Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences

Migration in the Name of the Money

– Male and Female Migratory Experience of Rural Youth from Uganda to the Gulfs

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Master's Thesis • 30 credits
Agriculture Programme - Rural Development
Department of Urban and Rural Development
Uppsala 2020

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- Male and Female Migratory Experience of Rural Youth from Uganda to the Gulfs

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Credits: 30 credits

Level: Second cycle, A2E

Course title: Master thesis in Rural Development, A2E - Agriculture Programme - Rural Development

Course code: EX0890

Course coordinating department: Department of Urban and Rural Development

Programme/Education: Agriculture Programme - Rural Development

Place of publication: Uppsala

Year of publication: 2020

Online publication: https://stud.epsilon.slu.se

Keywords: Labour migration, gendered migration, feminized migration, Uganda, migration to the Gulf countries.

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Abstract

Labour migration is a growing phenomenon around the globe, and it is rather self-evident that people move to achieve better life conditions or flee adverse circumstances. Significant in this growth is the mobile continent, Africa having substantial numbers of its people on the move.

This study aims to explore the social, economic and cultural characteristics of male and female migratory experience of rural youth from Uganda into Gulf countries. For this aim, the following research questions have been developed:

- What are the main motives and objectives behind labour migration for men and women from rural Uganda to the Gulf countries?
- Which processes did Ugandan rural male and female youth go through to get employment in the Gulf countries?
- How did guest workers experience the living and working conditions in the Gulf countries?
- How do migrants evaluate their time in the Gulf in relation to themselves and others?

This study was operationalized in Nakaseke, a rural district located in central parts of Uganda. Semi-structured interviews with former guest workers in the Gulfs are the primary empirical basis for this study.

Participants in this study moved for economic reasons and experienced positive economic achievement as a result of their work in the Gulfs. The emotional, bureaucratic and financial facilitation from family and brokers is essential, but at times contributes to the vulnerability in the migration process, according to the empirical findings. Racial discrimination, social-, cultural isolation and poor working conditions were significant characteristics of the informants' experiences. These experiences partly differed depending on gender. Despite these experiences, participants generally viewed their migration as a positive achievement due to economic progress.

The world system theory, the new labour migration theory and Neo-classical economic together with push/pull factor approach, has been the theoretical framework of this study. A gender perspective has been consistently considered throughout the study.

Keywords: gendered migration, domestic workers, labour migration, labour externalisation, youth migration, Uganda, Africa on the move, Migration to Gulf countries.

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Abbreviations

EEU	External employment Unit
GBV	Gender based Violence
GDP	Gross development product
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
GII	Gender Inequality Index
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMO	International migration Organisation
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
LWP	Labour Works Programme
NE	Neo-classical Economic
NELM	The New Economics of Labour Migration
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P.	Primary school level
S.	Secondary School level
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAGE	Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UGX	Ugandan Shillings
UN DESA	The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund
USD	United States Dollar
UWEP	The Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
YLP	Youth Livelihoods Programme

1. Introduction

Migration[1] has, for a long time, been a growing phenomenon in numbers but also as part of the political and public debate. Within research and policy on the topic, there has been an increased and renewed interest in temporary and return migration (de Haas & Fokkema 2011). The growing interest in and attention to the topic are partly due to the hopes that both individuals, policymakers and politicians have attributed to labour migration as a solution to solve labour imbalances and demand (ibid). The international labour organisation (ILO) in the 2nd edition of Global Estimates on International Migrant Worker (2018) reported a 9% increase of international migrant workers from 150 in 2013 to 164 million people in 2018 (58% men and 42% women). Additionally, 19% of the workforce of high-income countries are migrant workers, and more than 50% of all workers in the Gulf countries [2]are migrant (ibid; Gardner 2011). These countries thereby stand out as probably the world's most labour migratory region.

The dominating narrative and conceptual understanding has for a long time been and increasingly is, that return labour migrants play a considerable role in innovative investments and the economic development of the sending country (de Hass & Fokkema 2011). By this understanding, labour migration is a mechanism through which labour imbalances are dealt with. It is assumed that work surplus is exported to where there is a labour deficit, making it a pair dance between many developed countries and low-income countries (Zachariah *et al.* 2001). Seen from the perspective of the sending community migration can contribute to poverty and economic inequality reduction through the remittances (Ellis 2003). Even on individual and household levels, migration has occurred to be a livelihood strategy. It contributes, not the least, to households' livelihood and income diversification in

[1] Migration is a collective term referring to the movement of people from one geographic place to another (NE 2020). There are different types of migration, such as rural-urban migration, internal migration and international migration. In this study, migration is mostly used either in its general meaning, synonymous with international migration, labour migration and/or explicitly referring to labour movement from Uganda to the Gulfs.

2 The Gulf countries are called so because of their geographical location bordering the Persian Gulf, which is a gulf in Western Asia. Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates count to the Gulf countries (Tétreault 2011).

rural areas, allowing households to invest in suitable family members to go and work abroad (Ellis 2003; Ho 2011).

When the migrants return to their country of origin, they can both enrich the human capital in their home country and bring new skills with them. Through the return migration, there can also be immaterial remittances in terms of economic expertise, technological and scientific knowledge that benefits the country of origin (Ho 2011). Migration also increases financial independence for youth and women (Ullah 2017; Meaza *et al.* 2019).

Migration can bring about new or strengthen existing political, social and cultural exchanges, seen from both the hosting and sending communities (Ullah 2017). Still, it can also create, uphold and reinforce injustices within and between countries (ibid).

Crawley (2018) argues that "Migration is a highly visible reflection of global inequalities whether in terms of wages, labour market opportunities, or lifestyles. It can both create new inequalities and exacerbate existing ones." He further highlights that the benefits of migration are unequally shared and that migration mirrors already existing structural and social injustices concerning age, gender and income (Crawley & Skleparis 2018).

Patterns of migration show movement towards higher-income- countries, with about 61% of labour migrants residing in North America, Northern, Southern and Western parts of Europe and in the Arab States (Popova & Özel 2018). These patterns, in a way, point out the brain and care drain phenomenon from low- to high-income countries /sub-regions. For example, the medical and social services of several countries in the sub-Sahara region have been negatively affected as a consequence of the exportation of its health professionals (Tebeje 2005). 38 of 47 countries in the sub-Saharan region could not meet the minimum standard of 20 physicians per 100, 000 people set up by the World Health Organization (WHO) (ibid).

While the proportions of men and women of the global migrants' populations are somewhat in balance, there are far more injustices faced by women, especially women migrant workers. These injustices include risks of discrimination, abuse and exploitative treatment in the process and at the destination of migration. (Lee *et al.* 2015)

1.1. Background on Uganda

The Republic of Uganda is a former British protectorate located in East Africa that gained independence on 9th October 1962 (Globalis 2018). The total population is estimated to be 42.7 million people as of 2018(World Bank Group 2018a). English and Swahili are the official languages, although there are more than 20 ethnic local languages of which Luganda is the largest. The country is divided into 121 districts. Kampala is the capital and largest city of Uganda, with approximately 2 million people (ibid). Uganda has a BNP of about 643 USD per capita, and the national currency is Ugandan shillings (UGX), 1 USD is approximately 3 800 UGX (Globalis 2018).

With over 70% of its population aged under 30 years, 60% aged below 20 years, Uganda ranks for having the youngest age structures in the world (Daumerie & Madsen 2010; Pletscher 2015). Further estimations are indicating that having one of the world's highest fertility rates, the age structure in the *pearl of Africa* as Winston Churchill is quoted to have called Uganda (Pletscher 2015), might not change in the nearest future. The young age structure poses challenges as many of the young and youth live in poverty. Youth employment/unemployment is a challenge as the formal sector only manages to employ less than 30%, as close to 70% of the youth are informally self-employed or occupied by family work (Ighobor 2013). Uganda has one of the highest unemployment rates, with many youth unemployed or underemployed (Namakula 2015).

Migration has been posed as one of the key solutions in the search for prosperity among Uganda´s youth, as the formal sector seemingly does not generate adequate job opportunities (Namakula 2015).

2. Problem statement, research demarcations and rationale

In general, the labour surplus in rural areas, the poor living conditions and the scarcity of non-farm employments generating enough income have been pushing the rural people to migrate (Ho 2011). One of the causes for the labour surplus in the rural areas could be the high population growth, causing, for example, a shortage of agricultural land on which many livelihoods depend (ibid). Most human migration happens from rural to urban areas within the same countries (ibid). However, there has also been significant growth of global migration (Haas *et al.* 2019). Over 60% of the global international migrants are labour migrants (ibid); some of these labour migrants are seeking temporary employment. The majority of guest workers migrate due to the opportunities for work that can increase their income and earn them a better living standard (Ibid). But are these pull and push factors reflected in the personal experiences of the men and women presented in statistics? Is migration labour experience characteristically uniform, or are there gender and regional differences?

Typically, youth and able-bodied people migrate from rural areas for studies or employment (Andersson & Johansson 2013). Acknowledging how significant the changes in the demographic composition of the rural regions are due to youth emigration, it is of interest to understand the factors behind this phenomenon by exploring the youth migration experiences.

Considering the concerns of rural areas is essential for understanding the demographic structure of Uganda´s population. The majority (over 70%) of Uganda's population reside in the countryside, of which a large proportion are youths (World Bank Group 2018b). Reasons for the dynamics at rural places that might have pushed youth to migrate as well as eventual impact caused by outmigration on the rustic societal design will, therefore, be of interest in this research. Agriculture is regarded as the backbone of Uganda's economy and is a target for development and modernisation (Andersson & Johansson 2013). Thus, the role of agriculture is critical to bear in mind in order to understand the issues of rural societies.

There are inequalities in opportunities and obligations for females and males, systematised in cultures and various institutions around the globe which are manifested within labour migration. These make the rationale to have a gender perspective in this paper as this study looks to explore the migrants' experiences deeply.

The research is narrowed to labour migrants to the Gulf countries. Large numbers of non-qualified labour have migrated to the Gulf countries from parts of Asia and Africa recently (Gardner 2011). The phenomenon has rapidly grown in Uganda in the last decades, caused a public debate and led to political regulations (Namakula 2015; Ndezi *et al.* 2019). The general discussion has superficially been on the life and working conditions of Ugandan female housemaids in the Middle East. Ugandans have historically migrated to the neighbouring countries and countries in the global north with English as the official language, mostly to the United Kingdom, Ireland and the United States of America (Rutaremwa 2012a). These factors, considered from a gender perspective, make the study of Uganda – Gulfs migration an exciting research field.

Within research on Uganda's migration, the focus has been on the internal migration aspects and the inflows mostly from neighbouring countries. This focus could partly be related to Uganda's hospitality towards refugees, as it is one of the largest-refugee-hosting country in Africa (Momodu 2019). Focusing on the outflow of people from Uganda in this research will, therefore, help cover another aspect of Uganda's migration processes in research.

2.1. Research objective and questions

The objective of this study is to explore the social, economic and cultural characteristics of male and female migratory experience of rural youth from Uganda into Gulf countries. The research objective raises the following research questions.

- What are the main motives and objectives behind labour migration for men and women from rural Uganda to the Gulf countries?
- Which processes did Ugandan rural male and female youth go through to get employment in the Gulf countries?
- How did guest workers experience the living and working conditions in the Gulf countries?
- How do migrants evaluate their time in the Gulfs in relation to themselves and others?

3. Literature review and theoretical framework

This chapter contains background factor and statistical figures on Uganda's migration, regarding processes, regulations, effects, motives with focus on labour migrants and returnees. Due to the lack of specific aggregation, most statistical data refers to the general labour emigration from Uganda.

3.1. Uganda migration relations

The general migration situation and structures in Uganda have over time, been influenced by internal and external political, social and economic conditions. These situations include and relate, for example, to rapid population growth associated with the high fertility rate, poverty, political instability and employment opportunities on the international market (IOM 2015), but also migrant and refugee reception (Momodu 2019).

There has been very little migration from Uganda historically, but war, political instability and poverty are factors that have caused forced migration (Rutaremwa 2012). Uganda´s laws and policies on immigration except for refugees and asylum are inadequate, deficient and fragmented, with very little at place, especially concerning emigration (Rutaremwa 2012b; IOM 2018). There is a need for the Ugandan government to do further work on developing adequate employment and social security agreements, besides taking greater responsibility for its migrants' protection (IOM 2018). Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers abroad) Regulations, 2005, together with 2013 Guidelines are the essential legal reference and governing documents on labour migration from Uganda (Ibid).

Uganda's emigration history can be divided into three different waves, where two of them are related to war and political instability. The first wave was during the early 1970s when the then head of state, a military dictator called Idi Amin, expelled 80,000 Ugandans of South Asian descent from the country (Rutaremwa 2012). The second wave was between 1971 and 1986, during which Uganda experienced internal war and political instability, forcing thousands of Ugandans to emigrate

(ibid). The current migration wave is regarded as the third one. Ugandans' ongoing migration is characterised by expanding labour migration facilitated by the interplay of the Ugandan diaspora and globalization mechanisms that have created factors for mobility (ibid).

Labour externalization is currently a politically motivated strategy by the Ugandan government to fight unemployment, especially among the youth (Walusumbi-Mpanga 2013). Statistics indicate a growing number of men and women emigrating from Uganda, mostly for economic reasons (Namakula 2015; Rutaremwa 2012). This is due to among other things since Ugandans, especially youth, are increasingly taking part in the regional, continental and global labour markets (ibid). A household survey on migration and remittances done in the year 2008 found that 42% of Ugandans had by the time of the study a family member residing abroad, which would at that time put the number of Ugandans living abroad to around 3 million (IOM 2015), (Namakula 2015) and other sources have pointed out several shortcomings in statistical data on migration in Uganda by highlighting, among other things, how data on different topics, such as the number of Ugandans residing abroad, from various data collectors have come to different results.

Uganda has signed several bilateral agreements and is in negotiations with other countries on labour agreements (IOM 2018). At place are labour agreements with among other countries, Jordan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which for 2017, provided 40,000 Ugandans with jobs (ibid). It is difficult to find fixed data on the total number of Ugandan labour migrants in Gulf countries due to lack of documentation back in time as well as the ill estimated proportion of people travelling via unauthorized ways (Namakula 2015). The Uganda Association of External Recruitment Agencies (UAERA), an umbrella for labour recruitment agencies in Uganda, has estimated the number of Ugandans working in the Middle East to 165,000 people, remitting about 650 million USD per year (UAERA 2020). Remittances from the Gulf countries have been growing for the past years, making up 10% of the total remittances in 2012 (Namakula 2015). The most significant number of labour migrants to the Middle East work as housemaids, security guards or cleaners (UAERA 2020). It has been difficult to obtain compiled data on the proportion of men and women, respectively, who have migrated for jobs to the Gulf countries.

Those migrating for work are composed of skilled and unskilled workers of which the skilled generally move to North America and Western Europe and unskilled to the Middle East and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) countries, e.g. South Africa and Botswana (Rutaremwa 2012).

Registered recruitment companies recruit most Ugandans migrating for employment to the Gulfs (Marius 2014; Namakula 2015). These agencies are required to apply and get a license from the External Employment Unit (EEU) in Uganda to operate legally (Marius 2014).

The formal recruitment chain is most often as follows: the recruitment agencies through different media platforms like radio and television advertise the vacancies following the receiving countries labour demand (Marius 2014). Workers then apply, and those with matching skills are given employment.

The process involves different costs for the work applicants. The fees mostly paid to the agencies amount to between 2.5 million UGX to 6 million UGX (664-1593 US$). Payments made by the applicant cover, among other things, passport fees, visa and air ticket and payment to receiving countries' employer. The range of money required can depend on the type of work and the location (Namakula 2015). Recruitment agencies are obliged to make sure the EEU receive the names, and signed contracts for those employees found fit for work after the medical and skill tests (ibid). Recruitment agencies must obtain a report on the workers' criminal background before proceeding with the employees' travel plans (Marius 2014).

Uganda National Household Survey UNHS, (2016/17) states that people in Uganda mainly move for income reasons. Personal remittances received correspond to 5.7% of the national gross domestic product or GDP (UBOS 2017b). However, there is uncertainty in the statistical data on remittances as another source reports a higher amount, about 1 billion US$, making up 17% of the country´s GDP (Marius 2014). Another explanation of the differences could be the fact that remittances sent also change dramatically in periods. For example, between the four years of 2006 -2010, there were significant annual changes in the payments from the Gulf region to Uganda. From 12.2 million USD (2006) to 40.3 million USD in 2007, peaking at 72 million USD in 2008-2009, before it dropped to 34.92 million USD in 2010 (Assefaw 2014). IOM (2015) estimated 68% of the remittances to Uganda to be used for domestic consumption while 32% is spent on economic activities like business, farming construction and land purchases. According to Rutaremwa (2012), splitting location of the family is a scientifically proven strategy of securing livelihood among rural households. Additionally, Rutaremwa (2012) mentions that Nguyen (2008:5); Marx and Fleischer (2010: 41); Hugo, (1982); Jhang, Kelley et al.: (2001) present evidence showing that remittances helped improve households´ living standards, mentioning better diets, access to education and healthcare.

The Uganda migration country profile (IOM 2015) recognised that there are relations between health and migration. They state that migrants' physical, mental

and social health can face higher risks and pressure during the migration process, depending on the circumstances of the process (ibid).

3.2. Macro-, meso- and micro level of social phenomena

Sociology examines social phenomena at three mainstreamed different levels; macro-, meso- and micro level. A macro-level study looks to understand society from a broader perspective, the structural systems, institutions and entities like state that shape the community are at the centre. The economic, social and political structures within a society are important in a macro-level analysis. A meso- level or network analysis studies organizations and communities on a more detailed level, looking at how the social networks of a group influence the broader community. Examination of the social phenomenon on micro-level instead focuses on the individual or small groups like families and their relations. Micro-level analyses fall short of identifying the general social structures and interactions that influence the behaviours of individuals and small groups. However, a micro-level examination has a higher potential of giving nuanced information on specific dynamic of social relations. (Serpa & Ferreira 2019)

Below follows the presentation and discussion of theoretical frameworks on the three different levels (macro-meso-micro) that will be applied to the empirical data.

3.2.1. World-system theory

The World system theory points out the significance of the interactions between societies as a crucial part in social change within communities, thus argues that international migration should be understood from a global view (Wallerstein 1983). Additionally, trade interaction between high-income and low-income countries benefits the already rich, resulting in social injustices and economic stagnation in the impoverished region, as Figure 1 illustrates (Wallerstein 1983). This situation occurs as the poor are being drained of the building blocks for social and economic development since, for example, high-skilled, highly educated migrate to a much greater extent than low educated (ibid). More than a third of university-educated have emigrated in several countries in sub-Saharan Africa. At the same period, two-thirds of the skilled labours in some Caribbean countries emigrated (Ruist 2016). This phenomenon is referred to as “brain drain” (Jennissen 2007), and migration of people that would otherwise do social duties in their home society is called “care drain”. In a way, the world system theory sees the push and pull factors of migration from a system/structural

perspective. It is the systems/structures (national-regional-international) that force migrants to move.

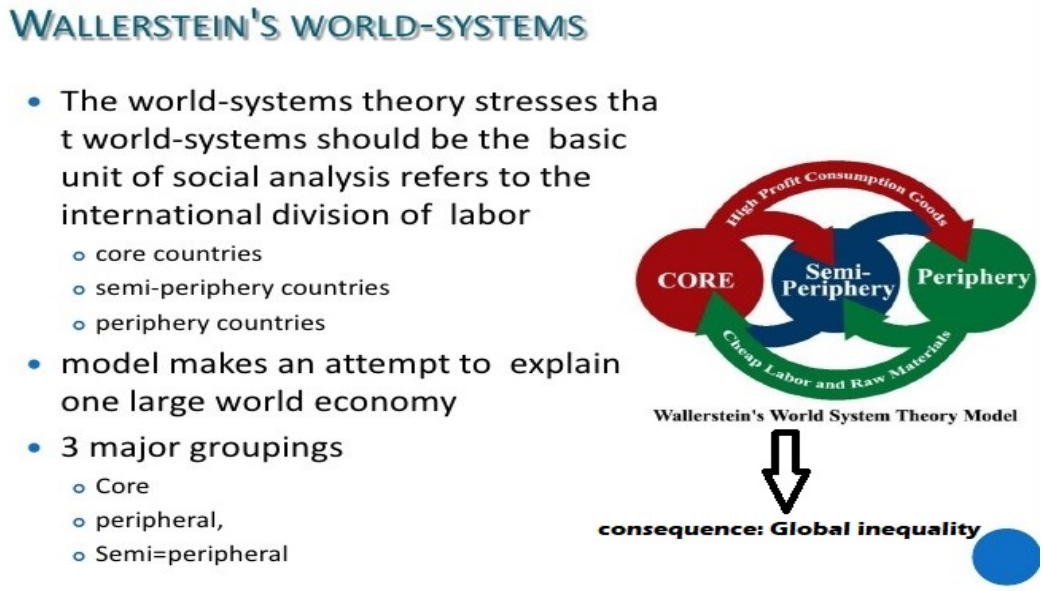


Figure *1* Wallerstein´s World system theory model and description picture by Tom McLean, edited by the author.

Brain, care or brawn Drain/Gain

Ruist (2019) and Jennissen (2007) argue that although there has been an established interpretation of human capital flight (brain drain) as a phenomenon causing a negative economic effect on the sending countries, that view is empirically questionable. Ruist (2016) claims that the empirical connection at country level regarding the rate of emigration and the countries' development level is lacking. Ruist (2016) argues that the migrants and their knowledge if not for migration, would not have come to use, due to for example economic, structural and institutional problems in their countries (Ruist 2016; Jennissen 2007). Contrary to the views of World system theory, the interaction between societies such as through emigration is, therefore, potential "brain gain" (Jennissen 2007). Economic and social cooperation between high-income and low-income countries contribute to development for migrants and their societies through remittances such as transfer of technology, ideas, financial capital and values such as democracy (ibid). In 2012, remittances were three times as big as the world development aid budget, and they have a more prominent role in the development of low-income countries (Daramy 2016)

Adesote and Osunkoya (2018) argue that it is "practically impossible" for a country subjected to brain drain to develop sustainably. According to them, skilled human

capital flight from Africa has threatened and indeed killed the vital structural basis, such as institutions, that are essential for development (Adesote & Osunkoya 2018).

Kadiri (2015) states in her abstract that "The international migration of both skilled and unskilled persons from the global South to the North has reached an alarming proportion." Human capital flight is also an economic loss for the low-income countries, and most probably benefiting the already high-income receiving countries (Adesote & Osunkoya 2018). These countries make a loss in the form of huge costs invested in among others educating the emigrating professionals (ibid). Adesote and Osukoya (2018) mentioned that although there seem to be several positive aspects of remittances for the sending country, they do not consequently lead to or promote development as they are mostly spent on domestic consumption.

It is essential to mention that the majority of labour migrants are low- and semi-skilled workers (ILO 2015; Popova & Özel 2018). De Haas and Fokkema (2011) discussing labour migration refer to human capital flight as "brawn drain". Their point is that the shortage of labour within the agricultural sector and diminishing productivity within the sector is not seldom associated with significant numbers of young, able-bodied people migrating from the rural areas. Discussing the pros and cons of migration, according to different theoretical approaches, De Haas and Fokkeman (2011) observe that typical migrants are young, talented and tend to have a job already. Migrants are typically more entrepreneurial, with higher mobility and slightly better educated in comparison with their original society (ibid).

3.2.2. The new economics of labour migration (NELM)

According to NELM, migration is contemplated and should be understood from a household/family level perspective (Stark & Bloom 1985). According to this approach, as a livelihood strategy, households send out the best-suited person to accumulate income elsewhere to spread income risks, improve household income and increase investments with fewer constraints from the market in the country of origin (De Hass and Fokkema, 2011; Stark & Bloom 1985). NELM is within this research especially expected to be of interest in discussing the relationship between the expectations and outcome (achievements and non-achieved) of family objectives with the migration and the migrants´ return or willingness to prolong working abroad. According to the logic of this approach, migrants will only return if the plans/motives of the move have succeeded (ibid). Family or other substantial support for the migrant is seen as a factor pointing to the collectiveness in the migration decision (Kadiri 2015).

Abreu (2012) argues that the NELM theory is developed to be perceived as a theoretical middle ground between the structural macro level and the micro-

individual-focused approaches. In the real sense, it is a remake of the Neo-classical Economics (NE). The difference between these two theories lies, therefore, in the emphasis put on the migrants' dependency on or independence from social context (often family) for these complex decisions. Equally important in these theories is also the beneficiary of the calculated expectations (Szelenyi & Sumner 2016).

3.2.3. Neo-classical economics (NE)

Neo-classical economics (Harris & Todaro 1970) is a consistent theoretical approach to consider in discussions for this research since it creates space to look at and interprets migration from an individual aspect. Neo-classical economics views immigration as an investment in human capital whereby a person moves to a place where they can maximize their economic return on their human resources (de Haas & Fokkema 2011; ibid). Wages and labour demand/opportunities are central in the individual migrant's decision to move, according to the theory (ibid). Even social welfare and security/safer environment will be "pulling" people to immigrate, be it within the country or beyond national borders. Low salaries, lack of employment opportunities, poor education, conflicts and political instability to the contrary will distract and push people to move away (Kadiri, 20015). The push and pull factors can and often differ within a country, e.g. between rural and urban areas, between countries but also on a macro-level between global sub-regions. For example, only between 1868 and 1873, about 100,000 Swedes were "pushed" to migrate to North America because of a famine (Powell 2009).

3.2.4. Pull and push factor approach

The different varieties of motives behind human migration are both in the public domain and the academia with the different theoretical approaches discussed in terms of Push and pull factors (Ho 2011). Factors related to the conditions at the migrant's original place, forcing (pushing) a person/group to voluntarily move are Push factors (Dorigo & Tobler 1983; Andersson & Johansson 2013). Pulls are to the contrary, attractive factors and conditions at the destination causing (pulling) a person to move there (ibid). Pull factors could relate to access to social-welfare facilities, for example, health-care and education (Dorigo & Tobler 1983).

The push and pull factors model of analysis and explanation are based on Everett Lee's *Model of origin and destination factors and intervening obstacles in migration* formed in 1966 (see figure 3) (Andersson & Johansson 20013; Amaral FL 2018). According to this model, at the origin and destination, there are neutral (0), positive (+) and negative (-) factors. The characteristics of the factors can be a combination between economy, social life and culture, but also personal and political (Ho, 2011). These factors vary and change, along with migration processes

(ibid). The push and pull factors work as cost and benefit calculations in migration analysis.

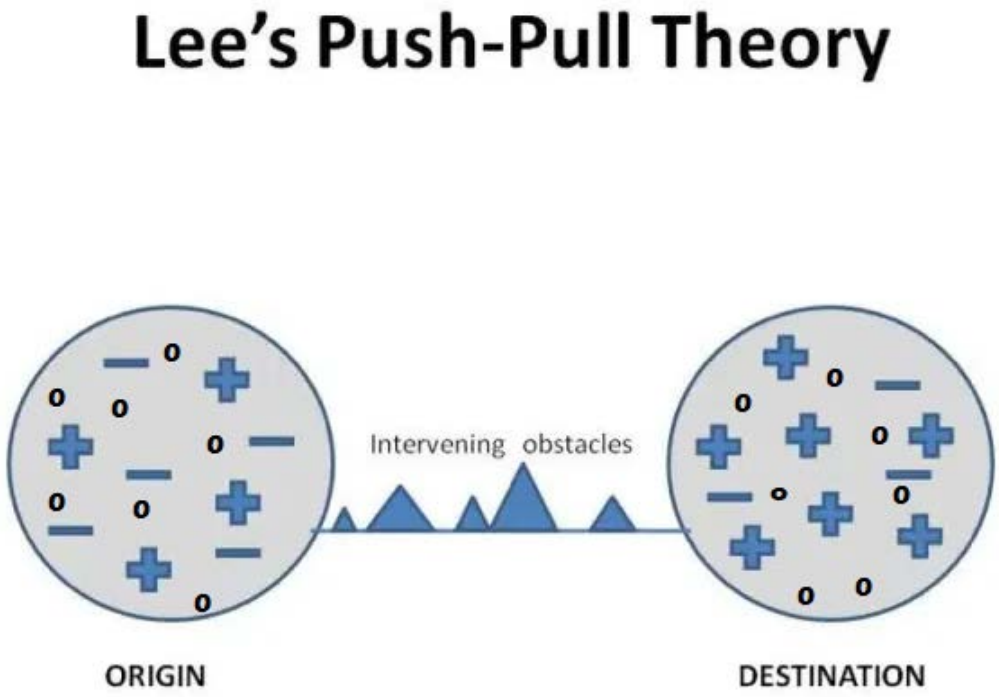


Figure 2. Model of origin and destination factors and intervening obstacles in migration. Source: Faridi (2018) adapted by author of this paper.

A person's calculation of these factors determines the decision to either move or stay. The fact that there is often an imbalance of information in the person's decision process partly explains the subjectivity in what is regarded as neutral, positive and negative. The decision-maker usually has more experience in the "home place" compared to the place of destination. Because different angles like subjective values, preferences and perceptions affect the individual's process of choosing to migrate, this makes it hard at times to theorise a homogenous motive to why people decide to move (Amaral FL 2018; Andersson & Johansson 2013).

According to Andersson and Johansson (2013), things like costs of travel, spatial distance and family attachments that lay between the place of origin and that of destination are regarded as intervening obstacles. These are to be understood as neutral factors but are essential to highlight as they can keep migrants from going to their desired destination.

Governance within a society can facilitate and be supportive of the push or pull factors. The push factors can be a result of bad government policies (Kadiri 2015). Some governments deliberately produce policies and programmes to facilitate the

movement of their citizens to other countries, e.g. Uganda (Tebeje, 2005; (Walusumbi-Mpanga 2013). In the same way, the government can put in place policies to attract and pull migrants (Kadiri 2005).

The three different theories, neoclassical migration theory (NE), the new economics of labour migration (NELM) and the World system theory, combined to the pull and push approach all contribute with varying dimensions of analytical perspectives on the topic of international labour migration. These point to the need to put individual/household rooted aspirations into the meso and the macro context. Essential in the analysis of this research is that they are explained from the personal perspectives and narratives.

3.3. Gender in migration

Even though migration has been feminized, gender analysis has mostly meant the study of the left/remain-behind women, thus missing the aspects of gender-related to female migration. In the aim of this research, it is assumed a gender perspective would enrich the analysis of the research material in answering the research questions. The gender perspective refers to the examination of the data from an angle of identifying and understanding relations between men and women regarding normative roles, access to and control of resources in the context of migration (Sida 2015). Here, the macro, meso and micro levels of males' and females' conditions and experiences regarding migration from Uganda to the Gulfs will be analysed.

In Asia and Africa but also other parts of the world, men are socially raised to see themselves as breadwinners while women learn to be obedient and hold low-profiles (Kambarami 2006). Different religious cultures but also political policies together with social and economic systems play roles in restricting and limiting the freedoms of women (Kambarami 2006; Ullah 2017). Consequently, the agency of women and girls in Muslim societies such as in the Gulf countries is mostly limited, which further explains the low score by most Muslim countries in the gender equity index (Ullah 2017).

International migrants were predominantly males for some time; international migration was therefore perceived as a male issue (Ullah 2017). Currently, the proportion of women in international labour migration count to over 40% of the total (Popova & Özel 2018). The increasing number of women labour migrants in combination with other factors like broadening the focus on several aspects in migration research and reports has contributed to the feminisation of migration, applying a gender perspective (Ullah 2017).

Seen from a NELM approach, the household being the primary rationale for migration and broadening the focus to include social aspects could lead to curiosity about, for example, the inevitable changes that probably come in the everyday lives of wives whose husbands migrate and vice-versa.

Ullah (2017) notes that it is difficult to estimate the number of migration left-behind family members internationally. The structures of the family for the migrants change as well as the responsibilities for those left behind. For many left-behind women, interactions with people, organisations and institutions, e.g. schools and banks that they did not interact with before becomes a new reality. However, it is essential to point out that not all women experience improved autonomy, as some are still controlled by the migrated husbands or through the husbands' extended families (Ullah 2017).

Migration has seen women, both those left/remain behind and those who migrate, gain increased autonomy, with high participation in decision making, increased mobility and economic independence. They obtain freedoms, in contrary to the minimal influence over the decision making processes and financial dependency in the patriarchal societies (Szelenyi & Sumner 2016; Ullah 2017). The potential economic gains may not solve all the possible social problems that come with migration. Different gender issues are likely at hand when men (the main breadwinners) migrate compared to when women migrate.

The growing demand for caretakers for children, elders and the disabled in high-income countries has contributed to the occurrence of care drain. Women in low-income countries have left their responsibilities to take on care jobs in these countries. Hochschild in (Newman & O'Brien (2008) highlights that the extraction of resources from low-income countries to the rich countries is not a new phenomenon, but the extent to which women are part of it, is current. Hochschild argues that women labour migration into domestic work is a sort of emotional imperialism that can ethically be questioned. She emphasises the fact that women leave their families with children and the elderly to do the same work abroad.

Gavanas (2013) discusses aspects of gender in domestic work in a Swedish context. She argues that domestic work is exposed to feminization and racialisation to a great extent through labour migration. This affects the opportunities for migrants on the labour market, be it formal or informal (ibid). Even internationally, female labour migrants tend to work within the domestic work sector to a greater extent than men (ILO 2015). Over 80% of the total migrant domestic workers are in high-income countries (ibid). Migrants make up about 83% of the total domestic workers

within the Arab states while the percentage is 71% in North America and 55% in Northern, Southern and Western Europe (ibid).

Domestic work is regarded as unskilled work and contains traditionally poor working conditions and is easily in-formalised (Gavanas 2013). These make domestic work serve as an opportunity mostly to women, low educated and migrants who are finding it difficult to enter the labour market (Gavanas 2013). Traditionally in Sweden, and most probably in large parts of the world, domestic work has been bestowed to the female (ibid). Gavanas (2013) further highlights the challenges domestic workers face, with high difficulties getting fulltime jobs and getting formal employment. The informal work not only means missing out of several privileges like paid vacation and other social benefits/securities but also harassment and abuses. "[…] colleagues may travel long distances to clients only to find out that they will not be paid the agreed-upon amount for their cleaning services unless they service clients sexually as well." (Gavanas 2013: p.60). Gavanas (2013) attributes the sexual harassments within domestic work to the fact that the professions are highly feminised in combination with services performed in clients' private homes. Additionally, she reports that clients within domestic work take advantage of those with informal employments and the undocumented immigrants since these are less likely to report abuses, underpayments and non-payments to the authorities.

Several countries have taken different measures to harmonise and protect the externalisation of their citizens. Pakistan, for example, has a law that forbids women to take domestic work employments in UAE as a result of reported recurring human rights breaches against female housemaids (Szelenyi & Sumner 2016).

Migrants, especially women, do not only face injustices like abuses and harassments at their destination, the very process and journey of migration are full of gendered insecurities (Freedman 2016). It is although vital not to portray women as passive victims of the system with little agency to help themselves, as many women develop strategies to cope with the insecurities in migration (ibid). In her study, Freedman (2016) mentioned having met women who through migration escaped GBV and other constraints hence whose security had improved. This was despite the difficulties and poor condition in the process and at the destination of their migration journey. Women migrants gain social status and autonomy as they become breadwinners and send money home (George 2005). On the other hand, it is possible to argue that the women domestic workers are being exploited by both the sending countries with clear strategies of externalising labour to other countries and the employers (Shinozaki 2015).

3.3.1. Gender in Uganda

The Ugandan government, through its national gender policy, recognises and aims at reducing inequalities and vulnerabilities between males and females in different economic, social and political spheres of life. The Uganda gender policy (2007) has reportedly through various programmes such as the Youth Livelihoods Programme (YLP), Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) and the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) made Uganda see a reduction of gender inequalities and vulnerabilities within employment and economic empowerment (Mukite 2014; Kaisiromwe *et al.* 2019). However, the Human Development Report (2018) indicates that Uganda is among the countries with the lowest human development, rating 0.528 on the Gender Inequality Index (GII) (UNDP 2018). The low scores suggest that despite the progress, there are significant gaps in the opportunities and obligations for men and women.

Both informal and formal institutions within the Ugandan society are recognised to be key role players in perpetuating gender inequalities. Religion, family, marriage, social and cultural norms and practices are some of the institutions that all contribute to patriarchal structures (Kaisiromwe *et al.* 2019). The UBOS report on gender (2019) highlights the significant gaps and differences between men's and women's employment opportunities, assets ownership and gender-based violence (GBV), all mostly disfavouring women (ibid). The Uganda Demographic Household Survey (UDHS) for 2016/17 reported for example that 39.6% of ever-partnered women and girls over 15 years had experienced physical, sexual and psychological violence from their current or former partner within the last 12 months (UBOS 2017b). Unemployment in Uganda is higher among females than among males (ibid).

According to the survey, for the last 20 years, about 30% of households in Uganda are headed by women, 70 % by men (UBOS 2017b). One possible explanation of the stable figures related to migration could be the balance and proportional share of men and women who migrated from Uganda during the last decades.

4. Methodology

This chapter includes discussion and elaboration on the motivation behind the research design, data collection and analysis. It also consists of the reflections of the researcher – the researched relation, research site presentation and ethics.

4.1. Research design

The research design is by scientific tradition guided by the research problem or research question (Creswell & Creswell 2017). Based on the research objective and research questions presented earlier, phenomenology as a research design within the qualitative research approach is suitable for both data collection and analysis. Phenomenology, as an approach, helps study social phenomena through individuals' perceptions which can provide new detailed knowledge about a specific social event (ibid). In this case, it will make it possible to get in-depth knowledge about the migratory experience of labour migration to the Gulfs. The phenomenological qualitative research design further allowed presenting unique, enriching perspectives through people's lived lives and their expressed values (Kvale & Brinkman 2009; Creswell & Creswell 2017). Thus, this research design presents the deeper social, economic and cultural characteristics which are necessary for understanding the migratory experience of working in the Gulf countries.

4.1.1. Snowball sampling technique

In this research, the snowball sampling method (also known as chain-sampling) was used to recruit the informants. Snowball sampling is a nonprobability sampling method where existing study participants (in this case, the returnees) recruit or identify another participant from among their communities (Graue 2015). This method is popular in sociology and other qualitative studies (ibid). Applying the technique systematically, I started by identifying two participants in the Nakaseke district. I then asked the two participants after their participation to identify other persons that would qualify for the study as informants. The method is cost and time-efficient and knowing the right people to interview was more accessible for the people who themselves have been in the Gulfs and live in the same district.

Snowball sampling can empirically be problematic because of two main factors, biases and representativeness (Graue 2015). This nonprobability sampling form does, therefore, not allow the researchers to generalise the results of the study to a population (ibid).

The issue of representativeness is also manageable if the researcher chooses to study a phenomenon within a population with similar traits. However, it is possible and plausible to assume similar characteristics among the migrants based on the delimitations on, e.g. age and geographical boundaries. Thus, it is assessed that the samples of this research correspond to patterns of male and female migrant composition within the Uganda-Gulfs migration context.

4.1.2. Criterial characteristics for an informant

I carried out individual interviews with each of the 12 informants (see informants profile in Table 1). The conversations were approximately 1 hour each. Based on the research resources and the type of study, this produced sufficient empirical material.

The criteria for the interviewee were as follows; 1) A person should be a youth; thus under the age of 32 years (UN-Habitat definition). This criterion was to make sure that youth speak for the youth, as the data collection was primarily to be on youths. 2) A person should have worked in one of the Gulf countries for at least one year and therefore have served at least half of the contracted time that most Ugandan labour migrators get in the Gulf countries. There duration of time needed for a person to socially and culturally integrate or cope with the new social context might differ, and for some people, a year is certainly not enough. However, since the time of the contract is often two years, I think it is enough for the informants to be able to evaluate the social, economic and cultural impact. After all, a person should at least be able to make/give a reflection on their lived experience, especially with the support of triggers as the four research questions can be regarded. Besides, one year is for many sufficient to learn a language, understand a culture, experience economic change and even acquire skills to talk about, and workers with this experience can thus make good research informants for this research.

Factors like social status, education level, and family situation, employment status before travel or gender were not criteria for a person to participate in the study. This information was nevertheless recorded because it can impact a person’s social, economic and cultural judgements and experience.

4.1.3. Informants profile

Table 1: Profile of the informants arranged by gender, i.e. females to males and education level (low-higher). The names used here are fictive for anonymity.

Fictive names	Gender	AGE	Education level	Years in Gulf	Travel facilitators	Social status	Occupation abroad
Rebecka	F	23	P.7	2 Oman	Broker	Single 2 kids	Housemaid
Sara	F	27	S.3	1,5 Oman	Broker	Divorced 2 kids	Housemaid
Katherine	F	30	S4	2 Oman	Broker	Married 1 kid	Housemaid
Natasha	F	32	S.4	2 Oman	Broker	Married 6 kids	Housemaid
Magdalena	F	29	S.4	2 Oman	Broker	Divorced 2 kids	Housemaid
Faith	F	28	S.4	1,3 Oman	Broker	Divorced 2 kids	Housemaid
Mary	F	22	S.6	2 Oman	Broker+ company	single	Housemaid
Juliet	F	29	S.6 skills	2 UAE DUBAI	Broker	Divorced 1kid	Housemaid
Kenneth	M	28	S.6+	3,5 Dubai UAE	company	Single	Fibber glass laminator
Brian	M	30	S.6	1 Kuwaiti	Broker	Married 2 kids	Farmer & plumber
Filip	M	28	Bachelors in Camas	3,5 Dubai UAE	company	Single	Fibber glass laminator
George	M	27	University courses	3, 8 Dubai UAE	company	In relationship	Assistant shop keeper

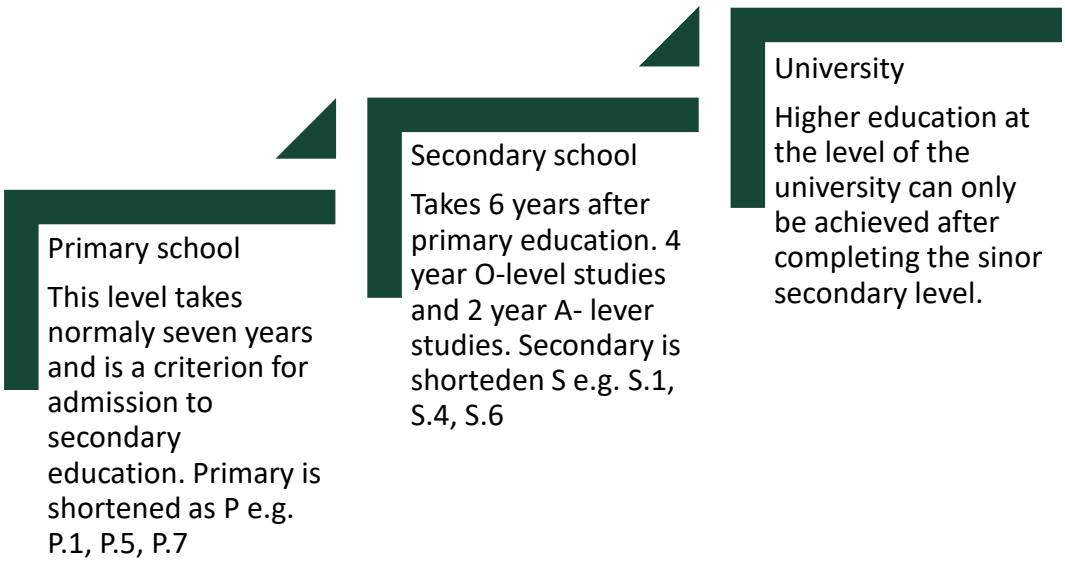
Out of the 12 informants, 8 are females, and 4 are males. Their average age is approximately 28 years based on figures given by the informants. The oldest was 32 and the youngest 22. A few interviewees indicated uncertainty of their age since, at the time of their birth, there was insufficient documentation of those born. One informant revealed that since the birth certificate is one of the required documents for the passport application and she didn't have one, she did "as many others" and

got a falsified birth certificate to get a passport. As earlier mentioned, there has been a lack of a documenting culture in Uganda, including giving out and keeping records such as a child's birth certificate. This is especially true for births in rural areas and in non-governmental/non-authorized health centres, which were not uncommon during the 20th century, including its last two decades. All the interviewees for this research were born in this period.

The informants´ education level varied all from primary seven, at the very least to a bachelor's degree. What can be noted on this topic is the clear difference between the females' and males' education level, where all the males stand for the higher education level. The most educated among females had equal education to the least educated among the interviewed males. Table 2 below explains in short Uganda's education system.

Informants' civil status varied. Divorced status was higher among females. Most informants had 1 - 6 children, four of the twelve had no kids. Only one of the interviewed males had children. The average number of years spent working in the Gulfs was higher among the male respondents compared to that of the females.

Table 2 Uganda´s education levels/system



4.1.4. Semi-structured interviews

For this research, I conducted semi-structured interviews, a noncontroversial method within the qualitative research design approach (Creswell & Creswell 2017). A semi-structured interview is an interview setting where the interviewer

prepares a few open-ended questions to which the informant can freely answer (ibid). Open questions leave space for discussion with the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkman 2009). A semi-structured interview guides the interviewer to ask for useful information on the regarded topic (ibid). This interview setting further makes it easier to collect comparable research data in addition to the possibility of maintaining thematised spheres of the conversation, especially after the transcription process (ibid).

The interviews were carried out at different places based on the choice of the interviewees. I made observation and interview protocol during the interviews, which has helped in the data presentation, especially regarding identifying citations. With the informants' permission, I recorded the conversations, which enabled me to focus on the conversations fully. The recorded material was transcribed and translated into English which further facilitated the analysis part (Fägerborg 2011). To substantiate and concretise my reasoning, I presented translated quotes, citations and excerpts of the interview material to a large extent.

4.1.5. Data analysis

The transcribed interview material was analysed to answer the research questions. The first step was optical scanning of the content before storing and locating information by assigning codes to the identified themes. "Categorizing or coding the data are ways to organise and prepare the data and make it usable for the analysis"(Graue 2015 p. 12). Writing a summarising word that represents a category over chunks of the material is a way of coding (Creswell & Creswell 2017). The coding of the data was done by using words/phrases and colours such as "Reason for movement", "social life experience", "family facilitation", "remittances" and "Usage of income" to capture exciting and vital remarks. The coding themes formed the basis of the titles in which the findings are presented in the result chapter.

4.1.6. Supplementary data

Statistical data is highly essential when studying migration. Statistical data from various second-hand sources have been used to place the empirical data of this research into a broader context. The statistical data is, to a great extent collected from international sources, for example, ILO and IOM. This is because the official statistics agency in Uganda, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) lacks crucial statistical data on migration. There have been challenges in locating reliable and relevant quantitative data due to the ill estimated number of unknown cases, as, expressed in the background of this paper regarding the total number of Ugandans abroad. Meanwhile, most statistical data on Uganda and Nakaseke district are taken

from UBOS, which is potentially the best source for statistical information regarding Uganda.

It is by record challenging to obtain accurate statistics on migration from certain countries in the Middle East due to their restrictive policies on the topic (Szelenyi & Sumner 2016).

4.1.7. Researcher and researched relation

It is important to be transparent and aware of the role of the research in a scientific study. (Valentine 2005) explains that the identity of the researcher collecting data through interviews impacts the interaction with the interviewees. It is, therefore, part of the researcher and researched relation reflection to acknowledge that myself having roots in Uganda coloured the interview situation. Being a student but also a diaspora travelling to study people in my country of origin are identity aspects that also form the context of the interviews. The language skills, of fluently speaking Luganda, for example, facilitated the interview process and might have contributed to interviewees' feeling trust and comfort, and thereby share their experiences more openly. The values, expectations, but also the personality of the researcher are factors that influence the implementation of the study (Bryman 2011). In that regard, I am aware that this study is not totally delinked from my previous understanding of and interest in the Ugandan context, Middle Eastern countries and the topic of migration, for example. Studying a familiar environment might have helped me capture and understand perceptions of the informants that would otherwise have gone missing.

Ethically, during the time of this research, informants were informed of their right to cancel participation at any time and to share only information they were willing to share. The participants were also informed that they would be anonymised in the presentation of the study.

4.2. Research site – Nakaseke district

Nakaseke District is a district located in rural areas of central Uganda. 197373 people reside in Nakaseke district, of which over 80% live in the rural areas. 76% of the district residents are between 0-30 years of age (UBOS 2017a). Luganda is the most popular language in the district among several (UBOS 2017a). The weather in Nakaseke district is tropical, with an annual temperature of 27.5-30 degrees Celsius (Ahimbisibwe & Kirungi 2016).

A more substantial proportion of women than men study the lower levels of education up to s.4 in the region (UBOS 2014). School dropouts after S.4 are,

however, higher among women compared to men in the district (ibid). Therefore, there are fewer women whose education level is higher than S.4 when compared to men. The school dropouts among women could be partly explained by the early marriages and young maternity age among women. Among females in the district, ~14% get married at the age of 10-19 years, and 17.8% give birth before 20 years (UBOS 2017a).

Only around 40% of the children in Nakaseke district own a birth certificate. This contributes to uncertainty and statistical errors regarding age as many instead estimate their age.

4.2.1. Culture, Social life and living condition in Nakaseke

In Nakaseke district is full off different beautiful nuances of green from the plants and leafy trees that covers large parts. Along the murum often bumpy roads are layers of reddish-brown dust covering the green and everything near the streets. Chances are high of meeting big trucks transporting mostly charcoal and agricultural products like cattle and the milk. There are town councils and trading centres around the district, mainly built beside the main roads. For Sundays, appropriately dressed boys and girls, men and women in colourful clothes, make their way to the churches. Football, cinema and attending market gathering are part of the popular social activities in the district.

In everyday life, most households start the morning with agricultural work. It is after the farm work that those with other businesses often turn to them in the trade centres.

4.2.2. Economy and employment in Nakaseke

Youth unemployment, just like the rest of Uganda, is high in Nakaseke district (UBOS 2017a). Farming, both animal rearing and crop production (involves 86.8%), is by far the most significant finance sector, livelihood approach and most common occupation in Nakaseke district (Ahimbisibwe & Kirungi 2016). A clear majority of farmers are on small scale farming working either with their land plots or leased land with their human resources sometimes complemented with hired labour for home consumption agriculture and selling of the surplus (Ahimbisibwe & Kirungi 2016; UBOS 2017a).

Trade and charcoal production are also significant economic activities (Ahimbisibwe & Kirungi 2016). Remittances are also crucial in the districts economy, 20.5% households of the homes in the district´s reported having received money from abroad within the last years (UBOS 2017a).

5. Study findings

In this chapter, social, economic and cultural characteristics of male and female migratory experience of rural youth from Uganda into Gulf countries are presented. The presentation is through the different themes identified in the study's empirical data through coding. The themes/categories make the structure of this chapter presented as subheadings. Gender aspects in these categories are consistently presented in the chapter.

5.1. Main reasons for migration

Income increment is the leading general reason for the labour migration among those interviewed. The pull factors include opportunities for migrants to get employment abroad and increase their incomes. This is a vital pull factor regardless of gender among the informants.

> Going abroad was motivated by many dreams; I was told that in the Arabs, I would get a job paying three times more than my current job at the hospital. - George

Informants, regardless of gender, travelled with individual goals to either get money so they can afford higher studies, start a business or improve their living conditions.

> My dad came up with the idea that I should go abroad. I only wanted to go to university, that's why I chose to buy the idea of migrating. - Mary

Aside from finances, other pull factors influenced the informants' motives. One is the excitement over travelling for the more adventurous individuals. "Just the mere travelling by a plane is a hyped thing in Uganda," Brian explained. He mentioned Enkuka, one of Uganda's most famous festivals where part of the most significant happening within the programme is for attendants to take pictures on an aeroplane as well as flying with it for a few minutes. The excitement for air travel was confirmed as Sara described that for her, part of her main goal was to travel by air.

> I wanted to experience the happiness of travelling in an aeroplane and living in a more developed country. I also wanted to count as one who flew through the clouds, see something else than Uganda but also, of course, increase my income. - Sara

An additional explanation, apart from being adventurous, could probably be the actual or perceived attractive life the returnees/diasporas exude. This can be in terms of attributed social status by the locals and within the family. The said charming life of returnees and Diasporas refers to the aesthetic and economic achievements, as Brian elaborated in the citation below.

> You know, when the "ba summer" (Diasporas) come home, they bring with them new cloth styles and electronic devices to show off. They give the impression of a straightforward life. Those from Europe even buy cars. Besides, when you see the speed in which young people who have been working abroad finance the construction of their houses, it is hard to avoid the temptation of wanting to travel there. - Brian

The pull factors can be either for the individual as previous informants indicated (e.g. George) but also be collective. The collective characterised desires are mostly connected to family goals in contrast to self-fulfilment individual motivations for informants. Accumulating the needed resources to finance a home/house construction for family or other loved one was a recurring collective desire.

> The main thing was for me to use the opportunity of working abroad to build a house for my family- my kid and me. - Rebecka

There are some visible differences in the desired outcomes based on the respondents' backgrounds. For example, respondents who were parents (most women and one man) stated more often desired outcome for a more collective good of their families as the quotation above illustrates. But, the collective desires were not only confined to children. Others wished to improve the lives of their parents – among people wanting this was Magdalena. Similarly to Magdalena, many had a combination of the individual and collective goals.

> The critical issue was to build my mother who takes care of my children a house and have her connected to the electricity network. Also, find myself a better future- like buy a plot of land for me and construct a home in it. - Magdalena

Lack of sufficient income, employment opportunities or lack of economic independence are the main push factors to why the migrants left Uganda. The tough

job market with high unemployment, especially among the youth, compelled many to seek employment abroad. Research informants described an overall income opportunity scarcity in Uganda.

> After graduating from s.6, I tried but could not find any permanent job. I even tried Kampala for a period, also there I was surviving on day-to-day deals. I can assure you of two things. One is, getting permanent employment in Uganda is not a walkover, and the second is getting a job with a reasonable salary is even harder. - Kenneth

In a way, life seemed tougher towards the male youth. From the observations and the way they spoke on survival, it appeared the males also lived of expectations, even on themselves to take care of themselves independently to a larger extent. On the other hand, they seemed to have been more exposed to the labour market in comparison to women.

> I had no real job before I travelled, I couldn't find any, and I just sat at home. With little hope of getting any employment, the option of going abroad seemed like the right solution to me. - Katherine

Less exposure to the labour market and lack of jobs, possibly in combination made women economically more miserable. Several of the female respondents lacked economic independence and were thus financially depending on their husband or other relatives. For some of the female informants, migration was, therefore, a solution to escape being dependent on their husbands' income as the citation below reveals.

> The tiredness of bad living conditions took me to work for the Arabs. Always waiting for the husband to give you something (cash), to buy something for the children, and you cannot even own a plot of land. - Katherine

The citation above also indicates frustration from the inability to support children independently. The ability to help their children was of high importance and of relevance for all female informants who had a child. Within the same citations, I out read the issue of poverty – spelt out as "bad living conditions" which is highly connected to lack of sufficient income/resources among the respondents. Poverty is further illustrated as lacking ownership of land in the citation. In an agricultural society, land is a crucial resource on which many livelihoods are dependent.

Even for those few informants who have a job within the tough labour market, the difficulty in earning sufficient income was a push factor.

> When I graduated from university, it was hard to find a job. – You apply for a job. They ask you for a bribe just for employment that will earn you 200,000 Ugandan shillings a month. […]. I worked for six months as a finance manager before I travelled. It was on probation. I was only earning for food and rent. - Filip

The citation from Filip, the most educated among the informants, pinpoints that even the highly educated were not spared of the migration pushing factors. His salary in Uganda could only cover basic subsistence despite being educated as he narrated.

Most respondents spoke on education concerning their emigration for work in the Gulfs negatively regardless of the education level as most saw no promising prospect with their education. Most of them prompted for semi-unskilled jobs in the Gulfs and saw little opportunities of getting professional employment in their home country either. A few of the respondents were interested in additional studies despite the hopelessness.

> I still have the dream of upgrading my studies; I like what I started, and the reason why I left Uganda was that here I could not get the money needed. - George

There were also personal push factors among the respondents´ answers on what made them leave Uganda.

> I had a misunderstanding with my boyfriend at the time the idea of going abroad came up. It played a role in my decision to move away and work abroad. The argument was to give me space from him for a while. - Juliet

Juliet was self-employed as a mobile money agent before travelling to the Gulfs, where she worked as a housemaid.

5.2. Family facilitation of respondents migration

The respondents' families were unanimously supportive for the respondent to move abroad for work. The families facilitated the application process through their knowledge and networks, financially and at least blessed the move by the respondents to seek and eventually move for work in the Gulfs. For many of the respondents, the idea for employment abroad was self-discovered but planted in them by a family member as the citation below gives an example of.

> I got the idea of going abroad from my elder brother. It was not in my mind at all. I knew nothing of it until he shared about it with me, then I was hooked. - Kenneth

Where present, family networks were utilised in the process of migration to have a family member take employment abroad.

> My dad told me to go abroad. He works with a network of people recruiting women for housemaid work in the Arabs. He facilitated all the process for me. - Mary

For those with children, (the majority of the respondents) finding caretakers for their children under the period of employment abroad was a critical issue. The majority left their children with elderly female relatives. Family members taking care of children of the migrants during that period was therefore highly valued support.

> I left them (2 kids) with their grandmother (her mother) when I went, and I called her regularly to speak with my children and check on them. - Rebecka

Meanwhile, the only man with kids left the kids to be taken care of by their mother.

> Their mother was there; she was already taking much of the child responsibility, so nothing was new in that sense. When I left for work in Kuwait, she took care of them. Our home is also close to my mother's place. Whenever my wife is going somewhere, she leaves the kids with her. - Brian

Emotional support prior to and under the working period abroad was also part of the family´s contribution to the migrants' migration. Acknowledging being familiar with what some described as scary and adverse reports on the living and conditions of domestic workers in the Middle East, meant mental and emotional stress that increased the need and appreciation of the family's emotional support. Moving far away from children and friends into a foreign culture without any social community did not make the situation more manageable. A phone call to a relative and hearing the voice of their children was the kind of support that helped dampen the feelings of loneliness that several of the informants experienced.

> I had a sister who was already there, and we used to talk. Of course, I had people saying people are poorly treated in the Arabs, but my sister was there

> and not in a terrible condition, it gave me courage. During my time there, I used to call home and hear from my children whenever I felt loneliness. - Juliet

5.3. The role of intermediaries

Apart from family influence, recruitment through local brokers and marketing advertisements played a significant role in the migrants' decision to migrate. As George recounted, different media platforms are used to arouse interest and recruit Ugandans.

> I was watching TV, and I saw an advertisement showing up several times with the agency's phone number. I decided to call them, and that is where it all started. - George

The local recruiters are, in some cases, returnees from working in the same geographical areas of the Middle East. These local recruiters did not exempt their relatives as they included family members in their recruitment work. This was the case for several informants as one citation from the interview material below shows.

> A male relative to us, a paternal uncle recruited me and helped me throughout the whole migration process. - Faith.

Friends and neighbours recruited each other. Similarly, those who worked in the Gulfs for a while could freelance as brokers and bring people from their original villages to companies that needed staff. The citation below also shows the trust the recruited put in the personal recruitment by someone they know in contrast to what they know from different media platforms.

> I wanted to go but, I was discouraged by the stories coming from there. I knew nobody there. But I got a friend who worked for a recruiting company. He could meet all the objections I had about going there; I eventually thought it was worth trying it out. - Filip

5.3.1. Bureaucratic and travel facilitation of the migration process

In most cases, different people facilitated different parts of the informants' migration processes. Most informants exhibited limited knowledge, exposition and interest in bureaucratic processes linked to migration. With a few exceptions, the bureaucratic work for the migrants was done for them by intermediaries, e.g. brokers and the recruitment agencies. Bureaucratic work includes the process of

applying for travel documents like passport, Interpol letter, medical check-ups and actual job application etc. The brokers take extra pay to facilitate different bureaucratic processes, matters that the individuals would otherwise do themselves.

> I could not fill in the passport application forms myself. There was a guy, my brother connected me to, who helped me fill in the application and follow the whole process until I got it. I had to pay him some extra money for help. - Katherine

Lack of bureaucratic knowledge and confidence to meet the bureaucratic authorities and access the services they provide was more prevalent among the female migrants. The male respondents reported having done more of the bureaucratic work on their own as Filip categorically put it;

> There was no middle hand between the recruiting company and me. I worked on my papers by myself. They could call you abruptly telling you they need this, within limited time and you had to deliver it to them on schedule. - Filip

Apart from the apparent pride and confidence of being able to meet the bureaucrats the respondent exhibits, the citation above further highlights that the bureaucratic facilitation can be done in different combinations.

Some of the informants revealed having used illegal paths and facilitator in their process of migration. Some did so intentionally and others without their acknowledgement and approval. Mary revealed she knew about the illegalities of her procedures to Oman.

> By the time I went to Oman, Uganda didn't allow its citizens to go there, so I was smuggled through Kenya. I spent two weeks there before I took the flight to Muscat. - Mary

During the time of the ban in 2017, the Ugandan government specifically warned citizens against labour migration to Oman through the minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development. The ban was as a result of reports on female domestic workers who were dragged into sexual slavery, tortured and dehumanized in different ways, mostly in Oman. All respondents were familiar with these adverse reports, and some tried to avoid taking on employment in Oman as Katherine narrates.

> They offered me a job in Oman. I declined and made myself clear that I didn't want to work in Oman. I suggested at least Jordan because I heard

> that although Jordan discriminates Africans and women, nobody has died there. In the end, they still manipulated me to go and work in Oman, through a certain lady who they sent to persuade me. - Katherine

Katherine's words in the citation above do not only reveal the illegalities migrants face by using unauthorized facilitators for employment abroad. She also uncovers the dependency and desperate mood many migrants face in relation to brokers on the hunt for work elsewhere. It seemed particularly more common among the female respondents to have used such paths. In a way, her story affirms the feminisation and racialisation of migration. Another female respondent revealed that she found out she was being smuggled on the way out of the country. She was not persuaded but tricked into being smuggled.

> We found out we were being smuggled through Kenya while on the bus. They lied that we had missed our flight and suggested that we take a bus and board the plane in Nairobi. They even asked for more money for the bus tickets. While on the bus, they called, directing us to hide some of our documents. - Faith

It seems neighbouring Kenya was an optional path, as smugglers faced or anticipated obstacles and risks using the Ugandan Entebbe international airport. The smuggling made the migrants´ first air trip filled with tension and stress. A respondent elaborated how the Ugandan officials spotted them and consequently denied them travel as the citation below indicates.

> None of us anticipated there were spies around. [..], a big man came and asked us in an authoritative voice, where we were travelling. We noticed we were already busted and we honestly with nervous voices replied, "Oman". He called on police officers who came and picked us up. - Katherine

Anticipating challenges that might come on the way, migrants are promised to be taken abroad for work, even if they were to be stopped at the first attempt. This is though possible only if they do not in any way cooperate with the authorities and divulge the smugglers. Katherine, in the citation below, spoke more on this.

> They had strongly warned us not to give out any information about them, so we did not give the police anything on them. After a while, the police released us without charges. Back to Kampala, we called the agents who ensured us we would travel soon, this time using another route. They boarded us on a bus to Kenya the next day, where we also met challenges and fears but eventually reached Oman. - Katherine

There were varied experienced circumstances regarding the respondent's employment contracts. While some did not sign any contracts, others signed papers they didn't fully understand due to language barriers. Many, especially those who travelled with unregistered brokers, had to settle for oral agreements.

> I asked for a contract when I got there, but my boss told me openly that he would not give me any. He promised though that if I´m honest in his work, he will be frank with me. - Brian

5.3.2. Economical facilitation of the migration process

The migration process requires economic resources to meet the financial costs that come with it. All the migrants and respondents for this research performed different payments to achieve employment in the Middle East. The total amount of money paid among the informants varied between 1 500 000 to 4 500 000 Ugandan shillings, around 409-818 US dollars. Different strategies and sources were utilised to collect the needed money. Most strategies meant collecting from several sources. Borrowing money from broker/recruitment agents was one option that several women used.

> I paid a total of 500,000 shillings before travel. But then, my first two months' salary went to the person who facilitated my travelling process. It was part of the deal since I didn't have the money needed in cash. - Rebecka

Rebecka´s citation further illustrates arbitrariness of broker's payments but also the kind of reliability relationship that appears between the broker and the migrant. Borrowing money from brokers created a possibility for those coming from poor families also to have the opportunity of taking employment abroad.

Selling off assets to collect the needed resources for the migration process as Magdalena narrates in the citation below was not unique. In the struggle of raising the necessary funds, some had to sell family assets to top up that from other sources.

> My mom sold hens and goats and even some maize and cassava. But those earning were not enough, so I still had to take a loan in advance from the broker in my village how facilitated my travel process. - Magdalena

The luckiest had a family member or relative who not only had the economic muscles but also the willingness to facilitate the entire process economically, as one of the migrants narrates below.

> I told my grandpa about the plans of taking employment abroad, and he promised me support. He freely gave me 2 000 000 UGX without any conditions, even about paying him back. - Filip

5.4. Gendered work and living Experience

The informants´ experience of the Gulf, of both working and living conditions, had some apparent differences generally based on their gender. For example, the interviewed males talked of clearly regulated working hours with possibilities of getting paid for overwork hours, for some with an option of declining offers of working overtime as the citation below exemplifies.

> I had to work for 8 hours a day, but my boss could give me chances of leaving earlier sometime and other days ask if I wanted to work extra. I did not work Fridays and half Saturdays. - George

On the contrary, none of the female informants reportedly had regular weekly offs. Heavy daily duties with long working days, exceeding 12 hours and in most cases without any guarantee of a day off in a week was the reality for close to all of the female research respondents, as Sara complained in the citation below.

> One of the challenges I generally faced was that they [employers] didn't seem to understand that a person gets tired. I would wake up at 4 am to start my duties and get to sleep after midnight. They could not give me even a day off. Working all time. - Sara

There are apparent gender differences in the roles/type of work done between the interviewed men and women. While men reported being occupied with different kinds of jobs, e.g. construction, farming and warehouse jobs, all women in this study were involved in domestic housework, as housemaids (see informants profile table). Besides their housework obligations for the place they were employed at, the housemaids reported being regularly lent away for work by their employers, in most cases to the employers' extended family without their approval or getting any compensation.

> Sometimes they could lend me to other relatives of theirs who had no housemaid. I performed housework there as well. The burden of work was too heavy. - Natasha

Even living conditions such as accommodation were different for men and women. Men were accommodated in the employing companies' workers houses sharing a sleeping room with 3-8 people generally from the same country.

> I shared a sleeping room with three other guys, accommodation and transport to work were catered for by my employer. We could hang out, play games or just listen to music together after work. - Kenneth

Women, on the other hand, stayed at work 24-7 in the households, either having their sleeping quarters or using the dining room as sleep quarters during night. Those who used open places as their sleeping quarters talked of having experienced fear or having been victims of sexual abuse.

> One big problem I had was that one of the two men in the house wanted to use me sexually, which I had refused. So I spent six months there, sleeping in fear of getting raped before I eventually changed place. - Sara

In a vulnerable working and living situation, the women respondents decried the exploitative conditions they faced, which affected both their physical and psychological integrity. Wives and children of the Gulf families are allegedly the main perpetrators causing female housemaids experienced physical, mental and verbal to torture. One of the women talked about how working in an Arabic family made her feel having lost her dignity. This was as the family´s child could spit in her food, and the child´s mother would only laugh at this behaviour. Several other informants narrated how their female bosses could bark at them as if they were kids.

> I think I was shedding tears for 4-5 months during my first period there. The child of my boss treated me like a dog, and his mom did not even care. I had never experienced being dehumanised to that extent of someone spitting in my food. The children of my boss could bully me, and call me a monkey and I can't do anything about it. Their mother did nothing to help, but once she was not happy with something I did, then she barked at me as if I was worth nothing. I felt so small. - Juliet

Even as the working conditions were challenging, the female respondents further spoke of challenges in changing place of work/household to work. They explained that they were dependent on their perpetrator to get to the employment centre where they could either be sent back to Uganda or get re-employed by another household.

> I took courage and told my boss that I would not do any more work. I insisted he should drive me back to the agency's office. I wasn't sure who

> had my passport because they took it as soon as I arrived at the airport and there was no public transport in my area either, so I had to beg them to drive me back. - Natasha

One lady elaborated on how she was physically harassed and had to go on a week's hunger strike before her bosses could accept and implement her will and desire of changing work household.

> The man at the office slapped me twice. I was forced to return to the same home for three-time. The third time my boss also wanted to beat me when we got home. I then decided to hunger strike for close to a week. It was then that he decided to take me back to the office. Then they got me a new family to work for. - Faith

Deciding to breach the employment contract with a current household employer was also described as a tricky choice due to the terms of the employment contract and conditions at the employment centre (office). Once housemaids changed household, their salary for the past month was deducted. If the person had worked for less than six months at their current place, the new contract meant signing up for another two years.

> I didn't want to change the workplace because once you changed a working place, the new location also wanted you to work for two years. I was determined to stay so that I wouldn´t miss to get home earlier, see my children, but the conditions were unbearable. - Juliet

Many like Juliet tried, therefore, to avoid a new contract as long as possible, since it would consequently mean a longer time before meeting family and loved ones back in their home country. They tried to endure and persevere for the first six months before the change.

Aside from the harassments migrants experienced at work, they described poor living conditions at the agency centres where they were taken for inevitable household changes. The interviewed women described the office sleeping headquarters as crowded accommodation with food scarcity, as Faith retells below.

> But at the office, life was not easy there either. There were lots of women there who were also returned for different reasons. We survived on prayers as we were given very little food and lived very many in tiny rooms. - Faith

The process of getting new employment was considered disgraceful. Getting a new job was according to those who experienced the situation comparable to human trafficking.

> At the office, it was like experiencing the slave trade we heard about at school. Employers came, took a look at all the displayed African ladies available. They could point and ask questions about anyone they found interesting, discuss with the agency officers and eventually sign a contract and pay after making their choice. Our job as a potential good [employees] was to smile and look attractive. - Natasha

5.4.1. Social life experiences

> After work, I was free. I used to watch films on my laptop or go out for physical exercise. I played a lot of football as well. On Fridays, it is a red day there. I could go hang out with some friends. - George

The quotation above from George is similar to that of the other male informants' social life experience in the Gulfs. Despite that story, all respondents elaborated on experiencing significant social isolation during their time in the Gulf.

> The arrangement in the UAE is that all the migrants live separate to where the nationals live. I don't think they even have public transport or so in their areas. In social places like clubs, it is hard for you as an immigrant to go to the same places they go to. - Kenneth

In an attempt to explain the social isolation that he experienced, George highlighted that "Racial discrimination is overwhelming in that country (UAE) [...]." The informants experienced racial discrimination both at work but also in public places like supermarkets and streets. The kind of segregation Kenneth highlights in the quotation above applied mostly to men. As presented before, all the female informants lived with the families they were working for.

For the housemaid women, social life was non-existent. There was nothing purely disconnected from work as they spent all their time in the Gulfs at work. The remaining option for the women migrants was to build up virtual internet communities where they could socialise with others as Natasha remembers.

> We had established networks of Ugandans on WhatsApp sharing experiences with other Ugandans working in Oman as housemaids, but also connecting with family and friends at home (in Uganda). - Natasha

Some of the women defined social life as almost similar to meeting other Ugandans in the Gulf. Sporadic meetings with a Ugandan was, therefore, considered a social climax for some.

> I didn't like the Arabs; they are bad-hearted. They could hardly let me get out of the gate. Even meeting other Ugandans was difficult, but the chance I had was when I went a few meters outside to dump rubbish. There I got to meet a Ugandan working in the neighbourhood. I was, of course, delighted to meet her. - Sara

Glints of social life for these migrant women could also occur depending on if the employer had relatives who also employed a Ugandan worker.

> When we went with the household to visit their relatives, I found another Ugandan there working for them. We could meet and share our experiences whenever the families met. It was a nice feeling to speak Luganda face to face with someone in the Arabs. - Natasha

5.4.2. Cultural limitations

The cultural limitation was also part of the experienced challenge during their time in the Middle East. Culturally, the language barrier was one challenge most of the migrants cited, as Katherine confirms.

> I never learnt Arabic. It is a difficult language. Arabic was a challenge and made life more difficult. I preferred using English because I did not like them and their culture. - Katherine

Another cultural challenge was related to the items of clothing, something only women complained about and faced.

> Clothing was challenging. They force one to wear according to their Arabic cultural and religious dressing codes. Some places got no air conditioner, which made life tough, especially during the summer times. - Magdalena

Many of the interviewees were Christians and had no experience of living in a culturally, Islam dominated society. Parts of the ethical and cultural challenges were, therefore, unbearable. The fasting ritual or religious practice was such a challenge as the citation below clearly exemplifies.

> Everybody in their home must fast during the Ramadan period, and I had too. I was not used to fasting, so it caused me sickness, and I developed sore throats. - Natasha

5.4.3. Migration as a positive or negative experience

Despite the adversities experienced when it comes to living and working conditions in the Gulfs, migrants expressed an overall general satisfaction of their migration for work in the Gulf.

The informants described a positive general prevailing ideal belief (working/living abroad is equal to being successful) within themselves and their societies of origin associated with travelling and working abroad. Almost all of the respondents, even those who came home earlier than planned, spoke of migration and experience of working abroad as something positive they had achieved.

> It was a tough and tedious life period. Nevertheless, what I learnt there in terms of responsibility, working hard, and the economic achievements made it worth. - Sara

Like the citation above shows, the migrants spoke positively about their movement, particularly as they compared their life before or with what they had accumulated through employment abroad. Even comparisons to those that “stayed home” are frequent in the conversation related to the overall experience of migration as the citation below indicates how it earns one respect as a successful person.

> When a person from abroad gets back home, people he looks and thinks big of that person. People think big of us, and some even fear to approach us. A returnee´s word weighs more even in the family and friends who know he has been abroad. - Brian

Again in what can seem like a paradox, although most generally look favourably on the outcome of their period abroad, none of them expressed desires or ambitions of making life in the Gulf. Many stated they would not like to start a life in the Gulfs. The unfavourable experienced working and living conditions but also an increased appreciation of their original culture and social life in their home country motivated why migrants did not want to live in the Gulfs, as can be seen in the citation below.

> I would only travel back for the money but not otherwise. Life and freedom here in Uganda are incomparable to the Arabs. - Natasha

5.5. Women's care responsibilities

For most of the interviewees in this research, the procedure to migrate also meant different levels of disclaiming or delegating responsibilities. One such shared responsibility was childcare. One interviewee who had six children by the time she travelled for work, explained emotionally the painful process of making her children understand that they would not see her for two years.

> The night before the day I was leaving, I sat with my kids and explained to them that I was going for a job abroad. The youngest child was 11months. It was heartbreaking but necessary for a better living standard. We humbled ourselves, prayed as tears dropped. They were too young to understand it all. I had hired a nanny to whom I handed them over. - Natasha

Unlike the case of Natasha´s kids, most of the children of the labour migrants were taken care of by their grandmothers, as mentioned earlier.

> I left the kids with my mom; they were used to her since I lived with her most times. They also spent school holidays with her before; I started working abroad. - Rebecka

Other responsibilities mentioned by the informants included taking care of younger siblings and sick relatives. Brian explains the duties he had before travel.

> Mom has problems with her legs, and my young sister is mentally sick. I was their caretaker and breadwinner besides caring for my wife and my two children. I left that responsibility to my wife. - Brian

Jobs and businesses were also among responsibilities they had to handover, due to their employment in the Middle East.

> Before I moved abroad, I was working as a laboratory staff at Kiwoko hospital. I worked there for two years before I resigned to take on a job in the Middle East. - George

Business or entrepreneur projects as occupation before travel appeared more among women in this research. Sara is one of the entrepreneurs before and after a period in the Gulfs. She explains below on her situation after working abroad.

> When I came back, I took over my business shop for clothes. I had left it in the hands of a good friend to me. I had regular contact with her, trying

> to keep track of how it was going. On return, I boosted it by adding in more capital. - Sara

5.6. Income and income use

All respondents reported significant income increase in the Gulf compared to their income in their country of origin. Among them, the monthly earned salary varied between approximately 700 000 UGX (190, 40 US$) to 1 600 000 Ugandan shillings (435, 20 US$).

Despite the recognised significant income increase among the interviewees, many exhibited dissatisfaction concerning their salary with the motivation that the wage was not in proportion to the work burden.

> I got 80 reals, about 700,000 shillings. Although it was better than what I got in Uganda, it is not proportional to the burden of work, I begged for higher, but they did not approve. - Rebecka

The salary differences are evident between the male and female informants. Of the 12 informants, all of the eight women had a monthly salary not exceeding 85 0000 UGX. Men, on the other hand, reportedly made between 1 million to 1.7 million UGX for the equivalent time.

> I earned 1,650 dirhams per month, which is about 1, 7 million Ugandan currency. As an individual who had never received a reasonable salary before, I was excited. I was very thankful to God for my earning. - Filip

Notable is also the fact that the female informants to a greater extent reported receiving a lower salary at arrival than what was promised to them before departure.

> Contrary to the 80 reals I agreed to be paid, reaching the place of work my boss wanted to pay me 60 reals. She argued 80 was too much. We settled for 70 reals per month. - Magdalena

Almost all the respondents were able to save money from their income in the Gulfs. They reported having had minimal spending, since accommodation and for many, even food was catered for by their employers. Several of the interviewees revealed having spent as little as 15% of their monthly income on their consumption.

> Here money is to be milked. One has to save little, little at a time to collect a reasonable amount of money that a person working abroad can save just from a month's salary. I saved more money than I had done, ever. - Sara

Many sent remittances regularly, and the majority could at the least save or send 50 % of their monthly salary.

> Most times I sent all the money I got to my mum. I did not have anything to spend it on. I was always home without paying for rent or food. - Magdalena

The remittances went to finance different things. Individually interviewed, the research respondents spoke of grown financial responsibilities related to their families and relatives but also friends as a result of working abroad. The increased and for some the new responsibility meant catering for their own children´s or their young relatives´ school fees, and family members´ hospital bills together with usual home consumption.

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> The plan was to finish building my home, and I did, and also constructed a borehole which will help in my other business project. I want to buy land and keep animals. I have also planted avocado. Besides that, my mother's house and mine got connected to the electricity network. - Brian

Brian, in the citation above, gave an account of his achievements for what he further described as "success" for 1-year work in the Gulf. Following the desired outcome as reported before, land purchasing and home housing was financially the most prioritised use of the income and the sent remittances.

> I boosted the house I already had. I bought beds for my children because they were sleeping on poor materials. […] Since I came back, I started up a poultry farming business from the money I earned in the Arabs. - Natasha

Boosting and starting up small businesses, e.g. agricultural projects as the quotation above indicates, was part of what the earned salaries from the Gulfs were used for. It is also important to note that for some the remittances sent of the earned income were used for loan repayments. These loans were used for the facilitation of guest works migration processes.

> Since the broker facilitated my travelling process financially, I paid him my two first months' salary, which I had no problem with since he helped me earn more than I could ever make in Uganda. - Rebecka

5.7. Benefits to the community

The interviewees spoke differently about how their employment abroad had benefited their home society. On this, most females referred to the benefits of their families. Otherwise, two of the research respondents argued with pride that their migration abroad benefited their home community on a broader level.

Returning to Uganda after 3,5 years in the Gulfs, Filip took a job as a recruiting officer for a local recruiting company in Uganda. Below he explains what this means for his community.

> Since I came home from Dubai, I have been working for a company recruiting housemaids to the Middle Eastern countries. In my work, I have encouraged girls in my village and convinced many to take the opportunity of working abroad. In that way, my society has benefited from my experience of working abroad. I even help some of them with money if they want to travel but do not have money. They come and thank me afterwards. - Filip

To Brian, the borehole primarily intended for his own business is an appreciated asset to and by his society. According to him, it is a result of his earnings in the Gulfs.

> It is something I am proud of, which I achieved thanks to the money I earned in the Middle East. People come and thank me for the borehole, and since it is on my land plot, I see how it helps many every day as they fetch water from a shorter distance than before. - Brian

5.8. Success, modification and fiasco

Although most of the Gulf-guest workers interviewed for this research recount positive achievements, few if any had managed to attain what they had gone for exactly. In most cases, money was not enough for the goals and dreams set before travel. Magdalena gives an example of this.

> My ambitions were to buy a plot of land and build a big house on it. My calculations did not work out well. I came back and had seven million shillings, and it was not enough to purchase a plot and build a house. Money was just not there, as other responsibilities were more urgent. - Magdalena

Many migrants had to modify their plans, at least the timeline within which their goals would be achieved. The hope that these goals will be reached was living.

> For the future, I hope to build a house in the land plot I bought and also find capital to start my own business in Uganda and stay with my kids. I want to travel again, preferably to another country than Oman. I don't mind very much working as a housemaid because I´m now used to it, provided they pay me my salary and on time. - Rebecka

Despite the decried inhuman experiences, the hope is still set on the opportunities of employment in the Gulfs. Like Rebecka, both men and other women informants wanted to change the country of work within the Gulf region. Several of the respondents by the time of the interview were either in the process of going back to the Middle East for work or would like to do so in future as Kenneth further confirms.

> I´m looking for opportunities in Bahrain; I want a bigger salary. I don't want to work in the middle for too long, maximum five years maybe. I am looking for capital to start up something here (in Uganda) and return as soon as possible. - Kenneth

Kenneth in the citation above also pinpoints something that several other respondents aspiring to work in the Gulfs again do. They were clear that it was for economic reasons and nothing else, as Katherine clearly stated in the citation below.

> I go there only for money, but I would not love to live there. Even though they are rich, life there is not enjoyable, it's rather harsh and injustice. I go there to get money so I can live the life I want in Uganda. - Katherine

Three of the interviewed Gulf guest workers had lousy luck and returned home before the end of their contracts. Contrary to the other respondents, they were all sceptical to migrating back to the Middle East. For one of them, the migration was a fiasco.

> I accomplished nothing with travelling to the Arabs. Besides paying back the loan I had taken to travel and buying a cell phone for my sister, I bought a pig, but it died. I was even stupid enough to give money to my husband. Nothing has helped. I spent 1year and three months in Oman and gained nothing other than saying that I have also worked abroad. - Faith

Different reasons lay behind the earlier returning for the three informants. For the women, the miserable life and working conditions forced them to come home while the only male came home because his mother was reportedly very sick.

Besides and in line with the “money not being enough” lays the informants perception of money before departure did not match with reality. As a matter of fact, many expressed a change of goals or dreams to bigger ambitions during their time in the Middle East. Some who went with ambitions to accumulate fees for further studies were now looking for business capital. The growth of financial responsibility –especially regarding family and relatives is another explanation of why money was not enough for their original ambitions.

6. Discussion

In this study, the social, economic and cultural characteristics of male and female migratory experience of rural youth from Uganda into the Gulf countries have been explored. As mentioned in the theory chapter, the three different theoretical approaches on macro, meso and micro level combined bring out the complexity of migration and the various aspects (especially gender) within which migratory experiences of men and women have been discussed in this chapter. The research questions give the basis for the structure for this chapter.

6.1. What are the main motives and objectives behind labour emigration for men and women from rural Uganda to Gulf countries?

By applying the *push and pull factor* approach on the empirical data, it was possible to explore different aspects of the migrants' experience while working in the Gulfs. This approach was particularly beneficial in regards to the reasons behind their choices to migrate from the rural areas of Uganda to the Gulfs. Visible within the collected data are also the four various aspects that, according to Lee´s model, affect/interplay in the potential migrants' decision. These include 1) conditions at the place of origin, 2) conditions at the site of destination, 3) the intervening obstacles and 4) the personal factors (Faridi 2018).

The most evident reasons why the research participants moved were related to the economy. In this regard, both the NE and NELM theory are supported by the findings of this paper. The interviewees that comprised both unemployed, self-employed and employed individuals, all looked for higher income in the destination country, hence the evidence being in support of NE theory. Indeed, the opportunities for employment and higher-income expectations in the Gulfs based on the interviewees' information about the destination place is to be regarded as a crucial pull factor to the site of destination.

Although not all of the informants lacked jobs before travel, they cited the low-income and lack of employment opportunities as causes for their migration. That

response corresponds to the facts that Uganda has one of sub-Saharan Africa´s highest youth unemployment rates (Ighobor 2013; Magelah & Ntambirweki 2014; Bandiera *et al.* 2017). Lack of economically satisfactory opportunities at the place of origin is the crucial reason behind migration, also according to the interpretation of NE and NELM theories (Ho 2011). In other word, low-wages and poor opportunities of employment pushed the participants to migrate.

For some of the female informants, the pull and push factors were connected to their autonomy, generally from men. Reflecting the cultural impact of having been nurtured to be a mother and handle unpaid domestic work, many fell victim to that system and were therefore financially highly dependent on support from men. The men could be either their spouse or of other relationship. Several of them, thus, described that they wanted to break out of economic dependency (push factor) as a reason for why they chose to migrate. The other side of the coin is again their ambitions of being able to financially support their children which they saw to be matching with the opportunities of earning their own and a higher income.

Similar to the findings of Szelenyi and Sumner (2016), the qualitative empirical data shows that the move for jobs in the Gulf was motivated by the family´s ambition to increase its income. Hence there is support for NELM within the results of this paper. In some of these cases, the decision to look for employment opportunities abroad was not individually made but instead collectively made with one or several family members. These stories make an example of how low-income household use migration not only to increase their income but to diversify livelihood means and by so doing, minimize the risks and vulnerability to shocks.

There was little criticism from the research respondents directed to international systems and structural factors related to their migration. This might be due to particular perceptions of the phenomenon among the interviewed. Nevertheless, the push/pull approach shows economic inequalities driving the migration, which corresponds to the difference in economic development, wage levels between the Gulf-states and Uganda. It is due to the dependency on higher income and employment opportunities associated with getting there that the work and living conditions can be as they are. People are desperate or in high need of income, so they go despite the exploitative conditions. The dependency thesis can be seen in the degree of exploiting cheap labour, the poor work conditions, the lack of labour security, racial discrimination, gender-based violence and the role of remittances, characteristics even Gavanas (2013) pointed out in her research. Castles et al. (2014) claim that the phenomenon of migration will continue not because of individual choices but due to the powerful economic, political and social processes that drive it.

Andersson and Johansson (2013) state that “Push and pull factors […] can be based on the view upon the rural as retrograde and old-fashioned when, at the same time, the urban couples to modernity and development”. In the same way, the youth from rural Uganda certainly had a view of the Gulfs representing modernity and development and their society of origin the opposite, taken from their sharing.

Some of the respondents in this research were entrepreneurs with different business projects before travelling. In addition to the respondents' age, this would match the description of the typical migrants as young, from the rural, who already have a job, are entrepreneurial oriented and with higher mobility. The description would furthermore correspond with the criticism of migration as care and brain-draining phenomenon for the sending society, a statement that would be supported by (Adesote & Osunkoya 2018).

6.2. Which processes did Ugandan rural male and female youths go through to get employment in the Gulfs?

A variety of themes regarding the migration processes of the participants were more prominent in the empirical data. On this aspect, the research participants elaborated on the emotional, bureaucratic and financial facilitation of their migration. It is evident in the results of this study that both the individual and structural (macro-meso-micro) level factors interplay and have a role in the migration processes. In other words, the conditions that determined the informants’ migration processes are affected by structures and systems existent in their societies. These structures are embodied as institutional policies, laws and norms that influence their processes.

In comparison to the systems and structures, the individual is like a ball in a football match. Although every move is dependent on what the players do, the ball´s place in the game is significant. The individuals’ networks and beliefs closely interact with society forming the processes and influencing decisions. Conceptually, the NE, NELM and the world system theory all have theoretical tools that intercept these factors at different levels.

All respondents, without exception, got support in one way or another, even though the amount of support differed. For many, the idea of considering employment abroad came from a family member. The emotional support from family networks, especially those with experience of working in the Gulfs, played a role in the migrants´ decision to migrate. From the results, this support was also crucial for several of the labour migrants to remain persistent and fulfil their contracts. The emotional support was important especially with the background of several negative reports on female domestic workers’ experience in the Gulfs. The reports

cites stories of abuses, social isolation and other emotionally stressing factors (Meaza *et al.* 2019).

Castles et al. (2014) pointed out that it takes significant resources to carry out international migration, and the process of finding funds for migration was indeed a struggle for most informants. There are fees paid to the private recruitment agencies, although many countries, e.g. UAE, prohibit or set limitations on fees paid to them (Massey *et al.* 2004). Family but also other social networks were central in the financial facilitation of the informants' migration procedure. By the NELM approach, many migrants migration was part of the family strategy or deliberate effort to improve and secure their livelihood. A clear example of this was the story of Mary, whose mother had to sell some of her domestic animals and the food she had grown to accumulate the needed resources for her migration. In return, Mary bought more land and could send remittances for replacing the sold animals and additionally improving the house of her mother.

Gender is at play when the women leave for work, far away from the husband, children and other family members as presented in this study's findings. It is worth noting that transnational labour migration among women also influences the family structures, including masculinities and fatherhood (Freedman 2016; Hoang & Yeoh 2011). Although the qualitative data is not very clear on changes on masculinity, some tendencies point towards exchanged roles within families. Some informants mentioned having left the responsibility for their children to the children's fathers. While this seemed to mean that those children were then taken care of by their fathers, it was clear in some cases that the fathers delegated this responsibility to their mothers (the children´s grandmothers). However, the recognition of women as breadwinners due to their employment abroad, in a culture where typically men are the primary breadwinners seemed welcomed, not only by the close family but also the extended family. This is based on the information given by the female respondents as their husbands were supportive of their migration and the reportedly grown responsibilities during their work period in the Gulfs.

Ugandan female labour migrators in this study described valuable, insecure and illegal paths in their migration processes. Several came from poor families who could not fully finance the process and instead took loans from brokers who demanded to get the first few months' salaries in repaying. The respondents reported having accumulated the finances of their migration from many different sources. It is possible to argue that the poverty among these women contributes to the vulnerability and insecure conditions and circumstances coupled to female migration to among other destinations to the Gulfs. Meaza *et al.* (2019) described several dimensions of vulnerability that Ethiopian female labour migrants faced, which were present in the empirical data of this study, including taking expensive

loans and signing contracts they did not understand. In this study, this is something possibly connected to the respondents' economic vulnerability.

Again, similarly to the Ethiopian women, the female respondents expressed uncertainty and in some cases, total ignorance when it came to the job procedure for work abroad. Many females were therefore totally dependent on assistance from the brokers, even to what may appear to be basics, such as obtaining a passport. This total dependency, either based on naivety and desperation or social trust, could also be part of the reason why many of the women never got to sign contracts for their employment.

By contrast, the men signed contracts of which they understood the content. Men generally facilitated the bureaucratic part of their migration process to a greater extent on their own. One explanation of the differences could be in the educational levels that were different between the females and males in the study but also in Uganda at large (UBOS 2014). The higher educational level among the males probably contributed to their confidence in the society, not only in meeting the various authorities which often use English. Even during the interview, for which both English and Luganda were used, males showed more confidence and used more English than women. The choice of language, especially in the context of an interview on one's experience could be a mere preference or interlinked to cultural identity and thus not related to education level. As one informant motivated "after all, we are in Uganda, and you can speak Luganda".

Another explanation for the differences in the bureaucratic facilitation between men and women could be within the social and cultural norms of gender roles within the society, as Kaisiromwe *et al.* (2019) reported. These roles could be limiting women's autonomy and implying that men should represent the women, also in meeting with the authorities. Based on the empirical data, it is most probably a combination of both. The fact that Uganda maintains the former colonial master's language as the formal language could be interpreted as the system that undermines, in this case, Uganda's independence as a nation, and its local cultures (Conrad & Rubal-Lopez 2011).

The influence of the structural components in society relating to what the government provides in terms of laws and politics is more manifestly revealed in the labour migrants´ stories on border closing. These stories further reveal how the macro levels of international relations and systems also are at the centre of labour migration. The Ugandan government's periodic ban on the externalisation of domestic labour workers to several of the Gulf countries, like Saudi Arabia and Oman, is an example of this. For this, the government cited abuses and inhuman treatment of the Ugandan domestic workers in these countries, more specifically

atrocities against women. It seems the prohibition made things worse, as several of the informants reported to have been smuggled to these countries for domestic work at the time of the bans. In other words, the ban put the women in an even more vulnerable situation where they became more dependent on smugglers over whom the government had even less control. The dependency on smugglers might leads to physical and psychological stresses as some of the female respondents revealed in this research. It should be noted that the government had a bilateral agreement with the Saudi Arabian one on the externalisation of labour, something that did not guarantee the safety of the female domestic workers there. It is arguably possible to uphold that this is a demission of international interactions that the world system theory highlights as only reinforcing inequality and injustices.

6.3. How did guest workers experience the living and working conditions in the Gulf countries?

Gardner (2011:p7) writes that ”The Gulf states attempt to consign much of this unskilled population to enclaves, particular neighbourhoods, planned `bachelor cities`, and peripheral industrial areas of the front stage of the Gulf cities.” Although Gardner further argues for the unsuccessfulness of these planned segregations in his article, this markedly coloured this research’s informants work and living experience in the Gulfs. The respondents did not only reveal the widespread standard of job and work racialisation, but also the racism and social isolation that they faced. The racialisation within work is within the hierarchical structures in a company that is based mainly on ethnicity and nationality. At the top would be the nationals owning the company, with other immigrated Arabs, Persians and South Asians in the middle (described by the informants as supervisors), and unskilled workers from sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and South-Eastern Asia at the bottom. In the last category, nationalities like Indians, Pakistanis and Filipinos were mentioned. The “supervisors” had better living standards with their own bedrooms, for example, and a higher salary. One of the informants who proudly described himself to have successfully got at least an oral promotion for his hard and excellent work decried not to have received anything showing that he was ever promoted.

Racism on the streets and in public places, such as supermarkets, was something the male respondents reportedly faced. This can be part of or at least a symptom of the conflicts that come up where the segregation between the unskilled migrant workers and citizens breaks down (Gardner 2011). Brian, one of the informants, described the social fear and unpleasantness in meetings with the Kuwaitis and said “You do not look in the eyes of their wives, it is dangerous. They can kill you, so I avoided it” Brain. Besides, it was reportedly “impossible” in general for the informants to interact with citizenries. Filip, one of the informants who had been in

the Gulf for the longest time narrated how he took a chance to visit an Emirati family but regretted it as he felt unsafe and insecure.

For the females, the story was significantly different on several points. Men had well defined and standard working hours, with weekly days off. They lived in corporate houses from work with other colleagues with the possibility of socialising. Several of them even participated in regular social activities, like soccer. Female domestic workers could only dream of all this. Their reality was heavy household work, with long and not always specified working hours, but rather a 24-hour job as they slept at work, and had no clear and regular weekly holidays and low wages in comparison. In addition to this was the inhuman and abusive treatment these women faced in the Gulf-homes something in line with Gavanas (2012) description of the feminised migration of domestic work. As reported before in the finds, several women informants equated their work and life conditions in the Gulfs with slavery. This is similar to something that Szelenyi and Sumner (2016) in their quantitative study in UAE also significantly came across – workers reported being treated like slaves. Much of these inhuman experiences were the exact motives to the Ugandan ban on its domestic worker externalisation to the Gulfs. The evidence above, in agreement with several other research findings, e.g. (Walusumbi-Mpanga 2013; Namakula 2015) suggests that there is a need for a social security legal dispensation for Ugandans working abroad, particularly in the Gulfs. The Gulf States employers should review their way of handling migrant guest workers and follow the laws of these nations. The Gulf States should work out ways of making their citizens follow the regulations and respect human rights and live up to the bilateral agreement signed with labour sending countries.

In consistency with Kambarami (2006), the significance of religion and various institutions in limiting women's opportunities and suppressing their autonomy is a recurring factor in the interview material. Due to the Muslim clothing culture, more specifically with norms on the clothing of the women, the new life in the Gulf-homes was strenuous. The change from a more or less free and colourful clothing society in a weather-friendly climate to the normative long, often single coloured and Islamic comprehensive clothing meant a reversal of the identity of these mostly Christian Ugandan young women. Contributing to the identity factor was also the language barrier which affected the cultural and social experience of life for the migrants.

Even though many women give up or are broken down and forced to return home before the end of their employment contracts or at least the norm- two year period of it (where there were no contracts) the majority build resilience. As Freedman (2016) described it, most female migrants develop strategies to cope with the challenges faced under the migration period. Here the availability of smartphones

and the internet with different social media apps like WhatsApp were utilized for social and cultural needs.

It is often argued that migrants from low-income countries where no welfare exists are desperate to acquire foreign citizenship in high-income countries (Kadiri 2015). However, none of the interviewed informants in this research was close to that description. To the contrary, many expressed that they were only in the Gulfs for the money. Besides the bad experiences, this could also be since migrants; mainly the unskilled labour migrants can hardly get citizenship or directly take part of the welfare in the Gulfs, something even the informants expressed knowledge about.

6.4. How do migrants evaluate their time in the Gulf in relation to themselves and others?

In this study, most informants recognised a significant increase in income and wealth as their biggest achievement for their work period in the Gulfs.
Remittances are central in the different discussions of labour migration. It is also generally recognized that remittances, although most researchers refer to the financial and economic aspect, also include the cultural, political and social ideas (Andersson & Johansson 2013).

Money, assets, business capital and school fees are the different results of 1-3 years´ employment for Ugandan guest workers in the Gulfs. All respondents sent remittances home in the form of money during their employment time in the Gulfs. Almost every informant had bought land either for home housing or agriculture activities.

Many informants reported of also having invested some of their earnings in an income-generating business. This result appears with the picture of Ugandans as being very entrepreneurial, which was confirmed by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report (2015). Uganda, with 28% of adults owning or co-owning a business, was ranked as the most entrepreneurial country in the world (Singer *et al.* 2015).

It should be noted that although it was more evident among the female respondents, the benefits of the earning in the Gulf were also ascribed to their family. The difference was that while the women who generally were mothers, talked of life improvement for their children and caring for a parent, the men, of whom only one had a child spoke of support to their parents and other members of the extended family. This is also backed by the UNPF (2011) statement that also upholds that

women send home an equal amount of remittances to men generally, although they earn less.

Contribution to home society was also part of the story told by the rural youth that had been working in the Gulfs. Besides the contributions to the economy of their communities through their own business and better schooling of children, three specific things were mentioned. One was the development brought about through building houses. The second concerned a water borehole one of the informants built for his business projects but which many were allegedly grateful for as they got clean water closer to their homes. A third contribution was mentioned by a male respondent who after returning home was working as a recruitment agent. He worked to specifically encourage other youth (mostly girls) from his community to look for jobs in Gulf countries. By doing this, according to him, he helped unemployed, and people with low income get opportunities for improving their lives. This could be a further explanation apart from more significant social acceptance of why and how migration becomes a trend in some areas (Andersson & Johansson 2013). These developments contribute to the arguments of labour migration as a gain/contributor to the sending society's development.

Again on remittances, different skills such as language (Arabic), baking and cooking, work ethics, economic budgeting/saving, child nurturing ways and social welfare systems were among the things that different informants mentioned as having learned and brought home after employment abroad. The aspects above give an example of the political, social and cultural remittances.

It is essential to mention that several of the immigrants' attempts to live a better life through migration end up as a failure, not least among women in housework and especially in Arab countries (Massey *et al.* 2004). The bad experiences of inhuman treatment, abuses in combination with cultural shocks and social isolation makes the situation unbearable, forcing several to return home before completing their contracts. For some as the empirical evidence indicated, the earning abroad were only enough to repay migration loan and self-transportation. This means that their migration was an economic, social and time loss. The empirical data of this research similar to Massey *et al.* (2004) indicate that early returnees develop a more sceptical attitude towards retaking employment in the Gulf States.

7. Ending remarks

The results of this study showed that the main reason for the Ugandan – Gulf country migration was employment and income increment. Consequently, for many, taking on work in the Gulfs, even if it is a semi/unskilled job, is preferable to a low paying professional job in Uganda. Worth even when it means missing out on the precious social life, freedom of movement and at times not meeting children at least for two years. Income increment for individuals and households and economic independence for men and women was a fact. To this, both the NELM and NE theories have conceptual explanations. Although women face harsh conditions, they show resilience and even though several do not realise their goals, many do obtain improvements in the lives of their own, their families and to some extent their societies.

Knowing of the entrepreneurial spirit in Uganda, before the study, I expected that the migrants would spend much of their earnings on business and income-generating projects. To the contrary, the results suggest that buying land, and home construction were of higher priority among the labour migrants interviewed. Although most had entrepreneur projects, the amount of money invested in this was not close to the ones mentioned above. Here the structuralists to which the world system theory count would argue that since most of the migrants' money is spent on domestic consumption, it exhibits the dependency in south-north migration. Many of the informants talked of plans of going back to the Gulfs for employment, something that could be pointing to the tendencies of dependency on the high-income countries also recognised in the world system theory.

The necessary and almost vital need of emotional, social and financial facilitation fulfilled by the migrants' social network/family makes a strong point for the NELM theory in this research. Not the least as the temptation for travel is often coupled with fear caused by the information on the different risks accompanying employment in the Gulfs. The need for someone to say it will be fine seems evident in the informants' stories.

The NELM and NE narrow way of looking at migration in a rather micro way, (although the first mentioned tries) falls short of identifying central structural aspects of migration. The disguise of Ugandan women's identity in the Gulf-homes and the insecure avenues of being smuggled and other challenges they are forced

to face fall in this category. Like Gavanas (2013) argues on women´s migration, domestic work is both feminised and racialized. These are aspects worth noticing on labour migration analysis. This calls for gender analysis and consideration in bilateral agreement and institutional policies concerning migration. Further preparedness for foreign culture and employment abroad should also be emphasised for the labour migrants.

Berhanu (2012) and (de Haas 2010) hold that theorising the decisions behind people's migration and where they migrate is complex. Push and pull factors are not always easy to separate, and the heterogeneity of migration experiences undermines the theoretical pits of viewing migration as negative or positive. In this study migration for employment and income-increment is a push and pull factor depending on what the analysis focuses on (sending or receiving society). The high youth unemployment, low-income increment possibilities, poor households and the stories of females who are economically dependent on their male relatives in Uganda among others could here be considered as push factors.

7.1. Further Research

Now that the notion of migration has changed and female participation in international labour migration is significant, the aspect of gender studies should also develop intact. Here the questions regarding masculinity and fatherhood for the left behind husbands are potential aspects worth researching. Perhaps the exploitation by the sending countries of their own citizens through labour externalisation also needs to be studied from a gender perspective. These are some of the aspects that are not part of this study, but that would make interesting and useful research and should, therefore, be considered in further research on the topic.

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Acknowledgements

Several people have along the way contributed with their time knowledge and encouragement for the work of this master's thesis. Here I will acknowledge and thank some who have been central in the process.

First of all, I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor Assoc. Prof. Ildikó Asztalos Morel. Her professional advice and guidance on this thesis are invaluable.

Secondary, I would like to send special thanks to all the informants that freely gave of their time, and without whom, this study would not have been possible.

Lastly, thank you, friend, family, course leaders and course mates for the support and encouragement throughout the entire thesis time.

Uppsala 2020-05-21
Denis Bisaso