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Human Rights Perspectives  
Guest Editors: Nicola PIPER and Amber FRENCH



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# Do Women Benefit from Migration? An Editorial Introduction

By Nicola PIPER and Amber FRENCH

Do *women* benefit from migration, and if so, how? This special issue of *DIVERSITIES* attempts to provide some insights into this straight-forward sounding yet complex question, ultimately aiming to draw some conclusions on how migrant women fare in terms of gender justice, empowerment, and rights. Its purpose is to accompany ongoing work on migration and gender at the international level, which often focuses on economic aspects of migration outcomes at the macro, community or household level based on conventional means of assessment. By contrast, the starting point of this issue is a human rights based approach in its broad definition beyond the realm of international legal instruments. It offers a dialogue on how women themselves evolve throughout migration, ultimately gaining or losing from the experience vis-à-vis male migrants and other groups of migrants, as well as non-migrating women.

This collection of works has three distinguishing strong points. First, it offers an array of perspectives from gender and migration specialists, researchers involved with migrant associations, as well as international policy analysts. Secondly, the authors' contributions are based on a variety of different methods, qualitative and quantitative. Thirdly, the papers cover a strikingly broad range of geographical contexts on which only a certain degree of work has already been published in English, including migration on Hispaniola since the 2010 Haiti earthquake, South-South migration within Latin America, and migration from Africa to Europe.

But what exactly is meant by “female migration outcomes” in this issue? We invited contributing authors to formulate their own

interpretations and views on this question. As Gaye and Jha point out in their article on “Measuring Women’s Empowerment through Migration”, it is problematic to rely on existing human development/gender indices such as the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), the Gender-related Development Index (GDI), the Gender Inequality Index (GII), and the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI). Other authors in this volume interpreted “outcomes” in terms of a number of variables ranging from:

- quantitative (years of education attained, income) to qualitative (legal status, knowledge and awareness);
- observable (job status, social inclusion, deskilling) to obscure (escaping oppressive gender roles)
- internal, or linked to migrant women’s personal situations and conditions (notions of rights and entitlements, personal security, decision-making power), to external, or influenced by external forces (legal authorities, migrant associations).

Moreover, the contributing authors go above and beyond these starting points by sharing their insider knowledge and first-hand accounts with *migrant women as dynamic individuals who change over time and space, and whose presence changes places* in multi-directional ways. In other words, learning and acquisition of knowledge (in the sense of normative interpretations and practices linked to this understanding) is a two-way process shaping migrants, the places they come from and the places they go to. Migrants are also influenced by socio-cultural changes non-migrants “back home” are experiencing, as shown in the contribution by Jettinger.

The papers in this issue examine individual-centered outcomes, based on the now well-established fact that women have significantly different migration motivations, patterns, options and obstacles from men. They also explore collective responses to the migrant experience by migrants themselves or concerned citizens on their behalf via civil society organizations of the “service provider” or “advocacy” kind as well as diaspora associations. Ultimately, the authors analyze how these and other factors determine the gains and losses of migration for women, addressing the impacts that socio-cultural norms, home country development and the migrant experience have on these outcomes.

Indeed, gender-based inequalities, injustice, discrimination and outright violence continue to permeate all societies to a certain extent, in some form or another. Such outcomes are often brought to the surface through, or are the result of, the migrant experience which, for women, typically means dual discrimination on the basis of being female and a non-citizen or absent citizen. Yet migration may allow women to turn these negative outcomes around by gaining greater control of their lives, whether through escape from traditional gender roles, improved knowledge and awareness about their rights, or newfound financial independence. Whether they migrate between two societies with opposing or comparable human development situations, women may find that they are liberated simply by having taken on a new role because of the move. As succinctly expressed by Tanja Bastia and Erika Busse in their contribution to this issue:

“A change in women’s status is to be achieved through their exposure to different gender norms so that they might start questioning the assumption that gender inequality is ‘naturalized’. These migrant women might begin appreciating the socially constructed nature of gender difference. Women’s position might also change by virtue of their new incorporation into foreign labor markets, which provides them with greater avenues for autonomy and independent decision-making.”

On the other hand, as Bridget Wooding points out in her account of human trafficking after the

Haiti Earthquake in 2010, there is still much to be done to more effectively protect women from physical and psychological harm:

“In the area of gender equality the legislation criminalizing rape for the first time in 2005 was a significant step forward. Notwithstanding the latter sign of progress, women continue to have difficulty in accessing the judiciary system and persistent gendered stereotypes coupled with a lack of knowledge on women’s human rights by actors within the judiciary maintain a cycle of impunity.”

Especially in the expanding literature on the “migration-development nexus” it is often assumed that migrants change due to the experience in often more developed countries in the North or that migrants bring back experiences to their countries of origin (as per the concept of “social remittances”, Goldring 2004). However, as also argued by Piper (2009), this depiction tells only part of the “remitting” story and not only do migrants bring socio-cultural remittances to the places of destination but change can also occur in the country of origin and can then be remitted to migrant diasporas in the Global North (as per Jettinger, this volume).

Net gains could also turn negative if destination country policies give insufficient weight to protecting those who work in domestic and care sectors. Discrimination in the destination society, or migrant women’s poor perception of their rights (see Piper and Mora’s contribution in this issue), may prevent them from establishing stable livelihoods for themselves and their families. In such situations, various contributions to this issue show the crucial role played by civil society organizations. As an increasing body of scholarship has demonstrated, migrant supporting or migrant rights advocacy organizations have been mushrooming in most regions of this world. They differ greatly in their attempt to address injustices and inequalities experienced by migrants. Outcomes depend on activists’ personal involvement in attempting to transform processes of inequality (Routledge and Cumbers 2009) and most effective, as has been argued, are organizations run by migrants themselves (Piper and Ford 2006). Yet, the specific ‘labour condition’ and status held by

migrants often prevents them from being able to self-organize. As Mora and Piper (this issue) argue, the need for a job and an income often takes precedence over articulating grievances as 'rights demands' (see also Briones 2008). In such circumstances, active support by local organizations is vital, and not only in their role as "service provider" but also as "advocate".

Ultimately, we hope that this special issue of *Diversities* will embark its readers on a trip

around the world, updating them on the status of women in various steps of the migration process and stages of life experience at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Perhaps the most resounding message we wish to leave is the role of migration as a bridge between the worlds of migrants and non-migrants, between "here" and "there", with migrant and non-migrant individuals in their roles as activists, workers, spouses, parents - and as women.

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# Notions of Rights and Entitlements Among Peruvian Female Workers in Chile<sup>1</sup>

By Claudia MORA (Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Santiago, Chile) and Nicola PIPER (Arnold Bergstraesser Institute at Freiburg University, Germany)

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## Abstract

Migration flows from Latin America to North America and Europe have been subject to much scholarly interest and its feminization has also been noted. Yet intra-regional migration flows in its gendered form have been subject to relatively little research. In the case of Chile, the country was known for several decades mainly as a country of emigration. However, since the 1990s and the end of the dictatorship, there has been an increasing influx of migrants, especially Peruvians. Migrants' vulnerability and marginalization from mainstream society are enhanced by their labour conditions and by different forms of social stratification that capture and classify them in ways unfamiliar to them. These conditions, as well as their situation in the country of origin prior to emigration, also influence their sense of entitlement and their notion of rights. While most migrants consider they deserve to be treated with respect given 'their human condition', not all articulate an entitlement to human rights, and even fewer articulate an idea of rights beyond labour rights that they are (or think they are) not in a position to demand.

In this article we will discuss the diverse notions of rights held by Peruvian migrants, linking their understanding and practice to a combination of the following factors: a) their social and cultural capital; b) the length of their stay in the host society; and c) their understanding of rights vis-à-vis their country of origin and destination. By addressing the literature on human rights and citizenship, we aim to develop a more comprehensive approach to migrants' rights. This analysis is based on research carried out in Santiago de Chile between 2008 and 2009. We conducted fifty in-depth interviews with Peruvian women workers and conducted a survey of the organizational landscape, interviewing key civil society informants.

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## Introduction

Migration flows from Latin America to North America and Europe have been subject to much scholarly interest and its feminization has also been noted (McIlwaine and Bermudez forthcoming; Guarnizo, 2008). A number of studies contend that labour migration has

unlocked opportunities for an increasing number of migrant women to seek paid work that were previously not available to them. Yet for many, with greater economic opportunity comes greater social injustice and inequalities based on the intersection of gender, class and nationality (Bastia forthcoming; Piper 2008a). While attending to these issues, we shift the focus away from North America and Europe to intra-regional, or South-South, migration dynamics. This type of migration has gained some attention in recent years, albeit mostly in the context of the revived debate on the link between migration and development and is, thus, derived from the

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<sup>1</sup> The authors would like to thank Rosario Fernandez for her invaluable help as research assistant. We would like to thank the reviewers for their helpful comments. Correspondence can be e-mailed to [cmora@uahurtado.cl](mailto:cmora@uahurtado.cl) and [nicola.piper@abi.uni-freiburg.de](mailto:nicola.piper@abi.uni-freiburg.de). Funding for this research was provided by IDRC, Canada, Grant number 104785-006.

specific interest in migration's or migrants' ability to contribute to development in their countries of origin (Bakewell 2009; Castles and Wise 2008; Adepoju et al. 2007). Here, we explore a different type of development, that is 'political development', by investigating the emergence and conditions of the possibility for migrants to demand their rights in destination societies, which are often very close (geographically and otherwise) to those migrants' places of origin, but that nevertheless still harbour migrant experiences characterized by vulnerability and social exclusion.

The main drivers of migration in the case of intra-regional flows are essentially the same as in the case of inter-regional (or South-North) flows: the majority of South-to-South migrants are labourers in search of better economic conditions and quality of life and are attracted to countries which enjoy greater economic and political stability. This migration often occurs between neighbouring countries and involves immediate cross-border (short-range, short-term) movements as well as migration to the urban centres medium-range, (longer-term)<sup>2</sup>. In the case of Chile, the country was known for several decades mainly as a country of emigration – mostly of political refugees. Yet, since the 1990s and the end of the dictatorship, there has been an increasing influx of Peruvian migrants, political refugees and labour migrants. While many are not lacking in human and cultural capital, most end up segregated in precarious types of work, women mainly in domestic service and men in the construction sector, largely on the basis of their national and ethnic origin, filling jobs locals often refuse to do. Although the percentage of the foreign born population is only 1.2% of the total 15 million Chileans (Census 2002), what has captured Chileans' attention is what makes this migration "new": its origin in other Latin American countries, and its drastic increase

<sup>2</sup> Although one has to distinguish here between "intention" and "actual behavior" when it comes to length of stay abroad. The plan to migrate temporarily might turn into permanent settlement; the plan to leave permanently might not work out and return or re-migration might ensue.

in the inter-census period from 1992 to 2002 (105,000 to 184,000 foreign residents).

Intra-regional migrants in Chile are mostly from northern Peru but also from Argentina and Ecuador (and other neighbouring countries, albeit in smaller numbers). Peruvian migrants differ from the other two main flows in that there has emerged a distinct (and thus, visible) community with extensive networks in Peru and Chile residing in a bounded neighbourhood in downtown Santiago. Peruvians also face greater difficulties in accessing the labour market, mostly due to prejudice and stereotypes held by Chilean employers and society at large. Most Peruvian women are recruited through formal and informal channels to work in domestic service, in conditions that do not substantially better their economic and social marginalization, but that nevertheless often constitute an improvement over the economic conditions in their country of origin.

Migrants' vulnerability and marginalization from mainstream society are enhanced by their labour conditions and by different forms of social stratification that capture and classify them in ways unfamiliar to them. These conditions, as well as their situation in the country of origin prior to emigration, also influence their sense of entitlement and their notion of rights. While most migrants consider they deserve to be treated with respect given 'their human condition', not all articulate an entitlement to human rights, and even fewer articulate an idea of rights beyond labour rights that they are (or think they are) not in a position to demand.

In this article we will discuss the diverse notions of rights held by Peruvian migrants, linking their understanding and practice to a combination of the following factors: a) their social and cultural capital; b) the length of their stay in the host society; and c) their understanding of rights vis-à-vis their country of origin and destination. By addressing the literature on human rights and citizenship, we aim to develop a more comprehensive approach to migrants' rights. This analysis is based on research carried out in Santiago de Chile between 2008 and 2009. We conducted fifty in-depth interviews with Peruvian

Type of Work	Education	
	High School (complete/incomplete)	College, Vocational, Professional Training (complete/incomplete)
Private sector worker	4	6
Domestic Work Live-in	15	13
Domestic Work Live-out	11	1

women workers and conducted a survey of the organizational landscape, interviewing key civil society informants.

Through a snowballing method of sampling, we selected migrants according to their educational level and type of work, in numbers proportionate to their distribution in the labour market, as shown in the table.

Interviews lasted between one and one and a half hours, they were transcribed and coded using the software program ATLAS.ti. Here, we analyse data on migrants' notion, access, and practice of rights in Chile.

Although in this paper we draw primarily from our migrants' interviews, we also conducted a survey of thirty-four organizations in Santiago, identifying different types of programmes and services: A) services providers sponsored by the Catholic Church, with specific programmes tailored to migrants (job centres, work training, shelters); B) legal and psychological attention services, sponsored by local universities; C) refugee organizations, created with the first Peruvian flows of political refugees of the Fujimori regime; and, D) social and cultural organizations, promoting the cultural integration of migrants and providing information, referrals, and economic aid to the community.

### A Social Science Approach to Rights

Bryan Turner (2006) and other social scientists have commented that the study and analysis of rights has predominantly been the province of legal scholars, philosophers, and political theorists, leaving other social sciences, comparatively speaking, rather silent on this subject. This has somewhat to do with the lack of engagement in normative issues by many social scientists.

Taking a normative approach, however, is not the only possible manner of engaging with the 'rights question'. A crucial contribution of social science to our understanding of rights is to perceive them as an expression of a socially constructed reality, thus treating rights potentially as subject to redefinition and re-evaluation over time and space. In other words, conceptualizing grievances as 'rights' and the actual claiming of rights are actions that derive from the changing aspirations of people, a change that could be induced by the migrant experience. Social movement and historical scholarship, focusing on collective action or contentious politics, has demonstrated this shift in the specific contexts of the civil rights, the labour and the women's movement (see Tarrow 2006 for a detailed literature review); far less, however, is known about changing definitions of rights in the case of migration as related to migrants' experiences at the intersection of ethnicity, class and gender, and their positioning in social hierarchies of origin and destination societies.

In this sense, we move our discussion beyond a legalistic notion and normative deliberations, by building instead on Nett's understanding of rights as "the primary condition of acting – to speech, motion, expression, being heard, represented<sup>3</sup>..." (1971: 218). Such approach to rights, therefore, involves a process of self-awareness, consciousness rising, and articulation which may be enhanced through collective

<sup>3</sup> Arguing that rights need to be conceived apart from the law, Nett distinguishes 'rights' from 'law' because the latter often works as an instrument of privilege, whereas rights discourse is used by social movements, such as the civil rights and the women's movements, in order to challenge law.

organizing and mobilizing. Gender and other forms of social stratification affect all of these processes, and so does place – or rather, changing places through migration.

#### *Gendered Migration, Gendered Rights*

Over the last few decades, major advances have been made in migration research leading to the acknowledgement that women constitute approximately one-half of the 190 million global migrants; that female migration in Latin America has increased significantly in the last several decades; and that throughout the world female migrants have experienced various forms of strain and abuse in the labour force such as de-skilling, sexual harassment, racism, violation of contract terms, underpayment, and violation of national/provincial labour legislation provisions (UNFPA 2006; UNRISD 2005). Consequently, migration scholars have made important contributions to a theoretically rich literature on gendered aspects of migration. This scholarly body of work includes studies assessing gender relations in settlement patterns; the re-articulation of gender identities and family roles; the gendering of the labour market; and individual/collective agency as well as structural issues affecting gender, among others (Mora, 2009; Piper 2008; Asis 2004; Carling 2005; Kofman 2004; Andall 2003; Fouron and Glick-Schiller, 2001; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, 2001; Mahler and Pessar, 2001; Salazar-Parreñas, 2001; Sassen, 1998). The question of whether migration constitutes an empowering aspect for gender relations has also been raised by feminists, with varying results arriving at slightly different conclusions (a debate well summarized by Bastia, forthcoming). Many have argued that the -by now- global trend towards rising numbers of female migrants does not automatically amount to increased freedom of movement or autonomy (Erel et al. 2003).

Social scientists or migration scholars have rarely investigated rights issues from a gender perspective. Our interest here is in migrant women's understanding of their rights and if, or how, they claim rights in the context of gendered dynamics of their migratory situation. In this regard, it is important to highlight that

migrants leave and enter already gendered societies and that adult migrants were socialized into accepting certain roles and behaviours in the 'home' country. Once migrated, gender intersects not only with other social relations such as ethnicity or race but also with new class dynamics. This often couples with downward mobility of migrants in the host society and their migration status, the combined effects of which lead to migrants ending up in specific niches or (mostly informal) sectors of the labour market. For migrant women, the predominant form of labour is domestic work. Being confined to private households as their place of work (and often residence also), a situation of deep dependency ensues which has been described as a type of "modern slavery"<sup>4</sup> or "servitude" (Chin 1998). Taking all of these dynamics and issues together, "a complex map of stratification emerges with its own dynamics of exclusion/inclusion and power relations" (Piper, 2008: 1).

Feminist researchers have in fact pointed out that the oppression of female migrants should be viewed as an intersection of various forms of subordination, including gender, class, ethnicity or race, and migrant status (see, for instance, Dua, 2007; McDowell, 2008; Nash, 2008). Bond observes, for instance, that: "(i)ndividuals do not experience neatly compartmentalized types of discrimination based on mutually exclusive forms of, for examples, racism and sexism. Rather, individuals experience the complex interplay of multiple systems of oppression operating simultaneously in the world" (Bond, 2003, p. 76). The author similarly suggests that the intersectionality approach must inform the ways in which advocates promote human rights around the globe (Bond 2003, p. 76). However, what has been missing in the literature on intersectionality is another ingredient: specific labour relations or the 'labour condition', which is particularly significant in the subordination of migrant women, who tend to be concentrated in precarious work in the informal and 'individualized' sector of domestic work. This in

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Domesticworkslavery.aspx> (downloaded 14 February 2011).

turn has implications for their ability to claim rights.

On the issue of migrants' rights, existing studies have mostly focused on international human rights standards (Cholewinski 1997, Satterthwaite 2005, Elias 2007) or on formal and substantive citizenship (typically in context of Northern destination countries) (Canefe 1998; Castles and Davidson 2000) and to a lesser extent on collective migrant rights activism (Piper 2008b). Most of the former studies take a "top down" or state-centric perspective by focusing on rights through state (legal and other) provisioning, and the latter strand shifts the focus to the meso level of organizations and their role in advocacy. Our approach starts from the "bottom up", highlighting how migrants' individual understanding of rights develops as the result of their pre-migration experience as well as by the actual migration itself, given that the entire migration process is essentially shaped by gender, ethnicity and class.

The linkage of social positioning and notion of rights is hinted at by a study carried out for the ILO on intra-regional migration in Latin America suggesting that migrant women tend to suffer an underdeveloped sense of having rights which, as the authors suggest, is based on their gender and origin (where a sense of citizenship had not developed) (Farah and Sanchez 2002). A number of papers carried out under the auspices of the ILO's gender programme persistently find that migrant women often do not know their rights and that this is related to patriarchal systems where women tend to have low status, low educational as well as low skill levels. Thus, a lack of rights consciousness may be related to social stratification at the origin as well, since migrants may think that "this is normal treatment" because treatment at home is the same or even worse. A study on Bolivian women migrants (Farah et al. 2002:26), for instance, has shown that the lack of a rights consciousness is not the same among all migrant women from the same origin country: those of rural origins do not typically recognize the pattern of discrimination because it is common to those who live in rural Bolivia; however, women of

urban origins, who often enjoy a higher degree of education and knowledge of their rights, are the ones that recognize the discriminatory nature of their treatment. Whether or how the migrant experience leads to a conceptualizing of grievances or needs as 'rights' has not been explored sufficiently.

#### *The Chilean context*

In the case of Chile, the country's political stability and economic growth have been perceived by other Latin American countries as signs of prosperity (Martinez, 2003). Migration from Peru has increased more than 300% in the last few years. Migrants are attracted by the expectation of higher earnings, better life conditions and secure employment (Mujica 2004) once they arrive. Employers' demands for specific worker profiles shape migrant flows, most clearly in the case of Peruvian women who are recruited as live-in nannies. The majority leave their families in Peru. Geographical proximity and fewer immigration barriers than posed by countries in Europe or the United States make it easier and cheaper to move and return periodically to the country of origin or to pursue family reunification. A common language also makes Chile an attractive destination in the region (de los Ríos and Rueda, 2005).

Although South-South migration involves moving between neighbouring countries, different studies contend that immigrant arrival in the host society often involves an encounter with different political structures and organization of the labour market, and perhaps more importantly, with new forms of social stratification that absorb and categorize migrants in unfamiliar ways (Mora 2009; Duany, 1998). Bashi and McDaniel (1997) argue that immigrants arrive with their own conception of ethnic identity (as well as gender and class identities) but often, involuntarily, acquire a new ethnic and racial tag in the host country. Similarly, in their study of migration and transnationalization, Cordero-Guzmán et al. (2001) depict a process of enmeshment of migration with social stratification. Immigrants (perceived) phenotype, immigrant status, ethnicity, and national origin, are all elements in the

creation of racializing hierarchies that positions them at the lower end of social structures, determining their life chances and trajectories.

Race and racial formation in the context of migration in Chile are beginning to receive attention (Mora, 2009). As migration from neighbouring countries becomes a new, dynamic and growing trend with far-reaching economic, social, and cultural effects in the sending countries as well as in Chile, scholars have begun to address migrants' precarious status in Chile, especially regarding a labour market that is particularly gendered and racialized for Peruvian migrants. Highlighting vulnerabilities caused by the intersection of migration, gender, and race, Hill-Maher and Staab (2005) explored perceptions of Chilean employers who contended that Peruvian women were "more devoted, caring, and submissive" while also "backward, unclean, and dark". The authors argue that Chilean employers prefer Peruvian women because they are willing to work as live-in nannies, making fewer demands than local workers. They suggest that migrant women have filled the void in domestic care in a process that profits from their economic vulnerability and that draws from racial/gender images of Peruvian migrants<sup>5</sup>. In this process, gender stratification meshes in with racial hierarchies given that migrants are chosen precisely because of their perceived gender and racial characteristics. This is why feminist migration scholars have addressed the interaction of migrant status, gender, and racial labelling in the economic and social marginalization of migrants. In this context, however, more attention needs to be paid to the conditions fostering the emergence of a sense of having rights, or the kind of claims or grievances migrants frame as rights.

### **Gender, the Migrant Experience and Rights in Chile**

As in other parts of the world, Peruvian migrants leave and enter societies via a variety of channels or migration schemes, responding

<sup>5</sup> These are observations also made in other contexts such as Taiwan (see Pei Chia Lan, 2003).

to 'supply' and 'demand' structures which often follow gender stereotypes and roles. Rights and entitlements that are attached to, or the result of, specific modes of entry and positioning within the labour market, are therefore also gendered (Piper 2008a). In general, low-skilled workers, who form the majority of migrants, are more vulnerable to rights violations as opposed to the highly skilled, since the former tend to work in the informal sectors of the labour market, or in sectors where labour standards are not applied or not applicable even for local workers. There are common problems affecting both male and female migrants such as non- or under-payment of wages, unfair dismissal, bondage (withholding of travel documents), long working hours, and precarious working conditions.

On the whole, it has been noted that abusive and exploitative practices in male-dominated sectors are better documented and more visible since men usually work in groups in construction and agriculture and often in sectors that are organized by trade unions (which holds, however, not true as far as agriculture is concerned). Abuses against low skilled women migrants are less well known since they are likely to occur in a more invisible situation. Since women migrant workers often go into individualized and unregulated work environments (e.g. domestic service, entertainment), data on migrant women in invisible occupations are not readily available (Esim and Smith 2004:8). This results in cases of exploitation, violence and harassment of domestic workers, for instance, who are subject to very low public visibility, if any (as observed in the case of Italy by Scrinzi 2003<sup>6</sup>) which are largely unattended by formal mechanisms of redress and claims making.

The specific situation of domestic workers has been highlighted by the first UN Special Rapporteur for the human rights of migrants (see report on her visit to Canada, 2001). Their

<sup>6</sup> This situation, however, is somewhat different in Asian "hotspots" such as Hong Kong where domestic worker organizations have been very active in staging highly visible demonstrations over a long period of time and increasingly so with support by local and global trade unions (Constable 2007; Law 2002).

situation is partly conditioned by a country's recognition of the domestic sector as an area of employment in terms of providing a legal migration status. However, legal status (work permit) does not automatically mean recognition by labour laws. In fact, domestic work is widely excluded from national labour legislation. In the case of Chile, domestic workers are included in the definition of workers by Chilean labour law, but granted fewer rights and benefits than other salaried workers, such as a lower minimum wage, longer working hours, and fewer social benefits. Hence, the high concentration of Peruvian migrants in domestic work reflects a double bind: they work in a precarious and isolated activity, and they are more likely to be abused as migrant women workers.

While labour rights are, obviously, central to migrant workers, health care, housing, security and education are part of the daily needs of Peruvian migrants. Access to employment is also an important right – access to other types of employment than domestic work, which is one of the most precarious forms of work. Migrants are not always in a situation to demand their fulfilment to the Chilean state or institutions, however. A key factor shaping their sense of entitlement or the development of a notion of having rights is related to their documented/undocumented status. Although Peruvians do not need a visa to enter the country (this is true of all nationals from neighbouring countries, except for Bolivians), there are nevertheless stricter requirements to work in the country. Upon entry, the immigration officer stamps the length of stay, which cannot be longer than three months if entered as a tourist. Within that time, migrants must find jobs, and once they have a contract, they can apply for a work visa, sponsored by their employer. They receive a temporary visa, which may be transformed into a permanent one after two years of work for *the same employer*. Though the procedure to obtain a permanent visa is fairly straightforward in bureaucratic terms, this framework is problematic as it forces the worker to stay with an employer for two years, and sets back the clock to zero if they change jobs in the event of

abusive employment relations or if they miss the payment of their social security taxes. Hence, the possibility of becoming undocumented always lurks in migrants' labour relations. Left out of the equation in terms of rights is the accountability of employers who must treat the migrant worker according to certain standards but are unlikely to be supervised, especially in 'private' homes, where most Peruvian migrant women work<sup>7</sup>.

For migrants themselves, the need for a job often takes precedence over migrants' demands or grievances (see also Briones 2008). Peruvians fear the loss of their job if they ask for a written contract, as established by law, or present a formal complaint to the Labour Inspection, a state office that promotes and monitors the compliance of workers' rights – but by way of the workers having to be proactive, not by way of worksite inspection in the case of domestic work. Moreover, migrants fear stigmatization as a 'problem worker' which not only would affect their situation but that of the network of migrants often involved in their labour recruitment. That is why it is common to find recent migrants in more precarious labour situations, often with lower wages and partial payment of their social security taxes compared to older, more experienced migrants--many of whom have obtained a working visa and thus, are not tied to one employer.

Most migrants are conscious of the vulnerability that is behind their accepting just any job at any wages. At the same time, most reveal a raising awareness of workers' rights in the context of their migratory experience, given that working hours, paid holidays, and other workers' benefits are new to them. The knowledge and awareness of rights acquired

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<sup>7</sup> This was precisely the argument made by the employer group at the ILO Congress in June 2010 during which the possibility of a new domestic worker convention was discussed. The employers argued against this convention for a number of reasons, one important of which the fact that the workplace is within private households which cannot be monitored by public authorities (Piper, participant observation, Geneva, 2010). Such arguments however, were also initially made in the case of domestic violence and marital rape and successfully refuted in many cases.

through time is clearly highlighted by Jocelyn (fictional name), a waiter from Tacna, who has been in Chile for three years:

“When I first came I did not have a contract and I didn’t know that, I mean, the benefits you get when you have a contract, like subsidy for your children, no, I didn’t know and then I started to get information and I started demanding, I mean, the right to have a contract, I demanded and my employer did it, and paid me, I mean, I made him pay, I told him he had to pay me for the year I had worked without a contract... at first he said no... and I said he had to do it and pay all my social security taxes for that year and my child’s subsidy... I told him that if he didn’t pay I would go to the Labour Inspection. The neighbours knew me and knew I worked there so I demanded that right and yes, he paid”.

Length of stay appears then as tied to a sense of having rights, a sense of entitlement to legal protection that can translate into demanding labour rights. Partly due to acquired knowledge and partly to the attainment of a worker’s visa, the empowerment of migrants is also often tied to their human capital. Since up to 40 percent of women domestic workers have some level of training or degrees beyond a high school level, downward mobility, characteristic of Peruvian migration to Chile, tends to mark only the preliminary phase of the labour trajectory of migrants with college-level education or higher training. Cultural capital contributes to an upward labour trajectory that involves a higher awareness and demand of rights (preliminary findings, FONDECYT project, Mora 2010-2011).

Marta, a graphic designer who has been in Chile three years, exemplifies this trajectory having started as a domestic worker and managed small upwards steps to her current position as a restaurant employee. While a domestic worker, she had an accident and broke her arm. Her employer did not want to pay her medical bills and she went back to Peru, only to return later and file a law suit against her employer: “[I was in Peru] three months recovering, and when I arrived back I told her everything... and I went to court and won and she had to give me my severance payment because she didn’t want to give me even that...”.

Interestingly, labour rights are mentioned by the majority of Peruvian migrants when asked if they have any entitlements in Chile. Health related services and access are not uniformly conceived of as rights, a perception that is enhanced by the common ill treatment migrants are subjected to in public hospitals. Access to education and housing is also perceived as a benefit new to them, and to be thankful for. Regular status is important also because it marks their eligibility for assistance and subsidies from a ‘generous state’. Ana (fictional name), a live-in domestic worker for four years, highlights the ‘newness’ of having rights:

“Here in Chile there are lots of good things because there, in Peru, not all of us have fonasa [health insurance], for example a domestic worker does not have health insurance, only private [industry] and public [service] workers... another thing is that they do not have a retirement fund... there, husbands have to insure their wives because they work for private industries, not like here. Here is different, I have realized that here they worry a lot about women and children too.”

Rosa, a live-in nanny, adds: *no, in Peru we don’t have any... well, here [in Chile] when you work they give you severance pay and they pay you for the time worked. There, in Peru they don’t do that, I mean, here there are workers’ rights as you say. In Peru we don’t...*

Regarding the importance of a regular status to access social benefits, Ana continues:

“What we don’t have access to, I don’t know if this is a right or not, for example to open a savings account because we don’t have a permanent visa, we can’t get a loan, we can’t apply to housing subsidy, we can’t have a credit card!...”

Juana, a compatriot currently employed in domestic work also assesses that “...when you are a foreigner... when I went to ask, I remember, I went to ask for a subsidy. They told me that if you are a foreigner you first must have a permanent visa. With a temporary or other kind of visa you can’t but once you have a permanent visa you can access all benefits that they have here in Chile. That’s what they told me!...”

One of the most important barriers to the development of a sense of ‘having rights’ is the quotidian discrimination Peruvians face

because of their perceived race, social class and origin. Irma (fictional name), a domestic worker, captures the common litany of stereotypes Chileans hold on Peruvians: *“that Peruvians are dirty, that they stop anywhere to get drunk, that they are always picking fights, that all women are like that, loose..”* Yuri (fictional name), a street vendor is visibly upset when she recalls: *“there are people who ask me about Peru.. but others... have insulted me and have asked me to get out of the street fare because [it] is for Chileans... I treat everyone with respect so they don’t have to treat me so badly, I am just working here for me and for my child in Peru...”*

‘Humanness’, being a person and having the basic right of being treated with respect is a notion heralded especially by undocumented migrants, although the majority of migrants, regardless of status, mention ‘respect’ and ‘dignity’ as the most important rights for them to have. Jacqueline (fictional name), puts it this way: *“the fact that we are workers ..what is it you call us? Nanas. We are people just like you... I said this to her [employer] we are people, and we are working for you just like you work so you can pay me, perhaps you get more pay than I do, sure! But you also have to work to make money, to pay us and that doesn’t mean you are going to look down on us...”*

For migrant women, the process of entitlement, from ‘respect to their human condition’ to the demanding of labour and social rights is particularly cumbersome, given their concentration in the lowest echelon of the occupational hierarchy-domestic work – which does not come with equal rights by law, where they find themselves in a situation of isolation from other workers, and prone to employers abuse. In this scenario it is no surprise that Peruvian women are mainly aware of labour rights and feel entitled as citizens -albeit second class- only once they become ‘regular’. Prior to achieving this status, migrant women do have grievances that are demanded in the language of basic human rights. Hence, access to entitlements is determined by formal and informal sets of rules and regulations defined by law, social norms and conventions.

An analysis of differentiated access to systems of rights or entitlements and the issue of how access in turn impacts on welfare, well-being and empowerment of migrants has allowed us to shed light on social inequality based on gender at the individual level. The next step is to envision harnessing of rights at a collective level.

### **Harnessing Individual Grievances through Collective Organizing**

The most general meaning of justice, according to the feminist philosopher Nancy Fraser (2007), is parity of participation which requires social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life. Overcoming injustice, therefore, relates to the removal of institutionalized barriers that prevent some from participating on equal footing with others. Characteristic of *political* injustice, then, is that it occurs when political boundaries function to deny participation to some people.

Many female migrants by virtue of being part of the reproductive sphere of labour lack recognition as worker – socially and legally by being (partially or completely) excluded from labour legislation. Domestic work is a case in point. Employer ideologies have played into this by constructing domestic workers as ‘one of the family’ not recognizing domestic labour as real work, fostered also by gender ideologies undervaluing care work (Ally 2005; Valenzuela and Mora 2010). This results in domestics often not understanding themselves as workers, and combined with lacking legal recognition, this poses limits to collective mobilization based on a worker identity which is the crux of unionization (Ally 2005). There is also another angle to this issue to do with ‘de-skilling’ or social downward mobility: according to a trade union leader in Southern Europe, those migrant workers who were highly qualified workers in their own countries often do not perceive themselves identity-wise as labourers at the destination despite performing such jobs, and thus do not claim the rights due to them as such (Scrinzi 2003: 83).

In addition to analyses on the ‘labour condition’, gender perspectives on, or critiques of, social network theory have further shown that women

tend to have less access to social networks, partly because many migration flows were originally led by men (Bastia 2007; Wright and Ellis 2000). Moreover, social networks are gendered in the sense that women tend to have less access to information and financial resources to facilitate their migration based on their different location within the labour market or different cultural norms (Dannecker 2005). Commenting on Bolivians in Argentina, Bastia writes that the “spatial organization of the sexual division of labour provides men with more opportunities for establishing stronger relations and bonding with co-workers” (2007:663). This has also serious implications for the political organizing of male and female migrants (Piper 2008b). In other words, in the context of feminized and gendered migration, this requires us to look into gendered dynamics of opportunities and obstacles for migrants to become political – i.e. their capacity, or capability, to do so. Looking at the various types of organizations in terms of constituency (sector-specific, by nationality/ethnicity etc.), gender becomes apparent as a determinant factor as far as access, type or organization, method of organizing and issues campaigned for are concerned. Non-union migrant activism on behalf of domestic workers in many Asian countries has, for instance, focused on making these workers visible and garnering society-wide respect for their work (Elias 2008; Lyons 2005).

Existing studies on migrants’ collective organizing have classified non-union advocacy organizations along two main groups: 1) migrant associations (run by migrants themselves) and 2) organizations operating on behalf of migrants by concerned citizens (in cases where self-organizing is impossible for multiple reasons: because of the migrants’ legal status, the position they held in the labour market or lack of freedom of association due to lack of democratic space provided by the destination country for such organizing) (Sim 2002; Ford and Piper 2007). The forming of collective organizations and networks between them, or ability to access existing organizations (especially those that are male-dominated) can be a problem for women migrants from places where gender (often in combination to caste,

class, ethnic or religious group) norms result in greater levels of inequality than in other places. As a result, migrant organizations run by and for male migrant workers may exclude women from their support systems and from male-dominated organizations and their networks.

In the case of Chile, migrant organizations are generally scarce and their efforts to harness rights in a collective manner are at best incipient. Among these are those organizations tied to the Catholic Church, which provide shelter to recently arrived migrants and function as placement agencies for domestic service work. Also, there are legal and psychological service organizations affiliated to various universities in Santiago, providing legal aid in the regularization process of migrants and attending to their mental health. There are cultural centres as well, fostering the ‘cultural integration’ of Peruvian migrants, and a few organizations born out of the political exile of Peruvians under former president Fujimori.

In our survey of thirty-four organizations in Santiago, we found that most adopt an *assistentialist* (‘service provider’) perspective towards migrants, paying sole attention to individual needs, more than taking on an advocacy role in demand and the advancement of collective rights. Most of the migrants who participate in these organizations are women who are mainly motivated by their search for employment and seek assistance in doing so, but many migrants are also involved in cultural activities promoting ‘Peruvian traditions’. In the case of Church organizations, which are the most visible among the migrants, they prepare women for domestic service through organizing workshops on the type of labour expected from them but also on their rights as domestic workers. All in all, the migrant civil society organizations in Chile tend to foster the inclusion of Peruvian women in their gendered role, with an emphasis on the satisfaction of their immediate needs. In this regard, the bulk of the existing organizations are reactive service providers, rather than proactive advocacy organizations.

The coordinator of an immigrant service programme in an NGO gives a sense of organizations’ perceptions of Peruvian migrants

when she states: *“the difficulty here is how we go about motivating migrants’ participation because it doesn’t look like it means much to them. We don’t have the same “codes”, it looks like participating is irrelevant to them. Their concerns are more related to housing and employment. Participating does not seem to be important to them...”*

Even organizations with a stronger orientation to lobbying for migrants’ rights hold similar views and tend to provide services that reproduce a gender division of labour. A Catholic Church head of a migrants’ service programme states: *“well, for [Peruvian] women we have different workshops, in addition to the ‘school for nannies’, like training in psychology, crafts... workshops to entertain them like folklore dancing, talks on various topics...”* She adds: *“we started this out of the need of Peruvian girls who come here to work, to know more about Chile because they just know things about Peru, like Peruvian cuisine, but here, food is different. And they did not know how to operate house cleaning devices, so we created a school for that... we wrote a guide and we provided an introduction on the ‘Chilean housewife’ and their psychology... we also have teachers of protocol, a cleaning teacher and in Chilean cuisine. They also have religion classes and we teach them how to maintain their regular migratory status...”*

This does, however, not mean that organizations are silent on the collective harnessing of rights; rather their work is just beginning in its focus on migrants’ access to legal information as well as information on housing, employment, and educational rights. So far, however, the dominant perspective that has resulted is one that naturalizes the hierarchical (and patriarchal) positioning of Peruvian migrants.

### Conclusions

Rights are no longer tied to citizenship in its conventional understanding, nor are they based on individual membership to a nation-state. To a certain extent, this notion has been incorporated into the Chilean regulation of immigrant status of peoples from neighbouring countries, with fairly flexible entries and re-entries granted

with an ID; the recognition of basic rights to migrants regardless of status such as education and health; and a new agreement between Peru and Chile on mobility of social security retirement funds. At the same time, the South-South migration dynamics are not far from the South-North tensions over citizenship, human rights, and social exclusion of migrants. However, growing migration from Peru is also transforming the political space and ways in which rights and citizenship are exercised and claimed in Chile.

An important question posed by this research is that of rights consciousness and the conditions fostering its emergence, starting with the pre-migration stage. We find the length of the migratory experience, migrants’ cultural and social capital, and the opposition to conditions in the country of origin, all greatly influence an awareness of rights and a sense of entitlement in migrants. The key issue at the initial stage for migrant workers, especially women, is information. As scholars of migration have noted, strangers to the destination society, migrants may be unfamiliar with the cultural language, laws, and practice, and so less able than others to know and assert their rights. Thus, traditions and culture could also discourage the exercise of rights and self-will.

Evidently, lack of awareness and self-perception as rights bearer hinders the development of the notion of having rights, leading to their demanding. Grievances, hardships or needs are not always conceptualized as such. What this study suggests, however, is that migrants hold a continuum of relevance and centrality of rights, and that such a grading scale shifts with their migratory experience (access to information, comparison with country of origin), and with their acquired capitals (social and cultural), widening the scope of rights claims as these features increase. In other words, what we can see is a diversity of notions of rights. Given that both experience at destinations and acquired capitals are clearly shaped by gender, we suggest that developing a notion and demand of rights are deeply gendered processes. And so is the harnessing of individual ‘consciousness gaining’ through collective organizations.

All of this means that rights' awareness and consciousness has to be understood as a process based on the migrant experience, shaped by the intersection of gender, class, ethnicity, social capital, labour relations as well as by collective organizing. By combining micro level insights stretching over the whole migration process

(linking the origin and destination country) with meso level insights of organizations involved in migrant rights advocacy, a more holistic approach to our understanding of migrant rights emerges – beyond the legalistic/normative and state-centric/top-down realm.

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# Transnational Migration and Changing Gender Relations in Peruvian and Bolivian Cities

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## Abstract<sup>2</sup>

Labour migration has profound implications for the reconfiguration of gender relations. Most of the literature has focused on the changing status of women in so-called 'host' countries. However, it is well recognised that migration creates ripples of change throughout the migration process, not just at destinations. In this paper we draw the readers' attention to the changes that take place as a result of cross-border labour migration in places of origin. We focus on gender as an analytical concept, rather than just women as subjects. Through a comparative analysis of male-led and women-led migration, we analyse the changes that migration brings about for women in places of origin, particularly Bolivian and Peruvian cities. On the basis of in-depth interviews with women in low-income urban and peri-urban neighbourhoods we find that in both women-led and male-led migration patriarchal relations are challenged but then reconstituted.

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## Introduction

Migration is today high on the political agenda of both countries of origin and destination. Migration alleviates social and economic pressures in countries of origin by decreasing levels of unemployment and easing pressure on public services while at the same time contributing, sometimes substantially, to the national revenues, in the form of remittances sent back home. While migration is nothing new in the history of humanity, over the last couple of

decades there has been an increased appreciation that migration is a process involving multiple geographical locations. As a consequence, it has been conceptualised as a process that stretches social and economic relations across space or transnational social fields (Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Blanc-Szanton, 1994).

Although there are continuations with previous migration ages (Castles and Miller, 2009), today's migrations are substantially different because of the current moment of capitalism that places migrants in a vulnerable situation, one in which migrants have little or no job security and they face continued racism (Basch, Glick-Schiller, and Blanc-Szanton, 1994). Job insecurity and widespread racism in turn place migrants in a situation where they need to maintain and 'cultivate' their fallback position, offered by family members and acquaintances who remain in the countries of origin. In this process the inter-dependencies that have developed between nation-states as a result of the movement of labour in one direction and

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the flow of financial remittances in the opposite direction (Phillips, 2006) is also experienced at the micro level between households that stretch across national borders.

In this article we focus on this micro level of analysis, on the families and households that are stretched across borders through migration. We build on Mahler's analysis of gender and transnationalism (1999) and draw the readers' attention to the changes that take place as a result of cross-border labour migration in places of origin (see Piper, 2009b). Here we take gender as an analytical concept, rather than just women as subjects. This is critical, not only because of what has become known as the 'feminization of migration' but more importantly, because gender relations permeate all social relations. As such, gender relations are also fundamental for the ways in which the process of migration develops and how it is experienced. They are also critical for our understanding of the consequences migration brings about.

In this article we extend our existing work into a comparative analysis of the consequences of migration in cases where women are the ones who migrate (Bastia) and those where women are the 'stay at home wives' (Busse) in two countries that are historically and culturally similar. One would expect that the consequences of migration for women's equality be markedly different in contexts of women-led and male-led migration. However, this might not be the case. In this paper we therefore ask: What does it mean to be a woman in today's neighbourhoods where half of the families have at least one resident abroad? What does it mean to be a man in a transnational household where the woman is in another country, having taken on the 'breadwinning' role? Are there new ways of being women and men, which are being brought about as a result of transnational migration? To what extent is it possible to find instances of women's empowerment as a result of transnational migration? We recognise that there need not be migration involved for these identities to change but we choose to focus on transnational families where at least one family member lives and works abroad.

The paper is based on a subsample of the 182 interviews collected through multi-sited fieldwork with (i) Bolivian migrants and their families in the community of origin, a neighbourhood on the outskirts of Cochabamba, Bolivia and different destinations in Argentina and Spain and (ii) Peruvian migrants from different cities in Peru to the U.S.—mainly but not exclusively to New Jersey. For Bolivian migration, fieldwork was conducted in Cochabamba, Bolivia in 2002 and 2008; in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2003 and 2008; Spain in 2009. For Peruvian migration, fieldwork began in Paterson, NJ and neighbouring cities in 2006. The contacts made in the U.S. were used to contact migrants' families in five different cities in Peru in 2007. This was followed by multiple month-long visits from 2008 to 2010. In this paper we focus on a selection of cases but also draw on our wider research projects to substantiate the findings.

#### **Migration trends in the region**

South America received a large number of European migrants after the economic depression of the 1930s and the World War II (Altamirano, 2000; Bonfiglio, 2001; Castles and Miller, 2009). However, from the 1970s onwards South America has been increasingly a region of emigration. This coincides with a declining level of economic performance, rapid growth of the labour force and political instability in the region. Migrants from the Latin American region have historically migrated north to the U.S. and south to Argentina and Chile. Europe, particularly Spain and Italy emerged as preferred destinations for many Latin American migrants during the late 1990s, especially Peruvians, Ecuadorians and more recently Bolivians. The Latin American and Caribbean region experienced the highest net emigration rate of any region in the world between 1995 and 2000 (O'Neil, Hamilton and Papademetriou, 2005).

Latin America and the Caribbean was also the first region to achieve parity in the numbers of women and men migrating (Cortés Castellanos, 2005). However, Latin America's special status in this respect is not surprising. Already in the 1970s, the Latin American region had the



Fieldwork site, Cochabamba, Bolivia (author's photograph)

highest female labour market participation rates as compared to other regions of the Global South (De Oliveira and Roberts, 1998). During the same period, between 1960s and 1980s, men's labour market participation rates had decreased (in some Latin American countries significantly while in others only slightly) as a result of increased opportunities for education but also due to economic stagnation in countries such as Argentina, Chile and Peru. Female labour market participation rates increased because of the processes linked to urbanisation: higher educational attainments and lower fertility rates. The highest increases were recorded in metropolitan areas, where women entered domestic and other personal services, petty trade as well as office work (de Oliveira and Roberts, 1998).

A decade later, Latin America was already experiencing high levels of international migration by women, a process which has also been associated to the high levels of urbanisation (Hinojosa, 2008b). At the receiving end, the feminization of global migrations has been linked to the ageing of industrialised countries, the higher labour market participation rates by women in Europe and North America as well as inadequate welfare

support for the older and youngest generations by the state. The flexibilization of labour markets and the shifts towards the service sector led to an increased demand for women workers, which is being met by migrant women. While general trends can tell us about the number of women migrants vis-à-vis men, it is also critical to analyse the consequences of transnational migrations in countries of origin, which is where we focus our empirical analysis.

#### *Migration trends in Bolivia*

Forming part of the Southern Cone regional economic system, Bolivian migration was directed until recently towards Argentina and to a lesser extent to the United States, Brazil and Chile. Spain emerged as a major destination after the 2001 Argentinian crisis. Based on official figures it is estimated that over 1.3 million or just over 14% of Bolivians live in another country and 18% of mothers interviewed for the last census stated that at least one of their children lives abroad (Servicio Nacional de Migraciones, cited in De la Torre 2006).

Men historically dominated Bolivia's international migration but this began to change during the 1980s when more women started migrating

to Argentina and specifically to Buenos Aires as a result of increasing demand for women workers (INDEC 1994). Women migrants accounted for 65 per cent of the total increase in migration from neighbouring countries for the period from 1970 to 1990 (INDEC 1997). Bolivians together with Chileans, showed the greatest percentage change in the masculinity indexes between 1980 and 2000 (Bastia, 2005). However, the greatest change occurred following Argentina's crisis in 2001, when Bolivians began to migrate to Spain in large numbers (Hinojosa, 2008a). Over half, 55 percent, of Bolivian residents in Spain in 2005 were women (INE 2005).

These broader trends are relevant for the processes analysed in this article as well as for how the interviewees experienced migration. The Bolivian interviewees have a background in mining. Most of them had relocated from a mining town to Cochabamba during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Men led the initial migration to Argentina, particularly to Buenos Aires. Some migrated directly from the mining town while others moved to Cochabamba first and from there on to Buenos Aires. Women followed closely and engaged in the migration to Argentina in increasing numbers throughout the 1990s. After the 2001 crisis in Argentina many Bolivians returned and women in particular began migrating to Spain. Given that women migrated to Spain in larger numbers than men and the fact that they were often the migrant pioneers, it can be said that this newer migration to Spain was led by women.

#### *Migration trends in Peru*

Peruvian migration to the U.S. has been present since after World War II, but the number has risen steadily since the 1980s due to the economic hyperinflation and political instability that characterized Peruvian politics. There are two different types of labour migration to the U.S., one promoted by specific programmes and the other related to independent migration. An example of labour migration through a U.S. based programme is the shepherders who came on H-2A visas. From the 1970s onwards, American sheep ranchers in California, Oregon, Nevada,

Colorado, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming started recruiting Peruvians. The Peruvian shepherders were workers on the ex-haciendas and peasant communities in the central highlands. Most of the Peruvian shepherders are overwhelmingly from the mining region of Junín.

As for those who have migrated to the U.S. independently, there is a group composed of young women from the highlands who had already migrated to Lima to work as maids. Most of them had little education. Beginning in the 1950s, employers began bringing them into the U.S. In the past five decades these women have built up a network that helps recruit women from Andean villages to Miami and other cities in North America.

Another important group is made up of middle class migrants who often arrive without legal status, language skills, or employment sponsorship. Lacking these resources, many have experienced employment instability and downward mobility. As a coping strategy, these middle class Peruvians view their situation in the U.S. as temporary. They aspire to gain legal status and are working toward regaining the social status they held in Peru. This group has clearly distinguished themselves from other Peruvians and they have contributed to the reproduction of the racial and ethnic hierarchy of Peruvian society while in the U.S. (Sabogal, 2005). The last group of independent labour migrants is made up of skilled migrants, that is, professionals who leave the country to work in low end jobs or those who transfer their credentials and stay in the U.S. (Altamirano, 2006).

#### **Changing migrations, changing gender relations?**

In this section we would like to relate these wider migration trends to changes in gender relations. The literature on gender and migration raises the question of changing gender roles and the potential for women's empowerment in contexts where either women or men migrate (e.g. see Piper, 2009a; Pratt and Yeoh, 2003; Salgado de Snyder, 1993). In situations where migration is predominantly male-led, a central question regarding women's experiences has

been whether non-migrating women expand their roles and responsibilities as a consequence of their husbands' absence (e.g. David, 1995; Gisbert et al., 1994). This literature questions whether the expansion of women's roles brings about changes in their status and relationships. Some scholars argue that women are empowered by the new decisions they have to make (e.g. Balán, 1995; Dandler and Medeiros, 1988; Hirsch, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Parreñas, 2005), albeit with conflicts and anxieties. Other scholars claim that expansion of women's roles without substantive change in women's status and relationships means that male migration reinforces gender inequality (e.g. Menjivar and Agadjanian, 2007). In this view, migration exacerbates tensions which women resolve by conforming to strict gender norms. Scholars such as Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) assume that the expansion of women's decision-making in one sphere of their lives will be replicated in other spheres. However, most research on gender and migration that focuses on empowerment has been conducted in rural communities where several individuals—whether family or neighbours—have migrated and are part of a community in the country of destination.

In contexts where migration is predominantly led by women, the literature has also suggested that this type of migration might lead to greater women's empowerment (Pessar, 2005; McIlwaine, 2010; Morokvasic, 2007). A change in women's status is to be achieved through their exposure to different gender norms so that they might start questioning the assumption that gender inequality is 'naturalised'. These migrant women might begin appreciating the socially constructed nature of gender difference (Bastia, forthcoming). Women's position might also change by virtue of their new incorporation into foreign labour markets, which provides them with greater avenues for autonomy and independent decision-making. For this literature, an interesting question arises at the current conjuncture of high demand for 'women's labour'. While the highest earning individual was historically an adult man within the household – or the 'breadwinner' – and notwithstanding

the fact that men continue to earn higher salaries than women, what happens when the highest earning individual is the adult woman or the main 'reproductive worker'? What are the consequences of large numbers of women migrating? How do households and communities of origin cope with the absence of the main reproductive workers? Who are the losers and who are the winners in this global reorganisation of labour?

### Gender relations in Latin America

Gender relations in Latin America are loosely constructed around the idea of *marianismo* and *machismo*. Both emerged from the influence of the Catholic Church. The aspects of *marianismo* as a symbol of femininity that appear to be predominant in urban areas in both Peru and Bolivia include the belief in women's moral superiority over men, hyper-appreciation of maternity, denial of female sexuality and self-sacrifice (Dreby, 2006; Stevens, 1973). *Machismo*, in turn, emphasizes virility and aggressiveness (Fuller, 1993). The importance of these ideals varies across Latin American societies and across socio-economic groups. However, they serve as an important point of reference.

Patriarchal relations were predominant among the families we interviewed. Mothers are expected to be the primary caregivers and in charge of the social reproduction of the family, while fathers are responsible for providing for the family. Even though the socio-economic structure has changed in both Peru and Bolivia over the past twenty years, this model is still prevalent at the lower-end of the socio-economic structure (Kogan, 1992).

We need to highlight that the 'models' we explain here are very much *ideals* to aspire to. Very few women from low-income families are able to conform to these models as a result of lowering wages and the need for two incomes to sustain a family. Therefore, in practice, both men and women find it difficult to conform to this ideal. Single motherhood is common, particularly among lower-income groups. Moreover, an increasing number of women have taken up paid jobs as their husbands' incomes decreased and

male unemployment rates increased over the last couple of decades.

More specifically, between the 1970s and 1990s, Peruvian women experienced greater access to education, entered the labour market in large numbers (Nunura and Flores, 2001) gained more control over their fertility, and participated more in politics, together with expanding civil rights (Fuller 1993). Although these structural transformations did not challenge significantly the gender division of labour within Peruvian families, the way women in particular understand gender relations has changed (Fuller 1993; Rivera 1993). The religious foundation of being a mother (along with being a wife and a woman) has been questioned and reinterpreted by Peruvian urban women. The emphasis on motherhood is increasingly associated with women's own development rather than solely on the children's development. Meanwhile, urban masculinity has changed at a slower rate, if at all (Fuller 2001). Focusing on elements of urban masculinity, particularly the hegemonic working class culture, work is perceived as the "capacity to earn money for subsistence" and is performed mainly by men (Fuller 2003:3). As work opportunities diminished in Peru in the late 1990s and early 2000s, migration presents itself as a logical response. Further, as men's identity revolves around work, women's income is perceived as an additional help and not necessarily as primary income. For urban Peruvian men, and especially for those involved in the informal economy, being an economic provider and being responsible for others are crucial characteristics of masculinity. For these men "to attain their manliness and be worthy of respect they must become husbands and fathers" (Fuller 2001:319). Working class men tend to work and marry (or cohabit) at an early age so work may become even more important for their masculinity than for men in other economic sectors.

Similar changes have taken place in Bolivia, where women's position has changed considerably over the last ten years. Women increased their labour market participation rates as well as their role in politics, particularly since the election of the Morales government in 2005.

Literacy rates have also improved. However, deep inequalities persist, particularly in relation to income distribution and the quality of jobs women take up in the labour market. In fact, while the gender gap in labour market participation and literacy rates converged, the gender income gap and the quality of jobs men and women perform diverged over the same period (UNDP 2003).

We now turn to our empirical data to investigate whether migration disrupts these gender relations. Following the theory outlined above, we should expect to see at least a challenge to patriarchal relations when (i) women leave their places of origin to tap into foreign labour markets and higher salaries, effectively producing a role-reversal in which they become the breadwinners; and (ii) new spaces open up for less patriarchal control and greater decision-making power in relation to economic decisions within the household in contexts where men migrate.

#### **How cross-border migration is changing the role of women**

When women began to enter Latin American urban labour markets in greater numbers during the 1970s and particularly the 1980s, they often did so without having to force a major change on the nature of gender relations prevalent at the time (Fuller 1993). Many of the jobs undertaken by women, such as informal street trading or home working, were compatible with their domestic and reproductive responsibilities. Moreover, their jobs, even when critical for the survival of their household, were generally seen by both the women as well as their partners, as 'supplementary income'. The household head continued to be the man, and even when their wives engaged in paid work, they continued to have the primary, breadwinning role within the household. However, combining caring responsibilities with long-distance migration is no longer possible for many migrant women.

#### *Feminization of migration from Bolivia: women breadwinners*

Long distance cross-border migration poses a challenge for the way in which gender relations

are conceptualised in two respects: (i) the physical separation between the site of production and reproduction, making it impossible for women to combine both roles; and (ii) women becoming the family breadwinner.

The first challenge relates to the distance between the site of production (foreign labour markets) and the site of reproduction (family 'back home'), which effectively prevents women from combining paid work and reproductive work. Many would like to take their children abroad with them but they are unable to do so because of migration policies; the costs involved in migration; the nature of the jobs they take up, which often involve long hours, for example, as sleep-in domestic helpers; their low wages, which are insufficient to support an adult with children; racism and discrimination in schools in (some) 'host' countries. Therefore, those women who have children often decide to leave their children in their countries of origin, while they seek (temporary) work abroad. When this happens, they cease to be the main provider of childcare, providing the first critical challenge to women's identity as mothers.

One of the practical consequences of the many mothers who decide to migrate, with or without their partners, is a reconfiguration of care work in the community of origin. 'Granny fostering' is quite common and represents the first choice in terms of reconfiguring care work (Bastia 2009). In these cases the grandmother or an aunt takes full responsibility for any younger children. They often also do the cooking and cleaning for any adult men present in the house. When this is not possible the migrant mother tries to find another woman to look after her children. This was the case with Doña Silvana, who was married and had five children when she migrated to Buenos Aires during the late 1980s. Her husband liked drinking and seldom brought home enough to feed the family. A friend was encouraging her to go to Buenos Aires, but she could not get herself to leave her children: "And how could I leave them if my husband was a drunk? He liked drinking. How could I leave my children? No, until they grow up I will have to suffer. I will suffer and then one day I'm going to go." When her eldest daughter was

in her late teens, Doña Silvana decided to go to Argentina. She paid a neighbour to look after her children while she worked abroad.

If granny fostering or paying somebody to take care of the children is not possible, households merge to congregate around a main reproductive worker. The household where Tanja lived during fieldwork in Cochabamba had an adult woman who did all the cleaning and cooked for her resident two adult brothers, her own three children and a nephew (whose mother was in Spain; the father lived in the neighbourhood but in another house), plus two non-resident nephews and sometimes another adult brother (whose son lived in the household with her). Tanja heard of various but found only one verified case where the man was left 'to cope' on his own with his children and housework.

At the ideological level motherhood becomes fundamental for how women's migration is experienced and viewed by the community. Here, the social imaginary of *marianismo* to a great extent shapes the way in which migrant women's determination for migration is understood and socialised. While women's role as mothers does not prevent them from leaving to seek work somewhere else, their identity as primary caregiver is used against them when their migration projects are seen to go against the traditional notion of the patriarchal, nuclear family. Many of the mothers who migrate to Spain are vilified and criticised as being greedy and selfish by community leaders and neighbours<sup>3</sup>. Interestingly, the oppositional categories of "good woman" and "selfish, greedy migrant mother" emerge only around the most recent migration of mothers to Spain. This is largely related to the fact that there are more mothers who migrate without their children in the new migration to Spain (Román, 2009) than in the previous regional migrations. Despite higher levels of income, migration to Spain is much more expensive than regional migration (up to

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<sup>3</sup> In the Peruvian case, Erika found that the family of the husband tends to be more critical of the women who left. In contrast, the woman's family tends to be more supportive (Busse, forthcoming). These differences were not evident in the Bolivian case.

\$3,000 as opposed to around \$100 U.S. dollars). Restrictive migration policies in Spain also make it more difficult for women to take their children with them. Because of the increased levels of autonomous women's migration to Spain, neighbours and community leaders perceive these projects to be undertaken for individual benefit rather than as a family strategy. Young or single women who do not have children are relatively free to pursue modernity and inclusion into the global modern world through migration. But the recent vilification of migrant mothers stands in stark contrast to women's (and mothers') previous migrations to Argentina, precisely because women's migration then was seen as being a household survival strategy. The more recent migration to Spain in contrast is seen as being individualistic, selfish and greedy, autonomy gone too far in its clash with motherhood (see also Mills, 1997).

The second fundamental challenge is posed by women becoming the main breadwinners in their families. When women take up jobs in foreign labour markets, their wages are relatively high not only in relation to what they would have earned had they not migrated but also in relation to their husbands' earnings in the country of origin. If they migrate as a couple, women often earn lower wages than migrant men, but women's initial period of unemployment is often shorter.

Therefore, in cases where the woman migrates and her partner remains in the country of origin, the migrant woman becomes the highest earning individual in her transnational household, effectively assuming the breadwinning role. This was the case for most of the women who were successful in entering Spain between 2003 and 2007 before the introduction of the visa for Bolivians. Some families experienced a slight reconfiguration of gender roles, albeit a temporary one. For example, Doña Josefina, who went to Spain in 2006, left her children with her husband. She was away for twelve months, returning with a capital of around \$20,000 U.S. dollars. She said that while she was away her husband as well as her children started appreciating her domestic contributions,

because it was the first time that they had been responsible for cooking, cleaning and washing clothes. She also said that her husband's view of her also improved because she earned enough money to build their house and buy her husband a car so he could work as a taxi driver.

Many returnees highlight that economic gains go hand in hand with the emotional suffering. Doña Miriam went to Madrid in 2005, leaving her three year old daughter and one year old son with her mother-in-law. She found employment as a domestic worker. She said that in her family nothing changed as a result of migration. However, with her savings they have been able to expand their house from a two bedroom, single storey building to a five bedroom two storey building. They have also been able to buy a new truck and put a motor in one of the two trucks they owned before Doña Miriam's migration. She felt that there were many material benefits to the community as a result of migration: better housing, improved income-earning possibilities as a result of migrants' ability to buy cars and *trufis*, small vans that function as mini-busses. However, there are also many costs. She felt that children were neglected because "nobody looks after them as a mother". Many couples are not able to stay together and effectively separate because of the long distances.

Doña Pamela went to Spain in 2005 with her husband because they had a debt and were unable to repay it with the low income they were earning in Bolivia. They stayed in Spain for three years, leaving their seven year old son with his (maternal) grandmother. Her husband was unemployed for most of the time in Spain, working as a builder but only on a daily basis while Doña Pamela secured work looking after an elderly lady for a monthly wage. In the interview she pointed out that she was supporting her husband while they were in Spain. She was able to repay her debt after a year and four months, and then stayed to save enough money to buy a large plot of land and start building her own house. While Doña Pamela gained materially from working abroad, she also felt that there are many costs. Her sister observed that "children get lost, *se hechan a perder*". Doña Pamela also

commented that her son was not the same any longer.

However, most women seek to disguise their contributions to the household finances upon return. Moreover, their investment patterns suggest that they actively seek to reproduce at least a semblance of patriarchal family relations. Doña Silvana, whose initial migration experience was described above, was one of the first women to migrate to Buenos Aires. She was able to be financially independent and support her five children through her work in Argentina and more recently in Spain. She is now in her late fifties and divides her time between Argentina, Spain and Bolivia, the different localities where her grown-up children live, continuing to support them through periods of illness or when they need additional childcare. She continues to live with her husband, who never worked much because “he liked drinking too much”, managed to save enough money to build her own house and also buy a car so her husband could work as a taxi driver. For both Doña Silvana and Doña Josefina the taxi they bought for their husbands is unlikely to bring in a substantial amount of money. However, it does signal that their husbands are now the breadwinners again while they returned to their domestic roles (Bastia, forthcoming).

The Bolivian case therefore shows that migration poses a challenge to patriarchal relations, mainly through women’s inability to continue to be the main carers in their families as well as their experience of taking on the breadwinning role. However, this challenge is largely temporary and short lived, given that women tend to disguise their earnings and their improved position within the family. The strategies they employ also indicate that they seek to reproduce patriarchal family relations, by often ‘returning’ the breadwinning role to their partners in the form of investment that will lead to their eventual employment (Bastia, forthcoming).

#### *Intensive mothering: Peruvian stay at home mums*

The women interviewed for this research project lived in the outer suburbs of Lima, where

precarious and mostly multifamily housing is predominant. The neighbourhoods are characterized by loose immigrant networks and husbands who rarely, if ever, come back for a visit—unless they have been deported<sup>4</sup>.

Prior to migration, both wives and husbands worked to make ends meet in Peru. Women mostly worked in the informal sector and continued to do so after marriage. They also continued to perform a greater share of household responsibilities, including childrearing. Thus wives used to combine their caregiver role with paid-work and received instrumental extended family support as needed. Although they were not the poorest of the poor in Lima, they sometimes went hungry. Their husbands migrated to make sure that their families in Peru would be able to afford to pay for food and bills. Even if men’s salaries in the U.S. are low, they cover their expenses, as well as regular remittances to Peru, which are used to pay for children’s private education.

The interviews indicate that once the husbands migrate, the women cease their paid jobs and dedicate themselves solely to their children. In this section we will focus on how mothering is carried out by the mothers left behind. For this purpose we utilize the concept of “intensive mothering” (Hays 1991). This concept was developed to explain the cultural contradictions working middle class mothers faced in balancing paid work and family life. As such, it is limited, because it is highly context specific. In addition, it represents an ideal that these women ‘aspire’ to as a marker of social standing. The Peruvian women interviewed for this study live in low income neighbourhoods and come from a background where they were expected to work to make ends meet. However, they quit their jobs as soon as their husbands’ remittances allow. Although imperfect, the concept of

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<sup>4</sup> For Peruvians deported from the U.S., the numbers are scattered and imprecise. During the course of Erika’s research, the families with deported members were very few. Of the few deported, they tended to initiate a new migration shortly thereafter, whether to go back to the U.S. or to another country (e.g. Argentina, Chile, Spain).

'intensive mothering' does explain and is useful in describing the new practices we observed. It is our contention that intensive mothering is a way of signalling an improvement in these women's social standing, although it may incur some costs to the women who also become dependent on their husbands' remittances.

While *marianismo* refers to what being a martyr mother entails, intensive mothering helps us disentangle the specifics of the labour put into being a good mother. Intensive mothering consist of five elements: (i) an individual mother is responsible for child rearing, (ii) use of intensive methods, (iii) expert guidance, (iv) expensive (financially, emotionally and time-wise), and (v) concept of the sacred child. Although Hays (1991) identifies these five elements for how intensive motherhood works in the U.S., we now apply this analytical category to the choices women make in Peru once their husbands leave for the U.S. We should note that research conducted with women left behind in Latin America, and in Mexico in particular, emphasizes the empowerment of women through accessing remittances, as discussed above. This research highlights the fact that women in these countries balance work and family. Because of the relatively small sample of our respective studies, we are not in a position to argue whether this is a new phenomenon for Latin America as a whole. However, we do highlight that intensive mothering does take place and warrants further investigation (see also Busse, forthcoming). Through intensive mothering, low-income women are able to claim moral superiority and therefore deal with the insecurities which long-term separation from their husbands entails.<sup>5</sup>

An individual mother is responsible for child rearing

The model of intensive motherhood stresses that an individual mother is responsible for child rearing. Relying on extended families is no longer

accepted, despite the fact that this was common practice by these very same women before their husbands migrated. Mothers not only help their children with homework on a daily basis. They are also always at hand to console and accompany their children. The devotion women show toward their children is partly based on the absence of the father, a void wives want to make up for. This is reinforced by husbands' insistence that women should take care of the children.

According to these women, child-centred-motherhood involves that mothers are the only ones that can help their children. They are the only ones who know what their children need. This is a radical departure from the older generation, who argue that children should learn for themselves. Wives for the most part have graduated from high school so they have the basic skills to help their children with homework, while the older generation usually only had a few years of formal education. Being with their children also supports the idea that women work a lot and hard, or that being a mother results in devotion and dedication, as wives left behind will point out. Susy, for instance, a woman who has not seen her husband for the past five years, stays at home taking care of her eight-year-old son, Tony. Susy's daily activities revolve around Tony. Sometime this entails a lot of work. However, when her mother-in-law offers to look after Tony, Susy does not accept the offer because she thinks that nobody can look after her child the way she does, even if her mother-in-law has raised six children on her own. This is a typical example of the ways in which women who practice intensive mothering put the children first. This is apparent when women compromise their own feelings for the sake of their children. In the interview Susy confides that after having an argument with her husband over the phone, she saw Tony miserable. Ever since, Susy avoids arguing with her husband to prevent making Tony sad. Her experiences indicate that even her relationship with her husband is thought through the effect that an argument, in this case, can have on her child. As such, women centre their lives, and their relationships, on their children.

<sup>5</sup> The insecurities they face are twofold: holding husbands accountable to provide and remain faithful to their wives and the possibility of the nullification of their certificate of marriage as a strategy to acquire naturalization in the U.S.

The emotional, financial and time expense of intensive mothering

Being a full time mother is an emotionally absorbing activity, where mothers have to be affectionate and nurturing. They have to show unconditional love and anticipate their children's wishes. The drawback of child-centred mothering and the use of intensive mothering methods—along with it being an unpaid job—is that women not only turn to their children, but this is also the only thing they do.

The financial remittances pay bills and private education for children, but not for other services or activities. For example, women do not use the remittances for employing domestic help or to pay for extra-curricular activities. However, they do enrol their children in private schools. These schools tend to be parochial and small, but they have a better reputation than any state school to which they would otherwise send their children. As there is no other activity they can afford, school and homework are the main activities mothers engage in with their children.

As mentioned above, mothers turn to their children and their routines revolve around their children. In the process of centring their lives on motherhood, these women deny their own sexuality. Given that raising their children is a full-time job, and their husbands are not around, women sacrifice their own sexuality to take care of their children. This signals to their husbands that they are good mothers and therefore deserving to receive remittances. Also, these women lack time to socialise with other people as they used to when they worked. Further, contrary to those women who are single mothers and therefore carry the social stigma of it, these women have “responsible” men that went to the extent of migrating to the U.S. to perform their role as breadwinner. This redefinition of themselves against single mothers rests on women's performance of child-centred motherhood and may also be related to their aspirations for upward social mobility and being able to afford staying at home.

Expert guidance

The low income women encountered tend to

seek validation from the children's teachers, other mothers and husbands. For example, Lily shows good care of her children in every minute detail. Lily was talking about her children when she described her three children's lunch boxes. She said, “Today, they had cheese sandwich, homemade apple juice and a bottle of yogurt instead of a fruit. They wanted yogurt today.” Then, she goes on to highlight that her younger son's teacher is always happy that Lily is a good mother for packing homemade juice rather than boxed juice or instant juice or fizzy drinks, which are considered worse options. In addition, this also shows that Lily is good at managing the money sent by her husband because she does not waste money on purchasing unhealthy foodstuffs. In this process Lily receives validation from the teacher for how good she is at taking care of her children's food—as indicator of how good she is at raising them.

Validation also comes from her husband. In the case of Lily, her husband Raul tells her in a judgmental voice that mothers in the U.S. are “different” because they send their children to day-care centres. Raul tells Lily that he is pleased that Lily takes care of the children. This validation also comes with the responsibility of looking after the children constantly. Lily cannot go out by herself. She needs to take at least one of her children with her at all times. One day Lily forgot to tell Raul that she was going to a farewell party next door. Although Lily attended the party with her children, after 30 minutes her children got bored so she took them back home and returned to the party. This was a source of an argument with Raul when he called home that day and found his children at home alone, without their mother. Lily's case shows that although women lack expert guidance (i.e. parenting books), they draw on teachers and friends, along with close supervision from their husbands as well.

Concept of the sacred child

In this case the use of the sacred child is more as the “destitute child,” as children are deprived of a father figure. Mothers have to focus on raising their children as the most important thing for a mother to do. Patty highlights that

she wants to take care of her four daughters a hundred percent. She may consider working in the future when the family is reunited or when her daughters are older. Patty has not seen her husband for nine years and plans to join him in a few months. She points out that her children are already missing their father so there is no point for her to work. Working for her will make her daughters spend most of the day without their two parents. Similar to Patty, wives left behind indicated that they will rather be at home for their children, even if they missed working and earning their own money.

As the analysis shows, by doing intensive mothering women who have quit their paid jobs are further isolated. As mentioned above, women seem to claim their motherhood as a source of power vis-à-vis their husbands. At the same time, women develop a closer relationship with their children. This is sometimes used as leverage when negotiating with their husbands as well as an indication of being 'good wives' and honourable women to their families and the community in Peru.

Wives left behind present themselves as good mothers and faithful wives, partially in opposition to two other types of women: "bad mothers", i.e. working mothers, and the "immoral wives", squandering the remittances and cheating on their husbands while they are away<sup>6</sup>. Being with their children all the time prevents them from being gossiped about. They are able to show that they are dedicated mothers and therefore faithful wives. Further, as mentioned above, women quit their jobs given the remittances they receive from their husbands, which in turn may reinforce the caretaker/ breadwinner division of labour in the family. The consequences of these choices seem to reinforce patriarchal relations

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<sup>6</sup> These are women's own reports about how they present themselves. Although it is impossible to be certain whether wives left behind are faithful or not, it is important to note that they choose this way to present their lives to assert moral superiority, making a clear distinction between them (faithful) and the other women (immoral). This goes in hand with the insecurities women have to deal with upon husbands' migration.

and a traditional gender division of labour within families.

### Conclusion

While the opportunities afforded by locally deemed lucrative jobs in foreign labour markets are clearly posing significant challenges to the ways in which gender relations are conceived, it is difficult to say whether these challenges will bring about a fundamental change in the gender (im)balance. Women's autonomous migration, their ability to sometimes command higher wages than their husbands, the relative freedom with which they engage in geographical mobility could be the basis on which to build more equitable gender relations. However, the Bolivian case has shown that there are also indications that the 'gender gains' are short lived and largely temporary. Women's migration to Spain is qualitatively different from previous migrations not only because there are higher numbers of women migrating but also because these projects are often constructed as *individual* projects. Women, especially mothers, are vilified as greedy and selfish, thereby highlighting an increasing polarity between migrant women's articulations of the reasons for their migration and the way these projects are seen by the community leaders, neighbours and teachers. In view of such opposition and criticism, one strategy that women employ is to disguise their level of autonomy. Even when they return from Spain with significant savings, after finishing their house, they buy a taxi for their husbands to work as taxis, thereby symbolically returning to their husbands the breadwinning role they temporarily performed. So rather than expecting a more liberating effect from looser social control in urban areas, it is precisely this urban-urban long-distance type of migration process that helps exacerbate the negative social connotations linked to women's migration, particularly the migration of mothers.

Patriarchy was also reaffirmed in the Peruvian case, where migration was led by men. The Peruvian interviews have shown that motherhood is crucial to the construction of women's gender role identity and gender hierarchies. This

identity allows these women to assert moral superiority (good mothers) vis-à-vis working women. By practicing intensive mothering they are also able to show their faithfulness to their extended families and their husbands abroad. The possible consequences of the importance of motherhood for these women are manifold. Intensive mothering may turn mothers into traditional mothers in comparison to their own experiences prior to their husbands' migration. Prior sharing of household chores and caretaking disappears and the division of caregiver and breadwinner is consolidated upon migration. As women are solely mothers, children experience a caring mother and a breadwinner father. So in the Peruvian case migration has also reinforced the gendered division of labour.

Temporariness is critical to both cases. In the Bolivian case, patriarchy was temporarily challenged through women taking up the breadwinning role, but then returned, albeit in

new disguises (see Bastia, forthcoming for more details). However, the autonomy and relative high levels of earnings that these women experienced might have left a permanent mark on the type of patriarchy that is reshaped post-migration. In the Peruvian case, the intensive mothering and the sharp separation between the women's caretaking and the men's breadwinning roles is only possible due to the relatively high wages men earn in the U.S. and the relatively low living costs that their wives and children are able to benefit from in Peru. If these 'left behind' wives join their husbands in the U.S., as most aspire to, their families will yet again have to go through an additional reorganization. Therefore, only time will tell to what extent the migrations we examine in this paper fundamentally challenged gender roles and whether the changes we have observed will provide the foundations for women's empowerment in the future.

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# Social Change and Female Involvement: Sinthiane's Associations At Home and Abroad

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## Abstract

In this article I investigate the development and evolution of diaspora associations with a particular focus on female (migrant) associations by using a case study of a Senegalese village community (Sinthiane) at home and away from home, in France. Focusing on women's collective engagement, I argue that female involvement in diaspora associations and associational development are better understood by taking into account social and political change in the sending location. The argument is built on a gendered analysis of diaspora development engagement, focusing on the role of NGOs and policy programmes in the sending location and daily associational life in Sinthiane and France.

My analysis is based on 17 months of ethnographic fieldwork mainly in the suburbs of Paris, and in Senegal, in Dakar and in Sinthiane, a village in the north-east of the country.

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## Introduction

Starting in the mid-1990s, interest in hometown associations and village associations (HTAs/VAs) resurfaced (Caglar 2006) focusing not only on collective remittances but also on a variety of non-economic questions concerning those collectivities (see e.g. Grillo and Riccio 2004; Page 2007; Kleist 2008). Despite this, associational development and especially questions around social change and female engagement in HTAs/VAs and the development of female associations tend to be ignored or stand out due to their narrow focus which is based on two main characteristics.

First the few studies focusing on women's associational activities tend to focus on the question of whether migrant associations' challenge or reproduce patriarchal norms (see e.g. Mahler 1998; Denzer and Mbanefoh 1998; Honey and Okafor 1998; Goldring 2001). They are based on the assumption that migrant associations have the potential to induce social change or reinforce common social norms at home and in the diaspora. As a result, their

analysis of HTAs/VAs concentrates on structural questions, such as: Are women part of HTAs/VAs? Do they hold leadership positions in those associations or does diaspora-development engagement of HTAs/VAs empower and liberate the women from social and patriarchal norms in the sending area? Secondly their focus of investigation is frequently on the receiving society using the political opportunity structure model to explain why women are absent from HTAs/VAs or from leadership positions in those associations (see e.g. Jones-Correa 1998a, b).

Both assumptions are problematic. First they are based on essentialist binary understandings that assert that human beings are differentiated into two clear-cut groups, namely women and men. As Judith Butler (1999) and other poststructuralist feminist scholars point out, the idea that society is 'inevitably' based on a binary patriarchal culture leaves little room to analyse differences and resistance. Taking this into account and being inspired by research that points out the validity of differences between and within migrant groups (see e.g. Marston

1989, 2002, 2004, Sinatti 2008, Mercer et al. 2009), I will focus on diversity and acknowledge the differences and similarities between men and women, but also among women and among men when analysing the evolution and changing landscape of Sinthiane migrant associations. Second their focus of analysis is on the receiving society and implies that HTAs/VAs have the potential to play a modernizing role in terms of social change at home. Scholars of transnational migration remind us, however, to study migrants' simultaneous involvement in two or more nation-states (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2003), a point of view which I will implement here. Focusing on women's associational evolution and engagement at home and in the diaspora I suggest that political and social change at home and the exchange between those at home and those overseas propels associational development and social change in the diaspora thereby providing a different gender analysis and questioning the standard assumption of diaspora-development participation.

In this article I present some results of my multi-sited ethnographic Ph.D. fieldwork which was carried out over 17 months, in the suburbs of Paris, in Dakar and Sinthiane. I focus on Sinthiane's changing associational landscape and the emergence of female associations in Sinthiane and the diaspora. In particular I will investigate the relationships between the different actors by focusing on social and political change in the sending locality and the way those changes impact on the evolution of diaspora associations, specifically female associations in France. I will critically examine the political opportunity structure approach, and highlight the strength of observing associational everyday life at home and away from home, as a tool to investigate associational life. The paper highlights the influence of the sending context in shaping associational formations and social change in the diaspora thereby elaborating on the political opportunity structure model and questioning the assumption that migrants are 'the only agents of social change'.

The article is organized in four parts. The first part focuses on the political opportunity

structure model and provides a review of the literature that analyses the emergence of diaspora associations in France established by migrants from the Senegal River valley region. In the second part I will introduce the sending context and the Sinthiane associations at home and away from home. Third I will elaborate on this account and focus on the evolution of female associations in Sinthiane and their interactions with the community in France. Finally I will present my conclusions.

### **The political opportunity structure approach and associations from the Senegal River valley region in France**

Research addressing migrants' political and social mobilization and participation on the national, international and transnational level tends to use the political opportunity structure approach (POS) which Patrick Ireland (1994) introduced and applied to the field of migration studies. In relation to associations, the POS approach tries to explain migrants' political behaviour, primarily their mobilization potential and motivation to set up and engage in associations. Furthermore, the approach addresses questions related to the evolution and changes in associations over time. The main assumption is that the formation and organization of migrant associations will strongly depend on the structure of political institutions and the configuration of political power in a given receiving society (Tarrow 1996). Comparative studies of migrants' political participation in Western Europe assume that the receiving societies shape the collective organization of migrants by providing certain resources for, and models of, organizing (Soysal 1994; Doomernik 1995). Changes in the external opportunity structure or constraints on mobilization can drive or curb associational activism (Schrover & Vermeulen 2005). In the course of time some studies elaborated on the POS approach by including non-institutional factors (Bousetta 2000; Koopmans 2004; Però and Solomos 2010), such as paying attention to discursive articulations of governments (Koopmans 2004) or moving away from national considerations pointing towards the dispersal of political and

institutional power. Those studies showed for example that the associational engagement of migrants belonging to the same group might vary depending on the local POS (Berger et al. 2004; Caponio 2005). The calls to 'transnationalise the POS' (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003; Però 2007, 2008) have so far been hardly heard, a task which I will address here.

#### *The Senegalese case in the receiving context*

Research addressing associational development and women's associational interest and activities in HTAs/VAs tend to use the POS model, frequently in combination with other socio-economic factors found in the receiving society. This applies equally to the case of the Senegal River valley community in France. The studies that focus on the associational activities of migrants from the Senegal River valley region point out that the migrants' associational engagement in France is strictly divided into male and female associations. Although there are exceptions, on a general level one can distinguish between a variety of male HTAs/VAs working primarily with and for their village of origin, and female associations which are frequently multi-ethnic and multi-national in nature and direct their interest primarily towards issues concerning integration in France (Quiminal et al. 1995; Daum 1998b, 2000; Millet 2004/2005).

The emergence and evolution of those single-sex associations is described as a result of the POS in France and other political, social, economic and cultural factors. In relation to this men's associational interest and the evolution of male HTAs/VAs is explained with reference to five main reasons. First it is argued that the booming French economy fostered the largest labour migration trajectory attracting mainly people from former French colonies in the 1960s (Timera 1996; Daum 1998a, b, 2000). This migration trajectory was notably composed of male labourers from the Senegal River valley region. Second the French state did not provide any help or facilities for the social integration of the newly arrived migrants, but rather a migrant was: '...a worker and his integration into society goes mainly and maybe even fully through his

inscription into working relationships' (Quiminal et al. 1995:4). Thus migrants were primarily perceived as workers and not as part of French society, and faced thirdly discrimination and racism. Fourth the legal framework allowed a free movement between France and the sending countries thereby fostering a circular migration system. Finally social integration was blocked owing to the state-managed provision of migrant housing. Migrants were accommodated in *foyers*, i.e. male migrant hostels. Women and families were until today denied access to those forms of migrant housing and thus family reunification was not on the agenda. The loose visa regime and the hiring of a male migrant working force without providing social integration helped to foster a particular kind of lifestyle. Daily life practices consisted of a family left behind, circular migration and a shared common life in the *foyers*. The shared common life in the *foyers* was organized around male village clusters that performed and shared their daily life together. Those male village clusters were the forerunners of or the actual first forms of male HTAs/VAs in France (Quiminal 1991, Quiminal et al. 1995, Timera 1996, Daum 1998b).

#### *The sending perspective*

This kind of lifestyle and especially the rise of male village clusters or HTAs/VAs was further supported by certain circumstances in the migrants' context of origin. Increasing environmental degradation and little support from the new postcolonial states did not allow for the continuation of the predominant forms of lifestyle; i.e. men providing for the family through working the land (Diop, M.C. 2008). Subsistence farming became increasingly supplemented by flows of remittances that emerged mainly from outmigration to the Senegalese capital Dakar and/or France. (Boutillier et al. 1962; Diop, A.B. 1965; Wane 1969; Guèye et al. 2007; Dia, H. 2008; Sall 2008). This goes together with certain customs and traditions, such as the division of labour and a tradition that prohibits unaccompanied female migration or even family reunification in France. Notably in Haalpulaar and Sereer culture, unaccompanied female migration was and

remains to a large extent an obstacle (Dia and Colin-Noguès 1982; Kane 2002) and moreover it remains the husband and his family who decide whether his wife will join him or not (revealed in interviews in France, Dakar and Sinthiane 2005/2006). As a result, families have become transnationalized and transnational family life became the predominant form of lifestyle. As the family was left behind private remittances supplemented the daily family life and collective remittances through the village clusters made sure that the village develops in certain ways that fit into the migrants' retirement aspirations. In this spirit it seems to be natural that a dense web of male HTAs/VAs engaging in mutual aid and the village of origin emerged over time in France. Furthermore, the inclusion of women into those collectivities appears to be redundant. This is still important, because only one third of the migrants from the Senegal River valley region opted for family reunification (Daum 1998b).

*Receiving country: diversification of migration associations*

However, the suspension of further migration and tighter immigration controls, as well as new visa requirements introduced for several African countries in 1985, transformed the temporary model of circular migration, and gave rise to both, a diversification of migration and family reunification from 1974 onwards. (Azoulay and Quiminal 2002; Tall 2002; Marfaing 2003). Over time, an increasing level of migrants coming from different sending countries, with different backgrounds and professional skills joined the mainly unskilled migrant workers from the Senegalese River valley community in France. This new diversity went together with the emergence of protest movements all over the world and resulted in the formation of an array of new migrant associations. Those associations were no longer directly linked to their hometowns or villages but rather they were fighting for migrant rights in France and rebelling against neocolonialism and other deplorable states of affairs concerning their countries of origin. Thus they transcended the common features of the predominant male migrant associations or village

clusters. Frequently they were run by students and composed of male and female migrants (Quiminal et al. 1995; Azoulay and Quiminal 2002). Those associations, however, had little attraction for the increasing number of migrant women who frequently came with children in the framework of family reunification to France. Those women were not only left out of the new associations but also, as mainly illiterate migrant women with no experience of 'western lifestyle' excluded from French mainstream society. However their double exclusion was taken up by some of the activist and feminist migrant women who started to built new kinds of female migrant associations, namely mutual aid associations aiming to facilitate migrant women's daily life in France (Quiminal et al. 1995). On the one hand the activist women continued to work in newly-built migrant associations focusing frequently on female rights and colonialism, and on the other, some of those women became founders and leaders of female mutual aid associations, first established in neighbourhoods with a high level of newly-arrived migrant women. The foundation of those female mutual aid associations became a trigger for a never ending cumulative process, which set in motion female associations in nearly all localities where a certain number of migrant women and families lived (Quiminal et al. 1995). The spread of both kinds of associations was further prompted due to a major change concerning the POS in France in 1981. In 1981 an emergency decree dating from 1939, which subordinated the constitution of associations of foreigners to the authorization of the Minister of Internal Affairs, was suspended. As a result, foreigners living in France gained the same rights as French people to form associations in accordance with the 1901 law which facilitated tremendously the setting up of migrant associations (Millet 2004/2005).

However, neither the associations of the activist women nor the female mutual aid associations swept off or were integrated into the earlier founded male HTAs/VAs but rather a spectrum of village associations came into being. However predominantly a juxtaposition of male and female village associations emerged. It is argued

that this juxtaposition is unlikely to break down due to two reasons. First the institutional and discursive POS in France continues to nourish the gender divided associational structure (Quiminal et al. 1995; Sargent and Larchanché-Kim 2006). This is explained with reference to distinct male and female modes of social integration. While men are little connected with public institutions outside their workplace, women are in contact with all kind of institutions thereby establishing relationships with teachers, nurses, medical personnel, social workers etc. Those divergent modes of social integration continue to be promoted by the French state and result in associational interest that supports women's involvement towards the receiving society, while simultaneously promoting the men's interest in their place of origin. Second this gender divided associational organization gains further ground due to cultural peculiarities found in many African societies. Many African societies are highly gender-divided and it is common that women need to integrate into the husband's family and the surrounding female networks after their weddings. The literature addressing this issue (Quiminal et al. 1995; Azoulay and Quiminal 2002; Sargent and Larchanché 2006) proposes that this situation bears some similarities to women's situation in France, where women arrive in an unfamiliar setting; however, they quickly become embedded into female neighbourhood networks that serve as a replacement for the female solidarity structures in the context of origin.

Thus the gendered associational characteristics of the Senegalese River valley community in France case are explained with reference to the POS in the receiving society as well as some other mainly cultural and economic factors originating in the sending context. I will build on those findings by conceptualizing male and female engagement in HTAs/VAs as a process of exchange between those left behind and those living overseas. However, unlike prior research my focus will be on the POS structure in Senegal and the associational practices in Sinthiane and their impact on associational life in France. Thus I will neither focus on the POS in France nor on the

efforts of the sending state to persuade those in the diaspora to become development actors (see e.g. Lampert 2009 on Nigerian; Mohan 2008 on Ghana). In the next part I will briefly present the sending area and map out Sinthiane's associational life at home and abroad.

### **Sinthiane: the sending context and its associations at home and abroad**

My case study concerns the northern part of Senegal, i.e. the Senegal River valley region which stretches along the south bank of the Senegal River. More precisely Sinthiane is situated in the Middle valley (also termed *Fouta Toro*) and is one of the numerous *Haalpulaar* villages in the Senegal River valley region. It is part of the *communauté rurale de Ouro Sidy* and situated around 30km south of Matam which is the next largest city and the seat of the regional council. There are 2770 people living in Sinthiane among them 792 men and 717 women of working age, 505 boys and 556 girls aged between 0-17, and 100 men and 101 women of retirement age. Thus the population is balanced in terms of sex and the claim that only women, children and old people are living in those villages cannot be confirmed.

Due to social, environmental, political and economic circumstances, the River valley region is undergoing a permanent change and the hierarchies of the past are being contested due to their incapacity to ensure the future: sometimes women, men and young people take on new positions and slightly reorder the traditional village organization. Nevertheless tradition continues to exist and it is worth recalling the basic principles of village organization revealing the daily life relations between men and women.

The social status of women relates to their performance as wives, mothers and caretakers (Diop 1965; Wane 1969; Sarr 1998; Dilley 2004). At a young age girls are already educated to respect and perform their wifely duties: to behave in a seductive manner, presenting attractive bodies, to be submissive and to bear in mind the position of co-spouses. After the wedding a woman is supposed to be incumbent on her husband and has to fulfill a broad range of domestic tasks. Though life based on subsistence farming was

already threatened by the colonial powers and is no longer possible due to increasing droughts and ongoing environmental degradation, farming remains the main source of income and the major profession of men (Dia and Colin-Noguès 1982; Guèye et al. 2007). Although women might engage in little farming tasks overall they are not supposed to be involved in agriculture and they thus have hardly any possibility to become economically independent.

#### *Associations in Sinthiane and the diaspora*

In terms of associations Sinthiane builds the starting point for both male and female diaspora associations. Before the emergence of any diaspora associations there were two types of associations in the village. On the one hand there has been what is commonly termed as *the caisse* which reunites all men from the age of 16 onwards and on the other, there was and continues to be an array of female-run family associations. While the former is organizing public and political life in the village, the latter is responsible for organizing family events, such as giving birth and wedding ceremonies. Hence the migrants' context of origin used to be and continues to be, to a large extent, predominantly organized around gender-divided associations, placing men and women out of place in specific contexts and privileging them in others. Those gender-divided local village associations became the role model for a growing amount of diaspora associations that emerged with an increasing level of national and international migration trajectories of Sinthiane people.

The first Sinthiane diaspora *caisse* came into being in Dakar and was literally a clone of the *caisse* in Sinthiane, providing mainly mutual aid for the migrant community. Over the years, the *caisse* in Dakar took on a double function, i.e. to provide mutual aid for the members and to engage in collective remittances for the village. However, not only the associational activities changed over time but also the associational landscape broadened. Geographical dispersion of Sinthiane migrants and family reunification taking place brought about new associations. On the one hand a much regulated transnational

associational system of male associations or *caisses* emerged and on the other old and new forms of female associations came into being in the diaspora. In what follows I will briefly explain the difference between Sinthiane male and female associations that emerged in the diaspora.

#### *Female associations in the diaspora*

In relation to female associations, it is important to bear in mind that migration from the Senegal River Valley region is still male-dominated and only a minority of migrants opted for family reunification. Concerning Sinthiane, family reunification took mainly place in Dakar and France. In addition to this there are some Sinthiane families in other African countries, notably Côte d'Ivoire (until civil war and unrest broke out). However the increase of female migrants in Dakar and France jogged the emergence of new Sinthiane diaspora associations. In fact the women acted similarly to the male migrants and cloned the traditional female associations found in Sinthiane. Thus Sinthiane migrant women engaged in associations that enable them according to tradition to perform family events, such as giving birth and wedding parties. This implies that their associational engagement is not necessarily linked to the village community but rather oriented towards an output that serves their own family needs in the receiving context. As such the female associations are sometimes built with neighbours or women who live in the same compound, house or district. They are neither necessarily homogenous in terms of the women's belonging nor are they transnational in nature.

Hence the Sinthiane diaspora associations that emerged over time used to clone the traditional village associations thereby keeping and renewing the traditional associational gender division. However over the years not only the daily life of migrants changed but also the life in the village increasingly altered. Due to social, environmental, political and economic circumstances, the whole River valley region is undergoing a permanent change. This change includes the emergence of new associational formations. In the next part I will focus on the

evolution of female associations in Sinthiane and how this evolution impacted on the formation and development of the Sinthiane diaspora associations in France.

### **New female associations in Sinthiane**

Among other things, the presence of development relief agencies, as well as shifts in the POS both have induced some changes to the traditional village organization and to associational life in Sinthiane. Though the shared narrative in the village and abroad continues to claim: "women are only running family associations and men are doing the development work" (revealed in interviews in France, Dakar and Sinthiane 2005/2006). Observations and interviews suggest however that changes in the POS combined with the efforts of some NGOs have fostered and challenged the traditional female associational landscape. In the course of several years, female associations that transgress the realm of family associations have emerged in nearly all villages in the region. From the 1980s onwards, the Senegalese government, in tandem with some NGOs supported the formation of *Groupements de Promotion Féminine* (GPFs), which are formal rural female associations (Sarr 1998).

The aim of these associations has been to integrate women into small scale development projects. They bring together 50-800 women, and sometimes assemble the women of one entire village (Sow 1990). Despite the fact that many of those associations were not very well accepted and under-used in the beginning, the Senegalese government continued to promote and support those associations as part of the state's development politics. Today, the official development discourse, expressed for example in Senegal's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, is based on the notion '*no development without the women*' (République du Sénégal 2002). Looking at those documents suggests that the Senegalese state tries actively to promote women's empowerment in accordance with the global development discourse. Supporting the foundation of GPFs as an integral part of the national development plan is one example of the state's efforts to proceed in line with the shared

global discourse on women and development.

Since the 1980s, Sinthiane also has a *Groupement de Promotion Féminine* (GPF), which has by now been joined by the majority of women in the village. Most interesting is how the GPF came into being and how a relationship between several actors and especially the GPF and the Sinthiane diaspora associations emerged:

...as women are now running ministries they (women) should also have something for themselves, they should build women's associations and also gardens because each women's association needs a garden... that is what we were told when the Ministry of Women came up with the idea to create female village associations... The government continues to support the GPFs but also other people, NGOs and other donors... (Binta. B., Sinthiane, 26.7.2006).

This statement reveals both, first, how a POS was created that provided incentives to build female associations which transgress the performance of traditional associations and second that the incentives to build those associations are provided by global development actors. Tracing the exact way in which the GPF in Sinthiane came into being makes this even more explicit:

...one day a delegation of policy-makers from Dakar came to visit. ...They (the government delegation) offered to construct a new well in Sinthiane under the condition that Sinthiane has a female association that will use the well... honestly at this time we did not have... a female association... but I quickly said yes we do have a non-registered female association... they told us... we need to register the association if we want a well. ...In fact the offer was only transmitted by the government... because it was finally UNICEF who dug and paid for the well... (Salamata S., Sinthiane, 14.08.2006).

Both statements suggest that the efforts of the Senegalese government in supporting the creation of female associations came neither out of the blue nor was it a non-recurring action; but rather, the states' actions to establish a 'female friendly POS' has been embedded in the interest of NGOs and foreign government institutions and their focus on the development-women nexus.

However while the government and development aid agencies provided incentives and facilities for the creation of formal female associa-

tions, the women in Sinthiane could only create the association after the male community in Sinthiane and in the diaspora approved it. Thus the Sinthiane women consolidated and asked the male *caisse* in the village for approval. Once approved by the male community in the village, the diaspora community was informed and asked to acknowledge the association and to make a financial starting contribution to the GPF. Overall this was a 'success story'; the GPF foundation was approved and the association received money from a variety of Sinthiane *caisses* and also from some individuals based elsewhere.

Not only is the approval of the male diaspora *caisses* exceptional but even more important is their willingness to listen to the voices of the women. While women have been in exchange with their husbands or other family members in France, communication between the women in the village and the male diaspora associations did not take place until then. Moreover to approach the male diaspora community and to ask for approval and some seed money was the beginning of an array of new communications between the male community in the diaspora notably with the *caisse* in France (the biggest one) and the women in the village. However caution is needed because not all men are in favour of the GPF and only a few women are responsible for the male/female exchange, namely the GPF leadership and some people close to them. Also even those women are to some extent still constrained and need to approach the *caisses* in well thought-out ways. For example they do not always approach the *caisse* directly but rather they ask a male representative in the village to approach the diaspora community. Alternatively, one of the responsible GPF women may call a migrant in France to request advice on if and what kind of a request letter to send to the *caisse*. Central, however, is that it the women's bargaining involves men in the village and the diaspora. This is especially interesting as one of the common narratives continues to claim: "women are responsible for the family and not for development" (revealed in interviews in France, Dakar and Sinthiane 2005/2006).

#### *Fostering female exchange in the diaspora*

However the female engagement goes even further, once they received the approval from the male community in the village and in the diaspora the women reached out and engaged with administrative officials who are responsible for local development. The *chef d'expansion rurale* (CER) was approached, in order to get technical and administrative advice. CERs are supposed to foster and encourage the self-responsibility and self-determination of the local population, and to promote local development. As such it is part of the CER's work to support and advise the rural female associations in their development efforts. For example, in Sinthiane one of the CERs has been central in helping the women to establish the garden and to provide a link to funding sources:

...the CER...when we meet he asks me if everything is all right with our gardens...it was also him who went with us (GPF chairwomen) to the village chef and the elders to ask for a plot where we can construct the gardens... once we had the plot he came to measure the allotments and to give each woman (who joins the GPF) an allotment of 5 metres...and the CER is also the one to ask for help from UNICEF...UNICEF makes some donations each year. ...If we want any cooperation with UNICEF we need to ask the CER...the funds from the French embassy were not through the CER – I think but I am not sure...(Binta, B., Sinthiane, 26.07.2006).

This highlights that not only new communication between the women in Sinthiane and the diaspora men emerged but rather that some of the women have entered some male-headed communications and made direct contact with relatively important and influential local people.

However, despite the acknowledgement and some seed money from the male diaspora community as well as continued support from the CER, UNICEF and other international donors, the GPF was not working particularly well in its founding years. This however changed over the course of several years. Today, the female association is engaged in a number of small-scale projects. For example, the GPF maintains a garden which allows each woman to cultivate a small plot and to use the harvest either to

supply the family or to sell it and to gain a small income. Another example of the activities of the GPF in Sinthiane is the production and selling of batik cloth which also allows some women to earn some money. The evolution of those projects might be applauded in terms of the women development-nexus, however what seems to be more central is that the foundation of the GPF in Sinthiane fostered some new relationships between men and women, which were thought impossible within the common narratives, and remain so. The foundation of the GPF created a variety of new communicative relationships between Sinthiane women and men in the village and the diaspora. For example the local cooperation with the CER brought about that the women managed to go through a funding application process in order to receive funding for watering pots for their garden from UNICEF. To master this process implies not only a range of very formal administrative work but also engagement in many male-headed communications, a task which was so far unknown for the women in Sinthiane. Similarly the approval and seed money from the male diaspora *ciasses* was just the starting point for further social and economic exchange between the women in Sinthiane and the male diaspora groups. Though there was and is no regular exchange between them but the diaspora *caisses* are approached in a very target-oriented manner according to the GPF's needs. For example the celebration of a women's day was a reason for the women to approach the male diaspora and to ask for supporting funds to carry out and host this event. Even though women are not fully part of all associations and meetings in and outside the village, and their partial participation continues to be ignored by some people, my observations paired with my interviews show that some of the women, mainly the GPF leadership and people close to them have entered domains which were previously fully closed to them.

I illustrated that a growing interest in women from national and international government and non-government institutions induced shifts in the discursive and institutional POS in Senegal, thereby 'targeting women' and fostering new

collective female initiatives such as the GPFs. In the next section I will illustrate how the women's associational engagement in the village affected the migrant women in France. I will focus on the GPF and the genesis of a new female association in France, namely the *association de femmes de Sinthiane en France* (AFSF).

*Female Associational Involvement, the Women-Development Nexus, and Changing Transnational Gender Relations*

Associational involvement has had interesting and unexpected effects on transnational gender relations, both in perceived and real terms:

...UNICEF was wondering if there is not a women's association similar to the *caisse* (in France)...as a result they (the female group in Sinthiane) wrote a letter to S.B. (one of the migrant women in France) and asked for a donation from us (Sinthiane migrant women in France) ...We had a meeting and finally we decided to make a donation by setting up a sister association...the *association de femmes de Sinthiane en France* (AFSF) ...(Oumou, B., Paris, 28.09.2005).

The women in Sinthiane describe the foundation of the female association in France (AFSF) in a different way. According to the women in Sinthiane it was the initiative of the women in France to set up a sister association in France (AFSF) and to make an initial donation of 100,000 CFA (150 Euro) to the female village association (GPF). Even though it is not clear who made the first step, the genesis of the female association in France is related to the prior established female group in the village. Today the AFSF has 27 members and group meetings take place on a rotating basis every three months at the home of one of the members. The maintenance of the association is driven by the wish to support the women in the village. 'Maintenance' means that the women pay into a kitty each month in order to support the female group in the village. They are in continuous exchange with the GPF by post, phone call, and video tape. They keep track of the association's activities, collect the membership fees, transfer the money, and all other related things. The women's long term goal is not only to respond to requests from the women in the

village but also to initiate development projects through fundraising actions in France. Until now the group reacted 'only to the requests' of the women in the village. Once a request from the female group in the village comes, exchange, discussion and further investigation starts, in order to come to an agreement on whether and how to support the female association in the village.

The women's group in the village fostered a new association and new associational practices among the Sinthiane women in France came into being. The foundation of a female sister association in France called into question common narratives which stress that, "women are not interested in development work" or "they [women] care only about their feast but not about the development of the village" (revealed in interviews in France, Dakar and Sinthiane 2005/2006) and question the assumption that "migrants are the only agents of social change and development". However some caution is needed as the women in France needed the permission of the male *caisse* in order to set up the AFSF. In addition, each of the women needs to get her husband's permission to join the association. However, the chair women and the leading circle of the association received broad support from their husbands and also from some of the single migrants in France.

The continued exchange between the AFSF, the male *caisses* all over the world and the GPF suggests that the POS in Senegal not only influences the associational interest of women and men in Sinthiane, but also impacts on the associational behavior of the migrant women and men in France. The external people surrounding the women in Sinthiane, such as UNICEF employees and government officials, are not only financial resources but heralds of new images and ideas concerning men and women. They are shaping the institutional as well as the discursive POS in Sinthiane and Senegal. Institutions such as UNICEF foster a new discursive POS that influences associational behaviour locally and transnationally. The new ideas and discourses in the village have an impact on the Sinthiane migrants in France. One example for this concerns the division of labour:

"...The world is changing and I like to be part of this... if I could, I'd go to work happily...in Sinthiane I am limited...I do the garden and sell juice...but really the women in France they have the possibilities they can work and they can support us (the GPF)..." (Salamata, S., Sinthiane, 14.08.2006).

Though the pre-dominant division of labour and the organization of daily life in male and female spheres is still deeply ingrained in people's minds, the women in Sinthiane seem to assume that the women in France and Dakar experience upward mobility, which is perceived as an enabling factor for building female solidarity networks or associations across borders. The women's associational evolution in Sinthiane produces new images and ideas about men and women in the transnational space.

The changing images and ideas of the women in Sinthiane have also had an impact on the male migrants in France:

... My sister (one of the migrant women in France) contacted me after the women received the letter from the women's association in Sinthiane (to ask for support from the women in France)...I told her my opinion...to work something out with the other women in France and to support the GPF... (Coumba, D., Paris, 07.04.2006).

This statement underlines that the women's growing involvement in the GPF brought about some challenges, which are not only described as a catalyst for the establishment of the female association in France, but also encourage male Sinthiane migrants in France to support the foundation of this association.

### Conclusions

By focusing on Sinthiane's associational performances at home and abroad this article has offered a corrective to recent approaches to the study of migrants' gendered associational engagement which has focused merely on one question, namely whether migrant associations are vehicles to change social and patriarchal norms or not. By changing the focus of investigation from the receiving to the sending context, the article contributes also to the political POS approach and challenges the common assumption that migrants are "the only agents of

social change". Focusing on the POS in Senegal the article questions the standard assumption of diaspora-development participation.

At the case study level, the article has shown how the collective initiatives of Sinthiane women have broadened to engage and mobilize locally and transnationally in development issues concerning their life in Sinthiane. In particular, the case study has illustrated how Sinthiane women extended their traditional associational engagement by directing their attention to small-scale development projects. The way the women reached out to find support for their new associational activities brought about the emergence of new local and transnational communicative, and the greater development of social and economic ties between the women and the male community in Sinthiane as well as with the Sinthiane diaspora community. Moreover it fostered the emergence of a sister association in France, which equally transgresses the realm of a traditional female association.

This illustration has been embedded into an analysis of the POS in Senegal. I highlighted how a female-embracing POS in tandem with policy programmes of development relief agencies nourished the establishment of the GPF. Interwoven in this was an illustration of the local and transnational interactions between the

female association in the village and the male Sinthiane association in France. In particular, I examined how the local shifts taking place in Sinthiane are mirrored in the associational landscape of Sinthiane associations in France. This highlighted that male and female diaspora engagement is not only bound up with the POS in the receiving society, but is also influenced through the discourses and exchanges performed in the village.

The experience of the Sinthiane case presented also some limitations regarding a gendered analysis of diaspora development engagement. Both the failure to include gender in the analysis of diaspora-development engagement as well as the preoccupations with questions concerning migrant associations, patriarchal norms and female empowerment are hiding more than they reveal. Taking an alternative path of analysis suggests that female engagement is inextricably bound to the sending context. This is not only ignored in the few studies that focus on gender in HTAs/VAs but also in the rhetoric of some academics and policy-makers who recently rediscovered and celebrated the development potential of migrant associations. Thus the Sinthiane case study serves as a reminder to study social change and diaspora-development engagement from an angle that includes the sending and the receiving context.

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# Measuring Women’s Empowerment through Migration

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**Abstract**

Currently, nearly half of international migrants are women, and evidence suggests that migration flows and their impacts are strongly gendered. However, there is a striking lack of quantitative analysis of international migration’s impact on gender. This paper attempts to examine the challenges in cross-national measurement of women’s empowerment through migration as a contribution to an informed policy debate around gender, migration and empowerment. Since the focus of this paper is on identifying challenges in quantitative measurement of women’s empowerment, we use individual-level data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) to examine migrant women’s socio-economic characteristics. Data on educational attainment is used as proxy for social empowerment, while economic empowerment is measured using individual-level data on migrant’s occupation, job status, property ownership and net wage. Although aggregate data on female migration is essential to improve our understanding of cross-country differences in aspects of women’s migration, this paper emphasizes the need for more longitudinal data to identify barriers to women’s empowerment in destination and origin countries. The paper makes several forward-looking conclusions that summarize the major findings and links them to data and measurement issues that need to be addressed in future research.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*“Migration can be both a cause and consequence of female empowerment.”*  
Hugo. (2000).

Since 1950, the female share of international migrants has been more than 40 per cent. Initially, women moved as ‘accompanying family dependents’, however, currently more women are migrating independently in search of jobs<sup>2</sup>. This change is a result of a combination of factors—changes in the demographic structure,

increasing demand for cheaper caregivers in rich countries, more visible inequalities in wealth and opportunities across countries, globalization and aggressive policies of private recruitment agencies<sup>3</sup>.

Improvement in women’s education, change in societal perceptions of women’s role in the family and differential wages for the same profession across countries, have all been drivers of independent migration of women. For instance, a doctor from Côte d’Ivoire can raise her income six folds if she moves to France (HDR 2009). As the 2009 Human Development Report notes, “movement both within and between nations is predominantly driven by the search for better opportunities.” In addition to income gains, migration has the potential to improve

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<sup>2</sup> INSTRAW, 2007

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

women's self respect, their dignity and enhance their freedom to act in pursuit of their personal goals<sup>4</sup>.

The important role of women as remittance senders and the role of migration in reshaping gender power relations has become an important research theme in recent years. However, as Hugo (2000) notes, whether or not migration results in increased empowerment of women depends on the context in which the migration occurs, the type of movement, and the characteristics of the female migrants.

With the changing trend in international migration, there is a growing awareness in social science research that the consideration of gender is critical when studying the motivations, outcomes, and barriers to international migration. Nevertheless, there has been little effort to explicitly model the differences between men and women with respect to the determinants and outcomes of international migration. This is a serious shortcoming in the existing literature. Unless we are able to measure adequately how migration affects women's status, it would be difficult to advocate for migration policies that are sensitive to the specific needs of female migrants. This paper highlights some of the challenges to quantitatively measure the impact of migration on women's empowerment.

Theoretical models and empirical findings focusing on male migration are not likely to adequately describe experiences of females migrating independently and studies that do not distinguish between males and females may misstate the effect of independent variables on migration for both genders. The lack of a structured and coherent gender focus has compromised our understanding of how even basic characteristics, including human capital, affect international migration by men and women. What little we do know makes it clear that gender cannot be ignored or represented simply as a dummy variable in econometric models. A lack of cross-country panel data has further impeded research on international migration by gender, because such data permit

researchers to investigate how trends in migration have changed and differed by gender over time.

While there are an increasing number of qualitative studies, there are limited quantitative studies on the impact of migration and women's empowerment. Most studies that have examined this issue tend to focus on gender-determinants of migration and on economic impacts. Lack of good quality data on migration, specifically sex disaggregated data, is a major hurdle in measuring the impact of migration on women's empowerment.

As a concept, empowerment is difficult to define because it is context specific. This poses problems for consistency and cross country comparability, and may explain the lack of literature on migration's impact on women's empowerment. Past studies have attempted to measure different aspects of women's empowerment—either using indicators or through composite indices.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the measurement challenges posed in quantifying women's empowerment through migration. We focus on how migration as a means of female empowerment can be measured. The broad question that this study attempts to answer is: what are the appropriate indicators to assess the impact of migration on women's empowerment? In doing so, we examine potential social and economic indicators that can be used to construct measures of migrant women's empowerment. We then examine several explanatory variables that affect empowerment of migrant women, such as their education level and so on. We use household level data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) for 36 countries in our analysis. The LIS datasets are selected for three key reasons—first, though limited in its country coverage, LIS is one of the few international datasets that includes indicators that allow cross-country comparison of migrants and non-migrants; secondly, we had access to the dataset through the Human Development Report Office and finally, they include questions on migration status of respondents and these responses are often disaggregated by gender.

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<sup>4</sup> HDR 2009.

The paper also assesses the extent to which the human development gender indices (the gender inequality index (GII), the gender-related development index (GDI) and the gender empowerment measure (GEM)) capture migrant women's levels of empowerment.

By attempting to measure migrant women's empowerment for a small group of countries, we highlight the challenges faced in measuring women's empowerment through migration. We propose indicators that better reflect migrant women's empowerment and future data collection efforts on female migrants. The quantitative analysis presented in this paper contributes to the small but growing field of literature on this topic.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: section 2 reviews literature on migration and on women's empowerment focusing on measures of empowerment used in past studies. Section 3 focuses on data for assessing women migrants' empowerment. First, the section discusses the human development gender indices as potential measures of migrant women's empowerment. Second, it reviews indicators and data sources that can be used to assess migrant women's empowerment, and finally, we use the LIS data focusing on indicators to measure our dependent and independent variables. Section 4 provides empirical evidence on migration's impact on women's empowerment based on LIS data. It does so by comparing migrant women's characteristics (levels of education, labour market participation, occupation, levels of income, etc.) with native born females in the host countries. Section 5 concludes and makes recommendations.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There exists a small but significant body of literature that examines the relationship between international migration and the empowerment of women. The relationship between migration and the empowerment of women hinges on the definition of empowerment used. In this section we review selected literature on the basis of the context in which empowerment is defined and

their analyses of migration's impact on women's empowerment.

Empowerment is a multidimensional concept which means different things in different contexts. Malhotra (2003) argues that one of the constraints to measuring women's empowerment is its context specific nature. For example, in some contexts women's participation in household decisions is considered empowerment while this may be the norm in other societies. This poses problems for consistency and cross country comparability. Empowerment is often seen as "a process with elements such as conscientization, agency, ownership of and control over resources, ability to make choices; and to participate in decisions that affect one's life" (Charmes and Wieringa, 2003). Measuring process with standard data collection tools adds another difficulty in assessing women's empowerment through migration. For example, proxy indicators such as women's participation in political structures are not adequate in measuring women's empowerment unless they are complemented by a qualitative sense of the nature of political participation. Another difficulty Malhotra points out is that behavioural and normative boundaries that define empowerment indicators keep evolving, changing the relevance of some indicators. For instance, if female participation in the labour market becomes the accepted norm, there is little reason to expect that it would be influenced by an individual's level of empowerment.

Data limitations are also a major constraint to quantitatively assess women's empowerment. This problem is further exaggerated when assessing migration's impact on women's empowerment. Often pre-migration information on labour force participation, income levels, engagement with political processes and asset ownership are not available. As stated earlier, some unobservable characteristic of the migrant rather than movement alone may account for the differences in levels of empowerment of migrant women and those who stay behind. Various methodology and data sources to measure migrant women's empowerment from previous studies are discussed in the following section.

### 2.1 *Measuring migration and women's empowerment*

Since the focus of this paper is on identifying measurement challenges, we limit this literature review to examining how previous studies have attempted to measure women's empowerment as affected by migration. Literature on migration and empowerment can be broadly classified into two groups based on their methodology: quantitative and qualitative data and methodology.

A number of studies have used primary data to quantitatively analyse the impact of migration on women's development and empowerment. For example, Connelly et al. (2010) used a survey of more than 3,000 married female migrants and returned migrants in rural Anhui and Sichuan provinces of China, to explore women's views on male-female relationships, women's role in household decision-making, women's relationships with their husbands and women's views concerning parents and children. Comparing migrant and non-migrant women's positions in their households, they concluded that migration has statistically significant, lasting effects on women's position in the household, though the effects are neither always positive nor universal. They argue that the impact of any specific migration pattern on women's empowerment depends on the circumstances of the move and the economic context of both sending and receiving areas. However, rural women migrants experience more autonomy in urban areas than they did at home.

Using household survey data from Mexico's National Rural Household Survey (ENHRUM, 2003), Pfeiffer and Taylor (2010) examined the impact of female and male migration on household investments in education and health. They find that effects of migration on migrant-sending households depend significantly on migrants' gender. Guzman et al. (2010) obtained similar results using Ghana's Living Standard Survey data to assess the impact of migrant remittances on household expenditure allocations and found that households receiving remittances from females inside Ghana allocated more money to health and education compared

to households with male remitters. This may suggest that the preferences of the remitter do influence the outcome of expenditures, but proximity increases control over whether these preferences are reflected in actual allocations. Based on a review of a number of gender-focused studies on migration that primarily use econometric analysis, Morrison and Schiff (2010) also confirm that female migrants may not have control over monies they remit in countries where there is male dominance in household decision-making.

Findings from a migration mapping of Cambodian female migrant workers in Malaysia show that migrant women tend to have negative experiences, which include harsh working conditions, sexual harassment, lack of freedom and inability to access their own funds for emergencies. Rural migrants who work as 'beer promoters' in urban areas also suffer stigmatization and are perceived as 'sex workers'. More than a third of 640 'beer promoters' surveyed reported having been coerced to perform sexual acts (Lee Chen Chen, 2006). Traditional mores and value systems often make it difficult for women who have migrated into urban areas to return to their villages and face derogatory remarks such as 'srey kroc'—which means 'broken women' (ibid).

Özden and Neagu (2010) used a sample of the 2000 U.S. census covering migrants from 130 countries to jointly analyse female migrants' labour market participation and their performance levels using two proxies—skilled level of occupation and wages—for two migrant cohorts; those who arrived in the U.S. in the 1980s and those who came in the 1990s. They found that the higher levels of education and the location where migrants obtained their education had some impact on labour market outcomes. Migrants who completed their education in the U.S. were more likely to be employed, with the exception of those from Jamaica, Ghana and Nigeria. Of those who completed their education in their home countries, those from Eastern Europe and from Africa had higher levels of participation but lower levels of performance (wages and salaries).

In contrast, Asian and Middle-Eastern female migrants had lower levels of participation but higher levels of performance. Migrants from Latin America had low levels of employment due mainly to low levels of education. Özden and Neagu concluded that education levels are the most important variables influencing labor market outcomes, regardless of where they were obtained.

A few studies have also examined the issue qualitatively using primary data. Tastsoglou's and Miedema (2002) used data from 40 semi-structured interviews to examine the integration process of immigrant women in two major urban centers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and to document the organizational activities of immigrant women assessing their significance in the integration process. They find that immigrant women in Canada are not well integrated. Even though they often have higher levels of education than Canadian-born women, their average earnings are lower, they are over-represented in lower status jobs and they are often unemployed or underemployed.

Van Eyck (2004) uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative data from 13 sending (including Barbados, Ecuador, Kenya, Ghana, Fiji, the Philippines, Poland and Sri Lanka) and receiving countries (including UK, Antilles, Barbados, Canada and Chile). Using survey data from over 600 surveys and 20 in-depth interviews, this report examines the impact of migration of public health workers on health service delivery and their conditions of employment. Van Eyck (2004) argues that migration has high social costs for women in particular and the benefits are often over-estimated. Van Eyck asserts that "gender acts as a basic organizing principle of labor markets in destination countries, reproducing and reinforcing pre-existing gender patterns that oppress women in their origin countries". For example, women migrants still perform 'women's work'—as nannies, maids and sex workers, with low remuneration, poor working conditions, and little or no legal protections.

## 2.2 Migration, self-selection and women's empowerment

Several researchers point out that selectivity bias is a major problem in existing data on migration. They argue that selection bias rather than migration itself explains the differences between migrants and non-migrants. In other words, women who venture to migrate independently may already be more empowered. The 2009 HDR points out that comparisons of groups with similar observable characteristics such as gender and education, can shed light on migrants and non-migrants but omit potentially important unobservable characteristics such as attitudes towards risk.

Brücker and Defoort (2006) used data from six OECD countries (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, UK and USA) for the years 1975-2000 (one observation for each five year period) and extended the Roy model<sup>5</sup> to assess how differences in the structure of earnings affect the skill distribution of migrants. They concluded that migrants tend to be positively self-selected with regards to their skill levels and found that higher inequality in earnings in both the receiving and home countries is associated with a favourable selection bias.

Chiswick (2000) also concluded that there is positive self selection of migrants on the basis of levels of their abilities. Connelly et al. (2010) also found that selectivity of migration is more important than selectivity of the return. They showed empirically that migrants who return do not appear to be different from those who are still located in the receiving area; implying that female migrants who remain in their destination places are risk-takers and have inert abilities, which influence their migration outcomes.

Borjas (1987) used earnings data from the 1970 and 1980 U.S. censuses to compare earnings of migrants from 41 countries to those of natives. He concluded that for positive

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<sup>5</sup> The Roy model of self-selection on outcomes is one of the most important models in economics. It is a framework for analysing comparative advantage. The original model analysed occupational choice with heterogeneous skill levels and has subsequently been applied in many other contexts.

*Box 1: Gender index to measure female migrant's empowerment*

The 2010 Human Development Report introduces a new Gender Inequality Index (GII). It is a composite measure which reflects inequality in achievements between women and men in three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment, and the labour market. It varies between 0 – when women and men fare equally – and 1, when women fare as poorly as possible in all measured dimensions.

The health dimension is measured by two indicators – the maternal mortality ratio and the adolescent fertility rate; and the empowerment dimension is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by each sex and by the attainment at secondary and higher levels of education by females and males aged 25 years or older. Instead of income the economic dimension is measured by female and male labour force participation rates.

What is interesting about the GII is that it combines elements of gender inequality and women's empowerment in one index. Another interesting aspect is the indicators measuring the health dimension—adolescent fertility rate and maternal mortality ratio, which have no male equivalents. The rationale is that safe motherhood reflects the importance society attaches to women's reproductive role. Reproduction in a number of countries is not only risky but often begins too early, compromising health and limiting future opportunities. Early child-bearing, as measured by the adolescent fertility rate, is associated with greater health risks for mothers and babies and tends to prevent young women from going to school, often limiting them to low-skilled jobs at best. Hence in the GII, the reproductive health of girls and women is compared to the benchmarks that each society should target – no maternal death and no adolescent pregnancy, a norm which all males attain because they are not exposed to the risk of maternal deaths or directly to early childbirth.

However, the GII is not a perfect composite measure and does not account for distribution between migrants and non migrants. The two proxy indicators for empowerment—attainment of secondary or higher level of education (achievement) and parliamentary representation measure important aspects of women's empowerment, but they neither capture women's agency nor their access to productive resources. Like the GDI, the GII is not a true measure of gender inequality. However, depending on data availability, the methodology could potentially be adapted to reflect the status of migrant and non-migrant women in those three dimensions.

The UNDP Human Development Index, which is a summary measure of human development in three basic aspects of human development—knowledge, long and healthy life and a decent standard of living, can be disaggregated by native women, foreign-born women and women in the migrant's home country, depending on availability of representative data for this level of disaggregation to assess whether migration has any impacts on achievements in these three dimensions. The difference in the HDIs would give an indication of how migrant women fare relative to their native-born counterparts and women in their home country.

selection of migrants to take place, there has to be a strong correlation between the earnings a worker may expect in the home country and those expected in the United States and whether income distribution of the United States is more unequal than in the home country. If, on the

other hand, income distribution in the sending country is more unequal than in the U.S., and there is a strong positive correlation in earnings, migrants would be selected from the lower tail of the income distribution in the country of origin.

The limited literature in this field shows that there are theoretical and data issues that prevent a richer analysis of the relationship between migration and women's empowerment. The fluidity of the notion of empowerment makes it difficult to compare findings across the relatively large body of studies in this area. From the literature, the impact of migration on women's empowerment is mixed and positive impact depends to a larger extent on the migrants' characteristics. Migrants are a self-selected sample and selectivity bias tends to make it difficult to attribute socio-economic conditions of migrant women to migration alone. Both qualitative and quantitative research is needed to better understand the relationship between migration and women's empowerment. In order to explore the impact of both female and male migration on women's empowerment, an effort to improve the accuracy of data on the volume of female migration including pre-migration characteristics should be high on the research agenda.

In section 4, we illustrate some of the measurement challenges in studying the relationship between migration and women's empowerment through an analysis of survey data from LIS.

### *2.3 Human development gender indices and migrant women's empowerment*

There are a number of existing gender indices (such as UNDP Human Development Report's Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM); the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI)). However, none is currently suited to measuring migrant women's empowerment. For example, GDI and GEM have contributed to the policy debate on gender inequality and women's empowerment, but they have also been criticized for both their conceptual and empirical limitations, which are well documented (see for example, Cueva-Beteta 2006, Dijkstra 2006, Folbre 2006, Klasen, 2006, and Schuler, 2006 and).<sup>6</sup> The conceptual and methodological flaws of these indices made them inappropriate for

capturing the impact of migration on women's empowerment.

Box 1 briefly reviews the new human development gender index and how it could potentially be adapted to capture women migrants' level of empowerment.

## **3. DATA AND METHODOLOGY**

### *3.1 Hypotheses*

The focus of this paper is to highlight challenges in quantitatively measuring the impact of migration on women's empowerment. One can measure the impact of migration on women's empowerment at different units of analysis – cross-country, regional or individual country level – and at each level there are different challenges to measuring the effects quantitatively. In this paper, we limit the analysis to examining the challenges in cross-national measurement of migration's impact on women's empowerment.

International migration has both direct and indirect effect on empowerment of women. Direct effects are a consequence of an increase in women's incomes as a result of migration. Indirect effect of migration on women's empowerment has to do with the social, political and family effect on women. This includes the impact on children's schooling, women's role as care-givers in their family, impact on women's reproductive choices, and women's role in political bodies, and so on. Previous studies (discussed in the literature review section) have shown that women's empowerment through migration depends to a large extent on the kind of job they undertake in their destination countries. Studies have shown that women migrant tend to undertake unskilled jobs in manufacturing or service sectors where wages are typically low and they suffer physical and sexual because of their vulnerable status.

Based on the literature review, a priori, we expect migrant women to be employed in greater numbers in unskilled jobs. We would expect migrant women to be less self-employed; rather they would be in paid and unpaid professions, with significantly lower wages than their non-migrant counterparts.

In an ideal scenario, to measure the impact of migration on the empowerment of women

<sup>6</sup> Journal of Human Development Vol. 7 Number.

we would compare empowerment indicators for women, before and after they migrated. Further, we would compare women migrant to men migrants, before and after they migrated. However, longitudinal data on migrants that compare their socio-economic status before and after they migrated is currently unavailable, especially at the cross-national level. What we can measure at present with the available data is the current empowerment status of migrant women. To measure the empowerment status of migrant women, we compare them to three sets of cohorts – non-migrant females, non-migrant females with tertiary education and migrant men.

Using these three groups as comparisons, we examine three specific questions pertaining to women's empowerment:

1. Are female migrants more empowered than their non-migrants counterparts?
2. Comparing female migrants and non-migrants with similar educational levels, are female migrants more economically empowered than their non-migrant counterparts?
3. Finally, are female migrants more (or less) empowered than their male counterparts?

Following our literature, we expect that female migrants to be less empowered than their non-migrant counterparts (based on established indicators of empowerment). We also expect that female migrants with tertiary education would be less likely to be employed in skilled jobs and less self-employed than female non-migrants with similar education levels. We also expect female migrants to have lower wages and own less property compared to their female non-migrant counterparts. Finally, a priori we expect female migrants to be less empowered than male migrants. Female migrants are often more vulnerable than male migrants and we expect that more females migrants take up unpaid and unskilled jobs, with lower wages than male migrants.

Borrowing from existing frameworks, we propose to measure women's empowerment using indicators of educational attainment and economic participation.

*a. Social empowerment* – social empowerment is measured by educational attainment. Education is a very important component of opportunities and agency. For example, empirical evidence points to a positive association between female education and other life outcomes such as employment, child survival and girls' enrolment (Schultz 2002, World Bank, 2001). The interpretation being that the higher the educational attainment, the greater the social empowerment.

*b. Economic empowerment* is measured by economic participation and property ownership. Economic participation is measured by average wage and status in job, while we use wealth tax and self-employed/employer as a proxy to measure property ownership.

Due to lack of longitudinal data, we limit our analysis to descriptive statistics. Since the focus of this paper is to highlight challenges in measuring women's empowerment through migration, this analysis will reveal existing data gaps and future steps to enhance data quality and related analysis to enable cross-national comparisons and study international trends.

### 3.2 Data and summary statistics

For the analysis in this paper, we use data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) to examine key socio-economic characteristics of migrant women. Since the focus of this paper is examine measurement issues in international comparisons, we needed data from more than one country. LIS is one of the few international datasets that include socio-economic indicators that allow cross-country comparison of migrants' and non-migrants socio-economic status and they include questions on migration status of respondents and these responses are often disaggregated by gender. Additionally, the Human Development Report Office has access to the LIS dataset that allowed us to use this data in our paper.

LIS is a non-profit project, which produces a cross-national database of microeconomic income data for social research. Located in Luxembourg, the LIS project started in 1983 and the datasets are grouped in five year intervals.

For our analysis we use the most recent available data from 36 countries. For three countries in our sample – Czech Republic, Romania, and Slovak Republic – the data come from wave 4 (1996-97). For the rest of the countries, data come from either wave 5 or wave 6 of the LIS database. (Table 1 shows the year and data wave for every country in our analysis.)

LIS publishes both household and individual level data on migrants. At the individual level most of the indicators are economic in nature. As a result, we are limited in the analysis we can present on the impact of migration on women's empowerment.

As discussed in the previous section, using data from LIS, we construct four broad dimensions of measurement. The first set of indicators measure educational attainment. LIS publishes data on educational attainment for each individual in the survey. The responses to this indicator are very detailed, ranging from three categories to over ten categories of educational attainment. Since the focus of our analysis is on highlighting measurement challenges, we tried to simplify the analysis. Therefore, we collapse the 'education attainment' category to two broad dimensions – primary/secondary education and tertiary education. Assigning all responses on education attainment to these categories was quite tedious since several countries reported several educational attainment levels. To the extent possible, we have classified education attainment into the two broad categories mentioned above.

The second set of indicators measure the type of occupation of an individual. Once again, in the original dataset there are several occupational categories, varying from managerial jobs to agricultural, to labourers. To keep this analysis within manageable limits, we broadly classified jobs into 'skilled' or 'unskilled' categories. All categories of jobs, other than ones that purely involve physical labour such as construction workers or farm labourers, are classified as 'skilled' while the rest are classified as 'unskilled'.

The third set of indicators relate to job status. These indicators are derived from the variable that measures 'status in employment'

and consists of several different categories such as 'self-employed family business', 'self-employed outside business', 'unpaid-homework' and so on. For ease of analysis, we reclassified these categories into three broad groups: self-employed, paid, and unpaid job.

The last set of indicators measure income and property ownership. We use average net wage as a measure of income level and wealth tax paid as a proxy for property ownership.

Table 1 presents summary statistics for the number (and percentage) of female migrants in the set of 36 countries that are used for this analysis based on the LIS data. We find that the percentage of female migrants typically varies widely across countries – ranging from 0 percent in Luxembourg and 4 percent in Italy to nearly 64 percent in Canada.

Out of the 36 countries included in table 1, 13 countries do not report any data on migrants in their last wave of data collection and therefore drop out of our sample. Further, we were unable to access the migrant database for four countries, Denmark, Peru, Russia and United States, and therefore they had to be excluded from our sample. The analysis in the following section is based on a set of 19 countries for which we had data on migrants. Some countries reported over 100 categories of personal occupation. These include: Brazil, Estonia, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and Italy. We did not report the 'occupation' variable for these countries since it involves a high degree of subjectivity in assigning them to the skilled-unskilled dichotomous groups. Education attainment data was missing for Israel and therefore, we did not report on its educational attainment.

#### **4. IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

##### *4.1 Comparing female migrants and non-migrants*

Table 2 presents a comparison of female migrants and non-migrants using four sets of socio-economic indicators described in the previous section. Columns (1) and (2) contain percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are currently enrolled in or have completed primary

or secondary education, respectively. Columns (3) and (4) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are either currently enrolled in or have completed some form of tertiary education, respectively.

Interestingly, only in nine out of nineteen countries in our sample do higher percentages of non-migrant women report completing or being enrolled in primary or secondary level education. These include Australia, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Luxembourg, Mexico, Norway, Spain and Sweden. In Canada and Colombia, there is no significant difference between migrants and non-migrants while in rest of the countries, a greater percentage of migrant women report being in or having completed secondary or primary education.

Similar patterns are also observed in women who report being enrolled in or having completed tertiary education. With the exception of Australia, Austria, France and Greece, a greater percentage of migrant women report having completed or being enrolled in some form of tertiary education. The differences in percentages range from 2% (in Canada) to approximately 10% (in Belgium). While it is difficult to attribute this source of empowerment to migration, these results indicate that, on average, female migrants tend to be more or almost equally empowered as their non-migrant counterparts based on the educational attainment indicators.

Columns (5) and (6) present the percentage of migrant and non-migrant women employed in skilled professions, while columns (7) and (8) show the percentage of migrant and non-migrant women employed in unskilled professions. A priori, we expect greater percentages of migrant women to be employed in unskilled professions. With the exception of Israel, Luxembourg, France, Guatemala, Mexico and Spain, the data show that this is indeed correct. Greater percentages of female migrants are employed in unskilled jobs compared to female non-migrants.

Columns (9) and (10) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are self-employed, columns (11) and (12) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are in paid employment; and columns (13) and (14) show the percentage of female migrants

and non-migrants who are unpaid. As expected, in almost all countries for which we have data, we find that a greater percentage of non-migrant women are self-employed compared to migrant women. On the other hand, greater percentages of migrant women tend to be in paid jobs. The exceptions are Italy and Mexico, where a greater percentage of migrant women are self-employed. With the exception of Greece, Guatemala, Luxembourg and Spain where greater percentage of non-migrant women are unpaid, in the rest of countries migrants tend to be in unpaid jobs.

The final sets of indicators pertain to wages and property ownership. Only five out of nineteen countries report data on wages for both migrants and non-migrants, while only three countries report data on property taxes for both migrants and non-migrants. Columns (15) and (16) present average net wages for migrants and non-migrants, respectively; and columns (17) and (18) present data on wealth taxes for migrants and non-migrants. Wages and wealth taxes are reported in domestic currency in the year that the survey was conducted; therefore, the actual value of the wages are ignored when making comparisons. Rather, we focus on the differences between female migrants and non-migrants in their wages and wealth taxes.

In four out of five countries, namely Austria, Belgium, France and Greece, non-migrants report higher wages than migrants. In Ireland, migrants have a slightly higher wage compared to non-migrants. This is not surprising given that nearly 92 percent of migrant women in Ireland are in paid jobs and none are self-employed. Since we are using wealth taxes as proxy for property ownership, we find that non-migrant women pay a significantly higher wealth tax in all countries (Italy, Norway and Sweden) compared to migrant women indicating greater property ownership among the non-migrant women in these countries. It is difficult to attribute this to discrimination against migrants as they may prefer to own properties in their countries of origin. Further research is needed to better understand this.

Overall, results presented in table 2 show that migrant women have, on average, higher

educational attainment than non-migrant women. Yet, with a few exceptions, migrant females tend to be employed in lower-earning occupations.

#### *4.2 Comparing female migrants and non-migrants with tertiary education*

For the analysis in table 2 we select a small sample from the entire pool of migrant and non-migrant women. We focus on women who reported being enrolled in or having completed tertiary education. Table 2 presents a comparison of this sub-set of female migrants and non-migrants based on the economic indicators on occupation, job-status and income levels. Columns (1) and (2) contain the percentage of migrant and non-migrant women employed in skilled professions, while columns (3) and (4) show the percentage of migrant and non-migrant women employed in unskilled professions. After controlling for education, we find that four countries – Australia, Austria, France and Luxembourg – report greater percentages of non-migrants in unskilled jobs. Of these countries, France and Luxembourg had also reported greater percentages of female non-migrants in unskilled jobs prior to controlling for education level. From this, we can infer that educational attainment does not influence the proportions of women in skilled versus unskilled jobs in these countries.

Columns (5) and (6) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are self-employed, columns (7) and (8) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are in paid employment; and columns (9) and (10) show the percentage of female migrants and non-migrants who are unpaid. Here we find that the results are somewhat different than for the whole population of female migrants and non-migrants. Only in Spain are there greater percentages of female migrants who report being self-employed. In all other countries, (tertiary) educated non-migrants are always more self-employed than migrants. On the other hand, migrants tend to take up more 'paid' employment instead of being self-employed. Very few, either migrants or non-migrants, are in unpaid employment. In Italy and Mexico, a

greater percentage of non-migrant women are unpaid.

Columns (11) and (12) present average net wages for migrants and non-migrants, respectively; and columns (13) and (14) present data on wealth taxes for migrants and non-migrants. Data on net wages is available for eight out of 25 countries. We find that in all countries, except Norway, average net wages for highly educated non-migrant women is much higher than their migrant counterparts. Even in Norway, where the migrant wages are slightly higher, the difference is not significant. Wealth tax data is available for only two countries and in both of them, Italy and Sweden, non-migrant women pay much higher wealth taxes compared to migrant women with similar education level, indicating that they own more property.

Controlling for education and focusing on highly educated women does not seem to significantly alter the results from the first table. Non-migrant women continue to outperform migrant women on all three dimensions of empowerment. A large percentage of highly educated migrant women are in unskilled jobs and display lack of empowerment by remaining largely in paid jobs (instead of being self-employed). This fact, combined with lower average wages for female migrants implies that, generally, female migrants are in low paying jobs compared to non-migrants with similar education levels. Whether their conditions are better or worse as a result of migration is difficult to determine based on the current data.

#### *4.3 Comparing female and male migrants*

Table 4 presents results based on a comparison of male and female migrants on the four dimensions of empowerment. Columns (1) and (2) contain percentages of female migrants and male migrants who are currently enrolled in or have completed primary or secondary education, respectively. Columns (3) and (4) show the percentage of female and male migrants who are either currently enrolled in or have completed some form of tertiary education, respectively. We find that in nine out of nineteen countries, a greater percentage of female migrants report

being primary/secondary educated while in three countries the difference between male and female is not significant. In terms of tertiary education, we find that in eight of the nineteen countries female migrants have received or are enrolled in tertiary education compared to male migrants. These are: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, Ireland, Luxembourg, Mexico and Norway. In two countries, Colombia and Italy, the difference in higher education between male and female migrants is not significant.

Columns (5) and (6) contain the percentage of female and male migrants employed in skilled professions, while columns (7) and (8) show the percentage of female and male migrants employed in unskilled professions. We find a greater percentage of males in unskilled professions in eight countries – Austria, Belgium, France, Israel, Greece, Guatemala, Mexico and Spain – suggesting that women migrants in these countries had skilled professions prior to migration or invested in skill development as migrants.

Columns (9) and (10) show the percentage of female and male migrants who are self-employed, columns (11) and (12) show the percentage of female and male migrants who are in paid employment; and columns (13) and (14) show the percentage of female and male migrants who are unpaid. In Australia, Austria, Guatemala and Mexico, a greater percentage of women are self-employed; while in the rest of the countries a greater proportion of migrant men tend to be self-employed. In all countries, except Belgium, Guatemala and Mexico, migrant females tend to take up paid employment in larger numbers than migrant men. Generally, a very small percentage of migrants are unpaid – though the percentages are strikingly high for female migrants in Brazil (~11%), Colombia (6%), and Guatemala (16%).

Finally, columns (15) and (16) present average net wage for female and male migrants, respectively; and columns (17) and (18) present data on wealth taxes for female and male migrants. Wage data is available for seven countries – Austria, Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, and Spain. In all countries, with no exceptions, male wages are significantly higher than female net

wages. Wealth tax data is available for three countries, Italy, Norway and Sweden. In Italy and Norway, male migrants pay higher wealth taxes indicating greater property ownership; in Sweden women migrants pay marginally higher wealth taxes than male migrants.

Analysis of socio-economic empowerment indicators between male and female migrants shows that female migrants tend to be more highly educated than male migrants in a number of countries. However, economic measures show that female migrants in general are less empowered than male migrants in terms of being in unskilled jobs, being in paid employment (instead of self employment) and receiving lower wages.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this paper was to highlight some of the challenges in measuring women's empowerment through migration. Using individual level data on migrants from the Luxembourg Income Survey for nineteen countries, this paper examined a set of hypotheses on women's empowerment through migration. A problem in quantitatively measuring migration's impact on women's socio-economic status is the lack of time series and the absence of comparison group. We constructed three sets of comparison groups with which we compared the groups of migrant women in our sample: non-migrant females, male migrants and highly-educated non-migrant women. For each of these groups, we compared them to their female migrant counterparts along five socio-economic dimensions. These are: education attainment, occupational category, job status, income levels and property ownership.

A key caveat of this study, like with any cross-national study, is that it is difficult to examine what determines the outcomes at the country level. However while the measurement of empowerment is context-dependent, the benefits of a cross-national measurement approach is that it allows international comparisons and enables us to study macro patterns that may not be easily identified through a single-country case study.

The analysis in this paper shows some interesting findings and corroborates existing literature on women migrants. We find that migrant women have higher educational attainment than non-migrant women in the destination country, on average. However, with a few exceptions, migrant females are generally found in lower wage jobs compared with non-migrant females. Controlling for education and focusing on highly educated women does not significantly alter the results - non-migrant women outperform migrant women on all measures. A large percentage of highly educated migrant women are in unskilled jobs and remain largely in paid jobs (instead of being self-employed). This fact, combined with lower average wages for female migrants implies that, generally, female migrants are in low paying jobs compared to non-migrants with similar education levels. Finally, a comparison of female and male migrants shows that while female migrants tend to be more highly educated than male migrants in a number of countries, on economic dimensions female migrants, in general, fare less well than male migrants. Due to the lack of studies that have quantitatively analysed the impact of migration on women's empowerment at the cross-country level, it is difficult to contextualize our findings. However, our findings match the findings from the few national level studies (such as Pfeiffer and Taylor, 2008, based on data from Mexico).

The analysis in this paper has shown that even limited data and simple descriptive analysis can

reveal interesting findings that can potentially be used to drive policy recommendations on women and migration. Since LIS data is not longitudinal, we cannot compare migrants before and after migration to show how migration affects their socio-economic and political status. Additionally, LIS is predominantly economic in nature and hence important dimensions such as health and participation are missing from this study. Therefore, due to the limited nature of the data, our conclusions only pertain to migrant women's current socio-economic status. Indicators that emerge significant from our analysis—educational attainment, occupation, job status, and wages and taxes—can be used for further analysis of migration's effects on women's empowerment.

Our review and analysis suggest more detailed data collection both at sending and receiving countries. Second, data collection needs to be coordinated across origin and destination countries to enable before and after comparisons. Finally, concerted effort is needed on the part international agencies to focus on women's migration issues. Not taking full advantage of the education levels by migrant women represents inefficiencies both for destination and origin countries. Better identification of skills and removal of barriers to practicing professions at both higher and intermediate levels can contribute both to the empowerment of migrant women and to societies.

Table 1: Summary Statistics

	COUNTRY	Year	Wave	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total	Female	Migrant females N	(%)
1	Australia	2003	6	5180	14.198	19.378	9.967	2.652	27
2	Austria	2004	6	1.213	11.830	13.043	6.725	651	10
3	Belgium	2000	5	810	6.125	6.935	3.509	355	10
4	Brazil	2006	6		244.959	410.241	210.562	87.563	42
5	Canada	2004	6	43.549	24.993	68.542	35.476	22.772	64
6	Colombia	2004	6	165	50.671	50.836	26.783	86	<1
7	Czech Republic	1996	4		71.836	71.836	31.557	..	..
8	Denmark	2004	6	21.115	156.154	177.269	89.806	11.051	12
9	Estonia	2000	5	4.407	12.748	17.155	9.176	2.413	26
10	France	2000	5	2.183	23.620	25.803	13.305	1.103	8
11	Finland	2004	6	..	29.112	29.112	14.373	..	..
12	Germany	2004	6	3.124	23.700	26.824	13.680	1.542	11
13	Greece	2004	6	881	14.016	14.897	7.653	468	6
14	Guatemala	2006	6	12.078	56.661	68.739	35.542	6.584	19
15	Hungary	2005	6	..	5.284	5.284	2.822	..	..
16	Ireland	2000	5	906	8.225	9.131	4.558	437	10
17	Israel	2005	6	5.849	15.197	21.046	10.844	3.184	29
18	Italy	2004	6	768	19.813	20.581	10.578	422	4
19	Korea	2006	6	..	44.852	44.852	23.239	..	..
20	Luxembourg	2004	6	3.744	5.917	9.661	4.853	1.896	39
21	Mexico	2004	6	266	91.472	91.738	47.459	114	0
22	Netherlands	1999	5	..	12.445	12.445	6.316	..	..
23	Norway	2004	6	4.449	29.540	33.989	16.785	2.184	13
24	Peru	2004	6	37.916	48.539	86.455	43.353	19.121	44
25	Poland	2004	6	..	99.038	99.038	51.743	..	..
26	Romania	1997	4	..	92.334	92.334	47.442	..	..
27	Russia	2000	5	910	8.338	9.248	5.105	440	9
28	Spain	2004	6	2.391	35.100	37.491	19.271	1.206	6
29	Slovak Republic	1996	4	..	..	0	..	..	..
30	Slovenia	2004	6	..	11.303	11.303	5.814	..	..
31	Sweden	2005	6	4.398	32.520	36.918	18.494	2.289	12
32	Switzerland	2004	6	..	7.993	7.993	4.098	..	..
33	Taiwan	2005	6	..	46.386	46.386	23.257	..	..
34	United Kingdom	2004	6	..	65.232	65.232	33.985	..	..
35	United States	2004	6	26.042	184.606	210.648	108.446	13.265	12
36	Uruguay	2004	6	..	55.587	55.587	29.605	..	..

Source: Luxembourg Income Survey, Waves 4, 5 and 6 (1996-2006)

Table 2: Socio-economic comparison of female migrants with non-migrants

COUNTRY	Educational attainment				Occupation				Job status				Wages and taxes					
	Primary/ secondary		Tertiary		Skilled		Unskilled		Self-employed		Paid employment		Unpaid employment		Average net wage		Wealth taxes	
	Migrant	Non- migrant	Migrant	Non- migrant	Migrant	Non- migrant	Migrant	Non- migrant	Migrant	Non- migrant	Migrant	Non- migrant	Migrant	Non- migrant	Migrant	Non- migrant	Migrant	Non- migrant
<b>Australia</b>	2.11	4.46	42.61	45.36	41.59	56.93	58.41	43.07	8.82	13.13	90.77	86.49	0.42	0.38	..	..	..	..
<b>Austria</b>	48.31	24.46	48.61	53.88	72.29	65.03	6.19	4.27	3.23	8.36	75.39	60.98	0	0	5695.942	7418	..	..
<b>Belgium</b>	70.65	55.73	29.36	19.68	30.18	40.86	0	1.57	2.77	5.05	27.38	37.51	..	..	209607.6	279126.4	..	..
<b>Brazil</b>	91.43	93.94	8.57	6.06	..	..	..	..	19.43	25.20	69.62	64.80	10.94	10	..	..	..	..
<b>Canada</b>	42.76	40.31	57.24	59.69	40.47	48.49	59.53	51.51	9.93	14.26	89.65	85.47	0.42	0.27	..	..	..	..
<b>Colombia</b>	84.40	84.65	15.60	15.35	37.69	46.87	62.31	53.13	36.83	45.96	57.04	51.25	6.13	2.79	..	..	..	..
<b>Estonia</b>	74.65	82.83	25.35	17.17	..	..	..	..	2.21	8.76	97.79	91.24	..	..	..	..	..	..
<b>France</b>	56.36	46.61	43.64	53.39	57.67	56.5	42.33	43.50	12.14	19.40	83.59	80.17	4.27	0.43	31966.73	56165.52	..	..
<b>Germany</b>	85.73	79.70	14.27	20.30	..	..	..	..	4.50	10.44	90.17	83.23	5.33	6.34	..	..	..	..
<b>Greece</b>	20.51	86.02	79.49	13.98	95.96	96.7	4.04	3.30	15.53	32.19	79.50	58.16	4.97	9.65	2823.253	3133.349	..	..
<b>Guatemala</b>	98.19	98.86	1.81	1.14	93.04	68.34	6.96	31.66	43.11	31.81	40.77	46.80	16.12	21.39	..	..	..	..
<b>Ireland</b>	74.14	83.38	25.86	16.62	26.32	37.06	73.68	62.94	..	17.25	92.06	81.74	1.59	1.01	5190.589	4782.297	..	..
<b>Israel</b>	..	..	..	..	33.51	25.61	66.49	74.39	5.57	12.51	94.21	87.33	0.23	0.16	..	..	..	..
<b>Italy</b>	91.93	91.50	8.07	8.5	..	..	..	..	18.67	13.60	82.85	78.61	3.56	2.72	..	..	2979.041	5552.573
<b>Luxembourg</b>	69.77	78.89	30.23	21.11	76.74	67.79	23.26	32.21	7.16	9.96	91.66	87.93	1.18	2.12	..	10508.96	..	..
<b>Mexico</b>	54.84	84.87	45.16	15.13	83.33	53.45	16.67	46.55	33.33	24.57	66.67	68.74	0	6.69	..	22572.32	..	..
<b>Norway</b>	68.58	76.48	31.42	23.52	..	..	..	..	4.21	6.85	95.79	93.15	..	..	..	..	538.54	1347.83
<b>Spain</b>	75.16	80.31	24.84	19.69	95.46	86.42	4.54	13.58	12.56	17.05	85.78	81.08	1.66	1.87	..	3930.797	..	..
<b>Sweden</b>	71.48	75.41	28.52	24.59	..	..	..	..	38.84	38.84	61.16	61.16	..	..	..	..	1192.602	3764.806

Source: Luxembourg Income Survey, Waves 4, 5 and 6 (1996-2006)

Table 3: Socio-economic comparison of female migrants and non-migrants with similar education levels Source:

COUNTRY <sup>1</sup>	Occupation				Job status						Wages and taxes			
	Skilled		Unskilled		Self-employed		Paid employment		Unpaid		Average net wage		Wealth taxes	
	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant	Migrant	Non-migrant
Australia	59.47	70.74	40.53	70.74	8.09	9.12	91.62	90.55	0.29	0.33	..	..	..	..
Austria	83.32	95.36	0	0.48	2.38	10.06	80.95	85.81	0	0	6583.599	13574.07	..	..
Belgium	32.72	79.04	0	0.15	5.04	6.42	27.67	72.79	..	..	394763.1	475180.5	..	..
Brazil	..	..	..	..	18.36	25.94	79.62	73.13	2.01	0.93	..	..	..	..
Canada	74.49	78.26	25.51	21.74	9.75	13.47	89.96	86.41	0.29	0.12	..	..	..	..
Colombia	65.87	72.72	34.13	27.28	23.53	35.05	74.32	63.16	2.15	1.79	..	..	..	..
Estonia	..	..	..	..	3.09	10.52	96.91	89.48	..	..	..	..	..	..
France	86.99	83.45	13.01	16.55	7.64	15.77	90.45	83.79	1.90	0.44	61999.36	97701.95	..	..
Germany	..	..	..	..	13.89	16.54	77.78	80.29	8.33	3.18	..	..	..	..
Greece	98.77	99.87	1.23	0.13	13.58	19.76	82.72	79.05	3.70	1.18	5544.486	10234.99	..	..
Guatemala	100.00	99.73	0	0.27	21.31	25.89	77.05	72.75	1.64	1.36	..	..	..	..
Ireland	66.67	77.7	33.33	22.30	9.30	11.15	90.70	88.61	0	0.24	8174.9	12766.36	..	..
Italy	..	..	..	..	15.98	26.38	83.30	72.30	0.72	1.31	..	..	9245.902	12536.88
Luxembourg	94.98	90.63	5.02	9.37	11.95	11.01	87.83	88.90	0.22	0.09	23216.67	36445.7	..	..
Mexico	66.67	75.56	33.33	24.44	0	17.98	100.00	78.96	0	3.06	46244.43	59149.03	..	..
Norway	..	..	..	..	4.23	4.67	95.77	95.33	..	..	2625.97	2526.369	..	..
Spain	97.78	97.66	2.22	2.31	15.56	11.27	83.33	88.25	1.11	0.48	6501.13	12832.17	..	..
Sweden	..	..	..	..	33.93	34.32	66.07	65.68	..	..	..	..	1379.799	5441.444

Source: Luxembourg Income Survey, Waves 4, 5 and 6 (1996-2006)

Table 4: Socio-economic comparison of male and female migrants

COUNTRY	Educational attainment				Occupation				Job status				Wages and taxes					
	Primary/ secondary		Tertiary		Skilled		Unskilled		Self-employed		Paid employment		Unpaid		Average net wage		Wealth taxes	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Australia</b>	59.54	50.22	40.45	49.78	41.59	55.78	58.41	44.22	16.32	8.82	83.43	90.77	0.25	0.42	..	..	..	..
<b>Austria</b>	37.90	48.31	60.68	48.61	72.29	77.48	6.19	15.56	8.37	3.23	84.70	75.39	0	0	5695.942	11782.86	..	..
<b>Belgium</b>	70.65	74.77	29.36	25.22	30.18	37.49	0	2.48	2.77	6.85	27.38	33.42	..	..	209607.6	481898.6	..	..
<b>Brazil</b>	92.82	93.99	7.18	6.01	..	..	..	..	19.43	31.82	69.62	63.80	10.94	4.38	..	..	..	..
<b>Canada</b>	40.42	42.30	59.58	57.70	59.53	66.06	40.47	33.94	9.93	16.47	89.65	83.23	0.42	0.29	..	..	..	..
<b>Colombia</b>	84.39	84.66	15.61	15.34	37.69	46.88	62.31	53.12	36.83	45.96	57.04	51.24	6.13	2.80	..	..	..	..
<b>Estonia</b>	78.36	85.45	21.64	14.55	..	..	..	..	2.21	5.58	97.79	94.42	..	..	..	..	..	..
<b>France</b>	56.35	46.61	43.65	53.39	57.67	56.50	42.33	43.50	12.14	19.39	83.59	80.18	4.27	0.43	31966.73	56185.38	..	..
<b>Germany</b>	82.94	76.91	17.06	23.09	..	..	..	..	4.50	9.73	90.17	86.74	5.33	3.53	..	..	..	..
<b>Greece</b>	62.76	62.48	17.33	18.44	95.96	92.40	4.04	7.60	15.53	17.93	79.50	79.94	4.97	2.13	2823.253	6767.915	..	..
<b>Guatemala</b>	98.91	98.67	1.09	1.33	93.04	75.83	6.96	24.17	43.11	33.91	40.77	58.63	16.12	7.45	..	..	..	..
<b>Ireland</b>	82.90	83.21	17.10	16.79	26.32	28.14	73.68	71.86	6.35	18.75	92.06	81.25	1.59	0	5190.589	10468.78	..	..
<b>Israel</b>	..	..	..	..	33.51	28.74	66.49	71.26	5.57	14.65	94.21	85.35	0.23	0	..	..	..	..
<b>Italy</b>	91.79	91.62	8.21	8.38	..	..	..	..	13.60	19.19	82.85	78.04	3.56	2.77	..	..	2979.041	5542.636
<b>Luxembourg</b>	76.74	79.82	23.26	20.18	7.16	9.02	91.66	90.71	1.18	0.27	10508.96	22419.30	..	..	10508.96	22419.3	..	..
<b>Mexico</b>	83.33	65.22	16.67	34.78	33.33	4.35	66.67	95.65	..	..	22572.32	145747.00	..	..	22572.32	14547	..	..
<b>Norway</b>	..	..	..	..	4.21	7.05	95.79	92.95	..	..	..	..	538.5422	893.5536	..	..	538.5422	893.5536
<b>Spain</b>	95.46	72.50	4.54	27.50	12.56	13.32	85.78	86.22	1.66	0.46	3930.797	7091.70	..	..	3930.797	7091.7	..	..
<b>Sweden</b>	..	..	..	..	38.84	46.25	61.16	53.75	..	..	..	..	1192.306	1047.854	..	..	1192.306	1047.854

Source: Luxembourg Income Survey, Waves 4, 5 and 6 (1996-2006)

<sup>1</sup> Israel is excluded from this table since it does not include any data on educational attainment.

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# Shaking up the Grounds for Human Trafficking on Hispaniola

By Bridget WOODING  
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## Abstract

The migration of Haitian women to the Dominican Republic is part of the so-called “feminization of migrations” caused by changes in labour markets as well as the precarious situation of women and their families in the neighbouring country of origin. The sequel to the earthquake in Haiti on January 12, 2010 has aggravated gender violence, in the makeshift camps in which hundreds of thousands of displaced persons are still living a year later, according to the reporting of human rights organizations, international organizations, women’s organizations and ordinary citizens. Although the unprecedented urban displacement provoked by the earthquake has not led to a stampede of Haitians attempting to cross the border to the western side of the island of Hispaniola, it has exposed migrants, particularly women, to new situations of vulnerability which may lead to human trafficking. This paper seeks to characterize the evolving situation. It examines how there is a new opportunity for civil society activists to direct attention towards possible humanitarian gaps as regards Haitian migrant women who have crossed the border, helping *inter alia* to strengthen protection measures across the island, in part because the issue of gender violence in Haiti has become more visible than previously.

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## Introduction

The migration of Haitian women to the Dominican Republic is intrinsically linked to the “feminization of migrations” which is in turn part of the so-called “new Haitian immigration” (Silié et al. 2002), brought about by changes in labour markets as well as by the fragile situation of women and their families in Haiti (Wooding et al. 2008). Haitian immigration was given a push under the U.S. occupation of Haiti and a pull under their occupation at the same time of the Dominican Republic when both nations on the island were occupied in the 1920s and 1930s and in response to U.S. investment in sugar cane holdings, especially in the east of the Dominican Republic. While this international migration, mainly composed of Haitian men, was initially directed almost exclusively to the sugar cane enclaves known as bateyes, the changes in the pillars of the Dominican economy

and the prolonged transition towards a fully-fledged democracy following the fall of the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti in 1986 have led to geographical dispersion, a diversification in the composition of the migrants, as well as in the labour niches they occupy. Women and girls are more than ever on the move, migrating autonomously in many cases, not just internally in Haiti (where they exceed their male counterparts as regards internal migration in Haiti) but also crossing borders (IHSI 2003; FAFO 2010).<sup>1</sup>

Women migrants are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking<sup>2</sup> and illicit smuggling

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<sup>1</sup> The former study is a nationwide household study carried out by the National Statistics Institute of Haiti with Norwegian technical cooperation while the latter study is a national survey on young people in Haiti carried out in 2009 prior to the earthquake, with the same institutional collaboration.

<sup>2</sup> The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or

of migrants<sup>3</sup> and more likely to be deprived of decent labour conditions than their male counterparts (UNFPA 2006). Their condition and position in a system of unequal power relations and discrimination on gender grounds means that they have less access to education, employment, resources and may be exposed to physical and psychological violence. Additionally, the international political, economic and social context, nationally and internationally, has led to cutbacks in public services and subsidies and has delegated responsibility and the “burden” of the care of others to women (Touzenis, Kristina 2010). Although a contributory factor to the emigration of women may well be gender violence, her migration trajectory and new pressures in the host country may be conducive to gender violence again, manifested sometimes in human smuggling or trafficking.

Moreover, it is necessary to overcome the worrying tendency to “infantilize” and over-protect women, assimilating her frequently with children, and making them visible exclusively as victims and not as autonomous social actors with the capacity to take rational decisions as regards her life and body. Thus, it is appropriate to go beyond a homogenous approach which tends towards the victimization of survivors of human trafficking and, rather, take a rights-based approach, recognizing her faculties, needs and different decisions. In the insular Caribbean context, Kempadoo has developed an instructive analysis of the situation of sex-workers across the region, developing the latter approach in a context where trafficked women are often

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use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (Art. 3(a), *UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*).

<sup>3</sup> The procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident (Art. 3(a), *UN Protocol Against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime*).

stigmatized as sex workers, supposedly without agency in the matter and without attention to the intersection of gender, race and sexual labour (Kempadoo 2004). A persistent stereotype places human trafficking in almost exclusive relation to sexual labour whereas in the Hispaniola context, for example, remunerated domestic labour is another area of considerable risk for migrant women because it is unregulated in practice (Wooding and Sangro 2009).

In the case of Haiti the context from which the women migrate, from a gender justice perspective, is even bleaker than that which they encounter in the Dominican Republic. In the field of justice there is much to be done to guarantee access and impartiality, including a more effective implementation of national legislation and more accountability with international treaties. In the area of gender equality, the legislation criminalizing rape for the first time in 2005 was a significant step forward. Notwithstanding the latter sign of progress, women continue to have difficulty in accessing the judiciary system and persistent gendered stereotypes coupled with a lack of knowledge on women’s human rights by actors within the judiciary maintain a cycle of impunity. Many women are unaware of or are unable to exercise their basic rights as codified, for example in the American Convention (ratified by Haiti in 1979), the regional Convention Belem do Pará and CEDAW.<sup>4</sup> For Haitian women progress in the area of justice and consolidating the rule of law are crucial for the establishment of a context in which women’s rights are recognized and which may prevent all forms of discrimination based on gender.

It is well known that, to mainstream women’s rights into the human rights framework and bring it to international attention, the women’s human rights movement used violence as their paradigmatic example. It offered the clearest parallels to already accepted violations of human rights because it often involves bodily harm,

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix 6 of the first and only CEDAW report by the Haitian Government (March 2008) lists thirty international legal instruments relating to human rights and women’s rights, of which only five are not adhered to by the Haitian state.

torture, and even death whether in private (domestic violence) or public (rape in wartime) settings.<sup>5</sup> Pro-Women's Rights activists in Haiti had been emulating this example with some success. Spearheaded by the Ministry on the Status of Women and Human Rights in 2004, a Coalition of Government, NGO and international donors have worked together in a major campaign aimed at eliminating violence against women. In the political instability of 2003-2004, the scourge of violence reared its head especially against women and children. Accordingly, a national plan of action had been adopted, including a protocol on how to deal with the victims of violence, using didactic materials in French and Haitian Creole. This Coordination had a certain degree of outreach and was coming to the end its five year plan when the earthquake struck. In Haiti the Parliament has not yet adopted any legislation against human trafficking or the illicit smuggling of persons. Nevertheless, it is important to note that, before the earthquake, human and women's rights had been put on the agenda by Haitian stakeholders. After 01/12 there has been a tendency to downplay these indigenous efforts, possibly because all the Government ministries were decimated and, given that the Women's Ministry is a small Ministry, the disappearance of several key women was even more devastating.<sup>6</sup>

In what follows, in a first section of the paper, attention is focused on forced migration and Haiti, including human trafficking in this relation. It attempts to consider why human trafficking in relation to Haitian women has been relatively sidelined prior to the earthquake, both in relation to their male counterparts and in comparison to Dominican trafficked women. In part, the information is drawn from the findings of a three year comparative research project on the rights of migrant women in intra-regional migration, one component of which addresses Haitian migrant women's knowledge of their rights and their ability to exercise these rights against the

backcloth of different strategies and discourses being used on and off island to advance rights compliance.<sup>7</sup>

A second section of the paper examines new challenges after the earthquake, especially concerning the forced displacement of women within Haiti and across the border. There has been a wealth of material documenting gender violence against women during this period while other aspects of the Guiding Principles for Internal Displacement<sup>8</sup> have been relatively understudied. In addition to secondary material, the information takes into account interviews with women migrants, who have come for the first time to the Dominican Republic after 01/12 in two main urban areas of the country.<sup>9</sup>

A further section of the paper examines the roles and responses of different stakeholders in relation to gender violence and related topics over the past year. In part, the analysis here draws on personal experience of our participation in the sub-commission on gender violence (reporting to the protection commission) which was set up as a shadow commission in Santo Domingo to the principal "clusters" (commissions) of the UN system in Port au Prince, Haiti.<sup>10</sup> The new "political opportunity structure" obtained because of the shaking up of Dominico-Haitian relations in 2010, potentially leading to heightened rights compliance as regards Haitian migrants in the Dominican Republic, is analysed. Concepts of political opportunity structure were first developed in social movements and then

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<sup>7</sup> This research Project (2008-2010) is supported by the IDRC and co-ordinated from the University of Windsor, Canada.

<sup>8</sup> Although this is a non-binding instrument, drawn up the UN system in the late 90s, the principles reflect and are compatible with international humanitarian law and with human rights, as well as with analogous law regarding refugees.

<sup>9</sup> These interviews were conducted by the Observatory Caribbean Migrants in October/November 2010.

<sup>10</sup> In part due to the scale of the disaster, in part due to the fact that the UN Mission was an affected party *in situ* losing over 100 staff members in the earthquake, the Santo Domingo Country Team functioned as a shadow "one response" over several months in 2010, and worked 20 kilometers inside Haiti, in a *de facto* division of responsibilities for dealing with the humanitarian crisis.

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<sup>5</sup> See for example, Friedman's article on "Bringing Women to International Human Rights" in *Peace Review*, Volume 18, Issue 4, and October 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Personal communication with a functionary of UN Women, January 2011.

applied to the mobilization of immigrants and migrants (Mc Adam et al. 1996).

An endnote presents some concluding remarks, highlighting pointers for migrants rights' advocacy on intra-island human trafficking and ways in which women's rights might be advanced and may be better protected in the future. Were this to happen, it would be due in no small measure to the shaking up the grounds for human trafficking which has happened in the wake of the Haiti earthquake.

### **The Evolution of Forced Migration on Hispaniola**

Forced migration<sup>11</sup> in and outside of Haiti has been a trend with a long history. Also, the corresponding tendency has been the non-recognition of the forced migrants as such by the more important receiving countries in the region. The term "Internally Displaced Person" (IDP) had not been used in Haiti prior to the massive internal displacement provoked by the earthquake in early 2010, although in the previous decade there could have been warranted use for this nomenclature and the protection it could afford, given certain peaks of internal instability and acute natural disasters entailing significant internal displacement.

This trend of involuntary migration goes back at least to the Duvalier regime, *père et fils*. It was important before then but it became a more significant phenomenon under the Duvalier dictatorship (1957-1986) because it touched peasant families. At times of crisis, massive forced migration can and does happen. One such turn of events took place in the early 80s and was popularly known as the crisis of the "Boat People". The new U.S. policy of 1981/1982 came about after the exodus of Cubans from Cuba, the Mariel crisis to which the Castro regime turned a blind eye. The radical change in U.S. policy implied the interdiction of the so-called "Boat People" at sea and their repatriation to Haiti without due process. This prohibition

<sup>11</sup> Forced migration is understood to be that which results from coercion, violence, political or environmental crisis or other forms of coercion, instead of voluntary actions (UNFPA 2006).

of flimsy Haitian boats happened exactly when the policy of "indefinite detention" of Haitians began in the Krome detention centre in Miami and other places. This migration policy has had its variations over the last three decades but in essence has not changed.

The U.S. Government maintains fairly efficient floating wall between Haiti and the U.S., alleging that it is necessary to prevent terrorists and economic migrants alike from reaching their shores. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the "Boat People" are intercepted and involuntarily returned to Haiti. Those who are not deported are held in the U.S., with few being released. Human rights activists have expressed concern over the "shout test" in which the U.S. coastguards allegedly give preliminary interviews to potential refugees only if they shout manifesting their fear of persecution if returned to Haiti.

For this reason, among others, the Dominican Republic, sharing a land boundary with Haiti, has become the more common safety valve for the international migration of lower income Haitians.

Moreover, and as is a common practice towards other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, the U.S. began again in 2005 the removal and deportation of Haitians residing in the U.S. Some have finished serving sentences in prison for crimes while others have been deported for administrative infractions of migration laws. Both groups are forcibly returned to Port au Prince, where they may be detained on arrival.<sup>12</sup> While "Temporary Protection Status" (TPS) was granted to those Haitians with irregular status who sought to come forward after the earthquake and who were already in the U.S., this has been short-lived. As of early 2011, deportations from the U.S. have started up again, despite exhortations from the Inter-American human rights system that the Government of Haiti is ill-placed to re-integrate these citizens and a reported death from cholera of a recent returnee (IACHR January 2011).

A similar hard-line migration practice has been routinely enforced in the Dominican Republic

<sup>12</sup> Article entitled "Anywhere But Here" in the Annual Report of the Lutheran World federation, 2005

which consists of recurrent deportations of Haitians in the Dominican Republic suspected of not having their papers in order. Official figures give a total of around 21,000 removals of Haitians annually. In the first half of 2010, there was a slowing-down by the Dominican authorities who deported some 2,500 Haitians, but there was business as usual by the second half of the year despite the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) pleading against this (UNHCR press note March 2010).

While historically this has been a commonly carried out measure, the breakdown in the seasonal importing of labourers for the sugar harvest when the Duvalier dictatorship was terminated in 1986 has accelerated the use of this strategy as an apparent means to control irregular Haitian migration. However, it is a blunt instrument given that the border is porous and that Haitian immigration is not adequately controlled at the point of entry. It is by no means certain that those who have entered irregularly are those who are being summarily deported, given the lack of due process.<sup>13</sup>

In the interviews we carried out with Haitian migrant women prior to the earthquake they were unanimous in drawing attention to the fact that the border was more virtual than real. The vast majority of women arrive initially in the country *amba fil*. Many women assume that it is “normal” to enter the country in this way if lack a passport or a passport with the relevant visa<sup>14</sup>. On being asked as to how they entered the Dominican Republic, the reply is prefaced with adjectives such as “normal”, “alezman”, “kom sa”. These are all terms in Haitian Creole which tend to normalize the border crossing without

<sup>13</sup> Despite the fact that a binational protocol for minimum standards by which to carry out the repatriations was drawn up between Haiti and the Dominican Republic in the late nineties and ratified in 2002, this agreement is honoured only in the breach.

<sup>14</sup> We use the neutral term “*Amba fil*” (literally under the wire) because of the difficulty of distinguishing clearly between irregular migration, and smuggling or trafficking situations. The UN rapporteur has also discussed the real difficulties in clearly defining these different notions since overlap and evolution are always possible (Bustamante, February 2008).

the correct documents. This banality makes invisible the risks of irregular migration, pointing up institutional weaknesses which may lead to human rights abuses. The other side of the coin is the encouraging of clientelism and the tacit invitation to illicit smuggling rings or traffickers to take part in the process.

Another matter generating distrust between Haitian migrants and Dominican society at large, which has been a constant over time and has persisted after the 01/12 disaster, is the exaggerated notion that Haitian women will inevitably and exclusively engage in sexual labour when they migrate across the island. As is well known, this is a common belief in migrant-sending countries as regards female emigration, irrespective of whether the migration is within the global south or to the north. In the case of the Dominican Republic as a migrant-sending country, for example, it is assumed that all Dominican women in Haiti are prostitutes even though this is not the case. Similarly, the imaginary of Dominican women who migrate to Spain and elsewhere in Europe as well as throughout Latin America and the Caribbean is that their mobility is most likely to be in function of sexual labour, although it is a minority who earn a living thus. Independently of the objective facts, the net result is that the misleading representations of female migrants endorsed by the media in sending and receiving countries alike tend to homogenize and stigmatize a heterogeneous group of people in ways which predispose public opinion and are inimical to the proper integration of women migrants and treatment of the issue of human trafficking within a broader frame.

Our recent interviews in October/November 2010 with displaced persons from Haiti repeat this stereotype, irrespective of whether the interviewee is male or female. Below (with pseudonyms) two young earthquake displaced persons comment on this enduring myth, firstly a male and then a female.

“Michel :*avan mpat konnen l mpat renmen l,men konye a m ladan l m oblije renmen l.e sa ou te konn tande wap di de li konye a ou vin viv li ou wè se pa vre.*

Entrev. :*Men kisa ou te konn tande wap di ?*

Michel :*bon,gen anpil bagay moun nan di yo di ,men yo pa viv li. Si tou ayisyen le mte ayiti,mtoujou tande pi fò fi ki vin nan sendomeng yo vin lave boutèy, ki jan lave boutey la, lè fi a vin isit, li vin fe pwostitiye.E pou tan li pa yon reyalyte, si majorite ladan yo vini pou fel,y opa kapab met tout moun nan menm sak,gen moun ki vini ki vin onet,ki vin chache la vi."*

"Michel: Before I came I didn't like Dominican Republic but now I am here inside the country I am obliged to like it because what you heard before you came here was not true.

Interviewer: But what was it that they said?

Michel: Well, there are a lot of things that people say but they do not live here. I always heard from Haitians in Haiti that women come to Santo Domingo to "wash bottles",<sup>15</sup> that when women come here it is for prostitution. And yet that is not the reality, even if the majority of women were to come to do (it) you should not put everyone in the same sack, there are people who come for honest reasons, to look to earn a living."

« Entrev. : *Nan ki sans ou panse y opa respekte dwa fanm nan sen domeng ?*

Claire : *Non paske le w ayiti yo di w pa al sen domeng kisa ki gen nan sen domeng,paske gen anpil fanm se boutey w'ap lave nan sen domeng se pou tèt sa se eksperyans sa m fè.*

Entrev. : *Ou rekonet kek fi ki vin isit la ki vin lave boutèy ?*

Claire : *Non mpa konnen. »*

"Interviewer: In what sense do you think that women's rights are not respected in Santo Domingo ?

Claire: No, because when you are in Haiti people say you should not go to Santo Domingo because a lot of women go to Santo Domingo to "wash bottles". That was what I expected.

Interviewer: Have you met any Haitian women who are "washing bottles"?

Claire: No, I haven't come across any."

There are perhaps two factors which have led to less attention being directed towards human trafficking as regards Haitian women as a general rule. On the one hand, although more Haitians currently live and work outside of the *bateyes* (UNCHR 1996), the criticism of alleged Dominican mistreatment of Haitian migrant workers is still

<sup>15</sup> "Washing bottles" (*lave boutèy*) is a common expression in popular Haitian Creole meaning prostitution.

rooted in the past. Thus the focus is on a situation with "akin to slavery conditions" of the male workers in the sugar cane harvest. Because of the low profile and unregulated niches occupied by the women migrants (such as informal trading, remunerated domestic work, services including sex work) they are often left out of the equation from a forced migration and rights compliance perspective. When they are depicted, it is almost exclusively in their reproductive role, as pregnant women using exorbitantly the public health services in the Dominican Republic.

On the other hand, the Dominican Republic is often mentioned in the same breath as Brazil, Colombia and the Philippines as a country resonant with trafficked women. Of course, the reference is to Dominican women who are trafficked abroad, especially to Europe, as well as across the length and breadth of Latin America and the Caribbean. Indeed there is more known about Dominican women who have been trafficked to Haiti (where they are well known as sex workers) than there is about Haitian women in similar circumstances in the Dominican Republic (COIN 2008). Evidence of this short-sightedness is to be found in the Inter-Institutional Committee for the Protection of the Woman Migrant (CIPROM), located in the Dominican Women's Ministry since the late nineties, which deals almost exclusively with Dominican women and hence leaving out of its purview the Haitian woman migrant, bearing in mind that the Haitians are the single largest cohort of migrants in the Dominican Republic.

However, the Haiti earthquake has served to shake up the issue of forced displacement across the island, such that the Haitian woman migrant will no longer be invisible or quite as stereotyped as previously, and has led to new challenges for public policy-makers and migrants rights activists alike.

### **The new migration configuration after the earthquake**

Decades of unchecked Haitian migration to the neighbouring Dominican Republic has resulted in a significant population of Haitian workers in that country. Not only is their status uncertain, but

these workers are also vulnerable to widespread discrimination and poor human rights conditions. In the Dominican Republic no legal framework consistent with international norms exists yet. Civil society practitioners in the human rights movement both nationally and internationally originated in the 1980s during the campaign against the abuse of migrant cane cutters. Today it has broadened its focus to include Haitian migrants and their descendents nationwide. One notable change in the movement in recent years concerns the leading role played by Dominican NGOs, with international partners providing support rather than vice versa (Wooding and Moseley-Williams 2004).

The “open border” policy on the part of the Dominican authorities in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake was an instantaneous humanitarian response marking a new departure in relations between the two countries. At the same time the Dominicans facilitated the first humanitarian corridor (both by land and by sea) into Port au Prince and other affected areas when the early international response was dominated by U.S. troops who were perceived as hampering the relief efforts.

Over the past year, the situation has become more complicated on the border, although many Haitian earthquake survivors who had moved to the border have now returned to the Haitian capital in the hope of becoming beneficiaries from the promised aid programmes and especially once the schools have re-opened. Border control has been reinforced in the Dominican Republic in the wake of the cholera outbreak in Haiti in October 2010, especially since early 2011.

Since the earthquake, Dominico-Haitian relations have been based on the idea of shared sustainable development, in those aspects which involve the two societies and their economies. The latter include: health, the border, security, climate change/environment and cross-island trade. Migration and human rights challenges remain, which continue to be the Gordian knot for the future of the relations between the two countries sharing the island of Hispaniola (Lozano 2010). Nevertheless, since a humanitarian prism still persists, the new political opportunity

structure represents a new opening for pro-migrant rights activists.

The concept of “Political Opportunity Structure” has been widely used in research on migrants’ political behaviour and activities, including voter turnout and representation in political bodies, membership in political parties and organizations, lobbying, public claim-making and protest movements. The political opportunity structure consists of laws that allocate different statuses and rights to various groups of migrants and formally constrain or enable their activities, of institutions of government and public administration in which migrants are or are not represented, of public policies that address migrants’ claims, concerns and interests or do not, and of a public culture that is inclusive and accepts diversity or that supports national homogeneity and a myth of shared ancestry (Rainer 2006).

As has been the norm in recent decades after sudden onset natural hazards and peaks of political instability on the west of the island, there has been no stampede of Haitians attempting to cross the border. Some always cite this possibility as though it was a real security threat for the Dominican Republic, even though it never materializes. On the contrary, the bulk of the forced displacement has taken place within Haiti. Some 2.1 million people had left their homes – over 1.7 million had been living in camps and spontaneous settlements in Port au Prince, while some 400,000 have taken refuge with families and friends in the provinces, 160,000 of whom had moved to regions within 20 kilometers from the border with the Dominican Republic. By early 2011, there were still almost a million people living in makeshift camps and the best estimates still seem to suggest a housing deficit in the immediate future (Government of Haiti projections).

There had been the perception that gender violence in Haiti and its repercussions for female migrants was an area where little progress had been made, despite Haiti’s first (cumulative) report against the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2008, some 27 years after this Convention was

ratified by the Haitian state in the early eighties. Gender violence against Haitian migrant women takes place, for example, in sexual favours which may be required to informally cross the border into the Dominican Republic or in human trafficking where women migrants once they arrive may be working in exploitative situations to which they have not consented.

On this latter issue, while it is true that the sequel to the earthquake has presented new challenges because of the context in which gender violence can (and has) spread, it has also revealed that Haiti had made considerable strides towards recognizing the extent of the phenomenon and dealing with it, notwithstanding formidable obstacles. Much attention has been paid to fresh challenges in Haiti, given the precarious camp and host houses situation for earthquake survivors, conducive to gender violence including, for instance, transactional sex in order for women to gain access to food distribution. It has been difficult to achieve the 1999 template of the international non-binding Guiding Principles for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), on most counts and including the gender benchmarks, not least because of the magnitude of the catastrophe (UNHCR 2010). Notwithstanding the decimation of the Women's Ministry and the difficulties of re-establishing the national coordination, led by the Ministry since 2003 against gender violence, the international community has been able to build on the initiatives and groundwork of this coordinating body.

The vast majority of the women consulted through our interviews warned that the earthquake had increased the vulnerabilities faced by and the needs of Haitian women, as confirmed by civil society organizations and the media. The number of female-headed households has increased because of the death of male partners or kin. Also, it is the women who are caring for the injured and disabled, reducing their opportunities for engaging in remunerated work or income-generating activities (Inter-Action 2010; IJDI et al, July 2010; Refugees International, October 2010; Schuller, Mark 2010; and Toupin, Sophie 2010).

While the vulnerabilities experienced by those forcibly displaced across the island relate to obstacles faced over time by female migrants on the east of the island, the earthquake has served to magnify these and add new variants. Thus it is still the case that newcomers are disadvantaged by their relative lack of knowledge early on, for example, of local mores and language in contrast to old-timers. Jeanette (pseudonym) affirmed in November 2010: "*w konnen m kongo, m pa konnen*" which translates as "you know I am a Congo<sup>16</sup>, I do not know" when asked about her knowledge of possible support or aid in the Dominican Republic. Jeanette is a single parent, 36 years old, mother of four children, who had been in the Dominican Republic, for the first time, since February 2010. Her small scale trade mainly in *pepe* (used clothing called so because of the jean brand "pepe") had been wiped out by the earthquake.

Another interviewee Liline (pseudonym) expresses in her testimony the importance she places on losing the family's documentation under the rubble. While the scale of the damage to the Haiti civil registry has been highlighted for the Haiti side (for example, constraints on drawing up a current and complete voter registry for the ongoing electoral process), less has been said about the increased vulnerability for those who cross the border *sans papiers* because of irretrievably buried papers.

« Entrev.: *Koman zon nan kote w te rete Potoprens te afèkte akòz de tranblèman de tè a?*

Liline: *bon, m te lakay yon sè m, epi pandan m te nan lari a, avèk sè m nan tranblèman e tè a te pase bò 4:00. nou te deyò epi kay la te panche, epi nou pat gen tan prann anyen andan kay la, pandan kay la plònje nou te deyò nan lari, ansanm avèk sè m, avèk tout timoun yo. Ak te nesans mwèn pedi, tout papye sètifika batem mwèn pedi, tout papye timoun yo pedi sètifikayò pedi, konyà ak de nesans mwèn avèk pa timoun yo pedi, nou pa jwèn yo.*

Entrev.: *konbyen moun ki te rete nan kay la etan Potoprens?*

<sup>16</sup> Congo is the expression used in the Dominican Republic for new Haitian migrant labourers, initially referring to those cutting the sugar cane but subsequently extended to all new migrant workers.

Liline: *Sè m la avek mari l, avek yon pitit li, mwèn menm avek de timoun pa m yo. Nou sis (6) ki te nan kay la.*"

"Interviewer: How was the zone where you were living in Port au Prince affected by the earthquake?  
Liline: Well, I was outside the house, and then when I was in the street when the earthquake happened around 4.00PM we were outside when the house pancaked, and then we had no time to take anything out of the house. When the house collapsed we were in the street, with all the children. I lost my birth certificate, my baptismal certificate, all the children's documents, certificates, so that we could not find these documents.

Interviewer: How many people were living in the house in Port au Prince?

Liline: Me and my husband with our children. There were six of us living in the house".

Liline subsequently found out that she was a widow since her husband was killed in the earthquake and after unsuccessfully trying to make do in one of the so-called "tent cities" in Port au Prince she is brought across the border for the first time by a relative when one of her children gets a bad flu due to the leaky tarpaulin. Lack of documents affects not only vulnerability to round-ups and repatriations but also jeopardizes access to services, such as health and schooling for family members in the Dominican Republic as the host society. Many of the female interviewees bore witness to this reality in their responses to questions posed in this regard while noting how they juggle care for trans-national families.

Irregular crossing of the border (the norm in recent decades but aggravated by lost documentation in the 01/12 catastrophe) has been further complicated by the outbreak of cholera since mid October 2010 in Haiti. One interviewee, Myriam (a pseudonym), reported that Dominican public transport was no longer accepting undocumented Haitians as passengers, fearing that cholera was contagious. Clearly, as a consequence, smugglers and traffickers may be more called upon than before.

Emblematic of increased gender violence reported in Haiti has been the number of rapes in the camps, including of girls as young as five years old (CIDH, 18 November 2010). Equally,

there has been a considerable rise in the rate of pregnancies in the metropolitan area of Port au Prince, many of which were unwanted, giving rise to the suspicion that there could be a direct correlation with the number of rapes.<sup>17</sup> Even before the earthquake, gender violence in relation to Haitian migrant women had already been highlighted by Dominican NGO. For instance, a programme set up by a Dominican legal aid NGO CENSEL, mediated through Catholic Relief Services, based in Santo Domingo, to address gender violence faced by vulnerable Haitian migrant women ended up treating three times as many as the anticipated number of clients (2009-2010).

However, the sequel to the earthquake has required an even sharper focus on gender issues in relation to Haitian women and children migrants in the Dominican Republic. In the ensuing chaos in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake there was more human trafficking and smuggling of migrants reported, especially by social organizations. While women migrants were vulnerable, the situation of children was underscored because of the phenomenon of irregular adoptions (one facet of human trafficking) of supposed "orphans", including through the Dominican Republic. To date there has only been one case which has gone through the Haitian judicial system with those involved in the alleged kidnapping eventually being released from jail, although the Haitian Prime Minister has questions as to whether justice was effectively done.

Some of the new challenges emerging may be quite clearly seen as cross-border. Initially, when a humanitarian corridor prevailed across the southern Dominican border into Port-au-Prince, Haiti there were no substantial hold-ups on the border for the humanitarian response. When the state of exception was lifted the truck

<sup>17</sup> According to press reports from information generated by UNFPA, before the earthquake of January 12 2010, the pregnancies in the urban zone of Port au Prince were 4% of women in reproductive age. After the catastrophe the figure has tripled in the camps of displaced persons. And, of these, two of every three is unwanted, while 1% of the cases exhibited sexual violence at the time of conception, [www.elpais.com](http://www.elpais.com)

drivers have to spend several days on the border, considerably elevating the demand for sex workers, Haitian and Dominican women alike, and on both sides of the border, in precarious conditions. We should, however, also take care to distinguish between the victims of trafficking and those who elect sex work as a form of labour – seeking to eradicate the former while providing alternatives, protections and rights for the latter.<sup>18</sup>

Given the relatively little progress on reconstruction in Haiti and the particularly fraught circumstances for women who are displaced, it is perhaps surprising that there are not more crossings being made by female migrants. That said, our informants reported increased costs for migrants being smuggled across the border, gender violence against women coming through the bush, akin to a “rite of passage”,<sup>19</sup> and increased difficulties to find income generating activities in the Dominican Republic partly because there has been a crack-down on selling food on the street as a cholera prevention measure. Some complained that there was an automatic assumption, on the part of Dominicans, that they were working in prostitution even when this was not the case.

In the light of these new challenges, including old challenges with new variants, the following section examines the roles and responses of some of the main stakeholders.

### **The roles and responses of stakeholders**

First, as hinted above, it should be acknowledged that the bulk of forced displacement following the Haiti earthquake has been concentrated on the island of Hispaniola for reasons of *force majeure*. As happened under the *coup* which propelled President Aristide into exile in the early nineties (Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children 2003), the forced

displacement, this time occasioned by a natural disaster of unprecedented dimensions in Haiti, has had to hold tight on Hispaniola. The regional and international response has been mainly hard-line, especially from the U.S., as explained above. Equally, the Platform “Support Group for Haitian Deportees and Refugees” based in Port au Prince (GISTI September 2010) has drawn attention to the difficulties faced by Haitians trying to enter France legally, due as much to the bureaucracy prior to leaving Haiti as to the complications relating to settlement in France.

The response has been no less frigid in the insular Caribbean where the involuntary return of Haitian *boat people* has been registered from various islands in the archipelago. These latter include, for example, Jamaica which traditionally had been a more hospitable nation towards those displaced from neighbouring Haiti for reasons of political instability or because of natural disasters.

In the face of this unwelcome rejection, what follows summarizes the response of some key stakeholders across the island, notably with regard to their approach to forced migration; gender violence; and illicit smuggling of persons or human trafficking which are often an unfortunate combined result of the first two topics.

As is well known, the international community has been challenged as never before by the enormity of the task in Haiti. As one international functionary bluntly paraphrased the response to the humanitarian crisis, “It is like driving down the highway at night with no lights”. Paradoxically, some issues which were more difficult to tackle before the earthquake have become more feasible to operationalize after the tragedy, on the part of some of the UN agencies. For example, the increased spotlight on the border (not always for the most altruistic reasons on the Dominican side since in part it may be in order to use the border zone as a buffer against increased Haitian migration) means that UNFPA can legitimately deepen their work on gender violence in this strategic zone. The possible spin-offs of this are clear for analysing and addressing illicit smuggling of persons and human trafficking.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of the shadow sub-cluster on gender violence, Santo Domingo, May/June 2010.

<sup>19</sup> The agency demonstrated by the women in these circumstances is not dissimilar to that which has been described in the case of female migrants from Central America in transit in Mexico en route to the U.S. This situation of these latter so-called trans-migrants is well analysed in Castro et al. (2010)

Civil society organizations island-wide have had a wide-ranging role in response to the earthquake, especially because of their traditionally close relations with many of the survivors and their families. However, the fact that many of the Dominican civil society organizations began to dedicate themselves almost exclusively to work in Haiti (including up to the present, more than a year after 01/12) has had certain consequences. On the one hand, there has been little time to dedicate to new humanitarian challenges on the ground in the Dominican Republic, caused by the extra baggage of disadvantage (as described above) carried by those new Haitian migrants who have been forcibly displaced across the Haitian-Dominican border.

On the other, there has been less time for reflection and consensus building on policy advocacy questions concerning the new configuration of migration across the island. In this tenor, there is an important debate to be had on possible protection gaps for displaced persons who cross a border. Broadly speaking, opinion may be divided into two camps: one of which favours so-called “assisted voluntary return”;<sup>20</sup> and the other of which is more supportive of the “temporary protection status”<sup>21</sup> route. Equally, the gender implications of these positions need to be rehearsed and lobbying positions developed. This debate is outstanding and well-argued agreed positions have not yet emerged on the part of Dominican civil society.

The fact that the Women’s Ministry in the Dominican Republic has been actively looking at how to help Haitian women subject to gender

violence opens a new space for dialogue on the part of civil society. This could be used to continue to advocate for more just migration policies and their more holistic application, including a more robust implementation of the legislation on human trafficking and the illicit smuggling of migrants adopted in 2003 but to relatively little effect.

In this context, the concept of “political opportunity structure” emphasizes that migrants are not only objects of laws, policies and discourses but also agents, who pursue their interests either individually or collectively. From this perspective, the point of analysing a political opportunity structure is to identify institutional incentives and disincentives that help to explain a certain choice of migrants’ political strategies. This need not imply that these choices are always rational ones or that they generally achieve their goals. There is, however, an alternative research perspective that regards the political opportunity structure not as given and as explaining migrants’ activities but is instead interested in explaining how these structures change over time and in comparing them across countries, regions or cities. Combining the two perspectives helps to understand changes in an opportunity structure as a result of political migrants’ choices and activities. Piper and Uhlin (2002) used the concept of political opportunity structures to analyse emerging transnational NGO networks in the area of trafficking. We believe that such an analysis could be usefully employed on Hispaniola, using this kind of lens.

The two incumbent governments across the island have shown much interest in broadening the coordination between relevant ministries, independently of the extra coordination engaged in between the UN system in the two capitals on the island in 2010. Not only the ministries which historically have met and decided upon bi-national actions (for instance, public health, agriculture and the environment) but other ministries, such as the respective Women’s Ministries, have begun to organize meetings to discuss topics of mutual interest.

There has been a noteworthy development on the protection of Haitian girls and boys in

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<sup>20</sup> Logistical and financial support to rejected asylum seekers, trafficked migrants, stranded students, qualified nationals and other migrants unable or unwilling to remain in the host country who volunteer to return to their countries of origin (IOM glossary).

<sup>21</sup> Procedure of exceptional character to provide, in the event of a mass influx or imminent mass influx of persons from third countries who are unable to return to their country of origin, immediate and temporary protection to such persons, in particular if there exists also a risk that the asylum system will be unable to process this influx without adverse effects for its efficient operation, in the interests of the persons concerned and other persons requesting protection (IOM glossary)

the Dominican Republic. For the first time the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) has a Protocol to deal with Haitian children (especially unaccompanied youngsters who have crossed the border after the earthquake), who hitherto had been practically outside the scope of their responsibilities, after early work with the United Nations System on forcibly displaced Haitian youngsters in 2010. New studies on children begging in the metropolises show an increase in this Haitian population, acknowledging that the younger the child the more Dominican pesos they collect, and that they do even better if they are a girl, earning more on a daily basis than a day-labourer construction worker.

Finally, the two states have appreciated the new climate of distension brought about by the earthquake and are beginning to think about a range of topics requiring a new approach. The preparation for a fully-fledged re-launch of the official Bilateral Mixed Commission (BMC) is evidence of this new departure.<sup>22</sup> Civil society needs to be alert to the possibility of agreeing on their representation which could be consulted by the BMC as appropriate.

### Conclusions

The migration configuration, including forced displacement island-wide, has become more complex since 01/12 as have the fluctuating relations between the two nations that share Hispaniola. The positive spin-offs have been that some Dominican authorities have begun to address rights issues in relation to women and children migrants, building on previous work or, in some cases, starting a new caseload from scratch. The Women's Ministry in Santo Domingo has been able to draw on work being carried out prior to the earthquake, notably in the border provinces on gender violence and expand this work, including the circulation of support materials in Haitian Creole. For the first time the

National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) has drawn up a Protocol to deal with Haitian children (especially unaccompanied youngsters), who hitherto had been outside the scope of their responsibilities, after early work with the United Nations System on forcibly displaced Haitian youngsters following the earthquake.

In these circumstances, it may be that women and children migrants are being instrumental in changing the discourse around Haitian immigrants towards a more enabling and inclusive environment *in situ* and facilitating a new "political opportunity structure" which should not be overlooked by pro-migrant rights activists. As explained above, concepts of political opportunity structure were first developed in social movements and then applied to the mobilisation of immigrants and migrants. In this new more pro-active approach by local actors, external pressures should be used prudently, such as that of the U.S. State Department whose last annual report (2010) gave the Dominican Republic a low ranking on its combating of human trafficking.

It is opportune for key civil society groups locally to take stock of policy advocacy strategies (in each country but also across the island) with a view to making good use of the new situation, including more openness to deal with certain aspects of the migration dossier on the part of the two states. This humanitarian prism may well not endure over time.

Paradoxically, it has taken the earthquake to reshape the narrative of these two nations on Hispaniola, the second largest island in the Caribbean. There is an historical opportunity to move forward on the Haitian question in the Dominican Republic, given the leveling effect that the Haitian earthquake has had on the earlier ultra-nationalist discourse. In particular, the myth of the Haitian invasion has been debunked once and for all. New positive overtures by certain Dominican authorities towards particularly vulnerable migrants, especially women and children, need to be heralded and built on with a view to achieving more lasting change. While this new turn may not be entirely altruistic and may,

<sup>22</sup> This official body was established in 1976 but has remained largely dormant since then partly because the two States in question have differing agendas in terms of the priority topics to be tackled with migration representing the single thorniest issue.

in part, be directed towards using the border as a buffer zone to prevent unwanted immigration, there are positive policy breakthroughs on the realisation of women and children's rights,

recognising that re-activating the necessary over-arching framework of the Bilateral Mixed Commission in order to make it functional may still remain elusive for a while.

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