlin, she observes, were mostly confined to the private and domestic sphere and social and gender relations especially for women were regulated.

Phizacklea (1983:2) argues that 'migration can lead to a loss or gain in the status of women and this varies according to the immigrant context and cultural background'. In some situations, new economic and social responsibilities have been the basis for a woman's increasing importance within the family whilst in others her role in the family has been undermined (Phizacklea, 1983). On the whole, migration to some extent can alter gender relations.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

When searching for literature that is relevant to this thesis topic, I realised that there is a scarcity of scholarly works that focuses solely on Nigerian migrants in South Africa in general and Durban in particular. Most of the research that includes this group of migrants focuses on African migrants as a group and not particularly on Nigerians (cf. Isike and Isike, 2012; Matshine, 2011; Morris, 1998). The few studies that focus on Nigerian migrants in South Africa are generally not gender grounded. Examples of such works are Singh and Saussi (2010) study on voluntary and remittances amongst Durban based Nigerians and Adeagbo (2011a) study on social support as a panacea for mental illness amongst Nigerian immigrants in Braamfontein in Johannesburg. Even those that have gender dimensions like Adeagbo's (2013) study on intermarriage between Nigerian male migrants and South African women are not strictly examined under a gender lens. There is, therefore, a dearth on gender

and migration studies on Nigerian migrants in South Africa as a whole and this study will hopefully help to fill in the gap. Also, most migration studies on African migrants in South Africa lack a gender perspective. Examples of such studies are *Pragmatic and symbolic negotiation of Home for African migrants in South Africa* (Ojong, 2012), *Caught between two worlds: The renegotiation of identity among Cameroonian migrants in Durban* (Fomunyan, 2012) and *Food and Maintaining identity for migrants: Sierra Leone migrants in Durban* (Naidu and Nzuza, 2013). As such, this study will help to fill in this gap on studies of African migrants in South Africa (2.4.7)

The literature review section has presented relevant literature that will assist in a better understanding of the study. As stated in the introduction, the literature review drew from relevant works from a variety of sources and it spans from early writings to the most recent in order to provide insight into how the understanding of concepts and issues change over time and the views of different authors. The research methods and methodologies are discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODS, METHODOLOGIES AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methods and methodologies utilised in this study as well as the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study. It also explains the sampling procedure used, outlines the profiles of the participants and highlights the gender dynamics during the data collection process.

#### **3.2 Research Methodology**

Research is a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a topic (Kothari, 2004). Through research, social scientists are able to study social relationships and seek answers to social problems. For a research to be undertaken, it should have a research methodology and research method(s). Although research methodology and research methods differ, they are at times used interchangeably. According to Kothari (2004), research methods refer to those methods researchers use in research operations whilst methodology is seen as the science of studying how research is done scientifically. In other words, the methods used by a researcher to study research problems are known as research methods and research methodology is the systematic way to solve a research problem. There are two main research methodologies and these are quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative research methodology was used in this study.

Qualitative research emphasizes the importance of interpretation and observation in the social world (Snape and Spencer, 2003). It allows researchers to get to the inner experiences of the participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture and to discover rather than test variables (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Redman and Mory (1923) cited in Kothari (2004) states that qualitative research is specifically important in studies that aim to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour. In light of the above explanations on qualitative studies, it was deemed the most suited methodology for this study as it allows for an in depth understanding of the perspectives of the study population and the context in which they live.



There are three major dimensions in a research process and these are ontology, epistemology and methodology and they constitute what is known as a research paradigm (Terreblanche and Durrhein, 1998). These authors also add that paradigms are an analytic strategy for integrating structure with process and can be seen as a tool for helping the researcher to identify contextual factors and link them with process. Olson, Ludwick and Dunlop (1992) define paradigms as patterns, structures and framework or systems of scientific and academic ideas, values and assumptions. Research paradigms differ but the one closely associated with qualitative research is the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm focuses on the holistic perspectives of persons and environments and is based on methodological approaches that provide an opportunity for the voice, concerns and practises of research assistants to be heard (Weaver and Olson, 2006). According to Hennick et al (2011), the interpretative paradigm recognizes that reality is socially constructed as people's experiences occur within social, cultural, historical or personal contexts. The interpretative approach highlights the inherent subjectivity of human beings both as study participants and researchers and acknowledges that the background, position or emotions of a researcher are an integral part of processing the data (Hennick et al, 2011). Denzin (1998:32) view 'interpretation as a productive process that sets forth the multiple meanings of an event, object, experience or text and it transforms, illuminates and throws light on experience'. This study, being a qualitative one was therefore placed within an interpretivist paradigm. As the interpretivist paradigm allows researchers to be co-creators of knowledge (Henning et al, 2004), I brought in my own positioning as an African migrant woman and a post graduate gender studies student to help shape the study. As an African migrant woman, my social world is similar to that of my research participants and this not only gave me a better insight into their gendered lives, but also put me in good stead to make meaning and contribute to the study.

As a result of the use of the interpretivist method, I was able to engage in self-reflexivity to contribute to this study. As Finlay and Gouch (2003) assert, researchers are able through reflexivity to reflect on their subjectivity, on how their social background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour impact on the research process. Reflexivity is a continual consideration of the ways in which the researcher's social identity and values affect the data gathered and a picture of the social world produced (Reay 1996, pp.59-60). Gill and Maclean (2002) observes that fieldwork is a relational process and therefore a reflexive approach is not only desirable but also necessary. I, therefore, made use of self-reflexivity in this study. Coming from the same region in Africa with these migrants and sharing certain religious,

cultural and linguistic aspects as well as the same migration space, I was in essence in a similar position as them. Like them, I find myself in a different gender regime where I had to contend with gender challenges. I was, therefore, better placed to engage with my subjectivity to structure my study. Being a gender studies student also informed me in framing my study within a gender-based framework.

As culture is a key aspect that was explored in making sense of the experiences of the migrants, this research has also been placed within a cultural studies approach that approaches research subjects in a holistic manner. As Barker (2002) notes, cultural studies is an important starting point in seeking to understand the ways in which meaning is generated and is produced through a variety of beliefs, practises, institutions and social structures. Cultural studies is best summed up by Bennett (1998:28) as concerned with all ‘those practices, institutions and systems of classifications through which these are inculcated in a population’s particular values, beliefs, competencies, routines of life and habitual forms of conduct’. Cultural studies seek to redescribe the social and cultural spheres in terms of specific values and hope for consequences (Barker, 2002). There are various methodological methods employed in cultural studies including ethnographic methods such as participant observation and interviews. As has been mentioned earlier on, these methods were utilized in this study.

### **3.3 Ethnography as a Research Method**

An ethnographic research method was employed in this study. Ethnography assumes that all human behaviour is intentional and observable and research should, therefore, be oriented towards understanding the reasoning behind people’s actions (Maree, 2007). Participant observation is the method most commonly used in ethnographic research but ethnographic research can sometimes be done by other methods such as semi-structured interviews or documents. Participant observation and in depth interviews were the two main ethnographic methods utilised in this research. According to Sarantakos (2005), ethnographic research is usually descriptive or critical and the method used usually depends on the underlying paradigm. For instance, if a research is based on an *interpretative* paradigm, critical ethnographic research is used as it aims at understanding the dynamics of socio cultural systems as well as how people interpret their world. As this study was based on an interpretative paradigm, *critical ethnographic research* was employed. Critical ethnographic research offers space to researchers to bring in reflexivity in their work.

### **3.4 Methods of Data Collection**

#### **In-depth Interviews**

In-depth interview is best described as a meaning making partnership between interviewers and their respondents, notably, in-depth interviews are special kinds of knowledge producing conversations (Hesse-Biber and Leary, 2006). I engaged in a one to one interview with the participants, using a semi-structured interview guide as it gives allowance for more questions to be created during the interviews and the flexibility to discuss issues. Prior to this, a request for interview was made to the participants and a time and venue was agreed upon. Participants were asked to sign an informed consent that spells out the terms of the interview. The interview was conducted mostly in English as it is the medium people from different backgrounds communicate with in South Africa. However, because I spoke and understood ‘Nigerian ‘Pidgin’<sup>2</sup> I was able to communicate in this language with some of the participants. I had earlier ensured though, that participants recruited have a basic command of the English language, by having an informal conversation with them prior to the interviews. I also established a good rapport with them which gave me the advantage to probe easily to elicit information. Open ended questions were used to gain information as it enabled the participants to express themselves more. It is notable that open-ended questions give room for reflection and this allowed the participants to give detailed accounts. A recorder was used for those who gave permission for it to be used during the interview. Some of the respondents did not like the use of a recorder and so detailed notes were taken in a fieldwork notebook. The duration of the interviews differed depending on the narrative ability of the research participant and they ranged from thirty minutes to an hour. The interviews were transcribed and portions of it were used as excerpts. The real names of the participants were not used to ensure anonymity and confidentiality and so pseudonyms were used instead. This is in line with research ethics. In-depth interview was important in this study as it encouraged the participants to share their perceptions and give detailed accounts of their experiences. In depth interview, however, can be limiting. At times, people are unable to articulate their experiences well, whilst others simply forget to mention important things. As a result, some important information does not get revealed. This was why I also decided to engage in participant observation to be able to get information that the interviews were not able to give.

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<sup>2</sup>Nigerian pidgin is a simplified version of English and it is the lingua franca of Nigeria

## **Participant Observation**

Spradly (1980: 7) refers to participant observation as ‘an immersion and participation into the daily activities and interactions of a group’. The aim is to allow deeper penetration and immersion into the life and world of the participants. I participated in social, religious and family gatherings of the migrants as it provided me with the opportunity to understand and make sense of the gendered dimensions in their lives. During these gatherings, I observed the migrants’ behaviour, expressions and interaction, as well as their social setting. As Hennick et al (2011) argue, observation is best carried out by watching, listening, questioning and recording people’s behaviour, expressions and interactions and noting the social setting, location or context in which people are situated. Similarly, Mays and Pope (1995) describes observational methods as the systematic detailed observation of behaviour and talk as well as watching and recording what people do and say. Observation is important as it can show something without the filtering effects of language (Rugg and Patre, 2007). It provides an avenue into seeing things that might never have been mentioned in interview especially familiar everyday activities. Observation puts researchers’ right where the action is, that is, in a place where they can see what is going on (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Sustained contact with respondents is important because during this time, the researcher gains trust and establish a degree of rapport with the research participants. All observations of the migrants were recorded in field notes which were collated and analysed for content.

Participant observation has one drawback though in that some researchers may try to give their own meaning to the interactions. However, it has more positives than negatives. Finlay (2002:532) views it as a valuable tool to do the following:

- (a) to examine the impact of the position, perspective and presence of the researcher.
- (b) promotes rich insight through examining personal responses and interpersonal dynamics.
- (c) empower others by opening a more radical consciousness.
- (d) evaluate the research process, method and outcomes, and
- (e) enable public scrutiny of the integrity of the researches through offering a methodological log of research designs.

Participant observation was, therefore, important in this study as it provided insight into the gendered lives of the migrants as well as information on what the interviews were not able to

capture. Using the running record method, observations were recorded in field notes which were collated and analysed for content. Running records, according to Maree (2007), are detailed continuous or sequential accounts of what is observed and focus on the action as well as the situation.

### **3.5 Selection of Sample Population**

A non-probability sampling method was used in this research. Marshall (1996) argues that a non-probability sample is suitable for qualitative research because it is aimed at deeper understanding of complex human issues rather than a generalisation of results. The non-probability sampling method used in this research is snowball sampling and is also known as chain sampling as it involves asking a participant or a key informant to refer to the researcher, anyone else who meets the same criteria. The number of persons recruited, therefore, increased with each new person. Brink (1996) views snowball sampling as a non-probability method used when the desired sample is rare. In this case, however, it was used not because the sample was rare, but because it was easier to locate people likely to participate in this research. As Muthuki (2010) argues, the snowball method is useful for studies involving social networks and is, therefore, effective for people who are likely to be in contact with one another. This sampling technique, therefore, enabled me to select Nigerian migrants who were willing to participate in the study. One participant was purposefully selected, who in turn generated additional participants. This type of sampling method could also be referred to as purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling in which the researcher takes decisions about the individuals included in the sample which could range from specialist knowledge to willingness to participate in the research (Oliver, 2006). The use of purposive sampling in this research enabled the researcher to get participants that had the required knowledge and were willing to participate in the research. The participants were all Nigerians living in Durban, twenty one years and above and were able to communicate in basic English. These criteria were made known to each participant so that they could refer a suitable person. A drawback of this type of sampling though is that participants recommend each other. As a result, I ended up with participants who were all Christians and from only two Nigerian ethnic groups (Igbo and Yoruba). However, this could also be attributed to the fact that Nigerians in Durban were predominantly from the Yoruba and Igbo ethnic group and they were mainly Christians as well. Therefore, if any Nigerian ethnic group or religion was not included in this research

such as Hausas (a Nigerian ethnic group) or Muslims (religious group), it was not because of any deliberate decision on my part.

As the purpose of qualitative research is to gain a detailed understanding of a certain phenomenon, it requires only a small number of participants so that issues can be explored in detail. The number of participants recruited for this study was guided by a theoretical principle called saturation developed by Glasser and Strauss (1967). This is the point at which the information collected begins to repeat itself. To avoid this, a sample of twenty four Nigerian migrants was interviewed, comprising twelve males and twelve females for an equitable representation. Amongst this sample group, I identified and selected six key informants. Key informants, according to Bernard (1994), understand the kind of information the researcher needs and are amenable to providing the researcher with that information. The key informants provided me with relevant knowledge and insights about the research topic. I maintained a close relationship with them and always went back to them whenever I needed clarification on an issue. A profile of key informants is provided later in this chapter.

### **3.6 Theoretical framework**

A theoretical framework is an analytical and interpretative framework that helps the researcher make sense of what is going on in the social setting being studied and it provides a framework for the problems and questions to be addressed in the study (Mills 1993, in Anfara and Meertz, 2006). Anfara and Meertz (2006:xxvii) in turn define theoretical framework as ‘any empirical or quasi-empirical theory of social and/or psychological processes at a variety of levels that can be applied to the understanding of phenomena’. Different frameworks suggest different solutions to problems and each framework provides a set of concepts to be used in clarifying a problem (Parpart, 2000). Corbin and Strauss (2008) complement the above explanation by stating that a theoretical framework is a conceptual guide for choosing the concepts to be investigated, for suggesting research questions and for framing the finding. It can be used, according to the above authors, to complement, extend and verify the findings, and it can provide insight, direction and a useful list of initial concepts. Theory serves as an ‘orientation for gathering facts since it specifies the types of fact to be systematically observed’ (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995:23). The elements or variables of a theory are logically interrelated and if a relevant theory exists, hypothesis or research questions can be deduced upon particular relationships between these elements

(Kaniki, 2006). A variety of theories are espoused in this study. This is a deviation from the norm where one or two theories guide the whole study. This can be limiting as the selected theories might not complement, extend or verify the findings. Each chapter in this study is, therefore, framed within a framework(s) that best complements it. The different theories used in this study are gendered geographies of power, feminist post structuralism, Christian egalitarianism, social constructions of masculinity, social identity, patriarchy and Goffman's front stage and back stage theory.

### **3.6a Gendered Geographies of Power**

Mahler and Pessar (2001) developed the above framework to examine gender across transnational spaces. Before then, several scholars have also engaged with this framework (cf. Alicea, 1997; Glick et al, 1992; Goldring, 1996; Kyle, 1995). As Nigerian migrants in Durban are positioned in the transnational space and in a new gender regime with its own operative power, the gendered geographies of power framework was therefore, suitable to examine their gendered lives. This framework has the following four elements:

**1. Geographical Scales:** The geographical scales concept capture the understanding that gender operates on a multiple spatial, social and cultural scales such as the body, family, state and gender hegemonies across transnational spaces (Mahler and Pessar, 2001). The authors further argue that it is within these scales that gender relations and ideologies are reaffirmed or reconfigured. As such, gender is envisioned and practiced within and across different scales and transnational spaces. This concept assisted me in examining the migrants' participation in the transnational space between their home and host country and how this reinforced and challenged their perceptions of gender. As this concept also captures the fact that gender operates on a scale such as the family in the transnational space, it was useful in examining how gender operates in the context of the migrants family and household in both Nigeria and South Africa.

**2. Social Location:** Social position has a profound effect on the lives of people. According to Mahler and Pessar (2001), people are born into social locations that can confer on them certain advantages or disadvantages. Pessar and Mahler (2003) assert that in society, people are positioned within interconnected power hierarchies created through social stratifying factors such as politics, ethnicity, race, history, class and kinship. Pessar and Mahler further argue that these dimensions of identity also shape, discipline and position people and the ways they think and act. As a result, people, irrespective of their own efforts, are situated

within power hierarchies they have not constructed and it affects their access to resources and mobility across transnational spaces (Mahler and Pessar, 2001). However, social locations can and usually do shift over time. This concept enabled me to examine the gendered diversities of the migrants and how gender is constructed for them in their host country.

**3. Power Geometry:** The concept of power geometry was introduced by Massey (1994) and it refers to the types and degrees of agency people exert in relation to their social locations. Foucault (1980) describes power as a complex strategic situation in a given social setting. In their attempt to explain such terms as patriarchy, inequality, oppression and subordination, feminists have also had to grapple with this concept. Power is, therefore, a central aspect of gender relations (Lips, 1991) and it needs to be considered in any analysis of gender. Massey (1994) argues that people are placed in very distinct locations regarding access to and power over flows and interconnections between places and are, therefore, able to exert power over these forces and processes as well as being affected by them. They are also able to use agency to initiate, refine and transform their social locations (Massey, 1994). This concept was useful in examining how the migrants exercised agency in the migration site, especially in relation to the gender challenges they experienced.

**4. Imagination or Mind work:** Mahler and Pessar (2001) view agency as affected not only by extra-personal factors but also by quintessentially individual characteristics such as initiative. They also argue that social agency must include the role of cognitive processes, such as the imagination, as well as substantive agency. Most of what people do transnationally is influenced by imagining, planning and strategizing (Pessar and Mahler, 2001) and this social imaginary or mind work must be valued and factored into people's agency. This concept was useful in exploring the impact of the imagination in the lives of the migrants and the initiatives they took to transform their situation.

### **3.6b Feminist Post Structuralism**

Feminist post structuralism explores the ways women are treated in the world and attempt to break down barriers by identifying how societal influences have led to the *status quo* (Lop, 2011). Baxter (2003) argues that it best equips feminist researchers with the thinking to see through the 'ambiguities and confusions' of particular discursive contexts where females are located as simultaneously powerful and powerless. The Feminist Poststructuralist approach posits that subjectivities and hence identities are not given but are socially constructed in



discourse (Hall, 1996). This theory enhanced my understanding of male domination and female subordination and how this can be challenged, renegotiated or reinforced.

### **3.6c Social Construction of Masculinity Theory**

Clatterbaugh (1997) avers that the task of describing male reality or men masculinities is a difficult one as there are different forms of masculinities. The dominant form of masculinity, however, is 'hegemonic' and is used to refer to groups of men who legitimize and reproduce the social relations that generate their dominance (Donaldson, 1993). Hegemonic masculinity, according to Connell (1995), is the idealised form of masculinity at a given place and time. Courtenay (2000) views it as a gender construction that subordinates femininities as well as other forms of masculinity and it represents power and authority. This form of masculinity underpins some of the chapters in this study.

### **3.6d Christian Egalitarianism**

The theory of Christian egalitarianism posits that all people are equal before God and in Christ (cf. Jewett 1975; Miller 1979; Payne 2009; Stagg 1978; Webb 2001). Christian egalitarianism is, therefore, based on the understanding that men and women are created by their Creator to have no gender-based limitations of what functions or roles they can fulfil in the home, the church and the society (theopedia, n.d). This theory was useful in interrogating the issue of male dominance and female submission within a Christian perspective.

### **3.6e Patriarchy Theory**

Patriarchy refers to a universal political structure which privileges men at the expense of women (Dugbazah, 2012). In other words, men tend to occupy positions of dominance and exercise control over women (Dugbazah, 2012). Different groups of feminists have over the years engaged with this ideology in their search for an explanation of women's oppression and subordination (Beechey, 1979). According to Salaam (2003), patriarchy justifies the marginalization of women in different spheres of life such as education, economy, labor, market and the family. Since the theory of patriarchy addresses the real basis of the subordination of women and analyses the forms it assumes (Beechey, 1979), it provided an understanding into my attempt at understanding the male migrants' desire to hold on to their dominant position at all costs.

### **3.6f Social Identity Theory**

Tajfel and Turner (1979) developed the social identity theory and it is based on a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership. Hoggs and Abrams (1988) define it as a person's knowledge of belonging to a social category or group. It is argued that this is done through a process of self-categorisation and social comparison. According to Hogg and Vaughan (2002), social identity is the individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups and that group membership creates in-group self-categorisation and enhancement in ways that favour the in-group at the expense of the out-group. This theory was useful in examining the relation, tensions and interactions between the Nigerians and the South Africans.

### **3.6g Goffman's Front Stage and Back Stage Theory**

In his book: *The presentation of the self*, Goffman (1956) likens the social world to the theatre. Goffman used the imagery of the theatre to portray human social action and interaction and this is encapsulated in his dramaturgical framework which compares the various components of drama such as the front stage and back stage to people and happenings in everyday life (Crossman, n.d). According to Goffman (1956), the front stage is where the actor performs and adheres to conventions that have meaning to the audience, whilst in the back stage the actors get rid of the roles they played and be themselves. As such, in real life, on the one hand, people play a part when they are with other people or in certain places because they know they are being watched and judged. On the other hand, when they are not being observed, they act differently and even express aspects of themselves that other people might find unacceptable. This theory enabled me to examine the complexities inherent in the migrants' actions and interactions with different people.

### **3.7 Ethical Issues**

A research proposal and ethical clearance application, form was submitted to the Higher Degree Research Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal which was duly approved and approval was given to proceed with the study. The participants were also informed through an informed consent form about the nature of the study, what was expected of them and their rights as participants. These rights include withdrawal from the interview if they wish. As part of research ethics, the consent form also assured the participants of their confidentiality and anonymity at all times.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Corbin and Strauss (2008) define an analysis as a process of examining something in order to establish what it is and how it works. According to the above authors, this means examining a substance and its components in order to determine their properties and functions, then using the acquired knowledge to make inferences about the whole. To perform an analysis, a researcher can break apart a substance into its various components and examine those components in order to identify their properties and dimensions (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). According to Maree (2007), a qualitative data analysis aims to examine meaningful and symbolic contents of qualitative data. Furthermore, it also tries to establish how participants make meaning of a specific phenomenon (Maree, 2007).

The data from both participant observation and in-depth interview were transcribed, coded and analysed along established major themes. Recorded interviews were transcribed by typing them out verbatim. Attention was also paid to non-verbal expressions such as sighs, silence and laughter. The process of coding involved careful reading through the transcribed data and dividing it into meaningful segments and analytical units (Maree, 2007). I utilised a thematic analysis to analyse the data. Thematic analysis involves carefully reading through the data and categorising the data according to themes. I searched for themes I already had in mind but was, however, on the lookout for emergent (new) themes as well. Once no new themes could be identified, I proceeded in writing out my chapters which were sectioned according to the themes.

### **3.9 Profile of the Participants**

For purposes of easy identification, the migrants have been allocated a number each ranging from one (1) to twenty four (24).

#### **3.9a Women**

##### **Iyamide (1) (Key Informant)**

Iyamide relocated from Nigeria to South Africa to take up employment at an International Non-Governmental Organisation about seven years ago. She now lectures at a renowned university and is also a PhD student. Iyamide is in her thirties, from the Yoruba ethnic group and is married with two children. Iyamide's family was not quite happy initially when she decided to migrate to South Africa because she was single at that time and they did not like

the idea of her migrating alone. They finally relented when she became engaged before she left and promised to come back to marry and find a job for her partner in South Africa. She kept her promise and returned to Nigeria to get married and secured a job for her husband in South Africa. She now lives with her husband and two children in Durban.

### **Patience (2)**

Patience is fifty four years old and a nursing student. She came to South Africa five years ago to pursue a degree in nursing. She was a practising nurse at an established hospital in Nigeria and she is married with four children. Her move to South Africa did not go down well with her family who thought that it was very unbecoming for a married woman to leave her family and go and live somewhere else by herself. She is in constant contact with her family back home but has not yet decided what to do when she finishes her studies. She is a Christian and is from the Yoruba ethnic group.

### **Joy (3) (Key Informant)**

Joy is thirty years old and from the Igbo tribe. She migrated to South Africa on the invitation of her elder brothers four years ago. She was unemployed in Nigeria and her brothers decided that they would assist her to come to South Africa to study and that she would help them with housework in return. Once in South Africa, she enrolled as a nursing student. With financial backing from her brothers, she also opened a hairdressing salon. She is unmarried but has a Nigerian boyfriend. She socialises mostly with Nigerians and migrants from other parts of West Africa. She stays with her brothers and a male relative.

### **Ayodele (4)**

Ayodele is thirty two years old and a sales assistant at a cell phone accessories shop. She used to be a hairdresser in Nigeria. She is married (Nigerian husband) with two children and is a high school dropout. She dropped out of school during the final year of high school because of the inability of her parents to pay her school fees. Despite this, she articulates intelligently. She migrated to South Africa to join her husband five years ago. She would have liked to pursue further studies but is unable to do so as yet because of work and family pressures. She plans, however, to embark on long distance studies so that she will be able to get an academic qualification.

**Lena (5)**

Lena is a seamstress and shares a shop with another seamstress. She is thirty five years old and has a baby. She is married to a Nigerian man and she migrated to join her husband who was already staying in South Africa. She was a housewife in Nigeria. Lena is from the Igbo ethnic group and a Christian. Lena aims to own a boutique and beauty salon in the future.

**Abigail (6)**

Abigail is thirty years old and is a senior officer at an international non-governmental organisation in Durban. Abigail studied in the United Kingdom and is a university graduate. She migrated to South Africa to take up a job offer. Her family was sceptical of her living in South Africa and grudgingly accepted her decision to migrate. Abigail, however, is very independent, probably because she is the only girl in her family and has to fight with her brothers to get what she wants. She lives in a shared apartment and socialises with other Nigerians and Africans. Abigail is Igbo and a Christian.

**Benita (7)**

Benita is twenty seven years old, a high school graduate and was an administrative clerk in Nigeria. She migrated to South Africa for tertiary studies and she is currently enrolled with UNISA. Benita is single and stays in a shared house with other Nigerian men and women. She is a Pentecostal Christian and spends most of her time in church services or doing voluntary work for her church. She is in a relationship which she hopes will end up in marriage. She is from the Yoruba ethnic group.

**Lizzy ((8)**

Thirty eight years old Lizzy came to South Africa on the invite of her brother. She was a shop assistant in Nigeria. Her brother promised to put her through tertiary education in exchange for serving as his housekeeper. She studied hospitality in a technology college in Durban and kept house for her brother for five years before she got married. She met her husband in South Africa (a Nigerian). She has lived in South Africa for eight years now. She is a hairdresser and owns a hairdressing salon where she sells hair products as well. She is Yoruba and a Christian.

**Bisola (9)**

Bisola is a nursing student at a Durban University. She is a twenty eight years old Igbo lady and has a Nigerian boyfriend. She came to South Africa for higher studies on the request of her brother and they share a flat together. She has lived in South Africa for about three years. Apart from her studies, she is also engaged in business as she has to send remittances home.

**Ikechi (Key Informant) (10)**

Twenty eight years old Ikechi migrated to South Africa with her husband and son to pursue further education. She used to work in a bank in Nigeria. She is Yoruba, a Christian and now has three children. She had hoped to pursue further studies when she migrated to South Africa, but she became pregnant immediately and so had to put her studies in abeyance. She is presently a housewife but hopes to take up studies at some point. She has lived in South Africa for three years now.

**Tumi (11)**

Tumi has lived in South Africa for five years now. She is Yoruba, thirty years old and married to a Nigerian man with two children. She migrated to South Africa to join her husband. She used to work in an advertising company in Nigeria. She presently works in her husband's hardware store and serves as the manager and sales assistant. Tumi loves singing and is the choir director in her church.

**Modupeh (12)**

Modupeh is forty eight years, married and has four children. She migrated with her husband and children in 2005 after her husband got a job offer at a renowned firm in Durban, South Africa. She was a business woman in Nigeria with no tertiary education but in South Africa, she decided to pursue further studies. She now has a marketing diploma and is employed in a reputable firm. Modupeh is a Yoruba and a charismatic Christian. She is very artistic and when she has time, she paints pictures or makes hand crafted jewellery which she sells.

### **3.9b Men**

#### **Adewole (Key Informant) (13)**

Adewole is fifty years old, a university graduate from Nigeria and unemployed at the moment. He used to hawk insecticides in the streets but had to stop as he was harassed by locals because he was a foreigner. He is married to a South African wife and he admits he partly did this to gain admission into the South African society. He lives in Umlazi Township with his wife's family. He does not like living there but since he is unemployed, he has no choice. He has lived in South Africa for ten years now. He migrated to South Africa because of political instability in Nigeria and the opportunity for a better life. Adewole is from the Yoruba ethnic group and a Christian.

#### **Amakechi (14)**

Amakechi is thirty eight years old and a PhD political science student at a renowned South African university. He migrated to South Africa to pursue his PhD studies. He has lived in Durban, South Africa for two years now. He used to work in the civil service in Nigeria. He is engaged to a Nigerian lady and is planning to get married soon. He is an Igbo and a Christian.

#### **Enoch (15)**

Enoch is thirty nine years old, married to a Nigerian wife, has three children and is from the Igbo ethnic group. He migrated to South Africa with his family because of educational pursuits. He is presently doing a PhD in Agriculture and lectures part time at a technology college in Durban. He was a school teacher in Nigeria.

#### **Omotayo (16)**

Omotayo migrated to South Africa in 1996. He did not originally plan to come to South Africa. He went to Zimbabwe on a business trip and then visited friends in South Africa. He was then cajoled to join them. He went back home from there, sorted out things, acquired the necessary travelling documents and left for South Africa. He has a pub at Point road, Durban. He is married to a South African wife and has a daughter. He is about forty years old and an Igbo.

**Nwoye (17)**

Thirty five years old, Nwoye is a shop and restaurant owner of Nigerian food items. He originates from the Igbo tribe and is a Christian. He migrated with his family to South Africa eight years ago in pursuit of better economic opportunities. He was unemployed in Nigeria. He initially stayed in Johannesburg but later relocated to Durban as he believed that there were more economic opportunities there. He has lived in Durban for six years. Apart from his nuclear family, Nwoye lives with other family members and his wife is a house wife.

**Babatunde (18)**

Babatunde is a twenty eight years old businessman who has been living in South Africa for over eleven years now. He is single but has a South African girlfriend that he lives intermittently with. He was a bar man in Nigeria on a very low income and he was influenced by friends to migrate to South Africa. He sold all his belongings and even some family property to finance his journey. He initially stayed in Johannesburg but later settled in Durban. He is a member of one of the numerous Nigerian associations in Durban and a very committed church goer.

**Bolaje (Key Informant) (19)**

Bolaje came to South Africa seven years ago with the intention of proceeding to the United Kingdom (UK) as it was difficult to get UK visas in Nigeria by then. He, however, failed to get it and decided to stay in South Africa where there are more opportunities than at home. He is now a juice factory owner and employs several people. Bolaje is unmarried but has a South African girlfriend with whom he shares a flat. He is an executive member of the main Nigerian association in Durban and socialises with other Nigerian migrants in Durban. He is thirty years old, a Christian and from the Igbo ethnic group.

**Olufemi (20)**

Olufemi is forty years old and from the Yoruba ethnic group. He was a former army officer in Nigeria. He left Nigeria for Lesotho because of political issues and later migrated to South Africa. He has lived in South Africa for over five years and is presently a car dealer. He is



married with children and he professes to be a devout Christian. He socialises mostly with other Nigerians in Durban.

### **Shodekeh (21)**

Shodekeh migrated to South Africa in search of a better life. He was a government clerk in Nigeria but said he was poorly paid and was always in debt. He heard about economic opportunities in South Africa and decided to migrate there. His dreams were, however, not realised as he struggled to make ends meet and is unemployed at the moment. He is unmarried but cohabits with a South African girlfriend. At the moment he survives on the goodwill of his girlfriend and Nigerian friends. He is between thirty to thirty five years old.

### **David (22)**

David is a university graduate and used to work in a bank in Nigeria. He was poorly paid, however, and he decided to seek his fortune in South Africa. He relocated to South Africa eight years ago and ventured into a self-employment business. He is now the owner of a grocery shop. David is thirty nine years old and has a Nigerian wife. His sister also lives with him. He is from the Igbo ethnic group and a Christian.

### **Abiodun (23)**

Forty years old Abiodun was a government clerk in Nigeria who was very dissatisfied with his condition of service. He came to learn about business opportunities in South Africa and decided to migrate there. His family helped him to finance his journey. He said he had a very difficult time when he migrated as he came with very little money. This was at a time when there were very few Nigerians around to help him. He was, however, assisted by other African migrants who gave him shelter and helped him find a job washing plates at a hotel. He did this for a long time until he managed to save enough money to start his own business. Abiodun now runs a successful printing and photocopying company and has lived in South Africa for over twelve years now. He is Yoruba and a Christian. He is married to a South African woman.

### **Cashopeh (Key Informant) (24)**

Cashopeh is fifty four years old and a graduate from a university in Nigeria. He migrated to South Africa because of political and economic reasons. According to him, since the Biafra civil war, his ethnic group (Igbo) has been badly treated in Nigeria. They had problems finding jobs and struggled to make a living. As a result many of them, especially the men, left for other countries. Cashopeh did not migrate directly to South Africa but went to other countries before he finally settled in South Africa as it had more business prospects. He is now the owner of a laundry and a club. He has lived in South Africa for about twelve years now. He is married to a Nigerian and they live together in Durban with their four children. His wife is a housewife because of health reasons. Cashopeh is a Christian.

### **3.10 Gender Dynamics in the Research**

This research was conducted via a gender lens. Gill and Maclean (2002) argue that although an increased awareness of gender may increase the awareness of the limitations placed on the researcher, it can also bring certain advantages to the analysis of social situations and introduce different issues and new ideas. It was, therefore, appropriate to include the gender dynamics that emanated from the research process particularly in the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewees as well as the research environment.

My interaction with the men was a bit different from the one with the women. All the men displayed some level of hegemonic masculinity, such as portraying themselves as the dominant sex as well as taking on the role of protector and provider. Although pleasant, they somehow gave the impression that they were doing me a favour. They also tended to sway from the topic under discussion and I had to constantly bring them back to the interview. Some of them also had issues with my level of education and tried to show that despite that, I was still a 'mere' woman. I have noted some of these interactions as seen below, bringing out the gender dynamics at play.

Cashopeh (24), for instance, was very pleased when I asked for his participation in the interview. We met in a church hall in the city centre. I had the feeling that he felt that being asked to participate in an interview for a PhD research showed how wise and knowledgeable he was. This feeling could be attributed to the fact that I come not only from a similar background as him but that I am a gender studies student as well and I have developed a keen awareness of how men from that background perceive themselves. From the start, he adopted

the position of a 'know it all man' assisting a 'knowing nothing' woman despite her educational background. Apart from answering my questions, he proceeded to tell me things that he assumes I should know and it started becoming as if I was being lectured. I felt as if I was losing control of the interview and struggled to put it back on track. It was a bit hard because he was far older than me and I did not want him to feel as if I was disrespecting him and secondly he was the one doing me a favour. The interview went on longer than I estimated. In fact, it was my longest interview compared to the other ones.

Babatunde's (18) attitude from the start was that a woman's place is at home. He came to my house for the interview. According to him, it would not be gentlemanly of him if I had to come to his place or meet him somewhere else. He also thought that as a married woman, it was only proper that the interview be conducted in my 'husbands' house. As a married Christian Sierra Leonean woman, this could have been problematic as the gender constructs of my home country would have seen it unfit for me to bring a man to my house for interviewing purposes. However, because of my educational empowerment and my spouse being supportive of my research, I was able to allow him to come to my house on condition that my husband should be in the house when he comes. Babatunde (18) came promptly on the scheduled time and we sat down in the dining room. Before we started, he enquired whether my husband will be seating with us for the interview, to which I said no. He seemed to think it strange and retorted that if I was his wife, there was no way he would allow me to do an interview with a man without him being present. I had to assure him that my husband was comfortable with the arrangement. Initially, his responses were brief but he later elaborated more. Once the interview was finished, he got up quickly and said goodbye. Babatunde (18) clearly did not like my independent attitude which he did not think was appropriate for a woman. According to Gill and Maclean (2002), female researchers are in danger of transgressing various bounds of acceptable feminine behaviour and tensions tend to arise between the roles of 'researcher' and 'woman'. Additionally, a woman who engages in the public realm may be perceived as stepping out of line, and even though not always verbalised, the behaviour of those around her serves to make her aware of her uneasy social position (Gill and Maclean, 2002).

Olufemi (20) on the other hand, set out to charm me. Not in a flirtatious way though, as he was aware that I was married, but maybe based on the conception that women need to be charmed. He was very courteous and polite and I could not help but wonder whether it was

an act on my behalf. At the end of the interview, he promised his assistance whenever I needed it. Abiodun (23), like Olufemi (20), was also charming and very pleasant. During the interview, he kept asking me whether I was comfortable or would like a drink. He was very easy to talk to and he explained issues very well. At some point, though, he said he wanted to ask a very personal question as it was bothering him. He wanted to know why I was doing a PhD. As a married woman with children and a master's degree, he thought that should be enough for any woman. He also wanted to know what my husband's feelings were about this. I told him that my husband was comfortable with me pursuing a PhD degree and proceeded with the interview. Abiodun's (23) question brought on an increased awareness of society's construction and expectation of women and made me realise that my educational attainment contradicts that which is expected from women. The interviews with Olufemi and Abiodun took place in the hall of the church I attend as I believed it was the safest place to meet with men.

My interaction with the women was more subdued with a different level of gender dynamics involved. Whilst they were willing to engage with me, they did not go out of their way to be pleasant or hospitable. They were also more concerned that I should not use their real names or identity in the research than the men, which brought home the fact that women were more concerned about their image and reputation than men. Furthermore, those who are less educated than I am felt intimidated by me as can be deduced from Patience's (2) case. Patience (2) was a bit intimidated by being interviewed by a PhD student and kept saying that I should have gone for someone on my level. I had to tell her that there is no wrong or right answer and she should just relax and answer as best as she can. She was also a bit nervous and kept stressing on the importance of anonymity and confidentiality. I had to reassure her several times that her name would not be included and that a pseudonym will be used instead. She said that she did not want to be identified with some of the things she would be saying which might not be acceptable to other Nigerians, especially those back home. We parted with a handshake and another promise from me that I would definitely not be including her real name in my work.

Joy (3), like Patience (2), also felt intimidated by me in the beginning because she thought that as a PhD student, I was too intellectual for her. She later developed confidence as the interview progressed. Iyamide (1), on the other hand, who was on the same educational level as me, felt comfortable with me. I met her at her office and we had an informal chat before

starting the interviews. Once we had established that I would not be using her real name and I assured her of confidentiality, she was very willing to talk. She was very articulate and gave detailed information on issues. She got very agitated, however, when recounting a horrible experience on account of her being a migrant. Once the interview was over, she wanted to chat a bit. My interaction with these women brought home the fact that women should not be regarded as a homogenous group and that gender intersects with factors like race, class, education and age.

Gender constructions of the roles and responsibilities of women were very evident in Ikechi's (10) house. She had initially wanted us to meet somewhere else but she had nowhere to leave her children and she then requested that I come to her house instead. She was trying to cook and take care of her children when I came and she seemed very stressed. Cooking and child rearing are expected roles and responsibilities of women in many societies. The two younger children were crying and demanding attention and so I had to help coax and calm them down. This took about ten minutes. Eventually, we started the interview. The children interrupted from time to time during the interview and I had to stop frequently to help settle them down. Despite this, the interview progressed well, although she got very emotional at some point when talking about her being stuck in the house all day with the children and not having the opportunity to study or work.

I also became aware of the gender context of the research environment during the research process. As Elwood and Martin (2000) argues, the physical site in which the interview takes place as well as the broader context in which the research takes place is another factor mediating the enactment of power relations. The environments where I met and interviewed the women were relatively safe, either in my office, their office, business place or in their homes. The venues were mostly of their choice. Making arrangements with the men though made me think of my vulnerability as a woman and I prevailed on a few to meet me at my church's hall in the city centre. This hall has good security systems and glass doors where people can see easily as well as easy exits. Later, when I thought of this choice, I realised that I had sub consciously expected danger from the men and so chose a place where I could easily get help or run from danger. Violence against women by men is rampant in present day South Africa and it is apparent that I must have internalised this. Article 1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women (1993) defines violence against women as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts,

coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life'. A 2010 shadow report on Beijing + 15 states that violence against women in South Africa has reached epidemic proportions and it is one of the highest rates in the world. It further states that it exists in millions of households, in every community, in every institution and in both public and private spaces and it cuts across race, class, ethnicity, religion and geographic locations.

As Oakley (1992) asserts, female researchers often appear to be more aware of their sexual status and its impact in the fieldwork and relationships than their male colleagues. Also, I thought the choice of a church hall was an appropriate place to meet and interview male participants. However, I was not always able to get my way as in the case of my interview with Nwoye (17). I had to meet him at his shop/restaurant where I was openly stared at and ogled by the male customers coming in. His shop attracted mainly male customers. Some of them even asked if I was his sister and told him they will like to talk to me when we finish. As a woman, I felt very vulnerable and did not like the way the men stared at me or tried to flirt with me. My interview with David (22) also made me feel vulnerable as a woman. It took place at his friend's house along the Durban South Beach front. I was very reluctant to meet him there but he said that was the ideal place as we would not be interrupted during the interview. I met him at his shop and on our way to the friend's house nearby, I felt very wary. At his friend's place I insisted that the door be kept open and sat in the chair close to the door. He was not pleased about this and asked whether I thought he would attack me. Not wanting to upset him, I just told him, I needed some fresh air, though I could tell he did not really believe me. Most women are understandably wary when they are in isolated company of a male they do not know well. Had he been a woman, I would not have been so nervous.

Despite my precautions, I was actually exposed to risk during my interview with Omotayo (16). Unlike most of my participants, I met Omotayo (16) for the first time on the day of the interview. He was recommended by one of the participants and all communication had been done through the phone. We arranged to meet in front of a certain pub at Point Road. On arrival at the pub, I saw a man by the pub door and I asked him whether he was Omotayo (16) and the person I was supposed to interview. He answered in the affirmative. He then requested that we go upstairs in the building. I had noted earlier on that there was a guest house at the top and so I declined. He insisted that it was either upstairs or no interview and when I still said no, he left abruptly.

I was very upset and left to get a taxi, when my phone rang and I saw that it was from Omotayo (16). Thinking that he wanted to apologise, I answered but to my surprise, the person asked me why I did not turn up for the interview. By then I was confused and told him that I had just met and spoken with him at the pub. Apparently, it turned out that the person I had met was not the real Omotayo and the real one now on the phone asked me to come back to meet him. I asked him to describe himself and also to tell me the type and colour of clothing he had on. He was concerned about what had happened and admonished me to be very careful next time. I finally interviewed him and he accompanied me to get a taxi as he wanted to make sure that I was safe. This incident awakened in me the fact that I was vulnerable as a woman and I was in the same predicament female researchers can find themselves in.

Participant observations also provide good insight into gender at play. Gender ideologies pervaded all the social, family and religious gatherings I participated in. At a birthday party I attended, for instance, I noted that the women performed the roles the Nigerian society culturally expects of them namely, that of cooking, serving, assisting the children, washing up and cleaning up. The men, on the other hand, mostly chatted, handed out alcoholic drinks around and acted as disc jockeys. However, I noticed that there were certain women who were deferred to and these did not assist the other women. The female participant who had invited me told me that these women were highly respected because of their age, educational attainment or wealthy status and so were accorded a 'male status'. This was another reminder of how gender intersects with other factors such as race, age and class. She also said that Nigerian men like to act tough in public but some are bullied by their wives at home. This reminded me of some of the interviews with the female participants wherein they explained how they challenged male power and redefined their roles.

In another activity, this time at a monthly meeting of a certain Nigerian home town association, I came face to face with male hostility. A male participant invited me to attend the meeting and although he had told them I was coming they were under the assumption that I was male. The members who were all men were openly hostile when they realised that I was a woman and made me feel unwelcome in their guarded 'male only territory'. I had suspected that they were not going to be welcoming because of the unpleasant way they expressed that they thought it was a man coming. They kept questioning me about my real intention of being there, they whispered amongst themselves, spoke in their language so that I

would not hear what was being said and the looks on their faces were not pleasant. I left early as I was not comfortable in such a hostile atmosphere. Whilst their reaction could probably be also attributed to a wariness of strangers, my being a woman and an educated one apparently unsettled them. As Gill and Maclean (2002) asserts, a female ethnographer has certain limitations placed on her in terms of behaviour which may affect her ability to carry out research successfully.

My attendance at a church service with a large Nigerian congregation also gave me an insight into the gendered lives of Nigerians. In the reserved space for babies and young children, only the mothers were with them. This was a non-verbal statement that child care is seen as the prerogative of women. The men appeared to be in positions of authority and prominence in the church as the presiding priest, altar servers and sides persons were all males. When I enquired about this, my participant said this was probably because the men were the most fitting for the positions. Although this could have been the case, I am convinced that 'fitting women' could have been found as well but that the men were only too happy to occupy and hold on to that space as it puts them in positions of authority and prominence. Tea and biscuits were served after the service and I was not surprised to see that it was the women who did this task as it was part of their culturally prescribed gender roles.

The naming of a child is very important in Nigerian culture. A lot of thought and reflection is put into naming a child as it is believed that names can positively or negatively impact a child. I was invited to a Yoruba naming ceremony of a male child by one of my participants and the ceremony started with prayers, followed by a welcome speech by a close male friend of the child's father. Whilst all this was ongoing, the parents of the child sat together, with the mother carrying the baby. An elderly lady then presented symbolic items such as salt, *kolanut*, palm oil and pepper to the child. The symbolic aspect of salt for instance is that it preserves and adds flavour to food and therefore an important commodity in one's life. The elderly lady touched these items on the child's forehead then passed it onto the mother to taste on behalf of the child. My participant explained that at times, the items were rubbed on the baby's lips but some families preferred mothers tasting it on behalf of the child as they are the primary caregivers. This indicated to me that the role of childcare is assigned to women.



The presentation of the items was followed by the announcement of the child's names by the pastor (male Nigerian) of the church the parents attended. The baby had five names but the three names I can easily recall are Babatunde (father has come again), Abiodun (born during a festive time) and Isaac. The pastor then blessed the baby after announcing the names. Once the ceremonial part was over, it was time for eating, dancing and socialising. The parents first danced together, followed by a dance by the mother of the child and some of the women present. The baby's father showered money on the mother as she danced and some of the men present also did the same. I was told that this was a way of thanking and appreciating her for giving birth, especially to a male child. Food was later served by some of the women present and they also cleared and cleaned up after. Apart from the symbolic presentations done by a woman, prominent tasks such as welcoming the guests and praying and announcing the names of the baby were done by males, whilst the women participated in housekeeping duties.

Gender was also evident in other ways. My experience with two ladies (Nneka and Kemi) who were willing to participate in the study and their subsequent cancellation made me also aware of the ever presence of gender. After being recommended by a participant, Nneka was willing to participate in the study. However, she wanted the approval of her husband. Male control of women is a norm in most Nigerian families and women are culturally expected to seek their husband's permission and approval before engaging in most activities. Nneka's husband, however, was against her being interviewed and so she had to decline. The same also applied to Kemi. She was willing and I tried to set up an interview with her. Her husband, however, started acting as a mediator and asked me to email him my informed consent form and details of what the interview would be like. I did and he promised to get back to me. He never did and after several attempts enquiring, he sent me an email that his wife was indisposed. I was not allowed to get in touch with his wife directly. Situations like this clearly revealed the ways in which men display hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is the concept of men engaging in practices that foster the dominant position of men and the subordinate position of women. Donaldson (1993) argues that it is used to refer to groups of men who legitimize and reproduce the social relations that generate their dominance. Hegemonic practices include men being assertive, tough, powerful and in control over women.

### 3.11 Reflections on the Research Process

Making the decision to undertake a PhD was a huge one for me as I was aware that it involves a lot of hard work. However, once I made the decision, I was determined to see it through to the end. My research journey could be divided into five stages and these are the proposal stage, the field work stage, the transcribing, coding and analysing stage, the writing stage and the editing and compilation stage. These stages are illustrated in figure 3 at the end of this section. A research proposal is not necessarily a lengthy document but it needs to be concise and precise. With the guidance of my supervisor, I wrote my research proposal and then had to present it to the academic staff and postgraduate students in my school for comments and advice. I was nervous about doing the presentation, but once the day arrived, I summoned every ounce of confidence within me and did the presentation. I took the advice and comments of all present in good faith and reworked my proposal. Finally, it was ready to be signed and submitted to the School review committee. I eventually got the go ahead from the committee to further submit it to the Higher Degrees review committee for acceptance. I was on tenterhooks during this waiting period as I have heard stories of proposals being rejected. Eventually, my proposal was accepted and ethical clearance was granted to proceed with the research. It was now time to embark on the next phase of my research which has to do with the field work.

The first phase of my research was confined within the University of KwaZulu-Natal, but now I had to go outside it and engage with people who were not even well known to me. Although I had utilised the snowball sampling technique wherein the participants themselves recommended other participants, I still had to initiate contact with them. This was normally done by telephone and then I had to make an appointment to meet with them. Most of the participants wanted to meet with me first before they committed themselves to the interviews although a few gave me the go ahead during these calls and we then agreed on a time and place to meet for the interview. On meeting my participants, I explained carefully what the research was about and they had to sign the informed consent form before I proceeded. Explaining that I am a Sierra Leonean seemed to work in my favour as Sierra Leone like Nigeria is a West African country and they share certain linguistic and cultural ties. Some of the participants viewed me as a sort of ‘sister’ and even referred to me as ‘my sister’. Others proceeded to address me as Madam or asked me the name of my first born to which they thereafter addressed me as Mama Danita (a customary Nigerian way to address parents by the

names of their first born). At times, I exploited my shared characteristics with them by dressing up in my traditional attire which is similar to theirs and greet or converse with them in 'Pidgin English'. This made them feel like (although not in all cases) that I was one of them and made them willing to grant me the interviews. This also worked in my favour during the participant observation sessions as I was able to blend in and be in a position to focus on and observe significant events and happenings around me. The times given to me by the participants, however, were not always suitable for me but I had no choice and at times there were instances when I had to do early morning interviews or late evening/night interviews.

Other challenges included participants cancelling and rescheduling their interviews, not turning up for the interview or even changing their mind about participating in the interview. One frustrating incident was when I agreed to meet a lady at 8 p.m. at the Howard College Campus. I left my house that night, got there on time, met with the lady, only for her to tell me that she was not comfortable being on the premise that time of the night. As such the interview did not take place. Another frustrating incident was with a male migrant who had asked me to meet him at his hair dressing salon in the city centre at 9 a.m. in the morning. I got there on time, waited for him till 1p.m. and he never showed up. His phone was off so I was unable to call him. There were also situations where I found myself in vulnerable positions like that documented in section (3.10) wherein a man tried to trick me by pretending that he was my participant. Occasionally, some of my participants asked me what benefits they were gaining from being involved in my research. I simply told them that they were contributing to new knowledge for present day society and posterity. I could tell from their faces that it was not the response they wanted but they, however, consented to go ahead with the interview. In some cases during the field work, especially with the women, I had to assist with washing dishes and helping with their children as we prepared for the interview. Despite these challenges, the field work was successful and I got to know different areas, locations and people in Durban. I also got to attend Nigerian parties, visit churches with a large Nigerian congregation, eat and socialise at Nigerian restaurants, shop or window shop in Nigerian shops, do my hair in Nigerian salons and even visit some Nigerian homes. During my fieldwork, as the saying goes, I breathed and lived like Nigerians.

Once my field work was done, I had to embark on the tedious process of transcribing, coding and analysing my data. I found this task to be tedious but I persevered and got it done and I

then proceeded to the writing stage. I had thought this would be the easiest part but apparently I had misjudged it. There are times when I experienced what is known as ‘writers block’. I would sit in front of my computer unable to type a single word. My brain would simply refuse to function. At other times, I would manage to put down one or two lines or at most a paragraph. In contrast to this, there are times when I could not stop writing. The ideas would flow freely and even when I went to bed, my mind and brain would refuse to shut down. At times, I would even get up and jot down some notes. There were also the times when I wrote a chapter and felt very pleased about it, only to be told by my supervisor that it is a good attempt but I need to go beyond. Going beyond is the operative word in a PhD research. I had to start where my Master of Arts (MA) degree ended. I learnt to go beyond as advised by my supervisor and this involved not only writing in a more academic manner but also involved being very critical, analytical, questioning, theoretical, observant and inquisitive. This, in turn, has redefined my character and made me a very astute, critical and confident person. Writing my thesis was a journey in itself. The final stage was to edit and compile my work.

Apart from the challenges I faced during the research process, I had to juggle my research enterprise with my family life and other activities and responsibilities. It has not been exactly easy and there have been tears, anxiety and frustrations alongside the laughter, joys and triumphs, but on the whole, it has been a worthwhile and satisfactory journey.

<b>Stages in the research process</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Stage One	Proposal Writing, Presentation and Submission
Stage Two	Field Work
Stage Three	Transcribing, Coding and Analysing
Stage Four	Writing the chapters
Stage Five	Editing and compiling the work

**Figure 1.** Stages in the research process

### **3.12 Conclusion**

This chapter has explained as well as motivated why the type of research method and research methodologies were utilised in this research. It has also profiled the research participants by giving the readers an insight into their backgrounds and personalities. The chapter also motivated my use of self-reflexivity and the sampling techniques involved. Self-reflexivity increased my awareness of the gendered dimension of research and its importance. As Gill and Maclean (2002) argue, recognising that the self is intimately connected with the completion of fieldwork and the recognition of variables such as gender, influence the outcomes of the study. The gendered dimension of the data collection process was also highlighted. Muthuki (2010) avers that the interview and research methods can be layered with gendered meanings and, therefore, the gendered dynamics of data gathering need to be recognised as central to the research findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **GENDER POLITICS IN NIGERIAN MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Gender plays a crucial part from the time a decision is made to migrate, up to the arrival and settlement in the host country. As argued by Boyd and Grieco (2003), gender is deeply embedded in who moves and how these moves take place towards the resultant future in the host land. Most research on migration, however, tend to focus on the ways in which migration shapes gender relations, with much less attention being given to the ways in which gender relations contribute to migration flows and settlement. Hondagneu-Sotello (1994:3) not only acknowledges that gender organizes migration but also argues that ‘gender is not simply a variable to be measured, but is a set of social relations that influences migration patterns’. It is further argued that it is necessary to examine how gender relations constrain or facilitate men and women’s immigration and settlement (Hondagneu-Sotello, 1994).

Men and women have different access to power across a range of scales from the local to the global and are thus exposed to different opportunities and constraints in determining their patterns of mobility (Dodson, 2000). Similarly, Remennick (1999), on the one hand, observes that the experiences faced by male and female migrants are as different as they are in other life contexts. On the other hand, Cheng (1999) suggests that as gender is an organising principle of social relationships of power, it should be a fundamental analytical element within the comprehensive approach of theoretical conceptualization in the fields of international migration. A gender sensitive lens is, therefore, necessary to provide a more complete and accurate view of world politics (Peterson and Runyan, 1993).

This chapter, therefore, examines the ways gender influences the mobility and settlement of male and female Nigerian migrants from their home (Nigeria) to the host country (South Africa) and the gender dynamics involved. It is thus worth noting that the gendered geographies of power framework is utilized in this chapter. This framework, according to Pessar and Mahler (2003:818), is useful in ‘analyzing people’s gendered social agency given their own initiative and positioning within multiple hierarchies of power operative within and across many terrains’. The social identity theory is also utilized in this chapter (cf. Hoggs and Abrams, 1988; Hoggs and Vaughan, 2002, Tajifel and Turner, 1979). As people living in a new environment and subject to identity changes, the social identity theory and the gendered

geographies of power framework with its various elements of geographical scales, social locations, power geometries (agency) and imagination or mind work enabled me to examine the gendered lives and activities of the Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa. This chapter, among other things, first examines the influence of gender in the migrants decision to migrate to South Africa. For a better contextualisation of the home to host land journey of the migrants and their eventual settlement, I have included the maps of Nigeria and South Africa as seen below. Figure 2 is a map of the migrants' country of origin (Nigeria) and Figure 3 is that of their destination country (South Africa).



**Figure 2:** Map of Nigeria (Source: Google Map)



**Figure 3:** Map of South Africa (Source: Google Map)

## 4.2 Gender Dynamics in Migration Decisions

Although various reasons have been advanced for the cause of international migration from Nigeria (see Obiala and Meseckaite, 2008), the importance of gender in the decision to migrate has, however, been overlooked. It thus needs to be reiterated in Cheng's (1999)'s terms that gender determines who migrates and who stays behind and that it shapes the differential experiences of the male and female migrants. It bears repeating, therefore, that this section examines the role gender played in the migrants' decision to migrate to South Africa and the gender dynamics involved.

Previous scholarship on international migration neglected the lived experiences and the viewpoints of women and as a result it provides an incomplete account of international migration (Tickner, 1992). This fact notwithstanding, it is notable that more women are now crossing borders and some of them are doing it autonomously. Adepaju (2006) asserts that women, especially African women, both the single and married ones are now migrating autonomously to fulfil their economic needs. DeLaet (1999) avers that women migrate across international borders for a number of reasons including economic incentives, family reunification, the possibility of greater autonomy, escape from marital problems, and opportunities for their children, or the hope that they can escape gender based prosecution. It is thus something of the past that migration was seen as a male enterprise as women are also on the move. Although the decision to migrate is hinged on the need for a better life for both men and women, the forms they take are gendered. Following, is an account of the critical reasons advanced by some of the female migrants as to why they migrated to South Africa and the gender dynamics involved. The excerpt below gives an account of Patience's (2) reason for migrating to South Africa:

*The only reason I migrated to South Africa was to fulfil my educational ambition. My family and friends were against it. For them a woman's place is with her family and as I was already a practicing nurse they could not understand why I want to do further studies, especially one that will take about three or four years. Also they said that if that was really what I wanted, then I should do it in Nigeria instead. I was determined to leave as I know that I will not be able to concentrate if I stayed in Nigeria. There will be so many family commitments. I wanted to go somewhere in Africa where I will get good teaching and be able to travel home easily and*



*that was why I chose South Africa. I had to fight to do this. If I was not strong, I will not have been able to do that (Patience.2).*

It transpires from the above excerpt that since Patience had a serious purpose, she had to go against the will of her family to be able to migrate to South Africa. She does not get support from her family and friends as they could not understand why a woman should leave her husband and children to go to a different country. Arguably, this can be accounted for as having been occasioned by the gender constructions of a woman's place being in the home as her duty is to look after the family. Iyamide (1) like Patience took the initiative to migrate although in this instance it was for employment purposes. She, however, had to subject herself to stipulated conditions by her family to ensure that she does not become a 'loose woman' in a foreign land as explained below:

*At home in Nigeria I learnt of a job opportunity in South Africa. I had the qualifications and so applied for the job and I was accepted. My parents were not happy though, that I was still single and they agreed to give their blessing only if I get engaged or married before I left. I got engaged to my fiancée and I left Nigeria as an engaged woman, and in South Africa I stayed in the house provided for me by the company that had employed me. My parents were happy that I got engaged as it means that I will eventually get married and I will not be tempted to do 'bad' things'. I managed to get a job for my fiancée in South Africa, and so I went back to Nigeria to get married and the two of us returned to South Africa (Iyamide.1).*

From the above excerpt, it is evident that Iyamide's decision to migrate was only sanctioned by her family because she fulfilled part of her society's gender expectations. Leaving as an engaged woman was seen as a better condition than being a single woman and it meant she will, to some extent, be under a man's protection and control. Whilst Patience and Iyamide initiated their choice to migrate, Joy's (3) fate was decided for her as gleaned from the transcribed pronouncement below:

*I used to live with my parents and sisters in Nigeria and I have two brothers in South Africa. They are not married and they were finding it hard to take care of their house. They wanted me to come and help them*

*and they promised to help me push my education if I came. They told our parents and they decided that I should go. My family were the ones who made the decision for me to leave. They set the date and arranged everything and so I came here and helped my brothers with housework. They helped me to register for a nursing degree and they also opened a hairdressing shop for me (Joy.3).*

The decision to migrate to South Africa was certainly not made by Joy herself. Her family made the decision for her. Like Joy, Lizzy (8) was also sent for by her brother as explained below:

*I have an older brother here in South Africa. I used to live with my parents, sisters and brothers in Nigeria and I worked in a shop. My older brother wanted to help one of us and they chose me because I was responsible and I could help him with his housework. He promised to help me with my education if I help him in the house. He arranged everything and I had no problem leaving Nigeria for South Africa. I do not think I will just have moved to South Africa if my brother was not there or any other relative. In fact my parents will not have agreed. They know my brother will take care and protect me. I started studying when I came here and even met my husband (Nigerian) here (who had to be approved by brother). I only left my brother's house when I got married and then my brother left me in the hands of my husband. (Lizzy.8)*

Lizzy's family was happy with her leaving as it meant that she would be under the support and protection of a man, her brother. They were also in agreement that she would help with housework which they viewed as women's work. The excerpts above which are representative of the women's views clearly instantiate the social construction of gender. Notably, Patience's (2) family was not pleased about her going because women should stay with their family. Iyamide's (1) family was a bit relaxed not only because she became engaged and plans to be married were underway but also because her fiancée would join her. Had this not been the case, she would have met with strong resistance from her family. Joy (3) and Lizzy (8) had the support of their respective families given the fact that they were going to join their brothers who would provide them with the support and protection expected of males. It is important to note that in exchange for their brothers' assistance, they are

supposed to take up supposedly women's task in their brother's households. It is also notable that some of the female migrants migrated to South Africa to join their spouses. As expressed by all the female participants, Nigerian culture does not take kindly to women deciding to migrate alone especially if they do not have a serious purpose such as education or employment and such women are usually branded as *ashawos* (prostitutes). It is, therefore, not common for Nigerian women to just leave home to go seek their fortune without well calculated plans as is common with their male counterparts. What is evident in this case is that the women migrated mainly for three reasons which were to join a spouse or a brother, to pursue education or to take up employment. The reasons advanced by the men and the situation around their migration vary significantly from those advanced by the women. This variation is succinctly articulated by Abiodun's (23) narrative as represented below:

*Things were bad for me in Nigeria and I thought the only way my life would be better was by leaving Nigeria and trying my luck somewhere else. I did not have enough money to marry and take care of a wife and family and cannot even help my parents and family. By then South Africa was no longer under apartheid and people were talking of jobs and business opportunities there. Even though I did not know anyone there, I decided to go there. I got together the money to finance my travelling and to help me settle down when I get there. My family gave me some money and they supported me to travel. In South Africa, I met some other foreigners who helped me to find a job washing plates in a restaurant. I did this for a long time before I moved on and got another better job. Now I do my own business (Abiodun.23).*

It transpires from the narrative above that Abiodun left Nigeria for South Africa with no resistance from his family. His undertaking of the migratory venture was embarked upon despite him not having not only enough money to travel, but also without having secured a job or educational activity waiting for him let alone knowing anyone in South Africa. They even supported him financially and gave him their blessing. Had he been a woman, this would not have been the case. His story is similar to that of Babatunde (18) below:

*I was just living from day to day in Nigeria, then I heard that Nigerians in South Africa were making money and living a good*

*life. I told my people about this and they encouraged me to leave. They did a family collection for me and I left for South Africa. I have been now here eleven years and my family is happy that I am able to help them. It makes me feel good as a man. (Babatunde.18)*

Just like Abiodun, there were no ensuing arguments or stipulations made by Babatunde's family. He made his own decision based on the stories he heard and his family backed him morally as well as financially. Thus, regardless of their circumstances, the men had their journey wholeheartedly supported by their families. This applied to all the men interviewed. Even those who were married were not discouraged from migrating. A man is usually encouraged to seek his fortune elsewhere and migration is regarded as a masculinized activity. The search for a better life and possible financial remuneration is aligned to the male responsibility of being the breadwinner. It is not surprising that in his parting statement, Babatunde states that he now feels good as a man. Indeed, 'prescribed gender roles affect migration choices in countries of origin' (DeLaet, 1993:5). Arguably, gender does influence migration decisions, making the failure of some migration theorists to incorporate gender into migration theories that attempts to explain the causes of migration worrisome. Such theories fall short of adequately conceptualizing the migration process.

Interviews with the men also revealed that some of them did not make the decision to come directly to South Africa. These engaged in step migration. The National geographic society (2005) defines it as a series of shorter, less extreme migrations from a person's place of origin to the final destination. It can be internal or international. Carlos (2013) defines stepwise international migration as a pattern, pathway or strategy in which migrants move from one transit country (the stepping stone) to the next until they reach the most preferred/desired destination. Step migration is international in this context as it involves leaving the country of origin and then moving on to one or more countries before settling in a final destination. Adepoju (2004b) observes that step-wise migration pattern within Africa is usually from the rural areas to the cities and then outside the country and that migrants have developed complex strategies for entering a country and for finding work. Paul (2011) observes that step migration (internal and international) differs from conventional migration in three ways. Firstly, it consists of multiple stages, secondly, the migrants tend to stay longer in a destination than transient migrants and thirdly, it has a dynamic nature in that the migrants keep making a series of decisions from their departure country to their final destination.

Maharaj and Moodley (2002) observe that a substantial number of migrants had been in one or more intermediary countries en-route to South Africa and this stepwise migration is replicated once migrants arrive in South Africa as well. South Africa apparently has what Paul (2011) describes as ‘place reputation’ which means that it has an enabling environment for migrants to settle as compared to the other countries that encourage ‘guest workers’ but do not provide them with incentives to stay.

One of the male migrants, Cashopeh (24) explains below how he step migrated to South Africa:

*I did not come directly to South Africa. I left Nigeria and then went to Cameroon, Ghana, Malawi, then Botswana. I was not sure where I will settle, but I wanted to leave Nigeria as my tribe was not treated well at all. My friends had told me about South Africa and so I decided to come and settle here finally. When I decided that South Africa was going to be the final place where I will stay, I went to Nigeria to marry my lady and then brought her to South Africa. I will not have liked to be jumping all over the place with her (Cashopeh.24).*

Apparently, he does not believe that women should be engaged in step migration. When asked whether Nigerian women engage in step migration, he indicated that they might if they were with their husbands, but that it is unheard-of for a Nigerian woman to just leave home with no set place in mind or just moving from one country to another. Also, her family would have frowned on this. I asked one of my female informants about this and she confirmed that it is indeed very rare for Nigerian women to engage in step migration. Step migration by Nigerians is predominantly a masculine activity and is regarded as dangerous for women. However, leaving one’s home country whether through direct or step migration involves making plans and going through various processes. Do these processes also have gender implications? The next section examines this.

#### **4.3 The Gendered Nature of Immigration and the Migration Process**

The immigration process starts from acquiring a visa and the required travelling documents in the country of origin to dealing with immigration officials at customs/borders in the destination area. These all have gender implications. On acquisition of a visa and permits to South Africa, the male migrants reported that they found it harder to acquire visas than their

female counterparts. This is accounted for by the fact that Nigerian men are at times regarded as crooks by South Africans. Some of the women disputed this as they argue that this negative perception includes all Nigerians rather than just males and that their travelling documents are rigorously scrutinized. A few, however, agreed with the men that it was true that the women acquired visas easily but that this was so because they were usually invited by a legal spouse or relative or had a serious purpose such as undertaking studies or taking up employment. They further stated that the men, on the other hand, were mostly seen as hustlers who were up to no good. On the whole, it was conceded that immigration officials were gender biased in the processing of the visa applications which requires one to fill in a form and personally submit it with clear copies of the other required documents, despite the visa requirements being standard.

As mentioned earlier on, all the migrant women interviewed stated that they came to South Africa directly from Nigeria and through air journey. Only two though came directly to Durban from Nigeria. None of them embarked on step migration or by other means of transportation. They came through air journey because it was thought to be the safest way to travel and they tended to avoid step migration as it can be hazardous. In fact, they expressed the view that their families would not have encouraged them to engage in step migration or to enter South Africa through the road borders as they would have felt that it was unsafe for them to do so. Not all of the men, however, came directly to South Africa from Nigeria or straight to Durban when they arrived as mentioned earlier on. Even though Durban's port and the international airport provide easy access, very few migrants make it their first point of entry in South Africa and they come there through other South African cities and towns (Maharaj and Moodley, 2002). Unlike the women also, some of the men came through land borders.

Two male migrants who entered South Africa by crossing through its land borders with Botswana and Lesotho respectively reported that they were subjected to intense scrutiny and harassment by custom officials at the borders. This, they believed, was because of the negative conception of Nigerian men that they were drug pushers and traffickers of young girls. This treatment was synonymous to that of the male migrants who came through the plane journey. They stated that they were given a difficult time by the South African immigration officials because of the general suspicion that Nigerian men are troublesome. They said that even though they had all the necessary documents and required paperwork, their documents were thoroughly checked longer than usual, were spoken to rudely, asked

unnecessary questions and their luggage thoroughly searched. The ladies, on the other hand, reported less interrogation and more polite manners by the immigration officials although their luggage was also vigorously searched for ‘drugs and unsuitable foodstuff’. Unsuitable foodstuff, according to them, was Nigerian food items such as yam, *pomo*, palm oil, *egusi*, dried fish, dried snails and dried vegetables. The migrants’ opinion of the South African immigration policies is that they appear to be gender neutral but that officials tend to act or make decisions that have gender and ethnic biasness. As can be seen, immigration officers are influenced by gender notions and this affects the way they behave. Thus their enactments of gender regulation are influenced by gender.

The majority of Nigerians are given temporary residence permits which include visitors, study, relative and work permits in compliance of Section 10 (11 and 12) of the 2002 Immigration Act, which states that a foreigner may enter and sojourn in the republic only if in possession of a temporary residence permit. Once they finally get through the hurdles of immigration and customs, the next challenge is to integrate and adapt into the South African society. Is it the same for men and women?

#### **4.4 Gender Dynamics in the Settlement Process**

Migrants settle in their new environments/society by adjusting, adapting, acculturating and enculturating. Fomunyan (2012) observes that words such as ‘adaptation’, ‘acculturation’, ‘adaptation’, ‘assimilation’, ‘integration’ and even ‘coping’ are words or terms used to describe migrant’s experiences. Migrants usually face a number of challenges in adjustment and adaptation at the initial stage of migration (Massey et al, 1993). Migrants’ adaptation process is influenced by factors such as conditions in the host country, pre-migratory conditions and transitional experiences (Richmond, 1998). The process of adjusting to a new culture or society involves potential changes in identity, values, behaviours, attitudes, interactions and relationship (Berry, 1990). Nigerian migrants like any other migrants go through the same processes and changes. There are, however, gender dynamics involved in the settlement process. For instance, men are usually encouraged to acculturate more quickly than women as women are frequently expected by their families to maintain traditional roles and virtues (Goodenow and Espin, 1993). This section, therefore, examines the gender dynamics involved in the settlement process of Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa and I will start by examining which sex settles down easily and why.

I deduced from the observation and the interviews that Nigerian female migrants were more cautious than their male counterparts and looked for ways to fit into the South African society unobtrusively. They do not flaunt their Nigerian identity much to avoid being singled out as foreigners and also because of a wariness of the xenophobic attitudes of some of the locals. The women also because of the high level of rape and crime in South Africa are scared to explore and meet people as their male counterparts do or to involve in business deals that might turn sour. Also, for some of the women, their cultural background has given them that sense of insecurity and lack of confidence and so they find it hard to easily settle down in a new space. As Massey (1994) asserts, gender influences mobility. For instance, the degree to which women can move between countries, walk about the streets at night without venturing out of their houses at night is not just influenced by capital but by men. She adds that various research has shown how women's mobility is restricted in a number of ways by men such as being ogled at, violated physically or made to feel out of place. On the other hand, I observed that Nigerian men are generally loud, boastful and tend to flaunt their identity and language. These characteristics make it easier for them to plough their way through their new society. As a result, they get to know places easily, meet and get to know the locals and are able to integrate into the society quicker and better than their female counterparts. It is also easy for Nigerian men to assimilate into the new society because they can date or marry local South African women. Seldom do single Nigerian women date or marry South African men. According to them, they prefer as well as are expected to date and marry Nigerian men or men that share a similar culture to theirs. In light of this, it is therefore not surprising that Remmenick (1999) observes that several qualitative studies show that immigrant women face more problems and barriers in their acculturation process than do their male partners.

The majority of migrants are in search of a better life and once they arrive in their new destination, they are on the lookout for employment or ways to earn money. Nigerian migrants are not different and apart from those in full time education, they branch out into either the formal or informal economy. Those women in the informal sector either work in their husband or male relative shops/businesses or operate their own businesses such as hair salons, restaurant or clothing shops. There are, however, those who work in formal sectors such as educational centres, health units and non-governmental organizations. There is a tendency for the women to stick to employment that creates some level of security for them.

The men, on the other hand, are not scared to explore the local market and look for business opportunities everywhere. As such, they integrate into the South Africa's society along with



their distinctive features which become incorporated into society. Although there are those who are into education and formal work, the majority work in the informal economy. They are owners/joint owners and workers in restaurants, hair salons and hair product shops, restaurants, food items/clothing shops, laundry, clubs, pubs and cell phones/CD's/DVD's shops. They are also not averse to working on the streets. Trading of used clothing, DVD's and CD's is also done in street corners. It is now a common sight to see Nigerian male migrants selling these on the street sidewalks. It is also not unusual to hear Nigerian music blaring from the stalls of these street vendors and some of these songs such as 'Chop my money' and 'Ashawo baby' have become well known to the locals. Indeed, as Isike and Isike (2012) assert, Nigerians living in South Africa have increasingly stimulated ordinary South Africans through their clothing, food and culture and that Nigerian movies provide cultural enlightenment on Nigerian peoples and cultures. The success of Nigerians in the informal employment sector could be attributed to their 'home' experiences as the majority of Nigerians are self-employed back in Nigeria and many have small businesses that provide a variety of services such as hair dressing and equipment repair (Falola, 2001).

One of my male research participants Adewole (13) was even a hawker of cockroach pesticide and used to walk around the Durban city centre shouting out his wares. He said he did not even care when he was laughed at because of his accent. This ability by the men to try their hand at anything to survive also made it easier for them to adapt in the host land better than the women. This section shows how the male and female migrants position themselves in the South African context and how male migrants in particular utilized agency to transform their situation.

#### **4.5 The Role of Social Networks and Voluntary Associations in the Settlement Process**

A migrant's ability to move to a particular destination, find a job and housing, open up a business and participate in the development of their home country can all be directly impacted by or even dependent upon the migrant social network (Poros, 2011). Networks can be defined as 'sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in origin and destination areas through bonds of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin' (Massey et al, 1993: 448). According to Poros (2011), social networks are made up of individuals and organizations, tied together by different sorts of relationships, such as friendship and common interests and they are in principle, open configurations of relationships that can encompass groups and communities and other social formations. The

above author further argues that many migrants have ties to institutions and organizations that help them to migrate, get jobs, or adjust to society in the destination country and these are diaspora organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious and cultural organizations. De Haas (2008) also avers that the presence of friends and relatives in the destination area enables new migrants to easily obtain information, receive assistance in finding employment and a place to live, sort out residence papers, or even find a marriage partner. Migrants' movement and adaptation to new unfamiliar spaces is, therefore, facilitated by social networks which are used to inform the migratory process in both the home and host country (Nooy et al, 2005).

There is a sizeable Nigerian community in Durban and they are instrumental in influencing the migration patterns of others back home. They assist in the settlement process of new migrants by providing employment advice, financial assistance, lodgings and important information. Most migrants leave Nigeria for South Africa with the knowledge that there are Nigerians they can count on for support when they arrive. Voluntary associations are an integral form of social network.

There are various voluntary associations for Nigerians in Durban. There is an umbrella association known as the Durban Nigerian Association. However, because Nigerians come from different ethnic groups and regions, once the migrants settle, they search for their home town or ethnic group associations such as the Enugu State Association, Etiki State Association, Yoruba Association and the Igbo Cultural Association. According to Singh and Saussi (2010), these associations also known as home town associations, are made up of loose knit associations of people from the same region, religion or ethnic background and there is a strong sense of dependency among them that is intended to provide ongoing association and a sense of belonging to the group. They also add that it serves as a 'buffer for people of similar backgrounds against loneliness, isolation and the challenges of adaptation' (p.62). In line with this, Massey (1993) views voluntary associations as organizations that allow migrants from the same areas to maintain ties with each other as well as materially and emotionally support each other in their new destination.

Both Nigerian male and female migrants benefit emotionally and materially from these social networks/voluntary associations but the women are of the opinion that the males benefit most because these associations tend to be male dominated and therefore male biased. They

express that the men in the groups tend to override them. In this regard, I can empathize with them. In one Nigerian home town group meeting that I attended, it was only males that were present. When I enquired if there were no ladies, I was told that there were a few but they did not like attending meetings because of the large male presence. Also, being a member of a voluntary association myself (Sierra Leone Association in Durban), I am aware of how 'home' gender constructs are expected to be enacted in meetings and other social activities.

As a result of male dominance and little benefits from these associations, most of the women are not active members in these associations. A few even indicated that they have refrained from being members in these groups as explained by Joy (3) below:

*I used to be a member of \*\*\*\*\*home town association. Every time I attend a meeting, there is always confusion and the men try to take charge. They do not listen to us the women's suggestion and believe that their decisions should stand. You know our men, they like to be the boss. To be honest I do not enjoy attending it anymore and so I have stopped going. I prefer socializing with Nigerians at church. It is better that way. In fact, you do not really need to be in an association to be able to socialize or get help from other Nigerians (Joy.3).*

When I questioned Joy why a group solely for women could not be formed, she said that attempts to do this have failed as there was too much gossiping and backbiting involved. She said women do not like listening to each other and that everyone wants to act like a 'madam'. A Madam in Nigerian context is usually a married woman in a position of authority in her household. Also, madam could be used to refer to rich influential women. There are times when one's position as a researcher becomes conflicting with the real self. Being a feminist made it difficult for me to accept that these women would allow such petty issues to stop them from uniting as a concerted group and to be so matter of fact about it. However, as the social location concept infers, people are positioned within interconnected power hierarchies created through social stratifying factors which influence the ways they think and act. Finding themselves in the midst of a dominant group which they find difficult to confront, the women look for other people to exercise their power over, which is ironically themselves. As van Dijk (2008) argues, ideologies can encourage dominated groups to have a 'false consciousness' which may lead them to act against their own basic interest.

With the intention to fill in all the gaps, I also tried to establish from the men if it was true that women were marginalized in these associations. This is what Shodekeh (21) had to say:

*The problem is that there is a lot more Nigerian men than women here, maybe every ten Nigerian man to one Nigerian woman. So you should expect that the Associations will have more men than women. The women are very small in these groups and I think that is why they feel that they do not have a voice (Shodekeh.21).*

Notably, he puts the blame on the small number of Nigerian ladies as compared to the men rather than any deliberate action by the men to marginalize the women. Adewole (13), on the other hand, has a different answer to the question as evidenced below:

*Is that what they said? I will like to see those women who talk such rubbish. They know that if we were in Nigeria, it will be like this, so why would they want it to change now. Why should they complain now?. I do not understand these women. Do they just think that now we are in South Africa, we should just throw away our ways? For me they can stay away if they want to (hisses) (Adewole.13)*

Adewole was angry that the women should dare complain about an issue like that, which he views as part of everyday Nigerian life and culture. He cannot accept that even being out of Nigeria should change this. For him, it was a way of life for a man to be in charge. His hissing at the end signifies his disgust with those women, who in his view, are going against tradition. His response, however, validated the claims of the women. As a female migrant myself and coming from a similar patriarchal background as these migrants, I have experienced such challenges in the voluntary group I belong to.

Whilst it is a fact that the voluntary groups are male dominated, it appears that highly educated male migrants are not keen on joining any particular voluntary group. According to PhD student Amakechi (14), he is not a member of a voluntary group nor does he wish to become one. He further stated that the more educated one is, the more he/she finds it hard to cope in such groups and as such well-educated Nigerians stay away from them. When I further asked him why, he said that he does not like some of the things that go on in these

groups but refused to explain further. However, a male member of a voluntary association attributed this to snobbery and a way of establishing superiority, whilst another noted that education makes people too critical. This does not mean, however, that some well-educated males are not part of these voluntary groups. This situation is an example of how gender intersects with class and status. The following sections offer insights into how the migrants use agency to transform their situations and the strategies they employ to adjust or recreate home in their new destination and they are examined within a gender lens.

#### **4.6 Gender and Political, Social and Economic Transnational Activities**

It is easier for migrants to settle down in their new society if they do not feel totally removed from home or if they are able to maintain some link with home. There is, therefore, a tendency for migrants to integrate into their host countries while also maintaining a connection to their home countries and the development of technologies has made it easier. This process is known as transnationalism. Glick Schiller et al (1992) define it as the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their new country. They further argued that within transnationalism, migrants are able to develop and maintain multiple relations that span borders. As Ong (1994) observes, boundaries no longer hinder the migrants' sense of belonging and identification with the homeland. Indeed, the conceptualization that countries are enclosed areas with fixed identities has shifted over the years to the realization that there are no fixed spaces. Massey (1994) argues that places should not be constructed by boundaries being placed around them or their identity defined through counter position to the other. Massey further asserts that they should be constructed by the specificity of the mix of links and interconnections to that beyond as it is those relations which stretch beyond (the outside) that constitutes a part of what is in the inside. In this light, home is no longer just one place (bell hooks cited in Massey, 1994). Appadurai's (1990) explanation of the tendency of individuals to construe an imagined world through the influence of the media and ideologies makes the concept of home even broader.

Waldinger (1998) asserts that transnational activities have been practiced by earlier generations of migrants. According to other scholars (cf. Ong 1999; Portes, Guarnizo, and Landolt 1999; Smith, 1998) though, the improvement in communications and transportation technologies facilitated migrants' transnational ties and as such could not be considered replicas of earlier transnational practices. As Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec (2003) argue, new

technologies in communication and transportation enabled migrants to stay active more regularly and influentially in their sending communities than before. As Appadurai (1996) argues, migration and the media make the previously imagined community of home a reality. Also, voluntary associations serve to establish a transnational identity that has roots in both the home and the host country (Massey, 1993). Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999) assert that transnationalism encompasses diverse activities. The three main ones though are economic, political and socio cultural. There are, however, considerable variations in migrants' levels, strengths, sectors and formality of transnational activity (Levitt, DeWind and Vertovec, 2003).

Nigerian migrants can be regarded as transmigrants as they maintain relations in both their home and host country. According to Glick Schiller et al (1992), transmigrants develop and maintain familial, economic, social, religious, political and other relations that span national borders. As transmigrants, Nigerian migrants in Durban participate in transnational activities. Their transnational activities, however, have gendered dimensions. As Dannecker (2005) observes, transnational practices and activities are influenced by gender relations in the home country as well as that in the migrant community abroad and are therefore not gender neutral. As a result, men and women tend to engage differently in transnational activities. Political transnational activity includes running for political office, electoral voting and retaining political party membership in country of origin. It can also include creating home political parties in destination countries. Snel et al (2006) regards the reading of a newspaper from the home country also as a political transnational activity. Whilst some of the female migrants noted that they had a vested interest in or were members of political parties back home, none of them were actively involved in the political arena in their country or in their destination country. None held any political position or showed an inclination for running for political office back home. Some of the men, on the other hand, were very active in the 'back home' politics and sent financial contributions regularly to support these parties, as well as influenced people back home to vote for party officials of their choice. One of the male migrants had a chieftaincy title of which he was proud of and he made regular visits back home to be in touch with his community. Another male migrant was actually aspiring towards a political position and was in constant communication with his supporters in Nigeria. He said that he will eventually make a trip to Nigeria when the time was close to the election. Notably, more of the Durban based male migrants participate in political transnational activities than the female ones. The social cultural construction of gender in the

home country could be responsible for this as women are seldom put in political positions of authority in Nigeria. As Nkoyo (2002) avers, only a small number of women in Nigeria are involved in politics and this has been attributed to factors such as gender roles, lack of economic incentives and discriminatory custom and laws. Olaoye (2002) blames the small number of Nigerian women in politics to the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian society in that male domination infringes on the freedom of women to actively participate in politics. Whilst it is true that some of the female migrants have become empowered in their new land, they are still bound by traditional values at home. Within the transnational space, they, therefore, have to negotiate their identities, being the submissive women when dealing with 'home things' and the emancipated women in the host country.

Economic transnational activities, according to Vancluysen, Van Craen and Ackaert (2009), include not only monetary remittances, but also sending resources or products to communities back home and migrant's entrepreneurship. Social bonds and the feeling of being part of their community albeit in a different space (transnational) help to explain why migrants remit money to non-migrants (Djajic 1986 and Taylor 1999 in De Haas, 2008). This explains why Nigerians engage in the remittance process. Singh and Sausi (2010) argue that it is mainly done to honour family responsibilities and to invest for a possible future return to Nigeria. Although remittances can be sent for community development purposes, the migrants interviewed said they sent it to help family members and for investment purposes. Remittances can be done formally through the bank and money transfer agencies or by informal methods. Informal methods include personal transfers or third party transfer. Goods can also be remitted through the informal methods. Whilst both men and women are senders of remittances, I established that the men tend to send more money and the reason for this is explained in the next paragraph. The highest amount remitted home at any one time by the women interviewed was the equivalent of five hundred US dollars, whilst the highest for the male migrants was over a thousand US dollars. Also, more men than women have investment projects in Nigeria as compared to the women. The interviews also revealed that male migrants were more engaged in migrants' entrepreneurship than the women, especially in importing food items, hair products, CDs and DVDs from Nigeria. On the other hand, only two of the women interviewed were engaged in transnational entrepreneurship and they mostly import and sold items for women such as clothing, make up and jewellery and only one has a business project back home. At this point, one may tend to ask whether the women are less privileged than the men or whether they do not earn as much as them.

The answer to this was less simple than I would have thought as it goes beyond financial and economic issues. It appears that there is a gender and socio-cultural angle to economic transnationalism. According to one of the male migrants, there was a limit as to what women could remit or the amount they put into business back home. If she is remitting too much money home or investing heavily in business deals, questions such as the type of job she is doing or the status of her husband will be questioned. If no satisfactory answer is given, she may be viewed as doing something dubious or improper. I questioned a female migrant, Ayodele (4) about this and she said that people are usually suspicious of women who remit or invest big money when little is known about their economic status. She said that if it is well known that she has a rich husband or has a good job or business, then there is no concern about the amount of money she remits or invest. Otherwise, she may be questioned about the source of her income or thought to be a loose woman. So, some women just remit what is expected from them. Men, on the other hand, can send as much as they can without many aspersions cast. In fact, if the money is little, he may not be considered man enough.

Apart from political and economic activities, migrants also engage in socio cultural transnational activities. These include activities such as organizing home cultural events, visiting and maintaining contacts with family and friends in the country of origin, joining social organizations either in the country of residence or origin, watching home country movies or television or listening to home music. Both male and female migrants actively participate in these activities. Not all of the migrants engage though in comprehensive transnational practices, which is a combination of all transnational activities. Some are selective in that they choose which activity (ies) they want to engage in. Also, gender constructions tend to affect their engagement in transnational practices. The migrants' transnational activities show how gender is envisioned and practiced within and across different scales and transnational spaces as the concept of geographical scales posit.

#### **4.7 Food and the Recreation of Home through a Gender Lens**

Food is a symbol of personal and group identity and it forms one of the foundations of both individuality and a sense of common membership in a larger bounded group (Wilk, 1999). This is buttressed by Long (2001) who argues that because food is woven into everyday life and is integral to festivals, rituals, and celebrations, it is a place where identity is intentionally embodied and presented so that symbolic meanings are foregrounded and accessible for



observation. Montanari (2006) further observes that everything to do with food, its capture, cultivation, preparation and consumption represents a cultural act. Food, therefore, is not only necessary for human sustenance but is an identity marker and serves a cultural and socialisation role. It also marks social differences, boundaries, bonds and contradiction (Counihan and Van Esterik, 1997). Food helps to define groups of people, thereby contributing to the 'we' against 'us' factor enshrined in the social identity theory. This theory as Hogg (2006) explains, involves two or more people identifying and evaluating themselves in the same way and having the same definitions of who they are. Food is one such way people can define themselves with and see themselves as different from others.

As food is an integral part of a person's life, most migrants struggle to either adapt to new 'foods' in their host countries or to procure and cook their own 'home' food. Procuring, preparing and the eating of 'home food' give them a sense of 'being at home' which in turn assists them to cope better in their host land. My field work revealed that Nigerian traditional cuisine is very different from that of South Africa and as such most of the migrants are not comfortable eating South African foods. They go out of their way to eat their traditional meals. Eating of their traditional meals helps them not to miss 'home' that much. This is encapsulated in the following excerpt from Benita (7):

*I would have missed home more if I had not been able to eat our food here. Here in Durban, you can buy any Nigerian food you want even the cooked one. I am happy about this as I don't like South African food. It taste so different and has no flavour. I feel like I am in Nigeria when I eat our food, even when I smell it, I feel good (Benita.7).*

The above excerpt shows that the eating of home food and even smelling it helps the migrants not to feel much cut off from 'home' and helps them to settle down better. As Mehta (2005) cited in Williams-Forsion (2010) observes, home is imagined through associative food ingredients, flavours, taste and smell. Indeed as Grosvenor cited in Williams -Forsion (2010) states, despite the fact that people leave home and even change their names and accents, the aroma of certain foods will trigger warm 'home' memories and the longing to return 'home. A male migrant expressed that one of the main reasons he finally decided to stay in South Africa was because of the food. He expressed as such: '*I don't think I would have endured it*

here in South Africa if it had not been that I can eat my country food. It is easy to get and when eating it, I even forget that I am in a foreign country'. From his account, food has certainly played a vital role in his decision to settle in South Africa. It is also evident that migrants are able to maintain their home identity through food. Food and food habits are usually the last form of cultural acts migrants relinquish as they will generally find ways to maintain their food and meal traditions (Williams-Forson, 2010). On several visits to Nigerian food shops, I observed that there was a large variety of local Nigerian foodstuff on display such as *egusi*, palm oil, bitter leaf, yam, *ogbono*, dried fish, *gari*, black eyed beans, *pomo* and plantains. In addition, drinks and tinned food from Nigeria such as malt, energy drinks, sardines and corned meat were also sold. Some of these latter items could be found in supermarkets in South Africa but the migrants claimed that those from home taste better. There are also many Nigerian restaurants in Durban especially along the Point and St George's area and they sell a variety of food such as bitter leaf and pounded yam, okra soup and *eba*, jollof rice, goat head pepper soup, beans, *moin moin*, *akara*, suya meat and *egusi* soup and pap. Like these migrants, I find South African meals very different from those of my home country and had it not been for the fact that I am able to buy the items and cook my traditional food, I would have found it hard to cope in South Africa. The opportunity to prepare and cook my traditional meals has certainly helped me to settle better in South Africa. I was curious to establish how Nigerian men married to South African women negotiated food in their household. According to Abioudun (23), he has learnt to be accommodating with regards to food. At his house, he eats South African meals like *pap* or *putu* with meat or *samp* prepared by his wife and eats at Nigerian restaurants when he craves Nigerian meals. Adewole (13) on the other hand, says he has taught his wife to cook Nigerian cuisine and so she is able to prepare it for him. As Romero (2008) observes, intercultural couples have to work out house rules in terms of what food is served, how it is prepared and by whom though these issues can result in bones of contention between spouses.

From the in-depth interviews and participant observation, it emerged that most of the Nigerian restaurants in Durban are owned and managed by male migrants. The staff though is mainly females, some of them non-Nigerians. However, there are some Nigerian males who are also engaged in the cooking and selling of these meals. Although Nigerians tend to view cooking as women's work, they are not averse to doing it when it comes to earning money. I even observed a Nigerian male migrant in the Point Area of Durban selling cooked food from containers securely tied on his bicycle. As Lena (5) express: *You know these our men, when*

*they are home they want us the women to do everything but when it comes to money they can do anything. They will even go to the market and come and prepare food to sell.* This is an indicator that when it comes to earning money, Nigerian men can perform ‘so called women tasks’ such as buying, preparing, cooking and the selling of food. In fact, it is mainly the male migrants who are engaged in importing the food items from Nigeria or buying them from whole sale suppliers in Johannesburg.

Nigerian restaurants in Durban, according to my observation and from the interviews, are largely patronised by Nigerian male customers especially the single ones, as many of them cannot cook or do not want to cook. Nigerian females, on the other hand, do not want to be seen as bad cooks if they frequent these restaurants. Joy (3), for instance, says although she partakes of the food from these restaurants, she never sits there and eats. She purchases it as takeaway and enjoys it in the comfort of her house or salon. She further states that she used to eat at a certain Nigerian restaurant but was uncomfortable with the stares she gets especially from Nigerian men who knew she was one of them and was even asked once whether she does not cook at her house. Despite the chance to earn money or changing circumstances in a new destination, cooking and all that which it entails is still viewed as a woman’s duty, especially within the household.

#### **4.8 Xenophilia: A Gendered Survival Strategy**

The Free Online dictionary (n.d) defines xenophilia as an attraction to foreign peoples, cultures or customs. According to Muthuki (2010), South African women tended to be attracted to foreign African men based on the perception that they treated women better and were less prone to violence than the local men. She further argues that this attraction may also be due to the fact that they were foreign, new, spoke a strange language and they expressed their love in new ways which served to elevate the foreign African men in the eyes of South African women. From accounts by some of the male migrants, it was apparent that they were making use of this phenomenon to adjust to and adapt in their new country. The narrative below from Adewole (13) sheds some light on this:

*If you have a South African girlfriend or wife, they can show you around, teach you the language, translate for you and can let you know if people are plotting against you. They will also fight for you when people try to bully you. They can even help you to get permanent*

*stay. There is a lot of advantage in having a South African woman (Adewole.13).*

In his narrative, Adewole highlights the benefits of having a South African partner. Abiodun (23) concurs with Adewole when he states that:

*You know, even from home, some men are already planning to come and find a South African partner. They have been told by their friends and relatives here that South African women like Nigeria men and they know that marriage between a foreigner and a South African can help you to get permanent residence. Anyway even if it is not marriage, having a South African girlfriend helps you to adjust better because they know their country better and they show you what to do. As I told you, my wife is South African and she has really helped me a lot (Abiodun.23).*

When I questioned him on whether this was not exploitation, he said that it is a form of survival and that many Nigerian men and South African women, including himself have gone on to have happy marriages and families. These marriages though can be regarded as marriage of convenience. As Minnar and Hough (1996) observes, marriage of convenience is one of the means used by African migrants to acquire the status that allows them to remain legally in South Africa. Others just enter into liaisons. Xenophilia as a survival strategy, however, appears to be gender biased as Nigerian women do not seem to benefit or make use of this phenomenon for a number of reasons. They say that South African men are not usually drawn to them and in cases where they want a relationship it is more for fun than for any serious purpose. Also, it seems that Nigerian women also prefer, as well as are expected to date their own men. As Adeagbo (2011b) observes, intermarriage between South African men and Nigerian women hardly exists and is not as common as marriages between Nigerian males and South African females. Ojong (2012) argues that in some cases, women from Uganda, Nigeria, Cameroon and Ghana are forced to enter into a sort of agreement with South African men to acquire legal papers. The author further argues that they do not bear children for their South African partners or get involved in a sexual encounter but get the men to sign a marriage certificate and go through the form of marriage.

This situation speaks to the social location concept in that these migrants find themselves in certain positions within interconnected power hierarchies that intersect with gender, social

class and nationality. Nigerian male migrants in this context negotiate their gender identity in a country foreign to theirs and are able to use their sex, foreign status and nationality to score points in the South African community. They exert agency to initiate change and transform their situation as implied by the power geometry concept.

#### **4.9 The Psychological Function of Religion as a Coping Mechanism**

Religion play varied functions, but the focus here is on the psychological function of religion. According to Ross (1990), the emotional or psychological function of religion has been well accepted by various scholars and it is believed to reduce psychological distress, depression and anxiety. It helps to relieve fears and anxieties about the unknown and to ease stress during personal life crises and challenges (Oneil, 2009). Pollner (1989) further states that praying and feeling close to God can lead to satisfaction and happiness.

My research participants who incidentally were all Christians are avid church goers and mostly frequented churches where there is a large Nigerian congregation. For many of them, however, life in South Africa did not turn out to be the utopia they had envisaged it to be and they had to cope with various challenges along the way such as unemployment, unhappy marital relations, loneliness, exploitation, xenophobia and sexual violence. In such a space that is fraught with so many challenges, some of the migrants felt the need for divine intervention to help them cope with these challenges. They, therefore, turn to their churches by attending normal church services, week day services, prayer meetings, bible meeting, consulting with pastors/priests and involvement in church organisations. As thirty years old Abigail (6) notes: *this country is not easy. It has too many problems and I find it difficult at times, but I just trust God that it will be well. When I go to church and I sing and dance and listen to the message. I forget about my problems. I know that God is there for me and one day things will be better*<sup>7</sup>. A male migrant Olufemi (20) concurs with Abigail in his assertion that things are difficult for him in South Africa and that had it not been for prayers and his church, he would have returned to Nigeria. Indeed, as Stack (1983b) observes, religion comforts one and makes life worth living. Olufemi, however, was the only male migrant to make mention of this function of religion to cope. The other men, as subsequent chapters will show, utilized religion in a more exploitative way to get women to be submissive to them. Nearly all the female migrants in contrast expressed at some point that it was their faith in God that kept them going and helped them to face the challenges of being in South Africa.

#### 4.10 Hustling in the Streets of Durban: A Male Prerogative

From the in-depth interviews, it was revealed that some Nigerian male migrants made their living from hustling in the streets of Durban city. My attention was called to those groups of men who congregated in areas like Point, South Beach and St Georges in Durban. Some of them stand there for nearly a whole day. Before I go further I will pause at this point to look into the concept of hustling. Hustle, according to the Free Online dictionary, has a number of meanings. It can mean to move energetically and rapidly, to push or force one's way, to act aggressively in business deals and finally it is an illicit or unethical way of doing business or obtaining money. The last meaning is the most popular, making hustlers being regarded as unsavoury characters. I, however, move away from this popular view to that of Brett's (2010) definition of hustling. Hustling, according to him, is doing whatever one has to do, for however long it takes, until the goal is reached. It is this concept of hustling that is being interrogated here.

From observation, these groups of men spend most of the time talking to each other on their cell phones, but will occasionally leave the group to meet someone or go somewhere. They were also approached by people (mainly men) periodically and at times items or money were exchanged. I was informed that these men bought and sold items like cell phones, car parts and computers and other goods they can make a profit from. From their vantage position they get to learn about deals, about things they could buy or sell at a profit, about business propositions and are able to make some money at the end of the day. Women are not seen in these groups although these groups tend to make catcalls and whistle when ladies pass along. Nigerians not in these group refer to them as *wayo* or *four one nines* (crooks/conmen), although that is questionable.

When I questioned one of my key informants about why there were no women in such groups, I was informed that these were strictly male domains that were guarded jealously by the men. Women were not allowed to penetrate such circles and it will also not be ethical for a Nigerian woman to hang out all day in the street whether it was with other women as they will be regarded as '*Ashawo*' (Prostitutes). The closest the Nigerian woman will come to such an activity is selling items from shop to shop or from house to house. He confessed that he used to be part of such a group and that it was not solely just about business but also about socializing and providing support for each other. For instance, they loaned one another money when needed. He said most Nigerians have been through that phase and that they see

it as a form of self-employment because it is what provides ‘bread and butter’ in their households. He added that it should, therefore, not be frowned upon or looked at negatively and that people should not associate these groups with drug sales.

I decided to have a woman’s view and perception on these groups and to establish if there were similar women groups for women. This is what Lizzy (8) had to say:

*I know of these groups but only men are there and they are always on the lookout for ways to make money. As a Nigerian woman, I will never think of becoming a part of it. In fact they will not even want me there. You know, if people see you standing there with them all day, they will think you are a bad woman. For me, as long as they find money the right way I am not bothered about it and I am used to seeing them. In fact, I know some of them. I do not think Nigerian women can form such a group where you have to stand out in the street all day looking for ways to make money. People will think we are prostitutes and unserious women. My sister, even those same men will even condemn us (Lizzy.8).*

From Lizzy’s excerpt, it is clear that hustling in the main streets of Durban is clearly a male’s domain. It is, however, not favoured by all Nigerian male migrants. For instance, PhD student Amakechi (14) is very critical of these groups. He said that they are the ones who give Nigerians a bad name and reputation and he will be seen dead rather than associate with such groups. Clearly, here is a situation where gender intersects with class, wherein men in a certain class do not want to associate with those from another.

#### **4.11 Family Formations: From Home to Host Land**

This chapter will be incomplete if family systems and structures of the migrants are not discussed. As this chapter examines the lives of the migrants from the time they made the decision to migrate, to their eventual arrival and settlement in South Africa, it will be remiss not to provide a background of family systems in Nigeria, as the migrants like any other migrants come from a family background in their home country. It will also touch on the migrants family structure in South Africa and contrast it with their former one. Hopefully, this section sets the stage for further discussions on family and household discussions in the study.

Nigerian families are said to be patriarchal and the extended family is very influential in the lives of family members as compared to family setups in the westernised world (Labeodan, 2005). According to Mallum (1986), many Nigerian families are extended, meaning that the nuclear family of father, mother and children live together with other relatives such as aunts, cousins, uncles and grandmothers among others. Foster children also form part of households. Extended families are pivotal to Nigerian family systems and all its members such as grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles, all work as a unit through life (Kwissential, n.d).

According to Durojaiye (1976) in Mallum (1986), the traditional Nigerian extended family is often a polygamous one. Monogamous homes however, also incorporate extended families and Nigerian nuclear families cannot be said to be strictly nuclear as extended family members are an integral part of their lives. A characteristic of the extended family is that members have a common identity and group feelings (Ezewa, 1986).

In the Nigerian family system, regardless of family structure, ethnicity and religion, men are revered as they are seen as the ones who continue the family name and lineage and therefore regarded as dominant to women (Labeodan, 2005). Women are seen as subordinate to men and there are prescribed gender roles for men and women. The man is considered to be the head of the Nigerian household/family and he controls productive resource, labour force and reproductive capacities within the family (Asinyabola, 2005). Women on the other hand are responsible for domestic chores such as cooking and cleaning. The literature provided on Igbo and Yoruba history and culture in this study attests to male dominance and the low status of women in Nigeria families and households. It also attests to the fact that Nigerian families are usually extended and that even though the sizes have dwindled, extended families continue to be part of Nigeria's social life. In light of this discussion, the majority of Nigerian families including that of Christian Igbo and Yoruba groups could be termed as extended patriarchal families.

From the interviews, it was revealed that some of the migrants come from such a background. The extended family is interwoven in the lives of even those from nuclear families. Thus, for the majority of the migrants, the extended patriarchal family has always been pivotal in their lives and provides support in various forms such as assistance with child care, finance and housework. The extended family is also instrumental in decision making. Upon migration to South Africa however, the migrants lost the immediate support of their extended families.



The family structure also changed as it became strictly nuclear, sibling based or cohabitation, wherein unmarried male migrants resided with a partner. Despite the change in the family structure, the male migrants still try to hold on to their patriarchal status and prescribed gender roles which often results in conflict within the family. For instance, women are expected to shoulder all domestic work as it is seen as their responsibility, regardless of the lack of help from extended family members. This puts a heavy strain on the women which at times leads to arguments with their spouses/partners. However, like all other migrants, Nigerian migrants in Durban have learnt to cope with new situations such as that of changing family structures.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

Notably, international migration is hardly ever a simple individual action in which a person decides to move in search of a better life and quickly becomes assimilated in the new country (Castle and Miller, 2003). It is a long drawn out process which will be played out for the rest of the migrants' life. This chapter has provided insights into these processes. It examined pre and post migration activities of Nigerian migrants through a gender lens and the chapter foregrounded the gender geographies of power framework. It first gave an overview of Nigerian migration in general and in particular to Durban, South Africa.

The concept of geographical scales runs right through this chapter. It is notable that gender operates on multiple scales such as the body, family and state across transnational spaces. As such, gender is envisioned and practiced within and across different scales and transnational spaces and gender ideologies are constantly reaffirmed and reconfigured. It was evident also that the migrants initiated ways to transform their situation. The social locations and power geometry concept of the gendered geographies of power framework speak to that. Finding themselves within power hierarchies they have not constructed and in a social location different from theirs, the migrants looked for ways to integrate into the society by exerting agency to transform their situation. Massey (1994) argues that geography is vital in the construction of gender and there is geographical variation in gender relations. She further argues that ways of thinking about space and place are tied up with both direct and indirect particular social constructions of gender relations. Although the gendered geographies of power framework is the main theory utilised in this chapter, reference was also made to the social identity theory as it best explains how the migrants define themselves through food.

This chapter also examined the gender dynamics in the immigration/migration process and in the ways migrants settle and adapt in the South African community. It further examined through a gender lens, the transnational activities of the migrants, their recreation of home through food and their use of the psychological function of religion. Finally, it looked at the migrants, particularly the male's engagement with hustling and xenophilia and family formations of the migrants in their home as well as host land. All of these activities were examined through the gender light thereby shedding light on the gender politics involved in Nigerian migration and settlement in Durban, South Africa

## CHAPTER FIVE

### GENDER POWER RELATIONS IN THE HOUSEHOLD

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter explores gender power relations in the households of Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa. There have been some works on Nigerian migrants in South African communities relating to xenophobic attacks, informal employment, settlement, adaptation and integration and health related issues (cf. Singh and Saussi, 2010; Segatti, Adeagbo and Ogunyemi, 2012) but hardly any research on their household life, especially from a gender angle has been conducted. This chapter intends to fill in that gap by exploring gender power relations in their households from the data collected from the in depth interviews and participant observation. This chapter focuses especially on how gender power relations in the households of Nigerian migrants are challenged, negotiated or reinforced.

To attain this aim, the concept of geographical scales, the social construction of masculinity theory, patriarchy theory and feminist post structuralism framework are utilized to provide insight and direction into the overall study. As Connell (1987) avers, the power structure of gender is connected with masculinity. Masculinity, according to Hearn and Kimmel (2006), can be seen as the power of men over women (heterosocial power) and the power of some men over other men (homosocial power). Clatterbaugh (1997) argues that the task of describing the male reality or men masculinities is a difficult one as there are different forms of masculinities. The dominant form of masculinity, however, is 'hegemonic' and is used to refer to groups of men who legitimize and reproduce the social relations that generate their dominance (Donaldson, 1993). This form of masculinity underpins this study. Hegemonic masculinity is interwoven with patriarchy. Under patriarchy, men are the arbiters of identity for both males and females because the cultural norm of human identity is by definition, male identity and masculinity (Stollenberg, 1997). Stollenberg (1997) adds that the cultural norm of male identity under patriarchy consists of power, prestige, privilege and prerogative as over and against the gender class women and that is what is entailed in masculinity.

In essence, gender power relations in the household cannot be explained outside the domain of masculinity and patriarchy. Also, as this section brings out the gender operations within the migrants family and households in both the extended family in Nigeria and the nuclear family in South Africa, I utilised the concept of geographical scales to explore how gender is

enacted in the family/households across transnational spaces and the changes that have occurred in family and household structures upon migration. To best explain the ambiguities and complexities in the gender power play in the migrants' household, feminist post structuralism theory is also utilized. Baxter (2003) asserts that feminist post structuralism theory best equips feminist researchers with the thinking to see through the 'ambiguities and confusions' of particular discursive contexts where females are located as simultaneously powerful and powerless. She adds that feminist post structuralism does not ascribe to the norm of viewing male dominance and female subordination as a universal phenomenon as it considers that a dominant discourse of gender differentiation can at different times and different places produce inequalities within gender relations. One, however, cannot talk about power in gender relations without an understanding of the power concept. The next section examines this concept and its relationship with gender.

## **5.2 Power and Gender**

Power can be defined as the ability to influence the behaviour of people with or without resistance. Foucault (1980) describes power as a complex strategic situation in a given social setting. Several authors have over the years grappled with this concept (Clegg, 1989; French and Raven 1959; Gee 2011; Luke 1974; Vatiero, 2009) resulting in various interpretations of the concept. In their attempt to explain such terms as patriarchy, inequality, oppression and subordination, feminists have also had to grapple with this concept. Power can only be exercised when there are two or more people involved, hence the term 'power relations'. As Young (1990) argues, power is a relation and it exists only in action as ongoing processes or interactions. Power relations can be found in various settings such as the work place and the household. This is why Connell (1987:107) asserts that 'power may be an imbalance of advantage or an inequality of resources in a workplace, household or larger institution'.

Hindess (1996) avers that people employ power in their dealings with things and with each other and as a result, the will of those with more power will normally prevail over that of those with less power. Hindess (1996) further argues that there is an unequal relationship between those who employ power for their own purpose and those who are subject to its effect. Contrary to the view that power is inherently bad, van Dijk (2008) argues that power can be used for many neutral or positive ends. Van Dijk further argues that it is when power is used illegitimately or abused that it becomes bad as it hurts other people and produces injustice and inequality. Kabeer (1999), for instance, conceives of power as the ability to

make choices and that it has three dimensions which are resources, agency and achievements. Power, according to Allen (2003), could be either instrumental or associational. Instrumental power is used to obtain leverage whilst associational power acts as a collective medium to facilitate some common aim (Allen, 2003). As the focus of this chapter is on gender power relations in the households of Nigerian migrants in Durban, examining how power is associated with gender was critical.

According to Lorber (2008), gender is an organizing principle of social orders that divide people into two major categories (men and women) and they are expected to be different, are treated differently and so become different. She adds that these social processes reflect and sustain the gendering of all the institutions of society. As a result, gender ideologies surfaces. Gender relations like all social relations embody both the material and ideological (Argawal 1997). Gender ideology is ‘the justification of gender statuses particularly their differential evaluation and the dominant ideology tend to suppress criticism by making these evaluations seem natural’ (Lorber, 1994:30). Gender ideology is tied to gender role ideology. Kroska (2007) describes both as attitudes regarding the appropriate roles, rights, and responsibilities of women and men in society and that they can be reflected generally or in a specific domain, such as an economic, familial, legal, political, and/or social domain. Kroska (2007) further argues that gender ideology constructs range from the traditional, conservative, or anti-feminist to egalitarian, liberal, or feminist. The traditional conservative gender ideology which accords power to the male sex is prevalent in present day societies.

Men are placed in a position wherein they can control, dominate and exploit women. In fact, most societies are governed by a patriarchal system, wherein men are in positions of dominance over women and are as a consequence the power holders. Millet (1985) asserts that in all known societies, relationship between men and women are based on power and this power takes the form of male domination over women in all areas of life. This implies that the patriarchal subjection of women transcends borders, peoples and cultures. It is therefore understandable why this is a main focus in feminist studies and this is attested to by Morris’s (1993) pronouncement below to the effect that:

It is important to recognize that the focus of feminist studies is this institutionalized male dominance, operating through social structures like the law, education, employment, religion, the family and cultural practices. None of these is to be explained simplistically in terms of

conscious intent, of ill-will or conspiracy of individual men or even groups of men. These self-sustaining structures of power, by means of which women's interests are always ultimately subordinated to male interests, constitute the social order known as "patriarchy", a designation which applies to almost all human societies, past and present (Morris, 1993:4).

The relationship between men and women is what is known as gender relations. It refers to the ways in which 'the social categories of men and women relate over the whole range of social organization and this is not just in interactions between individual men and women in the sphere of personal relationship but in all social activity' (Makama 2013:118). Power is a central aspect of gender relations and women generally have less access than men do to most kinds of power (Lips, 1991). It is, therefore, not surprising that it is universally acknowledged that men hold and exercise more power than women in every sphere of life including the family. This is not always the case though as gender categories differ according to people's class, ethnicity, nationality and sexuality (Jackson and Scott, 2000) and there are instances where male power is challenged or negotiated. As Luke (2005) avers, whilst people's conception about power can reproduce and reinforce power structures and relations, it can also challenge and subvert them. Similarly, Connell (1987) argues that the authority of men is not spread out evenly in all spheres of social life since in some circumstances, women have authority and the power of men can be contested or diffused. The actual treatment of women and their relative power and contribution vary enormously from culture to culture and over different periods in the history of particular cultural traditions (Ortner, 1996). This fact notwithstanding, men are usually the power holders in society since gender signifies relationships of power (cf. Scott, 1988a).

### **5.3 Gender Power Relations and the Household**

As stated earlier on, gender power relations are evident in households. A household includes all the people living in a house and this is generally made up of a family which is either nuclear or extended. There are also households that are made up of people who are not family members. Smart and Neale (1999) expands on diversified forms of household and families. According to them, there has been an increasing awareness of the diversity of family and household forms. This chapter, however, concentrates on the family household, especially those with spouses/partners. According to Agarwal (1997), family households

constitute multiple actors with varying preference and interest and they are arenas of consumption, production and investment wherein labour and resource allocation decisions are made.

Matsuoka and Sorenson (1999) view households as a zone of mutual support and companionship and are thus an important source and support for migrants. Szczepanikova (2004), however, argues that households and families are composed of individuals whose ability to benefit from such support is influenced by the structure and hierarchy of gendered relationships. Gender ideologies reflect and create complex power imbalances even in spousal relationships (Davies and Carrier, 1999). Gender power is most evident in the family and other intimate relationships where gender is still construed even ideologically as a reasonable and legitimate basis for the distribution of rights, power, privileges and responsibilities (Risman and Johnson-Summerford, 1998). Bradley (1994) argues that even if families are no longer strictly patriarchal they are nevertheless still transmitters of sexual inequalities as the notion of the male as breadwinner and the woman as a full time mother are still upheld. Similarly, Delphy and Leonard (1994) assert that marriage is precisely a gendered and unequal division of labor with most wives working more hours a day than their husbands in subordinate roles.

Gender power play in the household is revealed not only in ideas and representations but also in the division of labour and resources between men and women (Argawal, 1997). There is evidence that there are persistent gender inequalities in the distribution of household resources and tasks which largely result from gender ideologies and constructions. As such, decisions about the various tasks in a household are not simply based on the particular needs of that household but also reflect assumptions of gender and power in the broader society (Davies and Carrier, 1999). According to Okin (1989), the contemporary gender-structured family unjustly distributes the benefits and burdens of familial life amongst husbands and wives. Thus, the division of housework is based on power imbalances resulting from gender construct. Control of material and social resources in a household give the holders authority over others and in a position to exercise power (Kabeer, 1999). The power relations between couples are embedded within the social context they take place and the gender system of a society is central to the individual woman's ability to negotiate power within the household (Parrado, Flippen and Mcquiston, 2005).

Argawal (1997), however, argues that the relations of power between women and men are not easy to grasp in their full complexity. This is because of the unevenness and ambiguities of power relations between males and females, a fact posited by post-structuralist feminists. Although feminist post structuralism takes cognizance of the fact that men and women are not equivalently positioned in terms of the ways in which power is negotiated through gender relations, it does not subscribe to the view that all females are universal victims of male oppression (Baxter, 2003).

In light of this, it can be asked whether the former gender power structure of Nigerian family households is still upheld after migration, especially when one thinks about the complex nature of the family household and migration itself. Szczepanikova (2004) conceptualizes the family and household as an open system which is in constant interaction and under constant influence of external social forces and as a dynamic structure that is always in progress. For Connell (1987), there is no other institution like the family where 'relationships are so extended in time, so intensive in contact and so dense in their interweaving of economics, emotion, power and resistance'. Migration can provide women with greater economic opportunities and a more egalitarian cultural environment thereby heightening their power vis a vis men (Parrado, Flippen and Mcquiston, 2005). As such, migration has been credited with the empowerment of women and the altering of traditional patterns of life (cf. Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999; Lamphere, 1987; Menjivar, 1999). Whilst some schools of thought indicate that migration can lead to the autonomy and the independence of women (Grasmuck and Pessar, 1991; Lamphere, 1987) others argue that migration does not necessarily lead to female emancipation and that there are variations depending on race, class and status (Hondagneu Sotelo, 1994; Kibria 1993).

With such complex characteristics of the family and migration, it is reasonable to assume that there will be some effect in the family household structure when migration occurs. Some problems faced by families who migrate are cultural differences, the difficulties of learning other languages, psychological trauma and the sense of insecurity and uncertainty about the future (Castro, 2002). This can lead to disintegration in the family. In a study of post-migration changes on marital relationships, Hyman, Guruge and Mason (2008) argue that the major types of post-migration changes described by study participants were loss of household help and emotional support, changes in income and status and changes in gender roles. They also argue that some of the impacts of these changes on marital relationships are increased



marital conflict, increased autonomy for women, increased mutual dependence, more joint decision-making and changes in communication and intimacy.

It is, therefore, evident that as family members learn to adjust and settle in a new environment, they experience various changes, even in the power relation structure in the family. Is this the case though for family/households of Nigerian migrants in Durban? The following sections probe into gender power relations in the former setting of the migrants alongside the existing one and establish how migration has impacted on this relation in their households. As Bjerer (1997) avers, migrants' migration path can only make sense in the light of what went on before and what goes on simultaneously.

#### **5.4 Gender Power Relations in the Homeland**

As stated earlier on, Nigeria has about two hundred and fifty ethnic groups and these ethnic groups have their own distinguished characteristics (Falola, 2001). However, despite the differences in language, geographical locations, customs and traditions, one thing that they have in common is the gender construction of femininity and masculinity. From the in depth interviews conducted with the migrants (Igbos and Yoruba), they were all in agreement that the family structure in Nigeria is largely patriarchal, revolves around the traditional gender ideology and males are expected to display hegemonic masculinity. As Ako-Nai (2013) asserts, male children are trained to become heads of families, bread winners and decision makers whilst female children are taught to be loyal, faithful, diligent and subservient wives to their husbands.

Hegemonic masculinity promotes power and dominance over the female sex. Like any other form of masculinity, it is reflected in the institutional reproduction and articulation of masculinities and expressed in gender relations (Hearn and Kimmel, 2006). The traditional gender ideologies upheld in Nigerian households condone patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity, putting men in positions of dominance over women and according them power in their households. According to Krossak (2007), the traditional gender ideology on the family refers to men fulfilling their family roles through breadwinning activities and women fulfilling their roles through nurturing, homemaking and parenting activities. Van Dijk (2008) argues that members of dominant groups may derive their individually exercised power from the overall group they belong to. Power, therefore, is accorded to Nigerian men as a social group and as individuals, making them the power holders in their households and in the

society. Gender inequalities pervade the most personal of relationships and what happens in private life cannot be understood as separable from the wider social inequalities and cultural mores in which it is embedded (Jackson and Scott, 2002). The wider social context, therefore, is crucial in understanding interpersonal relationships (Lips, 1991).

Nigerian males are in no doubt in positions of power in their homeland households and thus make them the dominant sex. They display power in their households by acting as heads of households, breadwinners, decision-makers, property owners, scornful of domestic tasks and in control of women's sexual and reproductive rights. This is attested to by one of the male migrant's expression that '*A Nigerian man provides for his family. A Nigerian man decides for his family. Most of all a Nigerian man is the head of his house*'. The gender identity expected from a Nigerian male is echoed in the foregoing statement. Cameron (1997b:49) avers that 'identities are constantly performed, that is gender, for example, has to be reaffirmed and publicly displayed by repeatedly performing particular acts in accordance with cultural norms which define masculinity and femininity'. The construction of such identities evolves from a process of affiliation to particular beliefs and social groups and from the attributions or ascription of others (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999).

What Walby (1994) terms 'private patriarchy' wherein a patriarch controls women individually and directly in the relative private sphere of the home in the household is what is mostly practiced in the households of Nigerians. Such a society where power is held by male heads of households could be termed, according to Mann (1994), as a patriarchal society. In the Nigerian society, patriarchy in households/families can also be reproduced by older women such as mothers and mothers in law. As Olutola (2012) notes in a study on violence between Yoruba wives and mothers –in-law in south western Nigeria, there is a strained relationship between most daughters-in-law and their mothers-in-law which can even escalate in violence. Various reasons were forwarded for this such as the wife listening to or contributing to conversation between the mother and son uninvited, not giving necessary and due respect to the husband, wasting the husband's money and dictating to or controlling the son. Such attitudes leads to conflict between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law with the mothers-in-law determined to uphold and reinforce existing patriarchal relations. This is not to say however that daughters-in-law cannot be troublesome as well. It is also customary for mothers to advise their daughters to be good wives which involve adhering to their society's gender expectations which is largely patriarchal.

Having such powerful positions in their household in their home country, one that is even supported by their mothers and mothers in law, most Nigerian males are of the opinion that this patriarchal power will be maintained even if they migrate. Is this really the case though? Can their patriarchal power be maintained in a country like South Africa which, though patriarchal, on the one hand, also has a progressive constitution that upholds gender equality?

The end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994 led to a revisit of the country's constitution and other government policies. The Bill of Rights became enshrined in the constitution and it gives a number of rights to all regardless of race, class, sex, religion, sexuality among others. For most South African cultures however, roles and responsibilities are gendered and patriarchy is operative. Sexual and other forms of violence against women are also rife in South Africa. Despite this, efforts are made by the government and other institutions to promote gender equality and women's rights as well as to combat discrimination, abuse and violence of women. As such, it is possible to fight for one's rights and prosecute violators. The gender regime in South Africa therefore could be said to be a mixture of patriarchy and gender expectations of roles and responsibilities of men and women juxtaposed alongside the promotion of gender equality and rights of women which makes South Africa what I will refer to as a 'tolerant gendered space'. Before attempting to examine whether the men's patriarchal powers can be maintained in this space, I will first of all examine whether the female migrants, like the men also had preconceived ideas of how gender power relations operate in the migration site.

### **5.5 Migration Expectations of Gender Power Relations**

It was evident from the interviews that the display of power by Nigerian males in their households has not always been implicitly accepted by all partner/spouse or by other female household members and these are on the lookout for opportunities to challenge it. Migration affords such an opportunity. As in the case of Tumi (11) outlined below, it is evident that some of the female migrants had preconceived ideas of attaining an equitable gender power relationship in the migration site. They left Nigeria with the determination to acquire some degree of autonomy and were, therefore, ready for a challenge. Others, however, were influenced by circumstances in their host land and were forced to challenge the existing power relations in their household. This is not to say, however, that equitable gender power relations did not exist in some Nigerian households or that all the women are dissatisfied with their operating gender power relations. However, challenges of gender power is common in

the migration site and it usually ends up in situations where power relations are resisted, negotiated or reinforced as evidenced in the succeeding sections. As Bottomley (1979) asserts, domestic patriarchy is mostly dependent on the support from its environment and the drastic upheaval of migration can lead to the erosion of patriarchal authority.

Tumi (11) used to work for an advertising company in Nigeria. She joined her husband in South Africa, hoping for a better life and one free from cultural restrictions. She said she came to South Africa only to find that her husband was still the same and has not changed in any way. He expected them to pick up from where they left in Nigeria. She explains as follows:

*My husband has not changed in any way. He left Nigeria seven years ago and stayed alone all in this country till I joined him. He even did his own housework. I had expected some changes in his behaviour and in the way we will run our house. I thought he will now think differently but he still behaves like we are in Nigeria. He wants to be the boss in the house all the time, and telling me what to do, what to cook and how to behave. If I object, he gets cross (Tumi .11).*

Tumi is no longer supportive of the power relations in her family. In the first place, she had headed her household and lived independently for some years with her children in Nigeria. She was also of the opinion that her husband would no longer be strictly bound to former gender constructs. Therefore, before she left Nigeria, Tumi already had pre-conceived migration expectations that include her relationship with her husband. This can be equated with the Imagination or Mind work concept developed by Mahler and Pessar (2003) in their gendered geographies of power theory. They argue that social agency must include the role of cognitive processes, such as the imagination as it influences people's thoughts and action when they migrate. Migration and transnationalism are influenced by the imagination (Appadurai, 1990) and therefore this social imaginary or mind work must be valued and factored into people's agency. Tumi had imagined the migration site as a sort of gender Utopia, one where gender equality can be fostered. She was looking forward to a more equitable power relationship in her household. Her husband on the other hand is bent on upholding power by maintaining a hegemonic masculinity that accords him patriarchal dividends. Patriarchal dividend is the dividend accrued from being a man in a patriarchal

society, in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command together with a more material set of benefits (Morgan, 2006). As such, a power struggle ensued between Tumi and her husband and this resulted in tension and strife in their household. Ikechi (10) also shares a similar experience.

Ikechi (10) comes from a deeply religious and cultural background which promotes female subordination and male dominance. She is bound by them even though she is not happy about it. She expressed that she had thought that she and her husband would be able to work on an equal footing when they settle in South Africa, as they would be free from cultural gender restrictions at home. She expresses this in the following excerpt:

*I do not like the way us women are treated in Nigeria by men. Our fathers, brothers, husbands, uncles and even male bosses always try to boss you around and even treat you bad. I think they behave like this because that is how people expect them to behave. At times you can tell that some men are not happy with the way women are treated but they are scared to say or do anything because of what people will say. I always think that if we leave Nigeria, things will be better and my husband and I will do things together. (Ikechi.10)*

Ikechi is clearly not happy about the way women are treated in Nigeria. It is implied also in her narrative that even some men are not happy about this situation which in turn implies that one should not generalize that all Nigerian men are patriarchal or gender biased. Contrary to Ikechi's expectations, however, her husband had no intention of establishing an equal footing when they migrated and there is friction when she attempts to question things. It is notable, therefore, that the desire by the women for an equitable gender relation in their household usually leads to friction with their spouses. This struggle for power in the household of the migrants is what Parkins (1979) terms exclusionary and usurpatory strategies. Exclusionary strategies, according to Parkins (1979), involve the downward exercise of power in a process of subordination as a social group seeks to secure, maintain or enhance privileged access to rewards and opportunities. The strategy of usurpation, on the other hand, is the upward exercise of power whereby excluded groups engage in forms of countervailing actions and resistance to exclusion (Parkins, 1979).

Like Tumi (11) and Ikechi (10), some of the female migrants also had preconceived ideas of attaining an equitable gender power relationship in the migration site. They apparently were not happy with the patriarchal structures in their homes and left Nigeria with the determination to acquire some degree of autonomy. As Connell (1987) asserts, many accounts of patriarchy give the impression of a simple orderly structure but behind this façade is likely to be a mass of disorder and anomaly.

Others, however, were not sure of what to expect in terms of gender power relations and some even confessed that they did not really think about it. For many, their thoughts were tuned towards having a better life, job opportunities, financial progress, educational opportunities and a chance to send remittances home. As Modupeh (12) expressed '*All I thought of before I left home, was that I will now have a chance to better myself and my family and I did not really think of how things will be between my husband*'. Indeed, for the majority, it was when they settled in the host land that circumstances influenced them to challenge the existing power relations in their household as reflected in the succeeding sections. As such, gender power relations were resisted, renegotiated or reinforced as discussed in the following sections.

## **5.6 Challenging Gender Power Relations in the Household**

Feminist post structuralist theory identifies the versions of subjective reality available to women and the competing social and political interests which sustain these versions (Baxter, 2003). The above author also adds that it aims to describe and critique these different versions of femininity as well as the multiple but not unlimited range of subject positions pertaining to each version. This is important in understanding the different ways in which the migrant women respond to the gender power structures in their households. Whilst some women embarked on a full scale overthrow of their existing power structure, others negotiated, whilst some just simply succumb to it. Alongside the narratives of the women, the voices of the men have also been given a platform. The narratives of both male and female migrants have been used to reveal how gender power relation is challenged, (re)negotiated or reinforced in the household.

The discourse of gender differentiation has at different times and within different places produced inequalities within gender relations. However, some of these inequalities can be

redressed through negotiation. Negotiation addresses the processes by which men and women bargain for privilege and resources and as such it involves human agency (Gerson and Peiss, 1985). It is also argued that for negotiation to take effect there must be a sort of agreement between both parties, even if it is done grudgingly so (Gerson and Peiss, 1985). Using Ayodele's (4) example as a starting point, I attempt to show how gender power relations can be affected in a new gender regime and how it can be challenged and negotiated.

Ayodele (4) is a sales assistant in a cell phone shop and has two young children. In the following excerpt, she explains her daily routine and how she was overburdened by housework:

*I start work at eight pm and finish at five. I then collect my children from aftercare club before I go home. At times I shop first before I get home. At home, I cook and then then do other housework like cleaning and washing the dishes. In all this my husband never helps me, By the end of the day, I am so tired. I feel like I will faint at times. In Nigeria, I will have had people to help me, but here it is just me (Ayodele.4).*

With no time to rest and no help from her spouse, Ayodele is bound to feel exhausted. This forces her to question those social constructions which permit a man to laze around whilst the woman does all the domestic work. She challenged this inequitable division of household/domestic tasks by requesting that her husband assists her to do some of the chores. Her husband (a Nigerian), however, has been brought up to see domestic tasks as womanly and was, therefore, unwilling to help out. He constantly drew on patriarchal and masculinity notions to justify his actions and to hold on to his powerful position in the household. As Hartman (1981) argues, power is most often felt by those who challenge the distribution of unpaid work within the home. Ayodele had to contend with this power which ensued in a long drawn out battle, wherein she resorted to constant nagging and leaving some work undone. Finally, her husband backed down and agreed to help out with some household chores. This situation was one in which power was challenged and negotiated.

Ayodele's situation begs the question as to whether women who are employed or earn an income are better positioned to contest gender power relations in their household than non-working women. Negash (2006) avers that earning power and increased income give women self-confidence to obtain a voice in household decisions including financial, fertility and

domestic decisions. Negash (2006), however, observes that cultural practices can become a hindrance. Malhotra and Mather (1997) argue that whilst employment can aid women in having a say in financial decisions in the household, it does not necessarily give them a voice in social and organizational matters in the household. Similarly, Boyd and Grieco (2003) assert that whilst participation in the labour market can lead to economic independence and relative autonomy for women, it does not automatically improve equality between a migrant woman and her spouse. In an article on marital power dynamics, Tichenor (1999) investigates whether wives who earn more or are in higher status occupations than their husbands are able to exercise greater power in their relationships. She notes that whilst there is a material component to equality in marriage, it is not income or status that translates into power. On the same subject, Parrado, Flippen and McQuiston (2005) argue that increased employment opportunities and greater financial independence in the host land can promote migrant women's control over budgetary and other forms of decision making as well as a greater leverage in involving men in household chores, although this is not always the case. Zhou's (1992) study of Chinese women in New York and Kibria's (1993) study of Vietnamese women in Philadelphia show that increased earnings does not necessarily lead to an egalitarian gender power relationship in the home. It can be concluded, therefore, that whilst earning can give women the confidence to challenge unequal gender relations in the home, they are not always able to achieve full equality in gender power relations.

However, the concept of agency can make a difference as to how people challenge power and the achievement they work towards. Ayodele's example show that 'powerless' individuals can exercise agency to change their circumstances. Kabeer (1999) defines agency as the ability to define one's goals and act upon them. This, she said, can take the form of bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation as well as subversion and resistance. This is reminiscent of the concept of power geometry introduced by Massey (1994) which refers to the types and degrees of agency people exert given their social locations. Through agency, people can refine and transform their 'social locations' as evidenced in the case studies above. Within feminist post structuralism, individuals are seen as multiply positioned in terms of their agency to adapt, to negotiate or resist dominant subject positions or alternatively take up positions within a resistant discourse (Baxter, 2003).

Lena (5) like Ayodele, also exercised agency in challenging gender power relations in her household. Lena used to do home sewing but she was largely dependent on her husband



financially. Occasionally, he would withhold money from her as a way of exercising his power. When a friend requested that Lena teams up with her to rent a shop and become a full time seamstress, she saw this as a way out of her financial predicament. Her husband, however, was not in support. Despite this, she accepted the offer and her husband gave her a choice to either give up the offer or move out of the house. She refused to give up the offer or move out and threatened to report the issue at a family clinic if he insisted she should move out, a threat she admits she would never have dared to make if she was in Nigeria.

South Africa has family laws that regulate relationships between spouses, parents/guardians and children and between relatives. Family cases can be brought to a court of law but the family clinics also help by providing free legal services to families with domestic issues, such as marital conflicts, domestic violence and maintenance issues. In addition, they can channel subjects towards the required help facilities such as the police or medical unit. Such a threat made an impact as her husband was certainly not keen to engage with the law. Eventually, Lena's husband accepted the situation, although he is not happy about this challenge to his power. Lena's threat of reporting her husband forced him to relent rather than showing any tacit agreement on his part. Although her husband is angry about this and their relation is strained she was able to secure what she wanted.

Castells (1997) asserts that the transformation of women's work and women's consciousness can lead to the erosion of patriarchy and male anger and abuse is one of the responses of this erosion. Lena has become very aware of her rights and she vows to never go back to being the financially dependent person that she was. One, however, cannot help but think of the cost or the price she paid for her decision to prevail: the price of marital strife, tension in the family and a possible divorce. In their quest for an equitable relationship in the family and in society in general, women have had to pay high costs and make sacrifices. They are regarded as bad wives, bad mothers and seen as social misfits. It can also lead to conflict and breakup of the family, domestic violence/abuse and can even affect women's mental and physical health. Modupeh's (12) situation is different from the others as is evident below:

*I never knew that it was wrong for a man to force his wife to have sex with him as I believe that a wife's body belongs to her husband. At times, even though I will be too tired or even sick, I will give in to him as he will not take no for an answer. It is here in South Africa that I learnt from television*

*programs and friends that this is wrong and that it is called marital rape. I have learnt that my body is my own and I have a right to say no. Now, I stand my ground and do not allow my husband to bully me sexually. I know he is not happy about this, but he now listens when I say no (laughs) (Modupeh.12).*

It is not surprising that Modupeh was unaware of marital rape coming from such a patriarchal background wherein the man has the final say. Marital rape, according to Makama (2013), is generally not recognised as an offence in the Nigerian system of law even when the wife is wounded during the forced intercourse. As Salaam (2003) asserts, cases like marital rape and wife battery are not considered problematic enough to be taken seriously by the police. Religion and culture backs the notion of a wife's body belonging to the husband and, therefore, having no right to say no to a husband's sexual advances. Even in societies where there is a high level of awareness of marital rape, it is highly debatable as most men and even some women do not regard it as rape or a crime worthy of punishment as it involves sex with an intimate partner. According to Russel (1982), most men believe that their wives have no rights to refuse their sexual advances and persisted in having sex with them even though they knew it was unwanted. Russel (1982) further argues that wife rape is viewed as a manifestation of male sexuality oriented towards domination. It can also be seen as a way of men expressing power over women. In Frieze's (1983) study of marital rape, the majority of the women expressed that their husbands raped them because they believed that action served to prove their manhood. Coming back to Modupeh, she also expressed that even if she had had this awareness in Nigeria, it would have been difficult for her to stand her ground as family members, religious and traditional leaders or even the police would have supported her husband. Laughing at the end of the above excerpt is probably a sense of relief she now has as she is no longer forced into unwanted sexual advances.

Lena, Ayodele and Modupeh's story show that patriarchal power can be challenged and negotiated depending on the setting and situation. Migration challenges cultural traditions, national identity and political institutions (Castle, 2000). It provides new opportunities for women and men to improve their lives and escape oppressive social relations (Piper, 2005). As Kandiyoti (1988) avers, patriarchal power is dependent on specific material conditions and changes in them can weaken the patriarchal order. Connel (1987) also asserts that recent studies on the family show that husbands are now finding it more difficult to operate an openly patriarchal regime in the house. The above author, however, observes that these local

victories do not overthrow patriarchy and advocates that the global or macro relationship of power where women are subordinated to men in the society as a whole should be distinguished from the local or micro situations in particular household. Similarly, Gerson and Peiss (1985) argue that although challenges to the stability of patriarchal social organization may be met by concession which in effect readjusts gender boundaries, the overall system of male dominance continues to persist.

It is evident that although challenging gender power in the household can lead to positive changes in sexual division of labour, decision making and in other areas in the household, it can also lead to marital breakdown, domestic violence, increased domestic quarrelling and tension and strife in the family. Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) argue that uncertainties and challenges over social roles and identity, sexuality, work and personal relationships can be manifested in violent or abusive behaviours towards self and others. The fear of domestic strife, possible marital breakup and other resultant stress can keep women from expressing themselves or challenging issues they are not happy with. Also, an internalization of the inferior status of women also serves as a barrier to challenging unequal gender power relations in the house as the next section highlights.

### **5.7 Adhering to the Power Structure**

Unlike the women above who were able to challenge the gender power structure to some extent in their households, Ikechi (10), on the other hand, is too scared to do or say anything. She was unhappy about the existing gender power relations in her country and had thought that migrating to a new country would lead to more equitable gender relations between her and her spouse. This did not happen and she became even more frustrated as being in South Africa made her more aware of women's rights. She, however, comes from a deeply religious and cultural family, one in which a woman is expected to know her place. She vents out her frustration as follows:

*My eyes have really opened here in South Africa,  
that a woman can do so much and can have the same rights as a man.  
There are so many things I question now. For instance why should  
I be cooking and cleaning when my husband reads his newspaper  
and watches television, then expect me to serve him his  
food. Why should I be the one who stays at home to look after*

*the children. I think about these things, I do not like them but there is nothing I can do. The few times I try to say something we end up quarrelling. My people will not even support me if I try to complain. So I just swallow it. (Sighs) (Ikechi.10).*

Apparently, Ikechi has been further influenced by the conditions in South Africa. She finds herself in a position where she is critical of her society's expectation of women and the privileges given to men. She questions those things that are taken for granted. Indeed, travel and migration can expose both women and men to new experiences which can present them with opportunities for personal development (Davin, 1996). Women and men who have lived in more than one location in the world know that gender is constructed by people and are, therefore, in a position to question stratified gender roles (Sweetman, 1998). Ikechi, however, believes that she is not in a position to act. This is typical of many women who are constricted by culture and religious values and as a result they suffer in silence. What is so strong about culture and tradition that it can lead one to accept unsatisfactory situations? The most popular definition of culture is the one adopted at the World Conference on Cultural Policies in Mexico (1982) which states that 'culture is the whole complex of distinctive, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group'. In other words, culture is the beliefs and practices of a society and it is what upholds the fabric of many societies. It is a way of life and for many, the only life they know. Religion, like culture, is also a way of life for many people. It prescribes ways to behave and live. Unfortunately, most cultural and religious norms impose patriarchy and validate gender inequality. People normally find it hard to challenge those things which are part of their lives and at times find it hard to do so even when they have moved away from that cultural setting. The fear of being ostracized or being cut off from their roots deters them from taking positive actions. Parrado, Flippen and Mcquiston (2005) argue that the social and cultural processes that determine the evolvement of gender relations during migration is still poorly understood.

Also, as in all unequal situations, there is a tendency for the deprived to embrace and accept the inequality. As Kabeer (1999) avers, it is difficult to condemn gender inequality against women when it appears to have been embraced and accepted by the women themselves. Kabeer (1999) further argues that this means that they have internalized a lesser social status value and this can have adverse effects on themselves as well as other female members. Some women like Lizzy (8), implicitly accept the gender power structure in their households, and

accept their subordinate position of serving their husband. Lizzy explains her position in the following excerpt:

*Things here are not the same like home. It is a different place with its own problems but this does not mean that I should change or fight my husband. I accept that my husband is the head of the house and I value his decision. I go by whatever he says. This is what I know and what I will continue to do (Lizzy.8).*

In Lizzy's situation, the migration site has not influenced her in any way to challenge gender power relations. This may be because her cultural values have been so deeply internalized that she sees them as normal. As Nussbaum (2000) argues, some traditions have become so deeply internalized that they appear right and natural and women themselves endorse their own second class status. This situation could be regarded as psychological oppression (cf. Bartky, 1990), a situation wherein the oppressed become their own oppressors by imitating and internalizing their inferiority. On the other hand, this can be Lizzy's way of adapting in the new land. Sweetman (1998) asserts that as a reaction to the pressures of living in a strange environment, some women hold on to their cultural norms. The subjective views of the women makes feminist post structuralism a suited theory as it does not only offer explanations but also share the experiences of individual women especially how they can be contradictory or inconsistent. Indeed, women participate in setting up, maintaining and altering the systems of gender relations (Gerson and Peiss, 1985).

Although feminist post structuralism gives voice to the marginalized, it also gives space to dominant groups, so as to be able to have a better understanding of a situation. It is, therefore, in place to give space to the men to establish how they view the gender power relations in their household. The views by the men on this topic are varied. Some have realized the need to let go of some of their patriarchal powers in the migrant land to enhance the smooth running of their homes. Others are resisting any challenge on gender power relations at all cost. A few have reported that there have not been any challenges as their spouses or other female household members are satisfied with the existing situation. The following section highlights how gender power relations are reinforced in the household.

## 5.8 Reinforcement of Gender Power Relations in the Household

This section highlights a situation wherein efforts to challenge the status quo are resisted and non-negotiable, causing tension in the family. In other words, gender power relations are being reinforced. As Giles (1999) argues, gender relations in migrants household are influenced by traditional ideologies and remembrance of home. This can be seen in Adewole's (13) case. He is married to a non-Nigerian and he admits that this is very challenging since his wife is not aware of his cultural practices. However, he was determined that Nigerian or not, she should realize that he is the power holder in the house. He explains in the excerpt below:

*My wife was a very independent person when I met her. She does what she wants. She comes and goes when she likes and at times does not even tell me where she goes. I told her that when we get married, all was going to change but she thought I was joking. She tried to do the same thing when we got married and I told her that I will not take such rubbish and that I am the man of the house and she cannot expect to come and go as she wants. At time she will even expect me to wash and iron my own clothes. I told her that as a Nigerian man, we do not tolerate this kind of rubbish and that if she wants to stay married to me, she should do what I want or we part company. She saw that I was serious. Now she does what I say and things are better (Adewole.13).*

Adewole is certainly not prepared to let go of all he stands to lose if he negotiates with his wife, which includes being the decision maker and having free domestic services. Above all, he wants to be in a position of power and control. To hold on to these, he even threatens his wife with separation. His story is similar to Nwoye (17) as seen below:

*I brought my wife (Nigerian) to this country because I want her to be with me. She started listening to this fifty-fifty nonsense in this place and one day even had the guts to tell me that we should start sharing housework. With no offence to you my sister, but as long as women have to stoop to urinate, they can never be equal to any man. Never! I lay down the law. I told her that whether we are in Nigeria or not, we should behave*

*like Nigerians. I told her not to forget her place and that if she continues like that, I will send her home. Of course, this made her stop her nonsense. We get on well now (Nwoye.17)*

Notably, Nwoye is determined to hold on to his former gender relations and in essence holds on to the power involved. His masculinity is threatened and he fears for the erosion of his patriarchal powers and the loss of his patriarchal dividends. He also threatens his wife like Adewole, though in his case, with sending her back to Nigeria. His remarks on women not being unequal to men because of the way they urinate is reminiscent of the well-known philosopher, Sigmund Freud's concept of 'penis envy' and the glorification of the male organ and how these signifies male dominance over women in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. Penis envy is the ideology that women feel incomplete without the male organ and look for ways to find a substitute. As such, Freud viewed all women as having underdeveloped superegos which in turn makes them morally inferior to men who are capable of having fully developed superegos because they have a penis (Schultz & Schultz, 2009). As such, Freud's dismissive views of women and female sexuality were clearly phallic-centered (Cohler & Galatzer-Levy, 2008). This supposed supremacy of men over women because of their organ is also implied in the following Yoruba proverb: 'Let a woman and a man walk while urinating, one of them will have messy feet' (Asinyanbola, 2007 in Balogun, 2010). This proverb, according to Balogun (2010), implies that it is the woman who will be messy and this indicates that women are regarded as inferior to men.

In their reinforcement of gender power, both Adewole and Nwoye portray patriarchal and hegemonic masculine notions. As Hearn and Kimmel (2006) argue, masculinity construction influences individual men's performance and their understanding and expression of their gendered identities. Nwoye and Adewole's adherence to hegemonic masculinity is strongly indicated in their narratives. This form of masculinity views men and women as different, contrasted, complementary and unequal (Cockburn, 1991) but never as equals. It also views men as the dominant sex and the one in control. This form of male control and coercion is what Gerson and Peiss (1985) define as domination and it explains the ways in which women as a group are oppressed by men and the power of men over them. It is evident that masculinities do not exist in social and cultural vacuums but are constructed within specific institutional settings (Hearn and Kimmel, 2006).

Reinforcing gender power relations by men in the household is a way of holding on to power and subordinating women. Whilst it does have positive outcomes for them, it has negative ones for the women concerned. The women in this case have been threatened and their voices silenced. They are more like objects than subjects in their own rights given their being subjected to male dominance.

### **5.9 Renegotiating Gender Power: Male Perspective**

David (22) and Babatunde (18) want to hold on to power like the above but lack the resolve and will to stand their ground. Though married, David's sister lives and keeps house for him as his wife stays in Nigeria most of the time. For David, all women are subordinate to men not just wives or partners. He is determined that his sister knows 'who wears the trousers in the house' (meaning who is the man of the house). However, this was not to be the case as evidenced below:

*My sister thinks that now she is no longer in Nigeria, she can just do things. She has changed since she came here. I have told her that she cannot come and go as she wants to or dress anyhow but you will never believe what she told me. She said that if I want someone to control, I should do so to my wife. I do try to stand strong, but she is headstrong. I am fed up. Now if I come home and there is no food, I just cook. Or if my clothes are not ironed, I just do it. I do not like it, but what can I do. She will not have dared to be disrespecting me like this if we were at home. She would not have even think of it. Ah. If I had not promised my people that I will help her to study, I will just have sent her back home (David.22).*

David is unhappy about his sister's rebelliousness and her refusal to succumb to his 'manly' control. He finds it difficult to control her or exercise power over her. Like David, Babatunde also experiences difficulty in exercising his manly powers. He lives with his South African girlfriend, who he says does not listen to his orders or realize that he is the man of the house. Although they stay together, Babatunde said he will probably not marry her if she continued like that as she does not seem to realize the fact that he is the head of the house. To avoid quarrelling, he just goes along with her. Cashopeh (24) also states that the choice seems to have left him. He said his wife nagged him a lot to help him out with the domestic chores and that she even went on contraceptives without discussing with him. He



states that *'It is difficult to force your wife to respect you in a strange country especially where you cannot even beat her. If I do so here, I will end in jail. So I just help out now but I do not really feel like the man of the house any more'*. His statement justifies Castells (1997) assertion that the transformation of women's consciousness can lead to the erosion of patriarchy with male anger and abuse being a result of this erosion. Wife beating or battering is one of the responses by men when their powers are challenged by their partners. Wife beating/battery is a common phenomenon in Nigeria. This is even acknowledged in local proverbs such as the following Yoruba one *'pashan ta fina yale, oun, be laja fun'yawo* (the whip that was used to beat the first wife is kept for the second). This proverb according to Balogun (2010) indicates that a man has the right to beat his wife.

Cashopeh's situation is akin to what Morgan (2006) terms a 'crisis in present day masculinity'. Amongst the reason he cited for this is the rise of feminism and challenges to dominant forms of rationality. This crisis in masculinity results in changes in the economy and gender order as well changes in the family and patterns of intimate living. He notes that a crisis in masculinity is similar to a crisis in patriarchy. O'Donnell and Sharpe (2000:89) concur by stating that if there is a crisis in masculinity, then patriarchy too must be under stress. They also argued that 'once men begin to lose belief in their masculinity then it is a sure sign that patriarchy itself is losing credibility'. Indeed, masculinity and patriarchy go hand in hand and these men are facing what Castells (1997) terms as 'erosion of patriarchy'

David (22) and others are forced to renegotiate the gender power relations in their household. As Gerson and Peiss (1985) asserts, reciprocal processes of negotiation and domination elucidate the ways in which women and men act to support or challenge the existing system of gender relations. Omotayo (16), on the other hand, asserts that there have been no challenges to the gender power relations in his house. It seems as though Omotayo and his wife share the same views on gender power relations in their house and that migration has not impacted in any way. There is a chance though that his wife like Ikechi (10) is unsatisfied with the prevailing conditions but does not have the strength to fight against it.

Enoch (15) indicates that he decided to start assisting with housework after realizing that his wife was overburdened and she was finding it hard to cope. He explains thus:

*I never knew there were so many things to do in the house. In Nigeria, we had family around all the time who helped us but here I suddenly realize it was too much for her. She was struggling to cope and I felt sorry for her.*

*I told her that I will assist her but not when people are around. This is because you know people like my countrymen will laugh at me and ask me whether I have become the wife. They will even say I am now wearing the wrapper. In our circle, it is not good for men to do women's work. So I help her with the housework but only when there is no one around (Enoch.15).*

When questioned whether his wife was happy with the arrangement, he said she was quite satisfied with it as she would be branded as a bad/unsuitable wife if her husband was seen doing housework and that she will quickly take over whatever he was doing if they had visitors. This act of subterfuge in the household is quite dynamic and it is examined in a later chapter. Enoch further asserts that even though his wife liked him helping out with the housework, she made it clear that she was in charge of it and made the decisions as to what he should help with. Enoch's statement raises two main issues, the length which men will go to hold on to their masculinity and the way women themselves have internalized the fact that certain jobs are their domains. Thus, whilst they welcome help in certain duties, they also feel threatened if someone takes the initiative in these areas. It is notable, therefore, that 'the reconstruction of gender relations within the family at the place of destination is a dynamic process wherein some elements brought from communities of origin can be discarded, maintained or reinforced (Parrado and Flippen, 2005). Enoch's excerpt also brought out the fact that a change from the support of the extended family in Nigeria to the sole nuclear family in South Africa has gender implications. This is also indicative in Ayodele (4) narrative (5.6). The geographical scale concept is evident in this chapter as it reveals that gender is practised within different scales, in this case the family, within transnational spaces.

## **5.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined gender power relations in the households of Nigerian migrants in Durban and the impact migration had on their former one. This chapter revealed that gender power relations are not uniform in all the households of the migrants. It highlighted that gender ascriptions of males and females are interwoven with power and as such gender relations in the household are tied up with power as well. The level of power is dependent on the setting and the situation. Thus, this chapter has revealed that migration can impact on and change former gender power relations and that power in gender relations can be negotiated or

reinforced. It is important to note that where negotiations took place, it was done grudgingly or with conditions attached by the men as opposed to it being done wholeheartedly.

This chapter has also noted that some women migrate with the intention of acquiring some degree of autonomy and equality with men and explained that as a result of agency, people through their own efforts were able to refine or change their situations. The concept of subjectivity was also highlighted in the various responses of the women along with the ways in which power in gender relations has its roots in culture and religion. It was also revealed that whilst women were able to negotiate for increased autonomy, a voice in decision making and help in the housework, none reported that they were now on an equal footing with the men. It is also notable that power relations can lead to strife, tension and conflicts in the household. Finally, this chapter brought home the fact that migration does not only change family structures and dynamics but that these changes have gender dynamics as well.

## CHAPTER SIX

### RELIGION AS A VEHICLE FOR MALE DOMINANCE AND CONTROL IN THE MIGRATION SITE

#### 6.1 Introduction

Nigerians from the various ethnic groups have always believed in a supreme being even before the advent of Christianity and Islam in Nigeria. For example, as revealed by the literature review, the Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups believed in a supreme being even before they converted to Christianity and Islam and this belief even influences the names of their children as well as their daily lives. As Ezeome and Marshall (2009) note, although most Nigerians have transited from traditional religious worship to either Christianity or Islam, the same religious fervor is still evident. The authors add that despite the high rate of lawlessness in the Nigerian society, the people are passionate about religion. Religion therefore is not only an identity marker for many Nigerians but also a way of life. Thus, when the use of religion by Durban-based Nigerian migrant men to control women in the migration destination surfaced during the fieldwork conducted for this study, I felt compelled to examine it further. It was also an interesting development since migration as a phenomenon as well as religion and gender are hardly studied in tandem. Although there are a lot of scholarly works on migration and gender (Hondagneu-Sotello, 1994; Palmary et al, 2010; Willis and Yeoh, 2000) or migration and religion (Hagan, 2008; Johnson and Bellofatto, 2012) there are few studies that link religion, migration and gender together, especially within the African context. Studies that have attempted to combine the three are largely centred on gender hierarchies within migrant religious institutions rather than the role of religion in their everyday lives (Ebaugh and Chafetz, 1999, 2000; George, 1998). Also, as Chen (2005) asserts, scholars of this subject tend to focus on the construction of gender in male led immigrant congregation rather than focusing on the ways the women interpret and practice religion in their everyday lives.

This chapter attempts to forge a link among the three from a different perspective and to expand on the literature. It interrogates the role of religion in the reinforcement of gender relations amongst Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa by highlighting how Nigerian men perceive themselves and the extent to which they can go to hold on to their *status quo*. This chapter also probes into the experiences of the female migrants by conceptualising their thoughts and views on the subject of religion and female insubordination. It further

investigates whether women undergo change when they migrate. As the migrants interviewed were mainly Christians, Christianity is the religion focused on here. The migrants are from different Christian denominations though, namely Anglicans, Methodists, Catholics and Charismatics.

The theories of Christian egalitarianism and feminist post structuralism underpin this chapter as they provide an understanding of the role of religion in the lives of these migrants. The theory of Christian egalitarianism posits that all people are equal before God and in Jesus Christ (see Jewett, 1975; Miller, 1979; Payne, 2009; Stagg, 1978; Webb, 2001). The term *Egalitarian* comes from the French word *égal*, meaning equal. Christian egalitarianism is, therefore, based on the understanding that men and women are designed by their Creator to have no gender-based limitations of what functions or roles they can fulfil in the home, the church and the society (theopedia, n.d). It is thus ironic that men claim to be the dominant sex because of the dictates of the bible. This theory was useful in interrogating the issue of male dominance within a Christian perspective.

The fundamental belief in post structuralism is that the interpretation of what is right comes from people's experiences and interpretations and it takes a particular interest in language and also how experiences are communicated (Lop, 2011). Post-structuralism advocates that there is no one true meaning of a text and its specific focus is on language as a site for the construction and contestations of social meaning (Baxter, 2003). Weedon (1997) regards language as a vital tool in any analysis of power, social meanings and the construction of identities. Feminist post structuralism goes further. According to Lop (2011), feminist post-structuralism goes further in that it explores the ways in which women are treated in the world and attempt to break down barriers by identifying how societal influences have led to the *status quo*. Feminist post structuralism offers a platform for individual women to explain where their experiences came from, why these are often contradictory or inconsistent and why and how these can be changed (Baxter, 2003). Above all, it must be prepared to press release the words of silent groups. In this study it was necessary, therefore, to probe into the thoughts and views of the women regarding their 'subordinate' position and its links to migration and Christianity. This theory enhanced my understanding of male domination and female subordination and how these are produced, reproduced, challenged and negotiated through discourse. This chapter is thus guided by the following questions:

(a) What is the link between gender and religion?

- (b) Does religion perpetuate gender inequality?
- (c) Do women undergo change when they migrate?
- (d) Are the men sincere in their quest to uphold Christian values or do they have another purpose?
- (e) What do the men stand to gain from female subordination?
- (f) What is the response of the women?

The next section explores the link between gender and religion.

## **6.2 The Gendered Nature of Religion**

One cannot talk about the use of religion as a vehicle for male dominance and control without an understanding of the relationship between gender and religion. Religion is, however, problematic to define as different people have different conceptions of what religion is. Some scholars over the years have attempted to define religion, based on how they see it (Berger, 1967; Friedrich, 1985; Maduro, 1982; Yinger, 1970). One of the most popular definitions though is that of Gardner (1995) who defines it as a dynamic web of shared meanings used in different contexts and in different ways. A well-known definition of religion though is that by Geertz (1973) which states that:

Religion is a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic (Geertz 1973, pp.90-91).

There are different forms of religion worldwide. The most prominent are the monotheistic ones such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Most religions have a canonical text, officials to preserve and propagate the faith and ethical norms to regulate the lives of individuals and communities (Raday, 2003). Religion plays varied roles in society. One of these roles is the reinforcement of gender relations which is examined in this chapter within the migratory context. Gender, in simple terms, refers to the socially constructed roles ascribed to males and females. Various scholars have attempted to show the gendered nature of religion and how it is used to enforce gender inequality and power hierarchy. Ojong (2013), for instance, argues that gender shapes the problems and all forms of religious orientation. She further

argues that gender defines the concepts and determines behaviour within religion. Religion in turn prescribes appropriate gender roles for men and women. In light of this, Levitt (2003) argues that religion plays a critical role in identity construction, meaning making and value formation as can be seen in this study of Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa.

According to Raday (2003), religious norms impose patriarchal regimes that disadvantage women and these include mandatory obedience to their spouse, inequality in inheritance rights and division of matrimonial property, non-eligibility for religious offices and little or no rights over their own bodies. Thus Ojong (2013) advises that religion needs to be looked through a critical feminist lens as it effectively enshrines gender hierarchy and promotes the suppression of women worldwide. As early as 1895, Elizabeth Stanton remarked on the patriarchal nature of religion and published *The Woman's Bible* wherein she criticised religion and its treatment of women. Other early publications on this issue are the famous works of Mary Daly. These are *The Church and the Second Sex* (1968), *Beyond God the father* (1973) and *Religion and sexism* (1974). In fact, the concept of Christian feminism (cf. Anderson and Clack, 2004; Beavis, 2007; Reuther, 2007) was born out of the need to advance gender equality from a Christian perspective. Even in contemporary times, there are attempts to relegate women to subordinate positions both within and outside religious institutions. Torjesen (1995) observes that the formal processes by which contemporary women have been accepted as religious leaders have been fraught with social and religious controversy and bitter debates. The issue of women's religious leadership is embedded in a larger context predominantly that of cultural beliefs. Religion has come to be regarded as a global system which is transnational in its operation and which migrants use to live their transnational life (Beyer, 2001).

### **6.3 The Politics of Migration**

During the fieldwork, it emerged that most of the Nigerian male migrants interviewed were using religion to reinforce gender relations which they believe have been compromised as a result of migration. Migration involves settling in another place that may or may not be totally different from the place of origin. It becomes even more complex in international migration as it involves leaving one gender regime for another. Connell (1987:120) describes gender regimes as 'the state of play in gender relations in a given institution' such as the family or state. From the literature reviewed and the data obtained, it is evident that the state

of play in gender relations in Nigeria is very patriarchal and it is one in which women are overshadowed by male dominance.

The preference for the male child in West Africa is the strongest in Nigeria (Ibanga, 1994). Izigburah (2004) argues that in all Nigerian cultures, the male child is valued more than the female and at an early age he is made to recognize his worth and superiority over the female child. Izigburah asserts that the male children are socialised to see themselves as future heads of the households, breadwinners and owners of their wives and children whilst the female children, on the other hand, are taught that a good woman must be obedient, submissive, meek, a humble housekeeper and naturally inferior to men. These patriarchal constructions are supported by culture, religion and even the state. The Nigerian state, for instance, does not permit women to obtain passports without the consent of their husbands (Adefi and Aladi, 2012). Coming from such a patriarchal background, Nigerian male migrants in Durban, South Africa find it difficult to cope with gender relations in their new gender regime, one in which women have equal rights with men legally and constitutionally. South Africa is said to have one of the most progressive protection for women, a situation which some women cash into when they migrate. It is even more complicated by the fact that migration can be empowering for women.

Migration has been credited with the empowerment of women. Ojong (2002) argues that the migration process seems to have a generally empowering effect on women in terms of higher self-esteem and increased economic independence. The opportunity to even travel out of their country may itself be an empowering experience (Crush and McDonald, 1999). In her account of Chilean refugee women in the United States of America (USA), Eastmond (1993) gives an account of the empowering nature of migration on women. These women entered the USA job market and acquired new skills which increased their self-confidence and domestic authority. This altered the gender relations between them and their men including the traditional division of labour. This opportunity to negotiate traditional gender roles in the migration site gives women a sense of empowerment, new found freedom and self-confidence (Zentgraph, 2002). Like all other migrant women elsewhere, migrant women in South Africa have the chance of being empowered especially with them being protected by the full range of rights guaranteed in the new constitution. This serves as an enabler for migrant women to empower themselves and to challenge their subordinated positions. Migration as indicated earlier has the potential of altering and modifying traditional patterns of life (Otu, 2011). Gender identities, roles and relations tend to undergo some change upon



migration. George (2005) observes that the exigencies of migration can even force men to participate in so called 'women's tasks' such as childcare and cooking. This is why changes in gender relations and in the household division of labour are perceived to be one of the main effects of migration. As Van Naerssen et al (2008) observe, once people decide to settle in other countries, their personal life profoundly changes economically, socially and culturally.

Nigerian male migrants in Durban face an ongoing battle between trying to adhere to their home culture and adjusting to the lifestyle of their host society. They are faced with the challenge of holding on to a hegemonic masculinity with its attendant privileges on the one hand and negotiating their masculinities in a gender regime where women are being empowered on the other hand. According to them, Nigerian women had the tendency to become cheeky, questioning and even insubordinate when they migrate, especially if they are engaged in employment or education. Those married to South African women or have South African partners also expressed that these women can at times be disrespectful to them, especially as they are not *au fait* with their cultural practises. For them, whether the woman is a Nigerian or a South African, female subordination and male dominance is the accepted norm and any deviation from this is not tolerated. Thus, it is therefore not surprising that the men turned to religion to assist them in their quest for supremacy. Attempts by the women to be independent are interpreted as going against God's will. The men make constant reference to Christianity's tenets and the bible's 'supposedly' acceptance of male dominance and female subordination. Verses from the bible as will be seen later in the chapter were even quoted to support this assertion. Their adherence to the dictates of the bible is however questionable, as religion seems to be employed more as a tool to reinforce skewed gender relations in favour of men.

#### **6.4 New Gender Constructions in the Migration Site**

Since the chapter partially focuses on the male migrants assertion that women change for the worse when they migrate and therefore the need to use religion to control them, it is proper to first of all investigate whether women do undergo change in the migration site and if so, why. Ojong and Muthuki (2010) argue that most African societies are patriarchal and even when migration takes place especially within the African continent, it more or less remains the same in varying degrees. Notably, most societies are rooted in gender differentiations, mainly of male hegemony and female subordination (patriarchy). However, gender roles and

relations and identities do undergo some transformation in the migration site. As Remennick (1999) avers, countries of origin and resettlement may significantly differ in the extent of the forms of patriarchy and in gender roles.

Menjivar (1999) argues that there is extensive evidence that migrant women may benefit from migration and gender relations can become egalitarian especially in situations where women learn about new opportunities in education and employment and in general about less restrictive lifestyle for women in the destination country. This in turn can lead to marital conflicts and domestic abuse. Most literature on migration and gender tend to comment on the inevitability of women gaining independence when they migrate because of better access to educational and economic opportunities (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999; Pessar, 1995). The 2004 World Survey on the role of women in development indicates that migrant women who participate in the labour market tend to gain their independence and an understanding which can in turn lead to a change in gender relations within their families. The World Survey also states that migrant women are better placed to improve not only their own but also their family living standard and they often press for changed gender relations.

Abdulrahim (1993), however, takes a cautious approach and argues that although conditions in the migrant site can lead to some form of egalitarian society, there are also conditions that maintain and reinforce subordination. This is evident in Ojong and Muthuki's (2010) work on the migration of African professional women into South Africa and the power relations in their family which led them to question whether these women were being empowered or undergoing a form of reconstituted subordination. Phizacklea (1983:2) observes that 'migration can lead to a loss or gain in the status of women and this varies according to the immigrant context and cultural background'. Phizacklea further asserts that in some situations new economic and social responsibilities serve to increase a woman's importance within the family whilst in others her role in the family is undermined.

The majority of the male Nigerian migrants are convinced that Nigerian women change 'negatively' when they migrate. It must be noted that out of the twelve male migrants interviewed, only two do not subscribe to this view. Fifty four years old Cashopeh (24) complains of his wife being too argumentative and wanting to have her own way. He blames this on migration as he says she would never have dared behave like this in Nigeria. He also states that he has to constantly remind her that she is not behaving in a Christian manner.

The gradual loss of his male powers is something Cashopeh is struggling to adjust to and he explains it as follows:

*I am trying to adapt, but it is hard. Imagine me taking care of the children and helping with the cooking. On top of that my wife argues with me all the time. It seems like our women even forget their cultural and religious values when they leave Nigeria (Cashopeh.24).*

Cashopeh views it as undignified for him to take care of his children and help with the cooking. In his view, the ascribed roles of men and women should be adhered to regardless of the situation. He is also blaming migration for the changes in his wife and other Nigerian women. For Bolaje (19), migration brings out the worst in women. He explained that women, even the Christian ones tend to become disrespectful to their men when they migrate. He added that Nigerian women in South Africa are particularly influenced by the local women, the media and the fact that they are far away from their communities. The following excerpt encapsulates Bolaje's (19) views in this regard:

*I am telling you my sister, Nigerian women change when they come here. I have seen some of them smoking and drinking. On top of that, they no longer know how to behave to us men. They say this is a fifty-fifty country and that they are now equal to us. They don't realise they are going against God's will. They are just taking advantage that they are here. Some of them have South African friends who influence them and they listen to all this nonsense on television. I think it is better to leave your wife back home (Bolaje.19).*

Bolaje's narrative provokes a discussion on gender equality in South Africa. South Africa has been commended for having one of the most progressive constitutions worldwide. This assertion relates to the Bill of Rights enshrined in the constitution. The Bill of rights as described in Chapter 2 of the constitution is 'a cornerstone of democracy in South Africa and it enshrines the rights of all people in the country and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, equality and freedom'. The various sections in the Bill of Rights give a number of rights to all (men, women and children) and these include the right to equality, human dignity, life, freedom of expression, freedom and security, privacy, freedom of religion, belief and opinion, freedom of association, political rights, freedom of movement and residence,

freedom of trade, occupation and profession, labour relations, safe environment, housing, property, health care, food, water and social security, education, language and culture, access to information, just administrative action and access to courts. These rights put women in South Africa on an equal footing with men. Section nine of the Bill of Rights as seen below specifically focuses on equality:

(a) Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.

(b) Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.

(c) The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.

(d) No person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of Subsection (3). National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination.

(e) Discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed in subsection (3) is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair (Section 9, Bill of rights).

With such a Bill that promotes rights and equal treatment of both men and women, it is not surprising that Bolaje feels threatened in this new gender regime. He is aware that Nigerian women migrating to South Africa can take advantage of such progressive laws and that is why he is even saying that it is better if wives are left back home. He is also aware that the hegemonic status of Nigerian male migrants can be compromised. Bolaje is apparently hiding under the cloak of religion to maintain this hegemony. Van Djik (2008) argues that dominant groups tend to conceal their ideology and aim to get it accepted as a general or natural system of values, norm and goals.

Still on the issue of change, thirty nine years old Enoch (15) asserts that he has noticed some changes in his wife since they migrated.

*My wife used to depend on me to make decisions for the family and how to spend the household money. She now wants to be independent and at times make decisions without consulting me . To be honest, I don't know what to make of this, but I prefer how she used to be. She does not seem to be like the woman I know. Maybe migrations change you somehow. Maybe I have also changed. I even now help her with housework. I would never have thought that I would do that (Enoch.15).*

Enoch is concerned that his wife does not want to live up to their former society's gender expectations. He also questions and reflects on the changes that the migration process might have brought on his wife as well as himself. The social construction of gender is evident in his narrative. Roles and responsibilities of men and women are defined and expected to be upheld at all costs. The concepts of femininity and masculinity are central to patriarchy as it is through them that women are being kept in a subordinate position. It was but fitting to hear from the women themselves whether they believed they have changed negatively or not.

Thirty two year old Iyamide (1) expressed her views as follows:

*They (Nigerian men) should understand that being in a different land brings changes and they themselves have changed in some ways. For instance there is no extra family here to help with the housework. Why should it be wrong if I ask my husband to assist? Of course in Nigeria, I will not have asked him as there will be many people to help me. Our men should realise that circumstances change and should assist us rather than complain. We do not change to disrespect them but to cope with situations (Iyamide.1).*

Iyamide justifies the changes that occur in gender relations upon migration and cites the absence of the extended family as one of the causes. This is echoed by the other migrant women especially the married ones particularly on the issue of housework. Housework, simplistically termed but heavily laden involves such tasks as cleaning, laundry, ironing, dish washing and cooking within the home. It is an established fact that women do more

housework than men. Okin (1989) argues that the contemporary gender-structured family unjustly distributes the benefits and burdens of familial life amongst husbands and wives. According to Sweetman (1998), surveys show that women still bear the brunt of housework and childcare in the relative private sphere of the home. Similarly, Delphy and Leonard (1994) assert that time budget studies show that the amount of time spent on domestic work has not declined and that women still do twice as much each day as men. They noted that even when married women have full time paid employment, they are still required to work for their husbands. Working migrant women in particular struggle to strike a balance between housework and work. The following narrative from Ojong and Muthuki's (2010) work on professional female African migrants is an example of how working migrant women find it difficult to juggle work and housework:

*It is complicated being a medical doctor and being an African woman at the same time because I still have to go home irrespective of whether I am tired and prepare 'fufu' and 'soup' (Nigerian foods) for my husband. I was very hurt when my husband decided to fire our house help without even consulting me. For three months, I had to wake up at 4.00 a.m every day to clean the house, prepare the children for school and make lunch boxes for the entire family whilst my husband will wake up at 7.00 a.m and have his breakfast which I have prepared. I feel I have been served a raw deal (Taiwo, 50 years old Nigerian medical doctor),*

The preparation of traditional Nigerian meals is a complicated and time consuming affair and even when local domestic helpers are employed, the preparation and cooking of such meals cannot be left entirely to them as they do not know how to prepare such meals. The absence of the extended family makes it even harder for these women. At their homes in Nigeria, married women usually rely on extended family and domestic workers to assist them with their housework. Tasks such as cleaning the house, making beds, laundry and ironing, assisting with food preparation were done by younger siblings or cousins. Upon migration, they lost the support of their extended family and so had to contend with going to work and doing all the housework by themselves. As Ojong and Muthuki (2010) notes, the lack of extended family or community members to support working migrant women in raising their children and undertaking house work makes life difficult for them. Even when they have house helpers, their assistance is limited. It is, therefore, not surprising that Iyamide is displeased with the allegation that Nigerian women change negatively when they migrate.

According to Walby (2002) housework is a distinctive form of work. It is hard work and the fact that it does not receive a wage should not disqualify it from the status of work (Gershuny, 1983). In a study of female factory workers in London, Westwood (1985) argues that household tasks afforded them no time for leisure and that they paid a heavy price in terms of their health and well-being. Westwood (1985) further argues that no concession was made to the fact that they worked all day at the factory as they still had to prepare food, serve it, clean, and do the ironing and washing. Twenty eight years old Bisola (9) elaborates further on the issue of change:

*Nigerian men do not like changes. They migrate, expecting wherever they are to be like Nigeria. This will never be so. As soon as you try to readjust, they become difficult and think you are disrespecting them. Once you migrate, there are changes you have to make to survive. They should try to understand this (Bisola.9).*

Gleaning from Bisola's excerpt, it appears that Nigerian men do not appreciate change. It appears that they are practicing separation which is an avoidance of the cultures of their new country and holding on to those at home. Closer inspection, however, reveals that it is only certain changes that they do not like as in this case, changes in attitude or behaviour of women. Twenty eight years old Ikechi (10) also has her own views on this subject matter:

*"I think that when women migrate, they change in some ways whether for good or for bad. We as Nigerian women are not different. It is very different in a strange land, you see new things, you hear new things, it is a different culture (Ikechi.10).*

Iyamide, Ikechi and Bisola seemed to have come to terms with the realisation that migration has altered their lives in some ways. They are faced with new situations in their host land which requires them to readjust their lives. This ultimately impacts on gender relations. Gender ideologies and practices change as human beings cooperate or struggle with each other, their past and the structures of changing economic, political and social world linked through their migrations (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, 2003; Mahler and Pessar, 2001). Indeed, as Boyd and Grieco (2003) observe, migration can alter spousal relationship and can also lead to considerable negotiation and resistance to change by both men and women (Boyd and

Grieco, 2003). From Iyamide, Ikechi and Bisola's statements, it stands to reason that Nigerian women who migrate do undergo some changes which in turn affect gender relations. How these changes are perceived, however, is a different matter.

### **6.5 Christianity: A Weapon for Female Control**

Radical feminists define patriarchy as a social system in which men appropriate social roles and keep women in subordinate positions (Charvet, 1982). Patriarchy enables us to see the extent to which male needs and assumptions are still central to the political, cultural, religious and economic life and the norms against which women are measured (Bryson, 2003). Male power is not only seen in the public worlds of politics and employment as it also extends into private and personal areas of life such as the family. Notably, the nature of control or subjugation of women differs from one place to another due to class, region, ethnicity, religion, caste and cultural practices (Ray, 2008).

Winter (2006) suggests that the postulate that religion has to do with power and hierarchy incorporates two apparently contradictory but in fact complementary ideas. These are that religion is part of the masculine power structure within which social relations are gendered and secondly, religion is a vehicle through which power and hierarchy can be challenged, subverted, overthrown or modified. This is echoed in Raday's (2003) assertion that religious norms impose patriarchal regimes that disadvantage women and validate gender inequality. It is, therefore, not surprising that Ojong (2013) observes that there is gender biasness in religion as it privileges men, while weakening and devaluing the position of women. Religious narratives tend to ascribe superiority to men. In other words, religion is being used to uphold the masculine power structure (patriarchy) and Christianity is no exception.

As long as patriarchy affords power to the male sex, most men are reluctant to let go of this 'privileged position'. With Christianity being one of the social characteristics they share with their spouse/partners (Nigerians and non-Nigerians) and its 'perceived favouring of the male sex' it is not surprising that religion is being evoked in the power game. These migrants apparently embrace the concept of Christian Patriarchy which is the belief that God has ordained a specific family order wherein the husband leads and the wife submits. According to Anne (2012), Christian Patriarchy upholds that women must always be under male authority (or headship) and that men and women have vastly different roles to play.



Forty years old Abiodun (23), who is married to a South African woman, claimed that it is difficult to marry someone who does not understand your culture. He said that his wife does not want to learn his ways and at times can be rebellious. He was not shy to admit that with both of them being Christians, it is the only way he can reach out to her and he uses the bible to justify and convince her of her marital duties. Religion in Abiodun's case is also being used to promote cross cultural understanding.

Cashopeh (24) expressed that he fights with his wife all the time. He said that since she migrated, her behaviour has changed towards him and proceeded to explain that she now likes having her own way and makes decisions on her own. The only way he says he can get her to back down at times is to draw her attention to the teachings in the bible. What these men are trying to prevent at all cost is what has happened in Cashopeh's case. His wife apparently has been empowered by her new gender regime and is no longer willing to be submissive. Her striving for independence certainly does not sit well with him and he looks for ways to dominate her. Drawing her attention to the teachings in the bible is one way Cashopeh strives to maintain control over her. The use of religion to maintain control over women is echoed in the following narrative from Enoch (15):

*My wife does try to get out of hands once in a while, but one thing about my wife is that she is a good Christian. So when she starts wanting to get out of control, I just remind her about what the bible recommends for women. Had it not been for her love for godly things, I would have found it difficult to control her in this strange land. As you know, most women get out of hands when they leave their country (Enoch.15).*

Enoch is no doubt using Christianity as a weapon to get his wife to submit to him. He is not alone in this ploy. It is apparent that Abiodun and Cashopeh are also unhappy that their wives are not as submissive as they would like them to be and are also employing Christianity and the bible as a weapon to subject their women under male control. The fight to uphold male dominance is on. As Chen (2005) attests, religion can be used to preserve culture in situations where migration poses a threat to family and gender relations. This is because it legitimises patriarchal notions of gender. The excerpts below are the religious arguments advanced by some of the men to justify female submission and male dominance. Thirty five years old Nwoye expressed that:

*A woman can never be the same as a man. God made man to be the strong one and take care of the woman. So in my opinion men and women can never be the same. This is what God wants and what should happen (Nwoye.17).*

Omotayo (16) is of the same view as Nwoye as seen below:

*The man is the head of the house. The bible itself says so. My wife can never be equal to me. She has to understand that I have the final say and make the decisions for the family. She should always submit to me. I am not saying this just because I want to, it's what the word of God says (Omotayo.16).*

On the surface, it appears that these men embrace the concept of complementarianism which upholds traditional gender roles within Christianity. One may not, however, help but ask the following questions: Is that what God really wants? Should men and women never be seen and treated as equals? Are women always to submit to men? The concept of Christian egalitarianism contradicts that of complementarianism, as it calls for equality of all people. If all people are regarded as equals in Christ, then one sex should not be dominant than the other. In the excerpt below, fifty years old Adewole also attempts to justify male dominance and female submission from a 'Christian' perspective:

*I have been a Christian all my life and have studied the bible. There is nowhere in the bible which states that men and women are equal. Otherwise God would have created both men and women at the same time. Even Sarah in the bible calls her husband master. That tells you that we are superior to women and they should obey us always.(Adewole.13)*

It transpires from the above excerpt that the men have also aligned themselves with the ideology of male dominance and female submission within a Christian perspective. Ideologies, according to Van Dijk (2008), involve the selection, combination and application

of norms, values, goals and principles to favour perceptions, actions and interpretations that are in the best interest of a group. Van Dijk (2008) further contends that at times the ideology itself and its practice have their roots in various institutions such as the state, church, media or the family. People claim to believe in certain ideologies, but are in it more for the benefits they will accrue rather than an implicit belief in it. Leaders and government of communist states, for example, whilst propagating a classless and moneyless system actually enrich themselves from the country's wealth and subdue their subjects. The same is true of the ideology of male dominance. Men stand to gain a lot from this ideology and will go to perpetuate it even by employing religion. Apart from religion, men also employ culture, science and philosophy to justify their dominant position.

The ploy to reinforce gender relation through Christianity goes beyond marital relationships. The men use Christianity as well to reinforce gender roles with other females, such as their daughters, sisters, friends, church members and work colleagues. Nwoye (17), for instance, says he always reminds his sister and sister-in-law who stay with him of how Christian women should behave when they step out of line. Even in their churches, there is a desire to uphold power. Thirty eight years old Shodekeh (21) explains in the following excerpt how some 'bossy' female members in his church were disciplined;

*There are four women in our church who like to compete with us the men. They argue all the time and want to make all the decisions. What they did not realise is that us Nigerian men do not take this attitude from women, especially as their attitude is not even biblical. Unfortunately for them, the majority of the men in our church are Nigerians. We told them off and even showed them from the bible what is expected from Christian women. They are quiet in church now (laughs) (Shodekeh.21).*

Leadership and other positions in the churches have significantly changed compared to what they used to be in former times when these were predominantly the male domain. In contemporary times, there are now more women holding positions in the church apart from the Catholic Church where the headship continues to be male. Despite this gain, positions in churches continue to be male dominated, with women expected to walk in their shadows.

Some men even go to lengths to maintain their hegemony in the church as seen from Shodekeh's excerpt above and from the case study below of a church I used to worship in.

*In 2011, the assistant male priest of the New Faith Anglican Church (not the real name) in Durban was transferred to another parish and a female priest appointed in his place. This meant having two female priests as the priest in charge was a woman. Most of the men especially the Nigerian men resisted this appointment because according to them 'It was bad enough having one female priest, having two was just too much'. They also stated that the bible does not support women in positions of authority in the church. A petition was written requesting either the retaining of the former male priest or the appointment of another male to replace him. Some even threatened to leave the church. After much debate and arguments the decision to appoint a female assistant priest was upheld by a higher authority and the church now boasts of two female leaders. Some of the men kept to their threat and left the church. Others do not go for communion as it means being served by a female priest. Some seems to have quietly accepted the inevitable.*

It is evident from the excerpt above that the quest for male power and supremacy goes beyond the home and family. On the same subject of female leadership in the church, Bolaje (19) expressed that he was surprised to see women in leadership positions in Anglican churches in South Africa and that it was a rarity in Nigeria. He said he is not comfortable with this as he believes that only men should be leaders in church. As such, when a female priest presides over the Holy Eucharist, Bolaje refuses to partake in it. The above case study and Bolaje's narrative signal that the church still has a long way to go in promoting gender equality and obliterating forms of male hegemony in their structures.

To justify their need to be the dominant sex in all spheres of life, the migrant men even quoted bible verses to support their claims: verses that justify women's subordinate position to men<sup>3</sup>, verses that call for wives to submit<sup>4</sup> and verses that outline a woman's role or duty<sup>5</sup>. The verses were interpreted in diverse ways such as that men are heads of households, breadwinners, decision makers and property owners whereas women are home makers, care givers, responsible for domestic tasks, do not have equal say with men and should not be in positions of authority. Biblical language is employed here to construct gender identities. The

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<sup>3</sup> Genesis 2: 20 - 22

<sup>4</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:1, 5-7, Col 3:18, Ephesians 5:22-24, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:35

<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 31:2

importance of language cannot be overlooked. It is one of the resources that individuals and society draw upon in constructing gender roles and identities (Johnson, 1997). Unfortunately, it is not always in the best interest of women. This is why post structural feminists hold that language consistently puts females in a secondary role and gives male dominance as they believe that society is generally based around a very dualist view of gender that has come from years of experience and use of language (Lop, 2011). Terms like 'mankind' and 'headmaster' are, therefore, criticized as it is believed that these gendered terms, reinforce inequality and place women at a second level of authority. Identity is, therefore, not given but constructed in discourse (Hall, 1996).

The above arguments and verses also bring the theory of Christian egalitarianism into question as they endorse female submission to men. They, to a large extent, negate the theory and serve the purpose of patriarchy's proponents. Although the theory does call attention to those verses which justify gender equality within God's kingdom, it does not make a case for those which endorse patriarchy. This theory, therefore, whilst offering hope to women, also has loose ends that are not positive for women. It should be expanded to expose the inadequacies of some of these verses in present day situations. Makhene (1999) in her submission to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee suggests that some of the chapters in the bible be revisited to contextualise their applicability in present day situations and that when studying a passage, three things should be borne in mind. These are the author of the passage, the age of the author and the context in which it was written. Makhene's suggestion can greatly aid Christian egalitarianism and reduce patriarchal notions within Christendom.

Furthermore, this situation wherein the male migrants use religion to get their women to be always submissive to them could be construed as a form of gender based violence. Vann (2002) views gender based violence as a range of acts of violence committed against females because they are females and against men because they are men and can be sub divided into four categories. The four categories are sexual violence, physical violence, emotional/psychological violence and harmful traditional practises. The focus here is on psychological violence. The University of Illinois Counseling Center (2007) defines psychological violence as abuse that is emotional rather than physical in nature and it can include anything from verbal abuse and constant criticism to more subtle tactics, such as intimidation, manipulation, and refusal to ever be pleased. Notably, Nigerian male migrants use the more subtle tactics of intimidation and manipulation in the guise of religion to keep

their women in subordinate positions. I, therefore, argue that some Durban based Nigerian male migrants perpetuate psychological gender based violence against their women. Despite the tendency of religious thinkers to avoid the link between religion and violence and to view it as uncomfortable (Tanner, 2007), it is a fact that religion can be used to perpetrate violence. I also advance the argument that since the perpetration of violence is a criminal act and this violence took place in a country different from that of the perpetrators, then this situation could be regarded as a transnational crime. Transnational crimes are acts that are offenses in one state and these involve actions or actors in another state (Reuter and Petrie, 1999). Although transnational crimes refer to acts such as money laundering, sex trafficking and trafficking of endangered species, human parts and drugs and arms, it could be expanded to include crimes of a psychological nature. It is unfortunate however, that crimes under this category tend to go unpunished as they are difficult to prosecute, due to lack of substantial evidence by virtue of it being of a psychological nature. Despite this, it is important for such aspects to be brought to light whilst advocating for social change concurrently. This subject of the male migrants use of religion as a form of gender based violence and a transnational crime deserves further interrogation and therefore a subject for future research.

## **6.6 Patriarchal Gains and Dividends**

The men's desire to hold on to and promote male dominance and female subordination (patriarchy), albeit within Christianity sparks off some questions. Are these men being sincere in wanting to 'live within the dictates' of Christianity or is there another purpose? What do the men stand to gain? Why are these men so concerned about controlling their wives and making decisions for them? The key to this will be to look at the benefits of patriarchy and how it benefits the men in the migration zone.

In light of the above question it is important to first examine whether these men comply implicitly with the dictates of Christianity or not. There are a number of biblical instructions that condemn or encourage certain actions. For instance, the bible condemns couples living together before marriage, having children out of wedlock and working on a Sabbath. However, from the observations and the information elicited, it was apparent that some of the men were guilty of some of the above practises. Even the biblical obligation to tithe was not being met by all of them. It is not my intention to be a moral judge here, but I intend to show that the men's use of Christianity to subordinate women was not because of a strict adherence to the bible but for their own gain. They are interpreting the bible to serve their own purpose.

According to Kokopelli and Lakey (1983:1), patriarchy promotes ‘the systematic domination of women by men through unequal opportunities, rewards, punishments, and the internalization of unequal expectations through sex role differentiation’. Although patriarchy does enable men to dominate other men, it to a large extent, implies male rule/privilege and female subordination. This is why Kokopelli and Lakey (1983) assert that the imbalance of power between men and women is the core of patriarchy whilst Walby (1990) avers that patriarchy is a system of social practices where men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Similarly, Stollenberg (1997) asserts that the cultural norm of male identity under patriarchy consists of power, prestige, privilege and prerogative over and against women. According to Kimmel (2005:67), ‘global institutions and the world gender order give men a number of social and material privileges which is known as patriarchal dividends’. These patriarchal dividends include having women do their domestic labour, raise their children and serve as their emotional and physical caretakers (Clatterbaugh, 1997). Connell (2002) defines patriarchal dividend as benefits to men as a group from maintaining an unequal gender order and this includes economic advantage, prestige, authority and access to institutional power, among other things. Patriarchal dividend, however, can be influenced by economic class, social status, race, ethnicity, sexuality and age.

Women not only make men comfortable but are expected to be at their beck and call and to be subservient to them at all times. Patriarchy benefits men by giving them a class of people (women) to dominate and exploit (Kokopelli and Lakey, 1983). It also affords men power, authority, supremacy, ownership and affords them the position to control, dominate, make decisions and exploit. Very few men, therefore, are unwilling to let go of this privileged position and will fight hard to hold on to it. As Donaldson (1993) claims, the majority of men will go all out to defend and sustain this inequitable gender order. Similarly, Shope (2006) avers that men cling tightly to privileges afforded to them by their patriarchal definitions of culture. Whilst acknowledging that people can be faithful adherents to their religion, it must be borne in mind that the majority of Nigerian men have been socialised to be patriarchs and to display hegemonic male characteristics. These traits were very apparent when I interacted with them during the field work. I noticed that they have been taught to behave in socio cultural ways appropriate for men and made aware of those appropriate for women. They expect women to serve them and cater for all their whims. These gender constructs play a significant role in the men’s desire to be the dominant partner and to have submissive spouses.

The following excerpt from Bolaje (19) reveals what men stand to gain from being the dominant sex:

*I am not yet married but when I do, my wife will be my property. She should respect me, obey me and serve me all the time. Her duty is to take care of me, our children and the house. I will provide for the household. I will never consider my wife and myself as equals. It will be totally against the word of God (Bolaje.19)*

Bolaje's excerpt has its roots in his former gender regime where women are socialised to serve men and submit under them. From his excerpt, a woman is like a modern day slave. Having a wife, therefore, is like having a personal slave. From this view point, one can now start to understand why the men are so determined to keep their women in subordinated positions and being in a strange land does not quell this desire. Omotayo (16) expressed that with all the challenges in a new land, it will be most unfortunate for men to lose their superiority and the comforts that go with it. He articulates his thoughts in the following excerpt:

*It is when you leave your country that you should hold on more to the things you have been used to. In a strange country, no one knows you and at times don't even respect you. So you should try to hold on to the things that will give you respect and for me it is my manhood. I will hold on to it at all cost (Omotayo.16).*

The reference 'at all cost' is inclusive of religion. Religion is one way in which power operates in society and as feminist post structuralists argues, it is the different ways in which society values masculinity and femininity that drives much of the equality that still exists today (Lop, 2011). This is why Pateman (1998) argues that the patriarchal construction of differences between masculinity and femininity is the difference between freedom and subjection. There is no doubt that patriarchal constructions of gender are sanctioned by religion and religious institutions (Ray, 2009). It is, therefore, not surprising that these men are using religion to hold on to their patriarchal status even in a different country and in different spheres of life. The post structural space aided me in uncovering the textual sources and cultural scripts that encourage the notion of patriarchy.



## 6.7 The Women's Perspective on Religion and the Submission of Women

This chapter would be incomplete if the views of the female Nigerian migrants were not heard or their experiences shared. The way migrant women interpret and practice religion in their everyday lives is often neglected in studies on religion, gender and migration (Chen, 2005). As Baxter (2003) asserts, space must be allocated to those female voices which have been silenced or marginalised. Baxter further argues that the voices of the minority or oppressed need to be clearly heard alongside those of more dominant groups in any post structuralist inquiry, adding to, undercutting and potentially overturning the status quo.

The lived experiences of the women were vital in gaining an understanding of the subject matter. So, I interviewed some of them on the issue of female submission, Christianity and migration. As an African Christian female migrant, I was able to align myself with them and they felt comfortable to talk to me. I also utilised Goffman's twin concept of 'frontstage' and 'backstage'. According to Sternheimer (2012), this concept suggests that people present themselves one way when they are with others (front stage) and they let their guard down when they are 'backstage'. Mindful of this concept, and exploiting my shared characteristics with the women, I was able to connect with them 'backstage' in the comfort of their homes or friends houses where there was no judgmental audience waiting.

Within a few minutes into the interviews, it emerged that these women were keeping a brave face 'front stage' and trying to live up to expectations. I encouraged them to share and interpret their experiences through discourse. As Foucault (1980) states, it is through discourse that expectations, experiences and events are constructed. Religion, for the majority of the women was a sensitive and complicated issue. Whilst they had a fundamental belief in God, they agreed it was being exploited to get women to be always submissive.

Ikechi (10), whose husband is a Sunday school teacher at a Pentecostal church, spoke of feeling trapped by religious dictates. She wants to either study or work but has to stay at home and look after the children who are between the ages of one and three. Her husband has decided that she should make this necessary sacrifice on behalf of the household. Although she loves her children, she is not happy being at home all day. She has tried to discuss this with her husband and pastor but has been told that as the mother and wife of the house, it is her Christian duty to play this role. Ikechi sounded very frustrated and sums it up as follows: *"I am not happy but I have to agree. I think, however, it is wrong for people to*

*point you to the bible when you try to fight for something because it makes you feel guilty and you just give up*". She feels guilty to go against her Christian duty pointed to her. As Weedon (1997:21) observes, 'language is the place where our sense of selves, our subjectivity is construed'.

On the same subject, Bisola (9) sums up her frustration as follows:

*I live with my brother. I know what his lifestyle is like. Yet when he wants me to do things for him or does not want me to question him, he starts preaching to me. Our men are such hypocrites. They, steal, lie, drink, smoke and commit adultery and fornication. Are these not also against God's word? Why is it that they are only concerned with keeping to God's word when it comes to bullying women? It is strange though that the word of God is not kept to when it comes to other ungodly practices' like fornication (Bisola.9).*

Although Bisola's excerpt is not sufficient to make a case on the double nature of the men, it does offer an insight into the fact that the men are not strict adherents of the Christian faith. On the one hand, they want their partners to adhere strictly to the dictates of the bible especially on female submission and, on the other hand, they themselves do not follow all its dictates. Unlike Ikechi who seems resigned to her situation and Bisola who just complains, Ayodele and Tumi exercised agency to change their situation as attested to below. Thirty three years old Ayodele (4) explained that whenever she tries to stand up for what she believes in or gets involved in decision making, her husband gets angry and starts reminding her about the bible's dictate for women to submit. She added that since she migrated to Durban, South Africa, she seems to be quarrelling with her husband a lot more. The interplay between religion, migration and gender is best exemplified in Ayodele's excerpt below:

*In Nigeria, I had people to help me with housework but here, there is no one. As I told you I had to fight with my husband to get him to help me a bit. The work was still too much so I decided to get a maid. My husband thinks that I am wasting money and becoming lazy and did not want me to get the maid. When I hired one, he said I have disrespected him and I am not behaving like a Christian woman, that I do not submit to him. For me, I do not see this as the type of submission the bible wants. I am sure God does not want me to overwork myself and get ill? (Ayodele.4).*

Migration has certainly altered Ayodele's life. As Espin (2000) argues, migrants cross emotional and behavioural boundaries when they cross borders as becoming a member of a new society stretches the boundaries of what is possible in more than one way. Circumstances in the host land are making Ayodele resilient to the extent that she is now questioning the language and interpretation of 'submission' in the bible. Her experiences have led her to give her own interpretation to submission, liberating her in some ways. From a feminist post-structuralist view advanced by Butler (2004), she is deconstructing the cultural processes responsible for upholding the structures of oppression.

Tumi (11) claims that her husband wants her to feel guilty by quoting the bible when she tries to stand up for her rights but she has learnt to stand her ground. She shared that she endeavoured to learn to drive and bought her own car as she was not treated well in the local taxis because of her being a foreigner. Her husband, though, was not happy about this as he wants her to be very dependent on him. This caused a lot of friction between them but she stood her ground and eventually bought a car. Her husband has accused her of being insubordinate and unchristian and even quotes biblical verses to back up his words. Tumi says that she has learnt to quote back at her husband. For instance, when he quotes Ephesians 5: 22-24: *Wives submit to your husband's as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the house as Christ is the head to the church*, she retorts by quoting verses 25-28 which state that *husbands should love their wives as their own bodies*. As she argues, "If husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies, then they should treat their wives as equals too". This substantiates Barkarsia and Reads (2003) claim that individuals can interpret and apply patriarchal teachings in subversive ways. As Notre (2001) argues, even though religion can perpetuate patriarchal notions of women, it can also inspire women to reject those traditions. Ayodele and Tumi's action show that people can exercise agency to refine their situation. As Baxter (2003:99-100) observes, 'women are not permanently trapped into silence and victimhood or oppression by dominant discursive practices; rather, there are moments within competing discourses when females can convert acts of resistance into previously unheard but intertextualised forms of new expression'.

Despite their varied reactions to their situations, the women agreed that religion was just one of the many ways used by men to exploit women. They also cited culture as another oppressive tool. Religion and culture it seems, reinforce each other and their discourse over

the years have greatly contributed to the upholding of patriarchy. As Raday (2003) argues, religion is an institutionalized aspect of culture. Although the women do realise that the men are using religion to keep them in subordinate positions and some of them are putting up resistance, it is doubtful though whether some of them wholeheartedly embrace the concept of Christian egalitarianism. In more comfortable and familiar circumstances, they might not be forced to question cultural and religious dictates. There is suspicion that their rebelliousness or unwillingness to submit has more to do with survival rather than a desire to question the bible's dictates. Through discourse, however, the women were able to talk about their experiences and were able to identify societal influences that reinforce their low status. They were able to identify ways in which power operates in society and look at some of the ways masculinity and femininity is being constructed in society. Post structuralism offers a platform for women to question things and stand for their rights.

From all the ladies interviewed, only one to a large extent supported the men in their attempt to use Christianity to enforce male dominance and female submission. Fifty seven year old Patience (2), who incidentally was also the eldest female interviewed, said that it was God's will for women to submit to men and that she will not go against this will. She also said that women are now interpreting the bible differently to suit their needs, especially the very educated ones. Patience's statement was a bit ironic though as she had defied her husband and her family to migrate to South Africa to further her studies. Patience's comment, however, evokes the issue of women themselves perpetuating their subordinated role to men. As van Djik (2008) asserts, ideologies can encourage dominated groups to have a 'false consciousness' which may lead them to act against their own basic interest. This is true in Patience's case as she is acting against women's best interest because of the biblical gender ideology she possesses. It is interesting to note that some women who are in a position to empower other women such as female religious leaders are also themselves guilty of perpetuating female submission. This is because of the nature of subjectivity. According to Baxter (2003), subjectivity is of critical importance in any feminist post structuralist discourse as it is concerned with the conceptualisation of a woman's ability or agency to act for herself. Feminist post structuralism takes into account women's subjectivity which is a process whereby a woman can think and act for herself and be in a position to have her own opinion though it might not be in her or other women's best interest. This is why subjectivity is theorised in post structuralism as a site of disunity and conflict, central to the process of

political change and to the preservation of the status quo (Weedon, 1997). Thus, whilst subjectivity can liberate women, it can also keep them trapped.

Thus, although post structuralism offers the freedom for people to express themselves and question generally held truths, it is subject to myriad biases and misinterpretations as everyone has their interpretation of what is right or wrong. It, therefore, stands to reason that some women themselves will believe it is their lot to be submissive to men and will encourage other women to do the same. Post structuralism, therefore, whilst it can be liberating for women, can also keep them in bondage. Despite the shortfalls of post structuralism, it provides an avenue to understand the world through different voices and perspectives. The use of feminist post structuralism revealed the complex and ambiguous ways in which women are simultaneously positioned as relatively powerless within certain discourses but as relatively powerful within alternative and competing discourses (Baxter, 2003). It bears repeating, therefore, that whilst it can liberate women, it can also keep them trapped.

## **6.8 The Researcher's Voice**

In my position as researcher and being an African Christian female migrant (characteristics I share with the migrants), I have decided to add my voice to this research. As Riessman (1994) asserts, it is important that researchers locate themselves in their work as it helps readers to evaluate the situational knowledge they produce. I attempted to make sense of the use of religion by the male migrants to subordinate their women and to examine the concepts of female submission and male dominance in Christianity and the bible.

In Nigeria, tradition and culture were enough to perpetuate patriarchy and uphold traditional gender roles. However, upon migration these are not enough, as it is a different gender regime given the change in circumstances. It is, therefore, understandable why the men turn to religion to enforce gender relations. As religion is a very sensitive topic, most people shy away from interrogating it. It serves as a haven against social and cultural change. In the case of Christianity, people tend to implicitly accept its teachings and are reluctant to question issues arising therefrom. As a result, certain people, in this case Nigerian male migrants, exploit the bible to justify their actions by interpreting it to suit their needs and making claims which upon closer examination of the bible might not even be validated. Although one might argue that there are verses in the bible which do lend support to the act of female

submission, there are also verses that speak for equality and about God's love for both men and women.

Also, women were not as subordinated in Christianity as it is usually portrayed. According to Torjesen (1995), women used to hold prominent positions in the house churches in the first and second centuries and that even Jesus addressed women as equals and mingled with all regardless of age, sex or race. Torjesen (1995) further avers that the process of institutionalisation in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century brought about the formation of a monarchical bishop to preside over the church and that was the start of gender discrimination within Christianity. It is noteworthy that biblical verses that highlight the responsibilities of men in relation to how they should love their wives towards achieving a certain level of equality were not acknowledged by men. For instance, while there is a tendency to frequently quote Ephesians 5: 22-24 (Wives submit to your husband's as to the lord. For the husband is the head of the house as Christ is the head to the church) no mention was made of verse 21 (Submit to one another out of reverence to the church). Verse 21 calls for submission by everyone whether a man or woman. Verses 25-28 exhort husbands to love their wives as they love their own bodies. If husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies, it certainly indicates a level of equality with their wives. Notably, there is no justification for a situation where one spouse commands while the other one is subjected. A closer inspection of the bible reveals other verses that speak to equality. As Essien and Ukpang (2012) argue, a careful exegesis of the bible reveals that Christianity advocates for the emancipation and equality of every person. For instance, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7. 3-4 states that the husband and wife should fulfil their marital duty to each other and that their bodies belong to each other. This means that both husband and wife have equal responsibility and rights in a marriage. Galatians 3.28 best of all makes a case for equality in Christianity: 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ'. This is in line with the theory of Christian Egalitarianism in that all people are equal before God and in Christ.

Galatians 3.28 has, however, made little impact on the male migrants. As long as their status is at stake, they will fight tooth and nail to preserve it using all in their power. On the other hand, the women are becoming more aware of the drawbacks of Christianity for them and some are putting up resistance. The fight for gender equality by these migrants and the use of religion to uphold male supremacy will no doubt be a continuing battle.

Although this chapter has focused on Christianity, it is important to note that it is not the only religion to be exploited as such. Although all religions are not homogenous, they, to some extent, endorse patriarchy and can be used as vehicles to mobilize women's suppression. Orthodox Judaism, for example, invokes patriarchal norms when it comes to the division of matrimonial property, inheritance, divorce and eligibility for religious offices and participation in certain religious ceremonies (Raday, 2003). The idea of men being the dominant sex reverberates in most religious discourse as evidenced in the following examples from the Koran: "*Men have authority over women because Allah has made the one superior to the other*" (Surah 4:34) and, "*Your wives are tilth (farm) unto you, so approach your tilth (farm) when or how you will*" (Surah 2:223). Such religious narratives not only endorse male superiority but also regard women as men's property, to be treated in whatever way they wish. This is why feminist writers critique religion as bound up with power and hierarchy and label it as a patriarchal institution (Winter, 2008). Puttick (1997) argues that although women are the biggest consumers of religion, they have been badly served and oppressed by it. Whilst it is important to draw attention to how religion is used to socially control women, it is essential that theological doctrines are reconstructed within new paradigms to promote gender equality.

On the whole, as long as there are religious narratives and teachings that endorse male superiority and the predisposition of migration to empower women, there will always be a tendency for migrant men to use religion to reinforce gender relations. It is, therefore, important that feminists continue to challenge and critique patriarchal religious narratives and showcase how women are being exploited by religion and thus advocate for social change.

## **6.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has interrogated the role of religion in the reinforcement of gender relations and in so doing has established that conditions in the migration site can lead to a strain on gender relations. It highlighted the role religion plays in reinforcing gender relations in new destinations by bringing out how Nigerian male migrants in Durban, South Africa use religion (Christianity) to reinforce gender relations. The nexus amongst religion, migration and gender was brought out as well.

This chapter provided an insight into how female subordination which is an element of patriarchy is upheld as a Christian principle and how the men use Christianity and the bible to

uphold patriarchy in their host country. As has been noted earlier on in the chapter, different categories of feminists have over the years interrogated the concept of patriarchy and suggested ways of combating it. Despite their efforts, patriarchy is still prevalent in most societal institutions and people even migrate with patriarchal ideologies. Attention was also drawn to why the migrant men were desperate to hold on to their patriarchal powers and the extent to which they can go.

This chapter also examined the claim that women undergo some form of transformation in the migration site which in turn can impinge on gender relations and established that situations in a foreign land can result in women being more assertive and decisive. This chapter also probed the experiences of female Nigerian migrants to establish their views on the use of Christianity to reinforce gender relations in the migration site. This brought out the realisation that the women are very aware that their men use religion to control them and whilst some accept it, others rebel against it. Finally, this chapter challenged and provoked questions on patriarchy's claims to Christianity and the way the teachings of the bible are interpreted to suppress women whilst promoting patriarchy.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE MIGRATORY CONTEXT AS A PLATFORM FOR GENERATING NEW GENDER PERSPECTIVES: COMPLEX REALITIES

#### 7.1 Introduction

Migration can generate new gender perspectives for migrants. Migrants usually have to immerse themselves in another culture as well as position themselves in a new gender regime which in turn exposes them to new gender perspectives. It is believed that as life changes for migrants, so does their perceptions and identities. This is, however, a simplistic view as the realities involved are complex. Is this the case, however, for Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa? Does the migratory context offer them a platform to generate new gender perspectives? What are these new gender perspectives? How complex are the realities?

This chapter sets out to answer these questions by probing into the lives of Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa to establish firstly, whether the migration site serves as a platform for them to generate new gender perspectives and secondly, to establish the complexities involved. Whilst there may be some scholarly works on migration's ability to generate new gender perspectives for migrants, the complexities involved are rarely brought to light. This requires thorough investigation and this chapter intends to fill in this gap in the migration and gender literature. This chapter is foregrounded by the gendered geographies of power framework, particularly its geographical scales and social location component, the front stage/backstage concept of the dramaturgical framework and the social construction of masculinity theory. These concepts are useful in examining how migration impacts and shapes the gender perceptions of the migrants, the complexities involved and the subterfuge employed by the migrants. The following section, therefore, examines the former gender perspectives of the migrants as it will be remiss for one to talk about new gender perspectives without taking a retrospective look at the old one.

#### 7.2 Homeland Gender Perspectives

Gender is an integral component of every aspect of the economic, social, daily and private lives of individuals and societies and of the different roles ascribed by society to men and women (FAO, 1999). It is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes and is a primary way of signifying relationships of power

(Scott, 1998). Whilst postmodernism leans towards constructing gender as a verb, modernist thinking constructs gender as an aspect of life (Di Palma and Fergusson, 2006). The gender perspective can, therefore, be construed as a mental view, or understanding of gender issues and this includes status, opportunities, roles and interactions of men and women (FAO, 1999). A gender perspective can also be viewed as the awareness of the roles that society has assigned to men and women (Breines et al 1999). Notably, gender perspectives vary from country to country. What then are the perspectives of gender espoused in Nigeria?

As noted in earlier chapters, the gender regime in Nigeria is largely patriarchal and it thus favours hegemonic masculinity. The migrants, therefore, come from a background where male domination and female subordination is a norm. There are Nigerian proverbs that even substantiate this such as the following – ‘The man who dances to the flute played by a woman generally goes to the spirit world prematurely’. This implies that a man should always be in control of a woman as a man who subjects himself to the control of a woman will die prematurely. As Balogun (2005:3) argues, ‘proverbs have served as a major avenue for the continued perpetration of gender discrimination amongst Africans’.

According to a male migrant Nwoye (17), unequal gender relation has always been a way of life in the Nigerian society and he is of the opinion that it will always remain this way. Thus he explains further as follows:

*If men and women were the same, why should we pay bride price. The reason we pay bride price is to show that the woman is now your own. Men and women know their place in Nigeria now. If a wife go and complains to the police that her husband beat or raped her, the police will just tell her to go sort it out with her husband. So you see, even our government does not support this gender equality nonsense. But you know, some of our women now want to behave like oyinbo (white people) but we know how to put them in their place (Nwoye.17).*

Nwoye is justifying that women should be subordinated to men because men pay bride prices for them. The payment of the bride price is an integral aspect of Nigerian cultural life and is acknowledged in the customary laws of the country. Shope (2006) posits that the bride price does have symbolic currency for women. According to Nwogugu (2014), bride price used to be in the form of labour provided by the suitor for the parents of his wife-to-be, with a small

cash payment and drinks but later took on the form of monetary payment to the extent that the bride price has become very high in some areas. Nwogugu (2014) further asserts that high bride price has been criticised because it has in some cases prevented young men who could not afford it from getting married and that there has been attempts in several parts of Nigeria to combat high bride payments. There have also been criticisms not only of the economic aspects of the bride price but also of the negative impact it can have on women. Kaye et al (2005), for instance, observes that it reduces the power and prestige of women and gives the perception that women are paid for and, therefore, the property of men. It is further contended that it furthermore perpetuates gender economic inequality, domestic violence, divorce restrictions, domestic violence and denial of reproductive and sexual health choices for women (Kaye et al, 2005). Bride price, according to Wendo (2004), makes the wife the husband's property with little or no control over her own body. In light of this, it is not surprising that Nwoye views women as men's property and not to be placed on an equal footing with men.

From Nwoye's excerpt above, one can also deduce that there is a cultural as well as an institutional acceptance of male superiority. A look at the constitution of Nigeria reveals that whilst promoting human and equal rights, it does not specifically promote gender equality like that of South Africa. His (Nwoye's) remarks about police attitude towards wife beating and marital rape did not surprise me as I had the opportunity to experience something of that nature. On a trip to Sierra Leone, I stayed over in Lagos for a night. Whilst waiting to go through immigration, a Nigerian man whom I had travelled with from South Africa was verbally abusive to a female traveller. He was very aggressive and made threatening gestures and remarks. One of things that he said that impacted on me was the following statement: 'Don't forget we are now in Nigeria. I can beat you up and then bribe the police'. Everyone including the security personnel looked on calmly and it dawned on me that a man abusing a woman was a common sight there. According to the NDHS (2013), violence against women is a common practice in Nigeria and nearly three in ten Nigerian women have experienced physical violence since age 15 and 7% have experienced sexual violence. It further stated that spousal violence is high as well with one in four married women reporting that they have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their husband/partner.

Nwoye's excerpt also suggests that lobbying for gender equality is a western concept. Whilst it is true that feminism and the fight for gender equality kicked off in the West, it has

come a long way and it is now seen as a global issue rather than a western one. African feminists are equally as involved in this fight in present times. Kolawole (1997) asserts that ever since the call for African women to break the silence on the treatment of women was made by genuinely concerned African women such as Awa Thiam (1978), many African women have risen to the challenge. Thus, African women are now ‘throwing their voices’ and have moved from the margin to the centre. Kolawole (1997) adds that even those African women who reject the concept of feminism are not against the fight for women’s self-definition and assertiveness but rather against the conceptualisation of feminist thinking or rationalisation within a western perspective. Thus, instead of focusing on the term African feminism, people should feel free to name the struggle as they desire and get on with achieving the goal of gender equity and making African women more visible in various sectors (Kolawole, 2002).

In the Nigerian society where there is such a high acceptance of male superiority and female submissiveness, it stands to reason that gender perspectives run along the same lines. The gender perspective as embraced by the majority of the migrants before coming to South Africa, therefore, was an acceptance of patriarchy, gender inequality, female submissiveness, hegemonic masculinity, heterosexual relations and conformance to ascribed or prescribed gender roles, status and responsibilities. This is not to say, however, that all men favoured it or that all the women implicitly accepted it. However, the majority of the migrants had before they migrated, regarded the existing gender ascriptions and prescriptions as a way of life and were comfortable with it. Having examined the existing gender perspectives, it will now be in place to examine whether the host land generated new gender perspectives for these migrants or not.

### **7.3 Towards New Gender Perspectives**

South Africa’s constitution promotes gender equality in all sectors. South Africa has a strong legal framework in respect of gender equality and women’s right and it is the highest ranked country in Africa in this respect (Gender Statistics in South Africa, 2011). There have been criticisms though, that this looks good on paper than in actuality as patriarchy and gender discrimination is prevalent in the South African society. As the Gender Statistics, South Africa (2011) states, there are discriminatory practices, social norms and persistent stereotypes on the ground that result in inequitable access to opportunities, resources and power for women and girls.

Despite this, a number of women in South Africa are very aware of their rights and there are channels to complain about unfair treatment and discrimination. In addition, there is a lot of media and institutional campaign on women's rights and gender equality. South Africa's constitutional acceptance of lesbians, gays, bisexual and transgenders, the choice to marry in or out of community of property, women not being obligated to take the surname of their spouse or give their children their spouses/partners surname are also some of the new gender ideologies, the migrants are exposed to. In such a space which has a high level of gender equality awareness and the opportunity to become economically and educationally empowered, there is a chance that it can serve as an eye opener for marginalised migrant women. They become aware of their unequal status along with its shortcomings, unfairness and limitations. Indeed, this exposure to new gender ideologies has served to create heightened gender equality awareness for most Nigerian female migrants in Durban and made them very aware of their low status as women.

Circumstances in the host land have also forced them to become aware of gender inequalities inherent in their home construction of gender. The lack of extended family, for instance, has made many of them become very aware of the hard work and unfairness involved in the execution of housework - work that their culture demands should be their roles and responsibilities. As a result, some of the women started questioning their former gender constructs and even started challenging unequal gender relations. Indeed, international migration can provide women with an opportunity for liberating themselves from subordinate gender roles. It must be borne in mind though, that not all the women are dissatisfied with their former way of life. As Muthuki (2012) asserts, some migrant women are unwilling to distance themselves from cultural beliefs that they have been socialised with since childhood despite their level of education. On the whole though, migration to some extent does generate new gender perspectives for Nigerian female migrants. Is it the same for the men?

As noted earlier on, Nigerian male migrants come from a background which is predominantly patriarchal and one in which hegemonic masculinity and heterosexuality are the norms. They now find themselves in a space where women are given equal rights as men, laws and institutions put in place to protect and promote the rights of women and an institutional acceptance of same sex relationships. In addition, they also face challenges from their women. As such, irrespective of their efforts, they find themselves situated within power hierarchies they have not constructed, a fact acknowledged in the social location concept.

The majority of the men are not happy about these changing situations. As such, although the migration site does generate new gender perspectives, most of the men are unwilling to grab it or be influenced by it.

Two of the male migrants (Enoch (15) and Olufemi (20)) confessed though that being in South Africa made them become aware of the fact that women were being exploited by men in the name of culture and that whilst they do not wholeheartedly support full gender equality, they believe that discrimination against women should be addressed and women should not be made to feel as second class citizens. Another male migrant (David: 22) states that he became very aware of the levels of violence women were faced with and their vulnerability and this made him sympathetic to the plight of women. It was ironic though, that even though they acknowledged that women were being violated and discriminated against, none of them supported the fact that there should be gender equality in society. Apparently, they are not willing to let go of all the benefits that come with being a member of the dominant sex. These unearned advantages or conferred dominance are what gives power to men as a group over women (McIntosh in Jonson, 2001).

The renegotiation of various gender identities within migration also serves to generate new gender perspectives. Muthuki (2012) observes that migration presents women with the challenge of exercising their autonomy on the one hand, and the quite often religio-cultural requirement to submit to male domination on the other hand. She adds that, migrant men are similarly faced with the challenge of maintaining a hegemonic masculinity which accords them patriarchal privilege and renegotiating their masculinities in a new gender context where women have been empowered. This complex and constant negotiations of gender identities serves to either change or reinforce migrants' perspectives on gender. As advanced by the social location framework, multiple dimensions of identity also shape, discipline and position people and the ways they think and act. It is apparent that new gender perspectives can be generated in the migration site, which in turn can change the gender perceptions of migrants especially the women. However, the realities can be complex and these are examined in subsequent sections of this chapter.

#### **7.4 Female Empowerment: The Reality**

From the data collected, it is apparent that Nigerian women are expected to be subordinate to men and that a good Nigerian woman or wife should be submissive and responsible for the household tasks. As the NDHS (2013) states, Nigerian married women have less control over

their own lives than married men and that nearly half of them do not participate in decision-making regarding their own health care, major household purchases or even visits to family or relatives. Their men expect them to display the same gender identity and perform the same roles in the migration site regardless of their status. Yet, women are supposedly empowered by migration. According to Ojong and Muthuki (2010), the migratory process seems to have a generally empowering impact on women's self-esteem and economic independence. They further observe that education is pivotal to women's empowerment as it enables them to respond to opportunities, challenge their traditional gender roles and change their lives. Access to and control of money also contributes to women's empowerment (Pellow, 1997). Migration can provide migrant women with a vital source of income for them and their families and earn them greater autonomy, self-confidence and status (Jolly and Reeves, 2005).

The interviews revealed that education, economic independence and the migration process itself have empowered Nigerian female migrants in Durban to some extent and have helped them to be more confident and assertive. This has led to some of them questioning their former society's construction of gender and taking further opportunities to advance themselves. To what extent, however, are these women empowered? I will first of all look at the definition of empowerment. From a general point of view, it means taking charge of one's own life, making one's own decisions and taking responsibility. The Free online dictionary describes it as being invested with power. IFAD (n.d) describes it as the ability of people especially the least privileged to have access to productive resources that enable them to obtain the goods and services that they need and the ability to participate in the development process and the decisions that affect them which relates to the ability of people taking control of their lives. Women's empowerment is a collective action by women to recognise and address gender inequalities which stand in the way of their equal access to resources and full participation in power structures and decision-making (Longwe, 1998). Women's empowerment should include participation in the decision-making process and access to power (Beijing, 1995). Do supposedly empowered Nigerian female migrants, however, have full power over their lives, the activities they engage in and the choices they make? Are they fully able to address gender inequalities? The interviews relating to gender relations and roles in the household reveal that these women are not fully empowered as they would like to be. For instance, whilst they may be well educated, suitably employed, earn their own money and even be able to challenge their spouse on certain issues, household tasks

continue to be largely their domain and they find it difficult to free themselves from it or divide it equally with their spouse or partners.

Modupeh's (12) case is a good example in this regard. She is suitably employed and also sells hand crafted jewellery that she makes. She is financially strong and can even challenge her spouse on a number of things. Housework, however, continues to be her responsibility. She is heavily burdened by it and will have appreciated some help from her husband, especially with the cooking. Her husband, however, totally refuse to assist her with household tasks. Thus, whilst she appears to be self-assured, confident and economically independent, within her home she is bound by social constructs that expect her to serve as care giver and nurturer for the family. Iyamide (1) also expressed that whilst she can get her husband to compromise on some issues, even with housework, he is very reluctant to help with cooking. Cooking is part of the construction of an African woman gender identity (Muthuki, 2004) and an integral part of the construction of a Nigerian woman. A Nigerian woman is also not only expected to do the cooking but to cook well for her husband to be assured of his love. The following Yoruba proverb 'Olobe lo loko' (She that prepares tasty soup owns the husband) attests to this (Balogu, 2010). Child care is also seen as a woman's job and though most of the female migrants are empowered ideologically, in knowing that child care should be the job of the two parents, they allow themselves to be bullied in being the sole care givers because of cultural constructs. As Davies (1994) observes, even though a married woman can challenge traditional gender roles and try to step out of it, it is a possibility that the husband might still be able to exercise ultimate control over her and is able to re-establish the *status quo* because he has the weight of cultural history, tradition and precedent on his side.

Apart from household tasks, Nigerian female migrants continue to be under male control in many ways in their households. Even decisions concerning themselves have to be sanctioned by their husbands such as decisions regarding their reproductive health and finances. Lizzy (8), for instance, owns a hairdressing salon and is financially independent. She expressed that she suspects that her husband cheats and would like him to use a condom during sex. She asserted that she tried but was unable to negotiate safe sex practice with him and all she got for her efforts was a slap and a warning not to ever bring up the subject again. It is evident that even though a woman is being empowered through her level of education, financial independence and the migration process, challenges still abound as a result of negotiating



traditional gender roles (Ojong and Muthuki, 2010). In the above authors' study of professional African migrant women, they note that even though these women have high educational attainments and are economically empowered, they are unable to exercise the same empowerment in their homes due to socio-cultural and religious regulations.

Thus, whilst appearing to be fully empowered in certain public spheres, the majority of the female migrants are bound by social constructs in the private sphere (home). Despite their education, economic advantage, and exposure to new gender perspectives in the migration site, there is the tendency for them to submit to traditional gender roles. In other words, they are not socio culturally empowered. It appears that these women are buying into liberal feminism which advocates for formal equality in the public sphere yet ignore the social structures and values that disadvantage women (Muthuki, 2010). This is why radical feminists unlike the liberal ones go beyond the public to the private sphere to address gender inequalities in society. It stands to reason, therefore, that women are not as fully empowered by the migration process as some scholars make them out to be. As with any rule, there is an exception as this very study has also revealed that some women have been able to gain some level of autonomy within their household and gender relations have been altered.

### **7.5 Shades of Empowerment**

From the above discussion, it is apparent that Nigerian migrant women are not fully empowered and that the men are not comfortable with female empowerment. However, it appears that whilst some of the men do not like any form of female empowerment, it is the socio-cultural empowerment of women that the majority have an issue with. Socio-cultural, as the name implies, is a combination of factors revolving around social issues/society and culture. The Online Business Dictionary defines it as a set of beliefs, customs, practises and behaviour within a population. What then is socio cultural empowerment? In simple terms, socio-cultural empowerment refers to a situation where one is free and is in a position to reject disadvantageous traditions.

In nearly every parts of the world, cultural traditions disadvantage women. Cultural traditions are beliefs, rituals and objects passed on within a society that are still maintained in the present but with origins in the past (Green, 1997). Some cultural traditions have positive values but others promote discrimination, inequality and violence especially against women. Honour killing, wife inheritance, wife beating, early marriage, forced marriage, hard labour,

denial of education for girls, little or no property rights and non-participation in decision making processes are just few of the many cultural traditions that disadvantage women. Such traditions perpetuate violence against women and put them in submissive positions to men. As the eleventh session Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1992) notes, traditional attitudes by which women are regarded as subordinate to men or as having stereotyped roles perpetuate widespread practices involving violence or coercion and these forms of gender-based violence help to maintain women in subordinate roles. The concepts of cultural relativism and cultural defence which promotes tolerance and legitimacy of different cultural traditional norms have at times been advanced to justify harmful traditions. The concept of universalism, however, upholds that there is ‘an underlying human unity which entitles all individuals regardless of their cultural or regional antecedents to retain basic minimal rights known as human rights’ (Zechenter, 1997:320). In this light, a number of international, regional and national instruments have been drawn that condemn harmful traditional practices and culture especially those that discriminate and cause violence to women and girls such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1979) and the Protocol to the African Charter on human and people’s rights on the rights of women in Africa (2003). Article 5 of the Protocol to the African Charter on human and people’s rights on the rights of women in Africa, for instance, states that ‘state parties shall prohibit and condemn all forms of harmful practices which negatively affect the human rights of women’. The eleventh session CEDAW committee (1992) specifically requested governments to identify and end customs and practices that discriminate and perpetuate violence against women as documented below:

States parties in their report should identify the nature and extent of attitudes, customs and practices that perpetuate violence against women and the kinds of violence that result. They should report the measures that they have undertaken to overcome violence, and the effect of those measures (24e).

It is evident that there is global consensus that cultural traditions can perpetuate violence and discrimination especially against women. Customs, culture, tradition and religion are, therefore, major impediments to changes in gender roles (Daphne, 1998). Power hierarchies are created through such social stratifying factors. Such socio cultural constructs give little or no voice to women and give dominance to men. It accords men patriarchal dividends and as such, men are reluctant to let women be so empowered because it gives women a voice, the

power to say no to subordination, the power to refrain from ascribed chores and the power to be on an equal footing with men. As such, women find themselves in social locations that disadvantage them. This is why Ojong and Muthuki (2010) argue that the struggle for the emancipation of African women is not really a struggle against men but a struggle against ideologies that are not friendly to women. Socio-cultural constructs are the stronghold of men and when women are socio-culturally empowered, men lose their prominence and dominance.

The men are, therefore, not supportive of their women being empowered as such. The interviews revealed that Nigerian male migrants are to some extent tolerant of economic or educational empowerment of women. The majority do not want their wives/partners to be fully financially dependent on them and so they are not averse to them working and earning although they start to feel insecure when their wives earn more money, become more educated or are in better placed jobs than them. What they find very hard to tolerate is the socio-cultural empowerment of their women. Following is a representation of Iyamide' (1) experience in this regard:

*My husband does not mind that I have a good job or that I am highly educated. He does not even mind that I earn good money. What he does not like is for me to stand up to him or argue with him. He will then remind me of my place as a wife and that that he is the head of the family. He says that when we are together I should put aside my education, my money and my job and concentrate on being a wife (Iyamide.1).*

What does being a wife mean? In the Nigerian sense and in most cases it means cooking, doing household chores, caring for the husband and children, being submissive to the husband and generally having little or no voice. Most husbands are happy as long as their wives adhere to the socio-cultural rules of being a wife, despite their financial and professional status or level of education. Socio-cultural constructs continue to hinder women's progress. The roots of gender discrimination and gender inequality depend on those socio-cultural constructs of gender. Until women are socio culturally empowered, gender inequality and discrimination will always prevail in society. The establishment of women's rights, therefore, requires economic empowerment as well as socio-cultural empowerment, an

empowerment that calls for a profound transformation of unjust social systems (Ojong and Muthuki, 2010).

### **7.6 Negotiating Identities in the Transnational Migration Space**

As an academic, a PhD student in gender studies, a Christian, a migrant, an African, a wife, a mother and a woman, I find myself constantly negotiating my gender identity depending on where I am. In the academic sphere with colleagues and students, I am the confident, self-assured, well-educated and emancipated woman. In my household, I am bound by gender social constructs from my home country. In the church, I struggle with my feminist beliefs and the need to be a good Christian which can be contradictory. In the South African space, my identity is that of a well-educated, empowered African female migrant and in the transnational and home space, I resort to being culturally acceptable and that means conforming to former gender and other social constructs. In some ways, therefore, I am the emancipated, empowered African woman and in others, I conform to traditional gender roles and relations which put me in a secondary position to men. In other words, I cannot fully exercise my empowerment. I have to constantly renegotiate my gender identity depending on where I am.

The same is true for both male and female Nigerian migrants in Durban. Depending on their geographical and social location, they have to be constantly shifting their gender identity. I will first of all look at these situations and locations before attempting to explain why it is so. The way both Nigerian male and female behave when they are in a public space together is different from their behaviour when they are with the locals, non-Nigerian migrants or in private settings. Ojong (2002) observes that migrants display characteristics of home and recipient country depending on the situation. For instance, when interacting with their countrymen, they will behave as if they were in their home country. Rogers (1987) argues that identity is formed as a result of interaction with significant others. The public space includes the politico, religio and the wider-social cultural environment. It is in the public sphere that gender roles and responsibilities are most acted out.

New gender perspectives embraced by some of the migrants are usually discarded in the public space in favour of home gender constructs in certain settings. For instance, when in public Nigerian men as a group tend to stick together and expect the gender constructs to be played out. They expect their women to serve them and be generally submissive. In a

birthday party that I attended, I noticed that the ‘home’ gender constructs were evident. First of all, the chairman of the occasion and the disc jockeys were men putting them in positions of authority and prominence. Also, whilst the men relaxed, ate, drank and chatted, the women were busy dishing and serving food, clearing up and washing the dishes. Even when the men wanted more food, they called out for a woman to come and serve them. It was ironic to see one of the women who had earlier explained to me how she had challenged her husband actually succumbing to these gender constructs in public. She later told me that being in the house and being in public are two different things. She explains further:

*On a one to one basis you can challenge your man or any other man for that matter, but it is difficult to do when you are with other Nigerian people. Our people will see this as disrespectful and will tell you off. Even the other women will not support you if you are disrespectful to the men in public. So when you are with them, whether you like it or not, you are expected to act like a woman. When we are together we expect the men to act as men. Even if a man wants to help, he cannot because the other men will laugh at him and call him a woman (Lena.5).*

From this excerpt, it can be ascertained that the migrants perform their expected gender roles when they are in together in public. It also reveals the many inconsistencies and complexities of gender relations. Whilst it is acceptable for a woman to challenge a husband or partner in private, it is considered disrespectful to do so in public. A man who may be silent in his house will suddenly have a voice in the company of other men. The women themselves, even the ones who believe in gender equality will themselves pick on a woman who is ‘disrespecting’ a man in public. Men who help with housework at home will laugh at another who attempts to help with it in the public sphere. The same woman who would not hesitate to bash any other man in public will think twice before doing so to the menfolk from the same country. What is behind this public façade? Is it because the women are better able to challenge males as individuals in the private sphere of the home or is it because the women are ashamed of being seen as not conforming to tradition? Do men feel secure and stronger when they are with others? I asked a male and female key informant about this phenomenon and this is what the man had to say:

*As Nigerians we are very particular about what we do in public. Whilst we can shout at each other at home or in the family, we think twice before we do so in public. We were taught from childhood that we should respect people and be careful of what we do or say in public. Our parents expect us to practice the things they taught us, at home and in public. We were taught to respect people and to earn respect. So this then is not about a man or woman issue. It is simply respecting ourselves and each other in public (Cashopeh.24).*

According to this excerpt, the informant evidently shies away from gender issues and insists that tradition and cultural values are responsible. Gender, however, is interwoven with tradition and culture and it is through them that gender roles and responsibilities are prescribed and upheld. The female key informant has a similar view but goes further as seen below:

*What you do in your home and what you do in public are two different things. In public, even though you may not like some things, you have to pretend, to smile, to behave as if all is well. Our people expect us to go with tradition when in public and they will be angry if you do not. They can even push you away if you misbehave as it will bring shame to them. You know, very few people are strong to stand up for what they believe in. So many times you just go with the flow and do what you are expected to do. It does not mean that you believe in it. As women, they expect us to be polite to men and take care of them. So we just do it (Ikechi.10).*

It is evident that in dealing with their own people within and outside South Africa, Nigerians tend to resort to expected gender roles. They have a tendency to adhere to cultural traditions when in public and they have a strong sense of public conformity and acceptance. It also appears that tradition is not always appreciated by all but because of recriminations and tongue wagging, people pretend to adhere to it especially when they are in public. They, therefore, resort to pretence and hypocrisy. It will, therefore, be safe to conclude that when performing gender roles in a public space with people of the same nationality, the migrant's try to conform to the identities expected. When visiting Nigeria, the migrants are also

expected to adhere to their traditional gender roles and this can be difficult especially for the migrant woman who has become empowered and exposed to new ideas.

Joy (3) explains below how she has to take on a different identity when she makes a visit to Nigeria:

*Here in South Africa, I have a hair salon. I am the boss and in charge of my own staff. I am respected by all. When I go home to visit, I have to adjust a bit. For instance my parents do not like the way I am used to dressing here. They think I should not be wearing trousers all the time. I therefore have to put on clothes that are acceptable. I have to help my mother serve and prepare food and also help with the housework. I have to hide and drink alcohol as my parents do not approve of a woman drinking. Everyone expects me to know my place as a woman and to behave as one. You know, they are usually happy when a person does well in a foreign land but they do not like it when you change your ways. Then they think that you have thrown away your identity. So when I go home, I try to behave as they want (Joy.3).*

From her narrative, Joy is expected to still hold on to those cultural values that had earlier bound her. She find it difficult to exercise her new-found freedom and independence as it would be considered culturally unacceptable and out of place for a woman. She, therefore, has to conform to former gender roles. Some of the female migrants reported being in the same position as Joy, where they had to uphold 'home' gender roles even though they might have embraced new gender perspectives. Bisola (9) asserted as follows: *"When I go home, I behave like a proper Nigerian woman, but when I am here, I behave differently"*. Whilst they may act tough in the migration site, they do not want their family members and friends back home to realise that they have changed in some ways. Gender identities are constantly being renegotiated not only within geographical locations, but also in social locations as well. The men are also expected to behave like men when they go back home, to be in charge, confident, strong, scornful of housework and much more. Thus, even if they might have embraced new gender perspectives, they are expected to put it on hold as Enoch (15) explains below:

*I am used to seeing to the baby when he cries, and I change his nappy and feed him. So when I went home to visit, I automatically started doing this.*

*I got strange looks from my parents and my elder brother took me aside and asked me whether going to South Africa has turned me into a woman. He told me that it did not tell well for me to be changing a baby's nappy when my wife and other women were in the house and so I had to stop doing it. I got used to this and when I came back to South Africa, I had to start doing it again (Enoch.15)*

As stated earlier on, child care is regarded as a woman's duty. This is not to say though that Nigerian fathers are uninvolved or distance themselves from their children but caring especially for infants largely remains a woman's task. Men who perform supposedly women's tasks are not regarded as proper men and it is seen as derogatory for men to do women's work. Away from his extended family and in the privacy of his home in a different country, Enoch was able to execute the task without recrimination. Back home, he was unable to stand his ground and had to make mental adjustments when he returned. Enoch, Bisola and Joy are not the only ones who have to revert to traditional gender roles and expectations when they visit home. Other migrants also attested to this and some of them find it very disorientating. Abigail (6) who is a single woman, asserts that she finds changing identities tedious. She lives an independent life in South Africa and makes her own decisions. She is one of those women who have managed to liberate themselves from male dominance and she views herself as an emancipated woman. She argues that going home sort of throws her away from her comfort zone as she has to conform all the time to those traditional gender expectations she has distanced herself from. On her return to South Africa, she has to make that shift in her thinking and behaviour.

This constant shifting of identities in different geographical and social spaces can be tedious for the migrants. Others have learnt to adapt to the changing situations and as one of the male migrants succinctly puts it: '*you learn to dance to the different tunes you are faced with*'. Notably, gender is done or constructed, it can also be undone or deconstructed (Deustch, 2007). Goffman's front stage and backstage theory best explain the behaviour of the migrants. When in public or with certain people, the migrants are in front of the stage and they act out what the audience expects of them. They know that they are watched and judged and so they act accordingly. Backstage, in the privacy of their homes or with their spouse, they are able to engage in practice that their 'audiences' would have found unacceptable.



## 7.7 Complexities in Household Gender Relations

Past chapters have elicited that gender relations are altered during migration and that men are even forced to participate in so called women tasks. Some have generated new gender perspectives in that they no longer see it as belittling to assist their wives with housework and other so called womanly tasks. They have grudgingly come to accept doing ‘women’s’ jobs and are now a bit relaxed about ascribed gender roles and relations.

These men, however, are usually unwilling to let this be known to their friends and families. Tumi (11) thus argues that whilst her husband is now willing to help her clean the house, his act in this regard is supposed to remain a secret from friends and relatives. He will not be considered man enough if it was known that he was helping with housework. Tumi’s husband is not the only male migrant to behave as such. Bisola (9) also attests that her brother will pretend that he does not help with housework when friends and relatives visit and that he will quickly stop what he was doing if they visited him in the house. Apparently, housework is viewed as a woman’s domain and men are not expected to participate in it. Those who did are called women or are said to be tied to their wives’ wrapper. Single men are exempted but if they have a girlfriend or a female relative around, they are not expected to do any housework. As such, the men lacked the confidence to openly admit that they helped with housework or they will try to make it seem trivial. So, whilst they pretended to their friends that they were above these things, some did it in the privacy of their homes.

It emerged also that some of the women themselves were not willing to admit to others that their husbands did housework or that they were more educated or earned more than them. Whilst women are fighting against gender inequality, social constructs seem to have been deeply ingrained in them. Despite not wanting to ‘expose’ their spouse, there is also that sense of shame as they do not want to be regarded as ‘abnormal women’. Iyamide (1) explains below:

*I am happy that my husband helps me in the house but I do not want people though to know that he helps in the house. It does not tell well on me as a woman and on him as a man. When people visit us, I tell my husband to sit down and not to help with anything even though I might need help. I just do not feel comfortable with letting people know. People can talk you know, they might even say I have put juju (spell) on him. They will*

*say so many bad things and will even laugh at my husband. I want people to see him as a man and me as a woman. Am I making sense (laugh) (Iyamide.1).*

Iyamide's excerpt implies that women have come to accept certain tasks as theirs and have been conscientised that it will be unseemly for men to do such tasks when they are around. By saying that her husband helps her in the house means that she is unconsciously acknowledging that it is her duty to do so. Thus, it appears that women themselves have internalised certain values which make them 'good' women and act as co-conspirators with men to uphold these values. Thus, even though Iyamide is happy with the help she is receiving from her husband, she feels ashamed for others to know as she wants to be seen as the ideal woman. Laughing at the end of her excerpt is a way of acknowledging the incongruity of the situation. As Hall (1990) avers, the depth and intensity of interactive influences between self and values in identity processes motivates behaviour to accomplish ideals. She further argues that women are strongly influenced by traditional value systems in all societies and these are difficult to change because they are focal references for established social meanings and explanations. Ngcongco (1993) avers that African women experience a dilemma as their cultural upbringing indicates that a "good" African woman is subservient to male authority and is a home maker whilst western education lures them to be ambitious and independent career women. Within the Nigerian socio-economic scene, women are expected to execute domestic duties, take care of the home, bear and take care of the children and be obedient to their spouse (Jekayinfa, 1999). These are some of the cultural requirements of being a good wife. It is apparent that these Nigerian women have internalised these values which make them 'good' women. Thus, whilst they are not averse to the help given by their menfolk they do not wish others to know.

Masculine and feminine roles and responsibilities have become so ingrained in people that it becomes a part of their identity. Men and women are made to feel guilty and ashamed when they go against their society's gender expectations of them. It is, therefore, not enough to be biologically male or female. There is that sense of not being fully male or female if one deviates from social constructions of gender. In order to get a male's point of view on this subject, I questioned Omotayo (16) whether he would openly admit to doing housework and this is what he had to say:

*I know some of my friends are doing it but we all pretend not to do it. Only the young single men will admit to it and some of them avoid cooking and eat at restaurants all the time. If you go to our restaurants you will see only the men. Not many women go because people will think that they are lazy. You see, even our women do not like their man to do housework in front of other people except for those who have no respect. They will get a bad name. People will say that they are bad wives and will talk bad things about them. Good women should not even boast if they work more money than their husband or if they have more education than them. People will respect her because she has not shamed her husband (Omotayo.16).*

His response does not quite answer whether he would openly admit to doing housework but one can deduce that he would not feel comfortable about openly admitting it. Also, he feels more secure to talk about men as a group rather than the individual. He touches on the fact that the women themselves do not want people to know if their husbands do housework. His excerpt also unearthed other issues such as the fact that if a woman is earning a lot more than the husband or responsible for most of the financial issues in the house, she is not supposed to brag about it and should give the impression that the man is the main breadwinner. A woman who is more educated than the husband is also not expected to make it apparent. Male migrant, Bolaje (19) concurs with him. Bolaje views it as an abomination for women to boast that they are more educated and emphasises this by stating that an okra tree can never be taller than its owner. By this he meant that like the okra tree, a woman despite her status can always be controlled by her man (owner).

In the same way as they were unwilling to admit that they did housework, the men were also very unwilling to admit to their migrant friends and relatives that their women at times stood up to them or challenged them for fear that their manhood would be scorned. They would report that all is well rather than admit it. As Olufemi (20) asserted:

*'If people know that your wife stands up to you, they will not see you as a sober man. They will tell you to be a man and put her under control and will even laugh at you and say that you are behaving like a woman or a gay man. They will call you yeye (useless) man. So when my wife gives me headaches, I am careful about who I complain to. At times I do not even complain, I just try to sort it out in my own way*

*and would pray about it. It is difficult when you are not in your own home. Like in Nigeria, even though people might laugh at you and tell you to be a man, they will show concern and try to sort out the issue, especially the elders. Here, people are busy trying to sort out their lives and do not have time to listen to moans. So they just tell you that, so you know you have to be strong and sort things out for yourself (Olufemi.20).*

Notably, the social constructions of masculinity are at play here especially in terms of what makes one a man. It goes beyond biological aspects. According to Olufemi, it means not allowing one's wife to challenge and this implies that the man should always be in charge. Masculinity, according to Hearn and Kimmel (2006), can be seen as the power of men over women and the power of some men over other men. It is a construction of power structures and men's relationship to women in social and cultural discourse (Allwood, 1998). Connell (1993) identifies four different forms of masculinities and these are hegemonic masculinity, complicit masculinity, subordinated masculinity and oppositional masculinity. Masculinity in this context is hegemonic and it includes being heterosexual and in control of a woman. According to Connell (1987), hegemonic masculinity performances establish conditions of inequality in power and social resources. This condition of inequality give men increased social and economic power over women. Hegemonic masculinity is the culturally idealized form of masculinity and it is secured through the routine operation of gendered institutions which are headed by high powered males who uphold the ideals associated with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995). Some characteristics of hegemonic masculinity are aggression, competitiveness, athletic ability, stoicism and control (Martino, 1999).

It is evident from Olufemi's excerpt that hegemonic masculinity is being played out, as the men are supposed to be in control of women, should bottle up emotions, should not complain, should be strong and should be able to take things in their stride. Even though it affords men power over women and gain them patriarchal dividends, it also puts them under enormous pressure to conform to these social constructs. It is implied in Olufemi's excerpt as well that migrants are not so caring towards one another and not very concerned about the problems of others. Does migration indeed cause individuals to be less caring than they were in their home country?

Migration involves the loss of the familiar and migrants constantly try to adjust to their new settings. The loss of cultural norms, religious customs, and social support systems, adjustment to a new culture and changes in identity and concept of self can impact on migrants' wellbeing and they can experience multiple stresses (Bhugra and Becker, 2005). With so many issues to deal with, a man moaning about his wife is seen as petty, especially as it is not something a man is expected to do. Although it is not disputed that migrants can be uncaring to one another, the interviews reveal that they do support each other in times of need. Another issue that arose is that of tolerating lesbian and gay people. Nigerian law bans same sex relationships and marriages and Nigeria is viewed as a homophobic nation. This law banning same sex relationships was signed by Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan in January 2014 and violators could be imprisoned for fourteen years. In South Africa, however, there is a lawful acceptance of same sex relationships and marriages and it is a crime to discriminate against people because of their sexual orientation. However, like the contradiction between the Bill of rights and the gender inequalities inherent in the South African society, the lawful right to same sex relationship is also not fully approved by all and this has frequently resulted in homophobic violence. Although I was able to gather that some of the migrants do tolerate homosexuals and even have them as friends, there is an innate dislike of them and they will refrain from introducing such friends to their circle. According to a male migrant, South Africa is unlike most African countries in their constitutional acceptance of same sex union. He said that although this was a progressive attitude, it goes against the dictates of the bible and as such, even though he will tolerate homosexuals, he will not go out of his way to be friendly with them. He adds that if a Nigerian is seen socialising with a homosexual, there is a tendency for the others to think that person is so inclined.

The complexities in gender relations can, as always, be traced to the social constructions of gender. As Lorber (1994) argues, the building blocks of gender are socially constructed statuses. She further argues that gender is a human invention like language, kinship, religion and technology and it organizes human life in culturally patterned ways. As such, when a particular sex ventures outside its ascribed role and expectations, it becomes an issue and discomfort sets in. People are made to feel guilt and shame when they go outside these roles and they are criticised by society as well. In light of this, it is not surprising that the migrants have to resort to such subterfuge when they go against their society's expectations of their sex. The migrants also seem to be practising what Muthuki (2012) terms situational

transformation. She defines it as a situation when one alters personality and behaviour to suit situations and notes that circumstances of necessity and opportunity can force a shift of traditional gender roles within the transnational space. As Thorne (1993) observes, gender differences can be situational as it is created in some situations and done away with in others. Situational transformation is also akin to Goffman's (1956) front stage and back stage concept in his dramaturgical framework. The migrants are very mindful of their 'audience' and thus strive to live up to expectations when they are on the 'front stage'. When they are backstage, they are able to let their guard down and engage in practices that are not in line with their culture's expectation.

## **7.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that the migration site generates new gender perspectives for both male and female migrants but it is the women who mostly embrace it. It looked at the gender perspectives in the home country and highlighted the new ones generated in the migration site. It has also revealed that despite the new gender perspectives that are generated, there are complexities involved. These complexities include the fact that Nigerian women in Durban are presumed to be fully empowered when in actual fact they are not since the majority of these women are still subservient to their spouses and partners. It also touched on the fact that men are against the socio-cultural empowerment of women as they are aware that this would bring full empowerment and emancipation for women.

The importance of social and geographical locations in the performance of gender is evident in this chapter. Notably, the migrants perform gender differently depending on the geographical or social space they are in. When they are with other Nigerians in a public space, they tend to revert to traditional gender roles. The same is done when they visit home. There might be cases, however, where migrants adhere to new gender perspectives regardless of where they are and this would be the case when they begin to be brave enough to stand their ground.

It was also revealed that even though men are slowly beginning to do household tasks, it continues to remain a woman's domain and there is a lot of manipulation and hypocrisy surrounding it. Those men who help with housework do not want their friends to know. Women whose husbands do housework also do not want other people to know. Housework in this case could be likened to an intricate chess game, which involves making the right move

at the right time. Indeed, as the geographical scales imply, gender is being envisioned and practised within different scales. Whilst geographical spaces can impact on gender, social location is vital as well as it influences the migrant's perception of gender. As Hall (1996) argues, gender identity can be fluid and it becomes a contextualised process of unfolding and constant constitution. The fact that gender is not static means that new gender perspectives can always be generated but since it is a human invention it can be subjected to human manipulation as well which in turn breeds complexity. As Gierycz and Rerdon (1999) argue, on the whole, gender perspectives should lead to a critical assessment of the ways in which gender roles contribute to the fulfilment and the denial of human rights and the need for constructive partnership between the sexes.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### INTERSECTIONS OF GENDER, NATIONALITY AND XENOPHOBIA

#### 8.1 Introduction

Migrants in general face new challenges in their host land. The aspect of integrating itself poses a whole new challenge to migrants. As the International Labour Organization points out, 'integration is one of the greatest challenges to be met in international migration'. Apart from the general challenges migrants face, different groups of migrants face specific challenges because of factors such as their nationality, ethnicity, religion, culture, class status and the nature of the destination country they are in. African migrants in South Africa, for instance, face the challenge of xenophobia. Generally speaking, xenophobia means a dislike of or hatred of foreigners. Tshitereke (1999:4), however, argues that in the South African context, it is more of an 'intense tension and violence by South Africans towards African immigrants' rather than a dislike of all foreigners. Isike and Isike (2012) assert that within South Africa, there are two kinds of foreigners based on physiological differences and these are Europeans who are perceived and accepted as tourists and African foreigners who are perceived and rejected as '*Makwerekweres*' (derogatory term for foreigners) or throwaways who have nothing good to offer South Africa. Even those foreign Africans who have attained South African citizenship are perceived as such. Jones (1993b:16) argues that naturalised citizenship presents a challenge to the pure territorial exclusionary conception of citizens by bringing within the community 'lingering elements of the foreign'.

Xenophobic practice in South Africa is, therefore, mainly against other Africans by black South Africans and in some instances against arrivals from the Indian sub-continent (Landau et al 2005). The practise of xenophobia in South Africa should probably be better termed as 'Afrophobia' (cf. Matshine, 2011). Loosely translated, Afrophobia means dislike and hatred of Africa and Africans. There are a number of non-national Africans residing in South Africa from a variety of African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi and Swaziland. These non-national Africans face discrimination not only from the citizens but also from the police and government officials. Isike and Isike (2012:98) assert that 'deviations from bodily ideals of citizenship or conformity to fantasies of strangeness invites humiliation, torture, rape, mugging, search, arrest, detention, deportation and even killings of the so called African



foreigner'. They also face discrimination in many areas such as education, health care, accommodation, employment and are subjected to verbal and physical assaults.

Various reasons have been advanced as to the cause of xenophobia in South Africa. Some of the reasons advanced by Landau et al (2005) are fear of economic competition, the belief that foreigners are inherently criminals and a drain on public resources. Harris (2002) puts forward three hypotheses namely, the scapegoating, isolation and the bio-cultural hypothesis. These are explained as follows: the scapegoating hypothesis states that the foreigner is used as a scapegoat and is someone to blame for social problems and frustrations and the isolation hypothesis expresses that because South Africans did not have much contact with the outside world during the apartheid era, their mixing with unknown people after the apartheid era created a space for hostility. Finally, the bio-cultural hypothesis posits that xenophobia can result from the level of visible physical biological factors and cultural differences or otherness such as those exhibited by African foreigners in the country and these bio-cultural markers promote xenophobia because they point out whom to target, and indicate which particular group of foreigners the South African public dislikes (Harris, 2002). While the three hypotheses discussed above offer important insights into xenophobia, they do not properly account for why black African foreigners, derogatorily called '*makwerekwere*' are the most targeted.

According to Matsinhe (2011), African foreign nationals are feared and hated not because they are really different but because they resemble the former victims of apartheid and as such the ex-oppressed have taken on the character of their ex-oppressor and now oppress the African other. Harris (2002) suggests that the negative representation of Africa and African foreigners by the media and government/public officials is perhaps the most plausible cause for the practice as African migrants are portrayed as threats to the nation. Harris gives examples of sensational print media headlines that trigger xenophobia such as that in a July 1997 edition of the *Sowetan* newspaper titled: *Foreign influx: citizens fear for their job prospects after hordes descend on the country from the troubled north*. Government officials are also guilty of triggering xenophobia as seen in the case of a 2004 state of the city address by the then executive mayor of Johannesburg in which he stated that migrants place a severe strain on employment, housing and public services. Such headlines and statements are a catalyst for xenophobic attacks. Whilst migration therefore can lead to cultural advancement, it can also lead to cultural confusion and persecution (Isike and Isike, 2012).

In response to xenophobic acts, many African migrants are resentful and hostile to South Africans and there is a tendency to view South Africans as inferior. Also, negative stereotypes are held about South Africans such as that they are prejudiced and parochial and that black South African men especially are extremely violent, lazy, adulterous, not nurturing of their partners, wasteful, unenterprising and ignorant (Morris, 1998). African foreigners and South Africans have to come to view each other as 'the other'. The other is what one assumes he or she is not and foreigners are usually viewed as the 'others'. As Bauman (1991:8) avers, the 'foreigner' is the other of state subject. Although xenophobic practices are meted out to black African migrants regardless of their nationality, Nigerians, however, believe that they are the most disliked of all the African migrants. My respondents advanced a variety of reasons for this and gave accounts of some of the problems they faced because of this dislike. These problems and challenges in turn had gender dimensions. The situation is apparently one, where gender intersects with nationality. In other words, Nigerians as a group experience certain problems because of their nationality but some of these problems were gender specific. As Rabe (2004) asserts, social divisions such as class, race, disability and sexual orientation intersect with gender in an individual's life. This chapter investigates the claim of 'Nigeria-phobia' (dislike and hatred of Nigerians) and explores how it is gendered. Since the study is based on Nigerians in Durban, there is a chance that their experiences could vary from other Nigerians elsewhere in South Africa.

This chapter is grounded in the social identity theory as it best explains the perceived differences between South Africans and other Africans (particularly Nigerians), the problems faced and the resulting consequences. Matshine (2011) argues that looks, performances and body smells are used to signify foreignness and these signifiers in turn are used as markers of group as well as individual identity resulting in the 'we-they' differentiation between citizens and non-citizens. This is akin to the social identity theory which, as described by Hogg and Vaughan (2002), is an individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups. As Hogg (2006) aptly puts it, it is a case of 'we and us' against them. In this instance, it is South Africans (mainly blacks) against other African nationals, with a focus on Nigerians. This *we and us* concept is embedded in Harris's (2002) assertion that South Africa sees itself as divorced from the rest of the continent and Africa is viewed as a negative space 'out there' and totally separate from the space 'in here'. The way individuals and groups internalize established social categories such as their culture, ethnicity, gender and class identities are reflected in social identities (Zevallo n.d). As the social identity

theory postulates that different social groups varies in the power and status they have in society (Muthuki, 2010), it was suitable to also explore the tensions and power play between the two groups and the gender dynamics involved.

## **8.2 Claims of ‘Nigeria-phobia’**

As noted earlier on, there is general consensus amongst the migrants that they are treated more badly than any other African migrant group in South Africa. This, they believe is because of political reasons, negative perceptions held about them and enviousness. Some of the migrants stated that there was some political tension between Nigeria and South Africa as a result of Nigeria backing the Transnational National Council in Libya and South Africa being in support of the late Mohammed Gadhafi. They also claim that South Africans view South Africa as the giant of all African countries with only Nigeria to reckon with and as such, they are therefore, always on the lookout for ways to show power and superiority over Nigeria. As a result, there is political tension between the two countries that resulted in South Africans being generally hostile towards Nigerians. They gave an example of a 2012 incident wherein a hundred and twenty five Nigerians were deported from South Africa to Nigeria because they were accused of having fake yellow vaccination cards. The then Nigerian Minister of foreign affairs, Oluugbenga Ashiru had stated that this action was a contravention of international conventions and observed that although the relationships between the two countries at leadership level are cordial, this cordiality did not trickle down to South African institutions such as the immigration and the police (The Nation, 2012). The minister further noted that immigration officials were always unfriendly to Nigerians and that the police would arrest Nigerians indiscriminately without genuine reasons. This bad treatment of Nigerians was echoed by a Nigerian member of parliament, Hon. Opeyemi Bamidele, who cited that Nigerians suffered more than other African nationals in South Africa during the xenophobic attacks of 2008 and 2009 (The Nation, 2012).

Apart from the political issues, the migrants also claimed that South Africans held negative perceptions about Nigerians such as that they are corrupt, sell drugs, exploitative, boastful, involved in the trafficking of women, participate in money laundering and are involved in all sorts of crimes and illegal activities. Harris (2001) observes that the South African government officials and the people in general tend to stereotype Nigerians as criminals and drug dealers. Matshine (2011) draws attention to an article in the *Mail and Guardian*

newspaper of 18 April 1997 titled *Searching for a guilty Nigerian* that reported how some South African narcotics bureau policemen celebrated a colleague's birthday by vowing to arrest as many Nigerians as possible in the Hillbrow area. In this vein, Neocosmos (2008) made reference to xenophobic statements by the ex-home affairs minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi, which include the allegation that Nigerian immigrants are drug traffickers and criminals. Morris (1998) observes that even professional migrants or those married to South African citizens find it hard to be part of the South African society because of the perception that all Nigerian immigrants in South Africa indulge in illegal activities. One migrant asserts that: *as soon as you say that you are a Nigerian, you are branded as a criminal immediately.* The migrants recounted an incident at the Port Nolloth area in South Africa, where the Nigerians living in that community were accused of being drug dealers and selling drugs to the children in the community. They were attacked by South Africans, chased out of their homes and their property and shops were looted and burnt. This incident, they asserted is just one of many, where Nigerians were specifically targeted and attacked. They attributed these attacks to South Africans being envious of them and threatened by their business success. The social identity theory postulates that the 'in group' always find negative aspects of the 'out' group so as to enhance their own image and this is evident in the above mentioned case of South Africans (in group) accusing Nigerians (out group) of being criminals and drug pushers. As Hogg and Vaughan (2002) observe, self-categorisation and enhancement of an in group is created in group membership which favours the in-group at the expense of the out-group.

On the whole, it appears that Nigerians in South Africa are generally mistrusted, viewed negatively and treated badly and there is a general consensus amongst all the migrants that Nigerians are the most disliked of all African immigrants. Whilst I may not be in a position to validate these claims, I am aware that there are numerous negative perceptions of Nigerians by the South African public. I have witnessed incidents where Nigerians have been targeted. At times, I have been even mistakenly identified as a Nigerian by South Africans and have been subjected to hostility as a result. Having listened to all these claims and witnessing some of it myself, I could not help but ask why then are they willing to still stay in a place where they are so intently disliked. The answers range from the fact that South Africa is economically viable to the determination of Nigerians to succeed despite adverse conditions. As Adeagbo (2013) argues, Nigerian migrants in South Africa have learnt to live with this stigmatisation in their daily lives as they cannot change their identity. To this end, they have

adopted coping mechanisms to deal with the situation. Some of these coping mechanisms are teased out in subsequent sections. As if this aspect of Nigeria-phobia was not enough, it also came out that there are gender dimensions to it. For instance, the male migrants claimed that they are more mistrusted and harassed than the women and gave a number of reasons for this as discussed below.

### **8.3 Masculinizing ‘Nigeria-Phobia’**

This section advances the various reasons given by the male migrants as to why they are more disliked and harassed than Nigerian female migrants. They are as follows:

#### **8.3a Relationship with South African women**

The male migrants expressed that the local men hated them because some of them were in a relationship with South African women. They asserted that South African men accused them of not only stealing their women but also of spoiling them. Spoiling in this case means being over generous to these women and being very considerate of their needs. The migrants said that once a woman has dated a Nigerian, she feels dissatisfied with a local man. Babatunde (18) expands further on this by stating that:

*These South African men do not like us because they say we take their women, but they do not know how to treat their women. They beat them up most time and do not give them any money. You know, women who have friends who have Nigerian boyfriends and husbands ask them to find a Nigerian man for them as they know we treat them well. They are also jealous of us because they say we have money (Babatunde.18).*

Babatunde is attributing the dislike of Nigerian males by South African men to Nigerian men’s relationships with South African women. He also claims that South African men do not know how to treat women and that they are jealous of them because of the assumption that Nigerian men are wealthy and that South African women prefer dating Nigerian men. Another male migrant, Adewole (13) shares his thoughts on the subject matter as represented below:

*They accuse us all the time that we steal their women but I know they are just jealous that their women want us. Their women know*

*that we know how to take good care of women. In Nigeria, they teach us that we should take care of women, so we know how to do it. We cannot just stop just because we are here or because they are South African women. In fact people admire you when you take good care of your woman. They know you are really a man. I do not know why it should bother them so much if we have South African women. If these men were in my country and have no wife, I am sure they will go for our women. It is the reality. But they just like to think bad things of us but it does not bother me. It just makes me more determined (Adewole.13).*

Adewole's narrative is kaleidoscopic in that it contains so many issues. It brings out the societal constructions of what it means to be a man within the Nigerian setting. A man is supposed to be the breadwinner and be able to take care of a woman. He views Nigerian men's relationship with South African women as an expected thing and is unable to understand why this should bring ill feelings. The determined nature of the Nigerian male comes out. This was touched upon in an earlier chapter which explained about the tendency of Nigerian men to do anything to survive in South Africa and not be bothered by what people will say. Bad treatment of Nigerian men by local South African men as reported by the male migrants ranged from being shunned, being intimidated, being ignored, refusal to be friendly with them, verbal abuses, teasing, being embarrassed or humiliated in public or even being assaulted. Some of the migrants, however, stated that not all South African males were like this and reported of being on friendly terms with some of them. I wanted a woman's view on this issue of bad treatment of Nigerian men by local men because of the allegation that they 'stole' their women and this is what Bisola (9) had to say:

*It is true that South African men do not really like our men. They say that they steal away their women and then boast about it. I have heard South African men say so and at times when they try to date me and I refuse, they will grumble that my brothers take away their women, so there is nothing wrong if they do the same. It is not as if they want a serious relationship, just fun. I remember a case where one of our men was beaten up because he had a South African girlfriend. But you know, our men also do not want us to date South African*

*men. They say that they do not know how to take care of women. Maybe everyone should just keep to their own women to avoid problems (Bisola.9).*

Bisola not only confirms the allegation but also brought up issues of revenge and retaliation. According to her, a Nigerian man was being beaten by local men because he dated a South African. Although this could have been as a result of him dating someone's partner but because of the context, it was interpreted otherwise. She also claimed that South African men try to date Nigerian women in return, though for more of a fling than for any serious purpose. Another issue that came out was that Nigerian male migrants also do not like their women dating local men as they feel that they are not able to take good care of them. This is reminiscent of Morris (1998) observation that xenophobic acts against them have led African migrants to hold negative stereotypes of South Africans, one of them being that black South African men do not nurture their partners. Bisola's suggestion that maybe everyone should just date or marry women of the same nationality is probably not the best in this present day and age of globalisation. Love and relationship between Nigerian male migrants and South African women has apparently resulted in dislike for Nigerian males by local men. This can be further interpreted as a case where xenophilia (love for foreign things) is breeding xenophobia (hatred/dislike for foreign things). As noted earlier on, xenophobia is a big issue in South Africa and many migrants (males as well as females) have fallen victim at some point.

In association with Nigerian men and South African women relationship, the migrants claimed that another reason why South African men disliked them was that they believed that Nigerian men exploited their women to get permanent residence or citizenship in South Africa. This view, the migrants claimed, is held by male and female South Africans alike and although a number of South African women are dating Nigerian males, some of them are sceptical of engaging in a relationship with them as they feel that they will be exploited. According to Minnar and Hough (1996), African male migrants rush to marry South African women and have children with them as soon as they get to South Africa in a bid to be able to make a plea that they have dependents in South Africa if apprehended. This situation, therefore, is not unique to Nigerian men, but as Shodekeh (21) argues '*when other African men marry South African women, they are not judged as being exploiting, but when a Nigerian man does so, it is seen as exploitation*'.

### 8.3b Illegal Activities and Con Men

Another reason given by the migrants as to why Nigerian men are perceived more negatively and harassed than the women is because of the perception that Nigerian males are mostly involved in illegal activities such as drug trafficking, money laundering, counterfeit money, sex trafficking, pimping and other corrupt activities. They are also accused of introducing criminal activities into the South African society and of teaching the locals some of these activities. This is even acknowledged by high profile people in the South African society. For instance, in his 2004 address, the then executive mayor of Johannesburg stated that on every street corner, there were about thirty Nigerians committing crime and undermining the city's safety and security. When such a statement is made by such a high profile authority figure, it gives society reasons to believe that Nigerians are heavily involved in crime and it also makes Nigerians feel that they are the most discriminated against of all the African migrants. Bolaje (19) comments on this perception as follows:

*I get fed up when people think bad things about us Nigerians. I am a businessman and at times people are scared to do business with me, just because I am a Nigerian. Some will even tell me to my face that they are scared and will refuse to do business with me. At times I hear the remarks, people make about Nigerians and it is not good. They say we are all crooks. At times, when you tell people that you are Nigerian, you can tell by their faces what they are thinking. It is even worse when you are a man. Some will beg you money and will get cross when you do not give them because they think we have lots of money that we have made from crime (Bolaje.18).*

At this point, I could not help but ask him if it was true that some male Nigerians practise these illegal activities and if the locals were justified in thinking like that? Below is his response:

*I will never say Nigerian men do not commit some of the crimes you are talking about but which people do not commit crime? Listen to the radio and television and tell me if it is just Nigerians committing these crime. And you know even when Nigerians are involved; people think it only the men that do these things. Yes they blame us for all these bad things and yes our people do some of these things but a lot of other people*



*do them. It is as if it is only us Nigerians who do these things. There are a lot of Nigerians who have good jobs and so people should not just say Nigerian men because it is not all of us. But that is how people think about us. For me, I think it is just jealousy because most of us are doing well. It is not good though when people hate each other because of their thinking. It is good to meet someone and try to know them first before you judge. In Nigeria, as long as you are a blackman, we see you as one of us but here it is not so. I think it is because they do not travel (Bolaje.19).*

From his excerpt, he is acknowledging that, indeed, some Nigerians do commit these crimes but it is not only Nigerians who commit such crimes. Also, he is stating that there are a number of Nigerians in decent employment and, therefore, the illegal activities of some should not be used to judge all. This is buttressed by Isike and Isike (2012) argument that even though there is a tendency to stereotype Nigerians as criminals, the number of them involved in crime is very insignificant when compared to the number of Nigerian professionals working legally in South Africa. Bolaje appears to have a resigned acceptance of these negative perceptions which he attributes to jealousy.

### **8.3c Police Harassment**

Police abuse and harassment of foreigners has become prevalent in present day South Africa and as such the *Consortium for Refuges and Migration in South Africa (CORMSA)* forwarded a brief on this to the *Independent Complaints Directorate* in April 2010. Some of the alleged abuse and harassment recorded were abuses and theft during police raid on foreign nationals, extortion and harassment by the police, wrongful arrests, collusion with perpetrators, refusal to open cases for foreign nationals and torture. Landau et al (2005) argues as well that the police have learnt to exploit foreign vulnerabilities. Neocosmos (2008) adds that the police are known to raid and beat up African migrants in their sanctuaries, tear up their official documents and even refrain from assisting them if attacked. Whilst it is apparent that foreigners are prone to harassment by the police, Nigerian migrants believe that they are the most harassed nationals, particularly the men because of the negative perceptions about them as outlined above. They stated that they come under police harassment a lot of times and that their dressing and accent usually alert the police on their nationality. As Amakechi (14) remarks that ‘*As soon as the police see a group of us men talking and can tell from our voices, that we are Nigerians, you can see that they start thinking bad things and*

*will at times round us up and start asking us for id documents'*. From this excerpt, one can deduce that their clothing, language and accent are a giveaway. Harris (2002) asserts that biological-cultural features such as hairstyles, accents, vaccination marks, dress and physical appearance can signify differences and indicate foreignness in a way that is immediately visible. Although Nigerians speak a variety of languages and come from different parts of Nigeria, they have a distinct accent that makes them very identifiable and they have a lingua franca known as 'pidgin'. Morris (1998) observes that Nigerians and Congolese are easily identifiable because of their physical features, their bearing, their clothing style and their inability to speak one of the indigenous languages. David (22) further expands on police harassment of Nigerian men by stating that:

*There are times when some of us have even been thrown into jails just because we are Nigerian men. At times we will be drinking and enjoying ourselves in a bar and the police will come in and start making arrests. They will start asking us for our Ids and passport. They will target us the men more. At times the police just come in my shop and ask me for my documents. They say they are doing routine check, but I know that it is because I am a Nigerian and they think I am involved in bad things (David.22).*

David's narrative is similar to that of some of the other male migrants. The migrants' categorisation of police harassment include having their shops and places of business routinely searched and raided, extortion of money, being asked to account if large sums of money were found, being physically assaulted, being constantly asked to produce identity documents and even being arrested. They asserted that even when they are involved in an accident or traffic incidents, police officers are usually disrespectful to them. Nigerian male migrants who stay in the heart of the city in areas such as Point, South Beach and St Georges are more prone to police harassment probably because of the high concentration of Nigerians living there. I enquired from some of the male migrants whether women do also fall victims to the police or not and they indicated that even though the police might not like Nigerians in general, it is the men that they usually turn their attention to. Indeed, none of the women reported being rounded up or chased by the police though some recounted being discriminated against by the police as in the account given by Iyamide (1) below:

*I was in my car and waiting at a traffic light one day, when my car was hit from the back by someone. An argument started and the police eventually came to the scene. Even though it was clear that someone had hit my car from the back, whilst I was waiting for the green light, the police sort of sided with the other driver. As soon as I spoke, he asked if I was a Nigerian and then frowned. From that point, I knew he was not going to act fairly. I was given a fine even though I was in the right (Iyamide.1)*

Apart from incidents like these, the women interviewed hardly suffered from police harassment or brutality. Iyamide (1), for instance, further stated that: *'although I have been treated unfairly by the police, I have never actually been accosted by them. I think the police target our men more because they are thought to be drug dealers and con men'*. Men in general, are perceived as threatening and as a result they are more harassed by the police than women. However, although all my female respondents stated that they have not been aggressively brutalised by the police, they expressed that they are wary of going to report an incident or make a complaint at a police station, as the police have been known to be indifferent to their complaints and non-protective of them. At times, foreign women can even be subjected to verbal, physical and sexual assaults by the police. Some of them asserted that there have been situations where they have been exploited or conned but they prefer to suffer in silence rather than go to the police as they are aware that though the police treat foreigners in general badly, the police treats Nigerians even worse. So, from their narratives it is apparent that Nigerian male migrants are the most harassed compared to their female counterparts.

#### **8.4 Sexual and Physical Violence against Women**

Sexual abuse, assault and rape of women is rampant in present day South Africa. Statistics South Africa (2000) defines sexual abuse as any unwanted physical invasion of an individual's body that is sexual in nature and sexual assault as the unlawful and intentional application of force to another person, or making the person believe that such force will immediately be applied, with the intent to commit the sexual act. The South Africa Law Commission (1999:69) states that rape 'consists in a man having unlawful, intentional sexual

intercourse with a woman without her consent and sexual intercourse presupposes penetration of the female sexual organ by the male penis'. This definition is limiting though as it fails to acknowledge that men also can be raped. A justification for it, however, may be the fact that it is mostly women who are raped in South Africa. South Africa has been termed by various media as the world's rape capital. Although it is commonplace for women to be sexually and physically abused by men in South Africa, female migrants have complained that South African men tend to take more advantage of them because they are foreign and think that they have no choices. In their research on the gendered nature of xenophobia in South Africa, Sigsworth, Ngwane and Pino (2008) state that female migrants reported that they were touched and addressed inappropriately; thereby making many of them perceive South African men as sexual predators. Forty one percent of the above author's respondents claimed that there was a difference in the way South African men treat foreign women and explained that they discriminated against them, used and abused them, acted violently towards them and accused them of being prostitutes or using '*muti*'<sup>6</sup>. However, since South African women are also sexually harassed and abused by their men, can this sexual abuse of foreign women then be seen as xenophobia? Sigsworth, Ngwane and Pino (2008) argue that since migrant women are not expecting these kinds of violent sexual advances from unknown men and have less recourse and protection than South African women, then they are more vulnerable thus rendering them easy prey to men and, therefore, this behaviour could be viewed as xenophobia.

My female respondents also expressed similar views on South African men. They stated that they do experience a lot of sexual harassment and abuse from them. Joy (3), for instance, expressed that hardly a day goes by without being sexually harassed by South African men in the streets and that they attempt to touch her breasts or legs, pat her bottom and make verbal suggestive comments. She asserted that once the men know that she is foreign, they try even harder and even make comments such as they like 'foreign meat' and their intention is purely sexual. Although it was acknowledged by the female migrants that South African men are sexually aggressive towards foreign women, some stated that they are more aggressive towards Nigerian female migrants than those of other nationality and this was because of the revenge and the need to 'cut them to size' factor. The revenge factor is apparently the belief that South African men want to sexually harass and abuse Nigerian women in retaliation for

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<sup>6</sup> Traditional medicine used in a questionable manner

Nigerian men having relationships with South African men. The cut down to size factor, on the other hand, is on account of Nigerians being viewed as boastful, extravagant and loud. Sexual harassment of Nigerian women was, therefore, viewed as a way of putting Nigerians in their place. This is reminiscent of war situations wherein women are systematically raped and abused by the fighting parties to demean and as a show of power and superiority. Benita (7) shares her experience below of how she was sexually targeted because of her nationality:

*I have a South African neighbour who has been after me for a long time. He says all sort of rude things to me and will try to pinch my bum or put his hands up my skirt when we meet. He always ask me why am I so difficult and will say that my brothers are f\*\*\*\*\* his sisters, so what is wrong if he does the same to me. He will get cross when I tell him to leave me alone. He will even say you 'Nigerian women think you are better' than other women. He does not bother the other women in our flat who come from other countries just me because I am Nigerian (Benita.7)*

Benita's excerpt does throw light on the 'revenge' and 'cut down to size factor'. Her male neighbour justifies his sexual harassment of her by stating that if Nigerians men sleep with South African women, then it should be acceptable the other way around. Also, his saying that Nigerian women think they are better is an attestation to the cut down to size factor. Tumi (11) also gives an account of her being harassed sexually because of her nationality.

*I was in a taxi and speaking on the phone, and when I finished, this man sitting next to me asked me if I was a Nigerian because of the way I spoke I said yes and then he asked me why Nigerian men were not bringing their women here but taking South African women as wives. I said I do not know and then he placed his hand on my leg and started to rub it. I told him to stop and he kept squeezing himself near me and then put his arm round my shoulders. I was upset and called out to drop at the next stop. Then he said to me. ' So your men come and take our women but you do not want me'. When I came down from the taxi, I was shaking. I try not to call attention to myself now and if I do not trust the people around me, I do not even answer my phone in public (Tumi.7).*

Tumi's account corroborates this special targeting of Nigerian women by local men. She was sexually assaulted because she was a Nigerian and her tormentor saw her as a fair game. Taxis have been identified as fraught places for foreign women as they can easily be identified as foreign, mostly through their speech and dress (Harris, 2001). From a Nigerian male perspective, David (22) states that at times he has been verbally attacked by South African men about Nigerian men dating South African women and there have been implied threats that they will also be on the lookout for Nigerian women. He asserted, therefore, that South African men specifically target Nigerian women and find ways to harass or molest them sexually. He conceded, however, that there was a tendency for South African men to use and abuse foreign women in general. From the women's account, there is always an underlying fear of rape, sexual harassment and molestation from local men and as a result, they try to obliterate their identity when they are unaccompanied or not in a group. In other words, they try to become invisible and blend in with the South African society such as by speaking less or putting on non-traditional attire. Many foreign African women have also come to adopt such practices and embrace a culture of silence in public. As an African migrant woman myself, I tend to adopt such practices depending on where I am. I keep quiet in taxis, make sure I have the right amount of money that does not require change, avoid sitting in front where I would have to collect the fares and speak out only to get down at my destination. I only put on my traditional attire when I go to church or places where I feel secure. This is because I have experienced xenophobic and sexist attitudes and therefore, do not want to draw attention towards me.

### **8.5 Dynamics of Love and Marriage**

From the interviews and observations made, it was evident that single Nigerian male migrants either turn to home to find a wife or either marry or have a relationship with a South African woman. It is very common to see a Nigerian man with a South African wife or girlfriend. On the other hand, it is very rare to see a Nigerian woman married to or in a relationship with a South African man. What is responsible for this situation? For single unattached Nigerian women in South Africa, finding a spouse is a complicated and difficult process. They reported that their men do not like marrying Nigerian women who have migrated autonomously as they see them as too liberal or as loose women. They will prefer to get a wife from back home. This is not to say, however, that single Nigerian female migrants cannot meet and marry single Nigerian male migrants.

Apart from the fact that their men are not too keen on marrying them, the situation is made worse by the fact that they are not taken seriously by the locals. They claim that South African men do not like marrying foreign women especially Nigerians. They do not mind having them as lovers but seldom want them for marriage purposes. When I asked why this was so, this is what Abigail (6) had to say:

*South African men do not like marrying foreign women especially those from our parts. I mean from West Africa. They might manage those from places like Zimbabwe or Mozambique but they find it difficult to marry us. They see us as strange and believe that we won't make good wives. They also think we won't be able to prepare their food nicely. They do not mind us to sleep with but not to get serious with. I have met many South African men who want to date me, but I can tell that they are not serious about a serious relationship (Abigail.6).*

According to Abigail, South African men are not keen on marrying Nigerian women because of the belief that they will not make good wives. One, however, cannot help but wonder if this feeling is mutual. Are Nigerian women also willing to marry South African men? When I questioned her if she would be willing to marry a South African man, this is what she had to say:

*I am not sure if I want to marry a South African man. They are so different and I know they do not treat women well. They do not even like us Nigerians (pauses and reflects). Maybe if I meet a nice one, I will think about it. It is very difficult to see a Nigerian woman having a South African boyfriend let alone a husband. If a Nigerian woman has a South African husband, it will mostly be because of paper reasons not for anything else (Abigail.6).*

From her excerpt, it appears that the feeling could be mutual. Although Abigail's views alone is not sufficient to make the assertion that Nigerian women do not want to get married to South African men, it sends a signal that the reluctance of South African men to marry Nigerian women is not one sided. By 'paper reasons', she is talking about the need to have legal immigration status or even South African citizenship. This situation could be viewed as a marriage of convenience and as Ojong (2012) asserts, foreign African women in South

Africa who undertake such marriages do not enter into sexual or intimate relationship with their South African partners.

Benita, on the other hand, attributes the reluctance of South African men to marry Nigerian women to 'Nigeria-phobia'. In her opinion, South Africans dislike and hatred of Nigerians has made it difficult for the men to engage in a meaningful relationship with Nigerian women. It is ironic though that 'Nigeria-phobia' is not implicit when it comes to relationships between Nigerian men and South African women and one cannot help but wonder if this is because South African women are more tolerant than the men. Love and marriage certainly do not come easy for single Nigerian female migrants in Durban and other areas in South Africa, especially those on the lookout for a partner or spouse in the new destination. Although most single female migrants admittedly find it difficult to procure a spouse in their new destinations, the situation is worse in the case of Nigerian single female migrants in Durban because of the animosity shown to them by the local men. .

### **8.6 Reproductive Health Care**

Section 27 (1) of the South African constitution states that everyone has a right to health services including reproductive health. This includes both national and non-nationals. However, because of xenophobic attitudes, non-nationals are at times refused health services or made to wait longer than South Africans before being attended to. Apart from these, they suffer from other forms of discrimination from health care workers. Pursell (2004) in Landau et al (2005) gives an account of a refugee who overheard nurses in a health care centre saying that foreigners are taking government money by having many babies. African migrants are mostly discriminated against and women from various African countries are discriminated against when they try to access reproductive health care. Sigsworth, Ngwane and Pino's (2008) study on the gendered nature of xenophobia, state that African migrant women suffer abuse in the hospitals as a result of them being mothers and needing help with childbirth or other gynaecological problems. They further argue that these women are subjected to verbal abuse and disrespectful treatment and those that are circumcised can face insensitive and xenophobic reactions.

Nigerian women who visit local clinics and government hospitals complained of being treated badly by nurses and other health officials. They are spoken to in the local language even though health officials are aware that they do not understand and are treated very



shabbily. When I enquired whether this treatment was not meted out to most foreign women, they said it was, but they believe that Nigerian women were the most discriminated against. Lena (5) asserts that when she gave birth in a government hospital, the nurses although not openly hostile to her made caustic comments that hinged on her nationality. She said she was asked why with all the money that Nigerian men get from drugs and money laundering, she did not go into a private hospital. She further expressed that the nurses were downright unfriendly and she believes that it was because she was a Nigerian. She explains about her experiences below:

*I had my baby at xxxxxx hospital. I was already in labour by the time I was admitted and the person at the reception spoke to us in Zulu. When I said I could not understand, she got sour and spoke roughly to me in English. She said something to a nurse passing by in Zulu and I heard the word makwerekwere (foreigner). I know that she meant me. I did not get much assistance at the hospital but thank God, I managed to have my baby. I know I was treated by this not only because I am a foreigner but because I am Nigerian also. If I ever get pregnant again, I will never go to a government hospital. I will try to get money to go to a private clinic, there they treat their patients well and do not care where you come from (Lena.5).*

Lena's narrative does not only lend support to the view that Nigerian women in reproductive health institutions are badly treated but also brings out that even though Nigerian women in Durban constitute a group, their experiences vary depending on class, education and status. As such, Nigerian women who give birth in private or semi-private clinics are not treated as badly, probably because of the high hospital fees they pay or the fact that they are holders of medical aid. Ayodele (4) adds that even procuring contraceptives or undergoing routine reproductive health checks in government health institutions can be very demoralising as some health officials can be very disrespectful to foreigners. It appears that health officials in government health institutions are guiltier of meting out bad treatment to these women than those in private health institutions. A plausible reason for this could be that they lack stringent disciplinary measures. Notably, the reproductive health experience of Nigerian female migrants varies just like the experiences of women globally. Whilst there is an acknowledgement that women are the most discriminated against and disadvantaged sex, the

experiences of women varies worldwide and this has led to the rise of different groups of feminists and the keen realisation that gender intersects with other factors.

## **8.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has established that xenophobia is operant in South Africa and that it is mainly targeted against African non-nationals. As such, the term Afrophobia is deemed to be a more suited term for this phenomenon and various reasons have been advanced for the cause of this. Nigerian migrants have further claimed that there is also the practise of ‘Nigeria-phobia’ in South Africa as well as the fact that they believe that Nigerians are the most targeted of all the African nationals in South Africa. A number of reasons were advanced to justify this claim such as statements made by government officials, actions taken by those in authority and acts by the police and the South African populace. It was also revealed that there are gender dimensions to this claim of ‘Nigeria-phobia’.

Although there is an apparent dislike for Nigerians by the South African public, male and female migrants face various challenges because of their sex. The men are viewed more as criminals than the women, are disliked more because of their relationship with South African women and are more harassed by the police than the women. The women, on the other hand, are subjected to intense sexual harassment and encounter disrespectful treatment when trying to secure reproductive health services in government hospitals. This chapter utilised social identity as a theoretical framework because it best explains the perceived differences between South Africans and Nigerians and the emanating consequences therefrom. Notably, social identity gives one a sense of belonging and also carries non-belonging and disunity. This is because people cannot belong to any group unless other people do *not* belong to their group and there is a tendency for one group to feel that it is superior to the other. In response to ‘Nigeria-phobia’, Nigerians have adopted coping mechanisms such as indifference, stoicism, silence, resignation, caution, confrontational but above all the determination to succeed in their host land. From their account, one can infer that Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa are triply oppressed in terms of nationality, race and gender. Despite claims of ‘Nigeria phobia’ and the evidence adduced to justify it, it was also brought out that it was not all South Africans who are Nigeria phobic and some of the migrants even stated that they are in good terms and relationship with some South African citizens.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CONCLUSION

#### 9.1 Overview of the Study

This study explored the lives of Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa in an attempt to establish the gender contestations they are exposed to in their new destination. As gender was an influential factor from the time the decision was made to migrate to their arrival and settlement in South Africa, this study gave space to interrogating the influence of gender on the migrants decision to move to South Africa and the migration process itself. Despite the ever presence of gender in society, most migrants are largely unaware of the prevalent role it plays in their lives and just accept it as a way of life. Nigerian migrants left their homeland to seek a better life in South Africa with little or no thoughts of how migration can impact on their socio-cultural beliefs which include gender constructions. The bringing of social-cultural beliefs into a different space that has its own sets of beliefs and ideologies is certain to bring conflicts. It was only as they attempted to settle that they realized it was not easy to adhere to their former beliefs and values and this even led to conflicts in their respective families. These migrants found themselves in positions where they have to renegotiate or reinforce their former social constructions of gender. In other words, the migrants encountered social and cultural contradictions which challenged, shaped and transformed their ideas, thoughts and sense of self.

In addition, both male and female migrants faced various challenges because of gender issues and they have learnt to adapt or cope with these challenges. This study, therefore, probed into all the different gender aspects in the migrants lives from the time they left Nigeria to their arrival and settlement in South Africa. The study was conducted in Durban, South Africa, which is fast becoming a multiracial city and is a major destination point for African migrants. It is home to a large number of Nigerian migrants. Maharaj and Moodley (2002) argue that some of the reasons advanced by African migrants who moved to Durban were that the city has more job and better business opportunities, is less violent, has more study opportunities, relatively tolerant of foreigners and is easy to integrate with other people there.

The introduction of the study gave insights into the study and highlighted the important aspects of the study such as the research questions, objectives and significance of the study. This was followed by the review of the literature pertinent to the topic. Kaniki (2006) notes

that the purpose of a literature review is to put the research project into context by showing how it fits into a particular field and as such it involves the identification and analysis of information resources and literature related to one's research project. The literature review, therefore, drew insights from previous relevant works such as books, journals, published and unpublished thesis/dissertations and electronic materials and it spans from early writings to the most recent, thus providing insight into how the understanding of concepts and issues change over time and the views of different authors. Although the literature presented leads to a better understanding of the study, it was apparent that there was sparse literature on the topic itself. Literature on Nigerians in South Africa revolved mostly around the reasons for their migration to South Africa, their influence on the South African society and integration strategies. These were not, however, done through a gender lens. This study filled in the identified gaps by focusing on the personal and gendered lives of the migrants. This study was underpinned by various theories as no single theory could fully explain the different concepts. Some of the theories used are feminist post structuralism, Christian egalitarianism, social identity and the gendered geographies of power.

For a study to qualify as a research, it must have a research methodology and method. The third chapter in this study research was, therefore, dedicated to explaining the research methodology and methods used in the study. It explained why the research is a qualitative one, presented the sampling procedure and the data collection methods used, outlined the profile of the participants and highlighted the gender dynamics during the data collection process. The research participants were all Nigerians selected through the snowballing sampling process. They were twenty four in number (twelve men and twelve women) and they ranged from academics to self-entrepreneurs. During my in-depth interviews with them and my engagement in the participant observation method, gender was enacted over and over again and this was captured in the section on the gender dynamics of the study. I also made use of self-reflexivity. As Gill and Maclean (2002) argue, fieldwork is a relational process and, therefore, a reflexive approach is not only desirable but also necessary. Coming from the same region (West Africa) and sharing certain cultural and linguistic aspects with these migrants put me in good stead to engage in subjectivity towards structuring the study. Being a gender studies student also informed my framing of the study within a gender-based framework.

This study employed a qualitative research methodology which, according to Corbin and Strauss (2008), allows researchers to get to the inner experiences of the participants.

Qualitative research provides details about human behavior, emotion, and personality, characteristics that quantitative studies cannot match (Madrigal and McClain, 2012). The above authors also note that whilst quantitative research requires the standardization of data collection to allow statistical comparison, qualitative research requires flexibility, allowing one to respond to user data. In a study of this kind, it stands to reason that quantitative research would not have been justified. A qualitative approach was, therefore, the most appropriate method for this study as it allowed for an in depth understanding of the study population and the context in which they live.

An interpretivist paradigm was utilized not only because it is closely associated with qualitative research but also because as Hennick et al (2011) argue, it highlights the inherent subjectivity of human beings both as study participants and as researchers and acknowledges that the background, position or emotions of the researcher are an integral part of processing the data. Placing the research within this paradigm helped me to engage critically and meaningfully with the study. The study was placed within a cultural studies approach, since culture was a key aspect in exploring the migrants' experiences. It also employed a life history approach by getting the migrants to recount details of their lives.

The rest of the chapters apart from the concluding one emanated from the data collated. Data from both participant observation and in-depth interview were transcribed, coded and analysed in relation to established major themes. These themes were used to write the various chapters. Chapter four explored the influence and impact of gender from the time the migrant decided to migrate to their arrival and settlement in South Africa, whilst Chapter five looked at gender power relations in the households of the migrants. During the in-depth interviews conducted, it became apparent that religion was being used by the male migrants to enforce male dominance and as such, Chapter six investigated this phenomenon. Whilst religion serves a number of positive functions for people, it can be used to suppress women. The awareness of this tendency of religion coupled with the tendency of migration to alter gender relations motivated the male migrants to employ religion to control their women. It also transpired that even though migration can generate new gender perspectives for migrants, the realities involved can be complex. This was explored in Chapter seven. The final chapter from the data is Chapter eight and this probed into how Nigerian nationality intersected with gender and xenophobia. It investigated the claim that although it was evident that xenophobic practices were meted out to other African nationals in South Africa, Nigerian nationals are the most targeted. This study ended with a conclusion that summarized the research and

presented the findings, contributions to research, recommendations and suggestions for future research.

## **9.2 Findings of the study**

A number of findings emanated from this study. It was found that gender played a pivotal role in the migrants' decision to travel, their travelling decision, their arrival and eventual settlement in Durban, South Africa. Indeed, as Hondagneu Sotello (1994) avers, gender organizes migration. The study also revealed that the migrants participated in transnational activities and executed various strategies to adjust and settle in their new environment. The male migrants, for instance, engaged in street hustling and took advantage of the attraction that South African women seem to have for foreign men. This study established that this attraction better termed as xenophilia did not only serve as a means to an end for Nigerian male migrants but is also one of the causative factors for xenophobic practices against them.

Another finding was that migration impacts and changes former gender power relations and can lead to gender power, especially in households, being challenged, negotiated or reinforced. As such, the migrants constantly re-interpreted and redefined their gender roles and expectations. It also found out that migration impacts household structures and the gender patterns within it. The study further revealed how patriarchy is refashioned in the host land. A significant finding of this study is that challenges to gender roles, relations, identities and expectations at times results in strife, tension and conflicts in the migrants' relations and households.

An important finding was that Nigerian male migrants in Durban are desperate to hold on to their patriarchal powers because of the patriarchal dividends they get and can use any means to secure it. One such means was the use of Christianity to reinforce these powers and secure prevailing gender relations. The study also found out that this use of Christianity by the men is a form of gender based violence, which could be further considered as a transnational crime. Some of the female migrants are aware of the men's ploy and even challenged some of the religious doctrines. The findings show that women are not always victims and that they can exercise agency to lift themselves out from their subordinated positions. On the other hand, some women are comfortable with their subordinate positions and have no inclination to challenge it.

Xenophobia is operant in South Africa but it is mainly targeted against African non-nationals. As such, the term Afrophobia is deemed to be a more appropriate term for this phenomenon. An important finding is that Nigerian migrants are one of the most targeted groups of Africans because of a variety of reasons and there were gender dimensions to this. For instance, Nigerian men in general were perceived as criminals and drug dealers whilst the women found themselves being harassed constantly by local men as a way of getting revenge against Nigerian men supposedly for 'stealing' their women. The study found that in response to this 'Nigeria-phobia', Nigerians have adopted coping mechanisms such as indifference, stoicism, silence, resignation, caution, confrontational but above all the determination to succeed in their host land.

It was revealed that the migrants behaved differently and put on varied gender identities depending on the context and situation. For instance, when they are with other Nigerians in a public space, they tend to revert to traditional gender roles. Yet in their households they will probably challenge or renegotiate certain gender constructs. In their interaction with non-Nigerians, they do not strictly adhere to gender roles and expectations. They engage in a complex process of changing gender identities and roles. A final finding of this study is that a new gender regime can challenge former gender perspectives, introduce new ones and expose migrants to a variety of gender related problems.

In light of these findings, I argue that the central hypothesis of this study which states that when migration occurs, gender situations change as they differ from that of the country of origin has been affirmatively proved.

### **9.3 Contributions of the Study**

This study made significant contributions to gender and migration research. A significant contribution is that it explored and provided knowledge on the gendered lives and activities of Nigerians living in Durban, South Africa. It examined the different aspects of their lives through a gender lens such as gender relations in their households and their adaptation and integration into the South African society. It also shed light on how former gender status, roles and relations of Nigerian migrants are affected in the migration site and how they renegotiate, redefine and reinforce gender. A significant contribution of this study therefore is that it adds to the body of knowledge on the gendered lives of African migrants in South Africa as well as to that of gender relations within Africa.

An important contribution of this study is the exposure of how Nigerian male migrants use religion (Christianity) to reinforce male dominance and female subordination, thereby perpetrating psychological violence against the women. The interplay between the concepts of religion, gender, migration and violence, serves to enrich gender and migration studies.

This study produced critical insights into how Nigerians shape themselves in the South African society and how they are perceived by South Africans in turn. Whilst xenophobia is meted out to African migrants in general, Nigerians appear to be the most targeted because of a variety of reasons, one of them being the tendency for Nigerian men to date or marry South African women. This has led to Nigerians being on the defensive and very wary of South Africans. By bringing out such issues, this study contributes to knowledge on the political and social environment of present day South Africa and how migrants perceive themselves in the South African space.

Another contribution of this study is that it sheds light on West African migrants living in South Africa, as there are very little studies on migrants from that part of Africa. Although it focuses primarily on Nigerians, it does provide insights into the activities and lives of West African migrants in South Africa.

Above all, this research contributes to academic knowledge on the relationship between gender and migration and it fills in the gaps in studies of African migrants in South Africa. A final contribution is that it adds to knowledge on migration issues in South Africa and to that of international migration in general and intra Africa migration in particular.

#### **9.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

This study applied a gender lens to explore the lives of Nigerian migrants in Durban. The data collected revealed the crucial role gender played in the lives of the migrants as they settle and integrate in their new society. As the study was conducted only amongst Nigerian migrants living in Durban, there is a chance that their experiences may vary from others living elsewhere in South Africa. Further research could probably be conducted amongst Nigerians living in other parts of the country. Also, Nigerians are just one group of migrants from West Africa. There are nineteen West African countries in all and these include Benin, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Senegal, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. Migrants from these West African countries could now be found in South Africa, yet very little has been documented on them. A similar study, therefore, could be conducted on other



groups of West African migrants. The data collected has been mainly from the migrants' point of view and some of it sheds a negative light on South Africa and its people. Apart from trying to understand xenophobic issues, South Africans are rarely given the chance to fully explain how migrants have impacted on their lives. There is a need to conduct studies on migrants in South Africa from a South African perspective. This study revealed that the Durban based Nigerian male migrants employ religion to control women. Since this is tantamount to psychological violence being perpetuated in a host country, I suggest that research be conducted on this phenomenon as a transnational crime which in turn will broaden the scope of transnational crimes.

### **9.5 Recommendation**

It transpired from this study that gender and migration go hand in hand. Thus, migration studies that lack a gender lens are bound to give an incomplete representation of whatever phenomenon was under investigation. I therefore recommend that migration scholars should constantly apply a gender lens to their studies.

It is also evident from this study that gender inequality and discriminatory treatment of women obtains not only in the Nigerian society but globally as well. Many African countries, for instance, have cultures and traditions that discriminate against women and perpetrate violence against them. It bears repeating that my recommendation is that African researchers on various subjects should employ a feminist perspective in their work. It is, however, disturbing that feminism has been negatively perceived by some within and outside the African continent and this does not augur well for African women. As a UKZN professor, Sarojini Nadar advised in an inaugural lecture (August 2014), there is a need to move away from negative constructions of feminism and the tendency to view it as an 'f' word that should not be mentioned. Feminism, she argues, should evoke anger at the treatment of women worldwide and the desire to intervene. Thus, feminism should be regarded as the 'f' word that leads to another 'f' word –freedom- and subsequently gender equality.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**

#### **Researcher**

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#### **To the participant**

I am a PhD gender studies student doing a research on gender and migration. My topic is 'Gender Contestations in the Migration Site; The Case of Nigerian migrants in Durban'. It will be based on the gender experiences of Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa. It is believed that when migration occurs, gender situations change as they differ from that of the country of origin. This research is therefore aimed at exploring these changes and migrants response to them.

This project is targeted at male and female Nigerian migrants in Durban, South Africa, 18 years and older. The duration of the interview session is estimated at a total time of thirty minutes per

interview. This process will involve the researcher writing down detailed notes and using a voice recording device at your discretion. All gathered data which includes voice recordings and written notes will be deleted and shredded once the research has been completed and submitted.

Please be assured of your confidentiality and anonymity regarding this research study. If you do not wish to provide your real name, you are at liberty to use a pseudonym. Participation in this research is voluntary and your decision not to participate will not result in any form of disadvantage. There is no obligation and you are therefore at liberty to withdraw from the study at any stage, at any time and for any reason, should you so desire. Thank you.

Participant Declaration

I.....(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project, and I consent to participating in the research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

Signature of participant

Date

.....

.....

## **APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE/GUIDE**

### **1. Gender power relations in the household.**

- a. Do you live with a wife/husband or partner?
- b. Is your family nuclear or extended and how many male/female in your family?
- c. Are roles and responsibilities assigned by sex in your house? Explain.
- d. Are your tasks and responsibilities in the house different from your spouse/partner?
- e. Do you make decisions on behalf of your household? Explain.
- f. Are you dependent on your spouse or partner?
- g. Do you have equal say with your partner/spouse?
- h. What is your relationship with other men and women in the house?
- i. Who is the breadwinner in your house and why?
- j. How do you view your relationship with your partner/spouse and other people in your house?

### **2. Gender regime of host/home country.**

- a. Why did you choose to migrate to South Africa?
- b. In your opinion, which sex in Nigeria do you think migrates most and why.
- c. Please explain the gender setup in Nigeria. By this, I mean how does your society view men and women? Are they seen as equals?
- d. Which sex do you think has the most power or upper hand in Nigeria?
- e. Do you think it is the same as in South Africa?
- f. If no, how does it differ?
- g. Did you expect these changes?
- h. Do you prefer the gender set up in your home country or that of the South Africa?
- i. Do you behave differently now that you are in South Africa from how you used to behave as a man/woman in Nigeria? If so, in what ways?
- j. Are the issues that used to concern you as a man or woman in Nigeria different from those in South Africa?

k. If different, explain how?

**3. Challenges and reinforcement of existing gender relations in the migration site.**

- a. Do you think male and female migrants have the same challenges or does it differ?
- b. What are some of the challenges you have faced as a male/female migrant in Durban, South Africa.
- c. Do you or your partner still try to keep up with the gender patterns you have been used to in Nigeria?
- d. Are your expectations of men and women still the same now that you are in South Africa?
- e. Do you behave the same way with your partner and with other men and women as you would have done in Nigeria?
- f. (If no) In what ways has it changed and why do you think it has changed
- g. (If yes) In what ways is it still the same and why do you think it has remained so?

**4. Response of Nigerian migrants to changing gender situations in the host country.**

- a. In what ways has gender situations changed from that of your home country?
- b. What do you think is responsible for the changes?
- c. What is your view about these changes
- d. Were you expecting things to change?
- e. What impact has these changes have on you?
- f. How do you cope with these changes? Explain.
- g. Do you think the gender set up in South Africa have influenced you in any way? If so, how?

**5. Different ways Nigerian male and female migrants experience transnationalism.**

- a. Do you maintain a link with your home country?
- b. If so, in what ways?
- c. Do you travel occasionally to Nigeria?
- d. What are the reasons for making these visits?

- e. Do you think men and women have the same reason for doing so?
- f. Do you behave differently when you visit Nigeria from how you behave when in South Africa?
- g. Do you communicate frequently with people in Nigeria?
- h. Does this communication and travel between Nigeria and South Africa have any effect on you?
- i. If so, can you please explain?
- j. Do you think the effects are the same for men and women?

**6. Migrants perception of the impacts of migration at the individual, household, community and national scale.**

- a. Do you think migration has the same impact on men and women?
- b. What do you think are the effects of migration on men/women?
- c. How has migration affected you as an individual?
- d. What is the impact of migration on your household?
- e. How do you see yourself as a migrant in Durban, South Africa?

**7. Distinct ways male and female Nigerian migrants shape and experience South Africa.**

- a. What are your experiences as a male/female migrant in South Africa?
- b. What are your views about being a migrant in Durban, South Africa?
- c. How do you view South Africans attitude towards migrants?
- d. What do you think of South Africa's immigration rules?
- e. Which sex do you think these rules favor most?
- f. Are men and women integration and adaptation strategies the same?
- g. If not the same, can you please explain in what ways they differ?