

Gender Norms in Transition: The Role of Female Youth Migration and its Implications for Family Formation in Senegal

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Abstract

In the face of major economic shifts that have occurred in Senegal since the 1970s, internal migration has become a fact of life for young people who are struggling to find stable employment in a broader range of occupations and livelihoods. This is particularly true for adolescent and young women who migrate to cities seasonally or permanently to earn income in domestic service. Through this process, young female migrants acquire greater autonomy and sexual independence than traditionally tolerated in rural Senegal. This challenges and contributes to shifting social norms and practices around marriage and family formation in general. Some of the most visible effects of norm change and practices are reflected in the large increases in the proportion of young women who delay marriage and childbearing which, in turn, have led to rising rates of cohabitation, premarital sexual activity, and adolescent pregnancies. This paper raises the following questions: How does female youth migration affect socio-sexual-moral norms regarding female identity, marriageability and status within and with regard to both families of origins and marital families (or other familial formations)? What does that mean for gender equality?

This paper addresses these key issues by drawing on qualitative data collected in a rural and urban community of Senegal in October 2014. A total of 79 women and men were interviewed through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, including unmarried women and young women who married after the age of 18 as well as parents whose daughters delayed marriage beyond 18. Key informant interviews with elders, religious leaders, teachers, nurses, and service providers were also included. The findings suggest that two important processes help explain the impact upon gender norms, roles, and relations in family formation and its implications for agency and gender equality. One is the notion of individualization, which induces the erosion of parental control over their children and spurs greater individual autonomy, which, in turn, increases young people's discretion and opportunities for informal contact between sexes. This has significant implications for women's social roles and responsibilities in family life, especially with regard to sexual norms and motherhood. The second mechanism refers to the monetization of social relations and transactions, reflected through economic insecurity, bride price inflation, and transactional relationships and sex. This process plays an important role in redefining feminine role expectations.

These findings suggest that the forces of globalization, particularly where they act through increased migration and urbanization, are important factors in altering family arrangements and formation. They further shed light on what that means for gender equality, providing programmatic guidance to ensure migrant women's and girls' voice, agency, and rights.

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Introduction

High rates of migration have been one of the enduring features of the globalization process over the latter half of the twentieth century and early part of the twenty-first. In large part, this is a reflection of the emergence of an increasingly linked global economic structure that has created a high demand for low-wage workers in various sectors, particularly in urban areas. At the same time, demand for low-wage workers in some sectors is linked to declining economic and agricultural opportunities in rural areas and, in some countries, to defunct industrial work as factories move on to places where labor is even cheaper. As a result, migration has become in many settings the “standard model of social advancement” (Hathie 2014). While much of this migratory process has occurred across borders, the overwhelming majority of population movements have been internal, primarily between rural and urban areas. The seminal work of Lewis (1954) and Fei and Ranis (1961) views rural-urban migration primarily as a response to the high demand for labor in the industrial sector, though others have highlighted the importance of economic and social opportunities, such as health care and education, as key drivers of this process (Adjamagbo and Koné 2013; Garenne 2004; Delaunay 2003; Antoine 2002). This has created new opportunities for young women to enter the labor market who seek new ways to secure their daily life and support their families left behind, turning them into income generators. Many young female migrants, therefore, move to cities to work as maids, a phenomenon that has become central to the economy of rural villages.

The changing dynamics of the labor forces inherently destabilize gender norms, expectations, and relationship within the family by throwing into doubt the conformity to gender expectations related to women’s domesticity and motherhood. As Barbara Risman (1999) argues in her research on American families, *Gender Vertigo*, “Gender expectations are socially constructed and sustained by socialization, interactional expectations, and institutional arrangements. When individuals and collectivities change socialization, expectations and institutions, the gender structure changes.”³ Therefore, any changes in institutional arrangements and expectations disrupt norms, either by facilitating or resisting the spread of alternative normative frameworks. The rural out-migration of young women illustrates this tension between traditional and the changing construction of gender roles. For women residing in rural areas, migrating to a city can be empowering; it provides them with new experiences that oppugn their subordination to men as they discover their own capability in being significant income generators. At the same time, this new gain in autonomy and independence violates conventional gender roles of women belonging to the domestic sphere, when young migrant women’s behaviors and personal choices fail to align in culturally expected ways. These flows have an inherently disruptive effect on gender norms, loosening traditional social networks, replacing social transactions with financial ones, and creating new opportunities for re-defining gender roles. These ideological collisions are particularly felt in the family which becomes a site of contestation in shifting gender norms and practices around marriage and family formation.

Francophone West Africa remains deeply enmeshed in this process of change. Its increased linkages to the global economy plays a major role in the emergence of large urban centers which serve as a pull factor not only for men, but increasingly for women workers from rural areas (Goldsmith et al. 2004). Statistics from the Centre for Democracy and Development (2010) confirm this trend with women today accounting for almost 50 percent of West Africa's migrant population.⁴ This is particularly the case for Senegal, the setting of the present study, whose internal female migration provides a unique perspective for examining the gendered responses and interpretations to female migration and its impact on family formation in the context of economic and social change. Senegal’s rural areas have suffered from economic transformations which have engendered a weakening in food security and farm production, with remarkable decline in arable areas and yields (IOM 2012; Ndiaye 2007). These conditions have incentivized

³ Also cited in Rhacel S. Parrenas. (2005). *Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes*. Stanford University Press: Stanford, CA, pp. 95.

⁴ West Africa Insight. (2010). Centre for Democracy and Development, 1 (9), pp. 8, September.

outmigration of young workers to urban areas, resulting in large numbers of young people with poor professional prospects who have entered (and continue to enter) urban areas in hope of finding employment, despite rising levels of urban unemployment, underemployment, and substantial insecurity (Delaunay et al. 2006; Garenne 2004, Antoine 2002, Delaunay, Antoine 1995; Pison et al. 1995). In contrast to past migration flows, however, many of these young migrants are female who are motivated by educational aspirations and the desire to seek out a new life. The emergence of Senegalese female youth migration as essential household breadwinners is inherently linked to globalization, which has resulted in a growing labor market participation of women (both professional and low-skilled) as well as deficits in care systems, creating opportunities for rural girls to come to the city and find work in the domestic sphere (Nader 2015).

Female youth migration presents a number of challenges to traditional gender roles, particularly when paired with young migrants' exposure to different social environments, the gain in economic and social autonomy, the erosion of men's economic standing, and a greater emphasis on formal schooling for girls (Adjamagbo and Koné 2013; Antoine 2002). Among the most significant of these is the challenge posed to traditional family structures, which have typically been dominated by parents and other older family members (such as uncles), with young women and girls having relatively little say in who or when they marry. Young women migrants are now exposed to empowerment trade-offs, allowing for some renegotiations of gender roles and norms with regard to family formation, creating tensions with their families and within their own environment as they challenge the traditional organization and structure of the family, particularly as it relates to the timing of marriage and sexuality. Young women and their families therefore find themselves in an uncertain position regarding gender roles and norms, with much of this uncertainty reflected in how decisions are made (and who makes them) around how they form their families.

In order to explore the migration patterns of youth female migration and its outcomes on gender norms and family formation, this paper takes Stephen Castles' framework of "social transformation," which views migration as part and parcel of other socio-economic and political processes in a context of rapid global social change (Castles 2010). Migration is therefore not seen as a distinct phenomenon catalyzing gender norm change; rather, it is a mechanism embedded in broader processes of development that, together destabilize gender norms either by promoting, reinforcing, or re-negotiating gender expectations with respect to family formation. Surprisingly, relatively little research has sought to explore migration in this context, particularly in terms of family formation dynamics and gender systems.

To fill this gap, this paper explores the following question, using unique qualitative data collected in both rural and urban Senegal: How does female youth migration affect socio-sexual-moral norms regarding female identity, marriageability and status within and with regard to both families of origins and marital families (or other familial formations)? What does that mean for gender equality?

Linking gender and migration theories with local context

Migration and gender norms: Mixed evidence

Migration is among the most noticeable aspects of globalization: a process that creates a single economy, through increasing mobility of capital, goods, and labor (Harris 2009). With the growing interdependence of the world economy, much of the movement of people takes place in diverse political, economic, and social settings, but the basic determinants of these population flows—be they internal or international—typically lie in inequalities at national levels of development, with a great impact on economies and the restructuring of labor forces (International Migration and Globalization: 231). One of the most fundamental features of globalization has been the integration of women in the labor force, compelling scholars to look at it as a "gendered phenomenon" affecting women and men differently (Hawkesworth 2006:2). Between 1960 and 2015, an increasing number of women – both single and married – have

been moving on their own to look for employment in other countries, leading to the *feminization of migration*, “a core dimension of the new age of international migration and globalization” (Donato and Gabaccia 2016). This concept has triggered much debate among migration scholars, some of whom insist that this so-called increase in female migration is simply the result of a reductionistic vision of migration as a male-centric phenomenon which has paid insufficient attention to the fact that women have been migrating since long before 1960. What has changed, however, is the way in which women migrate and the fact that the gender balance of migration flows shifts over time and varies across cultures and countries (Donato and Gabaccia 2016). Women are no longer family dependents traveling with their husbands or joining them abroad but now individuals migrating independently in search of employment opportunities (INSTRAW 2007). These movements are equally matched with extensive changes in gender roles and normative expectations within families, especially those of women as breadwinners. Increasing opportunities for women to enter the global labor market have forced them to move outside the confines of the home and, whether deliberately or coincidentally, inserted the barrier of geographical distance into marital and intergenerational relations (Parrenas 2010). Worldwide, the transition to wage-earning households has undeniably occurred with “corresponding shifts in power relations between the sexes,” producing tensions within family structures and relationships (Bigombe and Khadiagala 2003). In sub-Saharan Africa, one of the most notable disruptions in household structures is that of the re-definition of the economic and social values related to marriage and family formation, reflected in delayed marriages, prolongation of men’s and women’s singlehood, cohabitation, pre-marital sexuality and childbearing, lower fertility rates, and new forms of unions (Adjamagbo, Aguessy and Diallo 2014; Marcoux and Antoine 2014; Adjamagbo et al. 2004).

So far, a large body of research has documented the transformations of gender roles and family structures that result from women’s migration, providing mixed evidence on the extent to which migration is a driver of gender-norm change (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002; Parreñas 2001; Gamburd 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). In her study of transnational families and migrant women in Sri Lanka, Michelle Gamburd (2000) demonstrated how women’s migration engendered a shift towards more progressive social norms and power roles between women and men within the household. For example, it forced the rearrangement of household labor in transnational families by involving men in child care (Gamburd 2000). Similarly, Kabeer et al. (2011) found that Afghan refugees in Iran, when exposed to an alternative but clearly Islamic legal and policy environment that allowed women greater rights, both women and men alike reconsidered issues such as domestic violence and female education, employment and early marriage upon their return to Afghanistan (cited in Marcus and Harper 2014). In contrast, other authors suggest that migration does not necessarily have a major impact on changing traditional gender roles; depending on various factors, such as whether a female migrant lives alone at destination or with her husband’s kin, migration may produce contradictory rearrangements of family relationships and gender norms by reinforcing conservative gender attitudes. In their study on Bangladeshi returned migrants, Selim and Debnath (2009) show that men who returned from working abroad expected women to abandon the autonomy in decision-making on spending and independent mobility which they had acquired in their absence (cited in Marcus and Harper 2014). Similarly, in case studies of Egyptian and Yemeni migrant-sending communities, Taylor (1984) shows that the position of women had actually worsened in light of the growing influence of conservative interpretations of Islam (cited in de Haas 2009).

Studies like these have important implications for unveiling the complex social processes involved in migration but they also highlight the difficulty of separating migration from a broader understanding of contemporary societies in which fundamental economic and political shifts are affecting gender norms, particularly with respect to family relationships. Families are caught between conflicting ideological systems – traditional and new, further disrupted by the migration of women. This collision becomes more or less pronounced in different situations and contexts. Thus, an analysis of gender norm change in relation to family formation in the context of young women’s internal migration calls for an understanding of the interrelated nature of migration processes and local socio-cultural contexts (McKeown 2004: 171).

General patterns of youth migration

From 1990 to 2013, the number of young migrants increased from 23.2 million in 1999 to 28.2 million in 2013 (UNICEF 2014). According to the 2013 UN data on global migrant stocks, roughly 12 percent of the total international migrants are between 15 and 24 years of age, with young people representing a considerably larger share of contemporary migration flows (GMG 2013).⁵ As Heckert (2015) noted in her article on youth migration, the social and economic characteristics of the origin and destination country shape youth migration patterns. Lack of opportunities such as unemployment and under-employment and poor economic prospects, together with the desire to further education, encourage young people to move. These are often accompanied with cultural and psychosocial motivations, which, historically, have often been associated with readiness for adulthood and gain in independence (Schwartz 2009, McElroy and de Albuquerque 1988, Schlesinger 1968, cited in Heckert 2015). Political insecurity and environmental instability, in some contexts, are also important vectors in shaping youth migration (Keili and Thiam 2015).

In a more globalized world with more sophisticated industry, the demand for more educated and skilled workers has increased, expanding the need for low-skilled labor and opening the doors for women to enter the labor market. This process has generated some shifts in the global labor market, with women from industrialized nations entering the formal labor market while at the same time increasing the demand for informal domestic work, a sector typically filled by young women and girls (Gammage and Stevanovic-Fenn 2017 *forthcoming*; Heckert 2015; Palmer 2009, cited in Heckert 2015). Hochschild (2003) captures part of this process through the term ‘global care chain’, referring to the social divisions of labor of class, gender, race/ethnicity and caste reflected through the re-distribution of care work in a global economy (Hochschild 2003). Specifically, the concept of care chains focuses on how the migration of women (especially mothers) from the Global South to the Global North re-distributes women’s domestic and caring roles in their households of origin to other family members or even paid caregivers, while migrant women provide paid care for families in destination countries (Anderson 2000).

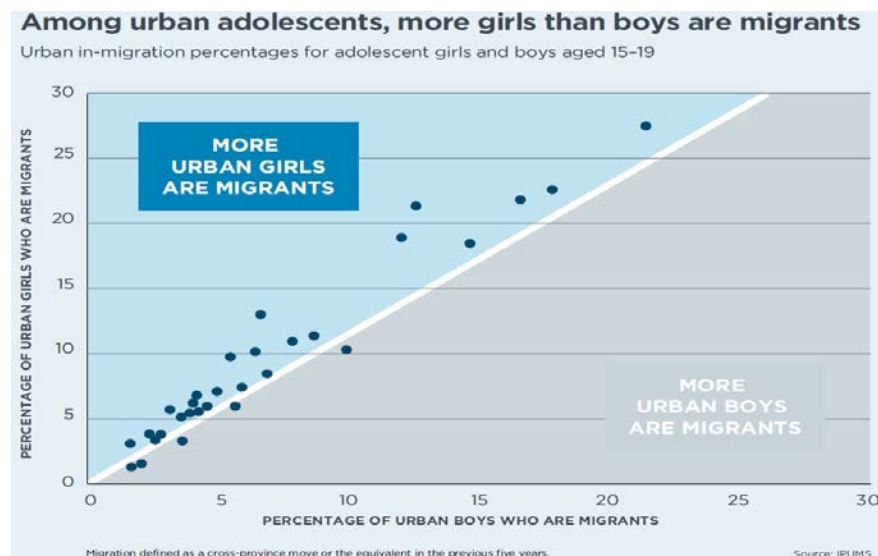
A common assumption in the scholarships on youth migration is the propensity to view adolescent and young migrants as either children who accompany their migrant parents, or who are driven by wage differentials and whose economic returns (remittances) will provide a safety net for their families left behind (Heckert 2015). Yet many of these young migrants move on their own, with evidence suggesting that the trend of those who migrate separately from parents intensifies after age 12, with the sharpest increase between ages 15 and 17 (Yaqub 2009). Based on empirical evidence, Heckert (2015) notes that youth migration tends to increase in countries where opportunities for youth are scarce and costly (Heckert 2015: 768). The author further indicates that youth migrating to attend school is associated with the increasing demand for education (Boyden 2013, cited in Heckert 2015). For example, the lack of secondary education in rural areas as well as the belief that the quality of education is superior in urban areas increases the likelihood of youth migration (Heckert 2015).

In developing countries, the primary internal migration pattern is made of movements from rural to urban areas while internationally, youth move from less-developed to more-developed countries (McKenzie 2008; Yaqub 2009, cited in Heckert 2015). Although research on youth migration is still at its nascent stage, the gender composition of these trends shows a higher rate of girls migrating than boys. Recent data (Figure 1) indicate that in many countries more 15- to 19-year-old urban migrants are female than male (Temin et al. 2013). Some of the main drivers behind this type

⁵ Global Migration Group (GMG) (2013) “Integrating migration in the post-2015 UN Development Agenda: Position Paper.” Global Migration Group. September 2013. <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/uploads/news/GMG-position-paper-Migration-and-post-2015-Development-Agenda.pdf>

of migration include the search for better educational opportunities, employment and personal development, family obligations, and the need to escape difficult conditions.

Figure 1: Percentage of urban girls and boys who are migrants



Source: Population Council, 2013

Adolescent girls who migrate to cities are often motivated by the lack of prospects in rural areas and the “tedium of agricultural work” (Temin et al. 2013). In addition, with more school doors being open to girls (reinforced by recent governments’ efforts to increase girls’ enrollment by decentralizing education as seen in West Africa), many of these girls migrate either to further their education in the city or to build savings during the dry season in order to cover school fees during the school year in the villages (Boubacar and François 2007). As noted in the Temin et al.’s report (2013) on migrant girls, “many migrants combine educational aspirations with plans to work.” Some of them anticipate that the money they will make working as maids may increase their chances to formal education (Temin et al. 2013). In this context, girls’ decision to migrate suggests that they may have already been challenging existing norms before migrating—that they already felt constrained by the lack of opportunities and a sense of freedom awaiting them in cities. The ability to act to further their own interests is not unexpected in a world that offers increasing access to modern communications and mobility, further exposing these young girls to new lifestyles and aspirations (Temin et al. 2013).

Female youth in Senegal

Internal migration in Senegal forms a significant component of the livelihood systems of millions of families and the essential mechanism for gaining access to job opportunities, social mobility and remittances. As noted, the country’s prolonged economic and agricultural crisis has triggered waves of migrants who seek new alternatives in cities in order to overcome economic constraints at home, making way for young female migrants, whose earnings as domestic servants are indispensable to the household income of the left-behind families. Also driving young women’s migration in Senegal and West Africa more generally has been the demand for and access of urban professional women to the labor markets. This, in turn, has triggered a demand for paid domestic workers to overcome the care deficit produced by the lack of adequate public child and elder care systems. Young rural female migrants end up in the informal care sector at their destination, serving mostly as domestic servants (also known as the “little domestic workers” or “entrusted girls”; IOM 2012). They tend to be between the ages of 10-17 years, typically migrate by themselves, and

live either alone or with extended family members, acquaintances, or employers. These young girls are also often students who leave rural homes to work in the city during their school holidays.

Study context

Migration in the context of economic and socio-political transformations in Senegal

The changing structure of the national economy has played a key role in gender role changes and family formation, particularly the growth of the urban economy in Dakar. In the early 1980s, Senegal liberalized its economy through the privatization and downsizing of state enterprises, market deregulation, and trade barrier reduction (Baizan and Gonzalez-Ferrer 2016). These economic changes, combined with poor ecological conditions and the decrease of government's support of farmers' incomes through the deregulation of the markets and the privatization of agricultural organizations, have caused rural income levels to fall dramatically, poverty to rise substantially, and food security to become an omnipresent threat (Bruzzone et al. 2006, cited in Baizan and Gonzalez-Ferrer 2016). To respond to these drastic conditions, the population has sought to minimize risks by diversifying earning activities through changing modes of agricultural production (mostly of subsistence crops), small trade and crafts during the dry season, and often massive seasonal or permanent migration to the cities as well as internationally (Baizan and Gonzalez-Ferrer 2016). For example, rural-out migration to Dakar saw a dramatic increase with a net influx of 33,343 internal migrants between 2003 and 2008 (République du Sénégal 2009, cited in Nader 2015). However, Senegalese cities, especially Dakar, have quickly become saturated, with living conditions, especially for migrants, declining substantially following the 1986 New Industrial Policy and leading to a massive formal-sector job loss accompanied by acute poverty (Kingston et al. 2011; Country profile Senegal 2007). In the mid-nineties, these economic pressures drastically reduced high-skilled jobs in Dakar while making way for substantial job creation in the informal sector (Bocquier 1996; Thioub, Diop, and Boone 1998; cited in Baizan and Gonzalez-Ferrer 2016). One of the most lucrative sectors that came out of this crisis (although one that also had deep roots in the French colonial era)⁶ has been domestic labor, offering the poor, uneducated, rural young women not only the opportunity for paid labor but also, for some, a space for acquiring autonomy and independence. In their study on the agricultural crisis in Senegal, Guigou and Lericollais (1991) in fact observed that young, unmarried migrant women between the ages of 10 and 20 who migrated to Dakar as domestics, began in the 1950s and particularly involved those from the Serer region, one of the sites of the present study (Guigou and Lericollais 1991, also cited in Nader 2015). Most of these women migrated seasonally, staying in Dakar during the dry season until they returned to their village to marry (Nader 2015). This ongoing phenomenon, also reflected in the findings of this study, is a central element in "the reshaping of the nature of migration in Senegal, but also the invention of urban space" (Nader 2015: 44).

The movements of young Senegalese women have been occurring in conjunction with shifts in the political sphere, with particular effects on the perceptions of gender roles. In 2010, a major Government initiative – Loi sur la parité (Law on Parity)⁷ – imposed a 50/50 gender quota in the political domain, leading to a dramatic increase in the number of women elected to the National Assembly (IPU 2016). In its wake, gender parity efforts have expanded to other domains, such as in education where several mechanisms (some in place prior to the Parity law) have been re-aligned to agree with gender quotas, thereby increasing girls' enrollment in primary and secondary education. Some of these programs include the Programme Décennal de l'Éducation et de la Formation (PDEF) or the Dakar Framework

⁶ For details on the role of French colonization and domesticity in Senegal, please refer to the work of Antara Nader in her excellent doctoral thesis (2015) "Maid for Success: Locating Domestic Work in Senegal's Shifting Landscape of Gender, Labor, and Power." Dissertation deposit, Anthropology Department, Macalester College.

⁷ Following an amendment of the constitution voted on November 13 and 26, 2010 by the National Assembly and the Senate, Senegal successfully passed a law instituting total parity between men and women, in all partially or entirely elected institutions. For details, please refer to: <http://sahelresearch.africa.ufl.edu/tsep/themesissues/gender-quotas-and-representation/senegal/>

through its objective – Education Pour Tous (EPS – Education for All), the Plan de Développement pour l'Éducation des Filles au Sénégal pour 2009-2011 (Development Plan for the Education of Girls in Senegal 2009-2011).

The migration of young Senegalese women, coupled with shifts in the socio-economic and political processes, have had some important implications for family dynamics, reflected most notably through the proportion of women and men who delay marriage and childbearing; increasing rates of cohabitation and premarital sex, unplanned pregnancies; a rise in adolescent fertility, and transactional sexual relationships (Mondain, Delaunay and LeGrand 2014; Adjamagbo and Koné 2013; Foley and Drame 2013; Zwang and Garenne 2008; Garenne 2008; Antoine 2006; Leclerc-Madlala 2003; Hertrich 2002).

Effects on family formation

Marriage in Senegal remains almost universal, acting as a condition for entry to adulthood as well as for individual self-fulfillment, particularly in terms of legitimizing sexual activity and births (Dial 2008; Diop 1985). Its significance is reflected in demographic trends, with very few people who do not marry and the proportion of single women decreasing significantly with age (Mondain, Delaunay, and Legrand 2014; Dial 2008). Staying unmarried is, in fact, perceived as a “secondary choice” (Antoine and Nanitelamio 1996: 130). The legal minimum age for young women to marry is set at 16 years while for boys, at 20 years but some girls may marry at much younger ages (Stevanovic-Fenn et al. 2015). Senegalese marriage has indeed been characterized by the young ages at which girls marry and have children. In fact, evidence of early marriage is still observed in the country despite an overall decline: 2010-11 DHS data report that 25.2 percent of women 15-19 years of age had ever married, with greater variations among regions, going from 14 percent in Dakar to 53 percent in Tambacounda. In the past two decades, however, Senegalese family formation has been undergoing major transformation. DHS data show a decrease in the proportion of women and men in unions and an increase in the proportion of singlehood (Mondain, Delaunay, Legrand 2014). For example, in a recent demographic study conducted in Senegal, Antoine and Marcoux (2014) found that from 1992-93 to 2010-11, the proportion of women aged 20-24 who were single increased from 32.1 percent in 1992-3 to 37.8 percent, while those in consensual unions (never married) rose from 33.3 percent to 38.8 percent. Over the same period, Marcoux and Antoine (2014) noted a decrease in the proportion of women who are married, from 63.4 to 59.0 percent.

Several earlier studies conducted in Senegal help to track some of these demographic changes. Delaunay (1994) points to seasonal migration, which destabilizes the social control mechanisms to which women are subjected within the home (Delaunay 1994). By escaping the purview of their families, Senegalese migrant girls and young women acquire more autonomy in the choice of partner and timing of marriage (Delaunay 1994). According to Hamer (1987), temporary migration has increased to intermarriages among persons with different village origins, which are often perceived by parents as “an unfortunate breach in the continuity of tradition” (Hamer 1987, cited in Velyvis 2008). In addition, contact with a city and access to their own earnings contribute to girls’ and young women’s emancipation, allowing them to make individual decisions on the timing of marriage (Enel et al. 1994). As is generally the case with urban living, cities offer greater freedom to transgress expected norms and behaviors. Migration to cities facilitates the exposure to new ideas in cities, with greater access to media, which Kabeer et al. (2011) suggest, engenders normative and ideational changes, particularly in gender expectations. For Antoine (2002), however, high unemployment, combined with the severe erosion of living conditions in Dakar, is responsible for these changes as they have weakened young men’s position as financial providers, preventing them from meeting young women’s expectations for the bride price (Antoine 2002). Similarly, Enel et al. (1994) observe that massive unemployment and rising costs of urban living, combined with the growing material demands by prospective brides, have led to bride price inflation and the monetization of marriage (cited in Velyvis 2008). This development seems to echo one that occurred in the 1970s, when, as Delaunay (1994) points out, economic and agricultural crises affected the cost of marriage, making it almost impossible for younger generations, and men in particular, to afford bride price and subsequently, to marry. Finally, longer schooling for girls and women’s participation in the labor market also affect

beliefs, perceptions, and behavior regarding marriage and parenthood (Delaunay, and Legrand 2014; Adjamagbo and Koné 2013; Ndiaye and Ayad 2006).

Other researchers have looked at these social transformations in African cities through the lens of transactional sex. According to Leclerc-Madlala (2013), the promotion of consumerism and exposure to global imagery of modern lifestyles are driving young women into commodifying sexual relationships through the exchange of gifts, resources and money (Leclerc-Madlala 2013: 1041). Foley and Drame (2013) root these sexual transactions in Senegal's 'new' poverty, which is largely urban, with indicators including high urban unemployment, rising food insecurity and the pauperization of Senegal's middle class (Adjamagbo and Koné 2013; Foley and Drame 2013). These economic pressures have significantly altered the stability and resilience of families and households in the capital city (Foley and Drame 2013; Fall 2007). In this context, *mbaraan* – to use the local parlance, is a means of earning money and can be a prelude to marriage as a way to secure financial resources during marriage (Hannaford and Foley 2015). It mainly concerns young single women for whom this system provides an opportunity to achieve a degree of material comfort and even to pursue their education or occupational training prior to marriage. *Mbaraan* has become so prevalent in urban areas that it has entered the popular consciousness and cultural debates of Senegalese urbanites, through both print and online media (Foley and Drame 2013) to the point of normalizing and accepting the practice as a fact of life (Leclerc-Madlala 2003). Foley and Drame (2013) suggests that “*mbaraan* reflects the contradictory opportunities and constraints that women face as they grapple with unfulfilled material, emotional and sexual expectations within marriage.” Although on the one hand, *mbaraan* indicates a degree of women's agency and bargaining power, in part by transgressing dominant gender norms, on the other, Foley and Drame argue, the practice reflects the perpetual economic subordination of women to men's financial support, forcing them to negotiate financial dependence within their sociocultural parameters (Foley and Drame 2013).

Taken together, these scholarships shed light on some of the important macro- and meso-system-level factors that drive changes in family-building arrangements. However, they provide little information on the conflicted gendered and embodied experience of discord and resistance in the lives of these young female migrants and its effects on family formation. This study takes a step towards addressing that gap.

The seasonal migration of Senegalese girls exposes them to these new lifestyles and forms of unions and relationships. While in rural areas, mechanisms for social control through families and communities are still very much *en vigueur*, migration offers these girls the opportunity to be more or less able to escape the social gaze of their families of origin and experience new ways of forming their own families. The findings on which this study show, however, that the process of migration of these young Senegalese women becomes a contested site of negotiations and resistance through which conceptions of what constitute feminine ideals with respect to family formation are thrown into crisis by the realities of their migration experience.

Methods

Qualitative data were collected from young women, parents with either married or unmarried daughters near marriage age, and men in two locations in Senegal: La Médina, a neighborhood in Dakar, the capital and largest city, which is known for its cultural diversity, poverty, low education rates and high proportion of migrants from rural areas; and two villages in Niakhar, a rural area in the Fatick region of the country roughly 135 kilometers east of Dakar. These two research sites were selected for the study for a number of reasons. Firstly, both are in the same general region of the country and share a number of basic linguistic, ethnic and religious characteristics, though Dakar is a much more diverse environment. Secondly, both sites have seen very rapid increases in the age of marriage and changes in family structures, though in quite different ways. Finally, the two sites are interrelated in a number of ways, particularly through migration. For example, while la Médina is composed of long-time city dwellers and recent immigrants from villages, Niakhar is characterized by high levels of mobility, both permanent and temporary, with a large proportion

of residents moving to and from Dakar, where they seek employment, on a regular basis. In this zone, the population consists mainly of people of Serer ethnic group origin (96.4 percent). Education levels remain relatively low: 50 percent of men and 75 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 24 years had no school-based education in 2000 (Delaunay et al. 2013).

A combination of convenient purposeful sampling as well as snowball sampling was used to select participants in both research sites, with data collection taking place over a period of two weeks in October 2014.⁸ A deliberate attempt was made to locate young women who had married ‘early’ and ‘late’, defined as having been married two years less or more than the median age at first marriage in each site.⁹ A combination of 13 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), 22 In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and 13 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were used to collect the data. Tables 1 and 2 present the sample in each site.

Table 1: Sample of participants in Niakhar (Site A and Site B villages)

NIAKHAR		
Sample	Site A	Site B
8 FGDs*	1 FGD of women age 18-25 and married “early” (12 women) 1 FGD of <i>mothers</i> whose daughters were either married and/or unmarried/ near marriage age (10) 1 FGD of fathers whose daughters were either married and/or unmarried/ near marriage age (12) 1 FGD of newly married men age 20-25 (6)	1 FGD of women age 18-25 and married “early” (8) 1 FGD of <i>mothers</i> whose daughters were either married and/or unmarried/ near marriage age (11) 1 FGD of fathers whose daughters were either married and/or unmarried/ near marriage age (9) 1 FGD of married men age 20-25 (5)
11 IDIs**	3 girls married at age 20+ 1 <i>father</i> whose daughters were either married or not yet married/at the median age of marriage 1 <i>mother</i> whose daughters were either married or not yet married/at the median age of marriage	4 girls married at 20+ 1 father whose daughters were either married or not yet married/at the median age of marriage 1 <i>mother</i> whose daughters were either married or not yet married/at the median age of marriage
7 KIIs***	1 tutor of a high school 2 high school teachers (male and female) 1 local surveyor/interviewer	1 village chief/leader 1 <i>grandmother</i> 1 nurse at a local health center

Table 2: Sample of participants in La Médina, Dakar

Sample	La Médina, Dakar
5 FGDs	1 FGD of women age 18-26 and married “early” (5) 1 FGD of women age 25-30 and married “later” (5) 1 FGD of <i>mothers</i> whose daughters were either married and/or unmarried/ near marriage age (5) 1 FGD of fathers whose daughters were either married and/or unmarried/ near marriage age (4) 1 FGD of married men age 25-30 (12)

⁸ The study was approved by ICRW’s Institutional Review Board and by the Senegalese Ethical Board.

⁹ In both sites, the median age at first marriage was calculated to be 22, so ‘early’ was defined as before age 20 and ‘late’ as after age 24.

11 IDIs	5 women age 25-30 and married at or after age 24 (late) 1 age 24, married at 19 (early) 1 woman age 19 with a one-year old child and not married but in cohabitation with child's father 1 <i>father</i> whose daughters were either married or not yet married/near marriage age 3 <i>mothers</i> whose daughters were either married or not yet married/ near marriage age
6 KIIs	1 teacher at a women's High School 1 imam 1 sociologist of the family at the Ministry of Health 1 <i>social worker at a youth center for contraception and preventing early pregnancy</i> 1 teacher at a private high school 1 nurse at La Médina Polyclinic

Findings

Social Transformation, Changing Gender Roles, and Power Relations in Family Formation

The migration of young Senegalese both disrupts and reproduces gender relations in which the role of young women is contingent upon pervasive notions of (poor) women's domesticity, motherhood, and their continued economic dependency. This process becomes a site of contestations with contradictory outcomes on girls' agency and bargaining power when making decisions about their future family prospects.

The analysis of the findings can be organized in two primary processes at work that destabilize gender norms with respect to family formation: (1) individualization; and (2) monetization of social relations. These two processes interact in complex and sometimes contradictory ways, variously expanding and contracting the agency of girls and young women. They demonstrate the confluence of social and economic factors that are an integral part of the migration experience.

Individualization

One of the clearest findings from this study reveal the intergenerational tensions and conflicting interests caused by the new and greater autonomy of children in bargaining-power and family decision-making.

Respondents, particularly older generations explained changes in family dynamics as being the result of young women's migration experience, triggered by the changing structure of the education system, female paid labor, and living arrangements in the cities. Participants noted that the new arrangements of the urban life style invariably delay the timing of marriages, with consequences that directly challenge conventional norms of Senegalese family formation. Participants stated that nowadays, children – girls and boys – have a greater role in making individual choices and decisions around marriage practices. This belief, best captured through the notion of *individualization* and frequently uttered by participants, is facilitated by government policies and the media that stress the importance of *la parité* (gender parity), as previously noted. Individualization related to the transformation of the family was reflected through perceptions of an erosion of parental control over their children on family projects and an expansion of children's individual autonomy that was, at the same time, increasing young people's discretion and enhancing opportunities for informal contact between sexes. Parents' perceptions that they have lost absolute visual control (*contrôle visuel*) over their children pervaded all interviews in both Niakhar and la Médina. One father expressed this concern vividly: "Before, we decided who the daughter was going to marry. But today, it is the children who decide

on their spouse. If you oppose it, the daughter will run away. We have lost control because of all these changes (referring to la parité and school). But with rural exodus, we don't have a choice [...] Children now live their life and we live ours."

In both Niakhar and la Médina, parents expressed concern that spousal choice has become more of their sons' and daughters' affair than the parents'. According to them, young men and women now choose their spouses, as opposed to the tradition that gave parents and maternal uncles the final word. This, they said, is because children are moving out of their homes either for school or migration, leading to autonomous lives in which they make their own choices. One mother recalls her experience: "With school, the problem is that we can no longer control our children. Before, a man came to see your daughter; he sat in the middle of the yard, under everyone's gaze. And then the man left and we followed him to the gate. But today, with school, we don't have that parental gaze anymore, and we see school as a place of debauchery."

However, contradictions in the narratives emerged. Among the many young women interviewed, parental consent for a marriage settlement remained of utmost importance. Although they agreed that nowadays more girls and boys choose their spouses, they said the choice remains contingent upon parents' approval. All of the young women interviewed insisted that although they decide on the choice of spouse and the time at which to marry, having parents' approval is essential to guarantee a "good" marriage. "Otherwise, you're bound to have a bad marriage." One young woman interpreted parental consent as a "bénédiction": "It is important to have your parents' blessing. Otherwise, if you have a problem in your marriage, they will not be able to support you." Asked what would have happened had her parents not approved of her choice, she added: "I wouldn't have gotten married. There isn't a decision to make. We don't defy our parents' authority."

Many participants, including younger men and women, also believed that the process of individualized choice and decisions leads to sexual relations involving "*grossesses en pagaille*" (pregnancies all over the place).¹⁰ All respondents noted that pre-marital pregnancies were now common, due in part to the practice of *mbaraan*, to which young migrant girls are exposed. Several participants blamed men for deceiving women into sexual relationships in exchange of gifts, often resulting in pregnancy, but others held parents responsible for lack of control and guidance over their daughters, particularly when migrating to the city. It is interesting to note that although respondents (older and younger generations) viewed premarital pregnancy negatively overall, most of the younger participants, including mothers, indicated a change in the perception, making it more acceptable. They rationalized this more flexible view in terms of the lack of financial resources that often prevent couples expecting a child from getting married. One woman said, "It is the case of many girls. They get pregnant but have to wait that the father finds a job in order to be able to marry." Another participant explained: "For parents, it can be a problem if the author of the pregnancy doesn't want to marry the girl. But in many cases, they don't have money to get married so they just go with it."

Gains in individual autonomy are also perceived as affecting women's social roles and responsibilities in family life. An idea that came out strongly in participants' interviews was that of women having more autonomy than before, increased through greater access to the public sphere, such as school and employment. Many mother participants described their lives before as one being confined to domestic and family roles (such as housewife, mother, and caregiver for dependent family members). However, today, young women go to school and have access to paid

¹⁰ This perception is not borne out in quantitative data, which that show that by and large, births still occur within marriage in Senegal. However, it should be noted that pre-marital births are difficult to assess statistically because it is more likely that they are reported as happening within marriage since, in many cases, the pregnancy results in marriage.

employment through migration, a process that is further supported by government policies such as allowing a girl to continue school while pregnant.

Overall, there was a strong perception that the function of marriage has changed considerably from one that used to build enduring relationships between families to one whose motivations are self-interested, often serving as a way to escape poverty (for women) or to force a 'love' marriage (through pregnancy) so that individual selection of spouse be accepted by parents. This process of transformations seen through the lens of individualization as affecting family structures raises an important question: what is causing and/or supporting these changes in marriage practices and family formation more generally? Schooling for girls was cited as one key structural process again related to the transformation of the Senegalese economy and internal migration, in driving change in marriage practices.

Schooling, and the need for formal education in the 'new' and more urban economy, emerged as a particularly strong driver of the delays in the start of the family formation process in rural areas, where education levels have historically been lower than presently. As noted earlier, school enrollment and continuation of school for these young girls strictly depends on their ability to migrate seasonally to Dakar in order to cover school expenses through their remittances. In both Niakhar and la Médina, schooling was highly valued, and as such, a priority for parents and their children. Despite some negative perceptions around school for its association with sexual activity, parents still recognized school as the only means for achieving better paid jobs and hence, economic security for a girl. As noted, the value of girls' formal education has also been reinforced by the local Senegalese governments in their effort to increase schooling for girls in rural areas. Both girls and parents perceived schooling as a pathway to better employment and eventually an urban career.

Schooling was viewed with some ambivalence, however, particularly in the older generations, partly because of the loss of control over the physical mobility of adolescents which they saw as a driver of premarital sexual activity. Participants also blamed schooling for driving girls into migrating to cities, therefore posing a direct threat to their ability to control the behavior of young women. In particular, they saw formal education as contributing to empowering girls in enabling them to negotiate skillfully their aspirations and space within a marriage, and also held it responsible for creating a shortage of young and 'marriageable' women, particularly when these leave villages to find educated and eligible spouses in cities. This situation forces men, in turn, to leave villages in order to find suitable girls to marry.

Participants explained that in this context, women are now aspiring to a life that is no longer restricted exclusively to servicing her family members but one that also includes the choice of having her own career. This was reflected in the narratives of many women participants during fieldwork who mentioned their desire to become a teacher or a nurse. One young woman describes her aspirations: "My goal is to be a good student because later, I want to be a police officer. But I was told that because I am a girl, I don't run as fast as a man, so I can't be a police officer. So I thought that being a nurse was another career I would like to do. And at least, I won't be asked to run!"

The increase in individual autonomy around family decisions was also expressed through the emergence of new types of families, seen as a threat to the traditional norms around marriage and procreation. Some participants in la Médina noted that cohabitation was a new way of experiencing conjugality. Marriage, they said, has not lost its value – it is still an important institution that legitimizes gender roles, obligations and procreation. However, socioeconomic changes (i.e. women in the labor force, greater education for children, contraception, and unemployment) are disrupting families by increasing singlehood, divorce, and single-parent families, particularly among lower-income groups. In this context of social change, the institution of marriage is suffering. One father lamented: "You know these days, we see everything – girls who are pregnant outside of marriage; divorced women; men who no longer want to get married, even women! It's nonsense. Marriage is not what it used to be."

Participants frequently pointed to the emergence of family planning in Senegal in both Niakhar and la Médina as responsible for giving more autonomy to a young woman and a man over their decision to have a child. Now, said one young woman, a couple consciously decides, depending on their living conditions, on the time and number of children to have. “Today, with family planning, we can decide when to have children, which was not the case for our mothers. It can be an advantage because when we don’t have the financial means, it’s difficult to raise children.”

Related to family planning, several women in la Médina indicated that contraception was contributing to delays in marriage. Because it is available to both girls and boys, they said, it encourages them to engage in sexual activities without the fear of getting pregnant. Avoiding pregnancy further delays marriage because the expectation is that the author of any pregnancy must marry the pregnant girl. “Today, young people can be sexually active without the risk of the woman getting pregnant. They avoid a lot of marriages that way.”

Monetization of Social Relations and Transactions

Social relations have traditionally played a critical role in marriage decisions and its processes in Senegal. For instance, the involvement of the two families and extended family was, and still is, in some parts of Senegal, an important tradition in sealing a marriage and building alliances. However, urbanization, migration, and women’s access to education, as well as economic insecurity, have led to some renegotiation of social relations in family decisions, particularly around marriage and reproduction, a change best conceptualized through the notion of monetization of transactions.

Many of the respondents felt that the monetization of Senegalese economy has had dramatic consequences on marriage practices in a number of ways, of which migration is the most visible outcome. The increase in economic insecurity and its growing connection to a monetized economy has forced families to find alternative sources of employment. Participants blamed the migration of young girls to urban centers as delaying marriage by providing women with a measure of financial independence from men and therefore less pressure to get married right away. They noted that seasonal migration (*norane*) and circular migration are central to the economy of the villages in which the study took place and is an integral part of a girl’s future in the village, serving as a safety net for household economics and school expenditure in some cases, or in others, as an alternative to school failure and a regular source of income. Although participants perceived migration as a deterrent of marriage, it is worth noting that the findings do not establish a clear link between migration and the active decision to delay marriage. Some women may still select to marry whether they are migrants or not and the reasons for delaying marriage may be due to factors other than migration, such as not finding a husband. Indeed, the findings suggest that the seasonal migration of young girls tends to create a “marriage squeeze” that works two ways, by reducing the number of women available to marry but also the number of marriageable men, as young women express a preference for educated husbands. Together, this type of migration appears to be responsible for increasing women’s age at marriage, decreasing the supply of women and thus, also increasing men’s age at marriage.

A 21-year-old married woman interviewed in one of the villages notes: “I had to go to Dakar as a maid because my mother had died and I had to send money to my father because we were very poor. In Dakar, I found a husband but I came back to the village because my husband was from here... For our daughters, school is our hope. My husband always tells me, ‘Let them study because we don’t want them to live what we lived. Nowadays, what kind of life is a peasant life?’”

Increased monetization of Senegalese economy is also reflected in the new patterns of relationships, which have turned into financial transactions. Participants in the villages noted that although this trend takes its roots in urban settings, it has now spread to villages due to migration to Dakar. Many respondents blamed economic insecurity for pushing

women into practicing *mbaraan*, a concept seen as transgressing gender norms, even among urban cosmopolitans whose attitudes about sex, love, and relationship reflect the ongoing encounter between Senegalese norms and global popular culture (Foley and Drame 2013). Participants in both Niakhar and La Médina insisted that *mbaraan* had in fact become more and more a resource for women to fulfill economic aspirations. For example, respondents said women often rely on *mbaraan* to contribute to their family's household expenses or school fees. Others said women used the money only for their own benefit, buying clothes and going out. Whatever the reason, women emphasized the economic difficulty of living in the city, which leads some to 'strategize' their relationships with men, also partly reflecting what some respondents viewed as a greater emphasis on materialism. One young newly married woman confirms this point: "You know, girls these days want a lot of things, they have become materialistic. They enter relationships with men who give them money and gifts. Sometimes, they have several lovers and that way they can have even more money." Another woman insisted that because a woman loses value once she is married, she is better off delaying marriage while she can benefit from material goods and financial support from a man. "It's better for a girl not to marry right away because she can benefit from *mbaraan*. Because once she is married, the man won't give her money anymore."

Participants further perceived premarital pregnancies as being an outcome of *mbaraan*. While in some cases, it was believed to be an involuntary but inevitable consequence of *mbaraan*, in others, premarital pregnancy as a result of *mbaraan* was a conscious and strategic decision on the part of the woman to force a marriage, as discussed earlier.

The monetization of social relations was felt through discussions around women's maneuvers to improve their social and material standing. Several interviewees described cases in which a woman used pregnancy to improve her well-being by forcing marriage on a rich man from a higher social status. Many said that it is a common strategy used by women migrating to Dakar to be maids, hoping to get impregnated by their bosses in order to force a union between them. According to a female respondent, "We see that a lot now, girls that get pregnant by their boss because they aspire to an urban lifestyle. They see that on TV. She is going to mess around with the boss and hope that he is going to marry her. It happens a lot these days because girls migrate to the city and after, they don't want to return to the village."

In Dakar, women and particularly men expressed concerns over women's high expectations, a concern observed in the villages which rural participants saw as being facilitated by girls' migration to cities. "[Marriage] is all about money," said one young woman, pushing women to marry only a man with money. Asked about criteria that made a man an eligible spouse, women indicated that having a job that could support the family was determinant. "Being too materialistic" (*trop matérialistes*) was the most common reason men cited as a factor delaying marriage, but it was also a recurrent theme among women. One 28-year-old married woman said, "Nowadays, girls have too many demands, they're too materialistic. They want everything, the phone, the computer tablet. So they look until they find the guy who will be able to afford all this. That may take a while." However, in citing reasons for delaying a marriage, several women added that any woman unmarried after age 35 probably had mental or psychological issues.

Bride-price inflation: men's economic financial inability to afford marriage, including establishing a new residence (a determining step for the constitution of a Senegalese family), appeared as another outcome of an increased monetized economy which has contributed to a shift from formal marriage towards more informal relationships with lower 'barriers' to entry or formation. Economic considerations have, indeed, always been part of the negotiations of marriage. However, socio-economic forces are creating opportunities for women – young women, mothers, and grandmothers – to manipulate and inflate bride price, easily exceeding thousands of CFA.¹¹ The men interviewed noted that marriage delays were exacerbated by shifting expectations on the part of young women and, particularly, mothers around bride price, which they saw as unreasonable, materialistic, and so high that they make it almost impossible for

¹¹ Senegalese currency.

a man to marry. This finding is consistent with several studies that have shown the extent to which bride price inflation in Senegal places an important financial constraint on young men, making it increasingly arduous for them to start a family, particularly in contemporary Senegal (Delaunay, Adjamagbo, and Lalou 2006; Randall and Mondain 2005; Mensch, Bagah, Clark, and Binka 1999). Men participants went as far as to call it “the abusive power of mothers” who decide on the choice of the husband, based on his wealth. Some women further noted that women’s materialistic aspirations are contributing to many divorces; a point confirmed in Dial’s study (2008) on divorces in Dakar, in which she notes that inadequate financial support from husbands is a women’s primary motive for divorce. Finally, criteria for an eligible spouse have also changed to higher standards than before, with women demanding that the future spouses have a stable job with the capacity to provide material comfort.

Discussion and conclusion

These findings highlight the diversity and complexity of internal migration of young Senegalese women as well as the difficulty of singling out migration from other socio-economic and political processes, stressing the need to approach female youth migration as part of a broader dynamic process of deep demographic, economic, and sociocultural changes, with implications for gender norm shifts (de Haas 2008). As Castles (2010) puts it:

“...to conceptualise migration not merely as a result of social transformation, nor as one of its causes, but as an integral and essential part of social transformation processes. That means that theories of migration should be embedded in broader social theory. It also means that research on any specific migration phenomenon must always include research on the societal context in which it takes place. Finally, because awareness of change starts usually at the local level, it is important to link local-level experiences of migration (whether in origin or receiving areas) with other socio-spatial levels—and particularly with global processes.” Pp. 1578, 2010.

The present analysis is an attempt to link the macro-, meso-, and micro- processes to socio-economic transformations through the lens of the internal migration of young Senegalese women and gender norm change with respect to family formation.

By examining the process of rural out-migration, the paper highlights the inherent conflict and tension involved in the transformation of an institution as fundamental as marriage to social functioning in Senegal. As the DHS 2010-2011 suggest and this qualitative analysis supports, broad changes in the social and economic landscape in Senegal have resulted in changes not only in marriage, but in all aspects of the family formation process, including the timing and context of sexual activity. This is leading to intergenerational tensions and delayed marriage. The delayed marriage itself causes tension because of the greater potential for premarital sex and forming other types of union outside of the traditional ways of organizing families. The findings also demonstrate the extent to which migrant girls to cities use and negotiate their power within their social and cultural parameters. This reflects both the new opportunities they may gain from recent socioeconomic changes, but also the constrained choices under which these girls operate by engaging, for example, in *mbaraan* whose purposes may vary from securing financial resources and a future husband to paying school fees and other expenses. As Foley and Drame (2013) argue, the practice reflects enduring subordination of women to men’s economic power to achieve their emancipation.

These findings also offer a number of concrete examples of how norms related to marriage, sexuality, and childbearing can change. The choice of Senegal and the specific research sites were motivated by its “positive deviant” character – a place where early marriage has decreased over the last decade. Internal migration has brought mixed outcomes for rural Senegalese families, simultaneously increasing alternatives to marriage for girls, such as schooling and employment while at the same time enhancing their susceptibility to these changes as well as their agency in reproductive decisions. Moreover, the findings emphasize the role of internal migration in contributing to demographic changes, as young women are raising standards for what constitutes an eligible husband. This creates a marriage

squeeze that works both ways in which there are fewer women to marry but also fewer men to marry because young women expressed the desire to marry educated men. Together, this type of migration increases women's age at marriage, decreasing the supply of women and thus also increasing men's age at marriage.

The case of internal migration in Senegal is relevant for further advancing research-based evidence of the effects of migration on gender norm change and on its implication for gender equality. The research on internal migration has been overshadowed by international migration whose implications on global governance are far more of a political issue than the consequences of internal migration (Herrera and Sahn 2013). In addition, the lack of reliable data has also contributed to the shift in focus on international migration research (Herrera and Sahn 2013). However, much could be learned on how these internal movements differ or resemble those of international migration and what their implications are for gender equality. There are clearly important material, but also psychological gains a young woman acquires in the process of migration, yet these gains operate within contradictory opportunities and constraints that highlight the structural dimensions of gender inequality. In this case study, young women use and negotiate these gain within their constrained choices against broader transformations, reflecting the persistence of gender hierarchies (women's continued economic dependence on men) and gendered division of labor (women as domestics), not only in personal attitudes and behavior, but also in institutional arrangements.

To be sure, internal migration of these young Senegalese women appears to be contributing to changes in their relative autonomy, both in terms of physical mobility and economic mobility. The findings indicate that the deciding-making process around the timing of marriage takes place with more direct engagement by young women in choosing their spouse and becoming a mother. Nevertheless, this form of migration takes place in a context of a restrictive labor market and occupations where sectors are limited, with young girls concentrating in a highly feminized and devalued sector. Young girls migrate to cities to pay for school expenses and fulfil material expectations, such as clothes or toiletry. These goals are often linked to the desire to escape early marriage and motherhood. In that process, however, most of these girls end up working as maids, therefore contributing to labor market segmentation, low wages, and the idea that young and poor women belong to the domestic sphere. The migration of these young domestics operates within structural constraints that reproduce gender as well as class inequalities. Thus while this type of migration may emancipate women by enabling them to pursue school or other life goals, it also reproduces a system of gender and class inequality between poor and professional families, which Parrenas describes in terms of a "division of reproductive labor" (Parrenas 2000). With this in mind, the case of internal migration highlights an important difference with international migration: "global care chains" are not just global but they also happen at the local level and, in some cases, occurs through reversed roles in which it is not the mothers but the girls who migrate and leave the parents or guardians behind. To recall briefly, Hochschild (2003) in her seminal work on care chains describes how care work has led to another division of labor, involving mostly women, and resulting in an observable "care drain" and care substitution in the sending countries (Hochschild 2003 186: 7). She sees this division of labor as one of many features of globalization, which the author refers to as "care chain", more commonly known in the migration literature as the "global care chain." The distribution of care work and the corresponding patterns of inequalities, reflected in gender, class, and racial relations point to the migrant mother's care responsibilities which are frequently reassigned to another member of the household, usually a woman, who takes on the extra care duties in the mother's absence (Parrenas 2005; Hochschild 2003; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997). As noted in Gammage and Stevanovic-Fenn (forthcoming), "The irony is that in the global care chain, migrants are exported to care for the children of others while their own children must in turn be cared for by others in the home country." While Senegalese migrant girls go to cities to fulfil these care duties, the families they leave behind are not their children but their mothers, fathers, grand-parents, etc. In this case, the care chain is different from that described in international migration research, as it involves girls who migrate to cities as domestic workers to pursue not only their own aspiration, but also to sustain the livelihood and care of their families and extended families left-behind through their remittances. To this end, more research is needed on the internal migration outcomes of these young girls, particularly on the use of their earnings, such as the amount they have to send home and how it is used by the families left-behind, how much they can retain, or use.

The suggested way forward is to develop conceptual frameworks that are more contextualized for this type of migration and linking it to social transformation processes to have a better understanding of the ways in which it relates to international migration. In order to understand female youth migration within a broader process of family formation and gender norm change in a particular setting, researchers must first develop a context-specific theoretical model and then link the analysis to broader societal change (Castles 2010). The emphasis should be given to investigating in detail the various layers that have the most direct influence in shaping gender norms with respect to the migration experience and how those affect family decisions. It should incorporate the cultural, social, and economic specificities of these young migrant girls, both at home and at destination to better target areas where they could maximize their human capital through their migration experience. For example, if for seasonal migrant girls, education is one of the main motivations for migrating to cities, then it would be equally important to explore the extent to which migration leads to better education outcomes or school dropout. Similarly, the literature on female migration often assumes that agency is acquired through the migration experience but often, women begin to exercise their agency before they migration. In the case of young Senegalese migrants, many of these girls expressed the willingness to move to cities so that they could pay for their school fee and get out of “the village”. This indicates that the causal relationship between migration and agency/empowerment is not linear, and can be both a cause and a consequence to migrate. Relatedly, more evidence is needed to understand how economic empowerment, gained through their migration experience can lead to a shift in perceptions about girls’ roles and social positions and the implications those shifts may have for effective programmatic or policy interventions in order to meet the actual, rather than perceived, needs of youth. Finally, the inherent power struggles as well as risks to which these young girls expose themselves in their effort to secure a stable source of income which can be devastating to their feminine identity and socio-moral, as seen through *mbaraan* and unplanned pregnancies. ore evidence-based research is therefore needed to assess the potential risks they face during their migration trajectories in order to better overcome them. In addition,

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