TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE (RE) CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IDENTITIES AMONGST FOREIGN STUDENTS OF AFRICAN ORIGIN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU- NATAL IN DURBAN SOUTH AFRICA

BY

JANET MUTHONI MUTHUKI

SUPERVISOR: DR. VIVIAN BESEM OJONG

Submitted in fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Gender Studies Programme, Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban

DECLARATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Graduate Programme in

Gender Studies, University of KwaZulu- Natal,

South Africa.

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. I confirm that an external editor was not used. The dissertation is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other University.

Student name: Janet Muthoni Muthuki

Signature:

Date: 17 March 2010

Acknowledgements

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of my late sister Florence Wangari Muthuki a budding academic, a gender activist and a mentor who literally gave up her life for me. I will forever treasure your memory.

Abstract

The transnational migration of students is a vast yet under-researched area with most studies focusing on skilled and unskilled foreign immigrants. The transnational experience of studying outside their home country and constant negotiations of new social and cultural environments provides students with an opportunity to either challenge or reinforce their perspectives of gender. An examination of gender in a transnational context however continues to be a much neglected domain. Gender is salient in migration because not only do gender relations facilitate or constrain both men's and women's movements but they also structure the whole migration process including practices and the construction of self.

This thesis interrogates the reconstruction of gender identities by foreign students of African origin at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN hereafter) in Durban South Africa. This study aims to contribute to the fields of gender and migration by examining ways in which gender shapes migratory flows and examining how migration shapes gender relations. Through exploring the tensions that students perceive and undergo and struggle with as they bring their own cultural insights , values and practices to a new context at UKZN, I seek to highlight the complexity of their gender identities as negotiated in a transnational context.

By using an interpretivist theoretical paradigm which is a qualitative approach, I highlight how the communal process of the views and perceptions of the students and my multidimensional positionality intersected to produce knowledge. I also highlight the gender relations as an important dynamic in the data collection process. The body of data reveals that men and women cite different factors as influencing their propensity to migrate namely gender role socialisation

on the part of the men and education and empowerment on the part of the women. In spite of the gender differences in facilitating their migration to South Africa, both men and women display resonance in terms of choosing South Africa and UKZN in particular as a study destination showing gender to be situational. This is in light of opportunity structures in place at UKZN that are available to both men and women thus enabling the foreign African women students to take advantage of opportunities they may not have had in their home countries

The study also generates critical insights about the complexities experienced by these students as a result of immersing themselves in UKZN embedded in Durban a multiracial environment which is still a much divided society. I also examine how these students perceive and interpret gender norms in South Africa and how these gender norms challenge or support conceptions of gender norms in their country of origin.

The themes presented in this study reveal that gender identity construction is related to the struggle over power and social status. A significant aspect of the findings was how the students were re-interpreting and re-defining their gender roles and expectations in the transnational space. Gender roles were enacted in different ways by students to express social status, position and power. This study also interrogates how the interplay of social ranking such as gender, class, ethnicity and nationality serve to construct several versions of masculinity and femininity in the transnational space. The exploration of the students' engagement with the gender discourse highlights the dilemma based on the dialectic between modern gender roles as a result of western education and maintaining traditional gender roles as a result of cultural upbringing. The study also explores the development of hybridised gender identities within the transnational space.

In the course of the study religion was highlighted as key factor in influencing the ways in which migrants renegotiate their beliefs, practices and attitudes and personal as well as social identities in the host country. The study examined how religion informed the transnational students' ethnic and gender-based identities and their experiences of social life and their appropriations of religion to form alternative identities

Key words

Migration, transnational space, gender identity, foreign African students

Table of Contents

Contents   **Page**

Chapter One: Introduction

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Chapter three: Research methods and methodologies

Chapter four: The impact of gender on migration decisions

Chapter five: New gendered contestations at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Chapter six: The dynamism of social status in transnational spaces

Chapter seven: The politics of relocation and its impact on gender roles

Chapter eight: Religion and gender identity renegotiation

Chapter nine: Conclusions

References

Appendices

Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1 Preamble

This thesis is a study of transnationalism and the renegotiation of gender identity amongst foreign students of African origin at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN hereafter). The transnational migration of students is a vast yet under-researched area. Further, much has been documented about tertiary students from sub-Saharan Africa going to study in the Northern "developed nations" with limited attention being given to student mobility within African countries (see Camara, 2006 and Wagner and Schnitzer 1991:277). In the African continent, Africa-to-Africa student mobility can be observed in South Africa.

With the opening up of South Africa to the outside world as a democratic country in 1994, there has been a steady increase in the number of international students seeking access to its higher educational institutions. Recent data indicate that over two thirds of international students at South African universities originate from the African continent (Rouhani, 2002). The growth in international students' numbers can be observed at UKZN in South Africa which is one of the largest contact universities in sub-Saharan Africa. UKZN is not only global and universal as can be observed by the number of

foreign or international students but it is also integrated into a given society and region as well as social, political and economic system.

Geographically, in terms of place, UKZN is embedded in the multiracial city of Durban which is in the KwaZulu- Natal (KZN) province also known as the Zulu kingdom as well as in Pietermaritzburg. From a socio-political perspective, arising from South Africa's national history, the legacy of apartheid is a society that is deeply fragmented and divided. As a result of immersing themselves in this context, foreign African students must negotiate this new social and cultural environment.

Initial studies of migration favoured an approach that focused on immigrants' adaptation and assimilation of host cultures and identities. In the 1980s however, scholarship on migrant populations shifted to concern with the issue of simultaneous participation in home and host countries, as people found themselves neither fully assimilated into their adopted country nor at home in their country of origin (see Mahler and Pessar, 2006 and Salih, 2003). This has given rise to a transnational perspective on migration or transnationalism which Basch et al. (1994: 6) define as "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement."

The transnational experience is however made complex by the negotiation of various social identities at different times and places. As Connell (1987) points out, when students study in another country they are not just immersing themselves in another

culture, they are also positioning themselves in another gender system or "gender regime".[1] As a result, some gender patterns in students may be hegemonic whereas others are subordinated (Connell, 1987). For many students therefore, the experience of studying abroad and constant negotiations can either change or reinforce the student's perspectives of gender.[2] Further, gender relations[3] not only facilitate or constrain both men's and women's movements but they also structure the whole migration process including practices and the construction of self.

This thesis examines the discursive and social practices through which foreign students of African origin come to perceive South African gender norms and how these new gender norms challenge or support their already acquired gender norms. This study also examines how gender is mediated in relation to other forms of identity such as race, class, ethnicity and nationality in the transnational space.[4] The thesis advances that the transnational space is a site of struggle and contradictions in which the reconstruction of

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[1] A gender regime is a group of practices, ideological and material, which in a given social context acts to construct various images of masculinity and femininity. The state of operation in gender relations in a given institution is its gender regime (Connell, 1987)

[2] Gender refers to the socially and culturally determined characteristics associated with women and men based on their reproductive differences, the assumptions made about the skills and abilities of women and men based on these characteristics, the conditions in which women and men live and work and the relations between them.

[3] Gender relations are the relationships that arise in and around the perceived differences between men and women based on their reproductive differences. Not all gender relations are direct interaction between women on the one hand and men on the other. Relationships maybe amongst women or men such as hierarchies of masculinities among men but they are still gender relations (Connell, 2002)

[4] Transnational spaces are produced by dense and active networks that operate regularly and ubiquitously across vast distances where people routinely live their lives in two or more national societies (Portes et al. 1999).

3

foreign African students' subjectivities sometimes challenges, other times reinforces and/or reconfigures existing gender ideologies.[5]

As will be examined in the various chapters, the immigration experience of immersing themselves in a different gender regime in South Africa challenges the students' perceptions of self. Within this space they find that they have to negotiate their social status in relation to their perceptions of their gender identities.[6] The struggle and tension between challenging hegemonic notions of gender on the one hand and the reinforcing the same on the other hand ends up enabling the transnational foreign African student to acquire the mark of cultural hybridity thus brokering new gender identities.

1.2 Background of the study

Migration in Africa is dynamic and extremely complex. The traditional pattern of migration within and from Africa, which has previously been male-dominated, is increasingly becoming feminised. Adepoju (2004) points out that in recent years, there has been a new phenomenon of women migrating and leaving their husbands to cater for

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[5] Gender ideologies are structured beliefs and ideas about the ways power should be arranged according to social constructs associated with sexed bodies. Gender is not only tied to the body but it also constructed through social and political processes that play out as various performances and practices of masculinity and femininity which are embedded and also enforced by social and political institutions such as the state (Duerst-Lahti, 2007).

[6] Gender identity has to do with somebody's sense of being a woman or a man and is socially constructed rather than biologically determined. The key application of the concept of identity to gender was made by Stoller (1968) who advanced that gender identity was only one aspect of the person involving her or his involvement in gender relations. However in order to understand gender identity one must acknowledge the interconnection with other forms of social identity such as nationality, race, social class, ethnicity and community among others.

4

their children. In the South African case, female migration from outside the country appears to have undergone a significant increase since the fall of apartheid in 1994 and the subsequent recognition of South Africa as a democratic state. According to Dodson (1998), these women have been migrating to South for a broad range of social, productive and reproductive reasons

Scholarship with a feminist angle has produced publications documenting the predominance of women in migratory flows. Inclusion of women in migration however continues to treat gender as a variable rather than as a social category for analysis. Handagneu-Sotello (1994) argues that gender is not simply a variable but a social category that organises migration in that gender relations prior to migration affect migration and settlement patterns. Men and women have different access to power and resources and thus face different opportunities and constraints in determining their patterns of mobility. Hondagneu-Sotello (1994) however does not relate gender and migration to a transnational perspective.

The task to bring gender into a transnational perspective has been undertaken by Mahler and Pessar (1996) who express that much needs to be done in the area of gender identity in transnational migration literature. In bringing gender into a transnational perspective, Mahler and Pessar (1996) argue for a shift to a transnational social field approach that is concerned with matters of continuity and change in immigrants' gender identities. This is as opposed to the conventional bi-local and comparative approach, which involves males versus females and their corresponding gender "roles". This study has been

contextualised in this argument and has focused on how foreign students of African origin are negotiating their gender identities in the transnational space.

1.3 Significance of the study

This study is significant because it seeks to examine gender in a transnational context, which has been a much neglected domain. Many of the scholars writing on gender and transnationalism still end up researching and writing on women only (see for example Erel *et al*, 2002, Parreñas, 2001 and Salih, 2003). It is important to note that gender is relational and that men are gendered[7] beings as well. Further, whilst there has been more focus on the formal realm of transnationalism such as the economic and the political, there has been a limited focus on the informal social, cultural and religious practices .This study attempts to bridge this gap by examining gender identities under social experiences in transnational migration.

This study is also significant in that it seeks for the inclusion of students in transnational migration. Most studies on transnational migration have tended to focus on skilled and unskilled foreign immigrants and not on students. In his examination of the lives of foreign students, Vertovec (2002) has argued that foreign students are forerunners of a kind of transnational migrant identity because their experience increases the likelihood of

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[7] To be gendered means reflecting or involving gender differences. Gender difference theorists accept and celebrate gender differences and argue that whether gender difference is a biological given or as a result of social conditioning, it should be recognised and valued (Squires, 1999). Cultural values however can influence the meaning of being different from others and our response to that meaning through biases in terms of superiority and inferiority (Pinderhughes, 1989).

6

their being a skilled migrant at a later stage. I argue for the inclusion of student migrants in transnational migration because foreign students even whilst still students, engage in transnational processes such as making contacts with their family and friends in their country of origin through telephone calls and e-mails for example as well as integrating in the new South African context. Through their social networks, they may end up living in South Africa and inviting other students from their countries of origin leading to further transnational migration. This was confirmed in this study as will be described in greater detail on under the role of social networks.

Further, as earlier mentioned, most of the research done on foreign students has tended to focus on student migration to the Northern "developed nations" (see Wagner and Schnitzer 1991:277). More recently there has been some focus on student migration within the Commonwealth and students from the North coming to study in the Southern "less developed nations" (Maxey, 2000 and Global Education Digest, 2006). There has however been limited examination of South-to-South student migration and less so on Africa-to-Africa student migration. To this end, I have focused on African student migration into South Africa in order to shift away from the context of northern "developed nations" to a different context in Africa. My focus on foreign African students from various countries as opposed to students from one particular African country is because students from different countries have different reasons for coming to South Africa. This information provided this study with a richer understanding of the diversity of foreign African students' experience at UKZN.

In as far as I could establish from the extensive literature that I accessed, a study on how foreign African students at UKZN are negotiating gender identities in a transnational space has not been done before. The findings of this study have enabled me to highlight and document critical insights generated in the area of transnationalism and gender identity (re) construction and hence contribute to knowledge in the area of gender and transnationalism. The integration of gender analysis in migration studies has contributed significantly to the understanding of migration but has not informed gender theory to nearly the same extent. This study contributes to the development of gender theory by highlighting the structural dimensions of gender in the transnational space.

1.4 Key questions addressed in the research

The key question in this study was, "How does transnational migration insinuate foreign African students into new gendered contexts at UKZN in South Africa and how does it provide openings for renegotiating new gendered identities?" In attempting to answer this key question the study addressed the following questions:

- How does gender structure migration from the country of origin into South Africa?

- How does transnational migration insinuate foreign African students into new gendered contexts at UKZN in South Africa?

- How does the transnational space provide opportunities for challenging some hegemonic notions of gender?

- How are some prevailing notions of gender reinforced within the transnational

8

space?

- How does transnational migration provide openings for renegotiating new gendered identities?

- How do these new gendered conventions provide challenges for both men and women?

1.5 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this research were:

- To interrogate how gender structured the migration of the foreign African students from their country of origin to UKZN South Africa.

- To examine how transnational migration insinuated foreign African students into new gendered contexts at UKZN in South Africa

- To evaluate how foreign African students redefined/ renegotiated their gender identities in relation to other social identities such as race, social class, ethnic background and nationality in the new South African context.

- To analyse how the transnational relations either reinforced, challenged or redefined and/or reconstructed existing gender relations.

1.6 Plan and structure of the thesis

This dissertation has been structured into the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introduction forms the first chapter of the dissertation and it outlines the research problem on how students leaving their home country to study abroad are faced with the challenge of renegotiating their sense of self in a new cultural context. This chapter presents the background of the study, the key questions to be asked, the broad problems to be addressed and the significance of the study. Lastly, the chapter gives an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter 2: Literature review and theoretical framework

This second chapter reviews previous studies in the area of migration. The chapter outlines how migration studies have shifted from focusing on male migration to women migration and how current debate is seeking to engender transnational migration. In this chapter, I anchor the research topic in literature by identifying the gaps in literature and applying the relevant theoretical frameworks emerging from literature. By using the gendered geographies of power theoretical framework which emerges from this literature, the chapter justifies the application of the framework in a different context in Africa so as to broaden the geographical space in which the framework can be applied. I also examine

the social network theory and the social identity theory and their application in this study.

Chapter 3: Research methods and methodologies

This chapter motivates the use of qualitative research methods in order to elicit data. By employing an interpretivist framework, I explore how presenting the reality of the participants from their own views intersected with my role as a researcher in creating meaning. In order to specify where the study was undertaken and the selection of the participants, this chapter specifies the sampling procedures, how informed consent was sought and the actual data collection. This chapter profiles the research participants in order to provide an understanding of their narratives. The gender dynamics in the data collection process are highlighted as a key finding of this study.

Chapter 4: The impact of gender on migration decisions

This chapter initiates the body of data examining the ways in which gender relations contribute to migration flows of the foreign African students. The interrogation of this data reveals various factors influencing the students' propensity to migrate namely: Gender and conflict migration, gender role socialisation on the part of the men, tertiary education on the part of the women and marital status. I also examine how the students make use of existing social networks to facilitate their mobility and settlement in South Africa.

The chapter also highlights the opportunity structures in place at UKZN that migrant students are quick to identify and seize in order to maximise their opportunities. These opportunity structures are available to both men and women thus enabling the foreign African women students to take advantage of opportunities they may not have had in their home countries. Of great significance is the opportunity structure of South Africa as an African country and the prospect of African culture which students expressed resonance with. South Africa also presents an opportunity for students to carry out their research and produce knowledge based on the African context

Chapter 5: New gendered contestations at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

This chapter critically examines the body of data on how foreign African students are immersed into new gendered contexts at UKZN in Durban South Africa. The chapter begins by giving the background of UKZN and locates it in the broader South African social-political and economic context. I then examine the complexities of African foreign students in a South African tertiary institution embedded in this context. The chapter also interrogates how these students perceive and interpret gender norms in South Africa and how these gender norms challenge or support conceptions of gender norms in their country of origin.

Chapter 6: The dynamism of social status in transnational spaces

In this chapter, I interrogate the body of data on how the students are negotiating their social status in the South African context. This chapter foregrounds that gender identity construction is related to the struggle over power and social status. This chapter does this by interrogating how the interplay of social ranking such as gender, class, ethnicity and nationality entail differential social power and serve to construct several versions of masculinity and femininity in the transnational space.

Chapter 7: The politics of relocation and its impact on gender roles

This chapter examines how foreign students of African origin are interpreting and re-defining their gender roles and expectations as they engage with the transnational space. I also explore the engagement of the students with the gender discourse. The chapter examines the dialectic between modern gender roles as a result of western education and maintaining traditional gender roles as a result of cultural upbringing and the possibility of creating hybridised gender identities within the transnational space.

Chapter 8: Religion and gender identity renegotiation

Religion is an aspect of people's adaptation to their environment. This chapter examines the significance of the students' religious beliefs and the religious networks in enabling them to negotiate the transnational space and their sense of self. I examine how religion

impacts on students' lives in religious organisations such as the church, the mosque and outside of church organisations such as at the workplace. The chapter considers how religion informs immigrants' ethnic and gender-based identities and their experiences of social life in the transnational space.

Chapter 9: Conclusions

This concluding chapter presents a summary of the findings, the significant contributions of the study and suggestions for further research.

Chapter Two

Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a background on the migration process and migration research by outlining developments in theorising about migration. I examine an extensive body of literature on international migration, the transnational aspect of migration and attempts to engender transnational migration by including gender as a central theoretical concept in migration studies. In this chapter, I anchor the research topic in literature by identifying the gaps in literature and applying the relevant theoretical frameworks emerging from literature. I explain the use of the gendered geographies of power theoretical framework in examining gender across transnational space and more so in the African context. I also examine the social network theory and the social identity theory and their application in this study.

2.2 International migration

Migration is the movement of people through geographical space. Over the generations, people have always migrated in response to demographic, economic, political and related factors such as population pressure, environmental disasters, poor economic conditions,

conflicts and the effects of macro-economic adjustment. These causes of migration have been further reinforced by globalisation which intensified at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Globalisation of trade, finance and production as well as the ongoing processes of political and economic integration has led to an unprecedented increase in international migration.

Castles and Miller (1998) have described the latter years of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty first century as the age of migration. Advanced communication technology has contributed greatly to the increase in migration by making the dissemination of information and movements across the globe much easier. Migration has also been fuelled by the demand for specialised skills as well as unskilled or semi-skilled labour in services, agriculture, construction and domestic work. The African continent, which Adepoju (2005) describes as a "continent on the move" has not been left unaffected by these developments but has continued to experience great movement occasioned by socio-economic and political tensions that have plagued various African countries.

2.2.1 African migration patterns

The history of Africa's migration is both dynamic and complex. Migration has always played a central role in the livelihood strategies of both urban and rural African populations. For instance, international migration within West Africa and between the region and North Africa has been in existence since time immemorial. Boahen (1996)

16

points out that the trans-Saharan caravan routes are among the earliest evidence of major interaction between West and North Africa for trading and exchange of scholars and religious clerics. The arrival of Europeans on the West Coast in the 15th century however disrupted the traditional patterns of trade and movements and created new patterns of movement, first through the slave trade and later colonisation, within the sub-region and with the rest of Africa (Boahen, 1966).

Adepoju (2005) advances that economic development policies of colonial governments had a strong influence on intercontinental migration during colonial times and immediately after independence in many African countries. Colonial ties are still very important in explaining present day migration patterns. However, since the 1980s there has been a clear diversification of migration patterns within and from the continent away from migration patterns determined by colonial divisions. African migrants have begun to go to countries other than the respective former colonisers. Although much research focus has often been on African migration to Europe, most migration takes place within the African continent and often to neighbouring countries within regions. Movements out of the continent continue to represent a small fraction of total migration according to Adepoju (1991). Even though migration within Africa has generally been informal and undocumented Akokpari (2000) notes that there has been a marked increase of the "wave" of migration within the continent.

Africa is characterised by dominant migratory flows namely; labour migrations between West and Central Africa, refugee flows within Eastern Africa, clandestine migration of

ethnic groups and nomads in West African Sahel and Eastern Africa and labour migration from Eastern and Southern Africa to South Africa (Adepoju, 1991).

2.2.2 Migration to South Africa

South Africa, where this study was carried out, has had a long history of cross-border migration. This migration history has been one of the most researched and documented within the Southern Africa region. Crush (2000) notes 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. Cross border migration has taken various forms such as the formalised contract migration to South African mines and the informal migration for work in other sectors. A study of the history of informal cross- border migration reveals that women migrants were always marginalised in the labour market and could only work in limited spheres (Dodson, 1998). The entire spectrum of cross-border migration has however not been static but has taken various changing dimensions from the mid-nineteenth century to the early 1990's.

The fall of apartheid in 1994 and the subsequent recognition of South Africa as a democratic state saw an increase in all categories of and new forms of migration into South Africa from the other African countries. Consequently, South Africa became a new destination for African migrants such as asylum seekers, long distance traders, entrepreneurs, professionals and students (Bouillon 1996; Saasa 1996; Rogerson 1997; de la Hunt 1998; Peberdy and Crush 1998; Ramphele 1999). Much focus continues to be

given to labour migration and other forms of migration. For instance Crush (2000) examines four discrete forms of migration into South Africa namely; contract mine migration, informal migration, white settler migration and refugee migration. There has however been limited attention given to other forms of migration such as migration for education.

2.2.3 Migration for education

Pursuing an education abroad has become a global phenomenon. An increasing number of students are crossing national borders to study at higher education institutions. While previously the student flow was overwhelmingly towards "Northern developed" countries, today several developing countries such as India and South Africa are attracting foreign students (see Ratha and Shaw, 2007). The inflows into South Africa are mainly from neighboring African countries and the rest of the continent, with a relatively small proportion from Europe and North America. The majority of foreign students[8] that is sixty two percent are from the neighboring Southern African Development Community (SADC hereafter) region (Rouhani, 2002).

Within the SADC region, one of the largest groups of foreign African students comes from Zimbabwe. From other African countries, the highest numbers are from Kenya and Uganda. Foreign African students come to South African universities for various reasons. These include: pursuing an education in an English speaking country, deteriorating

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[8] The Department of Home Affairs defines a "foreign student" as anyone who is not a South African citizen, not a permanent resident, or does not have diplomatic exemption.

economic performance in their home country, multiculturalism, lower tuition and living

costs (compared to Europe and North America), future employment prospects and civil

war in the case of countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and

Rwanda.

These new opportunities for migration to South Africa have generated interest and

necessitated critical inquiry in the area of African migration to South Africa amongst

social sciences researchers.

2.3 Transnational migration

The earliest approach addressing migration was the Chicago school of sociology that

favored an approach that focused on immigrants' adaptation and assimilation of host

cultures and identities. This approach however neglected research on the immigrants' ties

to their home countries. In the 1980s, scholarship on migrant populations shifted to

concern with the issue of simultaneous participation in home and host countries, as

people found themselves neither fully assimilated into their adopted country nor at home

in their country of origin (see Mahler and Pessar, 2006 and Salih, 2003). This then gave

rise to a transnational perspective on migration or transnationalism which Basch et al

(1994:6) defines as, "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi- stranded

social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement.

The transnational approach to migration was however challenged by scholars such as

Waldinger (1998) who advanced that it was not a new phenomenon but that transnational ties had been practiced by earlier generations of migrants. This critique led to a historical review that confirmed the existence of earlier transnational practices by previous generations of migrants (Foner 1999; Glick Schiller 1999; Guarnizo and Smith 1998). Other scholars such as Ong (1999); Portes, Guarnizo and Landlot (1999) and Smith (1998) however argued that improvements in communications and transportation technologies among other factors had facilitated migrants' transnational ties such that they were not replicas of earlier transnational practices.

Initial understanding of transnationalism was that of transnational migrants taking on a multiplicity of identities that were a combination of both country of origin and host country (see Basch *et al,* 1994). More recent scholarship however, understands transnationalism as taking place within fluid social spaces[9] that are constantly reworked through immigrants' embeddednes in more than one society (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004; Pries, 2005; Smith, 2005). The transnational space is not a social space just because it is inhabited by people but because it is produced by them as social space. Transnational spaces are so dense and widespread because of the accelerated flow of people, capital and social remittances such as ideas, norms, practices and identities (Levitt, 2001).

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[9] The aphorism of the 1970s advanced that that space is socially constructed. This is to say that space is constituted through social relations and material social practices. However in the 1980's there was the advancement that the social is spatially constructed as well. In other words, society is necessarily constructed spatially, and that the spatial organisation of society makes a difference to how it works (Massey, 1994).

Ong (1999) defines transnational spatial processes as situated cultural practices of mobility that produce new modes of constructing identity. Social and cultural movement is intrinsic to identities and is crucial in understanding what happens to personal histories when they are taken out of contexts in which they have originated. For this reason, other scholars argue for a broader approach including both the formal such as the economic realm, political transnationalism and the informal social, cultural and religious practices connecting all forms of social experience (see Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004; Smith, 2005 and Mahler and Pessar, 2001).

2.4 Bringing gender into transnational migration

The examination of gender under social experiences in transnational migration is crucial. Gender is distinguished from sex in that whereas sex is a set of biological differences, gender is the social construction of femininity and masculinity. The sex/gender distinction has generated two approaches namely; biological essentialism and social constructionism. Biological essentialism advances that gender identities and roles are natural and are based on the difference in reproductive abilities between men and women. This difference is assumed to be directly reflected in other differences such as bodily strength and speed, physical skills, sexual desire, recreational interests and character *inter alia* (Connell, 2002). The notion that natural difference provides basis for the social pattern of gender takes many forms such as the assumption that men's dominance in society is an expression of their greater physical strength or their higher levels of testosterone.

The social construction view on the other hand advances that gender is formed by social and cultural forces which prescribe activities, tasks and dress among others based on the perceived differences between men and women. Connell (2002) observes that we are not free to enact gender in any way that we like but rather that gender practice is powerfully constrained. Gender is relational and relationships amongst people would be of little significance if they were randomly arranged. Social theory attempts to capture the extensive patterns within social relations with the concept of structure.[10] Gender then is the structure of social relations that assigns different tasks to men and women based on their biological difference. Connell (2002) argues that whereas a structure of social relations may not mechanically determine how people or groups act, they define possibilities and consequences.

Within the migration process, gender is a core principle that facilitates or constrains movement and related processes such as adaptation to the new country, continued contact with the home country and possible return. Dannecker (2005) points out that, transnational spaces are gendered in that men and women experience transnationalism in different ways and have different relationships to their homes. Gender as a category of social organisation is embedded in migration but has received limited attention in migration studies.

Initial studies on migration focused almost exclusively on male migrants while portraying women as passive companions migrating to accompany or to reunite with their

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[10] Giddens (1984:377) defines structure as rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems.

breadwinner migrant husbands (see Crush 1991, Breytenbach 1979, Bohning 1981, Berger and Mohr, 1975; Handlin, 1951, Portes and Bach, 1985). This male bias in migration studies was later countered in the 1970s and 1980s by feminist scholarship that sought to highlight the predominance of women in migration processes (see Donato, 1992; Morokvasic, 1984; Ong, 1991 and Pedraza, 1991). Feminist scholarship highlighted that women were increasingly migrating as the main economic providers, or "breadwinners" for their households.

In the African context, the traditional pattern of migration within and from Africa, which has previously been male-dominated, is increasingly becoming feminised. Adepoju (2004) points out that in recent years, there has been a new phenomenon of women migrating and leaving their husbands to cater for their children. Dodson (1998) confirms this by highlighting that one of the trends in the new migration to South Africa has been the increase in the number of women for a broad range of social, productive and reproductive reasons. The "feminisation of migration" has produced specifically female forms of migration such as the commercialised migration of domestic workers and caregivers, the migration and trafficking of women for the sex industry and the organised migration of women for marriage. Independent women migration has also produced a group of professional women migrating independently to fulfill their own economic needs as opposed to just joining a spouse or other family members (Adepoju, 2004). However, the extent to which the mobility of women may be changing gender roles in Africa requires further interrogation as in many cases women's mobility is still largely

24

determined by unequal gender relations that either inhibit their movement or force them to leave their homes.

Whilst there has been increasing attention being given to women immigrants, gender has still not been included as a central theoretical concept in many migration studies but has continued to be regarded as a variable. Hondagneu-Sotello (1994) has been at the forefront in challenging the women only approach by asserting that gender organises migration in that gender relations prior to migration affect migration and settlement patterns. Hondagneu-Sotello (1994) however does not relate gender and migration to a transnational perspective. The task to bring gender into a transnational perspective has been under taken by Mahler and Pessar (1996) who have expressed that much needs to be done in the area of a more dynamic and flexible conceptualisation of gender as relational and situational.

Much attention continues to be given to the conventional bi-local and comparative approach, which involves males versus females and their corresponding gender "roles". There has been limited attention given to a more dynamic and flexible conceptualisation of gender as relational and situational. Mahler and Pessar (1996) argue for a shift to a transnational social field approach that is concerned with matters of continuity and change in immigrant's identities. Most studies have examined migration from an economic perspective giving limited attention to the social angle such as gender relations and gender identities.

2.4.1 The construction of gender identity

The construction of gender identity is a site of much debate. Socialist feminist theory advances that gender identity is rooted in the division of labour between the sexes into "public" and "private". This division confines women into the "private" which is organised around childcare and domestic chores whereas the "public" which is associated with men is organised around professions, business, politics and sports. Work done in the "private" sphere by women is always valued less than work done by men in the public sphere because of its association with material realms of necessity.

This notion of public/ private has been challenged by dissenting voices of women of colour, working class women and third world women who find little resonance with the dependent, white, middleclass, full-time mother upon whom the notion of gender identity has been constructed (see Marshall, 1994). Walby (1990) argues that dichotomies of public and private are not so clear-cut in non-western societies and that gender identities should not be based on such distinctions.

In agreement with Walby (1990), Ngaiza and Koda (1991) advance that the tendency to dichotomise social space into public and private spheres and according to gender does not adequately reflect the historical and cultural realities of African life practices. Further to this, they argue that biographical and oral histories of African women during nationalist struggles for independence show that women were not necessarily assigned to the private or even gender sphere as colonial gender ideologies perceived them to be. Mikell (1997)

reiterates that gender dynamics in Africa are different from those generated by western feminism. She advances that the gender struggle in the West is characterised by individualism and patriarchal domination over women within capitalist industrialised western societies. Gender struggles in Africa on the other hand are characterised by the fight for economic independence, preservation of family interests and resistance to western imperialism.

According to Oyewumi (1997), the application of gender theories to the African context is problematic because gender debates and research has been birthed from western women's experiences. She advances that within African family systems, which is non-nuclear, the family is non-gendered and that power centers within the family are diffuse and not gender specific but are based on age. This assertion of a genderless African family system has however been countered by other scholars who argue that gender divisions were present in pre-colonial societies but became deeply entrenched by the colonial governments. During the colonial era women in most of Africa became increasingly marginalised as producers in a rural economy. The colonially imposed sexual division of labour pushed men into cash crop economy while women were relegated to subordinate subsistence activities (Maddox, 1996).

An examination of African women's power would be misleading in exaggerating African women's egalitarian status in pre-colonial times. It would be more useful to examine women's power in relative terms such as how much relative power they held and how much of it they lost as a result of the interruption by the colonial project. It

would also be useful to explore the new avenues of power that were created in the post colonial period and which women were not totally left out but were denied equal access with men. This study is set in a postcolonial context and it is therefore interesting to examine how gender roles and identities vary in different patriarchal contexts.[11] Conceptions of gendered identities therefore need to be seen as relationally and historically constructed other than relying on the conflation of the gendered division of labour with the public and private dualism. The challenge from the historical examination of gender shows that gender far from being a stable conceptual category is a fluid concept that is constructed anew in every encounter. This can be observed in the case of transnationalism where transformations and renegotiations of gender relations have taken place in the transnational space.

Mahler and Pessar (2006) advance that bringing in a gendered lens to transnational studies benefits both the study of transnational processes and the study of gender. To this end, they have developed the gendered geographies of power framework to conceptualise and study gender identities and relations when conducted and negotiated across transnational space (see also Mahler and Pessar, 2001 and Mahler and Pessar, 2006).

2.5 Gendered geographies of power

The gendered geographies of power has been argued to be a useful theoretical

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[11] Weedon (1997) defines patriarchy as a system in which the interests of women are subordinated to those of men.

framework[12] for analysing people's social agency given their own initiative as well as their positioning within multiple hierarchies of power operative within and across many terrains. The gendered geographies of power is informed by Gidden's theory of structuration[13] in embracing both individual and societal characteristics in order to gain a more complete picture of migration.

Several scholars using the gendered geographies of power framework include Mahler (1996), Mahler and Pessar (2001), Glick et al (1992), Glick (1999), Goldring (1996), Keck and Sikkink (1998), Kyle (1995), Alicea (1997). Their scholarship has however been limited to women who are disenfranchised mainly rural women, refugees, transnational peasants, uneducated women, domestic workers and commercial sex workers. Such literature portrays women as unskilled workers and always existing in the margins of the economy. This study has employed the gendered geographies of power framework to examine the lives of middle class foreign African postgraduate students (both women and men) who are suitable subjects for the study of identity change or negotiation since they are required to adjust to new situations. Their experience becomes

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[12] A theoretical framework is a system of ideas or conceptual structures that help us "see" the social world, understand it, explain it and change it. A framework guides our thinking, research and reflects the stance the researcher adopts in their research and it indicates how problems are defined and the kinds of questions to be asked. Different frameworks suggest different solutions to problems and each framework provides a set of concepts to be used in clarifying a problem (Parpart, 2000).

[13] Structuration theory is an approach to social theory that is concerned with the interaction between knowledgeable and capable agents and the wider social systems and structures in bringing about social change. The structuration theory further advances that the constitution or development of a society is not only influenced by the people and the structure of a society but also by the historical and geographical processes. The history and geography of a region are essential to understanding social change because they are strong influences on the range of actions available to agents (Gregory, 1994).

salient because a quality education in the contemporary times is perceived to be a marker of social class. Education positions them to access education and employment opportunities in the South African context.

Further, much of the development of the gendered geographies of power framework has been based on studies conducted in the Americas and does not fully incorporate work performed elsewhere (see Mahler and Pessar, 2006). This study has applied this framework in the African context so as to broaden the geographical range in which one can study gender across transnational spaces. The gendered geographies of power framework is divided into four elements namely; geographical scales, social locations, power geometries (agency) and imagination or mind work.

2.5.1 Geographical scales

The geographical scales captures the understanding that gender operates on multiple spatial, social and cultural scales such as the body, family, state and gender hegemonies across transnational spaces. It is within the context of these scales that gender ideologies are reaffirmed, reconfigured or both. This concept enabled me to examine how gender identities and subjectivities are constituted in various geopolitical and historical contexts. The Feminist Poststructuralist approach posits that subjectivities and hence identities are not a given but are socially constructed in discourse (Hall, 1996). Davies (1993: 11) notes that the discourses and practices through which we are constituted are often in tension with one another thereby providing the human subject with multiple layers of

contradictory meanings.

Since subjectivities are always under construction, this framework does not seek to fix or unify subjectivities but rather seeks to examine the fluid process of meaning making and subject formation. According to Westwood and Phizacklea (2000) the subjective mark of a transnational would be cultural hybridity that is the ways in which transnationals challenge the notion of a fixed identity.

The geographical scales element was therefore useful in this study because it enabled me to examine how the transnational space between their home countries and South Africa provided foreign African students at UKZN with opportunities for either reinforcing prevailing gender ideologies or challenging hegemonic notions of gender.

2.5.2 Social locations

The social locations refers to individual's positions within interconnected power hierarchies created through historical, political and economic, geographic, kinship-based and other socially stratifying factors that provide a reference term for how individuals are situated in multiple intersecting hierarchies of gender, class and race. People are in most cases born in social locations that confer upon them certain advantages and disadvantages. Gender identities exist in connection with other social identities such as class, race, ethnicity and nationality among others. Foreign African students are not a homogenous group but are differentiated by various social identities such class, ethnicity,

31

nationality.

The social locations concept enabled me to examine the diversity of foreign African students by examining how their race, social class, ethnic background and nationality related to matters of gender. This concept also enabled me to explore how foreign African students were negotiating their gender identity in an institution where South African students are still facing the challenge of constructing and negotiating the concept of race and racial identity (see Pattman, 2007).

2.5.3 Power geometries

The transnational space being a social space is a complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and cooperation. This aspect of space is a kind of 'power-geometry'. The power geometry concept as explained by Massey (1994) is used to explain how people's social locations affect their access to resources and mobility and the degrees of agency they exert as initiators and transformers hence the term power in the gendered geographies of power framework.

Power as a dimension of gender was central in the first wave of feminism's concept of patriarchy. The women's liberation movement recognised that patriarchal power was not just a matter of direct control of women by individual men but that it was through institutions as well (see Madan, 1988). Power operating through institutions is an important aspect of the structure of gender. Within the context of migration it can be

observed that the state plays a major role in determining the patterns of international migration through emigration policies, which in some cases may treat men and women differently (see Mahler and Pessar, 2001).

Foucault (1977) however was skeptical of the idea that there was a central agency of power in society and argued that power is diffuse and discursive. In this way then power is not distant but is intimate and impacts directly on people in terms of their identities and their sense of place in the world. A full account of power therefore requires the understanding that power is organised and institutional as well as diffuse and discursive. Discursive power can be contested or transformed and total domination is a rarity (Connell, 2002). Feminist poststructuralists have appropriated Foucault's notion of power as a way of understanding gendered power and the possibility of agency. Drawing from the feminist poststructuralist discourse of the possibility of agency, the power geometries concept was useful in this study in examining how the negotiation of gender identity informed the ways in which foreign African students asserted themselves in the South African context.

2.5.4 Imagination or mind work

According to Mahler and Pessar (2001) agency is not just affected by extra personal factors but also by individual characteristics such as initiative. Much of what people do transnationally is fore grounded by imagining, planning and strategising. This kind of process entails envisioning life in the country of destination, working towards the

acquisition of travel documents and organising for actual travel to and accommodation in the host country while still in one's home country. The imagination concept focuses on how images, meanings and values are gendered, interpreted, and appropriated by women and men in varied sites in ways that promote or constrain mobility (see Brennan, 2001; Pessar, 2001 and Constable, 2003). This concept is frequently sidelined in those transnational studies that privilege social relations and social institutions. It was useful for this study because it enabled me to explore how images and cultural representations inflect on foreign African students' transnational practices.

Alongside the gendered geographies of power framework, this study also employed the social network theory as well the social identity theory. These theories are discussed in the following sections.

2.6 Social network theory

Social network theory is the study of how the social structure of relationships around a person, group, or organisation affects beliefs or behaviors and therefore attributes migration to social ties (see Scott, 2000). In countries of origin, information about study opportunities and living standards abroad may be transmitted through personal networks such as friends and neighbours who have emigrated. In host countries, immigrant communities often help their fellow women and men to immigrate by helping them out during times of arrival and settlement. Social networks in host countries also help them with information on job opportunities and visa renewal among others. This concept is

useful for this study because as mentioned earlier in Vertovec (2002), the networks that foreign students develop serve to provide opportunities for colleagues and friends from their home country hence leading to further transnational migration.

The social network concept has been used both in a metaphorical and analytical sense. In a metaphorical sense the concept is concerned with interconnectedness of social relationships but does not specify the properties, such as connectedness, status and role, of these social relationships which would be used to interpret social actions (see Mitchell, 1969). For instance when used in the metaphorical sense the social network theory does not explain why and how networks are formed and it also does not explain the gendered patterns of migration.

Mitchell (1969) points out that an analytical sense of social networks takes the relationship between linkages of a social network to be salient features in interpreting social action. Social network theory then becomes more analytically useful in interpreting behavior in a wide variety of social situations. For the purposes of this study, the analytical sense of social networks was useful in examining how gender structured foreign African student migration from their own country to UKZN in South Africa and how they formed social networks.

2.7 Social identity theory

Social identity is the individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups (Hogg and Vaughan, 2002). This can be distinguished from the notion of personal identity, which refers to self-knowledge that derives from the individual's unique attributes. Social identities are always constructed and modified in relation to the identities of other groups: mainstream and subordinate, proximal and spatially distant (see Dolby and Cornbleth, 2001). Social identities are in motion in multiple ways, not only in relation to other groups and their enactment of selves but also in relation to the dynamics of geographic place. Various kinds of identities are constituted in migration (see Greenland and Brown, 2006). Social identities are created in these unbounded places, the places in-between, and the connections among them. These connections are electronic and digital, interpersonal and wholly anonymous, as well as political, economic, and cultural.

Social identity theory asserts that group membership creates in-group self-categorisation and enhancement in ways that favour the in-group at the expense of the out-group (Hogg and Vaughan, 2002). For example, when abroad, especially in countries which have particularly different languages and cultures, migrants feel their nationality far more keenly than when they are at home. Migrants will tend to band together in national groups, perhaps making comments about the strangeness of the local residents. Social identity theory therefore acknowledges the existence of prejudice, stereotyping, negotiation and language use.

An important aspect of this theory is that it recognises that different social groups vary in terms of the power and status they have in society. This is crucial to the understanding of men and women as a social group a category that is usually ignored in many migration studies that refer to gender as a way of categorising people. This theory was useful in enabling me to examine how gender informs ways in which foreign African students at UKZN asserted themselves in the South African context.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine a body of literature on theorising around migration, transnationalism and gender. By using the gendered geographies of power framework which emerged from this literature, this chapter anchored the research topic in literature. This chapter has also explained the application of the framework in a different context in Africa so as to broaden the geographical space in which it can be applied. The relevance of the research findings in relation to the body of literature will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Alongside the gendered geographies of power framework, this chapter has explained the use of the social network theory and social identity theory framework in examining the students' experiences with the specific focus on gender relations. In the next chapter, I examine the research methods and methodologies and critical insights concerning gender generated during the data collection process.

Chapter Three

Research methods and methodologies

3.1 Introduction

This study entailed empirical data collection in an attempt to answer the key questions outlined in the introduction chapter of the thesis. This chapter motivates the use of qualitative research methods in order to elicit data. In order to specify where the study was undertaken and the selection of the participants, this chapter specifies the sampling procedures, how informed consent was sought and the actual data collection process. I interrogate the gender dynamics in the data collection process and how my identity as a researcher as well as the research question impacted on the kind of data I collected. I also explain how ethical considerations were taken into account, how the data was organised and analysed and the limitations of the study.

3.2 Research methodology

Methodology refers to linking of a particular ontology[14] and a particular epistemology[15]

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[14] Ontology is a way of specifying the nature of something for instance the belief that gender is a social construct rather than natural. Different ontologies offer different beliefs about social existence and hence different theories about the nature of reality.

[15] An epistemology is a way of specifying how researchers know what they know for instance from a)Empiricism, which relies on observation and experiments to make connections between human experiences, external reality and ideas about what really exists

in providing rules that specify how to produce valid knowledge of social reality (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002). Different methodologies depend on different beliefs about what really exists. Methodologies are therefore underpinned by philosophical positions and assumptions that inform the researcher's collection, collation and analysis of data.

This study employed a qualitative research methodology. Qualitative research is characterised by an emphasis on rich description, understanding and explanation of complex phenomena. As Barbour (2001:115) observes, qualitative research, with its distinctive approach to harnessing the analytical potential of perceptions, allows a research question to be examined from various angles. Qualitative research has been critiqued as failing to produce adequately rational or unbiased knowledge in contrast with quantitative research. Quantitative research uses numerical data to answer the research question and hence uses statistical procedures to obtain data. Edwards and Ribbens (1998:4) take cognisance of this by noting:

> Qualitative research almost inevitably appears 'unconvincing' because dominant understandings of concepts of "validity", "reliability" and "representativeness" are passed within a numerical rather than a process framework.

Although qualitative research may be seen as simple, it entails a great deal of complexity involving people's perceptions and self awareness on the part of the researcher. The aim of a qualitative study is to understand the full multidimensional, dynamic picture of the subject of study. Quantitative research would therefore have been unsuitable for this

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b)Realist epistemologies in which reality comes from a reasoning mind and from the material conditions in which the thinker lives (Ramazanoglu and Holland, 2002)

study which sought to capture lived experience, deeply held beliefs or feelings and worldview.

A qualitative method with its emphasis on peoples lived experience was suited for locating the meaning the students placed on their lives, processes, events and structures of their lives, their perceptions, assumptions and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them (see Rossman and Rallis, 1998). Bui (2004) observes that most of the empirical studies on students studying abroad tend to be quantitative; survey-based. This kind of study tends to focus on what "cultural knowledge" students have acquired about their host country. There is a lack of attention devoted to the perceived and subjective reality underlying that experience.

In the South African context, Crush and MacDonald (2002) point out that the demise of formal apartheid has created new and yet only partially understood opportunities for migration to South Africa. They question how far their own work based upon large structured questionnaires can grasp these new developments and suggest that more nuanced information can be obtained with more qualitative assessments of the "new South African migratory mosaic". A qualitative paradigm was therefore preferable for this study in order to obtain a more nuanced and contextual understanding of foreign students at UKZN because it allowed me as the researcher to understand the students in terms of their definitions of the world.

This being a qualitative study, it was positioned in an interpretivist theoretical paradigm. Within an interpretivist paradigm, knowledge is not only constructed by observable phenomena but by descriptions of people's intentions, values, beliefs and reasons. The researcher contributes to the creation of meaning by bringing in their own values and beliefs. She shapes the project through her curiosities and her worldview. The researcher also creates meaning by analysing texts to look for the way in which social meanings come about in discourses. The interpretive paradigm denies the existence of an objective reality independent of the frame of reference of the observer.

My positioning as a researcher was therefore crucial because this research was inherently structured by my subjectivity. As a foreign African student at UKZN, I engage in a transnational space and the research process therefore involved self-reflexivity on my part. Reay (1996: 59-60) describes reflexivity as 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. Having left Kenya in 2005 for my postgraduate studies in UKZN, Durban South Africa not only turned me into an outsider in the new South African culture, I also become an "outsider" at home. Those who I left at home sometimes refer to me as the "South African" when I go back home whereas while I am in South Africa the contact with the department of home affairs when renewing my visa, immigration officials at the airport and as well as interaction with local students constantly remind me that I am a foreign national. Alsop (2002) argues that while leaving is prerequisite to transcending self and society it also enables a different and deeper

understanding of what we left at home and hence looking back home enables one to practice self-reflexivity.

At UKZN in South Africa, I have the identity of a foreign student, whereas while in Kenya, I am a citizen. Foreign students are a category by itself and even have the UKZN International Students Office dealing specifically with their issues. From interacting with foreign students, I have encountered the perception that it is easier to get along with other foreign nationals as opposed to local students. As a foreign student of African origin therefore, I had the benefit of being an "insider" and this enabled me to have easier access to the foreign students. An insider is perceived as more likely to share meaning with the participants of the study as compared to an outsider. However foreign students and even more specifically students from the same country are not a homogenous group and they may have divergent views and interests. For example as a Kenyan national, I find that I share the Kenyan identity and language with Kenyans. However, due to my Christian background, I find myself going to a church, which has predominantly Zulu members and whose language is different from mine. I therefore find myself forming social networks with both Kenyans and my church members who are predominantly Zulu speaking.

The negotiation of this social space is further problematised by my background as a gender studies student. I continually battle with whether or not to engage in prescribed gender roles in social settings. While in Kenya, I find that as first born in a girls' only

family, I have to take on the roles of both a daughter and a son which involves decision-making as well as household chores which are 'traditionally" women's domain. When in South Africa I find that in academic settings, I have the space to challenge traditional gender roles. However, in social settings such as church and Kenyan gatherings, I constantly find myself battling with either engaging in the assigned gender roles in order to "fit in" or challenging the gender roles and facing alienation.

Constructing and re-constructing the very availability of different positions as a foreign African student, researcher (participant and observer), feminist, woman and Christian was a necessary element in this process and extended through all aspects of this study. As a researcher, I also created meaning by analysing texts to look for the way in which social meanings come about in discourses (Henning et al, 2004). Having a background in gender studies informed me in framing my study within a gender-based framework. Consequently, theory and practice are no longer separable but rather theories become more self-reflexive.

An interpretive framework is therefore a communal process involving presenting the reality of the participants from their own views, the role of the researcher as a co-creator of meaning and the types of knowledge frameworks or discourses informing that particular society (see Henning et al, 2004). This communal process was in line with the focus of this study, which was to gain a deep level of understanding of individual foreign

African students' experiences at UKZN.

3. 3 Methods of data collection

The use of multiple research methods in order to elicit rich qualitative data in this study was useful because as Brewer and Hunter (1989) assert, they provide rich opportunities for cross-validating and cross-fertilising research procedures and findings. This study consequently employed in-depth interviews and participant observation methods in order to elicit rich qualitative data over a period of one year that is from March 2008 to March 2009.

An interview is an interactive process between the researcher and the respondent. In-depth interviews are essential for understanding how participants view their worlds. According to Rossman and Rallis (1998) in-depth interviews lead to a deeper understanding as both the interviewer and interviewee construct meaning. An interview being an interactive process involves not just listening and recording participant views but the way in which the interview progresses plays an important role in the interpretation of the eventual data.

In conducting in-depth interviews, I used open-ended questions to enable the students to reflect on and give detailed accounts and perceptions of their studying abroad experiences. These experiences entailed information such as how the students engaged in transnational practices such as migrating from their country of origin to South Africa,

flow of social remittances such as ideas, norms, practices and identities across the transnational space and how gender informed these transnational practices. During the study, I also presented questions to students asking them to relate their racial or ethnic background to matters of gender. In-depth interviews were advantageous in that where meaning was not clear, I sought clarification from the respondents and I also probed for additional information.

I recorded the interviews using a digital recorder after obtaining permission from the respondents. A digital recorder was useful for data collection in the sense that it enabled me to collect extensive amounts of data not only by questioning and listening to but also by observing non-verbal cues from my respondents. Fortunately, all my respondents were amenable to the use of a recorder during the interview most likely because as students they understood the importance of recording for purposes of transcription. I however observed that some of them would give extra information when I stopped the recorder as if the formal part of the interview was over and they could now talk to me "off the record". I internalised these sessions and made notes immediately I left the respondent. I did not take this to be a breach of confidentiality since I had explained the purpose of the interview from the onset.

I then realised that as much as the recorder can be a useful device in collecting data, it would sometimes limit the amount of information a respondent could provide even when you had assured them of confidentiality because they knew that they were being recorded. As a researcher, I took cognisance of this and relied on my memory and

observation to back the recordings. The recordings were then transcribed and texts analysed for content (lived experience) and discourse. The process of transcribing took place in tandem with the data collection process and was quite time consuming. It was however worthwhile in that it brought out the richness of the data and I could then begin to observe patterns and recurring themes.

As resourceful as in-depth interviews can be, they can however be limiting in the sense that the respondent's views in answering questions maybe actually be different from what they actually practice. As a researcher, I took cognisance of this and made use of the participant observation method to collect data.

Participation observation involves both active and emotional participation in activities in the field as well as observation, which involves conscious distance so that you can see things clearly (see Henning *et al*, 2004). Participant observation is useful since it enables the researcher to observe what people do in every day settings which interviews may not be able to capture. Participant observation is useful for capturing the way of life of an identified group of people and enables the researcher to obtain a thick description rich in explanation and argument. A thick description refers to the detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context (Holloway, 1997).

Through participant observation, I spent some time with foreign African students in various social situations such as parties, community meetings, family settings and other

events in order to observe various aspects of gender identity. Through these, I was able to gain an understanding of how gender contributed to the interpretation of meaning in their interactions. I attended social organisation functions such as the official launch of the Cameroonian community in Durban (CAMCOD) Association, a Christmas party with a Cameroonian respondent and their family, a meeting of the Kenyan students and Kenyans living in the Diaspora with their deputy prime minister, a Special Elders Council meeting of the *Mbondo* community of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC hereafter) living in Durban among others in order to capture observation data. These observations were captured in field notes, which were later collated and analysed for content.

3.4 Selection of research sample and project area

Sampling can be regarded as the process of selecting a representative sample for observation from an entire population in order to draw conclusions about the entire population of study. I had initially set out to use the stratified random sampling method with the intention of obtaining a list of postgraduate students from UKZN International student's office. In this sampling method, I would have divided the foreign student population into homogeneous subgroups or stratums comprising of high sending African countries. From each stratum, I would have selected a random sample of students (the nth student in each stratum) in an attempt to acquire sufficient representation in the sample. I however found out that the UKZN International student's office did not have a separate list of postgraduate students who were my target group. Instead, the office had a list of both undergraduate and postgraduate students. I then sought to obtain a list of

postgraduate students from the leaders of the student's clubs registered with the Students' Representative Council (SRC). A number of high sending countries had not registered clubs with the SRC and only one out of the leaders whose names I obtained responded to my request for students names.

This being a qualitative study therefore, I decided to use a non probability sampling method in selecting my sample. Marshall (1996) asserts that a non probability sample is suitable for qualitative research because it is aimed at deeper understanding of complex human issues rather than generalisability of results. Qualitative research as earlier mentioned is frequently critiqued as lacking representativeness and generalisability of the research findings. In a qualitative research however, the characteristics under study of the population are less likely to be known as is required in the selection of a random sample in probability sampling. Using the non-probability sampling however, does not mean that as the researcher I knew absolutely nothing about the foreign African students but it meant that I did not know enough to use probability sampling. This is because it is difficult to establish that the values, beliefs and attitudes that form the core of qualitative study are evenly distributed within the population (see Blaikie, 2000). Further, in a qualitative research one realises that some respondents are more informative than others and are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher thus making it untenable to use probability sampling.

The non probability sampling method employed in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allows for the selection of respondents whose qualities or

experiences permit an understanding of the phenomena in question, and are therefore valuable (see Dane 1990). The study drew from foreign African students from the various high sending African countries namely Botswana, Cameroon, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Liberia so as to provide a richer understanding of the diversity of foreign African students' experience. The study's focus on foreign African students from various countries as opposed to students from one nationality was significant because research that focuses on gender from a range of different ethnic and national backgrounds is very limited (MacIlwaine, *et al* 2006).

My sample frame was made up of postgraduate students namely honours, masters and PhD students. I preferred postgraduate students because I made the presumption that their level of maturity would provide them with more past experiences to draw from in reflecting on how their gender identities have been challenged, reaffirmed or reconfigured in the transnational experience. Their ages ranged from twenty five to sixty and they were drawn from the social sciences as well as the natural sciences faculties.

The study also made use of key informants. Key informants are people who have a close relationship with and a deep understanding of the group a researcher is researching on. A key informant also understands the kind of information the researcher needs and is amenable to providing the researcher with that information (see Bernard, 1994). Most of my key informants were leaders of their social organisations. The key informants were resourceful in explaining to me the dynamics of the group as well as the background of

the particular country that they came from. They informed me of the dates of their social functions and hosted me during these social functions. In the social functions they would translate for me during or after the event since the meetings were conducted in their home languages.

The key informants were also very helpful in making recommendations for potential participants for the study from their own country. This then led to the use of a snowball sampling method in some cases. In the snowball sampling method the researcher locates one or two key people and asks them to name others who are likely to participate in the research. 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.

The in-depth interviews were conducted within the precincts of UKZN such as the students' department offices, campus residence, EG Malherbe Library and the Gender studies department where I could observe the respondents in their natural setting as foreign students. Due to the use of in-depth interviews and participant observation research methods, the number of participants involved in this study was constrained. An interview with one person would take at least two forty minute to one hour sessions on different days.

The students being at the postgraduate level were very busy with their own work and it was not easy to secure interview appointments with them and this required patience and perseverance on my part. Sometimes the interview appointment would be delayed

because students had a deadline to meet or they had a meeting with their supervisors or they were busy writing. Others had to travel back to their home countries in the course of the study and I had to wait for their return in order to continue with the interviews. However upon their return, they provided refreshing insights concerning how they were navigating the transnational space.

New themes stopped emerging after thirty five interviews and an acceptable interpretative framework was constructed after fifty interviews, the stage of thematic and theoretical saturation. A sample of twenty two foreign African students, eleven being women and the other eleven men (for the purpose of comparative analysis and not a binary reduction of gender), was used in this study to enable an in-depth investigation in order to elicit rich qualitative data.

These participants were drawn from various degree courses ranging from Culture Media and Communication, Architecture, Electrical engineering, Civil engineering, Development studies, Conflict resolution and Peace Studies, Community Development, Music, Nursing, Historical Studies, Anthropology, Religion and Theology, Gender studies, Human Resource management to Politics, Philosophy and Economics.

Whereas for some students, coming to South Africa was the first time they were leaving their home country, others had previous travel experience to various countries for purposes of studying, attending conferences and vacationing. Of the eleven women, five were married whereas seven were single. The men comprised of seven married men and

five single men. With the exception of one woman participant none of the married participants cited accompanying or being accompanied by their spouse to South Africa.

All except two of these students had a first degree and some work experience prior to coming to South Africa. While still in their home countries, the students were involved in various occupations such as lecturing at a University, working in a government ministry or non-governmental organisation while others were studying. A few were already working in South Africa before embarking on furthering their studies.

Funding for their studies was obtained either through bursaries by their home governments or international bodies such as the World Health Organisation (WHO) for instance. For some, funding was obtained through family members either in their home country or those already residing in South Africa. The rest were self funded and relied on their personal savings to cater for their education. These students' possession of a first degree, previous travel experience, work experience and funding placed them in a position to access tertiary education in a South African institution.

In order to get a sense of the different participants in terms of their age, occupation, marital status the next section provides demographic information about each participant. This is in order to enhance an understanding of their narratives as discussed and analysed in subsequent sections. The names of the research participants have been changed so as to protect their identity. Some participants were not willing to disclose their actual age and

so in some cases rather than the actual age the age bracket within which they fitted is provided.

3.4.1 Demographic information about individual research participants

3.4.1.1 Female Participants

Pauline

Pauline at the age of thirty two is a lecturer at the University of Makerere in Uganda. She came to South Africa in 2004 in pursuit of her Masters in the Community Development programme. She is currently working towards the completion of her doctoral degree and is looking forward to graduating at the same time with her mother who is also pursuing her doctoral degree. She also works as a tutor in the Community Development department. Pauline is married and has three children who are currently under the care of her husband and female siblings. She makes regular visits to Uganda for purposes of data collection for her research and to visit her family.

Mariam

Mariam, forty four, is a lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Mariam came to South Africa prompted by a program on the history of healing introduced by the

University of Dar-es-Salaam in 2003. Mariam found this to be an opportunity for historians to study the history of healing since pre-colonial times and in 2006 she came to South Africa to pursue her doctoral studies in Historical Studies. Mariam is married to a professional accountant who runs a private company with two colleagues alongside his government job. She makes regular visits to Zanzibar where her family stays for purposes of data collection and visiting her family. She has since completed her studies and returned home.

Purity

Purity who is between the ages of forty and forty five is a lecturer in Malawi and is married with two children who she has left under the care of her husband. She came to South Africa on a scholarship in order to pursue her Masters in Advanced Midwifery and Childcare. She works at the King Edward hospital as part of the practical component of her degree. Her parents, siblings, relatives and friends are all in Malawi and she travels home occasionally to visit them.

Eleanor

Eleanor a forty five year old single mother had been working as a pediatrician with the ministry of health in Liberia prior to coming to South Africa in 2004. Her son is still in Liberia. Eleanor had previously made attempts to go and study in the United Kingdom but it proved to be quite expensive. Lack of funding and outbreak of war in Liberia

delayed her plans to study further. She however got a breakthrough when she obtained funding for two years from the World Health Organisation (WHO) through the ministry of health where she had been working. The WHO was seeking to sponsor African psychiatrists. Eleanor is currently pursuing her doctoral degree in Psychiatric nursing and also works at the Skills Lab at the nursing department.

Lucy

Lucy a single Kenyan woman aged between fifty-five and sixty who has travelled extensively in the course of her career had been working in Johannesburg when she started looking for opportunities to further her studies. When her sixteen month contract came to an end she decided to use her savings to fund her studies at Bond University in Johannesburg. The university was however struggling to get accreditation and after receiving admission to UKZN she left Johannesburg. Lucy joined UKZN to pursue her Masters in Gender Studies and is currently undertaking her doctoral studies in Anthropology. Lucy has worked as a part time lecturer at the Anthropology department and is currently working at Maurice Webb race relations at UKZN.

Sylvia

Sylvia aged between forty and forty five came to South Africa in 2005 to join her husband who had been working and studying in South Africa for a year. She has a daughter in grade four. She also has other family members residing in Durban namely her

sister, brother in law, nephew and nieces. Prior to her coming Sylvia had been working at the human resources department of the Kenya Power and lighting company and was also running her own clothes business in Mombasa a coastal town in Kenya. Since coming to South Africa Sylvia has obtained her honours in Human Resource Management and is now pursuing her Masters in Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies. She also works at the Student's counseling center at UKZN.

Angelina

Angelina, a single woman between twenty five and thirty years of age had just finished her Matric in the DRC before coming to stay with her brother who was already in South Africa. She came to South Africa in 2004 and in the process of staying with her brother decided to study. Coming from a French background, she had to first learn the English language. She is currently pursuing her Masters in Human resource management.

Irene

Irene is a single woman from Cameroon aged between twenty and twenty five years of age. Prior to coming to South Africa, Irene was working as a branch manager of a motor insurance company. She had previously applied to study at the University of Warwick in the United Kingdom. Her brother who had been in South Africa for nine years with the help of her cousin at UKZN however made an application for Irene at UKZN where she got admission. Irene joined at honours level and is currently pursuing her Masters in

Anthropology. She is currently working as a graduate assistant at the department of Anthropology.

Jessica

Jessica, a thirty five year old single woman had been pursuing her Masters in Yaoundé in Cameroon before coming to South Africa. She had also worked as a teacher under the employ of the parents' teachers association. Jessica who has political ambitions had also been engaged in some work for the ruling party in Cameroon during the electioneering period. The process of Jessica's coming to South Africa was initiated by her friend who was working at UKZN and her younger brother who was already in South Africa who advised her that there were better prospects in South Africa. She came to South Africa in 2006 after being admitted for honours in the Anthropology programme and is currently pursuing her doctoral studies in Anthropology. She has worked as a tutor, graduate assistant and is currently a junior lecturer at the same department,

Chichi

Chichi, a married woman between twenty and twenty five years of age was working with the Malawi Human Rights Association prior to coming to South Africa. She left her six month old child with her husband in Malawi in order to pursue her Masters in Community Development. She made frequent visits to Malawi to collect data and visit her family.

Norah

Norah, a single woman from Cameroon who is between the ages of twenty and twenty five came to South Africa to join her sister in 2005. She had wanted to go to the United Kingdom but it proved to be very expensive and she had no family there. Norah came to pursue her studies at Masters level and is currently pursuing her doctoral studies in Civil engineering. She also works as a tutor in the same department.

3.4.1.2 Male participants

Phillip

Phillip is between thirty five and forty years of age and had been working with a church organisation prior to coming to South Africa. He was at first attracted by a University in Australia but since he was newly married he opted to come to South Africa so that he could be nearer to his wife. Phillip is currently pursuing his Masters in Development studies. He also works at the disability unit where he assists in translating students' manuals into Braille.

Maina

Maina who is between forty five and fifty years old is a lecturer at the University of

Nairobi in Kenya at the department of architecture. He did his Masters in Germany and has travelled to various other places such as Italy, France and America. Maina was scheduled to travel to Oslo in Norway for his studies but his sponsors suggested that he come to South Africa. He came to South Africa in 2003 and has been pursuing his doctoral studies at the department of architecture where he also works as a lecturer.

Maina is married with two children. His daughter is a student at the University of Nairobi while his son is in high school.

Rotich

Rotich is a lecturer at the Moi University in Eldoret a town in the Rift Valley province of Kenya. He had ambitions to complete his PhD before the age of thirty. He applied to the Ford foundation and was nominated by his faculty but when his application reached the university graduate training committee, they decided to favour those people who were nearing the cut-off age since the grant was available for people below thirty five years. This was not university policy but a decision by a group of professors in the committee. This meant that the grant would be available for those who were thirty-three, thirty four years and hence Rotich at the age of twenty eight would have to wait. Rotich who is married with two children wanted to complete his doctorate in the shortest time possible so that he could be available to his children and so that his wife could pursue her Masters degree.

He then opted to take his study leave and proceeded to South Africa for his doctoral studies in Culture Media and Communication funded by his university salary in 2006. Rotich completed his doctoral studies and went on to post doctorate studies in 2009 which he also completed. He has since returned to Kenya.

Koffie

Koffie, a single man of between twenty five and thirty years of age from the DRC studied Information Technology at the University of Makerere in Uganda in 1998 for his undergraduate degree. He came to South Africa from Uganda. Koffie has travelled to various African countries such as Ethiopia, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Central Africa, and Congo Brazzaville. He had made applications to study in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and South Africa. He came to South Africa in 2002 because this is where he obtained the quickest response. He stayed in Johannesburg for a month but did not like it since the pace was too fast for him. He preferred Durban due its laid-back nature and proximity to the sea. Koffie is pursuing his Masters in Anthropology and he also works as a tutor and at one point served as a graduate assistant in the same department.

Peter

Peter a thirty- two year old Kenyan man had trained as an accountant at the Strathmore College in Kenya and was working at Holiday Inn a prestigious hotel prior to coming to

South Africa in 2002. His father was opposed to his leaving a lucrative job in Kenya to come to South Africa and decided not to support Peter financially. Peter combined his savings together with funds obtained from his siblings and other relatives in financing his move to South Africa. He had initially wanted to study Bachelor of Commerce but was informed that his qualification in South Africa was equivalent to the Matric level. He however managed to find his way through and is now pursuing his doctoral studies in Development Studies. While in South Africa, he has been engaged in business and has worked as a tutor and a graduate assistant in order to sustain himself. He also met a Kenyan woman in South Africa and they eventually got married.

Kabila

Kabila a married man between the ages of thirty five and forty came to South Africa about eleven years ago seeking asylum after fleeing from the war torn DRC. He came with his family and children and they used their family savings to fund their movement. Kabila decided to further his studies in order to advance his career prospects. He is now a permanent resident and hopes to eventually work with a Non-governmental organisation rather than the government. He is currently pursuing his PhD in the Gender Studies Department.

Olomide

Olomide who is between thirty five and forty years of age came to South Africa about

ten years ago and like Kabila his coming to South Africa was precipitated by the war in the DRC. He however came first and sought to establish himself before his wife could join him seven years later. He had been doing nursing in the Congo but found it difficult to get a job in South Africa due to the language barrier since he is French speaking. Using his savings, he enrolled for an honours programme so as to enhance his career prospects. He is currently pursuing his Masters in Religion and Theology.

James

James a single man between the ages of twenty and twenty five came to South Africa about ten years ago. He had just completed his matric and being from the Francophone part of Cameroon, he was looking for an opportunity to study in an English speaking country. James had initially wanted to go to France but when that did not materialise he opted to come to South Africa. He then enrolled with the British Council for five to six months to gain proficiency in English before coming to South Africa in 2002. He did his undergraduate in Electronic engineering and is currently pursuing his doctoral studies in the same field.

Jasper

Jasper is a thirty nine year old man from Botswana and whose government has been funding his studies. He is a teacher by profession and has taught in primary school, a high school and was teaching in a college prior to coming to South Africa. At the college level

a higher qualification was required and that is why he came to study. He did his undergraduate studies in Pretoria and is currently pursuing his Masters in Music at UKZN. Jasper is married and has one son.

Raoul

Raoul, a single man between the age of twenty five and thirty was playing for the Botswana government music band prior to coming to South Africa. He was also training some students in music informally. He decided to pursue his passion for Music at a higher level outside of his country since the public university in Botswana did not offer an advanced course in music. Raoul obtained funding from the government of Botswana for postgraduate studies in South Africa. He has been pursuing his Masters in Music and has since returned to Botswana to take up a lecturing post in a private college.

Zebedee

Zebedee is a single man aged between twenty and twenty five years old from Zimbabwe studying Politics, Philosophy and Economics. Zebedee's education is sponsored by his parents. He preferred South Africa because it was nearer home and less expensive than America and Europe. He initially worked as waiter in both Woolworth's café and PrimiPiatti in Gateway to make some extra income.

3.5 Ethical issues

This study was approved by the higher degrees ethics committee of UKZN. The consent of the participants was sought at every level after the purpose of the research was explained to the students. The recording of the interviews was done with the interviewee's full consent. The informants were assured of confidentiality and assured that they had the right to choose whether to participate or not. Participant's names and identitities were replaced with pseudonyms and any distinguishing characteristics were disguised for the purposes of anonymity.

3.6 Methods of data organisation and analysis

The different forms of data were transcribed into texts representing students' experiences and perceptions and coded using QS NVivo 8. The data was then analysed based on the conceptual framework, the research questions and existing literature to identify recurring themes.

3.7 Limitations of the study

This study would have benefited if I was able to observe the respondents in their home settings since a number of them travelled to their home countries and came back during the course of this study. However due to the enormity of such a task given that they were all from various countries and the fact that the project was not externally funded this was

not possible. I had to rely on narrations of their experiences back home after having been in South Africa.

The study would also have been richer by involving local South African students in order to understand their perceptions of foreign students since identity negotiation does not occur in a vacuum. However for the purposes of delimiting this study, I focused on the experiences of foreign African students. The impact of the foreign African students on local students and contexts would form the basis for another study.

3.8 Gender dynamics in the data collection process

Conducting the study using a gender lens and using self-reflexivity made me more keenly aware of the gender dynamics involved in the qualitative data collection process. William and Heikes (1993) make the observation that there is scarcity of research on gender interacting with qualitative in-depth interviews. Gender relations are an important dynamic in shaping the interview process which can significantly influence the kind of data obtained. The interviewer and the interviewee are actively involved in the co-performance of gender in the interview process. Further, the gender focus of the research and the gendered context of the research environment are critical factors in mediating the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Gender relations are also implicated in the structure of particular research methodologies used. All these dynamics were highlighted in the course of data collection and especially so for me as a female researcher researching on men.

3.8.1 Gender as performance during the interview

Same gender interviewing may seem preferable but supporting evidence is mixed. Some researchers such as Graves and Powell (1996) wonder whether women make better researchers because their feminine communication styles make them better listeners. Others argue that the status of a researcher accords a woman "honorary male status" (see Fontana and Frey, 1994). Indeed in contacting the research participants for interviews, I adopted a "masculine" identity by initiating the interview (more like initiating a date). I found that men were quicker to respond than women in terms of granting me interviews and at one point I found that I had interviewed more men than women.

The men were however not as forthcoming with information as women. Most of them would give general answers to specific questions as opposed to giving reflective answers based on their personal experiences in what Tannen (1990) characterises as "report talk" associated with "public" speech contexts, a masculine communication style. This is in contrast with "rapport talk" which is associated with "private" speech contexts a feminine communication style. One of the key informants who had given me a referral later told me that Jasper from Botswana had described me in the interview process by saying "She asks such personal questions and it is sometimes difficult to tell her everything".

Jasper and Maina from Kenya on separate occasions asked for a pause in the course of the interview so that they could drink some water. I wondered if I was intimidating in my approach which did not elicit the same response from women. I then interpreted this to

mean that they were uncomfortable and experienced a sense of powerlessness by having a woman probe for details concerning what they considered to be the "private" aspects about their lives rather than the "public". These same men were however comfortable at the end of the interview to initiate their own topics of discussion.

Maina initiated a topic concerning his recent training with a group of educated men from his ethnic *Kikuyu* community while he was on one of his trips to Kenya. The group was involved in an initiative to harmonise their modern education with traditional rites of passage of becoming a man. Maina went into a lengthy explanation concerning the training (details will be discussed in another chapter) and how he had been appointed a junior elder in his ethnic community. This appointment qualified him to have his son go through circumcision; a rite of passage into manhood at the end of the year. He even showed me notes on the several stages one had to undergo before he becomes a senior elder.

This rich information was in keeping with qualitative research and in particular in-depth interviewing whose strength is that allows participants more opportunity for creativity and self expression leading to additional information. As a researcher when one comes across a good respondent one should be willing to learn. In this case I was able to learn a lot concerning the rite of passage and what it meant for Maina's identity as a *Kikuyu* man and how it would affect how he negotiated the transnational space.

I would however like to make the observation that inherent in this opportunity for self

expression was the allowance for the enactment of gender in the in-depth interview. It is instructive to note that this initiative on the Kikuyu rites of passage is exclusive to men and there are no women involved. It is possible that Maina was re-asserting himself in the interview as an educator and enlightener and in so doing reinforcing his masculine gendered identity around expert knowledge which as a woman I was not privy to.

Another instance where gender interactions were highlighted was the case where in some transcripts some men spoke in long blocks of texts. For instance, Peter also from Kenya began by asking me if I had a notebook and proceeded to answer the initial question on how he came to South Africa lengthily as if delivering a lecture. In the process of responding to one question at length, he would end up answering a host of other questions I had prepared to ask him. I only interrupted him on few occasions to ask some questions or to clarify a point he had made. This respondent was very informative and within the paradigm of qualitative research it was acceptable for me to adopt the role of a respectful listener so as glean as much information as I could.

A critical examination of this process however revealed the interaction of gender relations with this in-depth interview. Winchester (1996) asserts that a female researcher's interviews with men may reinforce stereotypical gender discourses which suggest that women's role in conversations is to be an empathic listener and facilitator for men's narratives. Some female researchers have however argued that being located in traditional discourses of femininity by male participants can be advantageous for their research in that one may be viewed as unthreatening and different (see Horn,1997).

Interestingly, this was one of the most reflexive male respondents I had interviewed and was the longest interview I had in one sitting lasting one hour and forty five minutes (Most of the other interview sessions lasted between thirty minutes and one hour).Prior to interviewing this respondent I had already assigned gendered interpretations of interviews with men as what Golombisky (2006) calls "public speech" contexts and interviews with women as "private speech" contexts. This respondent though adopting the masculine gender identity of an educator also adopted the feminine gendered identity of being self reflexive regarding how he had changed since coming to South Africa. Attributing this change to the level of personal growth he had undergone since he came to South Africa, the respondent constructed himself as a man who drew from both masculine and feminine gender identities. At the end of the interview he thanked me for enabling him to reflect on the last eight years of his life.

Butler (2004) points out that one does not perform one's gender alone but one is always performing with or for another. As a researcher, I cannot say that I just stood aside and allowed the respondent to talk but I was also an actor in the research process by performing both masculine and feminine gender identities by initiating the interview and adopting the role of a respective listener. However, much as the interview is shaped by the identities of the researcher and the researched, the subject of the research is crucial in shaping the research.

3.8.2 The gender focus of the research

Schwalbe and Wolkomir(2001) argue that in any research project where the focus is on gender it is likely that male participants will engage in more pronounced gender identity work as they may view their masculine identities as central to the research. Where masculine identities are seen as being challenged, hegemonic masculinities are likely to be reinforced. Connell (2000) points out that masculinity discourses confer greater power than discourses on femininity and this then presents a challenge for women who want to interview men.

As a female researcher I made the presumption that some male respondents in using sexist language and beliefs aspired to place themselves in a position of power. On one occasion in an interview with Zebedee from Zimbabwe, he made the following comments with regards to his relationship with his father and his perceptions of manhood:

> My father has authority in the house but he understands that I am a man. I still respect him. However, "Two bulls cannot stay in one roof" Two heifers can stay in one roof since women need a shoulder to cry on. Fathers should not open up in order to maintain authority (Zebedee, Zimbabwe).

Kabila from the DRC made the following comments with regards to his perception of South African women:

> A South African woman has the advantage of citizenship while I am a foreigner and this may be seen as a disadvantage to me but I am still a man and I will not feel threatened. My confidence as a man will not allow me to feel intimidated by an economically empowered woman since I still view her as a woman and to be a

70

man means to be better than a woman (Kabila, DRC).

I would inwardly cringe at the sexist comments by these men and had to battle with either maintaining my position as researcher seeking information or engaging in a heated debate with the respondents as a feminist. These responses could have been meant to provoke me since the respondents may have deduced my feminist stance from the gender focus of the research and this may have posed a threat to their masculinity. I interpreted the sexist comments to be a way of reasserting a hegemonic masculinity in a situation where they may have felt powerless on account of being interviewed by a woman. The lingering question in my mind in such encounters was whether as a feminist researcher I could engage in activism while in the research field.

In another instance, Jasper from Botswana after the second interview explained to me how women in his home country were willing to "surrender" since after attaining high educational qualifications and economic independence, they had no one to marry them. This kind of a response was repeated by other male respondents who at the end of the interview would make comments about how gender equality was not applicable in the African context. In so doing the men reinforced (performed) their masculine identity around notions of power accorded to them on the basis of patriarchal culture.

Interestingly, despite the assumed rapport between a woman interviewing another woman both women's social, cultural and personal beliefs determine a power relationship within an interview. During an interview with Eleanor from Liberia, a woman who is older than I, she adopted an advisory role by telling me the following in terms of the future

71

prospects of a life partner, "Let me advise you as a Christian and one older than you, do not be proud because of your education, remain humble".

While most African cultures have a patriarchal system which governs gender relations between men and women with men having positions of authority over women, older African women posses greater power than younger ones since they are charged with the responsibility of preserving indigenous cultures and traditions. Within Christian religion older women are also expected to train the younger women on how to be good wives. This kind of discourse[16] became highlighted in the "private speech" contexts associated with women after having established a rapport and hence more conversational partnerships. In the interview with Eleanor, I realised that other social identities such as age would confound attempts to make claims on gender-based differences. On account of her age, the respondent adopted a masculine role in advising or enlightening me.

Golombisky(2006) vests greater power on the researcher in enabling or constraining such performances in the co-performance of gender by both the researcher and the researched in the interview process since the researcher "acts, directs and produces" the final research product. I would however argue that the interaction is more fluid and power is more dispersed and contested since it is not held exclusively by men over women just as it is not possessed exclusively by the researcher rather than the researched.

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[16] Discourse defines ways of representing the ways that we think, talk about or respond to phenomena (Beasley, 1999).

3.8.3 The gendered context of the research environment

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 (Elwood and Martin, 2000). Safety issues such as choice of interview sites remain a cause of concern for women researchers. For instance, on one occasion I had an interview in the Gender Studies department at the TB Davies extension from 12:30 to 1:45 with a male respondent. After exchanging a few telephone calls the night before and in the morning after we settled on the time and venue. The above mentioned date was a public holiday and there was hardly anyone in the surrounding offices.

Before the interview commenced, I asked the respondent if he would have liked something to drink. When doing so, I wondered whether I was being a good researcher creating a conducive atmosphere for the interview or I was just acting out a prescribed gender role of a woman as a welcoming host. It was also a bit unnerving as a Christian single woman to be in the same room with a man as this would be frowned upon within the Christian circles that I come from. I however drew on my identity as a researcher and continued with the interview.

These kinds of conflicts continued during the participant observation process. On one occasion I had attended a Special Elders Council meeting of the Mbondo community of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with Kabila. The meeting was to take place at 2:00 p.m. at a Methodist church and by 1:45, I was at Fishcers Road off Point Road in

73

Durban waiting for Kabila. (Details of the meeting will be discussed in another chapter).

At the end of the meeting, at around 4:00 p.m., Kabila who is an elder along with two other male elders escorted me to the bus-stop. On the way, he asked me if I could join them for a drink at a nearby pub but I declined. I felt uncomfortable due to my Christian upbringing and the fact that I am a single woman most likely in an attempt to minimise the likelihood of sexual advances. Probably, if it was someone else who did not subscribe to the Christian faith and its principles, they may have joined Kabila for the drinks and most likely gathered more information. A male researcher may also have engaged in traditional displays of masculinity such as going to the pub.

After I declined to go to the pub, Kabila then offered to buy me lunch which I declined as well. We thereafter reached the bus stop whereupon he offered me bus fare which I also declined. In many ways he felt obliged to take "care of me". In so doing Kabila adopted the masculine gender identity of being a provider and protector. I on the other hand, as a researcher, felt obliged to decline in most cases since I felt that he had been generous enough in allowing me into their home and their elders function. As I was negotiating this process these questions would plague my mind during and after the data collection process: Was I rude or ungrateful? Should I have obliged? These conflicts as a result of my various social identities and the enactment of gender provided me with rich data.

Another challenge of the participant observation process which I faced as a feminist researcher was the "participation" aspect of the method. The Participant observation method draws on behavioral skills and already established social skills such as "fitting

in" among others. This requires that the researcher takes part in the activities that the respondents are engaged in. Social relations are however imbued with gendered meanings with men and women being assigned different tasks. This was exemplified in an instance when I attended a fundraising function of the Cameroonian Association in Durban (CAMCOD) for purposes of participant observation. On the day of the function, I arrived early at Jessica's and Irene's residence. I found their male cousin lying on the couch while Irene was in the kitchen and Jessica was at the hair salon. Concerning this male cousin Jessica in an in-depth interview had said:

> My cousin is so traditional and there is no way he can compromise even though he is aware that here in South Africa we have some cultural differences. My cousin wants to be served (food) and even if I am sleeping, I have to wake up and serve him. He can only serve himself if I am not there (Jessica, Cameroon).

As a feminist I was incensed by the gender dynamics of the women being in the kitchen and the man lying on the couch. I however joined in the food preparation sessions in the kitchen since I was obligated to do so by the participant observation method. Fitting in then required me to immerse myself in a gendered context and in so doing I ended up taking up a gendered role. The performance of gender roles was to be repeated when I accompanied Rotich, a Kenyan respondent to meet his wife at the airport while on a visit to South Africa from Kenya. On reaching his house Rotich asked me to warm the food while he called his wife's father making the observation that he had at least taken the trouble to cook.

75

I had thought that as a researcher and a feminist I would be able to side-step gender roles in the research process but on a number of occasions I found myself performing traditional gender roles. This was in contradiction with my identity as a feminist but as a researcher I was constrained by the method which I had chosen. Being a feminist researcher provided critical insights concerning how gender relations are embedded in research methodologies.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has motivated the use of the qualitative research method for data collection by situating the study within an intepretivist paradigm. In the intepretivist paradigm, the researcher and the participants are both involved in the creation of meaning. In this chapter, I have acquainted the reader with the profile of individual participants in order to provide an understanding of their background. The chapter also highlighted how the communal process of the views and perceptions of the students and my multidimensional positionality (foreign student of African origin, Christian, single, woman, feminist) intersected to produce knowledge.

Through the use of in-depth interviews as well as participant observation the chapter has highlighted how the communal process produced gendered encounters. Miles and Huberman (1994) note that an interview is a "co-elaborated" act on the part of both parties and not just a gathering of information by one party. Part of this act during the data collection process was the performance of gender. Practicing reflexivity therefore to

observe our own role as researchers in either enabling or constraining the production of gender performances in the data gathering process is crucial.

This study has also highlighted how data collection methods such as participant observation pose a challenge to the feminist researcher since the methods are not gender neutral but are loaded with gendered meanings. Participant observation with its emphasis on the use of social skills such as "fitting in" with the researched in order to obtain data leads to an enactment of gender on the part of the researcher. The use of self reflexivity in the study enabled me to highlight the gendered system of research methodologies.

With regards to interviewing, Alvesson (2002:126) in his critique of modernist approaches to interviewing, notes that the interview has been regarded as a technique or tool and the researcher is required to work hard to get the respondent to be clear and consistent. However as this research has highlighted the interview and indeed research methods as opposed to being just data collection tools are hardly ever gender neutral but are layered with gendered meanings. Alvesson's message that we need to consider the unstable nature of interviews suggests that the conflicts, contradictions and enactments of gender I experienced during data collection were key findings of the study. The gendered dynamics of data gathering therefore need to be recognised as central to the research findings.

Chapter Four

The impact of gender on migration decisions

4.1 Introduction

Most research on migration has tended 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. Men and women have different access to power across a range of scales from the local to global and thus face different opportunities and constraints in determining their patterns of mobility (Dodson, 2000). As a result, when gendered migration is situated transnationally, the differing experiences of women and men in both the home and adopted country contexts are made visible.

This chapter initiates the body of data examining the impact of gender on the foreign African student's decisions to migrate into South Africa. The interrogation of this data reveals various factors influencing the students' propensity to migrate namely gender role socialisation on the part of the men and tertiary education and empowerment on the part of the women. The chapter also interrogates the role of marital status on the propensity to migrate. The role of gender and social networks in place in facilitating students' mobility and settlement is highlighted.

As enumerated in the literature review chapter there are a variety of reasons as to why foreign students of African origin chose South Africa as a study destination. In this study, the students provided further illuminating insights concerning their coming to South Africa. This chapter also foregrounds the opportunity structures in place in UKZN such as proximity to the home countries, graduate scholarship, opportunities to tutor and African culture among others as factors influencing the students' choice of UKZN as a study destination. These opportunity structures are available to both men and women and foreign African students are quick to observe and seize these opportunities to their own advantage. The analysis in this chapter proceeds from gender relations, roles and hierarchies at the individual, familial and societal levels and their influence on the propensity to migrate.

4.2 Gender determinants of migration

In attempting to understand people's motivations for migrating, some scholars emphasise individual decision-making, while others stress broader structural forces. The significance of these micro and macro level influences on migration has been a subject of much debate in migration studies. Micro level influences on the one hand focus on the individual characteristics of migrants rather than the aggregate social conditions. Giddens (1979) advances that the individuals are knowledgeable and their actions are purposive. Proponents of macro level influences on migration on the other hand advance that the individual moves as a result of factors beyond the migrants control and hence focus on the characteristics of the society at the macro level at the expense of the individual

migrant decision maker. Dissatisfaction with the macro approach that portrays migrants as passive agents manipulated by global forces governed by a capitalist system has led to new theorising about articulation between sending and receiving countries rooted in the concept of transnationalism. According to Brettell and Hollifield (2000), articulation includes an examination of how people in local places respond to global processes. From a transnational perspective migrants move back and forth across international borders and between different cultures and social systems. These migrants bring change to local communities not only through economic but also social remittances.

Beyond the causes of migration is also the question of who migrates in an attempt to address gender-specific migration experiences. Gender and migration literature reveals how women and men's migration experiences differ. The body of data presented next examines factors influencing student migration to South Africa and the influence of gender relations and roles on the propensity to migrate on the level of the individual, the family, societal factors and the state.

4.2.1 Gender and conflict migration

In theorising about motivations for migration Gonzalez and McCommon (1989) use the term "conflict migration" to explain migration stimulated by violent conflict in the home country. This phenomenon can be observed in the case of the DRC which has experienced war due to a number of complex reasons including conflicts over basic resources such as water, access and control over rich minerals and other resources as well

as various political agendas. The five year war which involved the armies of five other countries, officially ended in 2003 and democratic elections were held in 2006. However, the fighting involving a plethora of armed groups continues, especially in the east of this mineral-rich country. The fighting in North Kivu, eastern DRC, has forced tens of thousands of refugees to flee their homes (Shah, 2008).

Kabila, a PhD student in Gender studies who came to South Africa about eleven years ago is one of such people. Whereas students from other African countries had pre-meditated their coming to South Africa, Kabila's move to South Africa was precipitated by the war in the DRC. Kabila migrated to South Africa with his family alongside other Congolese to seek asylum as explained below:

> I came because of a political situation in the DRC when the war broke out and we came to seek asylum in South Africa. We had some money as a family and so we used this to finance our coming to South Africa as we moved from a situation of war to where peace could allow us to live. I did not have South Africa in mind as a destination even though I studied it in history. It was like any other country. When we left the DRC, we moved en masse and we actually decided to come to South Africa because most of the mass was coming to South Africa and some of them had an idea of South Africa. We were moving as a flood. We did not come with any documents when we came to South Africa. It was very clandestine. We then went to the department of home Affairs to seek asylum. I must say that it is not just because I was a man that I moved even a woman could have done the same. When your life is threatened you have to move whether you are a man or a woman. The circumstances were such that anyone, man or woman could have moved (Kabila, a man from the DRC).

According to Kabila in a situation of war anyone could have moved and sought asylum elsewhere regardless of whether one was a man or a woman since the aim was to flee for safety. Studies however reveal that most of the refugees who find their way to South

Africa are male rather than female, young rather than old, adults rather than children. This is despite the fact in many countries, both in Africa and elsewhere, women, children, and the elderly are particularly at risk and especially vulnerable to the effects of war that commonly initiate major flows of refugees (Dodson, 2000). The gender implications of current refugee flows can be located at both policy and cultural levels.

The immigration criteria in South Africa are based on wealth, property ownership and skills. Steinberg (2005) observes that the migration from the DRC is primarily a movement of young, well-educated, urban middle-class people. Nearly one in two have some tertiary education and fewer than one in twenty was unemployed in the DRC. The majority have settled in the cosmopolitan inner-city neighbourhoods of South Africa's largest metropolitan centres. However in many parts of the world and Africa in particular men have more access to resources, have more capital and are more educated thereby facilitating their mobility as compared to that of women. This bias against women is deeply culturally ingrained with women being excluded from opportunities which are granted to men as can be observed in Olomide's account.

Olomide, a Master's student in Religion and Theology who has been in South Africa for eleven years left his wife in the DRC and sought to establish himself before his wife could join him seven years later. Olomide had done nursing in the DRC but he faced challenges in South Africa while seeking employment because of the language barrier. He speaks Swahili and French. Steinberg (2005) points out that many Congolese have been unable to sustain a middle-class existence and have ended up in unskilled work such

as street vending, cutting hair, washing and guarding cars. In a bid to secure better employment prospects therefore, Olomide sought to further his studies using his personal savings.

Olomide like Kabila came to South Africa in a clandestine way and attests that it was easier to move across the borders since he was a man and borders are mostly controlled by men. Olomide expressed that as a man, he would only be required to part with money while a woman who would be vulnerable to sexual abuse. In venturing to South Africa first before being joined by his wife later and seeking to establish himself first, Olomide drew from his African culture in constructing himself as the leader and protector of his family as shown below.

> It was easier for me to cross the borders as a man since they are controlled by men and they are not likely to see me as something they can use, they would only require money to allow me to pass through. Always when you are a man you feel more secure and more necessary than others. In the African culture, if there is a problem, people will always think of you as the most necessary one to talk to since you are expected to protect the family (Olomide, DRC).

Angelina a master's student in Human Resource Management from the DRC also cited African culture in advancing that men are more respected than women even when they are still at a young age. She said that the only reason that her parents allowed her to migrate to South Africa was because her brother was already there and she was coming to stay with him. Being a woman, her safety concerned her parents more than her brother's safety would have concerned them.

From the instances cited above one can observe that gender is a primary organising principle of the family and society, it follows that gender structures the migration process to a significant degree.

4.2.2 Gender role socialisation and the decision to migrate

Gender role refers to the set of attitudes and behaviors socially expected from the members of a particular gender identity. The process through which the individual learns and accepts roles is called socialisation. The socialisation process within the family is believed to be central in the construction of gender roles (Kayongo- Male and Onyango, 1984). The process of socialisation begins from the household into the larger community where the child is exposed to societal values and norms. Societal factors such as community norms and cultural values determine whether men or women migrate and how they migrate. Most African cultures have a patriarchal system which governs gender relations between men and women.

Across the spectrum of students interviewed I observed that in all the diverse communities represented, men were traditionally perceived as superior to women, as the decision- makers, leaders, and providers, protectors of the community, carriers of the family name, high achievers and property owners. Men were also autonomous and had freedom to move freely whereas women were mostly home bound. Migrating for the men students was therefore in keeping with cultural expectations of traditional masculine behaviour.

84

Rotich, a Culture and Communications PhD student from the *Kalenjin* community in Kenya explained that his socialisation and training during circumcision, a rite of passage from boyhood to manhood, is what enabled him to migrate as can be observed in the following excerpt:

> I come from a culture where men are trained to be very brave by going through circumcision rites. You go through all sorts of things. It is not just socialisation but it is a training to be very brave. I think this is what made me come to South Africa without fearing despite all the issues about violence. I knew that I would find my way out, I would survive. I have grown up knowing that if another person can go through a situation then I can also go through it (Rotich, A Kenyan man).

Because of his cultural upbringing, Rotich expressed confidence that he would survive in the South African context despite the challenges he would have to face. This perception was reiterated by Jasper a Masters Music student from the *Bangwaketse* community in Botswana and Phillip a Masters student in Development from the *Shona* community in Zimbabwe who expressed that culturally men were more capable of venturing into a new area and coping with a different lifestyle even with limited financial resources as opposed to their women counterparts. This cultural upbringing appears to have worked for men and against women in terms of propensity to migrate.

However, much as their cultures were predominantly patriarchal at a community level the students advanced that their immediate family had different gender dynamics from those of their community. The family is a basic unit of society where individuals confront and reproduce societal norms, values, power and privilege. The family is therefore a

significant institutional site whereby gender norms and relations are constructed, reinforced and challenged (Kabeer, 1997).

From the students' narrations, it was evident that their individual family dynamic provided them with a space to negotiate gender relations in a way that was different from their broader communities. Many of the men expressed that they did not observe strict gender roles in their immediate family and that it was only at the extended family or community level that these gender roles became more pronounced. Raoul a Masters student in music and an elder from the *Ballide* community in Botswana said the following:

> We have this style whereby we have broken boundaries concerning gender roles. I have my mother and my sister, my sister is older than I. I have no brother. You see since I am studying, I do not have income of my own and I therefore have to ask my mother and sister for money. Traditionally it would be the other way round, I would have to provide. It is at the level of extended family that I get those roles and I have to adapt to them. If I go to my extended family to ask for money they would say no since I am a man... It is here (the level of the extended family) where I experience distinct gender roles such as women are supposed to do the cooking. Whenever I try to cook in these settings, they tell me "You cannot cook when your sisters are here?" I therefore have to adapt. (Raoul, Botswana).

Jude a Masters student in Development studies reiterated Raoul's sentiments by advancing that though he was from the deeply patriarchal *Bamaleke* community in Cameroon, his immediate family did not observe strict gender roles. The particularity of his family was that his father was the only man in his family who was not polygamous while his mother was the only one in her family who was married to a man who was not polygamous. His maternal grandmother was a chef and his mother taught him how to

cook. Cooking therefore did not diminish his status as a man but was rather fulfilling for him. The only time this became a problem was at the broader community level.

Koffie a Masters student in Anthropology from the DRC attested to the difference between his immediate family and the broader community by advancing that his community was deeply patriarchal but his immediate family was liberal. Koffie comes from a wealthy family and his parents are well educated and widely traveled.

> I come from a community whereby, if I may put my family aside, women are expected to be submissive. They are not expected to wear trousers. If you wear trousers then everyone will call you a slut. Women are expected to respect men. If you are a woman you are not expected to be tough and it is okay for you to cry. That is the kind of environment I come from. My immediate family is crazy. I come from a family that is very liberal. You do what you are comfortable with that is anything you like. I would not say that my sisters are treated differently from me. We are treated the same (Koffie from the DRC).

Despite the different gender dynamics at their family level, these men on various occasions drew from the traditional gender roles in constructing their masculine selves as either as superiors of women or as providers and leaders. As educated men they wanted to portray themselves as modern and not bound by tradition but however did not hesitate to draw on the benefits accorded to them as men by traditional gender roles. This is also exemplified by the fact that though they distanced themselves from strict gender roles, the married men enacted the same roles by being in the "public sphere" at the University whilst their wives remained back in their home countries to ran their homes and take care of the children.

The different gender dynamics at the family level was a major factor in influencing

women's decision to migrate. Educated parents, the economic status of the family, exposure and open-mindedness on the part of the parents was instrumental in facilitating some women's migration. The women students particularly cited the role of supportive fathers in encouraging them to come to South Africa. For instance, Pauline a PhD student in Community development from Uganda came to South Africa to study while she was eight months pregnant. Her friends and her head of department at the University of Makerere where she is a lecturer were against her coming because of her pregnancy. Her parents and her father particularly were however supportive of her decision as she recounted in the narrative below:

> My family influenced my decision. If it was not for my father I would not have come for my PhD. You know after you finish one level you just want to relax, after I finished my masters, my father encouraged me to come for my PhD and I was expecting my second child. My head of department was saying that I cannot go but my father said she had no right to tell me not to go because she is not a medical person. I was supposed to get all these letters from doctors to give me a go ahead. For me to come here to study it was because of one, me and two my parents because they kept telling me that I should study now and that things get more difficult as one gets older. I came while I was eight months pregnant and I attended my module for three weeks and then I went back and delivered (Pauline, Uganda).

That Pauline could come to South Africa when she was eight months pregnant defies the traditional stereotype of a helpless and dependent woman and is in stark contrast to the men student's perceptions that they were better equipped to venture in a new area in pursuit of academic achievement. Pauline attended her module for three weeks and then went back to Uganda to deliver her baby. She then left the baby after a few weeks to resume her studies.

Another instance of a supportive father was cited by Lucy from Kenya who described her father as laid-back and providing whatever his children needed. Her father did not discriminate between the boys and girls in the family in terms of pressurising the girls to get married and sending the boys to school. He rather encouraged the children to go as far as they could in their academic ambitions and so when it came to coming to South Africa, he was supportive of Lucy's decision. Lucy said that her father though elderly was not a traditional man as would be expected of men his age. She attributed his open mindedness in encouraging his girl children to go to school to the fact that he was a teacher. (During the course of the study, Lucy's father passed on and Lucy had to travel back to Kenya for the funeral). The above examples show that even in deeply patriarchal societies where it was probably still not expected for women to pursue higher education, education and open-mindedness on the part of the fathers was a key factor in facilitating their daughters' quest for post graduate education in South Africa.

Interestingly while these women described their fathers as supportive some men on the other hand described their fathers as tough and displaying stringent patriarchal fathering styles. These fathers most probably thought that this kind of upbringing would prepare their sons for future decision-making roles. Peter, a PhD student in Development studies from Kenya as earlier mentioned described how his father denied him financial backing on account of resigning from his accounting job in order to pursue postgraduate education in South Africa. Incidentally, it was his father who had chosen the accounting course for Peter citing that men ought to pursue tough subjects. Peter then did the accounting course against his will but his coming to South Africa enabled him to change

his course to Development Studies and thereby somewhat stand up to a patriarchal upbringing.

Men such as Peter though they grew up under patriarchal fathering styles and were cognisant of the benefits accorded to occupying a dominant position, had begun some form of introspection concerning the kind of dominant masculinities portrayed by their own fathers. The findings of this study reveal that women students on the other hand benefited from supportive fathers who used their decision making powers in the family to support them in their educational pursuits.

It is instructive to note that though both the men and women students had tertiary education prior to coming to South Africa women particularly highlighted education as facilitating their mobility to South Africa while men cited their gender role socialisation.

4.2.3 Education as a determinant of migration

A recurring theme amongst the foreign African women was the role of education in increasing their propensity to migrate. Dodson (1998) attests to the fact that women who had migrated to South Africa tended to be those with at least a primary or some secondary education with education seeming to encourage cross border migration. There is a high correlation between the level of educational qualifications and the extent to which women can access skilled employment in transnational spaces. This is in line with

the fight for equal access for education fought by liberal feminists from the late nineteenth century onwards.

Across a broad spectrum of nationalities, most of the women students interviewed expressed that though coming from patriarchal communities, having a tertiary education was a key factor in enabling them to make migration decisions. The following excerpts by women from various countries concerning what may have facilitated their migration attest to this.

I do not see any constraints. For one I had a first degree. In Liberia we do not have many restrictions for women especially if you are an educated woman. In my family I am highly respected and especially because in my family there was a strong leader. I come from that lineage and so in my family they do not look down on women (Eleanor, Liberia).

I cannot think quickly which privileges we have as women but women are very much bound to the house, with their husbands, brothers, fathers and even grandfathers. You have to involve them in everything and if they do not agree then you cannot go ahead but most educated women are able to make their own decisions (Mariam, Tanzania).

We are really bound by what culture expects of us and a woman is expected to respect a man as a secondary person and is not expected to be at the forefront making decisions. The man makes the decision and you have to say yes. It is especially worse for women who live in the rural areas, the ones who are illiterate. At least with some education some women can forgo these roles (Purity, Malawi).

Being from a patriarchal society, men are taken as having a superior position. Having gone beyond the basic level to the university puts you in a position to earn a lot of money sometimes even more than a husband. As long as you are earning some money (not small amounts) then you find that you can make decisions. As a working woman you are involved in decision making and people look up to you, it is not like you are sidelined completely(Lucy, Kenya).

Educational attainment is fundamental in building women's capacities and preparing them to seize opportunities in their host countries as well as in their home countries. Increased participation in the labour market for such women means increase in social mobility, economic independence and relative autonomy. Research findings have shown that women report a sense of empowerment, newfound freedom, and self confidence as they negotiate traditional gender roles in a new social and cultural context (Zentgraph, 2002). The concept of women's empowerment has been adopted by a number of African countries which are signatories to and have ratified the various international conventions that commit participating member countries to address the issues of gender equality.

In line with this, a number of African women professionals have made the difficult transition from their home countries to South Africa in pursuit of greater scope for educational and professional opportunities and the empowerment that such opportunities confer. Purity, a Masters student in Nursing from Malawi opined that as a result of having a first degree she was empowered enough as a woman to make the decision to come to South Africa. This empowerment also led her to the realisation that she could not just depend on her husband but she needed to be able to fend for her family in case anything happened to her husband. With a higher level of education, she felt that she could be able to get well paid employment and take care of her family. Dei (1994) and Pellow (1997) attest to the fact that having access to money and complete control over it is very important because it contributes to a woman's empowerment. Education is

therefore seen as a cornerstone of women's empowerment because it enables them to respond to opportunities, to challenge their traditional roles and to change their lives.

4.2.4 Marital status and propensity to migrate

Dodson (2000) in her examination of gender and cross border movement to South Africa advances that migration is related to marital status with older, married women being more likely to have made cross border visits than single women. These visits were precipitated by multiple motives for instance trade as well as visits to husbands living and working in South Africa. These visits are however short- term. In this study where the purpose of migration was postgraduate studies which could take longer than a year, some female students attributed their propensity to migrate to the fact that they were single.

For instance, Lucy from Kenya expressed that she would not have relocated if she had a family as it would have disrupted the children's lives and that probably she and her partner would have drifted apart

> When you are not married you can just up and go very easily even when you have family obligations (parents and siblings). If I were married it would have been very difficult for me to uproot myself from my family. Family is very important for me. Once you start scattering the family at two levels firstly the husband and wife level you are prone to drifting apart and you can find other people of interest and that corrupts the marriage. The second level is the children depending on their age. If they are in high school or much older then, that is not so bad though even at high school children still need you. They need your counsel on various things. So for me unless the husband was moving somewhere and then I join him, if I was married, I would not have relocated. Being single gave me the wings to fly (Lucy a Kenyan woman).

93

In concurrence with Lucy from Cameroon, Norah also advanced that her single status had facilitated her mobility. Norah expressed that she had observed that women who had left their spouses behind could not pursue their studies further as in the case of her Nigerian friend who upon finishing her masters had to go back home to her family. Norah on the other hand upon the completion of her masters was able to continue with her PhD. For Lucy and Norah being single not only facilitated their migration but also facilitated their further pursuit of education at a PhD level.

Whereas at first glance Lucy and Norah may appear to have subverted patriarchy by opting to remain single and pursuing their doctoral studies rather than getting married, they still subscribed to traditional notions of family whereby a married woman was constrained in terms of her mobility and the length of time she could stay away from her home while pursuing further studies.

This position was however in stark contrast to the one held by the married women respondents. All the married women interviewed except for Sylvia came to South Africa independent of their spouses and children in pursuit of their postgraduate education. Pauline a Ugandan student who described herself as a *risk taker* and *rules breaker* had completed her masters and pursued her PhD studies while she was eight months pregnant with her second child leaving her first born and husband in Uganda. She had to exercise great resolve in holding on to her decision to come to South Africa. She however expressed that her mind was resolute with or without her husband's support.

If it was a man it would not have been a problem and he would still have left if his wife was nine months pregnant and about to deliver. For me people kept asking me, "How can you go when you are about to deliver" and I almost got convinced not to come and stay at home and have the baby. If I stayed at home then I would not have counted on the financial support I was receiving then at a later date. So it was chasing the scholarship since I did not want to lose it and the second thing was to convince myself that I was doing the right thing because everyone else around me except my father thought I was doing something out of this world. My husband... (pause) ... did not really oppose my coming because if I say I am going, I am going and he cannot say anything especially if I have the support of my parents. It was not a case of whether he would say you can or cannot go but it was a case of I will or will not support you but it turned out to be that I will support you because I had made my decision and it was for my career (Pauline, Uganda).

It is significant to note that Pauline's determination was also fuelled by a scholarship available at the time and she could not afford to lose the funding opportunity. Though Pauline was brave in her actions and her father was supportive, this situation raises the question of how gender sensitive funding institutions are concerning women students who may be pregnant.

Chichi from Malawi left a six month old baby with her husband in order to pursue a Masters degree in community development in South Africa and expressed that men should also take care of children while their wives pursued their educational aspirations. Purity also from Malawi who had described herself as empowered and decried male dependence left her husband to take care of their two children while she pursued her education in South Africa. She had previously accompanied her husband to the United Kingdom for his Masters degree and she now felt that it was her turn to pursue her education.

While family obligations may have constrained women's mobility before, it appears that married women on account of their education, exposure and economic independence were willing to leave their children under the care of their husbands while they pursued their educational aspirations. I must however mention that all these women had to make arrangements such involving their mothers, sisters and female relatives in helping their husbands to raise the children prior to coming to South Africa. The men students on the other hand did not need to make such arrangements since their wives were expected to take the responsibilities of caring for the children. These kinds of arrangements however generated interesting insights concerning conducting family relationships across transnational space as will be discussed later in chapter seven.

Another factor mediating the mobility of married women was the state. According to Thapa and Conway (1983), structural variables of migration represent not just societal constraints but governmental development policies as well. States play an important role in shaping transnational migrations since they are the prime institutions charged with border control, and gender influences states' border policies and practices (Mahler and Pessar, 2001). From the students narrations their individual States policies did not discriminate between men and women in terms of acquisition of travel documents. The only challenges were the bureaucratic processes and dealing with the immigration personnel most of whom required bribes in order to facilitate acquisition of passports.

The only exception at the policy level was the Kenyan government which required that married women obtain consent from their husbands and provide proof of marriage in the

form of a marriage certificate in order to acquire a passport. Sylvia, a Masters student in Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies who came to South Africa to join her husband who had preceded her attested to this by recounting that when applying for a passport for the first time she was required to have her husband's approval and provide their marriage certificate to this effect. Rotich from Kenya verified this information by saying that his own consent was sought when his wife needed to acquire a passport for the first time in order to come and visit him while he was in South Africa as shown below:

> What I found strange was that when my wife went to get a visa at the South African High Commission she was told that I as her husband have to send her a letter of invitation. I found it strange because as my wife why can she not take initiative to come and visit me, why do they expect me to invite her? I phoned the High commission to ask why that was necessary. Let alone that even the passport, I had to write a letter to the Kenyan immigration stating that she was my wife and that she needed a passport. I found this to be very strange. The thing is I believe that every citizen has a right to have a passport. The Kenyan constitution states that every citizen has a right to a passport. When I was coming I did not require permission from anyone but my wife needed a letter from me stating that I am her husband and that she needs a passport. I do not know who came up with such a policy. I was even planning to call the high commissioner to find out why such a policy exists. If my wife was able to prove that he had the financial capability to take care of herself I do not see why she needed a letter from me. I even had to attach a copy of the marriage certificate to show that we are married. When I phoned to ask, I talked to this person, I do not know whether he was speaking from an authoritative perspective but he told me that there are cases where one of the spouses takes a passport and leaves the country without letting the other person know. That is the rationale this guy used. The issue however is that no one asks the wife to write a letter when the husband needs a passport (Rotich, Kenya).

The requirement of the husband's consent in effect meant that legally if a married Kenyan woman did not have her husband's approval she could not obtain a passport and hence could not travel outside the country despite her level of education and financial capability. If the woman was in a customary marriage and has no documentary proof of

97

the marriage then it would be difficult for her to prove that she was indeed joining or visiting her husband outside the country. Men on the other hand were not required to obtain consent from their wives even if the wives may have been disapproving of their husband's migration. The immigration policy of the state in this case implicitly assumes a "dependent" status for married women and an "independent" immigrant status for men.

4.3 The role of social networks

As highlighted in the literature review section under the social network theory, a set of networks between people outside their home country and friends or family members located in their home country is major factor influencing migration. Micro-level influences on migration emphasise the individuals as knowledgeable agents underrating action within pre-established institutions with recognised rules. Massey et al (1993) assert that networks provide information that helps potential migrants decide if migration would lead to the overall improvement of their lives.

From most of the students interviewed, social networks comprising of friends and family members who were already living in South Africa were a major factor in contributing to their decision to migrate to South Africa as opposed to going to Europe or America where some did not have relatives. As mentioned in the section on the background information of the participants most of the students had desired and made attempts to seek for study opportunities in Europe, America and Australia. Networks such as family

members and friends residing in South Africa however furnished them with information concerning study opportunities in South Africa and actively persuaded them to migrate.

The importance of family or relatives in the host country affects who migrates, how they choose their destinations and how they fare upon arrival. For instance in my own case, I had wanted to pursue my post graduate studies in the United Kingdom. My sister who had preceded me in South Africa made me aware of the opportunities available in South Africa after having successfully completed her Masters. Through letters and photos, my sister convinced me that South Africa had good prospects and she was very instrumental in making my application for postgraduate studies.

Social networks in place not only provided one with information about study opportunities abroad but they also assisted the potential student in the application for admission process in South Africa. Most students only came to South Africa once they had received admission to the university which was facilitated by their social networks.
In the case of some students, they programme they ended up joining was chosen by their family networks. Irene is a case in point. She had desired to study for a degree in Bilingual Letters at honours level and thereafter pursue her Masters in Translation Studies. To this end, she had made applications to universities in the United Kingdom and Sweden. Her brother who has been living in South Africa for ten years however made an application for her to study in the Anthroplogy department at UKZN. This was because her cousin, Jessica was also a post-graduate student in the same course. Irene could not pursue another course because her brother was the one funding her studies and

her upkeep ever since she came to South Africa. She therefore ended up studying the course that her brother had chosen for her.

For many migrants networks provide a support system in many ways ranging from emotional, spiritual, social and financial. Such networks are useful for meeting one at the airport upon arrival, helping them settle by providing accommodation or directing them as to where to obtain accommodation, where to do their shopping, attend church and other important social and recreational events such as sports and going to the beach *inter alia.*

These networks also provide information about visa renewal requirements and job opportunities. Through social networks migrants also get to meet other people from their home country and they can eventually establish their own social networks in line with their needs. Family networks residing in South Africa are especially useful in providing financial assistance for some of the students' studies as in the cases of Norah, Irene and Jessica before the students can find other ways of generating income.

Early research focusing on the importance of networks stimulating and sustaining migration from one area to another tended to focus on the networks of men. The findings of this research indicate that women are increasingly having networks in place influencing their migration to South Africa. It is interesting to note that in my sample women were the ones who cited having family networks in South Africa who were influential in their migratory process such as a male cousin, brother, husband in

influencing their decision to South Africa. Women not only have networks with male family members but they also have other networks. Recent research shows that women have their own networks with other women and utilise them to migrate and settle in a new country (Boyd, 2003).

Norah for example came to South Africa as opposed to going to the United Kingdom because she had a sister living in South Africa. Her sister was financially capable of sustaining her and she could therefore depend on her for financial support and for friendship. I resonate with Norah's example because in my case, I came to South Africa because my sister was already here. She had been informed about UKZN (then the University of Natal) by a Kenyan woman who was studying at the institution. Through e-mail messages and telephone calls with her friend my sister gained admission into the university. Three years later, she made the same connections for me and I was able to come and pursue my Masters degree in the same department that she was in. The development of migrant niches at UKZN where students from the same geographical space study for the same programme at the same or different level is well documented by Otu (2009).

Previous links with heads of departments at UKZN which had been forged while still in their home country prior to their coming to South Africa also formed part of the social networks that facilitated students' mobility. Maina, a Kenyan lecturer who had rescheduled travelling to Oslo, Norway to a South African University would have gone to University of Cape Town which already had a student exchange programme with the

University of Nairobi in Kenya where he is a lecturer. However the University of Cape Town did not have capacity to supervise at PhD level. He therefore contacted the head of school of architecture at UKZN who had been his colleague and external examiner at the University of Nairobi for admission into the programme at UKZN. Eleanor who was sponsored by WHO as earlier mentioned also contacted the head of school in nursing in order to make her application. The contacts and accessibility of various heads of departments provided the students with invaluable networks which they would later develop upon coming to South Africa.

4.4 Opportunity structures in place at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Many African higher education institutions have continued to experience systemic problems such as lack of facilities and resources, shortage of academic personnel, and lack of access to academic literature, financial crises, unavailability of financial support for students and limited access due to the high demand for higher education and limited number of institutions. These problems have further been exacerbated by the general socio-political instability and civil war in some countries (Rouhani, 2002). South Africa on the other hand with the demise of apartheid and its political, economic and technological leadership on the continent has continued to attract an influx of students from other African countries as earlier mentioned.

Given their differences in migratory behaviors, both men and women displayed remarkable agreement on the reasons as to why they chose South Africa and UKZN in

particular as a study destination. This served to highlight that the enactment of gender is situational in that is it is emphasised in some cases and de-emphasised in others. The opportunity structures in place in South Africa and UKZN included proximity to their home country, African culture and curriculum options on offer in South Africa which were more relevant to situations and conditions back home and the UKZN marketing slogan of "The premier University of African scholarship".

The relatively cheaper fees compared to the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States of America, availability of financial support from international donors and governments, the UKZN Graduate scholarship offering eighty percent fee remission for postgraduate students and the opportunity for tutoring proved to be attractive opportunities to foreign African students.

It is significant to note that these opportunity structures are only available in South African tertiary institutions and foreign African students are quick to take advantage of them. While the students may be informed about some of these structures while still in their home countries by their social networks, they discover others when they migrate to South Africa and they are quick to seize the opportunities because they have to survive. These opportunity structures are equally available placing both the foreign African men and women students in a position to access them. In this particular transnational space, educated migrant women find that they have opportunities that they would not have had if they had remained in their home countries. In the following paragraphs, I examine these opportunity structures in greater depth.

Proximity proved to be a significant opportunity structure in place because it served to lower the travel costs. The students could then travel to their home countries more frequently and their families could also visit them. Those from neighbouring countries such as Botswana, Swaziland, Mozambique and Lesotho could visit home even more frequently during short vacations and weekends. Proximity was also a key factor for those students who wanted to carry out their research projects in their home countries. These trips to their home countries for visits and data collection helped in intensifying transnational exchanges.

The Graduate Scholarship of between seventy and eighty percent tuition fee remission for post graduate students who had attained a certain grade proved to be a compelling reason for studying in a South African tertiary institution. For those who are not funded by international sponsors or by their home governments, this scholarship ensured that most of their tuition fee was catered for. Many of these foreign students took advantage of this opportunity by working hard and burning the midnight oil in order to be eligible for this scholarship. The fee remission was also a great incentive for one to proceed with their studies up to PhD level. This is exemplified in Norah's case, whose family funded her studies for the first year. As a result of good academic performance, Norah obtained part scholarship in her second year. Norah is currently undertaking her PhD on a full fee remission coupled with some research funds from her supervisor. In my case, the Graduate Scholarship has sustained me from Masters level up to the PhD level.

The opportunity to tutor at the various departments was also an attractive opportunity in compelling students to study in a South African tertiary institution. While tutoring provided some form of income to the foreign African students, it also provided the students with a rich experience of handling students of diverse racial backgrounds. This is an experience that many of them would not have had in their universities back home. For those students who had intentions of taking up employment opportunities in South Africa after completing their studies this experience was a kind of preparation for working in a multi cultural environment.

For students who did not have jobs back home and were therefore not mandated to go back, tutoring was a stepping stone to eventually becoming a lecturer. Jessica who started as a tutor at her honours level went on to be a graduate assistant while she was at her Masters level and is currently working as a junior lecturer while pursuing her doctoral studies. Women students such as Jessica are well positioned to secure a permanent job at the University given the fact that the Employment Equity Act categorises skilled job allocations along racial and gender lines.

Some other students who had previously been adamant that they would not take up work opportunities in South Africa even on a temporary basis since they had jobs back home to return to were also quick to seize opportunities when they arose. This is exemplified in the case of Maina who was initially wary of taking up work opportunities at his department since he longed to complete his studies and return to his job in Kenya. However when a vacancy arose at the department he was studying, he took on a

lecturing contract as he continued to pursue his PhD. The foreign African students can be described as opportunistic in seizing opportunities that are available in this particular transnational context.

The accessibility of heads of departments as well as other senior members of staff at the university is yet another opportunity structure in South African tertiary institutions that students take advantage of in developing social networks. Jessica upon coming to South Africa described various heads of department as approachable as compared to people in senior positions at the university where she studied back in her country, Cameroon. She cultivated this perception after being introduced to the deputy dean of the Faculty of Humanities who on a certain occasion gave her a lift to Pietermariztburg where she was going to conduct a research interview. She narrated the event in the following manner:

> People are so approachable. In my country to book an appointment to see the university rector who is the vice-chancellor here could take you months. They mystify their positions. But here, can you imagine that I was driven by the deputy dean of the faculty of humanities, development and social sciences to Pietermaritzburg where I was going to conduct my interviews. He was so nice and I did not even know him, I was connected to him by another person and he called me later telling me that he was leaving for Pietermaritzburg and whether I would like to join him. He waited for me. It was amazing and I even told him that he is unlike the African people I know. African elite is one who creates boundaries, is one who knows that you have to respect the position he is occupying. He then told me that was a primitive way of doing things since very soon I would become his colleague and what would he then say (Jessica, Cameroon).

African culture was a major factor in precipitating migration to South Africa. With South Africa being a predominantly black country the foreign African students expected to be able to have some resonance with fellow black South Africans. Though African culture

is not homogenous there was an expectation of areas of commonality founded on the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. The word *ubuntu* originates from one of the Bantu dialects of Africa and is a traditional African philosophy that espouses that there exists a common bond between us all and it is through this bond, through our interaction with our fellow human beings, that we discover our own humanity (Panse, 2006). South Africa being an African country was an opportunity for one to continue experiencing "Africanness" and not feel that they were in a totally foreign culture as compared to being in Europe for instance. The challenges faced by the foreign African students in engaging with the philosophy of *Ubuntu* in the South African context will be delved into in the next chapter. Through an established network of family members and friends from their home countries some students expressed that they could maintain their cultural ties while in South Africa as compared to if they were in Europe or America. In her examination of the lives of African professionals at UKZN, Otu (2009) highlights their cultural affinity to Africa as expressed in their desire to serve the African cause on the continent. A number of students expressed the relevance of studying in South Africa for their home countries.

This is best exemplified by Purity from Malawi who obtained a scholarship that was specific to people who wanted to study midwifery in South Africa. She advanced that had she gone to study in the United Kingdom, she would have used sophisticated equipment and she would have been unable to apply this sophisticated knowledge in her home country. The relevance of the knowledge, the exposure and experience acquired in South Africa to their home countries for Purity and other students was a key consideration.

107

The choice of South Africa was also in a number of cases mediated by sponsors who wanted to sponsor research with an African focus such as in the case of Maina from Kenya and Eleanor from Liberia whose sponsors floated the idea of studying in South Africa. The UKZN slogan of "The premier University of African scholarship" was also a compelling factor for some sponsors who wanted to maintain an African focus. Jasper from Botswana attested to the fact that it was actually his government that chose South Africa as a study destination for him. He had undertaken his undergraduate studies at Pretoria but after his government read the UKZN mission statement they preferred him to carry out his post-graduate studies at UKZN. Lucy from Kenya was compelled by her research topic in choosing UKZN. Her topic being on HIV/AIDS and she had applied to UKZN since she felt that KZN was a suitable location to study issues of HIV/AIDS. The South African National HIV Survey, conducted in 2008 revealed that KZN is among the provinces in South Africa that record the highest HIV prevalence rates (Human Sciences Research Council, 2008)

Curriculum options on offer in South Africa which were more relevant to situations and conditions back home compelled students such as Rotich from Kenya to come to South Africa. After examining how culture influenced communication in HIV/AIDS at a Masters level while in a Kenyan University, Rotich desired a different experience of being supervised by new people, new connections and new theoretical frameworks other than what he was used to. He then enrolled for A PhD in Culture, Media and Communications at UKZN. He was drawn by the cultural perspective on HIV/ AIDS

offered at UKZN as compared to the Rhodes University programme which only had a media perspective on HIV/AIDS.

The profile of the professors and the alumni was yet another factor that was attractive to students. Rotich attested to being drawn by the fact that most of the people who were heading HIV/AIDS programs especially from a cultural perspective, for instance the head of the Centre for AIDS Development, Research and Evaluation (CADRE) were alumni members of the Culture, Media and Communications program at UKZN.

These students' desire to carry out research on the African soil resonated with UKZN's vision of promoting African scholarship. Otu (2009) highlights the desire of the foreign African professionals working at UKZN to contextualise knowledge production and engage in discourses that speak of Africa from an insider perspective. In expressing that their educational experience in South Africa would be relevant in their home countries and indeed in Africa as a whole the students demonstrated an engagement with transnationalism showing that education itself can be transnational.

Alongside research was the possibility of disseminating their research findings in the form of publication in a South African Post Secondary Education (SAPSE) accredited journal. Getting published in most of the other African countries is a long and arduous task. Further, the South African ministry of higher education through tertiary institutions such as UKZN does provide financial incentives for research outputs. These financial incentives as a result of publishing have enabled some of these students to attend and

present papers in international conferences; an opportunity that would not have been as easily attainable in their home countries.

Lastly, some students chose UKZN because of the laid-back nature of Durban city and the fact that it blended with their personality. With this notion in mind they could then combine studying with having some fun. This factor is best crystallised in the words of Koffie below who expressed that he felt more comfortable in Durban since that the pace in Johannesburg was too fast for him.

> I like my quiet space and I did not see like I could get it in Johannesburg. The moment I came to Durban and I compared the two places I felt that Durban was much better. I also liked the fact that it was close to the sea and hence more fun (Koffie, DRC).

Due to these students level of education and for some students' contacts in more than one city, they were able to gather and compare information through these contacts or via the internet about alternatives thereby positioning themselves strategically to access opportunities that were available at UKZN.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have highlighted the ways in which gender relations contribute to migration flows. In so doing the chapter has established that gender is a central category of social organisation that influences migration to a significant degree. For instance, the chapter has highlighted that whereas men drew from their gender role socialisation in

110

facilitating their migration, women cited the role of a good education and supportive fathers as facilitating their migration. Though both the men and the women had tertiary education prior to coming to South Africa, education for the women both married and unmarried, proved to be a significant factor in influencing their migration decision.

The chapter has examined the role of social networks in influencing migration decisions such as who migrates and the destination and future prospects in various aspects such as social, economic and occupational. I have also examined at length the opportunity structures in place in South African tertiary institutions that compelled the students to opt for South Africa as a study destination. These include proximity to home country, relatively cheaper fees compared to the United Kingdom, Europe or the United States of America, availability of financial support from international donors and governments, the Graduate Scholarship at UKZN offering eighty percent fee remission to meritorious post graduate students and the opportunities for tutoring for these same students. The chapter has foregrounded that the opportunity structures in place are available to both men and women thus enabling the foreign African women students to take advantage of opportunities that they may not have had in their home countries. For some students the potential for being in a city where they could combine studying with leisure activities proved to be an enticing prospect.

Of great significance was the attraction to African culture compelling students to choose curriculum options and a research focus in South Africa more relevant to situations and conditions in their home countries. In the chapter, I have foregrounded the students'

desire to make a contribution to the African continent by producing scholarship based on research conducted on African soil. It is with this kind of milieu therefore that the foreign students of African origin immersed themselves in a new context in South Africa. The next chapter discusses how the students' are insinuated into new gendered contexts in South Africa.

Chapter Five

New gendered contestations at UKZN

5.1 Introduction

This chapter critically examines the body of data on how foreign African students are insinuated into new gendered contexts at UKZN in Durban South Africa. Whereas most gender models predispose the researcher to look for differences between men and women this study conceptualises gender as relational and as situational. In examining African foreign students' experiences on immersing themselves in a new context in South Africa, this chapter examines situations in which gender was emphasised and where it was de-emphasised.

The chapter begins by giving the background of UKZN and locates it in the broader South African social-political and economic context. I then examine the complexities of African foreign students in a South African tertiary institution embedded in this context. By immersing themselves in a new South African context, the students by their very status as African foreign nationals became vulnerable to xenophobia[17] a phenomenon

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[17] Xenophobia is derived from the Greek words *xenos* (foreign) and *phobos* (fear) and can be defined as the attitudes, prejudices and behaviour that reject, exclude and often vilify persons based on the perceptions that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity (UNHCR, International Labour Organisation and International Organisation for Migration, 2001).

they assert is not common in their home countries. This chapter examines the varying shades of xenophobia as perceived by these students as African foreign nationals as well as the gendered encounters of xenophobia. In the new South African context the students also highlighted the complex nature of households and the contradictions between having one of the most liberal constitutions in the world and implementation in a patriarchal culture. The chapter therefore also interrogates how these students perceive and interpret gender norms in South Africa and how these gender norms challenge or support conceptions of gender norms in their country of origin.

5.2 The context of the University of KwaZulu-Natal

South Africa has twenty three public higher education institutions which have been restructured to offer a range of study and research options for both local and international students. UKZN is one of the largest contact universities in South Africa as a result of the merger between the University of Natal and the University of Durban Westville in January 2004. The South African government's higher education restructuring plans led to this merger whose objective was " To promote access to learning that will expand educational and employment opportunities for the historically disadvantaged and support social transformation and redress the devastating legacy of apartheid education" (Makgoba, 2004:3).

The apartheid system of education in South Africa had been elitist and exclusionary. However, with the change to a democratic government, the number of international

students increased steadily. Moja (2002) proposes that a balance be struck between responding to inherited problems of the legacies of apartheid and new demands of internationalisation of South African education. International students or foreign students are an integral part of an internationally recognised institution and it is important to recognise the academic, cultural and financial benefits to be gained from these students. UKZN advances that its commitment to internationalisation is embedded in its stated intention "To be a world class university and an active global player".

Ramphele (1999) describes the ideal university as global and universal with the issue of foreign or international students depicting the global nature of university education. She also describes the university as local and regional meaning that universities are integrated into a given society and region, social, political and economic system. Geographically, in terms of place, the UKZN is embedded in concentric local contexts namely; in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, in KwaZulu-Natal, in South Africa and in the global South each of which is a viable geographical context. Durban where the interviews in the study took place is one of the four major urban industrial centres in South Africa and is located in the province of KwaZulu- Natal (KZN). KZN also known as the Zulu Kingdom is one of the most densely populated provinces in South Africa and is home to the Zulu speaking group of people.

The specificity of Durban as compared to other towns in South Africa is the mix of cultures and races. Alongside Black Africans and the white population, Durban has a large Indian population (see Bhana, 1990). Despite the close proximity of these different

groups however, they are marked by huge disparities in resources and opportunities and are highly racialised. From a socio-political perspective arising from South Africa's national history, the legacy of apartheid is a society that is deeply fragmented and divided. Pattman (2007) in his article, *The significance students attach to race at the University of KwaZulu-Natal* notes that despite the recent UKZN merger, race continues to be an important marker of student identities and group affiliations at the university.

These time-space relations are a major factor in the constitution of societies according to Gregory (1994). Giddens (1984) suggests that people not only make histories but also make geographies. This is useful in transitional societies that are charting different courses from processes such as colonisation and apartheid in the case of South Africa. In these regions, the history and geography of the place are essential to understanding political, social and economic changes occurring there. It is against this backdrop therefore that foreign students of African origin immersed themselves in a different South African context.

5.3 The complexities of being a foreign African student in a South African tertiary institution

The term foreign has however increasingly acquired negative connotations in the South African context. The issue of foreignness has been a source of much tension between a group of largely black South African students and foreign students of African origin. South African students feel deprived and invoke their South African citizenship in the

wake of competition from foreign students for local resources in order to make ends meet. The situation is further problematised by the promotion of equity in terms of race to which the South African government has committed itself which is seen as open to abuse by foreign students of African origin who stand to gain from its undifferentiated use. Of great significance is the reality that these students are better equipped since they were spared the Bantu education and can therefore compete on merit for undergraduate, postgraduate and staff positions (see Ramphele, 1999). Foreign students of African origin are however not a homogenous group since they come from different countries such as those in Anglophone and Francophone Africa. Language barriers especially for those from Francophone Africa, such as the DRC, ensure that they do not get the same job opportunities as those from Anglophone Africa.

Interviews with the foreign African students on their perceptions of their being foreign nationals revealed that there were various complexities involved in navigating their multiple identities as foreign African students as amplified in the following data excerpts.

> It means being something like a bat that is having two different identities one as a foreigner, the other as a student and sometimes they do not overlap very neatly. Being a foreigner there are so many concerns such as being far from home worrying about the state of the health of your loved ones, economic issues, things that you want to do for yourself at home but you are still far away so that's being a foreigner. Being a student there are lots of things you have to worry about and to make it more complicated for me is that I am also working. There are times when by four o'clock or even by eleven I am ready to go home. Trying to fit in more academic work becomes difficult (Lucy from Kenya).

Lucy highlighted how being a student was complicated by the fact that she was also a foreign national. She found the two identities contradicting at times and likened this to a

bat which is peculiar in the sense that it is a flying mammal, two opposing characteristics. As a foreign national she reflected on what she left at home such as her family members and projects she would possibly have liked to engage in but could not because of distance. Alsop (2002) notes that leaving one's home country enables a different and deeper understanding of what we left at home. Lucy also had to contend with her academic work as well as her work duties which were demanding.

Despite the opportunity structures in place as highlighted in the previous chapter, foreign students also felt confined as foreign nationals in terms of accessing other opportunities which were available to local students. This sentiment was reiterated by many foreign African students both men and women as enunciated in the following data excerpts.

As a foreigner there are not too many opportunities as compared to local guys when it comes to bursaries and scholarships. The only thing we have is the graduate scholarship which is available to all PhD students. I always feel that I know what I am here for and as a man I focus on this (James from Cameroon)

It is disadvantageous because you are not treated as an indigenous student. There are very few opportunities available to you. It limits you because lots of scholarships are given to South Africans and jobs are given to South Africans. I think we experience the same that is both men and women (Norah from Cameroon).

That is something else, it is a lot of work and it is limiting. I need to have a South African Nursing Council registration, the professional one. I had a student one which took me two years to get but now I need a professional one otherwise I will get stuck with little money and I will not be paid at PhD level. Actually where I work I do not get paid much. It is not easy to get this as a foreign student but I am just trusting God (Eleanor a PhD nursing student from Liberia).

I have been made to understand that what I am receiving is not commensurate with what I am giving. The status as a student defeats you and especially as a

foreign student and it does not position you to gain fully what a local South African would gain. If a South African, was in my position, he or she would earn better but I would say that I am okay since what I earn keeps me going. I am not agitating; I am comfortable (Jessica from Cameroon).

From these excerpts, the foreign African students were keenly aware that they were foreign nationals due to lack of access to scholarships and lower remuneration rates at their work places. Though James and Norah above cited the Graduate Scholarship which catered for the tuition fee, they desired access to other scholarships to fund their PhD research.

Kabila described the situation as complex in the sense that like many other foreign African nationals, he felt his identity as a black person more keenly in South Africa than when he was back at home in the DRC as illustrated in the following excerpt:

> This is very complex. First of all I am black and then a foreigner. I see myself as black man in a black majority grouping. Personally I do not see myself as a black person in the sense of a white person being superior. I see myself as black but not as inferior. To be a foreigner is a disadvantage in many aspects. By not having a green ID I cannot access many resources that a South African can access such as some scholarships and some bursaries. I think both men and women have the same problems because we are both foreigners. But I think one is better off as a man... Being a foreigner is not helping me because as a man because I am not able to access certain resources. It is much better if I am at home because there I am a full citizen and at least a woman is inferior to me (Kabila, DRC).

Kabila's sentiments highlight the gendered nuances of foreign Africans' experiences by illustrating that being a foreign national and lack of access to resources impacted on him negatively as a man. Kabila comes from the *Kavembe* community in South of Kivu

119

province in the DRC where men are seen as natural leaders. Kabila is also a traditional leader in his community and this served to fortify his identity as a man. In South Africa however the privileges of being a leader were minimised by his experiences as a foreign national. He however drew on his gender role socialisation in expressing that he was *still* better off than a foreign African woman since his community constructed women as subordinate to men.

Phillip a Zimbabwean student speaking on his experience as a foreign student also drew from his gender role socialisation as a leader and advanced that this gave him confidence to navigate the space of being a foreign student:

> I find that I have ventured into a new area, experience and culturally I am always expected to find solutions as a man and as a leader of the home, family you know. So I always carry this mentality and it has always given me that confidence that as a man I can make it. As a student you will even find some women students who will tell you please accompany us to a certain place. They are asking you from the cultural understanding that you are a man but truly speaking I think it are all in the head. It is just a matter of confidence if you decide that you can do it then you can do it (Phillip, Zimbabwe).

Jasper, a principal of a secondary school in Botswana expresses the complexities of being a foreign student in the following manner.

> I fit but there is always issue of race because even if you tell yourself that you fit it is challenging because of cultural difference. You feel foreign and excluded at times. When you are foreign you always feel disadvantaged. As a man I don't know what to say but I feel like you end up regressing, you become like a child. If you expect to be treated as an adult you find yourself studying with people younger than you and with different personalities. I am not yet sure whether when I go back I will still be operating the way I was operating, I am still waiting to see because I was a teacher and now I am a student and a foreigner as well

120

(Jasper, Botswana).

Jasper experienced feelings of alienation as a black person and as a foreign national in the new South African cultural context. He further highlighted the issue of alienation because of age since he found himself studying with students who were much younger than him. These experiences affected his sense of self and identity as a man and he expressed the fear that he was regressing rather than progressing. He then wondered whether he would be able to operate with the same authority as a man and as a principal of a college when he went back to Botswana. The issue of age for Jasper as well as being a foreign student contributed to the challenges he faced in adapting to a new situation in South Africa.

Zebedee from Zimbabwe highlighted the issue of race, nationality and class in his experience as a foreign African student in the following excerpt :

> I consider myself to be coming from a fortunate place. Life is tough in Zimbabwe and you have to be coming from a fortunate place to be able to afford education in South Africa. As a person coming from a country such as Zimbabwe people look at you as a person who is coming from a poor country. They do not see you as an individual but they see you from your country's perspective. South Africa has people coming from a mixed background and I find that there is a lot of segregation here in South Africa and even in the institution. The privileged ones are usually the Indians and the whites. It becomes very hard to bridge that gap if you are black and you are coming from a bourgeoisie when you come to the South African society. When you start discussing various things and especially associating with black students you begin to experience problems of class. Your way of living is different and you therefore have to tolerate, their kind of life.

Zebedee experienced alienation on the basis of his race by white and Indian students as he was perceived as being a poor black student even though he came from an upper

121

middle- class background and could have been in the same social class or in a higher one than theirs. He also felt excluded from black students on the basis of his foreignness and his social class since they also expected him to come from a background of poverty which was not the case. His social class presented him with challenges in interacting with white, Indian and black students because being a black student from Zimbabwe he was perceived as being poor. Over 75 percent of the people in crisis-riddled Zimbabwe are living in desperate poverty, with children bearing the brunt. Zebedee appears to be in the elitist minority.

From the data excerpts given above it can be observed that the students negotiate the complex process at the nexus of the identity of being an African foreign student and social identities based on their nationality, race, age, class, gender. The negotiation of being of a foreign African national in a South African tertiary institution was further problemmatised by the phenomenon of xenophobia.

5.4 Varying shades of perceived xenophobia

With the advent of democracy, the legacies of the apartheid system combined with new forms of discrimination, such as xenophobia toward African refugees and immigrants, have played out through the country's period of political transition. A national survey on South African attitudes on immigration in 1997 revealed that South Africans were more hostile to immigration than citizens of any other country for which comparable data was available. Foreign African nationals are perceived by local South Africans as an economic threat and as people who have come to take their employment opportunities

122

(Crush, 2008).

At the time of conducting this research xenophobia had reached unprecedented proportions in South Africa with violent attacks against foreign African nationals in May 2008 in Gauteng Province. Xenophobic prejudice is manifested in various ways and is sometimes subtle and sometimes obvious. Given the background of hostilities by local South Africans towards other African nationals any form of discrimination against these foreign African nationals is perceived as being tinged with xenophobia.

From the students' perceptions, one of the ways in which they expressed that they experienced xenophobia was through local students and sometimes staff speaking to them in local languages such as Zulu. Their not being able to speak Zulu created a gap between them and the black South African students and they had to contend with being called names such as *Makwerekwere.*[18]

Even whilst carrying out their work duties foreign African students contended with being misunderstood as foreign nationals. Norah from Cameroon gave an example of how a misunderstanding ensued between her and a student in a tutorial while they were discussing factors affecting migration to South Africa on the basis that she was a foreign national and seemed to be insinuating that South Africans had HIV/AIDS

I am also a tutor and I had a class about factors affecting immigration in South

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[18] The word *Kwerekwere* is a derogatory word denoting one who cannot speak or understand the speaker's language.

Africa and we were talking about the broad pyramid in South Africa and how it is increasing and how it will be in 2020. The issue of AIDS came up as one of the factors that can lead to decrease in the pyramid. I cannot believe it, there was this student who said to me, "I know that you are a foreigner, does it mean that we South Africans have HIV/AIDS?" I told her, "No no no! That is not our topic, our topic is factors that can affect immigration into South Africa and it is a fact the HIV/AIDS is an issue in South Africa and might lead to a decrease in the pyramid." I think she thought that foreigners are bringing in the virus or we are trying to say that South Africans have HIV/AIDS (Norah from Cameroon).

The discussion was centered on factors leading to migration in South Africa and how the broad pyramid[19] was increasing. When HIV/ AIDS emerged as a factor that could lead to the decrease of the pyramid, the student interpreted this to mean that Norah as a foreign national was insinuating that South Africans had HIV/AIDS. Norah also expressed that the student may have been of the opinion that it was foreign nationals who brought HIV/AIDS to South Africa. This situation is indicative of the tensions existing between foreign African students and local South African students due to the perceived hostilities of local black South Africans towards foreign African nationals.

Another area of contention was in the documentary requirements at the level of admission and registration. While foreign students of African origin acknowledged that they did not expect to get the same treatment as local students since they were not South African citizens, they felt that the requirements expected of them were very stringent. These requirements were in various forms such the payment of the International student levy for foreign students of African origin alongside students from Europe and America who students felt were more financially endowed.

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[19] A pyramid with a broad base suggests a population with a relatively high birth- rate or a high volume of migration. A decrease in the pyramid may be occasioned by fluctuations in the number of births or volumes of migration or a rise in the number of deaths as a result of war or epidemics such as HIV/AIDS.

The international students' office also required that foreign students have medical insurance which was understandable. The problem arose with regards as to whether this medical insurance should be obtained from the students' home countries or from South Africa as can be observed from the following excerpt by Pauline PhD a community development studies student from Uganda:

> When it comes to registration, they will ask for medical insurance which is acceptable but they do not accept medical insurance from your own country (which you need in order to leave your country) but they require you to take a South African one. The medical insurance they want to give you here is only medical and yet at home I will be purchasing travel at the same time which makes it cheaper for me. If you tell me to buy a South African one it is more expensive for me and it does not cover me when I fly and if something happens to me then on air it will be my problem (Pauline, Uganda).

The UKZN international students' office has been accepting medical insurance from students' home countries in some cases even though for the greater part they expected foreign students to obtain South African medical insurance. As from 2010 however, the International Students' Office will not accept insurance from students' home countries under any circumstances but will expect them to have South African medical insurance. This places a huge financial burden on international students in that as Pauline pointed out, she had to obtain two medical covers since she already had one from her home country which was a pre-requisite for leaving her country. Further the South African medical cover did not include travel insurance for the students which would then necessitate another cover and hence increasing their expenses.

The distinction between foreign African students and local South African students also appeared to have taken a new dimension at the UKZN Human Resources department as is amplified in the following excerpt by Koffie from the DRC:

> To me I understand I'm a foreign student and I don't expect to be treated as a local. What makes me now look at it is when South Africans own the African identity. They now differentiate between foreign and African. It is obvious I'm a foreign national. The only problem that I have with it is when the African identity is given to a South African and you call me foreign because I'm not South African. On my side I don't know what the idea behind it is and when you come give me another identity I have a problem with that (Koffie, DRC).

Koffie was referring to the race section in the UKZN remuneration forms from the Human resources department where a distinction was made between "foreigner" and "African" in the race section. While this may not have presented a problem for foreign students from outside Africa, it was problematic for foreign African students. The term "foreigner" in this case is used as a distinct category and serves to exclude the foreign students of African origin from identifying themselves as African and confines the African identity to "black" South Africans.

At the State level, there had been increasing stringent immigration controls from the department of Home Affairs in terms of study permit and visa acquisition and renewal and repatriation requirements.

> I think that they should not make it so difficult for foreigners. Last year I had to go back home to renew my visa and it was costly and time consuming. It took me three weeks to get the study permit. I think they should look for another way of issuing these permits that is better than the current one (Jasper from Botswana).

In my recent experience of renewing my visa, what I found to be costly and time

consuming was assembling the required documents some of which have been introduced recently including a medical and a radiologist report and a police affidavit. These requirements are understandable but the only challenge is that visa renewals frequently happen at the end of the year when students are in the last stages of writing their examinations or their theses in bid to meet the submission deadlines. The queues at the Home Affairs department can be long and time consuming but if one's documentation is in place, the Home Affairs department nowadays takes about three days to renew a study permit.

Koffie from the DRC, decried the bureaucratic process involved in acquiring a study permit and expressed that the International Students Office should be more pro-active in assisting foreign students to renew their study permits

> I think in South Africa, it is not the policies that have much of a problem though there needs to be some changes. I would say mostly it is the attitude of the personnel. For example you can go to home Affairs and spend the whole day waiting for visa renewal. You can even be told to come back on another day. I think the processes need to be made easier. I think the international student's office needs to have foreigners in their staff because it is only a foreigner who will understand foreign students. The staff there are South Africans and you can even ask them which counter you go to renew your visa and they would not know (Koffie, DRC).

Some of these processes are administrative on the part of South African institutions to ensure immigration control and ensure that local South Africans are not denied opportunities due to them as citizens. These stringent processes and requirements are however perceived as being punitive and as governed by xenophobia by foreign African students.

5.4.1 Sentiments on xenophobia and the philosophy of ubuntu

In terms of social interactions, most students expressed that black South Africans were largely hostile to their presence which was contrary to the experience in their home countries where people were open and hospitable to foreign nationals. This can be observed from the following data excerpts from the following female students of various African countries.

> As Malawians we are very friendly to foreigners. It was instilled in us by the former president Levi Mwanawasa that when a foreigner comes we must ask where they are from, where they want to go, what can we do for you and all that. That is why Malawi is called the warm heart of Africa because it is really warm (Purity from Malawi).

> Here the people are not like us, we are welcoming to foreigners and we want to befriend them, here it is like "what have you come to do?" It takes a while to understand them. You can decide to ignore and continue with your life or you might find that they do not take you seriously as a foreigner and they do not treat you as a fellow African. These are the things I have to contend with... The Indians and the whites may want to befriend you once they discover that you are a foreigner. I do not understand why the blacks cannot accept you as a fellow African (Sylvia from Kenya).

> It is here that they treat foreigners differently. At home we welcome foreigners and treat them very well. It is so strange here that people treat foreigners differently and these are people who come once in a while and so you should treat them in a way that they come more often. South Africans and especially the blacks make us not want to stay here. I will not want to stay here for long. I prefer to deal with the Whites rather than the blacks. I do not see how black South Africans are different from me but they just treat me differently and I just know that this is not my place and so you want to finish your things and go (Norah from Cameroon).

The hostility of South Africans towards foreign African nationals was baffling to many of the foreign African students who found it contrary to the *ubuntu* philosophy which South Africans purported to embrace. In the words of the South African Nobel Laureate

Archbishop Desmond Tutu a person with *ubuntu* is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, willing to share. Such a person is open and available to others, willing to be vulnerable, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for they have a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that they belong in a greater whole (Panse, 2006). It is interesting to note that in the above excerpts from the three female students from Malawi, Kenya and Cameroon, they highlighted that in their home countries they espoused the qualities of being *warm* and *very welcoming* to foreigners, qualities which are traditionally feminine qualities.

The male students however did not use these words to describe their home countries but went on to describe how South Africans were not hospitable to foreigners and even exhibited a sense of superiority towards them. Maina from Kenya and Koffie from the DRC expounded on this in the following manner:

> Being a foreigner is disadvantageous because there is a very negative perception about foreigners especially amongst the black locals. There is this perception of superiority here where South Africans keep asking you, "You come from Africa?" I think that is quite negative. Most of them are very negative and that is why I say that this is a hostile environment (Maina from Kenya).

> South Africans – I don't know whether it's because of being exposed or it's their type of society that makes them consider that they are no longer Africans. As much as they keep on saying *Ubuntu*- they don't have it (Koffie from the DRC).

Koffie concurred with Crush (2008), who advances that the rise in xenophobia in the 1990's cannot be isolated from the country's apartheid past of racial and class segregation and attitudes of uniqueness and superiority towards the rest of Africa.

Two other male students from the DRC however gave interesting perspectives on xenophobia and the *ubuntu* philosophy by citing that it was not unusual for Africans to be hostile to one another. Olomide from the DRC advanced that:

> So many people are feeling it but for myself when I know that I am in Africa I still operate under African rules. Being a foreigner does not make a difference to me, they can call me a foreigner but so long as I know I am in Africa it does not make me feel inferior. I feel like it is home because I can move easily. The language issue is a problem because in South Africa they expect you to speak Zulu but for me I do not care. The issue of xenophobia did not affect me before except when it happened in Johannesburg and I saw that there are people who do not understand that we are all in Africa and they want to fight other Africans. If I can go back home in the DRC we are also struggling and fighting one another. Xenophobia affects me but not so much that I would want to go back home because we are in a similar situation (Olomide, DRC).

Olomide expressed that he was undaunted by xenophobia since he was still at home in Africa and wondered why Africans should fight against other Africans. To him xenophobia in South Africa was not much different from the situation in the DRC. Olomide who appears to perceive himself as more of an African than a Congolese takes the issue of African hostility against fellow African as a phenomenon that goes beyond the confines of South Africa. Kabila also from the DRC took it a step further by advancing,

> When I consider the war in the DRC and the xenophobia in South Africa, I do not think that as Africans we love each other, the philosophy of *ubuntu* is a lie. People do not practice it they just speak about it(Kabila, DRC).

Olomide and Kabila in engaging with the phenomenon of xenophobia reflected on their experiences back home in the DRC and expressed that the principles of *ubuntu* were no

130

longer in practice amongst Africans and the mention of *ubuntu* was a just a matter of rhetoric.

5.4.2 Xenophobia and xenophilia

While most students expressed that xenophobia affected them equally as men and women since they had the common identity as foreign nationals, further interrogation revealed the gendered aspects of xenophobia. For instance, violence against foreign nationals and violence against women are two forms of violence that are internationally condemned but are normalised ways in which South African society interacts with minority and vulnerable groups. Foreign women in South Africa therefore face a double jeopardy since they are at the intersection of these two groups that are so vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and violence.

The women students interviewed expressed their vulnerability in the South African context in various ways. Jessica from Cameroon expressed the following:

> By nature, women are more vulnerable. Sometimes the kinds of things said about us as foreigners in the department make me panic. I walk around feeling that this is not my country and I have to be this way but my male colleague is very steady. He asks me "Jessica, why are you panicking, we are here to stay. These things will come to pass". I find him very confident; I do not want to use the word aggressive. Even when we are chastised by some lecturers who think that we are not doing our work properly. I was very disturbed and I did not sleep. This situation however did not disturb my colleague an atom... When the information reached the head of department I thought I would be fired. My head of department reassured me that my position was secure and advised me to apologise to the lecturers. I apologised to them but my male colleague did not go round apologising to them. I am a stubborn person and I stand my grounds. South Africa

131

has shaped me. I now understand what it means to be out of home. To be out of home means you have to be very cautious about the way you go about your life and about the things that you say. I am very vocal person. Back at home what I would not bring myself that low because I found that they had no point. I think I apologised because I am both a woman and a foreigner. My colleague who is male and a foreigner did not apologise.

Though on the one hand Jessica appeared to essentialise women by saying that they were more vulnerable by nature, she on the other hand affirmed that she was a vocal and assertive person. This vulnerability appears then appears to be context specific since she would not manifest the same vulnerability if she was in her home country. In the case where she and her male colleague (a foreign African as well) were accused of not executing their work related duties as per the required expectations their reactions to the situation were quite different. Whereas her male colleague appeared unfazed and displayed traditional masculine behaviour of being confident, Jessica expressed vulnerability and adopted traditional feminine behaviour of being conciliatory rather than being confrontational about her rights. She attributed this to being a woman more than being a foreign national. It is significant to note that whereas the male colleague had other sources of income, Jessica was dependent on her employment at the University for sustaining herself and even expressed gratitude at having her work even though she felt under-remunerated.

Chichi from Malawi in concurrence with Jessica expressed that foreign women students were more vulnerable and likely to be taken advantage of.

Being a foreigner you feel lonely especially in the first days. There is also the language barrier since you do not speak Zulu. As a woman you find that if you

132

have to ask for something people will misunderstand you and think that you want other things. They may even take advantage of you but men are risk takers (Chichi, Malawi)

Pauline from Uganda highlighted concerns of foreign women's safety with regards to accommodation the following manner:

Looking at the conditions in which we live it has a lot of implications for women for example where will you live? Where will you squat? If a man walks in the street, he can be mugged but a woman will be raped or mugged as well. For a foreign student they can easily be mugged because they do not understand the language, someone can be planning to mug them just next to them but they will not know what is happening. The moment you push them out there without caring where they will live then they are on their own. They do not have a plan for where international students should stay if the residences are full. Like for me when I came this time I did not know where I was going to stay if I did not have friends then I do not know where I could have stayed. They do not understand that you have a family and children to take care of. Once undergraduate registration is closed they treat it as if postgraduate registration is closed and if you do not take up residence by 6th of February it is allocated to someone else. They do not consider if you are a returning PhD student or returning masters student. When they send you out there you have to consider, "Where am I going to stay?" As a PhD student you have to utilise the time you have and work very late in order to finish in the time that you are supposed to finish but you leave early you do not know whether you will be mugged, you cannot carry your laptop with you. You have to consider all these things especially if you are a woman because women are an easy target (Pauline from Uganda).

Pauline expressed that the UKZN department of student housing was not considerate of returning foreign postgraduate students when allocating accommodation and most of them had to look for accommodation outside of campus residence. She credits her social networks for providing her with accommodation in a certain semester when she returned and found that the Student Housing had not catered for her as a returning postgraduate student. Outside of campus accommodation was however limiting to students in terms of accessing campus facilities which was difficult for women who had families and were

133

under pressure to complete their programmes as soon as was possible. Being a woman and the associated categories of wife and mother is a social position that comes with a range of expectations and investments. Pauline who had previously described herself as a risk-taker and rules breaker tied the issue of her own safety to that of her children thereby displaying the traditional female role of a nurturer and care giver.

She also highlighted the double jeopardy that foreign African women in South Africa faced. While both men and women could be robbed, women could also be raped. Sexual violence is well documented in South Africa as a means to control and punish women. While it may be argued that this is applicable to all women in South Africa, in a country where sexual violence is pervasive in everyday life, it is difficult to distinguish between rapes motivated by xenophobic attitudes from those perpetrated because the general atmosphere of violence and lawlessness has allowed for it. In both cases, foreign African women students face a form of violence because of their gender.

Men on the other hand expressed that they experienced xenophobia because they were not only perceived as coming to take away opportunities from the South Africans but because they were taking the South African women as well. This is illustrated by Phillip below:

> In terms of xenophobia I think I am more in the way and especially as someone from Zimbabwe and I am seen as someone who can take away jobs from South Africans. Also when I heard that we take their women I was very surprised, I did not know that we are that popular. I did not know that we are perceived that way. I do not think it is well- founded. I think the relationship between a man and a woman goes beyond national barriers. As a foreigner I cannot boast about such things (Phillip, Zimbabwe)

134

Zebedee from Zimbabwe expressed that South Africans were more xenophobic towards foreign African men than foreign African women because of the perception that foreigner men treated women better than South African men. Whereas being a black man may have socially disadvantaged him in the South African context, he felt that being a foreign African national placed him above the local black South African men when it came to relating with local South African women as enunciated below.

> The South Africans are xenophobic especially to men. I think they (foreign men) are better to women. There tends to be this notion amongst ladies that they like foreign guys. Maybe they tend to be inquisitive and they tend to think that we are much better than South African guys in terms of handling situations such as treating them better in relationships. Within the South African context people rarely inter- marry across the races. They then tend to be fascinated when a black foreigner comes to bridge the gap and interact with women across the races. Although when you are black man, you are socially disadvantaged and you kind of feel inferior when you try to step up from... it is easier for a white man or an Indian guy to approach a black lady than for black guys to associate with white women. As a foreign man however, we really do not feel inferior. The identity of a foreign student boosts my image as a man (Zebedee, Zimbabwe).

The perception that South African women were more attracted to foreign African men was reiterated by several male students as can be observed from the following data excerpts:

> The men are... I have heard from others, they tend not to be too open to foreigners. I have heard that South African women like going out with foreign men because they are more kind and they know how to treat a woman (James, Cameroon).

> I have heard from a number of South African women that they prefer foreigner men because they treat them better. I have however learnt not to associate with the South African women because when you befriend them they seem to

misunderstand and think you want something more than friendship (Rotich, Kenya).

These excerpts exemplify an intriguing facet of foreign African men by amplifying the little studied phenomena of xenophilia. Xenophilia is the love for the foreign national that is also part and parcel of the encounter between foreign Africans and locals (see Sichone, 2004). From these accounts, South African women tended to be attracted to foreign African men based on the perception they treated women better and were less prone to violence. 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. This served to elevate the foreign African men in the eyes of South African women while they were vilified in the eyes of black South African men. For Zebedee being a foreign African man and being attractive to South African women boosted his image as a man.

Rotich however was wary of befriending South African women because in his perception, they did not seem to understand platonic relationships and would expect something more. He had also been warned prior to coming to South Africa against involvement with South African women.

> Well, well there is one thing before I came here, I was told to be careful in my interactions with women here that I would be killed if I interacted with their women. Two of my colleagues from the university where I teach in Kenya had been killed in South Africa one in Cape Town and another in Johannesburg because of women so when I came here I was very cautious in my interactions with South African women (Rotich, Kenya).

The perception that South African women did not understand platonic relationships was also reiterated by Raoul from Botswana who said

The ladies in Botswana are more accommodative. Most of them they don't relate to a man as someone they can fall in love with- they can relate to you as a person. But here if you are a man you are always seen to be coming with love- the opportunity structures in place are available to both men and women thus enabling the foreign African women students to take advantage of opportunities they may not have had in their home countries' not easy to relate (Raoul, Botswana).

5.5 Foreign African students' interpretations and perceptions of South African gender norms

The above perceptions of both South African men and women generated critical insights concerning foreign African students' interpretations and perceptions of South African gender norms. As mentioned in the introduction chapter, when foreign students study in another country they are not just immersing themselves in another culture, they are also positioning themselves in another gender system or gender regime. Most of the students expressed that South African gender norms were similar to those of their own countries in that in both situations they were largely patriarchal. They however observed that gender relations in South Africa were more complex as compared to their home countries due to the pervasive violent culture, the large number of female headed households and the tensions between South Africa's progressive constitution and patriarchal culture.

5.5.1 The gendered household

Apartheid policies in many forms directly impacted on family cohesion in South Africa and reinforced the destructive influences that urbanisation and industrialisation had on

the family. Thus, one consequence of the legacy of apartheid is the high number of single

parent families, resulting largely from pregnancy outside marriage and from divorce. As a

large proportion of the nation's children grow up in female-headed households with little

financial support, the African family in South Africa has continued to suffer considerably

greater disintegration than families have in the rest of the continent (Preston- White,

1993).

Many of the students interviewed perceived the South African context as complex and

contradictory as can be noted in the following data excerpts:

> From my observation, there seems to be a lot of contradictions. A lot of women
> especially the educated ones seem to be the ones supporting the men they interact
> with. Despite that, the men are very dominant. It seems a very macho society than
> where I come from and the women seem to accept that. It is a very complex
> society. For example getting a nuclear family is not that common. Most of the
> people I have met have children from different relationships and that is
> acceptable. This is quite different from where I come from (Maina, Kenya).

> From my interactions in informal settings I have noticed that there is still the
> issue of men trying to take over everything. Unlike in Malawi however, you will
> find a family being run by single women. This is very common, women being the
> ones taking care of children without caring about their husbands. I do not now
> whether it is because they are economically positioned to do this. Educated
> women can be able to access credit facilities and that is why you find them
> purchasing posh cars and buying houses because of their socio-economic status
> Here (South Africa) even the poor are given social grants even though it is not
> much. In my country you cannot access credit facilities easily and it is even
> difficult to buy houses. I however do not think that a woman alone will be able to
> bring up children in the right manner and this could lead to children having
> unruly behaviour. Children need both parents to be able to grow up properly
> (Purity, Malawi).

> You find that even early in the morning you will   find women in taxi's going to
> work and men seem to take a background role and so a woman has to really work
> hard. You find a situation such as in Umlazi where you find a single mama
> (mother) who has five children from different fathers and none of the fathers

participate in the upbringing of the children. Women here in that respect are very disadvantaged. You have sons who do not respect their mothers, we have people who do not respect elders, boys who terrorise their grannies at the end of the month because of money because they have seen men who will not take low paying jobs. These men go to shebeens with the little money they have got from their wives and drink the whole day justifying that by saying they cannot take low paying jobs. Women are willing to take low paying jobs to support their families. I am not saying that in Kenya all men are responsible but more men try. Much as the women are doing a good job in raising their families, it is allowing men to continue with their wayward behavior. I think that there should be ways of getting men involved because ultimately, it is costing the entire nation in terms of morality where children are brought up in a lop-sided manner in terms of gender (Lucy, Kenya).

They are a bit different. I came to realise that in South Africa men are worse than the Congolese men. In Congo we live as brothers and sisters but here in South Africa the men go around making babies and do not take responsibility. They live a hypocritical life, you can see them walking around carrying babies when they are going somewhere and you can think they are very loving but when you come to discover after only two minutes when that woman disappears they go for another one (Olomide, DRC).

Then on the other side some of the children I see it is so sad, you know in my country people are not rich they are poor but they take look after their children. Even if people are not married and they just stay together they take care of their children. I do not want to generalise but here people do not value family. Children at home talk about their parents, sometimes they talk about their grandparents. Here they talk about their grandparents. Teenage pregnancy is everywhere but in South Africa it is overly expressed (Eleanor, Liberia).

Zulu culture is very similar to my culture in terms of the man being seen as the head and the woman as the nurturer and home-maker. I have however observed that most families are headed by women. Women work very hard to provide for their families. In my culture it is the man's responsibility to provide financially for the children even if he is separated from his wife. Women also do manual work in a way that is not done in my community. For example, I have seen women cutting grass in campus residence something that is unheard of in my community. In my community it is men who cut grass (Rotich, Kenya).

From the students' narrations, it emerged that they perceived South African women as

139

more hardworking than the South African men since they were the ones who supported the men and the families. Men on the other hand were perceived as irresponsible towards their families. Purity from Malawi attributed the phenomenon of female headed households to women's economic empowerment and deciding to parent without the involvement of the men. She however decried this saying that children needed both parents.

Lucy from Kenya on the other hand blamed irresponsible South African men and expressed that much as the women were doing a good job of supporting their families, they were inadvertently encouraging the men's wayward ways.

Pauline from Uganda attributed the lack of involvement of men in raising families on their socialisation. She made a distinction between white men and black men and expressed that while white men were socialised to be independent, black men though expected to have women in their lives and provide for them were socialised to be dependent and hence could not take care of their families.

> I cannot say that I understand a lot of the culture but I have been exposed to two cultures. There is a white culture where men and women are socialised differently and there is the black culture where men and women are socialised differently. You find that in the black culture here is not different from back home but I find that there is something different in the culture here. Yes they are socialised to look after their families but not to protect. While they are socialised to look for women, they are not socialised to look after their families, they do not protect their daughters and with this comes a lot of abuse. Many people that I have seen you will find that men will stay in the house doing nothing and a mother who is a cleaner will come to work and at the end of the day the man will be waiting to spend the mother's money. That is unheard of at home if you are a man a boy you get out and build your own hut somewhere, at some point you have to go. You

cannot live in the same house with your parents. Here I think it is a mixture of many cultures. In the white culture the children are socialised to be independent and they will have to leave at some point whereas in the black culture children are socialised to be dependent and yet culturally they are supposed to provide. You therefore find clashes where a man is expected to provide and yet, he has been socialised to be dependent (Pauline, Uganda).

The perception of irresponsibility on the part of men appeared to be reserved for black men as is explained by Sylvia from Kenya who also made a distinction between "white" and "black" families in the following data excerpt:

I find the white men good... oh yes quite good with their families. I find them very very responsible, they share the roles and in fact some of them take care of the children more than their wives that is bathing, feeding and changing the children. They love children as compared to men back home. I find the whites more serious about families. The Indians also seem serious and you will see a husband and a wife and they seem to be a close-knit family. The black people are into culture. The men, I do not know how they have been brought up, they tend to be violent and the women have a do not care attitude. They do not take care of their families and even when they get children they seem not to take care of them. Of course there are a few good ones but most of the children here are brought up by their grandmothers. There are a few close-knit families unless they are Christians and really born-again Christians. Most of the women will always tell you that this is my child yes but the partner does not take care of them (Sylvia, Kenya).

Rotich from Kenya however drew some positive lessons from the situation of female headed families by expressing that South Africa had enabled him to appreciate women's capabilities in handling family resources.

Ever since I came to South Africa, I have observed that many of the families are run by women and I have therefore come to appreciate women in managing family resources. My wife back home in Kenya now manages all our resources. She pays the farm workers, engages in some building projects and even sends me money on a monthly basis. It is not that I did not trust her before but having come to South Africa and observing the women here managing their families and

141

seeing how my wife is managing has made me trust women's abilities much more. I am very open minded and I believe in women's capabilities. Many men back in my community get very surprised that I trust my wife with all the family finances including my salary (Rotich, Kenya).

Whereas Rotich felt that the transnational space had given his wife room to be involved in management of family resources, his wife while on a visit to South Africa expressed that he had "escaped" family responsibilities especially raising the children. While women may be celebrated for effectively managing households, it raises the question as to whether this is empowering or it is re-constituted oppression for women.

From the data excerpts provided above it appears that the relations between South African men and women were perceived as contradictory by foreign African students. This is because as much as the South African women were the ones heading the homes and in some cases were more educated and economically empowered than the men, they were still subservient to the men. The men were also constructed as dominant, disrespectful of women regardless of whether they were more educated or more economically empowered than them.

> I have realised that the Zulu culture is a bit different from back home. The man is the king though it is the same back home but Zulu men tend to dominate women. It is like a woman does not have any say but back home the woman has a say at least (James, Cameroon).

> I think South African men are very different from men from the DRC. They lack compassion and they are very authoritative. When they approach you it is like you are supposed to say yes to everything they are saying. Men from the DRC have compassion. With the white men they have compassion but the black men are authoritarian I do not understand it (Angelina, DRC).

I do not like the way they treat the women though for them it is acceptable. A man here will accost a woman very easily in the streets without knowing her, I find that very rough and uncouth (Maina, Kenya).

Mmh... what I think is with South African women are much disrespected. In the sense that a woman has to listen to a man, that's their culture. And it's like a woman is not gonna be very offended if a man had to halt her on the road and even if she does not know that person. She would wait and listen to the guy coz culturally a woman has to listen to a man (Koffie, DRC).

Both the female and male students constructed South African men as more dominant, disrespectful of women and more patriarchal than men from other African countries. From perceptions of foreign African students it appeared culturally acceptable for South African men to accost women any where regardless of whether she was a stranger or of a different social status. Eleanor from Liberia and Lucy from Kenya attested to this by saying that South African men in their perception were not intimidated by a woman's education and would go ahead to propose to her.

In my country when you get educated, the men tend to be afraid of you but I do not see it happening here. Even the cleaners propose to you, they are not intimidated by your qualification. I think it is cultural difference. Sometimes you have to be strong and tell them that you are married and they ask, "Where is your ring" and I tell them, I do not have to wear a ring. Sometimes I do not pay attention to them because I am busy. I think we people from outside care very much about education. I know of this couple from Swaziland, the woman is very highly educated she had a bachelors degree and was going for a Master's and the man did not have a high level of education... (Eleanor, Liberia).

You will find that colored people class themselves in a way and keep that relationship officious but the black men will try and proposition you at all levels ranging from those who are high up in the social ladder right down to the security guard or cleaners who see a woman as a woman and not in terms of her level of work. That sometimes surprises me in this country though it is not just in this country. I have seen it in Botswana and I have seen it in Lesotho any man can

143

approach any woman. In Kenya it is not so much people tend to keep more to their socio-economic levels as opposed to being so ambitious as to approach any woman (Lucy, Kenya).

This is reiterated by Angelina from the DRC who advanced that South African women were amenable to having relationships with men who were not of their social status despite their level of education as can be observed in the following statement:

> The women are very... I miss the word. They are intelligent but they do not have that authority in them. Even the ones you think have achieved you look at them and you think that this one has achieved but when they are with men the things they will make them do it makes you wonder. There are this girls who are very educated but the guy they would go out with they lack compatibility. They can go out with anyone they do not have the issue of class (Angelina, DRC).

From these excerpts foreign African women from outside Southern Africa were constructed as more conscious of their social class when it comes to relating with men as compared to South African women and women from other Southern African countries. The perceptions of the subservience of South African women to dominant men however presented contradictions in the sense that these same women were perceived as being more empowered than women in the foreign African student's home countries on account of South Africa's progressive constitution.

5.5.2 South Africa's constitution versus patriarchal culture

On paper, women in South Africa have some of the most progressive protections in the world enshrined in a constitution that is said to be one of the most progressive constitutions around the world. Indeed a number of foreign African students expressed that the South African women were *more independent, exposed, liberal, economically*

144

empowered as compared to women in their home countries. This can be observed in the

following relevant data excerpts:

> South African women are more independent than the Cameroonian women. They have a lot of rights in terms of their constitution. I however pity a lot of foreigners who fall into the hands of these women because in the case of divorce it works to the advantage of the woman rather than the man. The women are also more liberal in discussing issues and they can tell anything at any time (Jessica, Cameroon).

> If we take comparison between girls at home (DRC) and the urban girls in South Africa-the urban girls in South Africa are more informed compared to those ones at home- these ones here are more exposed to international media and all that compared to the ones at home. Plus the advantage here is there are legislative policies- they are put into place and they are practiced. Unlike home whereby they can have that but it's not gonna be implemented. No one can easily say take your husband to the police because your husband smacked you. No, instead what you would do is you start within the community first and that's when you can go to court but here I smack my girlfriend or whoever in the twinkling of the eye, she phones the police and I would be arrested, you understand and the moment I would be arrested depending on what, there is a degree of seriousness that the police would take the case. As much as here sometimes the police might miss something within the investigation the case, the way they take it would more serious than the way they take it at home (Koffie, DRC).

> South Africa is at a level where many women access wealth as compared to Congolese women who are still marginalised in terms of decision making and accessing wealth. South African women are tending to liberate themselves economically. I have also noticed that South African women are much more economically empowered as compared to Congolese women who are here and back home in the Congo. I have observed that South Africa has progressed much in terms of women's rights in the constitution but as is the case in a patriarchal society this rights are difficult to implement (Olomide, DRC).

Olomide however observed that much as South African women appeared economically

and constitutionally empowered their rights were difficult to implement in a patriarchal

context. Despite their progressive rights in reality, many South African women struggled

against continuing sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination as pointed out by Peter below.

> For me, I find that they struggle a lot with issues of gender that is the way they perceive women. You will find a highly educated South African man who you may think is empowered (education is supposed to open you up to think rationally) still thinking traditionally and they define the person in their life with this mentality. I find this to be very surprising. For women you find that most of them have lost their sense of self, their identity is controlled and you can understand this because this is their world and they have never had a chance to see the outside world and see how other people interact. We from other countries of Africa are much privileged to be exposed to many more discourses. You will find a highly educated woman still subjected to abuse, violence and assault and even still persevere in abusive relationships. I find this difficult because the more a person gets educated the more they try to define their own space. You let a person know how far they can be able to go. In my own opinion in this day and age there is no way a woman should relegate her identity to a man. If a woman is let's say for discussion sake is twenty–eight years and she has been independent all her life, I do not see why she should relegate her position and become subservient once she is married where she cannot take decisions. I think it is disempowering for a woman. I know there are things that you have to consult but even in such a case the woman should not be disempowered because "My culture or my religion tells me this (Peter, Kenya).

Peter expressed that South Africans had limitations in their social interactions since they were not as exposed to people from other countries as other Africans were. He also expressed that in the South African context that highly educated men were still very patriarchal and women subservient on the basis of culture.

Pauline from Uganda described the experiences of the South African woman as follows:

> They are caught up in two worlds, one leg is in modernity and the other is in the traditional. They are trying to make up their minds and it is like they are trying to make up their minds whether to go with their indigenous culture or modernity. It appears as if cultural structures are being kept but the biggest part of a woman's life is spent in modernity. It is like an act that is come to school and go for an

146

initiation ceremony. You however satisfy more of the modern because it gives you a little more freedom. From a cultural point of view they go for initiation, virginity testing and then here you have this modern structure (Pauline, Uganda).

Eleanor from Liberia advanced that the strong leaning towards culture amongst black South Africans was because it served as a tool of social resistance against the apartheid system. The ongoing contradiction between South Africa's progressive women's rights and patriarchal culture is then locked in a traditional versus modern paradigm whereby culture is equated with tradition and the democratic constitution is equated with western modernisation. The foreign African students are also caught up in the dialectic between the modern and the traditional in the transnational space as will be discussed in chapter seven.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter set out to present a body of data on how foreign students were insinuated into new gendered contexts in South Africa. The chapter examined the embeddedness of UKZN in the broader social-economic and political South African context as well as the complexities experienced by foreign African students in immersing themselves in this context. Xenophobia, a large number of female headed households and the South African progressive women's rights were fore grounded as situations unique to South Africa which was not the case in the foreign students' home countries.

Various forms of discrimination which were perceived as tinged with xenophobia by the foreign African students were explored. The chapter also examined the gender dynamics

in the students' experiences of xenophobia. Of great interest was the examination of the little mentioned phenomenon of xenophilia in which foreign African men are perceived as more attractive to South African women. The chapter also explored how the foreign African students perceived and interpreted gender norms in South Africa and how these gender norms challenged or supported conceptions of gender norms in their home countries.

From the data, it emerged that the South African context for the foreign African students was complex and contradictory in many ways in comparison to their home countries. The next chapter examines the dynamism of the negotiation of social status in transnational spaces.

Chapter Six

The dynamism of social status in transnational spaces

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined how the foreign students were insinuated into a new gendered context in South Africa and how this space was both complex and contradictory. In this chapter, I interrogate the body of data on how they were negotiating their social status in a different South African context. Within the social status is the area of social class which has been an area that is mentioned but rarely addressed by researchers in transnationalism. Social class refers to systems of social ranking and distribution of power. Levitt and Schiller (2004) advance that social scientists often use national income statistics to assess the socio-economic status of migrants without considering the other statuses that they occupy

As articulated by the social locations concept detailed in the literature review, individuals are positioned within interconnected power hierarchies created through historical, political and economic, geographic, kinship based and other socially stratifying factors that confer upon them certain advantages and disadvantages. These social locations affect how people access resources and the degrees of agency they exert. Most scholars have tended to study race, class, ethnicity, nationality and gender as discrete realms of social

experience. In line with feminist theory which recognises these social locations as mutually constituted I examine them together in this chapter. This study examines these social identities as hierarchical positions that entail differential social power as articulated by Levitt and Schiller (2004).

All the students interviewed regarded themselves as either upper middle-class or middle class while in their home countries. This ranking was based on various factors such as their occupations, lifestyles, parental heritage, traditional positions of leadership, belonging to a dominant ethnic group, social networks and future career prospects. For some of these students, middle class referred to a set of "middle class" dispositions or aspirations representing what middle class people normally do or aspire to according to Bourdieu (1984) while for others, their income qualified them to be actual members of this socio-economic spectrum.

The transition into South Africa, however, led to the destabilising of the students' perceptions of their social status leading to students either acquiring a new social status, diminished or elevated, or maintaining their social status in some instances. The chapter examines how the negotiation of social class at each of these levels mediated the renegotiation of gender identities. The study highlighted that the men students drew from belonging to a dominant ethnic group, traditional leadership positions and circumcision as a rite of passage from boyhood to manhood in renegotiating their masculinities in the South African context. Women on the other hand cited freedom from cultural constraints and social regulation found in their ethnic communities.

In the next section I examine the dynamism of diminished social status in mediating gendered identities.

6.2 The dynamism of diminished social status

In transitioning from being a professional such as a lecturer to being a student, most of the students opined that their social status had been diminished on account of having adopted a lesser kind of lifestyle as compared to the one they had at home. Of great significance however is that women students seemed to show greater resilience and adaptability in the new circumstances. For instance, Purity from Malawi expressed that while she was in South Africa she deliberately placed herself in a low social class by wearing torn shoes and not paying meticulous detail to her dressing because she was focused on acquiring her degree. She expressed that she felt de-elevated and sometimes pitied herself because she would not have done this while in Malawi where she was a respected lecturer. Pauline a lecturer in Uganda concurred with Purity in her experience of transitioning from being a lecturer to a student as recounted in the excerpt below.

> At home I work, my children go to a middle class school, I have a car, I have a home so maybe that is middle class or something like that but when I come here I can stay anywhere because I come here as a student. I embrace studentism in its totality because one it helps me settle so I do not miss home. At home it is a completely different life while here I am content with being a student. It is not a simple negotiation but for me I like to keep an open mind. I can work anywhere, I can stay anywhere. I can stay in a rural area; I can stay in a slum and embrace it. It is not easy since you have left your beautiful bed at home, children running around, your food and then you come here and spend the whole day on campus and then when you go home you realise that this is so difficult to adjust. You wake up and you have things to do but you realise that you miss home so much (Pauline, Uganda).

Purity and Pauline used words such as *I place myself in a low social class, I embrace studentism* displaying qualities of adaptability and flexibility traditionally feminine characteristics in negotiating the different circumstances both in their home country and in South Africa.

In contrast with Purity and Pauline, Jasper expressed difficulties in grappling with the diminishing of his social status. Coming from a middle-class background where he was a principal of a high school with a big house he found it difficult to embrace the diminishing lifestyle of a student and used the words you *are forced to lower your class* implying that the change had been imposed on him. Jasper narrated that he felt alienated and regressive and voiced concern as to how this would affect his progress in life as a man when he went back home showing that his negotiation of his social status in the transnational space had been more difficult for him as compared to Purity and Pauline who were more flexible.

Rotich from Kenya however had a different perspective on the transition from being a lecturer to a student. He expressed that being a student gave him greater freedom to operate outside of the middle class expectations placed on him in Kenya on the basis of being a lecturer. For instance he could go to a pub as a student in South Africa since no one knew him whilst in Kenya he had to maintain his status as a lecturer. He could also dress casually while in South Africa but in Kenya he had to be formally dressed that is in a suit and tie. It is interesting to note the gendered nuances in how Purity and Abraham used the mode of dressing in negotiating their social class. Whereas for Purity, "dressing

down", something she would not have done back home, denoted a lowering of her socio-economic status for which she sometimes pitied herself, for Abraham it was not demeaning but it meant freedom from middle class expectations. This was probably because the mode of dressing represented the different ways in which they constructed their gender identities.

For some women students however, the diminishing of their social status upon coming to South Africa was not just been a matter of adopting a different lifestyle as students but they had also become economically dependent on a male relative or spouse as in the cases of Irene from Cameroon and Sylvia from Kenya. Irene as she recounts below became dependent on her brother for accommodation, school fees and other personal needs which was contrary to her status in Cameroon where she was working as a branch manager of a motor insurance company prior to her coming to South Africa.

> I come from an average home; we are neither rich nor poor. In South Africa...eish... I am poor (laughter) because I do not have money. When I was in Cameroon before I came, I was an independent woman I used to support myself and I would even support some of my brothers. Now I have to depend on my brother, if I want to buy pants for example I have to beg, I have to depend on someone's pockets and that is why I am saying I am poor (Irene, Cameroon).

Sylvia who joined her husband in South Africa in 2005 had to leave her economically independent status in Kenya and adopt a new status of the dependent wife while in South Africa. While in Kenya she was due for a promotion but in South Africa she realised that she could not get employment without a work permit. She however expressed agency by working hard to further her education with the hope of securing gainful employment. She

153

had already acquired an honors degree and was working towards completing her Masters degree in Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies at the time of the interview. To supplement her husband's income she also did some small scale business. It was for this reason that she said that although her status was not the same as it was in Kenya it was developing as is amplified below.

> Hee...!. It is quite different for me now because for the last over ten years I was working. My status right now is still developing... In Kenya having been a working woman, having your own money, having your own car my status was a bit higher than here because now I have to depend on my husband. This difference affects me because I am not used to borrowing and I was used to having my own money and that is why I have decided to do my own business and also study. Whether the money is there or the man does not mind giving you, you would want to have your own money that is to be independent. That is why I am working hard to get my own papers and get a good job and have my own money. It is not that I will not share, I will want to contribute (Sylvia, Kenya).

The loss of social status was further exacerbated by the issue of race. In South Africa, "race remains the primary point of reference" (Soudien, 1994: 56; Soudien *et al*, 2004). For most foreign students of African origin, race was not a huge issue in their home countries in the way that it is in South Africa because of the legacy of apartheid. These students therefore hardly drew from their race in terms of social identity while in their home countries. While in the South African context however their race as part of their social identity became fore-grounded thereby posing challenges to their perceptions of their social status.

Despite some students having a middle-class background, negotiation of this economic stratum in South Africa proved difficult on account of the issue of race. Maina from

154

Kenya highlighted that his social interactions had been diminished because even though he was of an upper class socio- economic background he could not interact with white people of the same background with ease since he felt discriminated against on account of his race.

This loss of status on account of race was experienced in different contexts such as in academic settings. Pauline being from another African country (Uganda), expressed that she was perceived as poor. She further underscores the fact that she felt discriminated against as a black person, and as a woman. Her race made her competencies as an academic to be placed under scrutiny. As a woman, she had to prove herself not only to white academics but to black male academics as well. The interconnected forms of discrimination on the basis of race and gender highlighted in her case served to diminish her social status as is amplified below.

> It is outrageous for me having come from a country where race is not an issue. I normally say that I did not know that I was black until I came to South Africa. Before you are even thought of as a woman you are thought of in terms of your colour. Before you go to class as a tutor you are seen in terms of your colour and not in terms of your ideas. For me I see it as a disadvantage in two ways you are discriminated as a woman and as a black person. There are cultural issues that undermine in South Africa in a way. Men want to feel macho and so loud and kind of closing off and undermining the quiet woman who may have something to say. For me it is almost like you have to prove yourself at every point even to black men academics to show that you are almost as good as they are. You are not yet there but you are as almost there. For them they have arrived. To the white person it is like you are from a poor African country and what do you have to offer? For them it is like if it was to be presented by a person of a different colour they would not be like "wow" (Pauline, Uganda).

155

Angelina from the DRC also highlighted a situation within an academic setting in which the issue of race arose. She had asked her Indian lecturer in Industrial, Organisational and Labour Studies (IOLS) to re-mark her paper and the lecturer asked her whether her request to re-mark her paper had racial undertones since Angelina was African and the lecturer was Indian.

While both women and men experienced racism at different levels, Lucy's and Raoul's cases served to highlight the gendered dimension of diminished social status on account of racism. Lucy highlighted the plight of black women as easy targets for men and most especially for Zulu men. Lucy also mentioned that the men did not seem to take one's age into consideration (she is between fifty- five and sixty years in age) and social class, categories that would command great respect back home in Kenya. The men in her perception only seem to consider her race and gender.

> These men always willing to make a gamble and they do so because they have succeeded elsewhere. As a black woman I feel... (pause, disgust on the face)...I can't even think of a polite word to use... I feel offended. You do not just objectify women like that in South Africa or elsewhere (Lucy, Kenya).

Raoul from Botswana cited a case where he was suspected of being a thief when standing outside his neighbourhood within the vicinity of UKZN on the basis of his race. His case highlights the common but negative perception of black men as thieves. This occurrence was however confounding to him because no one would have suspected him of being a thief back home in Botswana given his middle class social status.

It (race) does undermine me because on the basis of my color people draw their own conclusions. One time I was outside waiting for a car, someone was gonna come and pick me up. He didn't know my place so he asked me to wait outside. When they (neighbours) saw me standing outside they thought this guy maybe is a thief or something. Next thing the police came. They said we've got a call that you've been standing here for the past twenty minutes or so. When they saw me opening my place and then locking it up that's when they believed that I stayed there. They agreed that I can stay there outside (Raoul, Botswana).

Another scenario in which students experienced loss of social status was in the area of traditional leadership roles conferred to them in their ethnic communities. Kabila from the *Kavembe* community in the DRC recounted that he was chosen to be a leader from birth. Before he was born there had been no rain for two years. On the day of his birth however, there were heavy rains followed by a flood just the same way it had happened when his grandfather was born. The mantle of leadership was then passed on from his grandfather to Kabila. As a leader, he was then required to provide for his family as well as guide and protect his community. This position was however not reflected while he was in South Africa as elucidated in the following excerpt:

As a leader I have to provide because if you do not provide it means your leadership is failing. I do not like this because the situation within which I am living means I cannot provide. This does not leave me at peace because I am no longer the chosen one if I cannot provide. As a leader you have to fight when there is war. However for me I did not fight when war broke out at the DRC and I am therefore not seen as the chosen but as a coward leader. I am however not 100% in that situation of the leader and that is why I am trying to cope otherwise my manhood could mean nothing to me. If I was in that community, it would even lead to suicide in a situation where you feel that you have failed your family, you have failed your community and it therefore becomes like a curse. You are then demoted in the community and hence you are not man enough for them and you are even lower than women (Kabila, DRC).

Kabila expressed that though he was chosen as a leader from birth he was unable to fulfill

157

his mandate as expected because his circumstances in South Africa were such that he could not provide for his family as was expected of him. Having come to South Africa a more developed country made the people he left at home consider him to be a corrupted since he had engaged with a western ideologies and way of life which was different from the traditional way of life. This "corruption" would then make it difficult for him to discharge his traditional leadership duties. Further as a chosen leader, he did not stay in the DRC to fight when war broke out but he fled and this he says was perceived as cowardice on his part. If he was in his country he would have felt greatly diminished as a man. Being in South Africa however, had enabled him to escape the perception that he was a failure even though he could not access the privileges that came with being a traditional leader. Nevertheless, Kabila is still an elder of the *Mbondo* community of the Congolese in Durban.

While these racial encounters served to diminish the students' status alongside their transition to being students. For some students and in some contexts however, some students expressed that their social status had remained unchanged.

6.3 The dynamism of maintained social status

Some students expressed that in their perception, their social class had remained the same as it was in their home country. They however felt that they were perceived differently by South Africans. Mariam who had earlier expressed that her she felt that her social status was diminished on account of her race by South African Indian Muslims said that

158

economically her social class has remained the same. This was despite the fact that she did not work at her department as was the case with most other foreign African students.

Mariam is married to a man who she described as very wealthy and who ensured that her children were well taken care of. Mariam expressed that no one was dependent on her financially since all her siblings were working. Mariam's money which she had saved from her teaching position at the University of Dar es Salaam was therefore hers to spend as she so desired and hence her ability to maintain the same social class as when she was in her home country. Members of her department were however not certain of her financial capabilities at first since she was not externally funded. She however asserted that she changed their perception of her after she had demonstrated that she could manage herself. It is significant to note that not only did she have to prove herself academically but she also had to prove herself economically in order to gain acceptance and respect in her department as shown below.

> When I first came here, first of all at the department they were not sure that I can survive here and I have to pay rent and for my studies. Then slowly they began to realise that I am not doing anything such as lecturing and I manage to pay for my studies without depending on anyone. While I am here I have managed to go to London and to Birmingham University so they now understand that I can manage myself. My social position is the same as when I am in my country and they know that now. They respect me very much. My supervisor respects me she knows that if I ask her to buy me a book from Amazon I will be able to pay her back with no problems (Mariam, Tanzania).

Zebedee from Zimbabwe who described himself as belonging to an upper middle class bracket cited difficulties in associating with black students at his place of residence due to

159

class issues resulting in a different perspective of life. He however said that one could not tell his social class by his appearance but rather on his level of knowledge and exposure. His Zimbabwean nationality however generated the perception that he was poor and this affected his sense of self especially with regards to the women at his place of residence who may have perceived him as financially challenged. Zebedee delineated social class from physical appearance such as mode of dressing and associated it with knowledge and exposure. He further amplifies the fluidity of his social class by advancing that in some situations he felt diminished while in others he felt elevated. For instance, whereas he uses a private car (a status symbol) at home in Zimbabwe, in South Africa his status is diminished because he has to use the taxi which is a public means of transport. He however can afford certain things that he would not be able to afford at home because he stays on his own.

6.4 The dynamism of the elevated social status

An examination of how the students felt elevated in the transnational space generated critical insights. For instance, entering a plane and travelling to South Africa was a marker of elevation of social status for some students in the sight of the people back home. Jessica expressed that in entering a plane, she had stepped out of the life of the ordinary Cameroonian woman who in the previous chapter she had described as less empowered than a South African woman. While she initially began by relating her social class to her parents and siblings, she was now able to place herself in a social class quite separate from her parents and siblings on account of having entered a plane.

160

In terms of social class it is difficult to place myself. If I limit myself to my parents who are in Cameroon then I am a peasant but if I limit myself to siblings then we are doing well... Having entered a plane changes my profile. The kind of respect I get is amazing. It is not that I have remitted much back home. It is like I have stepped out of the life of the ordinary Cameroonian woman. I am nowhere looking at me in terms of my economic status but I am somewhere looking at me in terms of intelligence (Jessica, Cameroon).

Ojong (2005) in her examination of entrepreneurship and identity among Ghanaian women in Durban documents how a number of these women became economically independent within the transnational space. These women are also able to send remittances back home, and thus make much appreciated contributions to the communities from which they came. These remittances served to elevate their social status in their home countries. In Jessica's case, though she had not remitted much economically her social status had been elevated on account of coming to South Africa since she was now perceived as a person with great potential.

For Kabila though his status as a traditional leader was diminished in the transnational context his coming to South Africa had generated much respect from some people in his home country in the DRC because he was pursuing post- graduate studies. Kabila who was from an agricultural community now expressed that on account of his education in South Africa he could now associate with people of a higher social class. He would not have gained the same respect if he had studied in his home country.

Koffie from the DRC expressed that he received what he described as unnecessary

respect by people back home. He felt the respect was unnecessary because some people in his country were better endowed financially and had better paying jobs with multinational companies. Others however gave him much respect and even envied him because he was living in South Africa which was much more developed than the DRC. While men acknowledged him for his academic achievements and friendship, it was the women who accorded him the unnecessary respect. His perceptions concerning the respect he now commanded from women in his country are crystallised in the following statements:

> It is the women who tend to give you the unnecessary respect. Yes, I can even now take the ministers wife. I remember in 2007, me and my sister in-law we went to a night club. I was with my crew some of them are big shots and they were going to treat me. We entered the night club and all the girls there were like "Koffie is back" and I said "Wow", even the ones who never used to greet me were excited to see me. You get a lot of attention also when you go to restaurants in rural towns. This starts with your dressing because they can see that you are different. The market is very good at home. In terms of women I am covered (Koffie, DRC).

In Koffie's case coming to South Africa seemed to have turned him into a hero with many women loving him and possibly wanting to marry him. This served to affirm his masculinity in the sense that he would not have to struggle to get womens' attention when he went back home.

Another area in which students sought to assert themselves and elevate their social status in the transnational context was in using their ethnicity as a resource for mobilisation as a reaction to the dominant local population (Olzak, 1983). A case in point is the *Mbondo* community of the *Bavembe* ethnic group of the DRC. The *Mbondo* community is the

oldest community Durban amongst the Congolese and was established in 1997 as welfare association aimed at providing assistance to members during funerals and other crises.

Kabila one of my key informants explained to me that the Congolese tried in 1999 to form a national Congolese community of people but it degenerated along ethnic lines. Most members of the DRC consequently meet according to their ethnic affiliations. Congolese refugees generally cluster in tight-knit, defensive ethnic networks, their relations with other Congolese hostile and suspicious. Several dozen ethnically constituted associations of Congolese refugees exist in South Africa.

Indeed in a participant observation session in a special elders meeting of the *Mbondo* community it was highlighted to me that the members of the DRC are very keen on ethnic affiliations. The meeting was held with the objective of electing new leadership and was mostly attended by men. Kabila's wife did not attend the meeting since she was not allowed to vote. This was because she belonged to a different ethnic community and was perceived as an outsider despite the fact that she was married to Kabila of the *Mbondo* community. Kabila's wife could however organise a women's meeting if she so desired.

Besides immigrants groups asserting their ethnic identities in a transnational context, individual migrants also drew from their ethnic groups in various ways in negotiating their identities in the transnational space. The appointment to a position of traditional leadership while in South Africa for Maina from Kenya served to elevate his social

status. Maina from the agriculturalist *Kikuyu* community in Kenya expressed with great pride that he had been appointed a *muthuri wa mburi imwe* (junior elder) after seeking permission from the council of elders from his village and paying one goat with the prospect of becoming a senior elder at some stage. As a junior elder Maina was an elder in training and could now sit in when elders were adjudicating complicated issues. He could however settle minor disputes amongst his grade mates. Maina expressed that his being appointed a junior elder was affirming for him as a man in the sense that while still in South Africa, he could still go back home and participate in certain cultural practices such as the organising of his son's circumcision ceremony.

For some students coming from a dominant ethnic group served to elevate their social status and affirm their masculinities in the South African context. According to Schermerhorn (1996) a dominant group signifies that collectivity within a society which has preeminent authority to function both as guardians and sustainers of the controlling value system and as prime allocators or rewards in the society. In highlighting that ethnicity did not affect them negatively because they were from dominant groups they came from dominant groups, Jasper from Botswana and Zebedee from Zimbabwe said the following:

> It is not so pronounced. It will always affect you especially if you come from a low ranked group. For me it does not affect me because I am from one of the real big tribes and they are the ones who went to school first as opposed to others who I see struggling (Jasper, Botswana).

From the look of things it looks as if ethnicity is another polite way of defining

race. Ethnicity is something to highlight difference. For me I would say it is not an issue and maybe it is because I come from a dominant group in my country i.e. the Shona group so maybe I do not feel sidelined on the basis of ethnicity. In Zimbabwe, there is the Shona, the Ndebele and a few white people. It might be that some people who are impacted negatively. For example you will find that most Ndebele people are in Matabeleland (Zebedee, Zimbabwe).

Jasper and Zebedee expressed privilege in terms of coming from dominant ethnic groups. It is significant to note that it was the men students who highlighted that they were from dominant groups hence re-asserting their superiority in a new South African context.

The area of male circumcision was yet another arena in which some male students advanced as elevating their social status while in a different context in South Africa. Circumcision is one of the oldest and most common surgical procedures. It is undertaken for cultural, religious, social as well as medical reasons. Contemporary cultural context of male circumcision is now variable and often transformed among groups who continue the practice. Male circumcision is currently being encouraged as a medical strategy to reduce the transmission of HIV infections. Traditional practices were commonly linked to the toughening, training and initiation of male adolescents into warrior status. Various forms of circumcision have been practiced for many generations among several indigenous ethnic groups in sub-Saharan Africa.

In South Africa, male circumcision is performed mainly on the youth as a part of initiatory rites of passage into manhood, primarily among the Xhosa, the Sotho, as well as the Ndebele, Pedi and Venda (Mayatula and Mavundula, 1997). The Zulu community however no longer observes this practice as a rite of passage to manhood. Cultural expectations regarding social responsibilities and their conduct as men in the community

are transmitted and following initiation, men are afforded numerous privileges associated with their status.

Some students from eastern Africa whose ethnic communities subscribed to male circumcision attested to the fact that this rite accorded them social status. In negotiating their masculinity in relation to Zulu men and men from other non-circumcising communities, male students from Kenya and the DRC affirmed their masculinity in the South African context in the following manner:

> I am from the Kikuyu community in Kenya and we are quite different. For example, in my community for one to be a man you must undergo circumcision where you learn certain things such as being responsible and hardworking. A man is not expected to be emotional. You will not find men from my community going around rioting and throwing stones because they have been circumcised (Maina, Kenya).

> There is a difference between Congolese men and other men in Africa. We follow this Jewish system where when a boy is four days to seven days old he is taken to hospital to be circumcised. Some of the countries in Africa do not have this system. This shows that I am a man different from another one but according to morphology we may be the same even if they are from Europe, men are men. This practised in all communities in Congo. You become a man when you are very young even if you are two years old you are a man. If you wait till you are say twelve years you can face many problems the community can even chase you (Olomide, DRC).

> What would distinguish me from a South African man is that in my country and in particular my ethnic group, a man must be circumcised. This makes me very proud and if I meet another man who is not circumcised I would consider him half a man even though he is superior to a woman. Therefore being circumcised Congolese man makes me proud. This makes me find myself on a higher level than a South African man who is not circumcised, a white man who is not circumcised, an Indian who is not circumcised and a Congolese who is not yet circumcised. Circumcision means that you are a man. You are no longer a child even though you may be young for example fourteen years old. You have

166

been brought into the company of real men (Kabila, DRC).

These men from the DRC and Kenya asserted that they were different because they were circumcised. Hall (1997) argues that the notion of difference is integral to an understanding of the cultural construction of identities. On account of being circumcised these men constructed themselves as superior to women and other men who were not circumcised. In so doing they highlighted gendered relations not just between men and women but amongst men as well. It is instructive to note that these students affirmed their masculinity in the transnational space by using circumcision to construct themselves as superior to Zulu, Indian and white South African men who were not required to undergo a similar rite of passage to manhood hence displaying a hegemonic masculinity. Morrell (2001:9) describes a hegemonic masculinity as "a particular form of masculinity which is dominant in society which exercises its power over other rival masculinities and which regulates power over women and distributes this power differentially amongst men.

While the men drew from their positions of traditional leadership, traditional practices and ethnic identities in asserting their social status, women advanced that the transnational space was elevating for them in that it offered a liberating space from cultural constraints in their ethnic community. Fleras and Elliot (1999) advance that ethnicity marginalises women especially if an ethnic group possesses cultural values that are devalorising to women's status. Jessica from the *Batanga* community in Cameroon where women are expected to be subservient expressed that the transnational space had freed her from cultural constraints and that she could be as assertive and outspoken as she desired since she had no-one to constrain her.

167

> I am not what I was twenty years ago, I have evolved. I have left the country; I have had different experiences and a new life. I now feel more free (I was born free) and more assertive. Because of the cultural space in Cameroon these qualities were limited but South Africa has enabled me to develop these since there is no one to supervise me. I have always been outspoken and coming to South Africa has reinforced this (Jessica, Cameroon).

Angelina explains that as a woman from *Nandi* her choices were limited in terms of her sexuality and relationships. While in South Africa and away from her family however, she had shed her conservative attitude towards her sexuality and made choices she would not have made if she was at home. It was not clear whether she perceived this development as positive or negative but she did acquiesce to the fact that the transnational space had presented her with such an opportunity as is amplified below:

> My ethnicity affects my choices in terms of sexuality, in terms of marriage and how I behave towards my brothers. For example you are not supposed to have sex before you get married and even in terms of marriage they can arrange someone for you even if you are educated. I will however not go along with this arrangement. I prefer to live my life as opposed to living how other people want me to live. I would say that I am no longer the conservative girl that I was before in terms of sexuality (laughter). I think I have changed because of being here in South Africa and being away from my family, my sisters... I miss my mum. Some of the choices that I have made, I would not say that I regret them but a lot of them I would not have made them if I was at home (Angelina, DRC).

Within the transnational space, Angelina has been able to explore her sexuality while Jessica has been able to express her outspokenness qualities which would be discouraged in their ethnic communities back home. For both Jessica and Angelina, by immersing themselves in another culture they were able to discover and explore aspects of their gender identity hence re-inventing themselves. The negotiation of personal expressions and relationships however led these women onto a contradictory path along the

continuum of retaining traditional gender roles versus embracing modern notions of gender roles as will be discussed in the next chapter.

The students' nationality and the heritage in terms of education and proficiency in the English language was an area of contestation amongst foreign students of African origin. A better education system and high levels of education proved to be an area of social status elevation for some male students of African origin in negotiating their identity in relation to South African men as is amplified in the following relevant data excerpts:

> In Zimbabwe we are not into violence whereas in South Africa, they even use weapons in a fight. We do not use weapons in a fight since we are not taught to be violent. After independence, Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe emphasised education and so as men we are more intellectual and prefer to reason things out. Being non-violent is emphasised as a national quality and a family value as well. In South Africa, they are previously marginalised for example students use their financial aid to support their families back home. Inner strength is what men in Zimbabwe consider manly i.e." you do not major in minors. Men are not supposed to talk too much. Quarreling, talking too much is considered feminine. South African men are a bit too aggressive on small things maybe because of immaturity though maybe for them it is maturity. People in Zimbabwe are very educated and prefer to reason out things (Zebedee, Zimbabwe).

The country's emphasis on education was reiterated by Phillip also from Zimbabwe in the following manner, "We are very hard working. I do not know about your country but in our country we value education very much". During the interviews, I observed that both Zebedee and Phillip were soft spoken and most of the time would give an intellectual view in response to the questions rather than reflexive responses based on their personal experiences. Zebedee highlighted that Zimbabwean men on account of their high level of education preferred to use reason in dealing with issues rather than violence as compared to South African men.

169

Maina from Kenya also cited the effect of high levels of education on Kenyans' behaviour in the following manner:

> Kenyans perform quite well in whatever they came to South Africa to do whether it is being a student, teaching, doing business, as farmers and doctors. I would also attribute it to our higher levels of education (Maina, Kenya).

Zebedee, Phillip and Maina in drawing upon education in negotiating their masculinity reflected what Vincent (2006) terms as "rational-intellect masculinity". While these students perceived themselves as having a rational intellect masculinity based on their nationality, Shikumo (2006) however also advanced that this identity though a marginalised one was also to be found amongst male South African students at the University of KwaZulu- Natal.

Students from Anglophone Africa drew from their proficiency in the English language in asserting themselves in the South African context and more so in tertiary institutions as exemplified by Maina below:

> There are a lot of characteristics that you take for granted that become more noticeable. There is the issue of language, that is our mastery of the English language, our common language of Swahili and mother tongue. Our ability to speak three or more languages is quite unique as compared to people from other countries (Maina, Kenya).

The significance of proficiency in the English language was underscored by Eleanor from Liberia who felt alienated on account of her accent which was not British as shown below:

> Maybe the way I talk though... You know in my country, free slaves settled in my country so we do not have British accent. Some people are from former British colony I find it difficult for me. I try to talk like them but it does not actually flow (Eleanor, Liberia).

170

Much as foreign students of African origin expressed solidarity while in the transnational space on account of being discriminated by South African locals some of them were not averse to "othering" students from other African countries in asserting themselves in the South African context. Social identity theory postulates that migrants will tend to band together in national groups, perhaps making comments about the strangeness of the local residents. The following students however not only portrayed themselves as having superior qualities to local South African but they also portrayed a hegemonic attitude towards students from other African countries.

> The stability of the country, Kenya has been quite a peaceful country and that stability of course makes you stable, you are able to study well because you do not have refugee status. Kenyans also are known to be aggressive and are willing to work hard and take advantage of every opportunity unlike Tanzanians (Sylvia, Kenya).

> Most of the Kenyans are hard working and tend to think about the future, there is a good grip of discipline though it differs from person to person. Compared with my fellow Africans, there is a perception that people from Tanzania are not very bright but it is not true because we know people from there who are bright. It is just a perception among African folks that people from there, people from Congo, Burundi are people who are a bit challenged. People from Kenya, from Nigeria, from Ghana and the Arab world the North African countries, Uganda, Eritrea and Ethiopia are perceived as bright (Peter, Kenya).

Sylvia and Peter both from Kenya in Anglophone Africa expressed that Kenyans were hard working and aggressive unlike some students from other African countries which they have cited above. Of particular importance is the reference to students from the DRC who were also interviewed in this study. The two students constructed themselves as better off than the Congolese due to their refugee status and perception that they were not diligent in their work.

171

In a conversation with Kabila from the DRC during a participant observation session at Point road at Durban Central Business District however, I gathered interesting insights concerning how Kabila constructed the Congolese. As we walked to the meeting venue he explained that there were many foreigners who lived in that area and he particularly pointed out the heavy Nigerian presence in that neighbourhood most of whom he referred to as "crooks". Though referring to the Nigerians as "crooks" and as violent, Kabila credited them for safe-guarding other "passive" foreigners like the Congolese from violent South Africans during the May 2008 xenophobic attacks. Kabila attributed the passive nature of the Congolese to having been colonised by the French and hence acquiring the "soft spokenness" of the French. This soft- spokenness he explained could be a possible reason as to why violence continued to escalate at the DRC. According to him, imperialism started with the British and hence foreigners from former British colonies such as Nigeria could be expected to be more aggressive than the Congolese.

Kabila's construction of the Congolese as less aggressive as a result of being French speaking is however contradictory in that the Congolese are involved in war back home. In an in-depth interview he also drew on a hegemonic masculinity where a Congolese man was seen as the "Spear of the Nation"

> Being a Congolese man in a country where being a man is the spear of the nation makes me proud, in the sense that I am superior to my wife, to my daughters and to other women. Secondly it makes me feel more secure even though some other men may threaten me since I am not a woman who needs to be protected, I am strong (Kabila, DRC).

Kabila consequently displayed the dialectic between a non- hegemonic masculinity which he attributed to his French background in relation to men from other countries and a

hegemonic one based on his culture in expressing his superiority to women. These contradictions were highlighted as a result of negotiating the transnational space.

6.5 Transcending social status

Due to the myriad contradictions and complexities of negotiating their social status in a new South African context, some students being unable to place themselves in a certain class ended up dissociating themselves from any social status available to them on the basis of their social class, gender, nationality and race among others. Dissociation from social class on the basis of religious beliefs will be discussed at length in chapter eight.

Another area where some students attempted to transcend social status in the transnational space was in the area of nationality. As detailed in the literature review section, the social identity theory advances that when abroad, especially in countries which have particularly different languages and cultures, migrants feel their nationality far more keenly than when they are at home. Migrants will tend to band together in national groups, perhaps making comments about the strangeness of the local residents. This group membership creates in-group self-categorisation and enhancement in ways that favor the in-group at the expense of the out-group (Hogg and Vaughan, 2002).

Some students however contrary to the social identity theory preferred to distance themselves from their compatriots as opposed to banding together with them. Koffie from the DRC preferred to distance himself from the Congolese by highlighting their negative

qualities such as jealousy, competition for women and betrayal. He recounted a bitter experience he had undergone with a fellow Congolese when he was pursuing a South African woman. This Congolese decided to pursue the same woman that he knew Koffie was pursuing. In describing this woman Koffie said that she appeared to want him to provide everything for her but since he did not want to play the role of her father, he limited what he gave her materially. The other Congolese man took advantage of this scenario by providing for the woman what Koffie did not provide such as the use of his car in a bid to make the woman more attracted to him than to Koffie. Koffie then expressed that his fellow Congolese had not treated him as a Congolese brother. According to Koffie, this was typical of the Congolese who liked to compete unnecessarily since according to Koffie the Congolese lost the woman and his car eventually. His opinion of the Congolese is crystallised in the following statements thus affirming the strained relations that most Congolese have with one another:

> A typical Congolese would be happy when I fail rather than when I succeed. We create associations not to help each other but to know what the other is up to and destroy it. That's why you won't see me in their umbrella associations (Koffie, DRC).

Unlike Kabila therefore, who as earlier mentioned is an elder of the *Mbondo* community in Durban, Koffie preferred to distance himself from the Congolese. It is however interesting to note that in the whole betrayal saga, he still displayed a hegemonic masculinity by portraying himself and his Congolese rival as providers and the woman they were both pursuing as dependent on them as men for financial support.

174

Norah from Cameroon unlike Jessica one of the leaders of the Cameroonian Association in Durban (CAMCOD) also preferred to distance herself from Cameroonians as a result of having had bad experiences with them though she did not appear keen to expound on these experiences. From these experiences however she had learnt that though there were good and dependable Cameroonians, there were some who were exploitative. Her sentiments concerning Cameroonians are crystallised in the following words:

> I know about them but I prefer to keep my distance. I am a Cameroonian and I know Cameroonians and I know there are good ones and not good ones in that association (Cameroonian Association in Durban). I know that there are many "Not good Cameroonians". I have got bad experiences with Cameroonians. They my brothers and sisters but as my mother says "eat with a long spoon" that is eat with them but with a long spoon so as to keep your distance. I choose the Cameroonians to associate with. There are Cameroonians who are not serious, some people just come here to exploit. It is better to have a South African friend. I do not have to have a Cameroonian friend just because I am Cameroonian. A friend is a friend (Norah, Cameroon).

Some other students while not distancing themselves from their compatriots expressed some detachment from their nationality. Lucy who described Kenya as her country of origin expressed that she did not have such a strong attachment to it as a result of having travelled extensively within and outside of Africa on work related assignments. Her definition of home or a home country was a place where she was happy. Kenya to her was not the only country where she could settle and for her a good employment was a greater consideration for re-location even to her home country rather than a sense of patriotism or proximity to her family. With regards to her family, she expressed that she did not have to be in the same space with them in order to maintain connections. With the use of technology she could still maintain connections with her family by making phone

calls, remittances and occasional visits. The process of conducting family relationships across transnational space is discussed at length in the next chapter.

Pauline expressed that holding on strongly to her Ugandan nationality may have limited her level of engagement in the new South African context. For this reason, she expressed that she negotiated the transnational space better by learning about the people's culture rather than holding on to her identity as a Ugandan. She however wondered whether this implied that she was unpatriotic as elucidated below.

> Maybe I am not so patriotic but I do not like holding onto the fact that oh gosh (laughter) I am Ugandan. I like to go to a place and learn about their culture, what they do, their ceremonies, their language so that you can fit into the space in which you are and negotiate better. I am Ugandan by birth so I do not walk around feeling that I am Ugandan while I am here and even at home (Pauline, Uganda).

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter set out to interrogate the dynamism of social class in transnational spaces and its mediation of gendered identities. The study did this under four broad categories namely

- The social dynamism of diminished social status

- The social dynamism of maintained social status

- The social dynamism of elevated social status

- Transcending social status

176

Many students expressed a sense of loss of social status in various ways such as adopting a student's lifestyle which was in contrast with their middle or upper class socio-economic status back home, becoming economically dependent on their husbands for some women and loss of prestige associated with traditional leadership roles for some male students. Women seemed to demonstrate greater flexibility and resilience in dealing with the loss of social status as compared to men. A militating factor contributing to loss of social status for both men and women was the encounter with the issue of racism which many had not experienced prior to their coming to South Africa. The students expressed challenges in navigating the social space in the South African context due to their race and the perception that they were poor despite the fact that they had a middle-class background. The chapter highlighted the gendered nuances of diminished social status in which some men encountered the perception that they were thieves and women on account of their race found that they were easy targets for local South African men and most especially Zulu men.

Using Foucault's notion of power as diffuse and discursive, the chapter examined ways in which students negotiated their social ranking and power in terms of their identities and sense of place despite the challenges faced. Some students still sought to exercise agency by advancing that they had maintained their social class by demonstrating economic capabilities in funding their studies as well as excelling in their academics and in general knowledge. Other students advanced that within the transnational space their social status had been elevated in the sight of people back home on account of coming to South Africa a more developed country.

The men in many ways sought to re-assert their sense of superiority over women and over other men. This was by drawing on their ethnic identities such as being from a dominant group, being traditional leaders and undergoing circumcision as a rite of passage from boyhood to man hood and hence re-affirming a hegemonic masculinity. On account of their high levels of education and mastery of the English language, some students especially from Anglophone Africa negotiated their masculinity to construct a rational- intellect masculinity which they deemed superior to that of Zulu men who according to them were bent on violence. Women on the other hand felt that the transnational space offered a liberating space from cultural constraints since their ethnic communities held onto values which were at times devalorising to women.

The chapter also examined how the negotiation of social status in the transnational space proved to be so complex for some students that they ended up dissociating themselves from social ranking such based on class, ethnicity and nationality. This chapter interrogated how the interplay of social ranking such as gender, class, ethnicity and nationality served to construct several versions of masculinity and femininity in the transnational space. The next chapter examines the politics of relocation and its impact on gender roles.

Chapter Seven

The politics of relocation and its impact on gender roles

7.1 Introduction

This chapter describes how foreign students of African origin are interpreting and re defining their gender roles and expectations as they negotiate the transnational space. The chapter does this by examining the impact of the politics of relocation on various aspects namely: inter-personal relationships, family relationships and gender role designation. I examine the students' engagement with traditional gender roles and ways in which these roles have either been transformed, reinforced or even reconfigured. I explore the engagement of the students with the discourse of gender in the transnational space and highlight the contradictions faced by these students in negotiating the dialectic between discourses of modernity and tradition. I also explore the new gender identities that they renegotiate within the transnational space.

7.2 The politics of relocation on inter personal relationships

Transnational movement can and does instigate personal growth and transformation. A number of students cited that engaging in the transnational space had provided them with an opportunity for personal growth in a way that would not have been possible if they had

studied in their home countries. The transnational space being a multicultural space had led to change in attitudes amongst the students and they attested to this by saying that they had become more *patient, tolerant, diplomatic, understanding, accepting* and *less judgmental.*

Purity from Malawi expressed that she had changed and become more patient within the transnational space. Previously she would be impatient with people who were slow in doing things and she would push them around, she would also get anxious about projects that were not completed on time and she would voice her annoyance immediately. On account of having come to South Africa Purity had changed and learnt to take time before reacting to aggravating situations. Purity now advanced that this level of personal growth of tolerance in dealing with people and her level of education were good preparation for leadership.

Kabila from the DRC attested that being in a different context had changed him dramatically in terms of inter personal relationships. Interacting with different people had made him a better listener and a more diplomatic person. His traditional understanding of both men and women had been altered and he felt better equipped for leadership.

Lucy from Kenya recounted having learnt to be assertive after attending a seminar in which she encountered outspoken young white South African women who did not fear to contradict their lecturers. This encounter brought her to the realisation that she was of a different generation and race where she had not been encouraged to think critically as a

woman. Lucy recounts her experience in the excerpt below.

There is this case when I was invited to a seminar on epidemics in the History department (I was interested because I am looking at nutrition) and I was thrown off balance to see honours students in their early twenties, (there were two other older women apart from me) one white and the other black. I then realised that I was from another generation and even another race where you weigh things before you say them and repress what you think in case they are not politically correct. These girls were not afraid to say what they thought in a group setting like that, sometimes disagreeing with their lecturers totally and they were not willing to back down and not saying, "Ooh because the lecturer thinks this then I better not say what I think". I was very impressed that we have a generation of younger women that have the kind of assertiveness that we never had and I see it also among the young black women who are more assertive than our generation but not as much as the white women, they still edit what they are saying depending on the context. From an academic point of view I thought that this was great in terms of thinking critically. In my generation, we were not encouraged to think critically and so that stretched me in academic character growth and in a personal way in that one needs to be assertive and say what they think, in a polite way and not a rude way (Lucy, Kenya).

The process of change for Lucy had been predicated on the ability to recognise and appreciate the differences among women, which in turn calls for a self-awareness that comes with the "politics of location". The politics of location has become a collective vocabulary for feminists as a way of becoming aware of their own positionality with regard to race, geography and so on and the ways in which it affects their understandings of themselves and other women (Tucker, 2008). This recognition however does not prevent them from learning about themselves in relation to women from other cultures and traditions. From the above encounter Lucy advanced that she had learnt to assert herself from these younger white South African women.

By renegotiating the transnational space through change in behaviour and attitudes, the above students were devising ways of enabling them to cope with being away from home and enhancing their interactions with other people. This kind of negotiation enabled them to build a broader social network than they would have had if they had remained at home.

7.3 The politics of relocation on family relationships

The impact of transnational migration on family relationships and intimate relationships is often underplayed and even overlooked. Though some researchers such as Eckstein (2006), Levitt (2001), and Ong (1999) are committed to exploring the changing dynamics within transnational families, they ignore the fact that that transnational family ties cannot function across different worlds without the recognition of family members in different countries. Transnational family life entails renegotiating communication between spouses, the distribution of tasks, and the decision of who will migrate and who will stay behind (Pessar and Mahler, 2001). The examination of the complex processes whereby family relationships are cultivated and negotiated transnationally is therefore crucial.

Maina highlights the role of communication technology in conducting the relationship with his family transnationally. He recalls that when his father went abroad in the seventies they had to wait for weeks before they could receive any mail from him. With the use of modern technology he can communicate with his family daily while he is in

South Africa. Maina also coordinates business with his wife through the internet though he is unable to delegate some consultancy work. He has also entrusted his mother with some of the family businesses. As a result of this Maina expresses that borders are artificial and that the only thing absent in his family set up is physical contact. He expresses that his family probably appreciates him more because they do not see him often.

Of great importance however is the kind of impact that this arrangement has on gender roles within the family. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Maina had undergone circumcision a traditional rite of passage to adulthood and was appointed a junior elder in his *Kikuyu* community, a position which served to affirm his headship of his family. Concerning how he then conducted his traditional gender role as the head of the family, Maina put it this way:

> I do not come from that kind of a set up. Probably my wife is more of a disciplinarian than I am. I do not come from a paternalistic background. My brothers and my sisters are at par so the issue of hierarchy is not that important (Maina, Kenya).

Maina asserted that his wife was probably more of a disciplinarian than he was maybe because she was the one who spent more time with the children. He also distanced himself from hierarchy at sibling level by asserting that they were of the same social status. Maina in some cases presented himself as transcending his ethnic background while on other instances he drew from it in affirming his identity as a man in the transnational space. Maina consequently presented himself as a bearer of a hybrid

183

identity of oppositional discourses of modernity and tradition.

Transnational family relationships are however complex and could only be possible when technology was available to all parties involved as in the case with Phillip from Zimbabwe. Phillip cited that making telephone calls to his parents back home was expensive and that since they lived in the rural areas they had no access to internet services. With his wife however, he could communicate through the internet since she lived in an urban area. When Phillip came to South Africa, he and his wife had just been married and he described conducting a relationship across transnational space as a real sacrifice. He did however get to go home on a couple of occasions during his data collection process. During the course of this study, his wife came to Durban and delivered a baby at King Edward Hospital.

Purity highlighted the limits of the use of technology in relating with her family transnationally. She explained that communication was limited without much expression of emotion and was almost businesslike while she would have preferred more details indicating a feminine speech pattern. Though the transnational space had brought about reversal of roles with her husband being the children's caregiver while she pursued further education, she expressed that she felt part of the home when the husband consulted her concerning the children's medication. It is significant to note that she highlighted that her husband consulted her on matters to do with the children's health while she did not mention other family issues they may consult on. It was possibly her way of affirming her identity as a mother even though she was in another country and

away from her children.

Pauline from Uganda explained that her relationship with her husband had fallen apart though she did not attribute this to her coming to South Africa. There had been indications that it would happen even before she came to South Africa. It appears that her partner may not have been as supportive of her as she was of him in terms of their individual aspirations. The transnational space had however served to enable her to detach from the various roles she played back home. She described her life in Uganda in the following manner:

> At home things become roller coaster, just spinning, you have children, and you have a man, a job and other community obligations. You are like a spinning machine, you never stop to think about your life but when you step out of that space you are like wow (Pauline, Uganda).

Coming to South Africa had enabled her to disengage from these obligations and to focus on herself and the direction she would like her life to take. She expressed that though this was selfish she had decided to live her life in her own terms and not based on other peoples definitions. Other people would then have to accept her on her own terms and not the other way round. She now describes herself in the following manner:

> I want to be my person apart from a mother and a wife then this fulfillment can filter into other areas of my life. Of course this takes a lot of time away from my children but it has been good for me. A stressed mother near children is not good. I do not want to look at my child and say "If only I did not have you I would have achieved so much". I would like to say "Yes I had you but look at what I have achieved". My child should not have a reason not to achieve because I have achieved even after having them (Pauline, Uganda).

Though Pauline describes her decision as selfish a quality contrary to the traditional definition of a good mother which emphasises self sacrifice, she does not detach herself from her role as a mother. She expresses that being selfish is beneficial in the sense that her children would be proud to have a mother who has attained her level of education as a role model.

Studying in South Africa while their children are in their home country constitutes one variation in the organisational arrangements of motherhood which Hondagneu-Sotello and Avila (1997) call "transnational motherhood". Both Purity and Pauline are transnational mothers and even though they left their children to pursue their educational goals, they talk about their role in motherhood as most mothers would. Even from such great distance, these mothers insist that the fostering of good relationships and emotional investment with their children is essential. They maintain the mother identity through phone conversations, text and e-mail messages with their children back home (for those with children old enough to access these facilities).These women exemplify how transnational mothers transform the meanings of motherhood to accommodate spatial and temporal separations.

Sylvia from Kenya being the only married student living with her spouse in South Africa said that her family which comprised of herself, her husband and daughter had experienced a positive change. She and her husband had become more understanding of one another and consequently the family had become more closely- knit. Sylvia described a positive change in their parenting as well. One of the challenges that migrants face

when they are in another country is the lack of support of their family and community members in raising their children. The task of raising the children is then left to the parents with limited assistance from the house help. The task however falls disproportionately on the women who have the dual role of balancing between their family and their professional life. Despite such challenges, Sylvia advanced that the transnational space had enabled her and her husband to share in parenting roles without interference from extended family members.

The above mentioned students illustrate cases in which traditional gender roles have somewhat been reconfigured as a result of conducting family relationships within the transnational space. In some cases however, gender boundaries or differences between men and women still persisted on the basis of culture and religion. Thorne (1993) observes that gender difference is situational and that it is created in some situations and ignored or over ridden in others. As will be observed in the students narrations in the following sections, gender difference was least emphasised in the area of educational attainment with both men and women expressing that women were as intelligent as men and were as capable as men if not more capable. Connell (2002) contends that men and women display similar traits but that it is not an individual decision, it is socially regulated. The next section gives an in-depth examination of student's engagement with traditional gender roles and ways in which these roles have either been transformed, reinforced or even reconfigured.

7.4 The politics of relocation on gender role negotiation

Gender roles form a major component of one's gender identity. Gender roles refer to behaviours, expectations and role sets defined by society as masculine or feminine. These behaviours consist of personality aspects such as aggressiveness and gentleness and social roles such as domestic roles, conjugal roles and parenting roles (Pleck, 1981). Of great significance however is that gender difference does not just exist but it is something that happens and must be made to happen. This means that it can be unmade or altered.

The transnational space is a site which provides students with opportunities for exploring and redefining their ideas, perceptions and understanding of gender roles and expectations. Within the transnational space, circumstances of necessity and opportunity may force a shift of traditional gender roles for immigrant students. Male and female students however had different perspectives on how to engage with the cultural norms and practices related to gender as is illustrated in subsequent sections.

Peter from Kenya who all along maintained that he had undergone personal growth explained that the transnational space had enabled him to come to terms with his love for cooking; a traditionally feminine gender role. He had always loved cooking but after going through circumcision, he had been discouraged from cooking since it was seen as a woman's role. He then became embarrassed about cooking at home and began to insist that his sisters do it instead. He advances that coming to South Africa enabled him to reclaim that part of him that he had lost. He had an opportunity to transmit this

transformation back home in 2007 much to the amazement of his brothers who still hold

on to traditional gender roles as can be seen in the following excerpt:

> I have changed in terms of cooking. I love cooking, the other day I bought myself two cookery books. You will be surprised, I may not follow everything in the book but I personally love baking I have changed in terms of cooking. I went to Johannesburg about three weeks ago and went to a book fair and I saw an old cookery book and I bought it...When I went back home to Kenya in 2007, I made *chapatis* (flat and round bread) for Christmas. My brother in law found it so strange because there I was in an apron kneading the dough and I am very good at it. For them the kitchen is still a woman's place (Peter, Kenya).

The transnational space had also enabled Peter to change in terms of respecting his sisters

and women by extension to a level where he could appreciate that a woman could

perform better than him. This appreciation of women's capability to perform even better

than men was reiterated by Rotich also from Kenya who advanced that he had changed

his view on gender roles. This was because coming to South Africa had made his wife

take over the roles he used to perform and she executed them much better than Rotich.

> I have changed in the way I view gender roles because my coming here made my wife take over the roles I used to play such as taking care of my parents and other roles 100%. We could consult but I made a choice to let her take control and I have come to see that she has a lot of potential. It is not that I thought that she could not do it but I have come to see that she has certain qualities. So in a sense my view of women has changed. As I was growing up my father used to tell me that women are more intelligent than men and coming here has proven that to be true. My wife has so much potential, for example when I go home I find that she has initiated some project and I just let her continue with them without my interference because she can do it better than me. Sometimes the workers come to ask me for something and I tell them to go ask my wife and they do not understand why. I would say that we now treat each other as equals. It is not that I never used to treat her like an equal but I used to find myself more equal than her. We are now treating each other like colleagues; we consult on a lot of issues. Sometimes she takes a decision without consulting me; for example this time I went home and found out that she had decided to make a granary without asking me whereas if I was there she would have consulted me or listened to me if I told

189

her that we should not construct it. I however told her specifically not to ask me and when she would sometimes ask me, I would not answer. She then has to make the decisions and hence I respect her more (Rotich, Kenya).

After realising that his wife was much more capable than him, Rotich now trusted her to make some decisions without necessarily consulting him. For this reason he expresses that he has come to respect her much more and regards her more of an equal and in some cases superior to him. Rotich further advances that the transnational space has changed the gender dynamic in his family in the following way:

> For example the meaning of going out as a family changes especially as a result of having interacted with culture where people are used to going out as a family (in South Africa). I come from a culture where people do not go out as a family. You then realise the value of going out as a family. I have also deliberately changed some things. For example when we make food at home we put it on the table for people to serve themselves. I have discouraged my wife from serving them (Rotich, Kenya).

Rotich also incorporated the newly acquired value of going out as a family within his nuclear family. He has also further discouraged his wife from playing the subservient role of serving food to guests and instituted the practice of guests serving themselves while visiting his family. On his side, Rotich advanced that coming to South Africa had made him learn how to cook. In his *Kalenjin* community, a man was not expected to cook. However after interacting with various people from different cultures in South Africa and observing how they handled food, Rotich asserted that he had learnt how to cook as can be observed in the following excerpt.

> ...when I came here (South Africa) I did not know how to cook. I have however learnt how to cook. In fact I am a very good cook right now. Some times when I

go back home (Kenya) and cook my wife gets very surprised at the good food I cook which I never used to do before I came here. Some people will say that you have traveled a lot and you are trying to be like white people. I also think that things are changing slowly and people are beginning to be open minded (Rotich, Kenya).

On trying to remit this new social perspective to his people back home they constructed him as having become too westernised and having abandoned traditional gender roles. According to them being in the kitchen with his wife and cooking with her meant that she had allowed himself to be dominated by his wife. Rotich however explained that he would not relent on his newly acquired perspective on gender roles. He asserted that even if the members of his community questioned him they could not shun him because they still needed him on account of his education.

Education and personal growth in the transnational space then appear to have provided some leverage in negotiating gender roles for both Rotich and Peter. Rotich however asserted that women should not abdicate the cooking role by saying:

I do not think that gender means that women should not cook. It means that men must also learn to cook (Rotich, Kenya).

As will be explored later on there seems to be a pervasive perception that embracing gender equality implied that women "abdicate" their designated gender role of cooking. This did not sit well with either the men or the women interviewed in this study. The levels of the negotiation of this role were however different. Though not totally detaching themselves from traditionally masculine gender roles, Rotich and Peter advanced that they had embraced some female traditional gender roles and had developed greater

respect for women within the transnational space.

Jasper in contrast with Peter and Rotich expressed that the transnational space had affected the gender role dynamic in his family in a negative way. As opposed to Rotich who has found his wife to be a capable decision-maker, Jasper constructed his wife as incapable of making decisions without his constant supervision and as immature in terms of her social interactions as shown below. He only delegated his decision making powers to his wife out of necessity. Of great concern to Jasper was how his roles as a decision maker and father to his son had been adversely affected and how this would affect his son's development as expressed in the following excerpt:

> The change is not only in not seeing them too often. You see, I have got a son and I am worried that he will not be shaped the way I would have wanted him to be shaped. The other day when I went home the picture I got was that he was not doing well as compared to how he was doing when I was there. With my wife there will be some things that you will find yourself complaining about. Like when you are not around she will find herself having more friends, women friends. When I am around she reduces these friends. When I am back home obviously I make more effective decisions than when I am here because I see myself phoning her to make decisions on my behalf so she cannot manage, she does not manage. Actually that is one thing that is worrying me. I do not know when I am going to finish these studies. My role as a decision maker has been affected very much and I think even my wife realises this (Jasper, Botswana).

Within the transnational space, Jasper has also found himself having to cook a role he did not play back home. Upon returning home Jasper expresses his intention to revert to traditional gender roles as shown below:

> Actually it is not a question of changing because if you change it means forever but what I have done is to alter my personality and behavior to suit the situation

192

while I am here. Back home as a man I do not have to cook because according to my culture that is the women's department but here I find myself cooking and washing for myself. When I go home I adjust back to the situation because there are some gender role expectations that I am expected to fulfill. It will be funny for the wife to see me taking over her roles. Okay, these days we know that there are some changes but you can only assist when you are asked and when it is necessary but you cannot take over the women's department. I have to be careful and that is why I say I have not changed but I have adjusted to the situation to survive so to speak (Jasper, Botswana).

Whereas Rotich and Peter expressed that they had undergone some transformation in their perception of gender roles, Jasper held on to traditional gender roles and engaged in what I would call *situational transformation* in order to negotiate his current circumstances without the intention of changing completely. In so doing, Jasper displayed the dialectic between maintaining traditional gender roles and addressing necessity. Even while at home, Jasper invoked culture and tradition to legitimise his minimal support of his wife in household chores since culturally household chores are perceived to be a woman's responsibility and he could only assist his wife but not take over her role.

Jasper advanced that men and women were the same in terms of thinking and performance in their studies and should be accorded equal opportunities in terms of education. At the household level however, he maintained that gender difference should be reinforced because traditional gender roles brought a semblance of order in the household. According to Jasper ambiguity in terms of gender roles or reconstructing gender roles would lead to chaos in society. He attributed prostitution and the spread of HIV/AIDS to attempting to restructure gender roles and shifting power from a certain group to another. Jasper imputed blame for prostitution and spread of HIV/ AIDS on

women not taking into cognisance the fact men were active participants in transactional sex and were also responsible for the spread of HIV/AIDS. Jasper then seemed to be implying that traditional gender roles with women being home bound were necessary to regulate women's sexual behaviour.

Even though at some point Jasper seemed to acknowledge that the dual work role for women, that is at the work place and at home, was unfair to women, of greatest concern to him was the loss of power on men's part if gender roles were to be re-structured. Though he had acknowledged that women were as capable as men in terms of educational pursuits, he revealed that this was intimidating to men by citing the following predicament:

> You see when women get educated, they get good jobs and they buy big homes and good cars. This intimidates men who say, "What can I tell the children? She will not listen to me". You know currently in Botswana this educated women are now saying that they want to surrender so that they can get men to marry them (Jasper, Botswana).

In reflecting on gender relations in his home country, Jasper advanced that educated women posed a threat to men and added to their sense of loss of power by "usurping" men's roles as providers. Men however reclaimed their power by refusing to marry such women. According to Jasper then, the educated women in Botswana were considering capitulating in a bid to make themselves marriageable.

Zebedee from Zimbabwe reiterated Jaspers sentiments by asserting that equal rights should be in the area of education while traditional gender roles should be maintained.

194

Zebedee expressed that rights had to do with availing opportunities to women and dealing with violence against women. According to him these rights should not interfere with traditionally prescribed gender roles in the home. Men should continue being the head and women should be the homemakers. In reference to the situation back home in Zimbabwe, Zebedee said that even though women had risen economically, social relations remained traditional and women were not decision-makers. Relieving women from traditional gender roles as in the South African case according to Zebedee was for the worse. Zebedee advanced that women should remain nurturers and should respect their husbands even though they may be earning more than them as highlighted below:

> Women in South Africa have gained protection from the laws and they have been relieved of their traditional duties. Back home in Zimbabwe, a woman still has to be subordinate to a man and fulfill traditional gender roles. Women in South Africa have become very much independent. I do not know what you can call this disassociation from gender roles. Is it transformation for better or for worse? The women have gained more rights but we really cannot call it empowering. Certain rights are necessary especially when it comes to extreme behaviors. Equal rights however have to be distinguished from traditional duties that have to be performed according to sex. A woman has a certain role to play in the family as a mother. Just because we have equal rights does not mean that my wife has to go and wash her own car. It does not mean that I have to have turns to cook. Rights have to be accompanied by education for women on their role in society. I am also thinking from a biblical perspective, the man has to be a provider. However in modern times, we find women earning more so the man has to treat the woman accordingly. The woman must however understand that she must not take undue advantage of the man (Zebedee, Zimbabwe).

Jasper and Zebedee are clearly opposed to restructuring of gender roles which they construe as loss of power for men. Men such as Jasper and Zebedee were opposed to gender equality because for them it implied the loss of the patriarchal dividend which Connell (2002) defines as the benefit to men as a group from maintaining an unequal

195

gender order. This benefit includes economic advantage, prestige authority and access to institutional power among others. The patriarchal dividend is universally distributed among men though this distribution is not uniform but is mediated by economic class, social status, race, ethnicity, sexuality and age.

The notion of the patriarchal dividend was clearly elucidated by Peter from Kenya who as earlier mentioned claimed to have undergone transformation since he came to South Africa. Peter advanced that it was difficult for men to surrender patriarchal privilege as amplified below

> I think that it is difficult for a man to undo a patriarchal mindset than for a woman because for them it is associated with loss of control, loss of power and loss of decision-making and then include money there. Different men would take this differently. I can only speak from a personal point of view. Like when I go home, I sit and chat with my sisters in law and later on they tell my brothers, "And your brother this…" I sympathise with them because there is nothing I can do (Peter, Kenya).

The transnational space had however made Peter question this privilege as a result of loss of social status and undergoing personal growth. As a result of this negotiation, he realised the harm that the patriarchal privilege did to women. For this reason, he could be able to sympathise with the plight of his sisters in- law back home in Kenya because his own brothers exercised their patriarchal privilege over them displaying a hegemonic masculinity.

Kabila from the DRC attested to the fact that his perception has changed since studying gender. He however contended that it would be difficult to implement this change in a

patriarchal society as stated below:

> My perception of men and women has changed having studied gender. I do not know if I will implement it due to the society I come from (it is patriarchal). It however depends on the environment. It opens my understanding of gender equality and helps me find ways of dealing with gender issues. My understanding has been broadened (Kabila, DRC).

Kabila is representative of a group of men who are willing to accept the rewards of a hegemonic masculinity without challenging the patriarchal system from which he benefits and hence representing a complicit masculinity (Connell, 2000). Complicit masculinity is embodied by the many men in society who do not themselves live up to the ideal of hegemonic masculinity, yet benefit from its dominant position in the patriarchal order.

Some men however viewed patriarchy as positive depending on how it is practiced. Rotich who earlier on said that he had come to respect his wife's capabilities as a result of negotiating the family relationship in the transnational space maintained that the man was the head of the home and the woman was to submit to his leadership. This was because in every institution there needed to be someone who was answerable and in the case of the home, it was the man. According to him, submission did not mean that a man should mistreat his wife or exclude her from decision making. He then recounted how in his case, he had entrusted all his finances to his wife while he was in South Africa. He explained the headship- submission relationship in the following manner:

My wife is the one who manages the workers at home, she sends me money. If she wants to invest in shares she will phone me and tell me about it and I will tell her to go ahead. For me I realise that I do not know everything and I need to tap into her knowledge. The fact that a woman should submit to her husband does not mean that she does not have a say. The woman must contribute to decision-making but there should be someone who is answerable and that is the man. In case we disagree completely that is where that man makes the final decision and the wife should submit. Headship means accountability in case something goes wrong. It is like being an over-all manager in an organisation but this manager does not work independently. Decisions should be made jointly with the wife and some with the children. A family cannot run efficiently if there are two centres of power especially when they are pulling in opposite directions. Where the church goes wrong is bringing in a sense of absolute submission of women to men even when the man is leading the family in the wrong direction (Rotich, Kenya).

Rotich asserted that though the man was the head of the house, he should act in consultation with his wife and that absolute submission of the wife was a product of the church and by extension Christianity. Gordon (1996:29) advances that in pre-colonial African societies "women often had enormous autonomy that helped to dilute tendencies towards male dominance". Scholarship by African male intellectuals such as Isike and Okeke Uzodike (2008) call for a reinvention of African patriarchies claiming that patriarchy in pre-colonial African societies was such that it respected women and retained significant socio-cultural and economic spaces for them. According to them, the current negative practice of patriarchy in Africa has been brought about by the forces of imperialism, colonialism and foreign religions.

However, whether patriarchy in pre-colonial times was beneficial to women or not, it is questionable how a reinvention of patriarchy would be beneficial to women in contemporary times. As elucidated by various male students, patriarchal privilege which is mostly in the hands of men seems to be the driving force in their motivation to hold

198

onto patriarchal culture even within the transnational space.

For the foreign African women students, the transnational space had served to elevate their profile in the sight of the people back in their home countries to the extent of involvement in decision- making as can be observed in the case of Jessica below.

> Before I came to South Africa, I did not have recognition in the family. It is not because I have remitted much money back home. Talking on the phone now I realise that they respect me in decision making more than before. I say the same things now that I said before I came but they would not listen to me. They would even listen to my younger brother more than me. A prophet is not without honor except in his own home town (Jessica, Cameroon).

The respondent expressed that though she had not remitted much in terms of money the transnational space had enabled her to remit socially in terms of her ideas and opinions which were now much more valued than when she was at home. She admitted that though her level of education played a major role in the elevation of her social status, she would not have received the same honour if she had studied in her home country. Further, she expressed that the transnational space had given her room to construct herself as an assertive and independent minded woman since she has broken loose from familial and cultural constraints. The same respondent however had to negotiate how and when to display this new found independence as shown below:

> I can however be free and assertive in a population that will understand me. Going to a rural environment and showing that you are emancipated no one will understand you. They will find you culturally unclean. I am an African woman and I will always remain an African woman. I am an emancipated African woman who is very dynamic, who can change time and again depending on who she meets. The way I express my self is different depending on who I meet. Education has opened me up to have a critical outlook in life but as an African girl I still

have cultural values. If it warrants me to stoop low, I will stoop low. If a situation warrants me to stand my grounds then I will stand my grounds. Normally a traditional African woman will be subordinate and a recipient of whatever comes her way. Sometimes, I will play that role of subservient women depending on the kind of audience. I am ready to adapt, I will not go to a rural area and display this aura of an emancipated woman since I will find myself like a fish out of irrigate (Jessica, Cameroon).

Jessica though asserting that the transnational space has made her more assertive and confident expressed that it would be challenging to exercise her newfound freedom and independence in her rural setting back home. This is because it would be considered culturally unacceptable. She then constructed herself as an "emancipated African woman" meaning that she would hold onto her newfound independence and display it when the situation warranted it such as in political gatherings. However, while in her rural setting where her community subscribed to traditional gender roles she would adopt the role of a subservient woman.

Mariam highlighted that her coming to South Africa had provided her with an opportunity to inspire other women to fund their own education rather than waiting for government support. She asserted that women should aspire to advance in their studies since they were capable of performing much better than men.

Most of the women in Zanzibar for a long time did not think that it is okay to pay for their own studies. They think the work of educating them belongs to the government but when they saw me going to pay for myself at the university level they asked themselves, "Why not pay for myself?" They are confident of themselves now and I said before our island is very small and a lot of people know that I am paying for myself. I think for me I can say that women can do as much or much better than men. So women should continue with their studies. What can be helpful for a family woman it can help if they plan together and even apply to go and study together (Mariam, Tanzania).

200

On negotiating between her educational achievements and traditional gender roles in the transnational space, Mariam maintained she would still carry out her traditionally prescribed gender roles at home as elucidated below:

> When I go home I do all the work for myself. My house is a five bedroomed flat. I have to clean, cook, wash clothes for my children and my husband. I do not have any assistant but when I start going to the university I think I will have to get one but otherwise I do everything. I normally mix with people very much because I am a researcher and I go to conduct interviews among them. I think my education has not caused me to change very much and people are still very confident of me. I normally commute with the low income people and I have not changed much although people were saying, "She will not even greet us". I want to remain the same because I am a researcher I go to the rural areas to do research, I owe them very much because I go there, do research, give them maybe five thousand shillings and I go and write a thesis or even ask for funds (Mariam, Tanzania).

Though Mariam believed that women should pursue education to the highest level she says that education had not changed her much in the sense that she still carried out her traditionally prescribed gender roles while at home. Mariam was also strategic in not depicting herself as having changed as a result of her education because in this way she could be able to interact with her research participants in the rural areas for purposes of data collection.

A number of the students such as Jessica and Mariam belong to a combined rural- urban space of social and economic relationships while in their home countries. The challenge in living in both urban and rural spaces then was that one had to adopt different lifestyles depending on their location with the rural leaning more towards the traditional while the urban leaned more towards the modern. While men students expressed that within the

rural space men were accorded more respect, the women students singled out the urban space as more emancipatory for them because they were somewhat free from the social constraints of their communities in the rural areas.

Pauline a PhD student in Community Development Studies from Uganda explained her negotiation of the rural- urban space in the following excerpt:

> The system is still highly patriarchal. Men still make a lot of decisions but now it is becoming more difficult especially when a woman has gone to school and is educated. What is happening at home now is that there is a culture that you succumb to when you are in the rural areas and there is a culture that you succumb to when you are in the urban areas. So what I will do in the rural areas is totally different from what I will do in the urban areas. The urban area gives women a little bit of space to decide what they want and especially if they are educated. I stay in the urban area but I go to the rural areas over holidays like Christmas though I do not stay there for a long time. I behave differently while I am there (Pauline, Uganda).

Jessica who had described herself as a humble rural girl who intended to hold onto her cultural values despite her education however expressed that her behaviour in rural settings was an act and not a reflection of who she had become. She was no longer the traditional girl she once was but in a rural setting she had to put up a performance to give the impression that she had not changed. She explained her negotiation of the rural–urban space in the following manner:

> It depends on the kind of people I meet for example in the rural areas it is traditional people and in the urban areas it is ministers and directors. With the urban people, I am able to freely articulate myself. When I meet the traditional people I will not be able to be my natural self, I will have to fake the identity and condescend (Jessica, Cameroon).

The desire to create the impression that one had not changed despite acquiring an education was held onto by various women students.

Sylvia from Kenya also highlighted that the transnational space had enabled her to acquire educational qualifications. Sylvia, who, as earlier mentioned, came to join her husband in South Africa and in the process left a well paying job in Kenya asserted that she has been able to further her studies and has great career aspirations. Sylvia who shares gender roles with her husband expressed that despite her educational qualifications and career ambitions, she would remain humble and her knowledge would make her a better wife and mother.

> I feel that it has opened great doors and opportunities for me. At least the certificate I have means a lot. That is one of the positive things that I have no regret about being in this country(South Africa) and it is one thing that I would not have had back home. It makes me feel on top there as a woman. I can be able to tell a woman who is struggling with a family that it is possible to study when you have a family. When I watch on TV and see women who work for the United Nations, ambassadors. I ask myself, "Why not me? What do they have that I do not have? I really admire women who are not proud but humble, even coming from a humble background but they are on top there because of their educational qualifications. It propels me to move forward" It does not change the woman that I am. It makes me to want to be a better wife and mother as a result of the knowledge (Sylvia, Kenya).

Increased participation in the labour market for educated women means increase in social mobility, economic independence and relative autonomy. It is therefore expected that with education women can respond to opportunities, challenge their traditional roles and change their lives. Daphne (1998) however advances that customs, culture, tradition and religion are major impediments to the changing of gender roles. Jessica, Mariam and

203

Sylvia though exuding confidence concerning their educational qualifications maintain that education will not change them and that they would remain humble. One of the ways they intend to do this is by upholding traditional gender roles.

While one may have expected that the female students would invoke the notion of gender equality to give them access to participation and leadership opportunities, I was surprised to find that many of the women were quick to distance themselves from issues of gender and were willing to hold onto some of their cultural understanding of gender norms. For instance Norah like Jessica asserted that she was an African woman who could be anything she desired to be (she is pursuing her PhD in civil engineering) without giving up traditional gender roles such as being a homemaker and the caregiver to her children. She appeared to associate gender equality with giving up traditional gender roles something she was not willing to do since it was an integral part of who she was as is elucidated below:

> I am not that gender type. I know that I am a woman, an African woman. To talk about gender   equality I know that that thing is there and that there is nothing that I want to do that I will not do because I am a woman. If I want to change the tyre of my car, I can do it. If I want to do my PhD I will do. I cannot be restricted in my family if I want to go higher in my education because I am a woman. The woman is still the homemaker, taking care of the children and the home. You cannot get out of this. It depends on how you were brought up. I will want to do the things my mother did in my house. I will not become modernised and say that I will not cook and I will buy fast food. It is the way you are brought up (Norah, Cameroon).

Norah asserted that though she was highly educated, itself an aspect of modernisation, she would not become modernised in terms of traditional gender roles and in particular

cooking indicating the dialectic between tradition and modernity. Feagin and Parker (1990) advance that modernisation and aspirations to modernity are probably the most permeating features of contemporary times with most societies caught between the web of becoming modernised or continuing with their own traditions of modernity. Historically, modernisation entailed the process of change towards social, economic and political systems that had been developed in Western Europe and North America. Within the modernisation process major clusters of traditional social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded and new patterns of behavior are made available.

Some characteristics of modernisation are exposure to modern life through machinery, buildings, response to mass media, change of residence, urbanisation, the spread of literacy and secular education among others (Feagin and Parker, 1990). Social forces such as urban life, modernisation and changing technology can produce change in gender relations.

The degree of exposure to the urban lifestyles and opportunities and the navigation of the rural-urban space had great bearing on how the students would later navigate the transnational space. The case of Norah is representative of other women students who chose to embrace certain aspects of modernisation such as urban life and secular education but were resistant to change in traditional gender roles especially in the home. Angelina from the DRC in resonance with Norah also distanced herself from the discourse of gender equality by asserting that gender equality should be focused in the areas of work and study opportunities and not at transformation of gender roles. She

made the assumption that in a family setting a man will automatically want to share gender roles with his working wife. Angelina seemed to ignore that fact that gender roles are inculcated through a process of socialisation and most African men will be hesitant to share in women's traditional gender roles as illustrated by Muthuki (2004). Angelina expressed her views on gender equality in the following manner:

> I never believed in that thing (gender equality) as long as they give women the opportunity to work and to study. I think in fighting for gender equality, they should fight for studying together and not take it to the kitchen and the bedroom. It should be about liberating women's minds and not in the household. When people focus more on the housework they forget the essentials. Like me in my house, every time there is something that requires me to go up the house, lift heavy things I do not do it. Even after shopping, I jump out of the car and leave my brother to carry the heavy stuff. If we have to talk about sharing the work like my brother doing the cleaning then we will be missing the point. The point should be then do we have the same opportunities, I do not think that if we both go to work then a man will come home and wait for his wife to cook for him or bring him water, we should focus on opportunities and helping women to get these opportunities (Angelina, DRC).

The perceptions of the above mentioned female students also highlight the fact that it is not just that most African men would be unwilling to share in women's traditional gender roles but that educated women may also be unwilling to let men perform traditionally female gender roles. Does this then mean that these women are adopting western liberal feminism which advocates for formal equality in the public space without challenging patriarchal structures or the causes of the deep ideological causes of the subordination of women?

De la Rey (1992) documents that at nearly every forum when there is discussion about

206

various forms of women's oppression and the need for gender transformation, culture is usually highlighted as an impediment to change. Culture plays a huge part in what one becomes by helping one to adapt to their environment and gives one a sense of community with their past. Culture also functions to control and limit individual behavior so that one conforms to the predominant values and norms (De la Rey, 1992) such as traditional gender roles.

Bhachu (1996) in her examination of reconstructed identities of Asian women in Britain however contends that an ethnocentric perspective on Black and Asian women gives the impression that their cultural values are oppressive to them. This is because this perspective sees these cultures as rigid and unchanging rather than as values that the women continuously adapt. Bhachu (1996) continues to advance that there is a lack of understanding of African women's perspectives of culture and why they accept some of the traditional roles of the communities they belong to. Ngcongo (1993) advances that African women experience a dilemma as a result of the cultural upbringing of an ideal of a "good" African woman who is subservient to male authority and is a home maker versus being an ambitious, independent career woman as a result of western education. This negotiation is well documented by Muthuki (2004) in her examination of changing gender roles amongst Zulu- speaking academics at UKZN and the dilemma faced by these academics in negotiating between modern gender roles occasioned by their western education and maintaining traditional gender roles as a result of cultural upbringing.

The independence acquired by women as a result of their western education would be

perceived as pride and culturally unclean in some situations such as the rural areas as explained by Jessica. For the single women, a high level of education would be seen to diminish their marriage prospects as previously highlighted by Jasper and reiterated by Norah below.

> Some people will think you are pig headed and not well mannered. In my case they think I am a "big book woman" because I am doing my PhD in civil engineering. In my country there are not many women engineers in fact it is rare to find a woman engineer. I have friends who keep telling me, "Get a husband before you finish your PhD because men will get afraid of you and they will not even approach you (Norah, Cameroon).

The perception of educated women as strong-headed and independent minded and the possible consequences of being alienated in a patriarchal society and diminished marriage prospects for the single women is a possible explanation as to why the foreign African women students from the above excerpts maintained that they would remain humble and would not abdicate traditional gender roles despite their academic achievements.

These foreign African women students engage in the transnational process both as migrants as well as African women charged with the customary responsibility of preserving indigenous cultures and traditions. Most African cultures are patriarchal in origin, and this patriarchal attitude prescribes and governs gender relations between men and women. Ojong (2005) confirms that African professional women migrants in South Africa find that even though they have risen economically and in professional status in their host country, their social relations remain traditional and women are expected not to

abandon their prescribed roles despite their new-found status and economic independence.

Davis (1994) remarks that male domination in patrilineal societies is built into the very fabric of social and cultural systems, and that even though a woman might be brave enough to challenge these traditional roles and try to step out of her traditional female role, her husband might still be able to exercise ultimate control through the systemic reinforcement of patriarchy and re-establish the status quo because he has all the weight of cultural history, tradition and precedent on his side. The subservience of women is also reinforced by religion. African professional migrant women who might be expected to be leaders and innovators with regard to social change cannot easily disregard or nullify the accumulated centuries of Islamic and Christian influence and dominance in Africa (Howard, 1993). Both these religions condone, in varying degrees, depending on denominational affiliation, the subservient role and status of women and the necessity for male headship in both the domestic context and in the community at large.

However, although the formal structures of society are still largely patriarchal, a close examination of the foreign African women's strategies, the choices they make and relationships they establish indicate that even within the confines and restrictions patriarchal structures, they are able to negotiate multiple roles and in some instances circumvent patriarchal constraints. Despite the challenges that they face, foreign African women migrants are active rather than passive actors in their own social spaces. Goetz (1997) argues that the intentions and plans of a patriarchal system can be subverted by

209

the abilities of individual agents to over-ride and re-direct these intentions to suit their own interests.

This kind of negotiation according to Buijs (1996) calls for an understanding of the roles of migrant women as initiators of newer cultural forms within the transnational space. Ojong (2005) in her examination of entrepreneurship and identity amongst a group of Ghanaian women in Durban explains that Ghanaian women have become economically independent in the transnational space and are unwilling to relinquish control of their finances to their husbands in the name of submission. Ojong (2005) further points out that these women are willing to negotiate reasonable terms with their husbands as long as their husbands did not undermine their economic independence.

Though the foreign African women students in this study expressed that they would still uphold traditional gender roles, the fact that these women have migrated to South Africa in pursuit of education autonomously and that the married ones were conducting family relationships across transnational space indicated that they were traversing gender roles and creating new ways performing gender roles. For instance the concept of mothering had undergone considerable change in the context of transnationalism where women could mother through across transnational space creating a type a different type of motherhood namely, transnational motherhood. Westwood and Phizacklea (2000) advance that the subjective mark of a transnational would be cultural hybridity that is the ways in which transnationals challenge the notion of a fixed identity.

From the narrations of these women, one can observe a hybrid of gender identities in one person such as a *mother, a home maker, a leader, a professional, risk taker and independent minded.* This is in resonance with Connell (2002) who contends that a great majority of people combine both masculine and feminine characteristics in varying blends rather than being all one or another. The transnational students' then in negotiating between challenging and reinforcing existing gender ideologies acquire new forms of gendered identities. This is best exemplified by Jessica who describes herself as an "emancipated African woman".

Ojong (2005) notes that the freedom of constructing new identities is made possible by the less rigidly defined social and cultural conditions these students encounter in post-apartheid South Africa. From the findings of the study it can be observed that as the foreign African students encounter multiple levels and forms of social and cultural contradictions which act to challenge, shape and transform their ideas, thoughts and sense of self they end up brokering new gender identities. Gender identity is then framed as a social and cultural construction which is negotiated through social behavior and performance (see Butler 2001, Freeman and McElhinny 2001). The struggle and tension between challenging hegemonic notions of gender on the one hand and reinforcing the same on the other hand ends up enabling the transnational foreign African student to acquire the mark of cultural hybridity thus brokering new gender identities. Gender identity then as opposed to being a fixed identity can be observed to be a fluid and contextualised process of "unfolding" and constant "reconstitution" (Hall 1996).

211

7.5 Conclusion

This chapter set out to interrogate the politics of relocation and its impact on gender roles by examining how foreign students of African origin were interpreting and re defining their gender roles and expectations in the transnational space. The chapter examined the renegotiation at various levels namely: inter-personal relationships, family relationships and gender role designation. The students expressed that they had experienced great changes in the area of personal growth as shown by the statements more *patient, tolerant, diplomatic, understanding, accepting and less judgmental.*

This chapter also examined the possibilities and constraints of conducting family across transnational space and the impact on gender roles. In the area of gender role negotiation the transnational space provided and opportunity for both men and women to traverse gender roles with men ending up performing traditional female gender roles such as cooking and childcare while women's role in decision–making back home became much more valued. The negotiation of gender roles was however problematised by the dialectic between the modern as a result of western education and maintaining traditional gender roles as a result of cultural upbringing.

The women students held onto the traditional gender roles and distanced themselves from the discourse on gender equality in an attempt to live up to the notion of a "good African woman". They however also held onto their new found independence and capacity to be more involved in decision-making leading to hybridized gender identities such as "an emancipated African woman" as illustrated by Jessica. While some men adopted more

female gender roles without relinquishing their masculine roles, others maintained that traditional gender roles should be upheld.

Such men felt that re-structuring of gender roles and gender equality would lead to a loss of power on the part of men. These men were clearly unwilling to give up the patriarchal privilege within which they stood to gain power, economic advantage and prestige. Those men who did not subscribe to a hegemonic masculinity displayed a complicit masculinity by not challenging the ideal of hegemonic masculinity, but by benefiting from its dominant position in the patriarchal order. Patriarchy is therefore not entirely subverted in the transnational context but rather gender identities are renegotiated in new patriarchal contexts.

Chapter Eight

Religion and gender identity renegotiation

8.1 Introduction

Most scholars acknowledge the salience of migrants' transnational economic, political and socio-cultural practices, but it is only recently that they have begun to pay attention to the relationship between religion and transnational migration (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). Migration is more than a physical experience in that it involves the entirety of a person's being. According to Bulcha (2006:40), "uprooting is more than a physical absence from home. It is a predicament which concerns the inner balance of the individual. In other words, it involves an emotional crisis caused by the individual's separation from their natural physical and social environment and a psychological problem of adjusting to the new one."

Religious beliefs appear to be useful in serving to restore the inner balance of an individual and reducing the levels of anxiety amongst immigrants. Religion is a key determinant of personal choices and attitudes of people. Ojong (2005) advances that religious beliefs affect us in our private domain of personal attitudes and view of life and this in turn has a bearing on the way we live our outward lives. Many people find part of their identity with their religion and in turn their religious beliefs have a great impact on

their lifestyles. Religion is therefore an aspect of people's adaptation to their environment.

This chapter examines the different ways in which religion influences immigrants' negotiation of the transnational space. The chapter considers how religion informs immigrants' ethnic and gender-based identities and their experiences of social life. I also examine how religion is important in students' life in religious organisations such as church, the mosque and outside of church organisations such as at the workplace in within the transnational space.

8.2 Religion and the negotiation of the transnational space

As highlighted in chapter two in the literature review, the imagination or mind work concept of Mahler and Pessar's (2001) gendered geographies of power framework attributes migration to the individual characteristics such as initiative which is demonstrated by imagining, planning and strategising. Beyond the role of the individual in all this undertakings is the influence of their religious belief attributing the events in their lives to divine intervention. This is well illustrated by Eleanor a Pentecostal Christian from Liberia who attributed her coming to South Africa to the hand of God.

Matshidze (2004) believes that Pentecostalism has gained increased popularity in West Africa because of its ability to produce radical changes in believers' lives. Within this belief system, God restores hope in the midst of life's troubles and anxieties. Eleanor had

215

for a long time been trying to further her studies abroad but was unable to do so because she did not have funding and there was war in her country, Liberia. She later obtained the funding but required a lawyer to sign a bond so that she could continue drawing a salary from her place of work. Before the lawyer could sign the bond, another war aimed at removing the then Liberian President Charles Taylor from power broke out and Eleanor had to flee from the town where she was working. When the war later subsided she was able to sort out her documents, make applications and receive admission at UKZN. She attributed the success of her plans to God's intervention and expresses this in the following manner

> I started applying in 2003 and in 2004 I was here. As a Christian I can say it was pre- destination. I tell you the truth, nothing influenced nothing. I am an intercessor and I believe that God told me to apply for this course. So I was praying for this application and I heard the Holy Spirit tell me to prepare for the interviews for they were going to be challenging. I was led to speak to someone who would prepare me for the interview. I did not know anyone at the interview and it was challenging and I knew that I was answering the questions because the Holy Spirit had told me go to that person. I knew that no one would have been able to answer all these questions (Eleanor, Liberia).

Eleanor who had also attributed her coming to South Africa to her level of education also attributed her coming to predestination. Pre-destination is a Christian concept implying that her coming had been divinely pre-arranged and she had simply stepped into this divine arrangement. Eleanor describes herself as an intercessor meaning that she is a prayerful woman who enjoys deep communication with God and in the process receives instructions concerning what steps to take in her life. She attributes her decision to apply for the course on psychiatric nursing and her ability to answer the questions during the interview for this course to instructions received from God in this divine communication.

216

In the course of the interview Eleanor constructed women as more prayerful than men. While in South Africa, Eleanor is a member of the inter-denominational "Wailing Women's" prayer group based in Durban. In this group they pray for many things including their personal needs, their family members and the salvation of souls for nations. Alongside her education therefore, Eleanor can be seen to assert herself spiritually in the South African context by praying for intervention situations in South Africa and elsewhere.

Ojong (2008) in her examination of *Religion and Ghanaian women entrepreneurship in South Africa* illustrates how migration impacts on ways in which migrants renegotiate their beliefs, practices and attitudes and personal as well as social identities in the host country. For some other students deep religious affiliation developed once they came to South Africa. Jessica attested that while at home in Cameroon she was not much of a Christian but coming to South Africa had made her a new creation. A new creation is a New Testament biblical term indicative of a spiritual rebirth.

Jessica a Roman Catholic expressed her gratitude to God for this rebirth and expressed that she could see the hand of God at work in her coming. Jessica since her coming to South Africa in 2006 as mentioned in an earlier chapter has completed her honours and masters degrees and is currently undertaking her doctoral studies. She has also worked as a tutor, a graduate assistant and is currently occupying the position of a junior lecturer in her department.

Jessica's case exemplifies how immigrants appropriate religious belief in shaping success in their endeavors in the transnational space. Bendix (1996) in his examination of Max Weber's Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism highlights the connection between prosperity and success in life and obedience to religious beliefs. Jessica's progress has served to elevate her in terms of her social status and this has become evident even across transnational space as can be observed in the following relevant excerpt:

> My friends say I have changed. When I speak to them not out of my intellectual capacity, I think my spiritual life is helping, they say I sound different. They are aware of my characteristics (being vocal). I have become more diplomatic. I was born with intelligence but it is my spirituality which I have developed since I came to South Africa. I am now operating freely as an individual. I was constrained by my friends, familial and cultural space. South Africa has enabled me to develop materially, spiritually and intellectually (Jessica, Cameroon).

Jessica attested that she had been intelligent even while she was back home in Cameroon but it was her spiritual dimension that had developed since her coming to South Africa. Whereas she was very argumentative and vocal before, she had now become more diplomatic a change which her friends back in Cameroon had noted in their telephone conversations. This change which she attributed to the grace of God was also instrumental in enhancing her relationships with people from diverse backgrounds in South Africa. This then enabled her to carry out her work related duties in that she could now relate with her students without fear.

Jessica as a result of her spiritual growth is actively involved in her local Catholic church where she does the reading every Sunday. This has made her visible to a point of almost becoming a role model. Members of her congregation look up to her and she feels that

she has to live up to their expectations. In my own case, I have found working with the women at my local church based in Chesterville Township in Durban and particularly the single women to be a platform where I can express myself. Being among some of the senior single women in the church, I find myself called upon to nurture and mentor the younger single women. For transnational students therefore religious beliefs play an enormous role in enabling them to cope with the complexities of the transnational space and in carving out a space where they can assert themselves.

The navigation of their religious beliefs in religious organisations for some students however proved to be a complex process due to forms of discrimination such as racism. Some students expressed that rather than being elevated as in the case of Jessica and myself in their places of religious worship their social status was diminished on account of their race. While religious institutions are mediators in the immigrant assimilation their ability to mediate the stages of assimilation also depends on the national and local political context.

Eleanor a Liberian woman said that at first the issue of race did not affect her because though she went to a church dominated by white people, they were friendly to her. It is only when the church invited an outside presenter to make a presentation on HIV/AIDS that she realised that even in a church setting being black was seen as the "other".

> Actually, I used to think that it does not affect me. I used to go to a white church and those people were very nice to me. I did a course on counselling there and the guy who organises the course invited some people for presentations on HIV/AIDS. Everything was about black people being the highest infected and in

219

the lowest position in life. I got angry. The presenter even said that they should not allow their children to mix with black children because they might get infected I felt terrible. I wondered whether it is only black people who are supposed to have HIV/AIDS. It is sickening. You know it moves me to want to pray for black people. There is something about this black. Any deviation from white is seen as black (Eleanor, Liberia).

Mariam recounted her experiences of discrimination as a black Muslim in a mosque dominated by Indian Muslims in South Africa. She found this discrimination a contrast to her experience in Britain where the Indian Muslims had been friendly. Further, the only black South African Muslim in her mosque did not want to associate with her which could have been as a result of a xenophobic attitude. Mariam's discrimination can be seen as two-fold; that is on the basis of her race as a black person and being a foreigner. This predicament which was diminishing to Mariam's social status however provided her with an opportunity to transcend religious barriers by choosing to associate with other Africans from outside of South Africa even though they were Christians. This realisation also made her more appreciative of local South African women who she had previously regarded in negative light as shown below

I am living with a local student. Before I had heard a lot of bad stories but she is different, I learnt that she is born within a Christian family. In the last two weeks I have come to learn that her grandfather is a pastor and her mother is a church community member. I started to get the picture that some of the South African girls are not bad at all because the picture I had before from other people was that South African girls are cheap girls but I have never seen her with men unless when she is involved in church affairs. I have learnt that there are girls who are brought up well (Mariam, Tanzania).

For Mariam who grew up in a Muslim family on the Muslim dominated island of Zanzibar the transnational space has made her to interact with people of different

220

religious beliefs and be more appreciative of Christians.

Olomide a male student in Religion and Theology student from the DRC attested that he had been involved in church seminars which were aimed at educating the youth. Olomide on account of his involvement in church work attempts to distance himself from the traditional masculine role of being aggressive by saying that being in a different context did not call for one to be aggressive but rather to be creative in the way one addressed situations. He cites an instance when he tried to address a situation of inappropriate behavior of local South Africans students in the following excerpt:

> I remember that there was this one time when I was working at the office and I was trying to correct a situation involving drinking and smoking, wearing short clothes and showing parts of the body, I realised that I was the one who was wrong, you cannot change a rock into a stone. I ended up apologising. If it was in Congo, it is not only me but the society would correct her. These women with short dresses cannot make good wives" When you come to South Africa especially if you go to the beach you feel like this is not the place I was supposed to come. You change because this is the situation you have found yourself in, you become open not in a positive way but in a negative way. You are becoming tolerant but you are suffering inside since you would want to tell this people to change. I would say that you try to accommodate but you do not change (Olomide, DRC).

Olomide highlights a situation at his place of work where he had to work with women whose values accommodated behavior such as drinking, smoking and wearing of what he considered as exposing apparel. This behavior was contrary to Olomide's religious belief and cultural upbringing back in the DRC. Initially, he attempted to establish his dominance by correcting their behavior since he felt that these girls would not make suitable wives. He however later on realised that he could not (or it was not in his place

to) change their behavior. While in the office or in other public spaces therefore he felt compelled to tolerate such behaviour though he was inwardly discomfited.

In church however through seminars, Olomide could address what he considered to be inappropriate behavior for women in relation to the teachings of the Bible. Olomide expressed that he felt that this was his contribution in impacting the South African young people. It is interesting to note that he was mostly concerned with changing the women's behavior though he had also in chapter five cited that the South African men were not responsible when it came to handling their families.

Upon further conversation with Olomide concerning his Christian faith, I realised that he was not a great adherent of Christianity and was even critical of Christian teachings and blamed white missionaries for poverty in Africa. With regards as to why he then felt compelled to teach in church seminars, I learnt that Olomide who was brought up in a community setting would in future also like to engage in community work. The church then provided him with a platform to be creative in using this opportunity to develop his future aspirations of community work.

Said (2001) in his examination of how people in exile compensate for their loss because of being away from home suggests that:

> Much of an exiles life is taken up with compensating for disorienting loss by creating a new world to rule. It is not surprising then that so many exiles seem to be novelists and chess players. Each of these occupations requires a minimal investment in objects and places a great premium in mobility and skill.

Such a migrant can then become a key figure in facilitating transcontinental interaction. Olomide in choosing the church space appears to be creatively carving out a space for himself where he can express himself and be a leader.

It is however interesting to note how in this study as explained in chapter seven and as can be observed from Olomide's case men used religious belief to assert male headship and women's subservience. Women on the other hand drew from their religious faith in dealing with anxieties in the transnational space. Cases such as those of Jessica and Eleanor exemplified how women found ways of appropriating religious beliefs to meet their personal needs and to assert their presence in the transnational context. Of great significance for this study therefore was how the students' religious beliefs informed their gender based identities.

8.3 The impact of religion on the renegotiation of the gendered self

This study in chapters six and seven has already highlighted that gender identity negotiation in the transnational space has to do with power and negotiation of social status. This negotiation presented students with many contradictions to a point where some were unable to locate themselves in a particular social- economic stratum. Often, migrants excluded from mainstream socio-economic institutions may turn to religion as a site for establishing alternative identities (Guest, 2002).

For instance, Eleanor from Liberia though describing herself as a professional woman,

who was not poor, preferred to draw from her religious and cultural values in distancing

herself from social class. She asserted that ethnic relations back home were somewhat

egalitarian in that a person was not judged on the basis of their material possessions. As a

result of this, the rich and the poor could interact without any barriers of social class. This

kind of an identity was also useful in serving her Christian mission as an intercessor.

Lucy a Christian who described herself as being from an upper middle class background

while in Kenya had been unable to classify herself in the new context in South Africa and

consequently drew from her Christian beliefs in distancing herself from social class as

amplified below:

> I would say I was in the upper middle class since I had a good job and I was
> staying in a suburb and I had enough money to either buy or build a house. That is
> back there, here I cannot classify myself. Okay, I am working and earning some
> money but according to South African standards I could be at the lower end of the
> middle class but I do not classify myself... I do not see myself as having a class
> anymore. I prefer to embrace a person that is the inner you as opposed to what
> they have on the outside. It is nice to have a nice car, a nice home but if you draw
> your identity from these I consider them to be very empty. Having your own bank
> account as a woman does provide you with a sense of empowerment but I do not
> want that to get in the way. It would be nice to have a lot of money but I would
> not like that to cloud my vision. By virtue of having a good job I have travelled
> and had lots of money in my pocket but those are not the things that define me as
> a person so I do not take my identity from them. I am informed by my religious
> beliefs and also when I consider the people I have admired it is not because of
> material things (Lucy, Kenya).

Lucy has had the experience of holding a good job and great financial perks implying

economic independence which is a cornerstone for the empowerment of women. As a

student in South Africa, she found herself at the lower end of the middle- class and even

preferred not to classify herself. Though she asserted that it was empowering for a

woman to be financially independent and possess material things, her current lack of these things caused her to draw on her Christian faith in forging an identity that was not based on material things.

Peter from Kenya who was also from a middle class family but described himself as poor in the South African context distanced himself from material things on account of his Christian belief. This dissociation from material things consequently affected how he negotiated his masculinity. He attested that though people might find it strange, he did not define his masculinity in terms of his possessions or his education. He defined himself in terms of service to others with his innate gifts given to him by God. This he admitted this was quite contrary to the way many men defined themselves that is in terms of control, power and decision making. Peter attributed this to personal and spiritual growth. This was empowering for him in the sense that he could now no longer be intimidated by a woman who had higher qualifications or earned more money than him because his identity was based on his own gifts and abilities and not on material possessions.

By transcending social class and citing personal or spiritual growth, Peter also negotiated the transnational space by distancing himself from a hegemonic masculinity reinforced by undergoing circumcision as rite of passage. While other students had used this experience to affirm their masculinities in the transnational space, Peter highlighted how this cultural practice was used to reinforce masculinity to the disadvantage of women. (As he delved into this subject matter, he first sought to ascertain that I was comfortable

with it. He had first thought that it was embarrassing for me as a woman to listen to his narration of his circumcision experience. As a researcher however I assured him that I was at ease with the subject since I wanted to glean as much information as I could).

After the circumcision ceremony, he began to see his sisters in new light and began creating distance and acting superior to them. Peter explains that the transnational space had enabled him to undo this mindset of devaluing of women. As a result of coming to South Africa he had learnt to treat women with respect after some introspection and undergoing personal and spiritual growth. This transformation culminated in his writing a letter of apology to his sisters in Kenya while he was in South Africa for having treated them with disrespect as a result of the teachings he had received in the circumcision ceremony. He did not want them to henceforth treat him in the light of how they had seen him before. Peter's case demonstrates that the impact of religion on gender identity can be offset by the immigration experience.

8.4 Religion and gendered negotiation of social networks

Social networks for migrants are an important institution in offering emotional, intellectual, spiritual, social and economic support. Alsop (2002) advances that a foreign context lacks the inner template that home provides since when one is in a foreign country they lack the history of personal and cultural experiences. Thrust in a new context therefore social networks act as a buffer against alienation and home sickness.

Religious beliefs however to a large extent govern how the migrant students handle social interactions. For instance, Eleanor expressed that being a Christian and an older single woman her social interactions were somewhat limited. Even when she encountered men of her age it was difficult to interact with or even go out with them unless another person was around. She sometimes wondered whether this was a Christian requirement or she was just being conservative as amplified below:

> Sometimes I find that I am scared and that I might offend God. Not that I would get involved in a sexual way as that would be for my husband but to become so close to another man is scaring. Maybe it is not God, it is just me (Eleanor, Liberia).

Lucy a single and older Christian woman also highlighted how social interactions for were complex in the following excerpt:

> There is a limitation in my interactions in the sense that some of the students I interact with are married. Now you do not want to spend a lot of time with married men in case the boundaries get blurred in terms of someone wanting to take this relationship to another level which is not platonic. And then there are a lot of younger men on campus and I relate to them not as equals but more as brothers it is not like we can hang out together over the weekends (Lucy, Kenya).

Social interaction for the single Christian migrant woman is not easy because on account of being single she may be seen as desperate and therefore as a Christian she has to exercise great restraint in her interactions with men and most especially married men.

It is however not only migrant women who have to negotiate their social interactions based on their religious beliefs but some men also find themselves having to navigate this

space. Rotich who is a Christian also found himself alienated from most men because he did not engage in what they considered traditional masculine behaviour such as drinking alcohol and smoking. A number of men students from his home country patronised a club also frequented by international students popularly known as the "Kenyan Pub" in Durban's central business district. Rotich could go to a club but since he neither consumed alcohol nor smoked this would disconnect him from the other men. He therefore had to find other people to interact with. Interestingly, though married, Rotich found that he mostly interacted with women. He explains his interactions in the following manner:

> At a personal level I find that I interact more with women than with men. I have more women friends than men friends. I think it is because I find women being friendlier to me. Secondly, I do not do what most men do and they would consider that odd. I go out but I do not drink or smoke. Most of the men believe that a man must smoke a man must drink. I do not smoke or drink and I do not think that a man must drink. This disconnects me somehow with some men who would have been my friends since I will not go out to drink with them. I do however have some male friends (Rotich, Kenya).

It is interesting to observe that even though for both transnational men and women students religion played a major role in determining who they interacted with, women bore the greater responsibility of avoiding interactions that would be perceived as unbecoming of a Christian woman.

8.5 Religion and future relationship prospects

Through out the course of the study marriage prospects for the single women appeared to

be a source of concern and a cause that required divine intervention. Being a single woman, a Christian and a foreigner pursuing postgraduate education, the interviews with the single women almost always inadvertently seemed to steer in this direction as we engaged in "rapport talk" (Discussed in the methodology chapter). The discussion would ensue on account of the perception that marriage prospects continued to diminish with the higher levels of a woman's education.

For migrant women students, this situation was made even more complex on account of being out of their own cultural context and facing the challenge of locating a prospective partner from their home country or marrying outside their nationality or race. Most of the single women interviewed however expressed a preference for partners from their home countries. South African men as illustrated in chapter five did seem to hold much promise for women from other African countries. Future marriage prospects did not appear to generate the same amount of concern for men since as earlier explained some men became even more popular in their home country (see for example Koffie's case on page 160) and they had prospects in South Africa on account of xenophilia (see chapter five).

In dealing with the challenge of future relationship prospects these single women drew from religious beliefs and resorted to prayers for divine intervention as shown below:

> I actually want to get married but I do not know my prospects. I am just leaving it in the hands of God. I pray about it but I want to travel to the United States because there are so many people from my country there but I am not limited to my country. I want to try and go overseas. My cousin has told me that there are a lot of people from my country there. You know what happens is that some people also get skeptical. There are some people who suggested someone to me but I do

not want just anyone (Eleanor, Liberia).

> In terms of relationships, I pray to God. I have to be myself. Men have said it and showed me that they are intimidated. There are people who would say that marrying me is fire. In Cameroon I had a boyfriend who understood me and would tell me "Jessica, these men do not know that you are very tender hearted." There is a Cameroonian guy I am interested in and I may even travel home this year to connect with him. I am clever and would behave differently. I would be less vocal. I would protect a man if I had one (Jessica, Cameroon).

These women on account of their level of education, age and being away from home expressed that their quest for life partners required divine intervention. Even while praying and trusting God, these women were not passive in their quest for partners but they were also proactive in making use of their religious networks to connect them with prospective partners in and outside of South Africa. Of great interest was the fact that they were willing to travel out of South Africa, Eleanor to the United States of America and Jessica back to Cameroon, in order to connect with the men of their choice. This is illustrative of the various ways transnational students appropriate their religious beliefs to deal with situations which may be confounding to them

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the relationship between religion and transnational migration. The chapter has examined the usefulness of religious beliefs in restoring the inner balance of an individual and reducing the levels of anxiety amongst immigrants in a new South African context. Of great importance also is how the students appropriate their

230

religious beliefs to negotiate the transnational space. Some students held onto the religious beliefs they had while in their home countries and this helped them right from the pre-migration stage. Other developed deep religious affiliation in the transnational space.

Within the transnational context both these categories of students attributed their success in pursuing educational and professional opportunities in South Africa to their religious beliefs, and they readily acknowledge that the blessings of God have been responsible for the ultimate realisation of all their successes in South Africa. They also asserted themselves by being active in their religious organisations such as churches. For some other students however, the experience in their religious organisations was complicated by encounters of situations of discrimination such as racism. This however served to expand their social interactions to involve people of a different religion.

The chapter has also examined how religion informs immigrants' ethnic and gender-based identities and their experiences of social life. In the study it emerged that some students unable to classify themselves within the socio-economic stratum in South Africa turned to religion to form alternative identities. This then affected their perceptions how they negotiated their gender identities. The chapter also examined how the appropriation of religious beliefs in social interaction and relationship prospects was gendered. While throughout the study men seemed to appropriate their religious beliefs to reinforce male headship and women's subservience, this chapter has highlighted how women have found ways of appropriating their religious beliefs to suit their personal needs. Religion is

therefore crucial to migration in that migration impacts on ways in which migrants renegotiate their beliefs, practices and attitudes and personal as well as social identities in the host country (Ojong, 2008).

The next chapter rounds up this thesis by giving a summary of the findings, the key contributions of the study and suggestions for further research.

Chapter Nine

Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This study was an attempt to explore the tensions and conflicts that foreign students of African origin perceived, underwent and struggled with as they brought their own cultural insights, values and practices into another national, ethnic, and cultural context at UKZN in Durban, South Africa. As immigrant students engage in the complex process of gender identity (re)construction, they encounter multiple levels and forms of social and cultural contradictions and complexities which act to challenge shape, and transform their ideas, thoughts and sense of self.

The starting point of this study was the paucity of research on the social angle of migration such as gender relations and gender identities as compared to the economic perspective of migration. The sparse literature on gender relations focused on the conventional bi- local and comparative approach, which involves males versus females and their corresponding gender "roles" with limited attention being given to a more dynamic and flexible conceptualisation of gender as relational and situational. Further, research on the transnational migration of students in relation to renegotiation of gender identities was sparse and even more so in Africa to Africa student migration as compared to student migration to Northern "developed" countries.

233

This study was intended to fill these gaps by shifting from the conventional bi-local and comparative approach to a more dynamic and flexible conceptualisation of gender as relational and situational. Gender identity as conceptualised in this study was seen as a fluid and contextualised process of "unfolding" (Hall, 1996) and "reconstitution" (Spivak, 1993).This study was informed by the gendered geographies of power framework developed by Mahler and Pessar (1996) to study gender across transnational space.

The uniqueness of this study was that it applied this framework in the African context so as to broaden the geographical range in which one could study gender across transnational space. The setting of this study at UKZN which is embedded in Durban a multiracial environment generated critical insights on how foreign African students were negotiating their gender identity in an institution where South African students are still facing the challenge of constructing and negotiating the concept of race and racial identity.

The study participants comprised of twenty two men and women (eleven men and eleven women) drawn from various high sending African countries and registered for various post-graduate courses at UKZN. Being of a qualitative nature, the study employed an interpretivist framework within which presenting the reality of the participants from their own views intersected with my role as a researcher in creating meaning. Being self reflexive during the process of data collection enabled me to generate critical insights concerning the interaction of gender with qualitative research methods. The interview

process revealed how I as the interviewer and my respondents were actively involved in the co-performance of gender in the interview process. Gender relations were also implicated in the structure of the participant observation method leading to an enactment of gender on my part as the researcher. The gender focus of the research and the gendered context of the research environment proved to be critical factors in mediating the relationship between myself as the researcher and the respondents.

9.2 Summary of the findings

The themes presented in this study revealed that gender identity construction was related to the struggle over power and social status. From the onset, the study established that gender was a principle factor in influencing migration decisions. Though the social locations of the men and women interviewed, namely, tertiary education, work experience, funding and middle-class status positioned them to access tertiary education in a South African tertiary institution; they cited different factors influencing their decisions to migrate. The men highlighted their gender role socialisation in facilitating their mobility. Societal and cultural norms which constructed men as autonomous and outward bound facilitated men's propensity to migrate. Even in situations of war and conflict such as in the DRC, gender was a principle factor in mediating the migration process.

Across the broad spectrum of women interviewed, the findings revealed that despite coming from patriarchal societies, having tertiary education was a major factor in

enabling women to migrate in concurrence with Dodson (1998) who attested that education for women seemed to increase cross border migration into South Africa. Further, women cited the role of a supportive father in facilitating their migration for education. While some of the un-married women expressed that family may have constrained their ability to migrate, married women demonstrated autonomy in migrating and leaving their families behind and hence conducting family relationships across transnational space.

In spite of the gender differences in facilitating their migration to South Africa, both men and women showed resonance in terms of choosing South Africa and UKZN in particular as a study destination. This was due to the structural opportunities which were in place at the university namely: proximity to home country, African culture, curriculum options on offer in South Africa which were more relevant to situations and conditions back home, the UKZN marketing slogan of "The premier University of African scholarship", relatively cheaper fees compared to that in the UK, Europe or the USA, availability of financial support from international donors and governments, the UKZN Graduate scholarship offering eighty percent fee remission for postgraduate students and the opportunity for tutoring.

The study generated critical insights about the complexities experienced by foreign African students in immersing themselves in a new context in South Africa. While focus on the African continent was a key factor in influencing students choice of South Africa as a study destination, their coming to South Africa brought them face to face with

236

xenophobia. Scholars such as Crush (2008) and Dodson and Oelofse (2008) have documented the realities of the hostility directed towards African immigrants by South Africans both in obvious and subtle ways. Ramphele (1999) has highlighted how stringent immigration controls from the department of home affairs in terms of study permit and visa acquisition and renewal, repatriation requirements, regulated employment opportunities are perceived as governed by xenophobia by foreign students.

The findings of this study documented new forms of discrimination that these students were facing which the students perceived as being tinged with xenophobia. Two examples will suffice. The first was the requirement by UKZN international students' office for foreign students to obtain medical insurance from a South African medical insurance company. This was despite the fact that many of them had medical insurance from their home countries. This served to increase their costs by having two medical insurance covers. The second form of discrimination had to do with the distinction between foreign students and local South African in UKZN remuneration forms where a distinction was made between "foreigner" and "African" in the race section. While this may not have presented a problem for foreign students from outside Africa, it was problemmatic for foreign African students since it was perceived as an attempt to exclude them from identifying themselves as African and confined the African identity to "black" South Africans. It is significant to note that any form of discrimination in the South African context is likely to be perceived as tinged with xenophobia by foreign African students.

An important finding that emerged as a result of encounters with xenophobia, whether real or perceived, was the students' engagement with the philosophy of *Ubuntu* which is a traditional African philosophy that espouses that there exists a common bond between us all and it is through this bond, through our interaction with our fellow human beings, that we discover our own human qualities. For most foreign African students, South African hostility towards foreigners especially fellow Africans was baffling since in their home countries they were hospitable to foreigners. Some students from the DRC in reflecting on their experiences of war as a result of conflict for resources back home concluded that Africans were not in solidarity with one another and did not espouse the philosophy of *Ubuntu*.

An examination of the pervasive culture of violence in South Africa highlighted the double jeopardy that foreign African women faced. Whereas both men and women could be robbed, women could also be raped. This can be said to be applicable to South Africans and non- South Africans alike. However in a country where sexual violence was pervasive in everyday life, it was difficult to distinguish between rapes motivated by xenophobic attitudes from those perpetrated because the general atmosphere of violence and lawlessness has allowed for it.

The findings also generated intriguing insights concerning the little studied phenomena of xenophilia which is love for the foreigner and in the South African case the attraction South African women had for men from other African countries. While this generated hostility from South African black men and has been cited as a factor in contributing to

their xenophobic attitude, foreigner men asserted that they treated women with greater respect than Zulu men. They constructed Zulu men as deeply patriarchal and disrespectful of women. It is instructive to note that foreign African men described Zulu men as deeply patriarchal while they were also from patriarchal backgrounds and were unwilling to give up the patriarchal privilege that accorded power and prestige to men. Constructing themselves as less patriarchal can be interpreted as a way of re-asserting their perceived superiority over Zulu men.

The foreign students interpreted South African gender norms especially in the Zulu families as complex and contradictory. The prevalence of female headed households presented an interesting dynamic whereby women were the ones who managed the households but men still exercised dominance over them. Even when women were more educated and economically empowered than the men, they were still subservient to the men. Further, it was South African women who appeared more empowered in the students' perceptions as compared to women in their home countries on account of their progressive rights in their constitution. However they were still were subject to male dominance on account of patriarchal culture.

The foreigner African women cited the seeming lack of social stratification in relationships amongst the Zulu men and women in the sense that Zulu women were willing to engage in relationships with men of a lower social class. The foreign African women on the other hand said that this was not as common in their home countries. For

these women therefore, social class appeared to be a major factor in mediating their relationships with men.

The findings in the study further provided illumination on how the students' negotiation of social status in the transnational space mediated the renegotiation of gender identities. Students recounted the destabilising of their perceived social status after immersing themselves in the South African context. Findings revealed that loss of social status for some students meant change of lifestyle such as mode of dressing, change in the kind of people one interacted with for example much younger people, loss of prestige for some who had held positions of traditional leadership in their home countries while for others it meant loss of income. Loss of social status was further exacerbated by the issue of race which a number of students experienced for the first time. Racial encounters served to diminish a student's social status and they found it a challenge to negotiate the social system because of being perceived as being poor on account of their race.

Gender dynamics on account of loss of status because of one's race revealed that the women now became targets of propositioning by Zulu men while foreign African men were perceived as possible thieves in some instances. A few students' expressed that they had maintained their social class though they had to prove themselves economically and academically. Students who felt that their social status had been elevated gave illuminating insights concerning how this had happened. The issue of having entered a plane to come to South Africa provided some students with great social leverage in the sight of people back home. For some male students being in South Africa made them

more attractive to women back home. Women students however faced a challenge in marriage prospects since they were seen as too educated and intimidating.

The findings revealed that male student's sought to elevate themselves and assert their dominance through ethnic identities such as being from a dominant group, being traditional leaders and having undergone circumcision as a rite of passage from boyhood to man hood and hence a re-affirming a hegemonic masculinity. On account of their high levels of education and mastery of the English language, some students especially from Anglophone Africa negotiated their masculinity to construct a rational-intellect masculinity which they deemed as superior to that of Zulu men who according to them were bent on violence. Women were not as keen as men in establishing superiority but rather cited on the other hand cited elevation in the transnational space on account of being freed from cultural constraints. Other student's expressed that they preferred not to rank themselves to according to social class ethnicity or nationality.

A significant aspect of the findings was how the student's were re-interpreting and re defining their gender roles and expectations in the transnational space. Gender roles were enacted in different ways by students to express social status, position and power. The transnational space enabled them to traverse gender roles with men ending up performing traditional female gender roles such as cooking and childcare. On the other hand women found that on account of engaging within the transnational space their ideas and opinions were much more valued back home and their role in decision making became crucial. An instructive finding was that while some men adopted more female gender roles without

relinquishing their masculine roles, others maintained that traditional gender roles be upheld. The one's who argued for the maintenance of traditional gender roles revealed a hegemonic masculinity. The ones who embraced female gender roles displayed a complicit masculinity which may at times have operated outside of a rigidly patriarchal system. Men who adopted a complicit masculinity however did not challenge a patriarchal system and seemed to enjoy its benefits. On the whole the men were not willing to give up patriarchal privilege.

Another illuminating finding was the engagement of the women students with the discourse of gender equality. Much as they expressed their ambition to further their education and pursue their careers, these women expressed that they would hold onto the traditional gender roles prescribed by their cultures. As Bhachu (1996) in her examination of reconstructed identities of Asian women in Britain contended, ethnocentric perspective on Black and Asian women gave the impression that their cultural values were oppressive to them. These women however seemed to perceive traditional gender roles such as cooking and care giving in the home as an integral part of their lives. They also distanced themselves from the discourse on gender equality in an attempt to live up to the notion of a "good African woman". Illuminating however was the fact that much as these women especially the married ones upheld traditional gender roles they did so while away from their homes and families. This demonstrated a type of engagement with new ways of doing gender across the transnational space. The women however also held onto their new found independence and capacity to be more involved

in decision-making leading to hybridised gender identities such as "an emancipated African woman" as illustrated by Jessica.

This study also highlighted the relationship between religion and transnational migration by examining how students appropriated their religious beliefs to negotiate the transnational space. The chapter has examined the usefulness of religious beliefs in restoring the inner balance of an individual and reducing the levels of anxiety amongst immigrants in a new South African context. Of great significance for this study was how religion informed transnational students' ethnic and gender-based identities and their experiences of social life. In the study it emerged that some students unable to classify themselves within the socio-economic stratum in South Africa turned to religion to form alternative identities. This then affected their perceptions of how they negotiated their gender identities. The chapter also examined how the appropriation of religious beliefs in social interaction and relationship prospect was gendered. While throughout the study men seemed to appropriate their religious beliefs to reinforce male headship and women's subservience, this chapter has highlighted how women have found ways of appropriating their religious beliefs to suit their personal needs.

9.3 Contributions of the study

This study has made the following key contributions in the fields of both gender and migration:

- The study has made a contribution by endeavoring to bring in the experiences of students into transnational migration which has been an under researched area. By focusing on foreign African students in a multi-racial context at UKZN embedded in patriarchal Zulu culture, the study has generated critical insights on how they are negotiating the complex identity at the nexus of being an African foreign student and other social identities such as nationality, ethnicity, race, age, social class, and gender in a different South African context.

- The focus of this study being on Africa to Africa migration experience has generated critical insights concerning how black Africans perceive one another. Foreign students of African origin have cited resonance with African culture and desire to contribute to African scholarship as one of the key considerations in choosing South Africa as a study destination. An examination of their encounter with xenophobia specifically directed at them by local South African citizens and especially the black South Africans residents generated critical insight s concerning how they were renegotiating their sense of self in the wake of xenophobia. While focus continues to be directed at South Africans hostility towards foreigners, this study has shown how foreign African students on the other hand perceive South Africans and especially the Zulu in negative light and in many ways seek to show their superiority over them. The notion of dominance was also expressed by some foreign African nationals over

other foreign African nationals. For instance some students from Anglophone Africa expressed superiority over those from Francophone Africa on account of proficiency in the English language. This struggle for superiority is encapsulated by the insights of two students from the conflict ridden DRC who questioned whether the philosophy of *Ubuntu* is a reality in Africa. Of great significance was that it was the foreign African men who sought to establish dominance over the Zulu men and women in general.

- A key contribution of this work has been the illumination of how gender identity construction in the transnational space is a struggle for power and social status. While social class has been a much under researched area in migration studies, this study has revealed that social class is a salient feature of migration. By drawing on their social ranking such as being from a dominant ethnic group, being a traditional leader, being circumcised, having a high level of education, having respect back home as a result of exposure in a different country, the study has revealed how foreign African students have sought to re-assert themselves in the South African context.

- This study has made a contribution by highlighting how the use of research methods such as interviewing and participant observation produced gendered encounters. The study has shown how I as a researcher using the interviewing method ended up co-performing gender

245

with my research participants. The participant observation method also led to an enactment of gender on my part as I used social skills in order to fit in the social settings of my respondents and gather data. These gendered dynamics affected the data I gathered and are central to the research findings that are illustrated throughout this study.

- This work has also made a contribution by highlighting how gender structures the migration process by illustrating the different factors cited by men and women in facilitating their migration. While men highlighted the gender role socialisation as influencing their propensity to migrate, for women education and economic empowerment continues to be a major factor in influencing their capacity to migrate autonomously.

- This study has made a contribution by examining foreign African students' engagement with the gender discourse which is locked at the intersection of adopting modern gender roles occasioned by their western education and maintaining traditional gender roles as a result of cultural upbringing. This study has shown that the students in bid to retain social status namely patriarchal privilege for men and the notion of a "good African woman" for women attempt to distance themselves from the notion of gender equality. These negotiation has however been negotiated within the context of the transnational space and hence produced different ways of performing gender roles transnationally. The study has shown

246

that though both men and women experience some level of transformation in their ideas about gender. How they chose to represent their changed positions varies and is sometimes contradictory. It is then through the re-constitution and negotiation that gender recasts its meaning.

- A key contribution of this study is on the relationship between religion and transnational migration by examining how students appropriate their religious beliefs to negotiate the transnational space. Of great significance for this study was how religion informed transnational students' ethnic and gender-based identities and their experiences of social life. In the study it emerged that some students unable to classify themselves within a socio-economic stratum in South Africa turned to religion to form alternative identities. In a transnational space, where students may experience anxiety religious beliefs affect their negotiation of sense of self, negotiation of social interactions and approach to issues such as marriage. The study has illustrated how migration impacts on ways in which migrants renegotiate their beliefs, practices and attitudes and personal as well as social identities in the host country.

9.4 Suggestions for further research

The data for this study was collected amongst foreign students of African origin and has generated critical insights on how these students were re-asserting themselves in the

South African context. Of great significance was the insight on how gender identity construction was related to the struggle of power and social status. Social identity is however not negotiated in a vacuum and it would be useful to interrogate the impact of African foreigner students on local students at UKZN. I would therefore recommend further research on the perceptions of South African students on foreign African students and how this impacts on their gender identities. This kind of a study would also include an interrogation of the little studied phenomenon of xenophilia in examining local students' perception of this phenomenon in relation to their gender identities.

It would also be useful if such a study was also conducted in another province outside of UKZN. This is because much of the negotiation of the gendered identities in the present study has been in relation to the Zulu- speaking group of people. It would be interesting to find out how foreign African students in another province negotiate their identities in relation to another group of African people that may have different values from the Zulu speaking group of people.

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250

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253

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Appendix 1

Consent to participate in a research study

Dear Prospective Research Participants,

Kindly read this consent form carefully and ask as many questions as you like before you decide whether you want to participate in this research study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during or after your participation in this research.

Institution

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Howard College Campus

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

School of Anthropology, Gender and Historical Studies

Name of researcher

Janet Muthoni Muthuki

031 260 2915 (Office)

079 743 0404 (Cell)

205511943@ukzn.ac.za

Name of supervisor

Dr. Vivian Besem Ojong

031 260 2431 (Office)

082 880 2511 (Cell)

ojong@ukzn.ac.za

Project title

Transnationalism and the (re) construction of gender identities amongst foreign students of African origin at the University of KwaZulu- Natal in Durban South Africa

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to critically examine how transnational migration insinuates foreign African students into new gendered contexts at UKZN in South Africa and how transnational migration provides openings for renegotiating new gendered identities.This study is significant in that will enable me to highlight and document critical insights generated in the area of transnationalism and gender identity (re) construction and hence contribute to knowledge in the area of gender and transnationalism.

Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any point of the study for any reason without any prejudice. This study will make use of in-depth interviews and life histories to elicit data from you. In the interviews, I will ask you in-depth questions about how you negotiate the space between your country of origin and South Africa and how this impacts on your gender identity. These interviews will allow you to express your experiences and views in detail. The interviews will consist of two to three encounters and may take part on different days with each encounter expected to last about one and a half hours. The interviews will be tape-recorded and notes will be taken with your permission in order to capture the information as accurately as possible. I will also use participant observation method whereby I will spend some time with you in social settings in order to capture observation data. These observations will be captured in field notes.

There will be no cost or risk to you except the use of your valuable time. Please note that there will be no financial compensation for your participation in this research. Your contribution however is very important for this study because it will be useful in making recommendations for policy and institutional changes identified by foreign students.

Confidentiality

Your responses in the interviews will be completely confidential. The data obtained from

you will be entered in the computer and computer passwords will be used to limit access to this information on the computer. The cassettes and field notes will be stored away from the reach of others. The results of this study may however be published in journals or may be presented orally. In such cases, your identity will remain confidential.

Authorisation

I have read this form completely and have decided that I will participate in the study described. The general purpose, the requirements of participation and possible hazards and inconveniences of participating have been explained to my satisfaction. My signature indicates my consent to participate.

Participant Name: ....

Participant Signature: ....

Date: ....

Researchers Name: ....

Researchers Signature: ....

Date: ....

Appendix 11

Interview guide

1) What are your reasons for studying in South Africa?

2) Why did you choose UKZN in particular?

3) What were you engaged in just before you came to South Africa?

4) What did you imagine South Africa would be like while you were still at home?

5) How did you obtain funding for your trip to South Africa?

6) How did your family influence your decision to study abroad?

7) How was the process of acquiring travel documents?

8) In acquiring your travel documents did you require permission from your spouse (For married participants)?

9) If an unmarried woman, did you require permission from a male relative?

10) What are the ways in which being a woman/man may have facilitated your movement into South Africa?

11) What are the ways in which being a woman/man may have constrained your

movement into South Africa?

12) What are the ways in which your home culture governs the social relations between women and men?

13) How do you relate to your parents, sibling and relatives?

14) In what ways does your church/ religious organisation govern the way you relate with women?

15) In what ways does your church/ religious organisation govern the way you relate with men?

16) What privileges and disadvantages are associated with being a woman/man in your country?

17) What are the consequences for stepping outside the gender norms in your country?

18) How does your host culture, South Africa, define roles for women and men and the relations between them?

19) What privileges and disadvantages are associated with being a woman/man in your host culture (South Africa)?

20) What does being a "foreign student" at UKZN in South Africa mean to you?

21) What does the identity of being a "foreign student" mean to you as a woman/man?

22) How is your interaction with interact with foreign students from countries outside Africa (both men and women)?

23) How do you interact with students from other African countries (both men and women)?

24) How do you interact with students from your home country (both men and women)?

25) How do you interact with South African students (both men and women)?

26) How does your home culture define race as compared to your host culture, South Africa?

27) How does this difference affect your identity as a woman/ man?

28) How does your home culture define ethnicity as compared to your host culture, South Africa?

29) How does your ethnicity affect your identity as a woman/ man?

30) How does your nationality affect your identity as a woman/ man?

31) What is your social class back home?

32) What is your social class in South Africa?

33) How does this difference affect your identity as a woman/ man?

34) What differences have you observed in the roles and expectations for women/men of your country as compared to those for women/men of South Africa, your host culture?

35) What conflicts have you experienced in these interactions in terms of roles and expectations for women/men?

36) How have you negotiated the differing expectations in terms of roles and expectations?

37) What are the distinct ways in which you have had to renegotiate your identity or expectations in terms of roles as a woman/man since you came to South Africa?

38) How have the interactions with your family changed since you came to South Africa?

39) How have the interactions with your friends changed since you came to South Africa?

40) What are the distinct ways in which you feel that you shape and assert yourself in

the South African context as a foreign student?

41) What do your academic experiences mean to you in terms of being liberated or marginalised?