

**EMPLOYMENT AS A TOOL OF INTEGRATION AND EMPOWERMENT?
EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE AFRICAN MIGRANTS LIVING AND
WORKING IN NORWAY**

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ABSTRACT

This research study designed to explore female migrants from Africa experiences of employment as a tool for integration and empowerment into Norwegian society. It explores different social and economic effects of employment and explores the impact of employment for female's empowerment and integration. In addition, it examines challenges faced to acquire labour or carrier like discrimination.

Qualitative approach was opted as the research method for this project as it enables the researcher to explore the topic under study deeper by using semi-structured interviews. The research findings indicate that native language was central to gaining employment, which in turn becomes a tool to empowerment and integration into Norwegian society. Employment gives individuals a sense of worthiness, self-esteem and belonging and a sense of feeling integrated into Norwegian society. However, findings also indicated challenges faced by females' immigrants in acquiring employment or career for instance, native language barrier, discrimination or prejudice, lack of network as well as lack of experiences in existing labour market, to mention a few. In addition, not all employed female migrants share the same experiences of employment as a tool for integration. Nevertheless, they acknowledge that employment is a goal to empowerment and integration into Norwegian society.

Key words:

Immigration, Employment, Integration, socialization, network, Empowerment, resource, agency, achievements, capabilities, domestic decision-making, access to and control over resources, self-esteem, respect, freedom, patriarchy, bargaining power, culture, remittances, gender role and family obligations.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A2G - Arbeids og Inkluderings bedriftene.

HIV- The human Immuno deficiency syndrome.

IMDI -The Directorate of Integration and Diversity

NAV- Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration

OECD-The organization of Economic and Development

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“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”. Melissa.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

The objective of this research project is to explore and assess the experiences of individual female migrants with the regard to employment as a tool for integration into Norwegian society. The focus is will be on economic as well as social benefits of employment on individual female workers. This chapter will also present rational for choosing to undertake this study and it will present an overview of presiding chapters and outline the content of each chapter.

1.2 Background of the study

Migration of people has existed in all ages but the facets of global migration have changed a lot in the last few decades. Women are currently migrating alone as main breadwinner, which has served to increase their visibility within migratory flows (Schwenken, 2008). Moreover, they are increasingly migrating in search of jobs, currently they constitute 48% of migratory flows (Fleury, 2016, p. vi). This change in gender migration is due to changes in demographic structures, increasing demand for cheaper caregivers in rich countries and more visible inequalities in wealth opportunities across countries, globalization and aggressive policies of private recruiting agencies (Gaye & Shreyasi, 2011, p. 3).

Norway has since 1970s experienced less immigrants, but immigration increased in last few decades. According to Statistics Norway 2018, the population of immigrants in Norway was 746671 people and population of immigrants in Bergen is about 20170 people. (<https://www.ssb.no/>).

Due to this increase, some migrants find themselves out of the labour market, which leads to challenges in labour integration. All of my informants are female immigrants from various countries in African continent, living and working in Bergen. Reasons for migrating to Norway were not explored as I considered it sensitive and personal hence, out of the topic. Labour market integration of immigrants has been a longstanding issue on the policy in Norway as it is seen as necessary for ensuring social cohesion, and it has attracted much attention because increase of immigrants. Henceforth, the state intervention in form of introduction program that was established in turn of the century focuses on integrating legal immigrants in labour market through funding for learning Norwegian language and labour training as to enhance their capabilities into labour market.

1.3 Rational for undertaking the research project and research objectives

Integration of migrants into labor market in Norway has been a serious concern for policy makers. Work empowers individuals with numerous benefits, it improves individual's livelihood, the wellbeing of their families and communities at large. Socially, work has indicated as one way of integrating migrants into a society as well as increasing their wellbeing. More so, as myself a migrant to Norway, I believe that labour participation to provide individuals with access to social network. Absence of labour participation affects individuals' access to social capital negatively.

Main objectives of this study project is to explore whether labor market participation of female migrants leads to integration into Norwegian society, and more generally, whether employment is a tool for empowerment to female workers.

Integration of migrants into labour market has generated heated debate in media in many western societies including Norway for the last so decades and issues concerning the impact of having many migrants unemployed on welfare has caused resentment against receiving immigrants as they become a burden to the society.

The research available been has largely been carried out on immigrants' economic drains on the government resources but research about immigrants 'contributions to society is lacking. My research has taken place in Bergen, a second largest city in Norway, and has been conducted on female migrants from Africa living and working in Bergen. In addition to exploring issues of integration and empowerment, I have also explored how female migrants keep connection to their home countries. Main researcher objectives are
Sub objectives.

- a) To explore how female migrants managed to acquire employment and the challenges they faced in this process.
- b) To explore their perceptions about labour as a tool of integration in society.
- c) To explore whether and how employment has empowered and benefited them and their families both in Norway and in countries of origin.

The researcher acknowledges that benefits that accrues from employment are as important to female migrant workers as to other Norwegian workers and those who are unemployed do not enjoy such benefits. However, the scope of the research did not cover unemployed migrants or male migrant workers but their situation did inescapably emerged during conversation the interviews.

1.4 The structure of the Thesis

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters.

Chapter one is the introductory part, which gives overview of t migrants' perception on employment, discuss the background of the study and presents the research objectives.

Chapter two reviews literature that corresponds with this topic under study, more specifically, discuss policies about labour integration and also challenges that immigrants face.

Chapter three discusses theories and concepts employed in the study, discusses theories of acculturation, integration, and empowerment. It also presents concepts such as remittances, power, resources, and agency.

Chapter four will discuss the methodological approach undertaken in this research study. The data collection methods used, how and why the study participants were selected and recruited. It will also discuss how the data was analyzed ethical considerations and the limitations of the study.

Chapter five and six will present empirical findings obtained from fieldwork and provide an analysis of different themes that emerged through data collection presented with supporting citations from the narratives.

Chapter seven will present conclusions and summary.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to review the literature available on the topic of labour integration of immigrants in Norway and employment as a tool of empowerment of female migrants into Norwegian society. In addition, it explores whether their labour participation has improved the wellbeing of female families both here and their home countries. There is not so much research done on the topic on integration of female migrants into labour market in Norway; however, much literature is available which concerns policies about migrants' labour integration in general. Integration of migrants into the labour market is an important stepping-stone towards socio-economic integration between migrants and natives and improves feeling of being part of the society. The chapter will start with a paragraph reviewing some literatures on gender migration in general and looking into the question of remittances.

2.2 Gender and Migration

Women have been migrating for many generations but little research been documented on this topic and this due to problem of researchers being gender blind (Ross-Sheriff, 2011, p. 233). Historians, who have been re-evaluating migration processes during 19th and 20th centuries have shown that transatlantic mass migration to the United States, almost half of the immigrants were women. Many female who migrated in that period were not employed in factories but rather in domestic work in cities and the countryside hence, the private sphere or as family work. However, real work considered to be in factories and this attracted attention among researchers. (Lutz, 2010, p. 1648).

However, inspired by women movements and feminist writers to focus on studies about women and women migration the 1980's scholars started to look at women's place in migratory processes. In the 1980's there was a change from women studies to Gender Studies. Gender was incorporated in social science to emphasize the difference between person's biological (sex) and socially acquired and performed (gender) identity and way of living and society (Lutz, 2010, p. 1650). The social construction of masculinity and femininity gives rise to private and public as workplace also plays and in of migration experiences for male and female in context of being couples, parents and on single.

International migration patterns have changed as a result of many forces such as social, political, economic and environmental trends and these problem has a great influence on how immigrants cope in a new society (Ross-Sheriff, 2011, p. 233). As mentioned, literature on migration was gender blind either because of unexamined assumption that majority of labour migrants were men, with women being recipients of remittances at home or women migrants being part of the immigrating families that accompany or follow men (Ross-Sheriff, 2011, p. 233). However, according to United Nations and World Bank, women constitute half of the international migration and many are migrating on their own seeking work opportunities and sending remittances to their families in their home countries (Ross-Sheriff, 2011, p. 234).

Migrants have shown to have potential to improve their lives, increasing their family statuses and providing them with access to control over resources and increasing on human capital. However, there are studies that indicate the disadvantages of migration on part of female migrants. For instance, study done by Fariyal Rose-Sheriff in 2011 “Global Migration and Gender” indicated that women are more vulnerable physically and more likely to be exploited than their male counterparts (Ross-Sheriff, 2011, p. 233).

Still, Rose-Sheriff’s research on gender migration argues that women migrants suffer from trauma due to separation from their families as well as political, social institutional and policies are not conducive to resolve the problems that degrade the productivity and well-being of women migrants (Ross-Sheriff, 2011, p. 233).

Global capitalism attracts many women to discard traditional social roles in favor of work opportunities outside the home and many women consider labour migration be only way to meet the demands of their families basic needs. Many highly skilled women have migrated to seek employment as teachers, physicians and nurses (Ross-Sheriff, 2011, p. 234)

Nordic countries have high level of gender equality, henceforth, many women participation in labor market resulted into demand for caregivers, many of whom are migrants. The increased demand for caregivers in Nordic countries and elsewhere in Europe also increased women labor migration, which has affected family roles both in sending and in receiving countries. Gender roles has changed due to women migration for instance, traditional male dominated roles as bread winners hence caring for the family has been substituted today by women

migrants working and taking care of her family as a bread winner or subsidizing to her family (Isaksen, 2010, p. 9).

2.3 Remittances

Global migration especially from South-to North has improved development because of global remittances generated by migrants. As noted by Kunz 2008, study “Remittances are beautiful? Gender implications of the new global remittances trend”. Migration is not a new phenomenon; people have migrated for centuries and send home money, made investments, and assisted their families. However, today, more than ever, many organizations, both non-governmental, and privately owned companies are interested in migration and remittances in their potential for poverty reduction and are increasingly creating policies to harness this potential (Kunz, 2008, p. 1389).

Increased international migration and lack of development funds to meet Millennium Development Goals, has motivated United Nations to focus more on harnessing remittances to achieve development in low developing countries (Kunz, 2008). According to Kunz, global remittances flows to developing countries increased from US\$ 161 billion from 2004 to US\$ 239 billion in 2007 (Kunz, 2008, p. 1390).

From Kunz’s point of view, global remittances has lacked assessment of gender specific account and instead been gender neutral but the feminists insists that remittances are not gender neutral rather gender- blind (Kunz, 2008, p. 1390). As noted by Kunz, “remittances embedded in gender perspectives calls for analysis of social remittances verses capital remittances. Social remittances are defined as “the ideas, behaviors, identities and social capital that flow from receiving to sending-country communities” and technical remittances to refer to the flows of knowledge, skills and technology associated with migration” (Kunz, 2008, p. 1399).

Hence, a gender analysis covers the “social remittances or transnationalism which forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement”(Kunz, 2008, p. 1399). From transnational perspectives, gender issues influence motivates to migrate, to remit who sends and who receives remittances.

Studies on gender and migration done by Susie and Reeves in 2005 indicate that migration can provide women with resources like income for themselves and their families and in turn, women earn greater autonomy, self-confidence and social status (Jolly, Reeves, & Piper, 2005). In 2011, a study on global migration and gender indicated that women have improved their own lives and lives of their families left behind (Ross-Sheriff, 2011).

Fleury carried out a similar study on importance of remittances in 2016. It revealed that remittances can increase recipient women's autonomy, for instance, studies indicate that migrant women who receives remittances from female relatives have moved from subsistence farming to running small business. Women show more stability and frequency in sending home remittances and they feel obliged to do so according to their tradition as the study done on migrants shows (Fleury, 2016, p. 13).

In relation to that, female, though they work for less pay, they often remit more and large sums of money than the married women and men hence they able to provide steadier remittances, likely to remit when unexpected shocks occur for instance, death in the family or drought, which provides a form of insurance (Fleury, 2016, pp. 12-15). More so, women migrants help in education their sisters or brothers by paying school fees for instance, in Republic of Congo according to Fleury, remittances increased rural girls education (Fleury, 2016, p. 15).

2.4 Policies for labour integration of immigrants in Norway

In many western European countries, migrants and refugees face high levels of unemployment, marginalization, social exclusion and discrimination in their new societies (Fernandes, 2015, p. 246). Norway has been a country of net emigration and has continued to be so for the last 50 years. As noted by central bureau of statistics Norway, in 2016, around 700,000 immigrants and 150,000 children born to immigrants are living in Norway and many nations are represented, with three largest refugees group from Somalia and Eritrea from Africa and Iraq from Asia (<https://www.ssb.no/>).

As such, integrating immigrants into labour market has generated a lot of enthusiasm as well as resentments against more immigration into the country. Integration of immigrants into labour market focused on language training as well as building infrastructure for future integration into labour market through work related training (Liebig, 2009a).

During late 1990's integration of immigrants focused on mainstreaming the needs of immigrants to within the general market and social policy measures as part of general welfare policy (Liebig, 2009a, p. 24). As noted by Liebig in 1997, a parliament report noted that Norway was developing into a multicultural society and provision of equal opportunities was advanced as a goal for integration by enhancing measures to put immigrants on equal footing with native Norwegian (Liebig, 2009a, p. 24).

In 2003, the parliament established an integration program aimed at facilitate integration process into receiving societies, this include among other things, language training, civic instruction and labor market and vocational training that will prepare for successful labor market integration (Liebig, 2009a, p. 25).

The state took responsibility for paying the language classes to facilitate social orientation and integration of immigrants that it had selected for entry, gradually adjusting its policies based on categories of immigrants and the nature of their stay in the country. This "effort to select and provide orientation for migrants through language and society training could be viewed as a policy manifestation of an ideally homogenous or egalitarian society with equality interpreted in terms of sameness" (Baba & Dahl-Jørgensen, 2013, p. 63).

Immigrants who come to Norway must adapt to a new set of circumstances, a new language, new social norms, and a society and assume a responsibility for creating a life for themselves, which demands more effort. According to studies done by Liebig about Labor recruitment in Norway, integration of migrants started long ago in 1974 a "white paper" presented to the parliament aimed at integration and inclusion of immigrants into labor market, provision funds of language training (Liebig, 2009a, p. 24).

Similarly, Lodovici noted that integration policy started earlier around 1980's on basis of a civic integration approach with legal immigrants entitled to all rights and obligations as the native population. For instance, provision of housing, building infrastructure for integration, support for the establishment of immigrants' associations, language and civic courses, care facilities for immigrant women, mother tongue education for the children of immigrants. And also granting rights to vote in local election for the immigrants who has been in the country at least three years (Lodovici, 2010, p. 14).

In the same sense, Lodovici noted that new approaches adopted for integration based on mainstreaming. Which entails that the needs of immigrants' should as far as possible provided for with the general labour market and social policies measures as part of general welfare policy. Some measures were enhanced for example, training, work practice and wage subsidies for unemployed (Lodovici, 2010).

In relation to above, Helbling noted that, more efforts for integration of immigrants in labour market in 1990's further strengthened with more attention paid to access to labour market and combating of discrimination. Emphasis was laid on making the best use of skills of immigrants, through more targeted language and improvements in the recognition procedures for foreign qualification, labour training and vocational training (Helbling, 2013).

More to that, different authors for example, Liebig, Helbling and also Aalandslid, note that integration of immigrants into labour market gained momentum with establishment of introduction program in 2004 for all asylum refugees and family members accepted by law to live in Norway and aged between 18 and 55 years with lower qualifications. These programs have duration of about two to three years and enhances migrants and refugees with rights and duties to participate fulltime 250 hours of learning language, 50 hours for social studies, and work training (Liebig, 2009b).

In addition to that, in the introduction program in 2005 authorities increased hours for the language learning from 250 to 300 hours as to give more time and provide basic Norwegian language skills and to give insight into Norwegian society, labour training and to prepare immigrants for further studies (Helbling, 2013). A similar study done by Brochmann and Hagelund on introduction program in 2012, show that integration of migrants into labour market picked pace in 2004 with Introductory Act, focused on migrants to make active efforts to qualify for participation in the life of work and society. It involved full time work in combination with language courses, work training or language training and social studies preparatory for future work or education (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012).

It made clear to migrants to respect Norwegian culture, human rights, rule of law, and individual freedom and respect to majority rights. Participation into Norwegian language courses was a key for individuals to become part of majority group as it enhanced and eased communication barriers between migrants and natives.

The introduction program initiated by government to improve on Integration of immigrants into labour market, as it became possible to combine work training with studying Norwegian language. This happened by making all in activities in a form of work payable henceforth compulsory and any absence without reasons would result in a reduction of the allowance paid (Aalandslid, 2009).

Moreover, Norwegian language and social studies priority has extended the offer to families who migrated to Norway on reunification basis (Aalandslid, 2009). They were obliged to participate in language and work training as to curb future marginalization in society. Female migrants have been given priority because many migrated from patriarchal societies where they have little or no educational qualifications or work experience outside their families.

As noted by Brochmann and Hagelund in their research, efforts to integration of migrant women in labour market intensified due to media reports about mistreatment and forced marriages of female migrants. The increased focus on integrating women migrants into labour market was also because of killing of honor of Swedish-Kurdish woman Fadime Sahindal, killed by her father as he considered her to have abandoned her culture in favor of Swedish culture. He felt this as an insult to family. This horrible killing in Sweden shocked many also in Norway and encouraged many female migrants in Norway to come forward with stories of forced marriage or husbands refusing them to learn Norwegian language (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012, p. 188).

Labour integration of female migrants' became priority as the state found out that some of immigrant women were hindered by their husbands to participate in the learning of the Norwegian language, participating into labour market as well as discovery of mistreatments of women by their husbands. This led the government to intervene in favor of women and attempt to integrate them in the labour market by training them in work related activities increase their education level and assist some to complete Norwegian language courses. Nevertheless, some immigrants remain outside labour market. There are signals of religious fundamentalism and growing political intolerance towards migrants in Norway have been noted (Akkerman & Hagelund, 2007).

Still, the introduction decree made it clear that one must respect society's basic values and certain principles are unchallengeable. Tolerance, participation, inclusion, anti-discrimination dialogue and diversity were some of principles that everyone had to observe. In addition, ethnic minorities' rights and cultures should be tolerated in exchange for accepting the basic Norwegian laws.

The information available to date on migrants' labour integration in Norway according to Norwegian statistics center, almost 50% of the participants in introduction program acquired employment or started school since establishment of introductory program and intensification around the country in 2006 (IMDI, 2006-2018).

For instance, Norwegian ministry of justice and public security in 2016 drafted a series of measures for an effective labour integration for newly immigrants with refugee background. Integration of immigrants into labour market is important in order to hinder them from remaining outside labour market and also to curb depending on social welfare and enable as many as possible to become economically self-reliant (IMDI, 2006-2018).

The policy stipulates that integration of immigrants into labour market should be as quick as possible as soon as immigrants granted permission to live in the country but it emphasized that knowledge of native language and society are perquisites for labour integration for all who have to stay in the country for a long time (<https://www.ssb.no/>).

A comparative study between Canada and Norway by Aalandlid in 2009 on labour market integration of immigrants show that there is a difference in labour integration as it is easier for migrants to integrate into the labour market in Canada because of language connectivity and level of education (Aalandlid, 2009). In the same study, it is indicated that migrants especially from Africa are constrained by the fact that migrants neither speak nor write Norwegian language, henceforth, a need first teach them the language both written and spoken and participate in work related training.

In a nutshell, in almost all research about migrants' labour integration in Norway, language has been singled out as an important factor in the labor market and societal integration in general and the state invest large amount of money to teaching language and social/ cultural studies to immigrants (Lodovici, 2010).

2.5 Challenges facing migrants to acquire employment in Norway.

The integration and inclusion policy stipulates that immigrants should be able to participate in the labor market and society as soon as possible after arriving in the country because it gives them opportunity to have equal living conditions with the natives. This should be achievable as the country enjoys relative low unemployment and with high growth domestic product and high labour market, participation of both genders (Perrons, Plomien, & Kilkey, 2010, p. 2).

Integration of migrants into labour market irrespective of reasons for migration is a challenge to all countries. Integration of migrants more specifically female migrants is challenge in Norway because policy makers as did not consider it as a priority due to the fact that there very few women migrants who participated in labour market in relation to male counterparts (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012).

A majority of the unemployed migrants are from the African continent, which have no historical or economic connection with native Norwegian population. This puts them in a disadvantaged position in relation to other migrants for instance, from Europe that has economic, trade and work agreements with Norway (Aalandslid, 2009, p. 25).

In relation to above, migrants Africa face language barrier, as masterly language of native language especially in a conservative country like Norway is crucial for labour integration and this leads many especially those who migrated to Norway as grownup people (Aalandslid, 2009, p. 20).

As mentioned above, migrants from Africa, mostly come as refugees or family reunion, rather than economic migrants as do the ones from European countries. A majority of hiring agencies, both private and public, demand fluency of Norwegian language as prerequisite for labour integration to migrants. This emphasis of language fluency has left some unemployed but there are others who have managed to acquire linguistic proficiency and integrated into labour market (IMDI, 2006-2018).

Still, labour integration in Norway requires network or social connection between employee and employer. According to Aalandslid, migrants lack social network (Aalandslid, 2009, p. 20) or social capital in their new society, as it is important for recognition and trust with

native citizens and this takes long time to build it. Henceforth, lack of network with majority population puts migrants into disadvantaged in labour integration.

Labour integration is also hampered by lack of academic credential or difficulties in accepting them. Some who have higher education from their countries of origin face challenges of gaining recognition or acceptance of credentials and pre-migration work experience (Aalandslid, 2009). Difficulties in acceptancy of education credentials forces some migrants to work in lower skilled labour or to take extra education in Norway.

Lack of labour integration could also be because of employment bias or discrimination. As indicated by Aalandslid, some migrants face discrimination in labour market (Aalandslid, 2009, p. 20), it leaves many without work yet they have the necessary qualification needed for employment. Similarly, Fernandes indicated that many migrants and refugees face high levels unemployment, marginalization, social exclusion or discrimination in their new societies (Fernandes, 2015, p. 246).

In addition, migrants lack familiarity with the labour market, as they are not used to the Norwegian system of employment. Access to information about employment opportunities is very limited to some migrants and this leads to unemployment to some migrants especially female migrants as they lack role models in their communities (Aalandslid, 2009).

Some migrants face challenges in acquiring employment, career or both in Norway and some are unemployed and without career, which poses challenges to individuals especially the ones lacking appropriate coping strategies and social support are lacking (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 474).

There is no doubt that employment is important both economically as well as socially and lack of employment has its consequences to individual's wellbeing and self-esteem. Concisely, therefore, majority of female migrants are unemployed due to a combination of factors, like lack of linguistic capacities or socio-cultural norms, but also some that are beyond their control for instance discrimination or lack of education. Nevertheless, some of them have acquired employment as well as a career and as findings indicate, their lives have positively changed.

Though some immigrants have managed to acquire work, quite a few according to Norwegian Ministry of justice and public security remain unemployed and employment rate of immigrant is lower than in the population as whole. Almost 71 percent of men and 66 percent of women in Norway between age of 15 and 74 were in employment at the end of 2014. For the immigrants, the rate were 68 and 58 percent and this varies between groups of immigrants and the difference is based on reasons for immigration, period of residence and differences in education and also traditions of country of origin played an important part (IMDI, 2006-2018).

2.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to review the literature relating to the policies about labour integration of migrants. It discussed the important contribution the state has undertaken to integrate immigrants in the labour market. It also discussed challenges facing migrants to acquire employment in Norway. As discussed, the essence of Norwegian policies have been to focus on employment as an integrating tool for migrants into Norwegian society both men and women, with an increased focus on women in the last few years. Henceforth, these materials will be helpful to analyze and discuss the empirical findings of my thesis.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORY AND CONCEPTS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents two sets of theories, acculturation and empowerment, which are relevant for the analysis of my empirical material about labour employment as a tool for integration migrants into Norwegian society. Acculturation theory will be used in chapter five and empowerment theory in chapter six respectively.

3.2. Migration and Acculturation

Migration is defined as a “permeant or semi-permanent change of residence” (Lee, 1966, p. 49). When people migrate, they often times bring with them their cultural attitudes that enable or discourage them to adopt cultures of the dominant or native group in the host society. Labour participation of immigrants is seen as an important component that may or may not bring together different people and establish relationship between migrants and natives.

With the above in-mind, acculturation theory is a theoretical perspective that was advanced by Sam and Berry, to explain what happens when different cultures meet and are in constant contact. The relationship that develops between them and how well they adapt, integrate, reject, or are rejected by new societies. According to Sam and Berry, acculturation as a relationship develops from cross-cultural encounters. When people of different cultural background encounter each other, they may or may not adopt each other’s behavior, languages, beliefs, values or social institutions (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 472).

This concept of acculturation is commonly also used to describe minority culture especially immigrants groups that are culturally distinct from majority group in the place where they have migrated. From their perspectives, acculturation “refers to the process of cultural and physiological changes that results following meeting between cultures”(Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 473).

Acculturation recognizes the reciprocity of the influences from other groups during cultural encounters (Sam & Berry, 2010). Migration affects both migrants and natives of receiving societies and the migrants adopt different acculturation strategies such as assimilation, integration, separation and marginalization.

Assimilation strategy occurs when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek close interaction with other cultures. Separation occurs when an individual place a high value on holding on to their original culture and avoid interaction with members of the new society. Integration is a strategy used by individuals with an interest in maintaining one's original culture while interacting with other groups hence, "a degree of cultural integrity maintained, while seeking to participate as an integral part of larger social network (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 476). Lastly, marginalization strategy entails little possibility or lack of interest in cultural maintenance and little interest in having relations with others which often leads to exclusion and discrimination (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 476).

Hence, acculturation is a two-way process, the majority or dominant group adopt some elements of minorities that they come into contact with the assumption is that during acculturation, no cultural group remain unchanged following the cultural contact. It occurs at group or individual level; it can be voluntary or involuntary. A case of the latter would be when migrants are obliged to learn the language or laws of society in order to qualify for the social benefits.

In other words, acculturation is a two-way traffic interaction resulting in action and reaction to the contact situation. According to Sam and Berry, three main areas of human life changes during acculturation. There are referred to as 'ABC' (Affective, Behaviour and Cognitive) (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 474). Though not being explained in details here, they are important in understanding how individuals and groups of individuals deal with acculturation, how they cope with stress and psychological changes.

In addition, when the individuals and groups enter into an acculturation situation, they are faced with numerous questions about themselves whom they are and where they belong. This is the core of social identity theory and explains whom individuals and groups identify with and behave as part of the larger social group (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 475).

Adaptation can be psychological for instance, changed sense of wellbeing, or social-cultural such as acquiring a new language (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 474). More to that, acculturation stress may result as individual may experience reaction in response to life events that arise during acculturation. Still, second language proficiency and communication competence are core strategies for cultural learning approaches and sociocultural adaptation. Henceforth, good

language proficiency increases interaction with members of the new culture and reduces maladaptation (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 475). This theory and strategies of acculturation will apply in chapter five in empirical findings about labour integration of immigrants in Norway.

3.3 Conceptualizing Empowerment

There are many definitions of empowerment, but they all agree on the fact that it incorporates some ideas about 'power'. The word Power is applied in different contexts and the term empowerment is rooted from the word power, which entails two opposite sites, one with power and another without power or powerless. Kabeer (1999), defined empowerment as “a process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 435).

In relation to that, Mosedale (2005) defined empowerment by pointing out four aspects namely, “to be empowered one must have been disempowered, empowerment cannot be bestowed by a third party, and rather, those who would become empowered must claim it. In addition, empowerment include a sense of people making decisions on matters which are important in their lives and being able to carry them. Lastly, empowerment is an ongoing process than a product. There is no final goal” (Mosedale, 2005, p. 244).

3.4 Dimension of power

Power has various dimensions as argued by Kabeer (1999) for instance, “power to, power with-in and power over” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). “Power to” which is a positive sense of power and means the people’s ability to define their own life and choose their goals. “Power-within” means “observable action, motivation and purpose which individuals bring to their activity” and “power over depicts negative sense of power which means the capacity of the actor or category of actors to override the agency of others” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438).

Henceforth, Kabeer and Mosedale appear to agree on certain criteria in defining empowerment and that is to say that those who want to be empowered must demand it and that it is not a given which depicts some power struggle between those with power, resources and others who have no power but demand it.

3.5 Dimension of empowerment

There are many dimensions of empowerment but Kabeer noted three that are more central and are interrelated. These are resources, agency and achievements. These dimensions in turn related to dimension of power. Resources includes among other things, human, economic and social resources to enhance ability to exercise power through various domains such as market, family or community institutions of the society (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437).

According to Kabeer, agency in sense of power, could be positive or negative, in positive sense, it entails the capacity of people to define their own life-choices. Negatively, it means the capacity of the actor or actors to override the agency of others by either force, violence or coercion. Achievements include among other things “ways of being and doing which are realized by different individuals” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438).

Varghese, in her article about women empowerment, indicates that “Empowerment is enlightenment and that there’s no development without enlightenment; it is the quality of life measured not in terms of rising money incomes or longer life spans alone, rather by the autonomy and security enjoyed by women everywhere” (Varghese, 2012, p. 52).

Similarly, Kapitsa noted that empowerment has two inter-related dimensions, resources and agency. Resources entails both tangible, which are material and financial assets, and intangible resources includes amongst other things skills, knowledge and expertise or political network (social capital). While, agency entails ability of people to define their goals, objectives and act on them (Kapitsa, 2008, p. 2).

However, Oudshoorn, cited Gibson’s definition of empowerment as an “outcome, producing a positive self-esteem, personal satisfaction, self-efficacy, self-esteem, mastery, control, a sense of connectedness, a feeling of hope, an improved quality of life, well-being as well as health” (Oudshoorn, 2005, p. 61).

3.6 Employment as aspect of empowerment.

According to Mosedale, employment is one of the key sources of women’s empowerment; it encourages activities outside one’s home, being part of the group, travel time for self and literacy. Employment increases a woman’s ability to analyze her situation and improve upon

it. It has positive effects on herself and her family, access to resources through employment can also empower women to escape from learned helplessness and develop self-confidence and when they work, they learn and gain experience from other women (Mosedale, 2005).

Similarly, employment as an empowering tool involves an ongoing process centered in the local community, involving mutual respect and group participation through which people lacking unequal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995).

Similarly, Blom noted, for migrants in particular that, employment is crucial element in the social and economic empowerment of migrants in a new society (Blom, 2004). Economically, employment of migrants “opens path for self –assurance and economic independence. Lack of economic freedom leads to feelings of disempowerment and hopelessness to some individuals. Employment improves ones’ psychological and strengthens feeling of mastery and self-respect” (Blom, 2004, p. 3). Female migrants’ access work may increase their psychological health and wellbeing as well as that of their families. Similarly, employment enables one to create a social relationship with one’s society and it increases contact with majority of population (Blom, 2004, p. 3).

Employment opportunities may give to access to social resources or to claim such resources, which are determined by norms, and rules that govern institutions. Work puts one in such environment that one feels has power determine rules or norms of the game and feels a sense of belonging. Henceforth, employment may empowers female migrants with ability to claim resources in terms of income, unemployment benefits, sickness benefits, old age pensions or disabilities (Blom, 2004), but also empowers them with negotiating powers to influence the rules and regulations.

More to that, access to resources enables one with access to social relationships for instance, market, family or community that determine distribution or allocations as well as future claim to such resources (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). Empowerment is a process as well as an outcome where by empowering process for an individual might for instance include helping to attain work or employment and empowerment aimed at community level may include collective action to access government resources.

More so, studies about migrants' employment show that an individual strengthens control of their lives, increasing their level of self-confidence and self-perception while being employed in a host society (Fernandes, 2015). Through mastery of natives' language, migrants are empowered with linguistic and cultural knowledge to navigate social, economic and political webs of power.

Employment as empowering female migrants involves the ability to make choices and entails a process of change of all components of societal structures that shape and reproduce power relations and the subsequent unequal distribution of society's resources and opportunities (Kapitsa, 2008). More so, empowering women or disempowered groups in Norway has focused on improving their effectiveness in the society for instance, active labour market program that target unemployed or language training as close to all immigrants coming to Norway have no knowledge of the native language (Aalandslid, 2009).

Employment as empowerment has generated a lot of debate as some acknowledge economic resources as a source of power, which could advocate for further claims in distributions of family assets and improving social status of women in the family or society. While others see material assets as an empowering condition which stress the access to resources as important (Kapitsa, 2008, p. 4).

Promoting of female economic opportunities has transformative advantages to women's lives and contributes to inclusiveness in growth. Enhancement of migrant women's agency in employment and education helps broaden structures of opportunities (Kabeer, 2013). In relation to the above, labour market participation may give women a voice and what Kabeer termed agency and "power within" enhancing individual's capabilities to make their own decisions (Kabeer, 1999).

Some immigrants have migrated from patriarchal societies. According to Kofman, patriarchal societies are societies where "women are regarded as sole consumers or dependent while men as sole providers" (Kofman, 2004, p. 647). Some researchers have indicated that male immigrants in Norway do want to maintain their "power over" women but it also shows that some of these women have rebelled against gross suppression from their husbands who wish to maintain patriarch cultural dominance (Brochmann & Hagelund, 2012).

Oudshoorn argues that the idea of power as ability to act or as ability to produce a specific effect or a possession of control, influence or authority (Oudshoorn, 2005, p. 58). From this perspective, power and resources are relevant and useful to achieve a desired objective. As such, Kabeer and Kapitsa agree with Oudshoorn that, empowerment can be both individual and collective and entails actions that challenge unjust power relation (Kapitsa, 2008, p. 2).

Employment for many female may empower them and improve their “socio-political situations, changing their cognitive, psychological, economic as well as political components” (Mosedale, 2005). Employment may also empower females cognitive understanding of the causes of their subordination, which improves the understanding of self and the need to make choices that may go against cultural or social expectations (Mosedale, 2005).

The focus here is how access to employment may empower female migrants. As Zimmerman and Perkins argues, empowerment is an “ongoing process centered in local community, involves reflection as well as group participation whereby individual lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources or it is a process by which people gain control over their lives, democratic participation in their community”. (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995, p. 570).

Participation in domestic decision-making and control over resources is one of the cornerstones of women empowerment as cited by different literatures and development organizations. When people are employed, they have better ability to exercise their choices in different dimensions. Employment as an empowerment tool here means, resources the “capabilities or potential that people have for living the lives they want, of achieving valued ways of being and doing. Employment enables one with economic resources which may enhances the capacity to achieve the goals they desire and lack of this capacity is associated with poverty or disempowerment (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437).

3.7 Employment and changes of gender relations

Gender is a social construct and “male and female and gender norms shape roles and expectations and behavior associated with masculinity and femininity” (Fleury, 2016, p. 1). Gender norms can both empower and constrain rights and opportunities. A gendered analysis explores “perspectives on gender relations, how gender affects access to resources, differences in power and equality in economic, social and legal structures”(Fleury, 2016, p.

1). Unequal gender power relation as Connell indicates is the “overall subordination of women and dominance of men”(Connell, 1997, p. 74).

Connell show that there is a “ dividend accruing to men from unequal shares of the products of social labor for instance unequal wage rates and gendered character of capital”(Connell, 1997, p. 74). Capitalism has given men a lion share in the economy as they control biggest cooperation and great private fortunes worldwide “social construction of masculinity”(Connell, 1997, p. 74). Though this trend of can be traced across Europe or America, it’s more severe in some parts of Africa where women’s powers are invisible especially in economic terms and this could have prompted female to migrate for a better future.

As argued by Isaksen, gender roles has changed due to women migration for instance, traditional male dominated roles as bread winners hence caring for the family has been substituted today by women migrants working and taking care of her family as a bread winner or subsidizing to her family (Isaksen, 2010, p. 9).

From these two theorists’ perspectives, it is clear that access to resources both tangible and intangible is paramount for empowerment. If female migrants are without equal access to employment this can have a detrimental to their rights as both women and human being as they are most cases deprived of those rights in many cultures.

3.8 Conclusion

The primary objective of this chapter was to explore theories and concepts relating to integration and empowerment for female migrants. It discussed different concepts and theories. The concepts and theories are relevant for the analysis of research questions, and are useful to analyze empirical findings from the fieldwork. These concepts are also in turn linked to the literature review done on the topic of immigrants’ integration and state policies in this regard. Therefore, these concepts and theories chosen are important for analyzing empirical findings that emerged during data collection and analysis. The concepts related to acculturation will be employed in chapter five and the concepts of power for instance, “power to”, power within or”, “power over” and concepts of empowerment for instance, resources, agency and capabilities will apply in chapter six about employment as empowerment respectively.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

4. Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to present the methodological approach undertaken to explore experiences of individual female migrant with regard to employment as a goal for integration into Norwegian society and empowerment. The chapter presents the epistemological orientations of the research design, research questions, sample size, site of study, recruitment strategies, data collection methods, ethics, quality assurance, role of the researcher and limitations associated with this study among other things.

4.1 Epistemological orientation and Research design

Epistemology means the study of knowledge and is concerned with how we can go about knowing things and the validation of knowledge and value of what we know (Howitt, 2013, p. 8). It is paramount for me as researcher to reflect and understand how the knowledge is created and constructed because with this in mind, it will guide me along this project as qualitative study involves close contact with participants. In this study, it is important to note that in such a qualitative we need to acknowledge that reality is not “objective” and “out there” to discovered as Positivists believe, but rather it is social constructed (Creswell, 2014, p. 7).

This research project thus assumes a constructivist foundation because as Creswell points out, individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences-meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into few categories or ideas”(Creswell, 2014, p. 8). A constructivist approach is associated with qualitative research methods because they rely more on individual’s own words and I as a researcher interpret the complexity of meanings. I used a qualitative research methodology because it is appropriate to explore and understand the perception of individual female migrants’ personal experience concerning employment as a tool for integration and empowerment into Norway society.

4.2 Research Design

In this study, a qualitative interpretive and phenomenological oriented approach was chosen as the research method because in the broadest sense, it explores and produces descriptive data or people's own written or spoken words and observe behavior (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015, p. 7). Qualitative methods are suitable for me as a researcher to explore and interpret meanings of individuals ascribe to a social or human problem because it is built on inductive reasoning whereby individual meaning takes precedence. "researcher stresses the socially constructed nature of reality, interpret relationship between researcher and what is studied and situational constraints that shape inquiry" (Denzin, 2003, p. 13).

As Rosenthal indicates, qualitative research approaches can offer insights into the question of "how" (Rosenthal, 2016, p. 510) and this method involves the process of emerging questions and procedures, data is typically collected that can agree or disagree with the theories, and data analysis is inductively building from particular to general themes (Creswell, 2014, p. 4).

4.3 Study site

The fieldwork took place in Bergen, the second largest city in Norway. I choose this site because it is where I live and has many migrants whom are my target group. The collection of data started august 2017.

4.4 Recruitment of informants.

Snowball sampling approach was used to recruit fifteen females' migrants. Some of the participants were friends and acquaintances and I used those friends and their network to snowball other participants. Snowball technique is suitable to deal with sensitive topics like this on as Biernacki and Patrick put it the technique is "applicable when the focus of study is on a sensitive issue, concerns in a relatively private matter, and thus requires the knowledge of insiders to locate people for study" (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 141). The study I considered sensitive because it intrudes into personal privacy, which most people are hesitant to talk about.

4.5 Sampling and selection of participants

In this research study, a purposefully sampling strategy was useful to help the researcher understand the problem and the research questions that directed the study (Creswell, 2014, p. 189). The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling is when informants

are deliberately chosen due to the qualities the informant possesses. Nonrandom technique does not need underlying theories or a set of number of informants. The researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge and experience (Tongco, 2007, p. 147).

The inclusion criteria was female participants from Africa, currently employed in Norway. In undertaking this research study, the researcher interview female aged between 18-55 years because in 18 years is the age of maturity in Norway and they are allowed to be interviewed alone without seeking permission from the guardians or authorities. In addition, I chose migrants from Africa because I saw them to be under represented in the labour market. In addition, I also being a migrant of African heritage, I thought was a good topic to be explored, as I ‘am familiar with those who are working and especially linguistically, I can communicate with them in Norwegian, English or some African dialects.

4.6 Participants.

First, a brief presentation of profile of each of the participant, the participant given pseudonym names in order to hide their identity. I interviewed fourteen female. Five single, six married, two divorced and one cohabiting.

Names	Country of origin	Civil status	Number of children	Length of stay in Norway (Years)	Employment
Fatima	Somalia	Single	0	15	Nurse in Elderly Home.
Dona	DRC Congo	Single	2	10	Care taker in Elderly Home
Eva	Rwanda	Married	3	22	Nurse
Sandra	DRC Congo	Married	3	30	Self Employed
Fama	Eritrea	Married	2	24	Primary Teacher.
Tuna	Somalia	Single	1	15	Waiter
Jane	Rwanda	Cohabiting	0	12	Cook
Lidia	Liberia	Single	0	19	Cook/Cafeteria
Jessica	Rwanda	Single	0	14	Assistant in Elderly Home and also a student at HIB
Umoja	Kenya	Divorced	2	27	Church sector
Patricia	Rwanda	Married	3	18	Supermarket

					attendant and pursuing Nursing at HIB
Emma	Burundi	Divorced	3	20	Kindergarten Teacher.
Anna	South Sudan	Married	1	7	Veterinarian
Fifi	Burundi	Married	2	21	Marketing manager at Museum.

4.7 Data collection Methods

An interview with each participant was arranged in advance and the time had to suite the timetable of the interviewee. A telephone conversation was carried out before the interview took place for later research as it allowed the study participant to familiarize with subject and concepts related to the questions. This gave time for the researcher to explain and solve any difficulties before the actual interviews could commence.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews was selected as method to carry out the research. These interview are sometimes referred to, as “informal, conversational or soft interviews are verbal interchanges where one person, the interviewer attempts to elicit information from another person” (Longhurst, 2003, p. 145).

It is about talking with people but in ways that are “self-conscious, orderly and partially structured” (Longhurst, 2003, p. 143). Semi-structured interviews are appropriate as the researcher probes and explorers as many questions as possible to gain an insight on the topic.

Each participant received the same questions relating to experiences with employment, integration, empowerment and remittances, and questions were open-ended such as “Can you explain to me your experience with employment in Bergen”? Such open questions allows the researcher to again knowledge, gather information and motivates study participants who can then express their opinion freely and in their own words (Züll, 2016, p. 2).

This type of research collection allows the researcher to explore the views of participants, and it allows the participants to elaborate and this gives them a room of flexibility hence capacity to elicit more information. Interviews provide in-depth information pertaining to participants’

experiences and viewpoints about the topic (Turner, 2010, p. 754). This approach was suitable to collect sensitive information from the participants.

Twenty-two questions were awarded in English, as the language was comprehensible and relevant to many migrants and where necessary, other languages like Norwegian, Kinyarwanda and Kirundi were used to explain to them those questions to avoid misunderstandings.

These languages were used interchangeably because some of participants who could not express themselves very well in English, they used Norwegian language. Others whom I same Kinyarwanda mother tong, we opted it as a medium of communication. Those who speak Kirundi, it is almost the same language with Kinyarwanda, so could communicate easily.

The structured interview questions concerned the following six areas.

- Employment
- Empowerment
- Integration
- Gender roles
- Remittances
- Maintaining of contacts with family members of home countries.

As employment and integration are important and serious subjects for individuals, the researcher tried to balance interview questions as to explorer positive aspects of these two topics throughout the study.

I asked them several key questions that were helpful to explore and allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge or separate in order to explore an idea or response in more detail (Gill et al., 2008, p. 291). I used an open-ended questions approach in order allows a degree of freedom and adaptability in getting information from interviewee (Turner, 2010, p. 755).

An audio recording device used to record the interviews and fourteen interviews were transcribed verbatim but one rejected to be audio recorded henceforth I used typewriting. Six participants was acquaintance of researcher; and other nine recruited through third parties

known to the researcher. All participants contacted on phone with the details of the research. Twelve participants choose to have interviews carried out of their homes, as it was easier for them and only two allowed interviewee at workplace.

4.8 Data analysis

Data analysis proceed hand-in-hand with other parts of developing the qualitative study, the data collection and the write up of findings (Creswell, 2014, p. 195). Though today there are computer software to use for transcribing and coding data. However, I used manual transcribing and coding of data because of my limited technological expertise and because some of my informants used different languages. I followed the strategy of a thematic analysis listening, transcribing all into English.

Coding the data started after all, the data had been transcribed and codes apply as the keywords or topics that categorize the data. The material was analyzed, categorized and organized in themes and subthemes that developed during coding process. The themes that re-emerged from all interviewers were verified for similarities and differences, seeking to find validity and authenticity of the data by rechecking.

4.9 Data Management

The information given to me was stored in my computer locked with password and remained confidential and all informants remained anonymous both in the transcripts and in the thesis itself. The recordings will be deleted on the completion of the study.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

According to Bellah as cited by Munhall “all social inquiry is linked to ethical reflection...social science must consider ends as well as means as objects of rational reflection”(Munhall, 1988, p. 151). In addition, in qualitative research, “knowledge of our collaborators’ aims and normative commitments are intrinsic component of the research” (Munhall, 1988, p. 152).

More so, I assured my informants were presented with a consent letter and were well informed what their participation means, but the written consent seemed to frighten them and thus, I simply obtained and accepted verbal consent.

It is important as a researcher to protect the identity of informants and information obtained from my participants. Confidentiality and anonymity was insured by not recording sensitive information for instance their registered numbers, real names or their addresses. I made sure that my participants' privacy remained hidden.

I also used pseudonym names to hide their identity. Their e-mails, telephone, registration number or places of residence were not revealed. This is in line with Munhall's view "one needs be concerned about the usual ethical considerations of fieldwork privacy, confidentiality, achieving accurate portrayal, and inclusion and exclusion of information"(Munhall, 1988, p. 155).

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and were given the copy of informed consent, but neither signed the informed consent but fourteen of them accepted to be audio recorded while one participant declined to be audio recorded but accepted to interview. My informants have the right of withdraw from the research anytime without explanation and I offered to provide them with the summary of the results of the project to allow them to follow through on this commitment. More so, reliability in this project has been ensured with consistency in data collection and transcription of data using the same method throughout.

4.1.1 Quality assurance

My thesis is built on a constructivist views of research inquiry that see "credibility as an analog to internal validity, transferability as an analog external validity, dependability as analog to objectivity" (Patton, 2015, p. 684). Credibility, involved careful collection and transcribing of data to establish trustworthiness.

The credibility depended on my ability and effort as researcher to capture the collected information, moments and due points from the perspective of the participant due to my prolong time in the field conducting in-depth interviews, document analysis, focus of the study and selection of participants. Reliability of the study depended largely on transcribing interviews, consistently using the same method to interpret and analyze the data (Howitt, 2013, p. 454).

Dependability of this study depended on my ability to carry out research on an orderly, logical and traceable manner. I made sure that I audio recorded all information, audited it and

analyzed it. Transferability refer to “the degree to which the results of qualitative research concerns whether the data collected can be generalized in terms of “case-to-case transfer” (Patton, 2015, p. 685). As a researcher, I ensured to provide sufficient information on this study so as the readers can compare results with other studies done on the same topic and find out if it can be transferred to other situations I also including my Interview guide hopefully, it can be useful for other studies.

4.1.2 Role of the researcher

It is important note that qualitative research is interpretive research, which entails that I as a researcher gets involved with participants about personal issues. Because of indulging into personal issues, it is important to reflect on role I played in shaping and guiding this research (Howitt, 2013). My role as a researcher was paramount, as I had to explain to the participant words, terminologies and language used during this study.

However, my informants spoke English, Norwegian, Kirundi and Kinyarwanda, because of different languages, some terms I had to explain to them. I tried to be neutral during interview and only to intervene under circumstances I thought the participant was diverting from the topic.

I cannot ignore my relationship with the study participants, all of participants are migrants just as I am, and this gave me the courage to choose the topic concerning work, integration and empowerment of female migrants. The research topic exited both the participants and me and during the interview, they saw me as one of their own. Though they were all female, there was no issue of gender problem. All participant seemed to be familiar with me. They were enthusiastic with the topic, and the mood during interview was good, as they seemed to have a knowledge about the topic.

4.1.3 Challenges encountered during fieldwork

During this study, I encountered some challenges for instance; at the start of research, I faced a problem of recruiting participants. It was difficult to meet my target, which initially was “single migrants’ female from African living and working in Bergen”. This problem was solved by having a chat with my supervisor, amend, and widen the research topic to “female migrants” from Africa living and working in Bergen.

Another obstacle was that, one of the participants refused to be audio-recorded; this means that I had to tape write all the information henceforth, some of the materials might be left. Nevertheless, another participant only responded in writing to the interviewer guide but she did not accept to be interviewed, as such, her materials not recorded here for analysis, as she did not fulfill the criteria of the study.

4.1.4 Conclusion

This chapter discussed methodological approaches used to explore the research topic. It outlined research questions, methods used for data collection and sampling strategy. It discussed how the data was analyzed, ethical considerations as well as challenges encountered during the study as well as the site where the research carried out.

CHAPTER FIVE

LABOUR INTEGRATION, CHALLENGES AND EFFORTS

5. Introduction

This chapter explores and discusses the main themes and presents the findings, which arose out of the interview process and data analysis. The key themes that emerged from data analysis from migrant' female experiences about labour integration were; native language barrier, discrimination, employment discrimination, prejudice against migrants.

Additionally, difficulties in acquiring authorization and acceptance of foreign academic credential, lack of network, poor knowledge about labour market, combining work with children care, employment and gender roles, efforts by immigrants to acquire work and achieve integration. All these themes are interconnected, and from the data analysis, it emerged that native language has an impact on all aspects of life.

5.1 Language Barrier

It is clear from the findings that mastery of native language is prerequisite for labour integration. Many of my participants especially those who migrated to Norway as adults indicated native language as an obstacle for their labour integration. This was also found by other researchers for instance, Liebig, who noted that migrants labour market integration has been a long-standing issue for the policy makers (Liebig, 2009b, p. 16), but lack of fluency in native language has alienated many migrants and left them feeling unintegrated. As Patricia, a migrant from Rwanda and employed as super market attendant explained like this: *Hindrance to get work was language, after studying the language, I got work.*

Lack of employment in Norway for many migrants was because of language barrier, as many migrants who migrate to Norway have no cultural or linguistic connections with the country from before. Fifi, a migrant from Burundi and employed as marketing manager in one of museums in Bergen acknowledged the necessity of native language as a hindrance to labour integration. She expressed her feeling in the following way:

I got problems in search of work, it was not easy to get work, I didn't know the language and Norwegians requires that we should be fluent, this has been a hindrance".

Similarly, Aalandslid noted, language barrier puts migrants from non-Scandinavian countries into disadvantaged position in relation to other migrants for instance from Sweden or Denmark, whom have linguistic and cultural connections to the Norwegians and are under the umbrella of Nordic countries (Aalandslid, 2009). As Anna, who migrated to Norway as old person and currently employed as a veterinarian in as private farm put it:

My Norwegian language was very bad and it was difficult to come into labour market because here in Norway, they use only Norwegian language.

Language barrier has been cited as the main challenge facing the migrants as most researchers have noticed for instance, according to Aalandslid noted in 2009 that “language barrier and rebuilding of social networks are some of the barriers to acquire employment” (Aalandslid, 2009). Sandra who migrated to Norway at old age had difficult with the language and she expressed it in this way:

I was less fluent in the language, you need to build a network through language training and try to find native friends.

In relation to that, almost all participants indicated that native language barrier was cited was the main obstacle into labour and carrier integration in Norway and this problem is also cited by many policy makers as an important hindrance to migrants integration into labour market as they place much emphasis on full mastery of Norwegian language (Liebig, 2009a). Eva, a migrant from Rwanda who employed as nurse, expressed her feelings about this problem of language barrier:

It was difficult for me to be exposed to Norwegians because I could not speak the language. I had to learn the language very hard and searching for work.

As noted by participants and also researchers for instance, Liebig, migrants’ lack of native language consumes a lot of state money, as the state invests large sums in language training (Liebig, 2009b, p. 10). Most of participants had no knowledge of Norwegian language prior to their arrival in Norway. They all had to start from zero to study the language and then apply for work as Sandra; a migrant from Democratic Republic of Congo explained her situation during our interview:

I was less fluent in language; you need to build a network through language training, going to school and to find native friends.

From this perspective, it is important to note that mastery of native language was a crucial factor in acquiring employment and lack of language was a barrier to gain employment as Tuna, a migrant from Somalia, employed as a waiter in a restaurant explained her feelings in this way:

I had challenges in speaking the language, yet the most important in Norway is the language.

Barriers to labour integration for many migrants in Norway was blamed on lack of mastery of native language, as Emma stressed the age aspect and the issue of not studying the native language at an early age in this way:

I went to school, I 'am a migrant, eleven years are not enough for me to learn the language because I came to Norway as an old lady, and did not get a chance to study Norwegian at kindergarten, primary or secondary. The problem is not that I cannot express myself, but when I call, they immediately know who I 'am.

As noted above, challenges in employment opportunities for some participants was because of language barriers as most of employers emphasize a complete mastery of Norwegian language. This was also assessed by Liebig on his study about labour market in Norway (Liebig, 2009a, p. 52). He found out that majority of hiring companies emphasize language fluency as most important yet many migrants especially women face this lack of full knowledge of Norwegian language. As my participants also noted about this issue of language barrier as an obstacle towards their labour integration for instance, Anna, a migrant from Southern Sudan explained her feelings:

My Norwegian language in the beginning was very bad and it was difficult to come into labour because here in Norway, they use Norwegian labour and the language is the key to everything.

As such, lack of socio-cultural skills or “social cultural milieu” (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 478) for adaptation leads to problems such as school performance or social competence. The issue of mastery of native language barrier as an obstacle cited often during interview with the participants as they hinted that it was an obstacle in their journey in search of employment and career in Norway as Patricia, a migrant from Rwanda described her situation:

I had to repeat the secondary school class because of the Norwegian language. As it is not my language, it was difficult.

During my fieldwork, I found out that those who migrated to Norway as grown up people had the same language problem as the main hindrance in the labour integration and this is quite different from others who came young or born in Norway and got a chance to attend

kindergarten or learn native language at young age. Umoja who works in church sector explained it to me during my fieldwork:

I was lucky, when I came to Norway I was ten years old, it is easier for the child to learn the language, see the norms, culture. When I came here, I learnt Norwegian language in three months”.

Similarly, Fatima who is qualified a nurse and working in elderly home migrated to Norway at young girl, had no problem of labour integration because she could speak the language very well and she explained to me in this way:

I had no challenges or expresses of any challenges in searching for work because I could speak the language well and the first work I applied, I got it.

It should indicated that young immigrants in Norway revealed to me that they had no experiences of any language barrier in search of work in perusing a career as Lidia who is employed as chief of cafeteria explained in the following way: *No problem because I ‘am young and I know the language.*

However, Jane who is employed as a cook in elderly home seemed to be different from others and show that there is no problem in getting employment except that the difference could be that the professional work is more difficult to get than unprofessional one as she expressed it in the following way:

It depends to the type of work you want. Hard labour work like working in elderly homes or driving a tax you can get it easier than a professional work and it is more difficult to get it here in Bergen.

As such, some of my participants mentioned that they face discrimination during their journey in search of employment or career.

5.2 Discrimination

Another theme that emerged as a barrier to labour integration was discrimination. Migration has its price on migrants when it comes to issue of “otherness” or negative attitudes about migrants, which leads to a difference in acculturating strategies advanced by Sam and Berry (Sam & Berry, 2010). For instance, marginalization, discrimination or exclusion in relation to work or career is a constant issue that migrants face on daily basis. Though in Norway, as Liebig noted, the state has put in place anti-discrimination policy, creating of

ombud¹ organ in charge of promoting equal opportunities and to enforce anti-discrimination law (Liebig, 2009b, p. 27).

As Fernandes noted, many immigrants and refugees in western European countries face high levels of unemployment, social exclusion and discrimination in their new societies (Fernandes, 2015, p. 246). As such, some of my informants felt that they faced discrimination as career seekers or applying for work. Emma described her experience of discrimination as a student pursuing her carrier as a kindergarten teacher in the following way:

We had an assignment to write children songs and present them in a group, but because I was not welcome in my group, I had to work alone, but the administration allowed me to write and present in French, I got grade C. I was happy because I did it alone...I had two advisors at school, they were very kind to me and God bless them. We had another assignment to go to ski in the mountain, to learn activities for children. It was part of science and physics out of school; we paid 800kr each student for accommodation, and every room, we were supposed to sleep four or five students. However, no one wanted to sleep in my room, I slept alone and the others who were supposed to sleep with me in the room, slept on the floor of other students. The male students who was the head of the group, when he heard about it, he said it was a pity and he told me that, since I was a woman, I' could not join them in their room. He was a kind student. In addition, when we had another assignment of cooking food to test us if we can cook for children in kindergarten, we all had to cook and taste each other's food. I cooked and they refused to taste my food except of that male student. He's only student who tasted my food.

Another problem expressed relates to the policy efforts to get immigrants into the labour market by offering them training. As employers have a tendency of preferring to employ migrants on short term training basis as it's beneficial to them because they receive large sums of money as subsidies from the government to training the migrants live the burden of hiring them (Liebig, 2009b). Some participants raised this issue as they expressed their frustration of lack of employment after participating in different organization, Jane; a migrant from Rwanda explained it in the following way:

I had done a lot of work training in different fields but no one offered me work, I tried to apply for work and I even asked my boyfriend to send my application because he was also looking for work and I asked him to send my application anywhere he sent his but I could not get a job.

¹ According to Oxford Dictionary: An appointed official to investigate individuals' complaints against a company or organization especially a public authority.

Another participant also experienced discriminating tendencies during her journey to acquire career or in search of work as Patricia, a migrant from Rwanda who has been living in Norway almost two decades expressed her experience about discrimination.

Your neighbors do not like you, feel they cannot live with you as a foreigner, they judge everyone as a bad person...every foreigner as bad. No contact with each other, everyone is in his or her place.

For the success of integration to take place, it should be a two way traffic, between immigrants and natives, but some view it as one sided hence domination of one group over the other which increases resentments and marginalization. When people migrate to a different culture, they bring with them their cultural values, norms and attitudes to a new culture that already has such in plenty. As they interact or acculturate, no cultural group remains unchanged during this encounter but the relationship that develops as a results or outcome of this encounter, could be one of domination or respect of each other (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 473). Interestingly, Umoja who happened to be positive about integration and she spoke for a lengthy time during interview, she felt that to integration to be successful we all have to participate. She expressed her feelings like this:

There are barriers, in a society, people think that integration goes one way, it is like, you just come to my country, you have to put effort to learn my culture, look in Norway, we do this and this, that is how it should be. You get some of these people, they are not open to know you, your culture, do not want to know what formed you the way you are...for me, integration goes both ways. If you want me to learn Norwegian society, do not impart it upon me and make me feel that I have to forget my own culture. Respect that I have also another culture; I expect that you also try to know me, to know what good and bad I can bring.

Eva employed as nurse who migrated as an adult in Norway had a similar views but explained it differently from Umoja's view:

It is difficult to fully integrate a hundred percent here because we have where we come, our culture is embedded in what we do, but we can learn from the positive things and take that. All should do their part, learn the language, get education and the society should help by giving us work.

Another participant seem to mean that during the acculturation process, there should be reciprocity or mutual respect but not domination. As Sam and Berry explained, during acculturation, "no cultural group remains unchanged following cultural contact; acculturation is a two-way interaction" (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 473). Fatima, migrated from Eretria at young age, employed as a teacher in a primary school explained it in the following way:

We all need to be open; Norwegian should open their houses and talk to people and should accept them, we as migrants learn the culture of the society we live in.

Related to that, the issue of employment discrimination as described by some participants as an obstacle into labour integration and this discussed further below.

5.4 Employment discrimination

Another factor that emerged was issue of discrimination faced by female immigrants in the labour market. Since 2003 government initiative introduction program and it came into force in 2004 (Valenta & Bunar, 2010, p. 471) with aim to improve on migrant language skills, learning of Norwegian culture, social studies and preparation for labour markets such policies have later been emphasized for all new comers into the Norwegian society. According to Hagelund, Norwegian integration policy can be termed as “social engineering” whereby the state is the main engine behind labour integration with emphasis on language to achieve social equality and cohesion in the society (Hagelund, 2002, p. 404).

However, the dilemma with the policy of social engineering is that it has not worked in sectors of employment where state control few employment agencies and others privately owned and issues of discrimination have not been fully monitored. Eva, who is employed as a nurse explained it to me in this way:

Norwegians should help us in giving us work instead of judging us beforehand, they should give migrants a chance, make it easier to attain work and they should eliminate discrimination.

Migrant women are more likely to become segregate and excluded than male counterparts despite of their participation in the language, social studies and work training. Fifi, a migrant from Burundi who has been living in Bergen almost twenty-five years described her situation.

There many requirements to obtain employment for instance, driving license, being available at any time you are needed. It is difficult, as we, women have no such driving experience.

Similarly, Umoja, migrant from Kenya at young age, described her feelings in pursuit for employment:

I had been in a lot of hiring agencies; they could call me in many places, every place I could go and work, get finished, and move to another, it was not easy to get what I wanted. I was not only hungry, but also frustrated.

The political atmosphere in most of western world for a large extent is against migration and migrants. The political rhetoric of discrimination held by people who occupy power resembles what Kabeer calls “power-over”, which signify a negative form of power by the actor or category of actors to influence the course of events. Power can also be exercised without any “explicit agency” for instance “rules and norms governing behavior” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). Some of the participants explained having encountered this form of power as they expressed it during the interview. As Emma, who migrated from Burundi as an adult, expressed it in the following way:

Norwegian leaders should change migrant politics; they are the ones to influence labour market. If you on the top and you go talking about migrant politics on television, the ones seated and watching, hearing what you say about having many migrants, or in the offices, are they welcome? Take the example of a bank, it is only Norwegians working there, some with no experience but working there yet there are migrants with a lot of experience but who have a problem of language pronunciation. They do not get that work. It is egoism because they think about themselves. If migrants get a chance to work, they master everything. However, many do not get a chance to come into labour market, those who have not been at work for a long time, they have started to forget theory, language and mix this and that.

Relating to the same topic, Fatima, who is working as a nurse, had had a similar experience of feeling unintegrated in the society though she managed to acquire work as she described her experience during interview:

I ‘am a nurse, people look down on me, asking how long I have been here, I keep explaining myself to my co-workers, even the patients I ‘am caring for. I have always to tell them whom I ‘am. Telling me that I speak the language well.

However, Jessica seemed to differ from others on issue of discrimination as she explained this point in the following way:

I applied for work in different areas, I was called in for interview but I never got it. I do not know why. However, what I know, there are many people who go through such challenges. I do not take it personally.

More so, some participants felt the problem of prejudice and this will be my next theme and explained in detail below.

5.5 Prejudice against migrants

Another theme that emerged among few of the participants is the problem of bias and prejudice against migrants in Norway and this creates a problem for many to acquire

employment. Lidia, employed as a cafeteria expressed her feelings as like this: *Norwegians are conservative people and make judgement before speaking to you.*

Another participant, Jessica, who is working as an assistant in elderly home, expressed her feelings about this problem, which she found disturbing:

Most of the time, I find that we are treated differently than Norwegians, when you are at school, you are always seen as the most damned, you have no contribution in class, no trust. They judge you before they know you, without knowing what you can contribute; you feel you are an outsider, migrant, even at school I experienced it. You work with students and they do not give you a chance to say what you have in your mind, to see what you can contribute. It leads you to feel like useless somehow.

In relation to that, some other migrants expressed the problem of prejudice related issues they experienced in their journey to acquire work or career in Norway. As Umoja, a migrant from Kenya, who is employed in church related sector, revealed to me:

I remember a leader of the group in NAVⁱ course I was participating in with other Norwegians and we were only two blacks, me and another man. The leader pointed at me and said I would be difficult to get a job because, first, you are a female, you are pregnant and your skin shows you are from Africa and here people are hesitant to employ them.

A study done by Liebig also found out that a migrant with a name which is not Norwegian has to write at least three or more applications before getting work (Liebig, 2009b, p. 66) . Fifi explained to me how she thought about this problem of discrimination:

Writing applications, I take them and knock on the door, ask to talk to the boss, he or she accepts my application and tells me that we shall inform you about the outcome. I wait and no reply. I remember another thing, one time, I got a cleaning job, and I used to see people's application forms being thrown in the garbage.

Similarly, Eva, a migrant from Rwanda, also revealed to me this problem of prejudice that migrants face in Bergen during our interview, but argued that Norwegians should change their behavior:

Norwegians need also to learn from migrants, they should develop confidence from migrants. They assess us beforehand; they should give us work and judge us from what we do.

Similarly, Patricia who is pursuing a career in nursing and is employed as a supermarket attendant argued that:

Norwegians should not judge everyone as bad, not generalize. They feel they cannot live with you as a foreigner. They should feel free to associate with us.

Notably, not all of my informants experienced the problem of prejudice or discrimination. Some had no such difficulties in career or employment and as I noticed, that been the case especially for young migrants who managed to acquire linguistic advantage skills better than older migrants who participated in this study. Fatima, one migrant from Somalia who came as a young girl to Norway, explained her experience like this:

I had no challenge in search of work. No experience of challenges because I could speak the language well and the first work I applied, I got it.

If immigrants experience discrimination or prejudice, they adopt a different acculturative strategy. According to Sam and Berry, if the immigrants experience high discrimination, they prefer separation or in the instances where the immigrants perceive to be rejected in the society of resettlement, they also reject them in return (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 479).

However, some of the young migrants did not experience prejudice or discrimination as they applied to work and received it or did not receive it because of other constraints like lack of education or qualification in relation to the existing work. They have linguistic or social capital as they grow up in Norway, which is lacking in most of elderly migrants that I interviewed during this study. For example Fatima, above and Lidia, a migrant from Liberia, expressed her experience to me:

No challenge in search of work because I graduated last year, went home in Liberia to visit my parents and when I returned I applied for work and in three days, I got work.

Henceforth, migrants' women experienced a variety of hindrances during their search for education or career in Norway; and others felt that they still have problems even after acquiring employment they felt that they are not integrated and they felt the problem of "otherness". From the analysis, one of informants seemed to be different from others and felt lack of work is not because any discrimination or prejudice as seen by other migrants who participated in this study but because of scarcity due to competition from other people from European countries. This was Tuna; a migrant from Somalia who described her feelings about labour employment like this:

It is difficult to get work because of many people from other European countries who want to work and they do any type of work, but we from Africa, we want to choose. We need to stand up and work. Norway has given us opportunities, we need to grabble them and work hard.

5.3 Difficulties in acquiring authorization and acceptance of academic credential from home countries

In relation to the above, another theme that emerged was that immigrants face severe problem of getting authorization and acceptance of their credential or pre-work experience from their countries of origin. As noted by (Aalandslid, 2009), this has hampered many to acquire employment or to get good work. Anna, a migrant from Southern Sudan who had had a career as veterinary in her home country expressed her experience in getting authorization to work as a veterinarian in Norway:

I had a challenge of getting authorization to work as a veterinarian, which is what I 'am missing. If I get authorization, I will be doing it.

Similarly, Emma, another participant from Burundi had also a similar experience of not getting her academic qualifications accepted, so in order to be admitted in university to study economics, as she had desired. She narrated her experience

I applied at Bergen university collage to study economic as I wished but I was not admitted to study economics as I wished, but I had to study education.

In short, barriers in acquiring authorizations to work in their respective fields or apply for further studies have hampered many migrants for searching further studies, some have completely given-up, and ended their pursuit for dream work or education. However, the Norwegian government since 2008 is trying to resolve this barrier by shorting time it takes to translate documents but other migrants from some countries for example, Iraq has been hindered by difficulties to receive verifiable information about documents from their previous workplaces or universities (Liebig, 2009b, p. 34).

In short, the process of attaining authorization to work in a professional field proved one of the hardest obstacle to some of my participants as the process only provide recognition of the degree level.

Related to that, some mentioned lack of relevant experience and qualification as one of major hindrance to labour integration and it is explain in details below.

5.6 Lack of relevant experience and qualifications in relation to the labour market needs

Some participants indicated that lack of labour experience as a problem, especially as it takes them many years to acquire qualifications before they begin to work and by first acquiring the relevant experience through work training to gain the knowledge and experience that desired.

It was not easy to get work in Norway because it was the first time to learn how to work in a new country, new culture and new environment.

Some researchers for instance, Liebig, indicates, that many migrants more especially women migrants lack relevant education in relation to their Norwegian counterparts (Liebig, 2009b), and this leads to problem of unemployment because existing jobs require a certain level of education which is lacking for majority female migrants. Though many of my participants are educated, they feel that they lack the necessary knowhow to work in Norwegian cultural environment as Umoja, a migrant from Kenya explained to me during interview:

The society we are living in is like a syndrome, you have to have a master degree to get work. To get work with a bachelor degree you are one of the luckiest. I have to say that school does not fit everybody, many people like to use their body, fingers and I believe that without a piece of paper or qualification, it is harder to get a job.

In relation to the above, Liebig, found that there is a problem of lack of relevant work in relation to migrants' qualification. Norway is one of the countries with few low-skilled labour as they lack industries in relation to other OECD² countries (Liebig, 2009b, p. 45). Some migrants, more specifically female lack or have low levels educational background in relation to their Norwegian counterparts. As Dona, explained her experience of lack of education and how it took her a long time to reach her career goal in the public health sector in Norway:

It took me long time to get school and after getting it, it took me almost five years to acquire a career as public health worker.

Thus, lack of educational background hinders migrants to acquire work in short term, as they have to apply for school here in Norway in order to attain a desirable level of education.

In addition to above, some immigrants especially those who migrated as adults face a problem of network connection with natives much more than youth as explained in the next section.

² Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

5.7 Lack of network and poor knowledge about labour market

In relation to the above, another theme that emerged was that majority of my participants face problems of lacking networks with native Norwegians. This creates problems for getting employment as they lack information about existing jobs as they only have networks between themselves and their communities. This problem was also emphasized by Liebig as one of hindrance to migrants' employment as many vacancies in Norway are done in informal way (Liebig, 2009b). Some participants also raised lack of network as a problem during this study for instance Sandra, a migrant from Democratic republic of Congo described.

I lacked network. You need to build a network through language training, going to school and try to find native friends.

A similar view about problem of network was explained by Fifi who work as a purchasing manager in one of museum in Bergen and she put it this way:

Norwegians themselves should accept us, know that we are visitors in their country, and know that we are from another culture. We should get access to be with them and come in touch with them. If we try to come close them to them, they should accept us.

Still, challenges faced by some female had to do with combining paid work with caring for children as it burden to them since the lack extended families to help them.

5.8 combining work with childcare

Another theme that emerged was one related to combining work with caring for children. It is of essence to note that most of my study participants migrated as wives, some got married in Norway, or some are divorced women and have children but without any other extended family member and this makes it difficult to combine work with caring for children. Berry defined of acculturation stress "as the individuals experience change events in their lives that challenge their cultural understanding about how to live" (Berry, 2006).

This is related to the situation faced by working women is due to cultural change because of migration. They experience new culture like combining work, career and childcare, which most of migrants find disturbing and difficult to comprehend as Umoja, a divorced migrant from Kenya described her experience like this:

A lot of challenges, you have to be everywhere at the same time, to be at work seven and half-hours a day. It does not work for me because I have to get early to pick children at kindergarten and school, so it is a challenge...I sometimes have to ask to leave early on this and this day to get children, sometimes their father helps to pick them. However, I think of these with children and do not have any one to help them; they are stuck in economic poverty because they have children and cannot work full time.

Though my informants are all working, they experienced socio-cultural change because in their countries of origin, some have relatives who offers a helping hand to take care of children or others could afford to pay for a nanny, face a great share of burden, combining work, career and family something that most of them are not used to do. Those who have managed to do it find themselves in much stress and others feel they cannot comprehend with the stress. As Eva, a migrant from Rwanda described her situation during interview:

It is difficult to work while you have children, I do not have extended family, so I do everything alone. No grandmother, children do not gain experience from extended family, I care for my own children, children get confused because of experience with Norwegians and it is difficult to integrate.

A similarly view was explained by Patricia, who also expressed the problem of combining career, family and work as one of the difficulties as she misses her extended families to offer a helping hand:

Combining school, house and work, it is not easy. I have to cook for children, help them with assignment and care and it is difficult.

Emma, who is divorced, formulated the problem in the following way:

For my part, there has not been problems to get work but the problem is that I am single with children, sometimes they call me to go to work when it does not suit my schedule with the children. This feeling of being over burdened by family obligations and being employed or studying requires a lot of energy especially for single mothers with children and lacking any family member to offer a helping hand.

As noted Sam and Berry, acculturation stress explain how people adapt to socio-cultural change. If certain individuals fails to adapt in major life events for instance, migrating to a new culture, these events may posse challenges to individuals and provoke stress (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 474).

In nutshell, some female migrants who are married and have children felt that they have stress in combining work, education and caring for children and they see it as different from their culture of origin where women are used to be home taking care of children and domestic work while men are working outside and bring money at home.

5.9 Employment and gender norms

Some participant acknowledged the challenges to attain employment as most of them had migrated as wives, sisters or family member but not as labour migrants. As noted by Kofman,

majority of women who migrated within the frames of family relations (Kofman, 2004), and also Liebig noted that some of the women come from societies where women employment is lower in relation to Norway where women employment is high (Liebig, 2009b, p. 48).

This is indicated by some of my participants who migrated as wives or daughters or with relatives. If one is to analyze this disparity between men and women in employment, one has to look at cultural rules that constraint women, as wives, caring for children or being a homemaker. These may hinder women to work outside their families even after migration.

As noted by Hagelund, “young women are both heroes and victims in these stores, that all revolve around dichotomies of traditional vs modernity, force vs freedom, family vs individual and foreign vs Norwegian values” (Hagelund, 2005, p. 671). The cultural rules that constrain women to participate in labour market cannot be taken away by such rhetoric of tradition vs modernity but by engaging both men and women who make such rules. As Emma, one of participant, a migrant from Burundi put it:

I have experience in my home country, most women are not educated and they are not active to find something to do to get money to contribute at home. Here in Europe, women who have no physical problems go to work, they try to get money in order not to be oppressed at home...in my home country, women sit, they know that the husband is out working, bring money at home. Culture is not all developed in a good way because they want things to be that way, though there are other women in my country who go work, but they have to come back during lunchtime to check on children or if things are in order and go back to work or school.

In relation to the above, many female migrants come from cultures where female are not used to work outside the home yard and because of such cultural tendencies they find it cumbersome to start to find work or career, as they lack such knowledge in the culture of the host societies. Fatima a migrant from Somalia explained it like this:

In Somalia, few girls go to school and very few at higher learning. They are mostly home with children, work a lot at home, and are not allowed to work outside.

This becomes problematic even after their migration though they have started to learn from Norwegian female and see that women in other societies can work and can have a career without any hindrance as Fatima acknowledge during interview:

“Here in Norway, women work as men, do the same work. I see women driving buses, trucks, and men working in elderly homes or kindergarten. It is not possible in Somalia”.

In short, cultural practices that forbids women to work for money or go to school to attain a career constrains them, as they are under the supervision of a male husband, father or brother, these are some of the challenges they need to overcome to acquire employment, career or both. Despite the challenges, all of participants managed to acquire work and achieve integration as explained in the next theme.

5.1.0 Efforts by immigrants to acquire work and achieve integration

Despite of the fact that many of my study participants had difficulties in acquiring employment, they managed to get it and felt as more integrated into Norwegian society than those who are unemployed. They strived to acquire requirements that are likely to enable them to integrate. The most important factor that emerged was efforts to learn Norwegian language and to speak it at work with native speakers. This related to Sam and Berry's acculturative strategy that focuses on immigrants' strive to integrate and adapt in a new culture (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 478).

Some of participants indicated that they had to study the language and social studies first before applying for work. It was emphasized during interview that in Norway, mastery of language go hand in hand with labour integration or acquiring employment or career as it was indicated by some participants and which is also argued about by the policy makers here in the country as a means to enable migrants to succeed in labour integration (Hagelund, 2002, p. 408). As Sandra, one of participant described her journey to labour integration:

I started by going to study the Norwegian language because I realized that everything here is about their language. First work was through NAV³ work training in a supermarket, where I developed a career and I managed to get work in supermarket because I spoke the language and everything is about Norwegian language.

Similarly, Fatima described how she managed to acquire employment because she put much effort to learn the Norwegian language or social capital.

I got my first work through Bergen Municipality to work in an elderly home. I say that the key factor to my acquiring work was that I could speak the language well. Norwegian language is the key to attainment of work.

More to that, Dona, a migrant from Democratic Republic of Congo who has been living in Norway for over a decade described her contribution to integrate herself into labour market:

³ Norwegian Labour and welfare administration.

I went to school to study Norwegian language, participated in language and work related training, found native friends, joined high school and found work.

All participant acknowledged that work was an important aspect in their lives and they had to learn the language as the prerequisite for labour integration or carrier acquisition in Norway. Eva, a migrant from Rwanda and one of the participant explained to me during our interview what she did to get a career as a nurse and integrate herself into labour market:

I learnt the language, went to school and participated in the work training. I have been with Norwegians in their national holidays as 17th May constitutional day celebration and I take my children in such celebrations to learn them the importance of Norwegian culture.

Some of my informants particularly female has benefited in various organization funded by the state to provide work training and many have been employed via such organization like Man-power, Back to Business⁴ or A2G⁵ which are funded by Bergen municipality as Fatima who participated in this program funded by the Bergen Municipality, explained to me during interview:

I got my first work through Bergen commune; they wanted a summer worker in one of their elderly homes. I applied and later I was called for interview.

Most of the participants revealed that they failed to get work on their own and they had to get intervention from the municipality, Dona, a migrant from democratic republic of Congo explained her experience like this:

It was difficult at first to get work; I tried different areas without success, later got help from NAV. I got work through NAV on work training and I started as a temporary worker, later I got permanent work.

Majority revealed to me to have work through interventions from municipality of Bergen as it was not possible to access work on their own. Sandra, a migrant from Democratic republic of Congo expressed her feelings about searching for work:

The first work was through NAV work training in supermarket, where I developed a carrier and now own supermarket.

Many participants indicated to have their work through NAV, as it was difficult to get it on their own as Jessica, a participant in this study explained her experience during interview:

⁴ Employment agency

I got work through employment offices with the help of NAV. I had applied for financial assistance in NAV social office and they told me that I could not get free money. They sent me to work for three months, later; I managed to retain that work until now.

Many of my informants believe that this principle of mastery of Norwegian language has led them to be stuck in lower jobs as some have not succeeded to get into higher education which could offer them better work. Again, because of language barrier these, who have succeeded to acquire higher education, feel that lack of language fluency has hindered them to attain their dream jobs. Eva described how she got her first work during our interview:

I had to study the language, tried to speak with other people who knew Norwegian language in order to be fluent in communication. I got my first work in summer work as a tourist guide in town because I could also speak German and French.

However, speaking about other migrants, she had also seen an unwillingness on part of some migrants to integrate:

Many young women choose to remain out of Norwegian society for instance, refuse to study the language, choose to have many children and intentionally refuse to participate in work related training. This is totally choosing to remain unintegrated.

This analogy concurs with Sam and Berry's separation strategy in acculturation theory where some individuals decide to uphold to their original culture and avoid interaction with the larger members of the society (Sam & Berry, 2010). Such strategy has repercussions on the individuals, who use it, as they remain unintegrated into labour market because they cannot read or write Norwegian language.

5.1.1 Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to underscore the findings that emerged on the experience female employment as a tool to integration for female migrants living and working in Norway. In addition, the challenges faced by the female in search of employment and career in Norway.

Despite of the challenges to acquire employment, the immigrants levels of employment has remained relatively stable in the recent years (Liebig, 2009b). The government has done much effort to integrate immigrant into labour market mostly by funding for their language courses and paying for the work training. However, as findings indicated, some immigrants'

especially young ones indicated to feel more integrated than the adult people did. Moreover, Sam and Berry noted that people might have different experience during acculturation (Sam & Berry, 2010), as some feel more integrated, others, marginalized while others reject or feel rejected by majority population.

CHAPTER SIX

EMPLOYMENT, EMPOWERMENT, GENDER ROLES, SOCIALISATION AND RESPECT

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings and themes that emerged about employment as empowering female working migrants. Some of the major themes emerged were access to resources, employment and respect, employment and domestic decision-making. Further, I look into employment and change of gender roles, employment and socializing, and the issues of remittances, expectations and obligations.

The objective is to explore experiences on whether and how employment has empowered female working migrants and improved their lives and lives of their families. The term employment can be defined as “work activity or job attachment during a specified calendar week and that included part-time work regardless of numbers of hours they worked or the reason they worked part time”(Stein, 1967, p. 2). According to Peterson’s definition of work it is “purposeful mental, physical or combined mental-physical activity that produces something economic value and may produce a service to others as well as a material product” (Peterson & González, 2000, p. 3).

Kabeer defined empowerment as “process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 435). There are many dimensions of empowerment but I choose to focus on Kabeer’s three interrelated dimension such resources, agency and achievements. Resources includes among other things, human, economic and social resources to enhance ability to exercise power through various domains such as market, family or community institutions of the society (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). Agency can have positive and negative implications, positively, it implies people’s ability to determine their own choices and seek own goals. Power over reflect the negative side of agency which entails the capacity of the actor or actors to override the agency of others through the use of force or threat (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438).

Achievements include among other things “ways of being and doing which are realized by different individuals” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). Here, the ability to achieve desired goals is not constrained by power but rather through individuals’ ability through preferences and priorities and failure attributed to laziness or incompetence. Employment as an empowering tool from the above dimensions such as agency, resources and achievements, are related to positive themes that emerged during collection and analysis of data for instance, socialization, income, identity, decision-making, domestic roles, independence and being part of community. The negative themes included language barrier, lack of social capital or network, socio-cultural change.

Similarly to that, in Varghese article about women empowerment, she indicated that “empowerment is enlightenment and that there’s no development without enlightenment; it is the quality of life measured not in terms of rising money incomes or longer life spans alone, rather by the autonomy and security enjoyed by women everywhere” (Varghese, 2012, p. 52). This could be related to what Kabeer calls “power to” which is a positive sense of power which means the people’s ability to define their own life and choose their goals (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438).

6.2 Access to resource and increased power

One of the important themes that emerged was access to resources. Many of the participants indicated that increased ability to access resources through labour participation was important. One should note that these women come from cultural background where males normally control financial or other resources and where women are often denied access to such resources (Lutz, 2010, p. 1648). Similar to the dimension of power this is “power over” as a negative form of power where some actors has capacity to override the agency of others (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438).

Agency or positive form of power, which is “power to” is the ability for individual to “determine their goals and act upon them” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). Hence, their access to employment opportunities has enabled to gain such power to claim resources or to achieve the ability to determine their goals as which is Fifi highlighted:

It is an honor for me as a woman to think about going to work tomorrow, to have a timetable for this and that. Importantly, to have something to do as a woman and helping and solving problem for my extended family in Burundi.

Empowerment entails an expansion of one's abilities to make strategic life choices (Kabeer, 1999) and Sandra explained to me during our interview how she felt as being empowered with her working:

Participating in labour market has helped me to bring some of my family members to Norway to visit and helped to improve bargaining power with my husband.

“Power within” is related to “observable action or the ability to define one's goal and act upon them” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). Power within which encompasses meaning, motivation and purpose. As such, from my empirical findings, some women for instance, Tuna a migrant from Somalia, described her feelings about labour participation:

I feel independent, pay my bills, I 'am strong, no man to provide everything. If I get one, I have to contribute and we work together.

As noted by Sen and quoted by Kabeer, resources and agency constitute “capabilities which refers to the potential for the people have for living the lives they want” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). As Emma who employed as a kindergarten teacher, described her feelings about how she' empowered by having work:

To get work, as a woman is important because you take care of yourself, you get what you want. I myself like good things, I feel ok...you get money; you support yourself without going to social office to ask for assistance.

The ability to determine one's own goals or one's life is expressed by some participants. One should also note that most of my participants migrated from patriarchal societies where men have the upper hand in decision-making. This is related to ‘power over’ by Kabeer as negative power which the “capacity of the actor to override the agency of others through force or violence” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). Jessica, one of the participant, a migrant from Rwanda, expressed her feelings about being empowered with her work as assistant in elderly home and pursuing her carrier as a nurse:

I thank God, we are in Norway, in my country, if you have no work, and you can become a prostitute just to put food on the table. I can pay my food, I 'am economically independent, I can pay my bills without going to social office for assistance.

6.3 Employment, respect and improvement of living conditions.

Another important theme emerged from the interview was related to identity issues. According to Peterson and Gonzalez, work, enhance self-regard and helps a person to adjust

to society. people in all cultures work but peoples valuing of and motivation for work reflect the nature of a culture at a given time (Peterson & González, 2000, p. 34). According to Varghese, Women empowerment as an “active and multi-dimensional process, which enables women to realize their potential and powers in all spheres” (Varghese, 2012, p. 52).

Also expressed this; by Fama a migrant from Eretria, a participant in this study described her feelings about having work like this:

Work has helped me to be independent, making my own money, I do not stress my family about money and it has helped me to stand on my own feet since I was a teenager.

Similarly, Jane a migrant from Rwanda and employed as a cook in one of elderly home described how she felt as employed and how it has enabled her to stand on her own:

Work in Norway helped me, my family for example when my sister was getting married, I sent her money for the wedding, and I paid for my father when he was having treatment in India. I also contributed for the wedding of my brother, to pay school fees for my siblings. It is true, work has given a voice because I pay my bills and I participate at home. Therefore, I have more respect because I work. If a woman is not working to earn money, she is not happy and her husband undermines her. Therefore, work gives me respect and I assist my husband.

They believe that the situation would be different if they had no jobs, but they also acknowledge the difference here and their home countries, that if you are not working here, you get unemployment benefits, which is not the same in their countries of origin. As Jessica, a migrant from Rwanda and one of the participants pointed out this during our interview:

I thank God we are in Norway, in my country, if you have no work, you can become a prostitute to put food on the table. Here, working, I can pay my food, I feel I' am independent.

That is also related to Kabeer's concept of capabilities in terms of empowerment as “the potential that people have for living the lives they want, of achieving valued ways of being and doing” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). Lidia a participant, also a migrant from Liberia and works in a cafeteria, expressed the feeling of work as enabling her to realize her capabilities like this:

It has made me a more of strong woman, not relying on anyone, do my own things. I have lost the African mentality of waiting for the man to cater for me. I feel, even if I go back in Africa, I have to look for work and take care of myself, work, do my things. If someone comes, he will not change me. I 'am more independent but I 'am not a feminist.

Some spoke about having work and they believe that the situation would be different if they had no work, but also they acknowledged that there is a difference here in Norway and where they come from. Dona, one of the participant and a migrant from Congo explained this point as:

In Norway, people without work, they get everything from the state”...but in my country of origin, they don’t provide unemployment benefit. Each person is on her or his own.

Women’s economic participation as a means of empowerment is difficult to assess as they focus on different dimensions of power. Patricia, a participant in this study seemed to differ from others as she discussed her employment opportunities as a woman and she explained that:

I do not associate work or employment with gender, in general, to work and a husband works, you develop your home, you have money, good economy, you can plan and everyday life becomes easy. You can afford a better house, better living standard and enjoy.

This is in line with Kabeer as she indicated, “dimensions of empowerment differ in the way they prefer to treat power as either an attribute of individual or property of structures” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 442). However, some think that attaining employment have certainly improved their status as female. For instance, Lidia, a young participant explained her feeling about employment in the following way:

Work has made me more of a strong woman, no relying on anyone; I do not have African mentality of waiting for the man to take care of me.

Patricia and Lidia both explained their labour participation as empowering. They still seem to differ and this could be because of age and marital statuses where Patricia is married and migrated to Norway as adult while Lidia is single and young.

6.4 Employment and domestic decision-making

Another theme that was also important was domestic decision-making. Access to employment opportunities has positive impact for the female workers also in this regard. When women have less or no say at all, and have no control over the resources, the key sources of power are in hands of husband, father or brother. Measures to ensure that women have access to such resources can be increased education, elimination of gender bias in employment sector or improving women status in the family. For my informants, their labour participation has had positive outcome for domestic-decision making or what Kabeer termed as “agency or power within or power to” which is the meaning, motivation and purpose which individuals bring to their activity” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438).

Dona, who is employed in one of the elderly homes in Bergen, explained how employment has empowered her domestically in the following way:

It has empowered me economically. I have a say at home, I get money to pay bills and help my children.

There is no doubt that if one is considering empowering women, should not ignore economic power that enables them to stand on their own. Employment opportunities for these female migrants have increased their agency in decision- making like where to buy a house, when and where to take vacations and they believe that the situation would be different if they were unemployed. As Emma, a migrant from Burundi described it to me:

This work has helped me a lot, I took a credit in the bank to help a relative back home, and I if I pay back, will get a loan to buy a house.

As expected, access to employment opportunities has positive impact for the female workers. Decision-making is one element of happiness in life. Employment has potential to improve women’s agency or decision-making , which is defined by Kabeer as the “ability to define one’s goals and act upon them” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). Resources and agency enable them to live a life they desire and act upon it, as the findings shows, decision-making was much easier as participants mentioned because they were employed Lidia, a single migrant from Liberia, explained her feelings in the following way:

I do not rely on anyone, I do my own things, and I have lost the African mentality of waiting for the man to cater for me. I feel even if I go back to Africa, I have to look for work and take care of myself, work and do my things...if someone comes, he will not change me.

Some of participants heightened this dimension of power or agency, as an ability to determine one's own life strategies. Also related to what explained by Fatima, a migrant from Somalia during our interview explained it like this:

since I' am not yet married, I take care of myself, pay my bills, food on the table and also help my mother who is in Africa, help my grandparents and a few of my extended family.

It is evident that employment has empowered and improved women migrants' lives and enabled them to bargain or take joint decision-making with their male counterparts on a range of issues for instance where to live and what type of house to buy or how and when to use households' income. The important issue is the advantage they gained in discussion with their partners and make a common decision on where and how the money is used. As the saying goes, "he who has gold makes rules". Fifi explained it to me in the following way:

To work and earn money for my family and I assist to ease burden on my partner. It is an honor for me as a woman, to think about going to work tomorrow. Nevertheless, importantly, work helped me as a woman to bargain with my husband".

Interestingly almost all participants revealed to me that employment is a key component for women empowerment as they become more involved in family decision-making matters for instance in economy of the family. If women are economically relying to their husbands, they do not have any say in economic affairs of the family. Sandra a migrant from Democratic Republic of Congo, who has been living in Norway for over three decades and who is in a private sector, expressed her feelings about how employment has made her to contribute in the financial affairs of the family:

Though I had a say before I migrated to Norway, I feel more empowered here in Norway and working than in my home country. It has helped to improve on bargaining power with my husband, in deciding where money should go, where to go for the holidays and whom to help in extended family.

The decision-making, power to, or capacity to live a life one desires without being coerced is one of the important theme emerged during interview and all participants have expressed it as central to their perception of empowerment because their labour employment as. Tuna a migrant from Somalia who has been living in Norway for the last fifteen years described her experience:

I feel independent, pay for my food, bills, I 'am strong, no man to provide everything....if I get one, I have to contribute and we work together.

Access to economic resources enables women to take strategic decisions concerning their lives and lives of their families. Employment is enhancing the power of female workers and giving them ability to determine their goals and act upon them. As mentioned before, employment opportunities had positive transformation of their lives and lives of those around them especially their families, was central to some of the participants for instance, Fatima, migrant from Somalia stressed the freedom to avoid early marriage as an advantage:

Since I started to work, I have a new life. Employment has developed me as an individual and given me opportunities of being independent. If I was in my home country, I could have been married by now.

Employment as enhancing female workers with capabilities or potential to have a life one desires was one of central theme during our interviews with participants. Tuna who is single mother with one child, from Somalia described how she felt empowered from being employed:

I feel independent, pay my food and bills. I 'am strong, no man to provide everything. If I get one, I have to contribute and we work together. Employment has helped my family and me; I help my son, my mother in Somalia and extended family.

According to Kabeer the meaning of agency is “more than observable action; encompassing the meaning, motivation and purpose which individuals bring to their activity” or “power within” (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438). It examines the motivations, strength and internal confidence for women to achieve their goals in face of all obstacles, for instance male domination, bias or discrimination in the society. Eva, one of the participants also a migrant from Rwanda, described how crucial she feel that work is for her self-worth:

Employment is an empowerment for the development of children. You become a role model of the children and the family altogether. It helped me to stand on my own, support myself, my family. I feel I have value for my family; and me I' am not a burden economically to anyone. No women empowerment if you are not participating economically.

As noted by Forde, this equality is expressed in the egalitarian values and welfare state policies which is positive for the welfare of Norwegian women, by involving in the family economic affairs hence reducing the economic and political gap between men and women (Forde & Hernes, 1988).

In nutshell, my participants' employment opportunities facilitated them with economic as well as social status and improved their wellbeing of themselves and their families something, which they could not have if they were unemployed.

6.5 Employment and change of gender roles

Interestingly, another theme that emerged was change of gender roles due to access to employment opportunities. One positive impact for the female living and working in Norway was sharing of domestic work between husband and wife. Men working outside and possess monopoly over economy and women work at home and men do not participate in domestic work like cooking, cleaning the house or child rearing as Umoja, a migrant from Kenya who has been living in Norway for almost three decades described views from her home country in the following way:

In Kenya, female looked at as a dependent to a man. It is the man who has power to influence the household...It is the man who have to work and bring the bacon, you as a woman you have to sit, take care of children, home, wash clothes, cook and serve food everything. Then, I come from a small village where men think they control the village and the household, but the reality is, most of them are lazy just sitting under the tree.

The opportunity to have access to resources enables women to have a balance of power between themselves and their partners in sharing domestic work, while lack of the resources puts them at extreme disadvantaged as men claim to be the ones who bring money at home hence refusing to participate in domestic work. However, some participants revealed to me, that they see gender roles as quite different here in Norway in relation to where they come from. Umoja explained in these words:

Very different, a lot of equality. I still cannot image a person sitting inside the house waiting for a man who went in the morning, carry the load by himself. Economically, here it is almost close to impossible, in Kenya for example, things are cheaper, house rent, and you do not have to own a car, there are public transport means, which are cheaper. In Kenya, the public has laid down that it is the male to go out and work, come with money, and a woman sit down, take care of children and the house. Here in Norway, it is expensive, you realize you cannot manage to buy or have a good living for a long time. The difference is that women here are encouraged to go work and make their own money, you do not have to depend on the husband, and it is equal in one way or another.

Umoja, during our interview, on the question if her experience of gender roles has changed due to her migration to Norway, she responded in the following way:

Yes, I think it has, I remember my mother, she is a bit modern but she used not to push. She still carries the traditional "he is a man, head of the house"... I say really, I cannot imagine that you go carry your family on your back for entire life and you still say he is the head of the family, chief of the house! However, when I came to Norway, I realized me as a girl, there is nothing that can push me back just because of my gender. In addition, seeing when I came to Norway, the prime minister at that time was a female called Gro Brundtland, for us it was a shock; even a woman can be a prime minister, a leader, it was a challenge, it was exiting. It shows that we should not hang on to traditions.

Gender inequalities in most of sub Saharan Africa signal oppression of women by men. Many of informants indicated that their labour participation has changed the stereotype mentality against women as Fatima; a migrant from Somalia explained:

In Somalia, few girls go to school and very few go to higher education, they are mostly home with children. Men go to café center with their friends, do nothing at home. Men work outside and women work at home, from morning to night. Women work a lot at home and not allowed to work outside. Here in Norway, women and men do the same work.

As noted by Gaye and Shreyasi, 2011, it is difficult to assess empowerment through migration, (Gaye & Shreyasi, 2011, p. 59), nevertheless, my participants believe that their migration to Norway has influenced some female migrants in their perception about gender roles and most believe that it is different from their cultural origin as Fatima described it:

My migration to Norway have influenced my gender roles. I know if I get married, I have to look for someone with whom I can agree on certain things like domestic work. I will not accept to work alone at home. He also has to participate, we should help each other, here it is different, and men work at home, as women do, maybe not so good like women, but they help at home. Men take care of children, feed them and play with them.

Moreover, many of my informants migrated to Norway as refugees or with family connections, but their lives have changed since they migrated to Norway because in Norway, there is equality between men and women. In addition, this has influenced their perceptions about gender roles as they used to know them from their countries of origin as Dona; a migrant from Democratic republic of Congo described it:

In Congo, women cook better than men do, but men do other type of work like trade, bring money at home. Men do nothing at home, but if they have money, they pay a house helper to assist with domestic work. Migration has made it easier for me to see that men in other countries do work at home as well as their work places. My future husband has to behave like men here in Norway. He has to assist at home, not only going out with friends or sitting on the sofa and waiting for me to cook. He has to do something at home.

It very clear that though, women having work gives them control or bargaining powers over economic resources as is an added advantage to them; however, their migration to Norway has been positive in their perception about gender roles and they believe that it is different from their cultural background. Eva, a migrant from Rwanda described it like this:

Economically, we do things together, working together, equal decision-making on money, without money, you become a burden to a man and you have no freedom.... In my culture of origin, a man work outside, sometimes far away, spend a lot of time, no connection with children. Mothers take care of children alone, and it could be better working together. If you are not working together, no one knows what the other person is going through with taking care of children alone. Here in Norway, we all do the same; working and caring for the children, participate in economy and society...that is the difference between modern society and developing countries. Here, everything is connected with the economy and caring for the children, it is positive for all parents to work together. Here, if a woman is pregnant, a man helps her with home activities, which is not the case where I come from.

Women have freedom of expression and have right to choose hence their migration was a positive step to empowerment as they accessed freedom to choice which they thought did not exist in their countries of origin. However, Eva, she surprised me when she commented that:

Women here are too independent, which leads to a lot of divorce because women can do a lot alone, just as she would do without a man. She can drive, work, and take care of children....there's too much divorce because they think too much about equality and lack to work together. If they all work together, relationship lasts longer.

Fame, who migrated young in Norway, she explained that her experience of gender roles from her country of origin is quite different to here in Norway and this influence does not matter if one is employed or not.

In my country of origin, a woman is in the kitchen; take care of children, some work outside but they also have to work at home. Men go to work outside home, but they do nothing at home. Gender roles are different here in Norway and my home country. As a woman, I think we should do the same work like men. My gender roles are not influenced by migration because I do not have an experience from my culture of origin as I came to Norway young, but maybe it is because I 'am in the western world and educated.

In relation to that, though these women come from different countries on the African continent, their account of gender roles in their culture of origin seem to be similar in one way or the other and their experience of gender roles in Norway is almost the same.

Jane, a migrant from Rwanda, explained her experience of gender roles in her country of origin and how different it is in Norway:

In my culture of origin, men naturally do nothing, but also women do a lot if you have money you can hire a house helper to clean the house, cook etc. nevertheless, if your poor, a woman does everything. Men do not work at home; they go out to look for money. However, it is changing today some are working together. For me, I have no children, nevertheless, I get home tired, sometimes, and it is hard to do work at home. Anyone who is working for long hours needs to find food on the table, a clean house. However, it is not the case, so I do it.

More participants indicated that gender roles are quite different here in Norway in relation to their experiences in their cultures of origin as Lidia, a migrant from Liberia described it me:

No men are working here, but before, I was working in kitchen with many men. That work was more masculine than this one. Here in Norway, it is ok because all are paid equally. We from Africa we have perception that a woman work at home and men outside. I love it here in Norway; we all have been used with the culture of working together. I have changed by being more independent, if I go back to my culture, I have to do my things. Be more independent.

Still, the participant explained to me that gender roles have positively changed in relation to their experiences in their culture of origin even without being employed. Jessica, a migrant from Rwanda expressed her feelings about gender roles like this:

When you are a girl, you are home, wake up clean the house and wash clothes. Brothers or father is outside working. I heard it has changed now, but that is what we used to do. It different here, I do men work because in Africa, it is the man to go and look for money, here; I do both...look for money and do work at home. I 'am now a man as well as a woman. Hahahaha, gender roles are different here in Norway from my culture. I find here that a woman can do everything. Because you have to do everything to survive. You have to do the same to be included in the society.

Patricia, who migrant with her husband from Rwanda described her experience of gender roles in her country of origin in relation to experience here in Norway:

When we reached here, we agreed to work together; we had to share at any cost. What changed is that when I 'am working, he has to cook for the children. He cannot wait for me. However, other work has to wait for me at any cost, in general, we agree for things to go well. What really changed here in Norway is that he knows that cooking is also his responsibility. In my culture of origin, women cook, take care of children and clean the house and men work outside.

Experiences of gender roles have changed for some women, women participation in labour has ultimately changed their perception of gender roles, and male bias towards women has changed as Tuna, a migrant from Somalia revealed to me during interview:

In my country of origin, a woman work home and a man outside, women wash clothes, cook food, take care of children and they look as slaves. Men, if not working, they are out with friends. Here, it is not like that, men here cook and take care of children. Most times, I do cook but I do it because of respect, but in my country, respect is like tradition. Here, there is equality, but some do not follow it. However, when we come to Norway, we can show that we can also do something. However, no change because I work, I need someone to respect me, I respect him and we respect each other. Not sitting down and expect me to work for him.

It was only one of the informants who indicated that gender roles have not changed in relation to their experiences culture of origin. Anna, a migrant from Southern Sudan who came on family reunification with her husband, and who used to work in a male dominated career in her home country, described her experience of gender roles in the following way:

In my own culture, women do not do heavy stuff, which men do. Nevertheless, what I have seen here, women are doing everything men do and it comes to me that the work I was doing was the same work, women and men are doing. Cultural perception about female is changing as the world is changing. People are realizing that the work, men can do, women can do it too. I have seen in my country that women are doing things men used to do when I was a teenager. However, working here did not influence my gender roles because I used to work in slaughter slab, it is difficult there as a woman but I worked. I used to wake up early in the morning and go to work with men. We were all slaughtering. I just believe in myself.

Another theme that came up in the interview with one participant was the role of the Norwegian state in family affairs and she indicated that this gives women in relative freedom in relation to her country of origin whether employed or unemployed. As Dona, one of the participant, a migrant from Democratic Republic of Congo who has been living in Norway for almost one decade had this to say:

In Norway, if you are not working, the state helps you, but in my country, it is not like that. Because of state involvement in family affairs, it helps women to earn respect here in Norway.

In general, gender roles in Norway are quite different from their countries of origin. Degree of participation between men and women in Norway may differ but they perform domestic work like childcare or cooking food as well as both performing their duties in their respective work places. Gender roles in some of African countries seem to differ from Norway explained by my participants.

6.6 Employment and socializing

According to Blustein, work, in addition of being a source of income to many individuals' lives, is also considered as social role in which people interact with broader political, economic and a social context that frame their lives (Blustein, 2008, p. 230). A couple of participants indicated that work enabled to acquire agency, which, defined by Kabeer as an ability to make strategic life choices (Kabeer, 1999).

Work plays a central role in women's integration into Norwegian society as they feel as part of the border community. Large percentage of participants acknowledged that it is much easier to create a social network with Norwegians, socialize and communicate with Norwegians while at work than outside. This was also indicated by Jolanki in her article "When you are working, you get a network connection" (Jolanki, 2015, p. 270). Though my study participants experienced hardships like language barrier, lack of network with native population or discrimination to mention a few, in search of employment and career, they nevertheless got employment and their lives seem to have positively changed. As Tuna, who employed as a waiter in one of restaurants in Bergen city explained in this the following way:

Work is important, you meet many Norwegians, you be together in social activities for instance you arrange to have a cup of coffee, have a party together not only at work, but also in other occasions.

It is important to note that according to the findings, all fourteen informants indicated a positive motivation to work also due to the relationships developed with their colleagues. They thought that their employment has lead them to integrate better into Norwegian society than those who are unemployed. Fatima, employed as nurse explained it this way:

I 'am part of the community, labour participation has enabled me to socialize with my workmates. If I was in my home country, I could be home taking care of children and nothing else.

They indicated that it is much easier to get native friends when one is working or studying with those who are unemployed or those who are not studying. Fifi, a migrant from Burundi who has been living in Norway for over two decades described her experience about having work in this way:

Work, it opens many doors because work enables you to know people, because here in Norway, if you do not meet people at work and greet each other, when you meet on the street, they do know you. Therefore, work helps you to meet others and it helps you to know others and get friends.

Social capital is important in society as it connects you to different actors and social capital is paramount to have access to employment opportunities. Getting a job is often done through informal network of friends, and lack of such network may lead to unemployment, Umoja described this as follows:

My friend called me and said that they have a project they are doing in the church sector about (HIV⁶), I could use my experience in the project and I joined. That is how I got my work.

Emma who is working in one of kindergartens explained a similar experience about informal connections in attaining employment in the following way:

It was through student association in Bergen kindergarten where my son went that I managed to meet some workers there who helped to get work. They got me work in another kindergarten, as it was not allowed to work in the same kindergarten I have a child inn.

Work enable one to interact with the Norwegians and interact with them, they invite you on social occasions like Christmas parties organized at workplace or invite you on constitutional day celebration of 17th may. You can only know Norwegians when you work with them for some time as Fatima, argues that:

Through work, you gain knowledge in what people here do, say and learn their culture. Work is also a way to integration into Norwegian society; you get friends, chat with them at work, arrange food party and cook together, it gives friendship, sharing of traditional food at work especially during Christmas season, we eat together Norwegian traditional food "lamb ribs".

People working enjoy such opportunities and if you are not in working environment, it is hard to access native social network. Most of the informants acknowledged that Norwegians are reserved people; it is difficult to get along them when they do not know you and you can only really get to know them when you are working or studying with them. This is how Dona who is working in elderly home, a migrant from Democratic Republic of Congo who has been living in Norway for almost thirty years described her experience:

Work is way for integration into Norwegian society. Communication with Norwegians is easier at work than outside, if you are not working; it is difficult to be exposed to them. Work and career is a goal to integration. You can know Norwegians through schooling and working with them for quite some time. Without such opportunities, it is difficult to integrate.

⁶ Human Immuno deficiency Virus.

Another participant narrated this point of Norwegians as reserved or quite people. Anna who is working as a veterinarian in a certain farm in Bergen, a migrant from South Sudan expressed her feelings this way:

Norwegians are much-closed people; it is sometimes difficult to be exposed to them. It is difficult to come to people who are not open because you see someone, he or she is open today, and tomorrow he or she will not know you. I have seen such people, but the job I do, I have come across some good people who they are very open for me. I have been working here one and half years, people I 'am working with are good to me.

Individual's contributions in work establishes relationship between hers or himself and the society and lack of this opportunity to work as they reported, creates a feeling of being unwanted or not belonging in the society. Most of the informants indicated that their labour market participation has lead them to integrate in the society and that they believe situation would be different if they were unemployed. Jane who employed as a cook in one of elderly home, who has been living in Norway for over a decade explained:

Work has enabled me to meet Norwegians, integration is communication, communicate with them. Work helped me to familiarize with them, it helped to learn to listen, and I was shy before, but I 'am no longer now since I started work. It helped to learn the culture, what they like and dislike, when they are happy or sad, go to parties with them.

Work enables one to acquire material as well as social resources of the community and to have access to future claim on such resource; Umoja, a participant living in Norway for the last three decades, expressed this in the following way:

If people work together, you have lunch together, conversations; you realize that it helps your mindset; you realize that you are not alone, you are part of the society. Work brings people together, work enable one to see how the society work. When you are unemployed, you are inside the house; you make your own imaginations on how the society or world works. Nevertheless, when you get out of the house and go to work, you see the society and start to integrate with others; they show you how things done. It is the way to learn the society much better.

In short, when people of different background meet especially in working or school environments, they mostly learn from each other. Acculturation entails some cultural learning approach of gaining an understanding in intercultural communication styles both verbal and non-verbal as well as rules, convention and norms. More still, gaining language competence skills that are important for the performance of daily tasks in the new society as well as creating interpersonal relationship in the society (Sam & Berry, 2010, p. 475).

6.7 Contact and visiting family members

Modern telecommunication technology has brought the world closer than before, enabling migrants to keep in close contact with their families of origin. The entire group expressed that they use modern technology such as WhatsApp, Viber, Facebook and Skype. These technologies have eased communication between them and their families in Africa. Lidia, a migrant from Liberia who has been living in Norway almost two decades expressed her experience about having contact with her families in the country of origin in the following way:

I use WhatsApp, Viber, Skycap and Facebook to call and chat with my family members. I call siblings of my father's side in USA and chat on Facebook.

More so, though technology is expensive to some extent it has eased the burden of migrants who live millions of kilometers away from their families by making it easy to keep a close contact with them. Anna explained it to me how she keeps in close contact with her family in Southern Sudan in this way:

There are many contacts, social media like Facebook, Messenger and WhatsApp. However, my parents, I have to call them. Since, I came to Norway, I have never visited them.

Most of the participants cited modern technology to have made it easier for them to keep in contact with our families As Eva; a migrant from Rwanda put it in the following way:

I communicate with people back home via Viber, WhatsApp or Face book. It is difficult to visit them because it is expensive and far. Nevertheless, I do visit them once in every two years.

However, the irony that these people face is that traveling to visit family members is very expensive and that they need internet and smart phone, which makes some of them to keep sending money to maintain communication because internet is expensive in most of these countries. Eva explained this point about traveling in the following way:

It is difficult to visit all of them because it is expensive and far, but I do visit them once in every two years.

Sandra a migrant from DRC had similar views about the problem of costs to visit family members in Congo and she expressed it in this way:

I used to visit them once a year, but now I have children and no enough money to visit them, but I have some family members in Europe, I visit them.

Emma expressed how she keeps contacts with her family of in Burundi in this way:

I contact them on phone, mobile, internet call. My mother uses her phone to text me. I last visited them in 2012.

However, certain countries have not progressed in modern technology because of political instability and this hampered migrants to visit their families' members in countries of origin. As two of my participants have not managed to visit their relatives back in their countries of origin citing instability in these countries as a hindrance to visit their families. As Fatima, a migrant from Somalia expressed it:

Since I came, I have never been to Somalia because of political insecurity, but I have been to Kenya, I have relatives there.

Political instability in some countries in African has prevented some migrants to travel to visit their families as they fear for their lives as Sandra, another participant from Congo Kinshasa also expressed this concern of insecurity:

No, I have not visited him or her because of political instability, but I visit some of my family members in Europe.

In addition, Dona, who migrated from Democratic Republic of Congo for almost one decade ago revealed to me during this study and expressed her feeling about traveling to her country of origin:

No, I have not visited them because of political instability, but I visit some of my family members in Europe”.

Though Dona and Sandra come from the same Country, they have different reasons for not visiting their family members as one cited travel costs as the main hindrance and the other, political instability as the problem.

As much as there are barriers that hinder some for travelling to visit their family members, employment opportunities enables them to keep in constant contacts with them and offer assistance to their families of origin.

6.8 Remittances, expectations and family obligations

My discussion with the study participants about remittances and obligations to help family of origin revealed mixed feelings as some indicated it to be a burden while others did not feel any burden at all and others again were positive and thought it to be their obligation keep helping their family members. According to researchers on remittances and development, they

acknowledged that migrants help their families and they contribute more but especially with domestic issues such as school fees, food or medical care (Kibikyo & Omar, 2012).

Similar view was advanced by Kofman, who also found that women or girls remit more than their male counterparts in the global and this has improved their status and increased class position in the families or society of origin (Kofman, 2004). According to Kunz, 2008, women remit to their families more often than men do. However, men can send a large sum of money but this money is often for development purposes rather than consumption for the family as female do.

Many participants described own employment as having helped them and their families of origin. However, some portrayed the demand to keep sending them money in a negative way as Umoja, who migrated from Kenya at a very young age:

It used be tough time, I remember once we came here, telephone bills were high, envelops, letters, people asking for money, mother is sick, the other is sick. I was sending money to families, no development, stark and going backwards...no vacation, my friends developing, driving, me struggling to pay license bills because of sending money to Kenya...therefore, I said, I have to pull myself and stop sending money.

Another of my participant, Dona, from DRC who came to Norway at a mature age, believed to have an obligation to help her family members but still portrayed it in a negative way:

I do support them with school fees, medical care and house rent. It is difficult to fulfill their expectations. I also have a life to lead, but I contribute what I can afford.

However, others think that it is their responsibility to keep helping their family members, an even if they understand it to be demanding they feel positive to help their families. Sandra, a self-employed; a migrant from Democratic Republic of Congo at old age, described her feeling about this issue of remittances:

I support my family members, help my parents and friends and send money occasionally. No much burden of financial expectations. My mother never calls me to ask for assistance. Nevertheless, friends have many expectations and some ask me to bring them to Norway. I brought my mother and my sister to visit me here.

Some feel it is positive to help others, as Emma, other migrant from Burundi who also migrated at mature age. She was positive about helping her family and other people whom she thought were needy and indicated that she remits most of her money to cater for her mother

and provides for care of street children in one of the organization in her home country. She described it this in the following way:

I send money help my mother. I and other two friends who live in Europe, we have an organization that help children on the street or poor women and girls who face sexual harassment like rape. We have someone who takes care of them. I send about 500000 Burundian francs per month and two friends send scholastic materials like school fees.

Patricia, a female migrant from Rwanda is equally positive about heling her family and described it in this way:

Yes, I send them money... obligation, I do not call it obligation, I feel obliged to do it. I do not know what they expect, but I think I have fulfilled their expectations.

Still, other participants have no obligation to remit their money to countries of origin as they think that it is not necessary to do it as Lidia a migrant from Liberia described it to me:

Not much, I have no contact with my father. I support the ones I have here. No much obligation, my mother is single mum and my siblings are in USA. No obligation to send money. I do my part here, no expectations.

Interestingly, some of the participants revealed to me as not having any obligations to remit their money to family members and they only do it according to their wish but do not feel obliged to do it as Jessica, a participant in this study responded to this question:

Not really, sometimes, but not obliged. I have no much obligation; I decide to send but not a must. They are capable of supporting themselves. I do not have parents; it is only extended family, so no obligation.

According to my observations from this question about the remittances, I found that some of my study participants who feel they are obliged to help them and they are positive to keep helping them as it connected to culture of “Ubuntu” which means to have compassion, mercy or respect for others especially your parents, elders or community. Fatima, a migrant from Somalia, and one of the participant in this study described her feelings like this.

I support my extended family with house rent, food and medical care. No much expectations because my parents live here. May be when they get older, that is when I will feel the pressure. Nevertheless, extended family call my parents for assistance. I assist them through mum. Our mother calls us and we seat with her, she explains the situation in Africa and we contribute but she the one who send the money.

Generally, the spirit of Ubuntu is common as one of my participants explained as they feel they have to help others and they are positive about it. Eva, who migrated from Rwanda at old age, described the spirit of “Ubuntu” in the following way:

I do support my family by sending money for food, shelter and medicine. In my culture, we have (Ubuntu), which means generous; we share the little resources we have. This is positive with our culture; we support each other, especially, those with nothing, we should not forget our culture though we are migrants.

As Fama, a migrant from Somalia, employed as a primary teacher described to me about her experiences with remitting money to her family members in country of origin:

I do not send money directly, if my extended family call me directly, I do support. However, mostly, they go through my mother and mother call us explains the situation and the need to help them. Some are very poor, others never had children or their children died in the war. Our mother helps them every month. Our family expectation have been fulfilled, if the extended families applicate what we give them, we do not know.

Though Fama, like some other young participants in this study who came to Norway at young age or born here, they do not send money directly to their extended families as those who migrated as grownups do. Nevertheless, the factor remain that they help through their parents because they feel that they have to help but they don't have much interactions with relatives back home and they don't know them well enough to feel obligations of sending them money directly as their parents do.

A couple of participants referred to feeling of being obliged and positive about helping their family members who are facing starvation. They send them money on monthly basis and Tuna, a migrant from Somalia described her experience:

I send some Money to my family and I send what I have. Yes, I have tried to give them what I have, if I have little, get little, if I have much, they get much. They have much expectation but I have tried my best.

However, some of participants do not send money to their family members as they feel they are capable of helping themselves but feel they have to help others of extended family. For instance, Anna, a migrant from South Sudan, and one of the participant in this study explained her feeling like this:

I really do not support them a lot because I 'am the youngest in my family and my parents can do everything themselves. Me 'I 'am the youngest and I was the last to graduate in the family. However, my siblings paid for studies and they have control over their lives. Nevertheless, it is in our culture that people help if there are many things like life cycle for instance, a wedding or a burial in the family". No expectation, except of course in extended family especially when there is wedding. However, I, I 'am a person who helps. Nevertheless, I help a person with goals in life. I can help to set up your life like paying school fees or start a small business, so that you can help yourself or others tomorrow.

Importantly, though, even if Anna never used the word “Ubuntu” in her conversation with me, she implied the same thing as Eva. “To feel obligation to help others is in our culture” especially in turbulent times like death or festival that requires a lot of money like wedding that require large sums of money and people contribute for such occasions.

However, one participant seemed to be different when she indicated to be using her money here in Norway and had no obligation to remit to family members Jane; who is employed as a cook in one of elderly homes in Bergen explained her situation in the following way:

I do not support them in any financial ways because my parents died and my siblings are working and manage themselves.

In nutshell, people who migrated at old age remit more than young people do as they have many family members they left behind. Young people remit less and mostly they do in form of contributions to their family members here in Norway when they are going to send money to extended families in Africa.

Largely, they do not feel the same obligations to send money as adult people do. However, they express some form of being empowered as working people and trying make a difference in their lives and lives of others who need a helping hand especially during turbulent times.

6.9 Conclusion

In nutshell, the objective of this chapter was to offer an interpretation and discussion of the findings, which emerged from findings. Language dealt within last chapter in relation to labour integration, as narratives shows, native language fluency is important for employment, which is relevant to other research that carried out. Aspects of labour participation as empowering tool was discussed in chapter six and it emerged that female labour participation is paramount for empowerment as it enables them to take control of individual freedom, destiny and power over resources and making decisions on personal lives, feeling as part of the society.

The findings on female labour participation suggested that access to economic resources contributes to improvement of wellbeing of themselves as well as their families through remittances to their families in the countries of origin. Remittances has proved to be of great importance to receiving families left behind as they help in education, medical care or other related domestic consumptions.

In general, as this research and other researches show, remittances migrants send to their families and relatives in countries of origin have a positive impacts on their lives and communities of origin.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

7.1 Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to explore whether labour market participation of female migrants from Africa leads to integration into Norwegian society, and more generally, whether employment is a tool for empowerment to female workers.

As part of the exploration of female immigrants' labour market participation, this study looked into the challenges facing immigrants to acquire employment. As explored in chapter five, some of my study participants faced difficulties when searching employment because of language barrier, lack of network with natives, low levels of education in relation to their Norwegian counterparts, lack of qualifications in relation to existing job opportunities, discrimination or segregation as well as difficulties to have their foreign academic credentials accepted.

A central aim of this study was to explore whether labour market participation leads to integration into Norwegian society. Chapter 5 examined how female immigrants acquire employment and the mechanisms the government uses to integrate immigrants into labour market.

Similarly to other studies on the subject matter, this study has found that learning native Norwegian language is paramount in the labour integration. Language enables labour participants with advantages such as access to employment, gaining network of natives, socialization, and cultural knowledge of the natives. In the same way, the study examined effects associated with lack of Norwegian language skills, which may exacerbate labour integration, integration in the society and lead to marginalization and exclusion.

Chapter six highlighted contributions of labour participation in empowering women, as well as improving the wellbeing of themselves and their families. It female labour market participation is paramount for empowerment as it enables the women to take control of their individual freedom, destiny and bargaining power over resources as well increasing their ability to make decisions in their personal lives and feeling part of the society.

Employment have empowered my study participants with recourses such as opportunities to drive and own a car, buy a house or own other resources something that is quite different from

what some of them used to experience in their culture of origin where resources are controlled by husbands or father. According to the study participants, their labour market participation has led to changes in gender roles from what they used to know from their cultural of origin. They also acknowledged that their husbands or partners could participate domestically in taking care of children, cook or clean the house because of their own participation in paid work.

Importantly, the findings shows that immigrants keep connections to their countries of origin through contacts via telephones, WhatsApp or Viber as well as traveling to visit their native countries. Further, they send remittances to their families of origin; and the findings on this research indicate that remittances play an important role in lives of the recipients as they use it for different purposes like pay for education or other domestic consumption.

Importantly to note, the research study show that adult people remit more than the young as young ones feel they need to use their money where they feel to have roots or sense of belonging. The ability to send remittances has also contributed to the study participants' empowerment. Possibly, it has led to changes in a gender or cultural bias that exist in their families where they think that males are only the ones to migrate and assist families. More importantly, contributions to their families of origin has improved the migrant women's self-esteem and confidence as they feel of worth to the family and earn respect from family members and society in general.

Concisely, the findings in this research relevant to other research study of the immigrant labour integration and general integration in the society. Integration of immigrants in a new culture is a two-way traffic, where the immigrants adjusts to new a culture through learning and mastery of native language, and going through labour training that eventually lead to employment.

Moreover, the society helps in opening up its doors to incorporate immigrants through employment opportunities and access to education, which is a cornerstone for accessing native network, gaining friends to socialize with as paramount for integration. As individual access employment, they feel more integrated in the society. They are also empowered with resources because of employment, which in turn leads to a sense of worthiness, self-esteem and self-respect.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview schedule

Employment.

1. Can you belfry explain to me your experience as a single female migrant to Bergen?
2. How did you manage to acquire employment?
3. What challenges did you encounter in searching for employment?
4. How has your labor employment changed your gender perception in general?
5. How has your labor participation changed cultural attitudes about female in culture of origin?
6. What are challenges in acquiring work and carrier in Bergen?
7. What are challenges of being single and working in Bergen?

Empowerment.

1. How has acquiring employment empowered you as a female migrant?
2. How has your labor employment in Norway helped you and your family in general?
3. Explain to me how you practice gender roles in your society of origin.
4. Has your experience of gender roles different from here in Norway?
5. Explain to me if your experience of gender roles have changed because of your migration to Norway.

Integration.

1. Can explain your experiences about integration into Norwegian society specifically in relation to labor or carrier in general?
2. Explain to me if acquiring work or carrier is a goal to integration in Norwegian society.
3. Are there barriers in integration into Norwegian society?
4. Any possible solutions to barriers into labor integration in Norway?
5. Explain to me what you have done to integrate into Norwegian society in general.

Remittances and family obligations.

1. How do you support your family of origin?
2. Have you fulfilled your family expectations?
3. Explain to me about the expectations of financial support for your family.
4. How do you maintain contact with your family back home?
5. How often do you visit your family?

Appendix II: Voluntary participation consent letter

Your participation in this project is complete voluntary. You may stop participating at any time without stating any reason. In the case, you choose to withdraw from the study all information you provided including the tapes would be destroyed and omitted from the final paper.

If you have any questions regarding the project, please contact me at ngangojohn@yahoo.com or T/F90706730.

You can also contact my university supervisor, Haldis Haukanes at Haldis.Haukanes@uib.no or at +47 55 58 92 59 or if you have any questions or concerns.

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, Norwegian Social Science Data Services in Bergen, Norway.

Place, date

.....
Signature
(Participant)

.....
Signature
(Researcher)

ⁱ Norwegian Labour and welfare administration.