Assessing the effects of out-migration on those left behind in Senegal: local family dynamics between change and continuity

Nathalie Mondain, Sara Randall, Alioune Diagne

Introduction

Migration is mainly looked upon through economic lenses with a focus on the remittances sent by migrants to their families/communities; however, as Toyota et al (2007) argue, the relationships between the left-behind and those who leave vary from case to case and should not be seen only through the lenses of 'livelihood strategies and development prospects'. According to these authors by bringing the left-behind closer to the center stage in migration research, we gain new insights on migration and broader social change, thus filling a gap in our understanding of the complex relationships between migration and development (Nyberg-Sorensen et al., 2002).

In this study, we look at more specific social dynamics in exploring how intensive international out migration in a small town in Senegal affects daily living arrangements within the household and more particularly to what extent migration brings changes in the traditional balance in gender and intergenerational relationships leading women to gain more autonomy from both their husbands and family in law. To a lesser extent we also explore how migration is perceived to affect the community in terms of its main advantages/drawbacks.

Migration studies, particularly the literature on migration selectivity, have established that migration flows are structured historically and socially and that migrants constitute a highly selective group. However, as Biao (2007) argues, while it seems that individuals decide who migrates and who stays back, there are also fundamental institutional constraints governing such decisions. Even if this is not the core topic of our paper we indirectly address this issue as our results show that there are indeed both institutional reasons and individual social characteristics for the people who stay. The question is: how does migration affect them?

The various effects of migration on the left-behind

Our perspective adopts the broader frame of transnational migration as has been emphasized these last decades (Portes, 2001; Levitt et al, 2003). This is based on the assumption that with the constant contacts maintained between migrants while abroad and the left-behind in addition to their direct interaction when migrants return (for short or long visits), various aspects of the local social and economic life is affected. At the

same time transnational dynamics contribute to maintain migration chains between the place of origin and the place of destination (Pries, 2004). As stated previously, the effect of international migration on the place of origin has mainly been looked at through economic lenses with the role played by migrants' remittances and investments. Simultaneously, there used to be various assumptions on how the diffusion of new ideas, values, and way of life could modify the traditional local hierarchical social relationships, whether related to gender, intergenerational relations, or other cultural characteristics such as religion or ethnicity. However, as stated by Mazzucato (2005), a better understanding of migrants and those left-behind living conditions should also consider to what extent the conditions of migrants' integration in the host society affect their ability and perhaps wishes to develop their own community. Hence, as highlighted by Levitt et al (2003: 568), those assumptions are increasingly challenged by more recent research and writing which ask "a more nuanced set of questions about who transnational migration benefits, under what circumstances, and why." Note here that the authors remain in a position of costs/benefits whereas our objective in this study is to draw a portray of the left-behind's daily life conditions and their perceptions of migration in order to assess to what extent international out-migration is beneficial for them or not.

The literature on the left-behind is still relatively scarce, especially for Africa. Most of it is based on empirical studies conducted in Asia (see special issue of PSP, 2007), and also Latin America (Massey et al., 1998; Taylor et al, 2004; Parrado & Flippen, 2005). Regarding sub-saharan Africa, we mainly find literature on circular labour migration within the country and on the issue of return from out migration but no systematic study on the left-behinds (Fall, 1998; Arowolo, 2004; Tiemoko, 2004). However we can identify two main perspectives on how migration affects the lives of those who stay: the first is related to the collective perception on migration and how it shapes the family and social relationships at the community level; the second is more at the individual level and how people are affected in their daily interactions within the household.

<u>At the community level</u>

While looking at the relations between the family and migrants in sub-Saharan Africa, Tiemoko (2004) points to a critical dimension which is how the resources sent by migrants are used. Quoting other studies he shows that in many cases these resources are used for consumption and social events rather than for investment in more 'productive' activities (Hermele, 1997; Cobbe, 1982; Adepoju, 1997, 1998a). This is because, according to Snrech (1998: 41), meeting basic needs continues to be a major preoccupation in West African economies, and 'investments in housing have been a major component of private investment' (quoted by Tiemoko, 2004). In other words, when exploring the effects of migration on those left-behind we may face situations

where people see households' daily life conditions improving but at the same time no new opportunities occurring for them in their home town. This point of view is echoed by Rigg (2007) who states that the effects of migration on those left behind may be positive in terms of household development, but broadly negative when viewed from the standpoint of community development.

These issues are tightly related to the social context as stressed by several authors (quoted by Tiemoko, 2007: Findley, 1997; Adepoju, 1998a,b; Afolayan, 1998; Faist, 1999; Ghosh, 2000) who argue that migration should be considered from the broader local economic and political context rather than simply seen as a product of economic 'push' and 'pull' factors: "Context is of central importance, and in a variety of ways: the village or settlement in question; the household under investigation; the individual being interviewed; and the national situation within which mobility occurs. All these influence the likely causes, patterns and impacts of migration" (Rigg, 2007).

In this perspective, the effects of migration on the left-behind are not pre-determined by a particular analytical framework but rather assessed by considering the specific context in which it takes place. In many cases migration is part of a household or family strategy that has a whole range and mix of economic, social and/or cultural dimensions (in our case the need for men to "honor and support" their parents; pride, etc.). Following Adepoju (1998b: 326), we must consider the social networks in international migration as binding migrants and non-migrants in complex social and interpersonal relationships (in particular how previous migrants help their younger kin to migrate).

Family and household level

Two main perspectives are considered here, respectively the gender and the intergenerational relationships within the household. In societies often considered as keeping traditional roles between the sexes and the generations, migration could affect this balance through changes in these relationships, contribution to new definitions of gender roles and hierarchy between generations. As Jones and Kittisuksathit (2003) working on labour migration in Thailand argue: "in terms of their world view, aspirations and understanding of life, the left behind are no longer the same villagers as before they were left behind".

Regarding gender relationships, two different types of findings come out of the literature. First the fact that even 'if they stay', the left-behind are not remaining static on their world views and may see the changes driven by migrants in the traditional social organization and relationships not negatively (Jones and Kittisuksathit, 2003). On the other hand, Resurreccion and Ha Thi Van Khanh (2007), working on the effects of

migration on gender dynamics, have shown that both migrants (in their study women) and the left-behinds (the men) would rather reproduce the traditional gender roles than bring new behaviours to ensure a certain stability threatened by the mobility of a significant number of local inhabitants. In the case of male out migration it is even less likely that gender roles are modified especially when the whole family depends on migrants' remittances. Our goal in this research will be to explore to what extent does the local intensive international male out migration lead to changes in gender roles and relationships.

Looking more closely at intergenerational relationships, in their interesting research in Thailand, Knodel and Saengtienchai (2007) show how parents and elderly support their children in their migration process and find an interest in it. The authors argue that a "modified extended family" has emerged which functions over geographical distance with the help of advancements in transportation and communication technology. Migration has transformed the traditional patterns of extended family support by spatially dispersing individual members away from home, but this does not automatically lead to the disintegration of extended family relations. This is particularly true in the contemporary context where communication technologies and transport have not only improved but become accessible to most people, especially in developing countries (Levitt et al, 2003). Hence, intimate connections and influences can be sustained with potential effects on left-behind's attitudes and behaviours. Rather than a static bounded entity, the extended family household is more an arena where members interact, different perceptions compete, and new actions emerge (Birschenk and Olivier de Sardan, 2007).

Context

In a recent report, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Senegal estimated that over 400,000 Senegalese were officially settled abroad (Fall, 2002). Among the main reasons emphasized for migrating are the economic and especially the agricultural crisis ongoing in the country for decades combined with the failure of the school system as a vector for social promotion and economic security. Although, it may be put in anothe other way: the context in which there are no jobs for the educated 1) encourages the educated to leave (brain drain) and 2) discourages youth to study.. In Senegal the river region bordering Mali and Mauritania used to be the main emigration basin. Because of the duration of the crisis, migrants have increasingly come from other areas, in particular the peanut basin located from north-east to south-east of Dakar. Although France used to be the main destination, because of the increasingly complex and discouraging immigration policies in this country, migrants have progressively shifted to new destinations, mainly Italy and Spain in Europe. However, with the increasingly strict immigration policies implemented by the host countries, out migration has become extremely expensive. In addition to the

travel costs, the issue of obtaining official documents through clandestine routes, in particular the visa, has led to a whole network assisting these men in their migration process in exchange for large sums of money. Hence important resources have to be mobilized, often through the family and relatives who have already migrated. The alternative is clandestine emigration, known as 'partir par les pirogues', meaning leaving on the local fishing boats from the Senegalese coast to reach Europe.

In relation to this need to mobilize resources, one specificity in Senegal is that migration is increasingly organized through the influence of religious brotherhoods (the Mourides in particular) or associational networks. Such brotherhoods are important political actors in Senegal. By relying on relations of personal dependence and an effective organization, the brotherhoods, the Mouride in particular, offer a solidarity system well-adapted to responding to crisis situations (Bava, 2003). Their financial contributions have also helped make the city of Touba, the site of the Mouride founder's revelation, a major commercial and religious centre, with the largest mosque in sub-Saharan Africa (Grillo and Riccio, 2004). The small town studied here is located in the Senegal peanut basin close to Touba, is predominantly inhabited by Wolof, with international mobility dominated by male migration to Italy with men migrating alone (not with wives / family), following paths shaped by migratory chains, and highly mobile within Italy. Poverty is less a motivation for migration for most men compared to the feeling that they have no job prospects if they remain in Senegal. However the context of economic crisis is certainly not the only reason for migrating and other local changes and influences related to the contemporary globalized world must be considered, especially how the increased mobility of individuals (internal and international out-migration) and the greater access to various forms of media and communication channels (in most urbanized places, even small towns, internet cafés exist, almost everyone has a cell phone, television is widespread…) open the perspectives for those left-behind who increasingly aspire to migrate whatever the costs.

To understand our objectives in this study it is also essential to briefly draw a portray of the social organization in this society which is mainly based on kinship relationships, themselves tightly related to the marriage dynamics as unions in this society are essentially family rather than individual affairs (Diop, 1985).

As in many other contemporary African societies, delay in first marriage of both men and women is the main transformation of Senegalese marriage in the last thirty years (Pison et al, 1995; Ndiaye et al, 1997; Antoine & Djire 1998; Hertrich, 2007) It is not yet clear whether this will eventually lead to substantial proportions of the adult population never marrying and the 2005 DHS suggests that postponement may have now stalled (Ndiaye & Ayad 2006). Postponement is most marked in the urban areas but has also been

observed in rural zones. Although the fundamental role of reproduction in marriage remains, there is evidence that some urban Senegalese are participating in a transformation where reproduction, formerly of critical importance to the wider kin group, is itself becoming more individualised and nuclearised.

In patrilocal Senegal, the wife moves to her husband's home, in most cases at his family's place. This stage in the marriage process seals the union and as such is generally marked by a ceremony (Diop, 1985). In rural areas this practice is not questioned (Randall & Mondain, forthcoming) but is being transformed in more urbanized settings for several reasons. First, in the city couples who have met in the city and work there may be separated from their respective families. A more prominent reason is economics. A whole body of literature has teased apart the relation between households' arrangements and poverty, particularly in cities such as Dakar where economic and spatial constraints are exacerbated (Antoine, 2003; Antoine & Djiré, 1998; Antoine et al, 1995).

Gender and conjugal relationships. In Senegal, where gender discrimination is legitimated within marriage, the man is "by definition" head of the household with his wife/ves entirely under his authority; this "social injustice" is accepted by most women, as they are conditioned by their social environment. These attitudes have led to expectations at the societal level, where the woman is seen as having to obey her husband while it is totally legitimate to expect him to provide all the necessities for her material well being (Antoine and Dial, 2005). Male authority is increased if the couple lives at the husband's family's residence where the new wife's role as daughter or sister in law is clearly defined. Couples living apart from the husband's family are more likely to avoid the potential conflicts and tensions arising from more collective life styles and thus develop new forms of interactions.

Intergenerational relationships and residential issues. Living in the family household means that the roles assigned to each member due to status in terms of generation, kin relationship, rank among siblings, etc. have to be respected daily. Pressures, tensions and potential conflicts are thus more likely to occur in such contexts whereas relationships may remain more harmonious by living in separate houses. In the latter situation the mother in law may have less influence and power over her daughter in law, who, in turn, may have more agency to develop her own life style. Another dimension of intergenerational relationship is the care of the elderly, which may be influenced by migration through diverse pathways.

This leads us to the following research aims: 1) we suggest that migration contributes to maintain traditional gender roles and relationships with an increased disadvantage for migrants' wives who become even more dependent on both their husband and their family in law; as a result this could lead to increased instability in marriages; following this perspective, it is likely that the new generations of women are viewing conjugal life

through other lenses and formulate new wishes for their conjugal future; 2) in terms of the intergenerational relationships, older men and women (as parents) may or may not contribute to their children's migration process; in all cases, they would expect high material returns from them should they successfully migrate and become integrated in the host country's labor market; on the other hand, what are the perceptions of migration and the related local changes for various left-behind including the elderly and those with no migrants in their wider family.?

Data and methods

Our data are 84 in depth qualitative interviews undertaken with adult men and women of all ages in a small town in North-West Senegal in 2007 (which we will refer to as "K."). Previous qualitative research from 1999 which compared reproductive strategies in Dakar, this small town (T) and a village (LeGrand et al 2003, Randall and LeGrand 2003) had shown that migration to Italy was having a major impact on marriage dynamics in the small town. In 2007 a small, follow-up, qualitative research project investigated the impact of extensive migration to Europe on family dynamics more generally. Fieldwork was undertaken in October and November 2007 by 4 post-graduate students (2 men and 2 women) trained in demography or sociology. After 4 days of intensive training and refinement of the interview guides the team moved to K. where the first week was spent getting to know the town and the different neighbourhoods, talking to administrators and key personnel in the town and meeting the councillors and leaders of each neighbourhood. The next three weeks were spent undertaking in-depth interviews. In each of the 6 neighbourhoods 6 men and 6 women were interviewed by same sex interviewers, stratified by age and selected at random; two aged 18-29, two aged 30-49 and two aged 50+. All interviews were undertaken in Wolof and translated and transcribed in French by the interviewer immediately so that the researchers could read them and give rapid feedback on both the quality of the interview, and specific themes and topics. Every evening the team met to discuss problems they had encountered, interesting themes which had emerged and as a result of these discussions further questions or themes were added to the topics to be covered in the interviews. During the translation process there was much discussion in the team about the appropriate translation into French of key, difficult to translate terms.

Each of the 6 neighbourhoods in the town has a very different atmosphere and history and the neighbourhood based approach to interviewee identification generated a good cross-section of society in K. There is probably a slight bias towards those people who can be found at home during the day because in compounds where there were several people of the target sex and age, there was a tendency to select one who was present rather than absent. Thus we may have a slight underrepresentation of the working

population. We have however obtained a much more heterogeneous sample than would have been obtained from a snowball approach. Further targeted interviews were undertaken with key informants and any migrants who were identified who were back in K. for a visit.

The in-depth interviews took a life history approach with each respondent encouraged to talk about their personal experiences of growing up and then as adults. The interviews focused on their education, professional lives, family life in the past and present and their experience of marriage. Specific accounts were requested about migration decision making and the impact of migration of others on individuals, households and more generally in the town. All interviews were read at least twice and then entered into a N6 database where they were coded according to themes. Although an outline coding scheme had been developed beforehand covering issues around the main hypotheses of the study, interviews were coded inductively according to emergent themes.

Results

We analyze attitudes and experience of both those who are closely related to a migrant and those who are not. Among the respondents unconnected to any migrant, many are torn between a negative view of migrants who are perceived as being too individualistic and not showing any solidarity with other members of their community and a more positive view as they see them generating improvements in their own family's economic circumstances. Comments are often tinged with jealousy and ultimately contradictory with the respondents' actual experience. We first provide an overview of the migration context as expressed locally before getting into more details on gender and intergenerational dynamics.

A brief overview of migration in the small town from different perspectives

One key issue for the candidates to migration is to find the means to leave, which means travel and legal documents costs. In our sample we found these different categories of situations, ranked by their degree of 'legality'. Even for the better off in terms of connection and financial support there are two categories of 'legal' migration first, there are the genuine legal which means they are a bone fide migrant (often on a student visa) and this only costs the air ticket and the visa. On the other hand there is the quasi legal – whereby they pay huge amounts (around 5,000,000CFA) of money to get either well forged or someone else's papers but which means they can fly in and should get through passport control (there are other ways of doing the semi-legal route). Finally, there are the "clandestins" (illegal workers) who travel by more risky routes, including the 'pirogues'.

In this latter case, because these migrants are less connected and arrive clandestinely, they have more trouble finding work.

This leads to different conditions at departure related to the migrant's own situation in terms of network and family support. Emigration in the small town has become an institution with migration seen as almost unavoidable. This is clearly illustrated by a single man (27) who dropped out of school and had made three unsuccessful attempts to migrate. He still hopes to migrate as he does not see any possibilities in K. It was his mother who supported him each time he tried to migrate: *Since then I am here but I still plan to emigrate since we have no degree, with the current situation when you see emigrants coming back and who manage not too bad even if they are not rich, at least they have the minimum. So we do all we can to leave. To improve our situation…*

The following excerpt highlights another common idea: the fact that migration has become the only possibility in young men's imaginations:
Q   What kind of changes has migration brought to K.?
A   It has changed with the pretty houses (laughs). Only the pretty houses… but not mentalities. Because people should stay here to work. But people are not enterprising any more, they only think of hanging out in the streets. There are many young people who only dream of migration. Because you see in a family, a young man who has migrated, if he has a brother [who stays] he will only dream to join him. (24 year-old woman)

Generally, when they can, families support their children in their migration process. This support is often combined to the help the candidate for migration gets from the migrant network already located in the host country. The interviews hence suggest that there are different types of migrants/migration experiences depending on men's family and personal situations: those who are well connected and supported by their own families in their migration process; those who are poorer and have to take more risks to migrate. The three following excerpts illustrate various possibilities (which can overlap) for a migrant to get support: the migrant network, the wider family at large and the role of mothers:

People save what they earn in their fields to send their children to Europe. Emigration is more present in K. than in any other city in Senegal. It is almost our only problem, you know there are things you cannot say, I have brothers who have emigrated to Italy, a sister who is there too with her husband and it is sure that if my children go there, they will be in good hands (58 year-old man).

It is the family who helped him to leave. It's my sister's husband who helped him as well as her husband's father. They lent him 4 million and 5 hundred CFAs. He reimbursed them (23 year old student woman; migrant brother).

…We were farmers. All my mother earned, she would save it. She saved until one day when she was discussing with a friend at the market. She told him she wanted her son to travel. He told her that if she saved so she could pay the ticket to leave he would take care of the spending money… My mother gathered all she had, the money from the farming, from the herding, everything. We sold everything, everything! We did all so he could go, his passport, and my mother "tchamin" [friend] gave him 100000 CFAs. God made that he arrived safely and found a job.

In the small town most people are not extremely poor, rather it is a lack (or feeling of lack) of opportunities and the vision of other men migrating and bringing material goods and building houses which influence the left-behind in their perception of how emigration is necessary in their lives. Hence there is a dual view regarding perspectives on why men wish to migrate: either for individualistic purposes or because they are deeply concerned by their family's situation and want to support them by providing the best possible living conditions. This is often expressed by older people:

Emigration is tempting everyone here, some young people feel concerned for their parents and this can even lead them to drop school, because if you come back home from school and there is not enough for the meal, if your father cannot pay the bills, if you live in a situation where you are neither rich or poor so you can't really tell people the difficulties you have, if you are a youth very close to your parents it can become a handicap for you; if you see emigrants who come back to improve their families' quality of life, it discourages young people and encourages them to migrate. On the other hand there are young people who come from well off families, who have the means, but they think that emigration is the fastest way to become rich, they force their parents to help them to migrate and this is the second category [of migrants]. The third category are those who whether they stay here or go to Europe will have deviant behavior (63 year-old man, migrant family)

Moreover, among those who are excluded from migration, criticisms are formulated as migrants are seen as not investing for the community as this 60 year-old woman, seeing her son struggling to find a job expresses:

Q   According to you have emigrants changed life in the community?
A   I think they haven't brought anything to the community in the sense they only take care of their families. They haven't created any factory. They only think of their own interests by building houses for their families and make other members of their family go abroad. There is no mutual help, it does not exist among emigrants because they think first of their family. They do not care about their neighbors' life conditions… Emigrants

have not brought jobs here. All they have done is to build houses. ... Everyone think of their own interest but not of the community.

This overview of how migration experiences are perceived highlight several dimensions and the complexity of the phenomenon in terms of the perceived benefits of migration at the household and community levels. First, besides the general feeling that there are no local employment opportunities, the main reason for migration is to support the family in order to improve living conditions. The other reason to migrate is the view of what migrants bring in terms of various modern items in addition to the building of luxury houses for themselves and/or their parents. This may reflect on the Wolof men's culture of "honoring ones' parents" and also show that they have "Baraka" (success, in particular in terms of business, money).

Just as there are different categories of migrants in terms of their departure conditions (support, network, etc.), there are also different types of left behind: those related to a migrant, either a close or distant relationship and a successful or unsuccessful migrant and those who are totally excluded from this arena – who are generally the poorest segments of society.

The effect of migration on gender dynamics

In this section we will pay close attention to the migrant wives from both their own perspectives and that of other respondents, men or women, the latter not married to a migrant. We are looking at two dimensions of these wives' situation: how they get married and their conjugal life.

Among all respondents, men and women, whatever their personal situation and characteristics there is a consensus that being separated from one's husband for long periods is not easy, emotionally, physically, for daily life arrangements and in terms of the relationships with in laws in the (common) case of shared residence. WOmen were rarely migrants themselves although there were exceptions, many women dreamt of migrating, and this gender division seems to be changing.

The marriage process for migrant wives

In almost all cases migrant wives are closely related to their husbands and the marriage was usually arranged. There is a general perception that mothers put pressure on their daughters to marry migrant men and thus, may influence the negotiations depending on who is asking their daughters for marriage. Is it because, migrants' mothers feel they will

have more control over a related daughter in law during their son's absence in case of conflicts as they will live on a daily basis in the same house?

Compared to 1999 fewer single women wish to marry migrants because of the difficult daily conditions faced by these women related to the absence of their husband. However there is certain ambivalence among single women in most cases they first seem to condemn women for their interests in migrant men but end up not being all that clear when asked what would their own preferences be in terms of their ideal husband (migrant or non migrant).

Q   Do you want to marry an emigrant?
A   No, what God will give me will be good. I don't have any preferences.
Q   Your preference does not go towards emigrants?
A   No, not a t all. I don't have any preference.
Q   According to you why have your sisters chosen to marry emigrants?
A   It is God who wished it like that. Everyone has one's own chance. (23 year-old single woman)

In most cases, marriages are sealed quickly between the migrant's visits and negotiations are made between the two families without providing much time for the couple to develop a (dating non sexual) relationship before marriage.

Q   Did you have a dating period before getting married?
A   No because when he was leaving to Italy I was young. And he lived a long time in Italy. It is when he came back [for a visit] that he married me (35 year-old woman)

This is echoed by this 35 year-old single man's personal project which follows the tracks of his elders who have migrated:

Q   How would you do to get married once in Europe?
A   My objective, once I will be in Europe is to build a house before getting married.
Q   But how will you do to get married?
A   I first need to get legal papers because I am praying God to get my papers within 3 years once in Europe. Then if I come back, during the year I will spend here I will build a house and will get married. By the time I make a few children the house will be ready and I will settle down with my family. This is my plan.

The most frequent marriage process, arranged marriages with a relative which is sealed during a visit home, is similar to 1999. The major change over the intervening 8 years is single women's decreasing enthusiasm for marriage to a migrant.

Absent husbands: quarrels and rumors

Both men and women believe that the absence of migrant husbands leads to misunderstanding between them and their wives about the realities of daily life. In addition, respondents all contributed to the rumors about migrant wives, and suspicions that they are having extra-marital affairs during the absence of their husbands. Although we never actually encountered this in our interviews (only once, from a man who realized he dated a woman married to a migrant) through the various discussions around these 'deviant' behaviours, we learn about how these women are actually controlled by their in laws.

The issue of quarrels between the wife and her in-laws which the absent husband cannot moderate and therefore may culminate in a divorce is mentioned often. Here is a typical case of lack of trust from the absent husband towards his wife which ended in divorce:

… There are too many divorces. And this is due to the fact that there are small quarrels. Sometimes the wife can ask for permission and all these things can happen. One of our relatives had asked for permission to go to Dakar. She did not arrive to her destination because she stopped at a hair salon. Her family in law called, people told them she hadn't arrived yet to Dakar. After that her husband called her to tell her it was over, that he freed her [left her]. This is how divorce happened because her husband thought she was a woman who hanged out in the streets. Her husband is an emigrant (31 year-old woman, divorced).

Many respondents, male and female, highlighted the difficult situation for women separated from their husbands for long periods and the constant control of their in laws over their lives as explained by this 42 year-old woman:

Because the migrant's wife, all her family in law is in her house. … Here in the neighbourhood migrants' wives suffer. I f you see why prostitution has increased (…) it is migrants go abroad and leave their wives [behind]. Their whole family surrounds their wife. Such a situation can lead to difficult conditions where you cannot even take care of yourself. You systematically hear that this man has divorced his wife. Because the migrant's wife was discovered [in an adultery affair] or because she has become pregnant [during her husband's absence].

Therefore, women frequently express the wish to live in peace which means avoiding the conflictual situations encountered within migrants' households; this 30 year-old woman,

who grew up in a migrant household has a sense of these difficulties and as such had no particular wish to marry a migrant:

Q   Why didn't you want a migrant husband?

A   My mother, 2 of her brothers are migrants. ... My brother is also a migrant. But me, I want a husband who can satisfy my needs, who give me peace, even if he does not give me money but that we live in peace. Because money can disappear. It is not eternal "Ngor gi mo fi dess" [only dignity counts]. Every woman wish to marry a migrant but peace is fundamental.

In their husband's absence their wives are subject to both their in laws and community control and scrutiny of their behaviour which becomes more intense when the wives cohabit with their in-laws – a common state of affairs. Whereas in 1999, when migration was a relatively recent development and somewhat less common, most women sought the the conspicuous financial benefits of marriage to a migrant, 8 years later with more time to observe the consequences a growing number of women are becoming wary of the conflicts and tensions such marriages bring. Furthermore there is evidence that a rich migrant husband does not necessarily mean a rich migrant wife.

Absent husbands and lack of control over resources

Despite the common view that migrant households are relatively wealthy, there is a growing consensus that often migrant wives have only limited access to resources, especially when they live with their in-laws, as they are given their share by the house's authority (often the migrant's brother or father) who follows their husband's instructions. Those who look onto the 'rich' migrant families may see nothing but wealth and comfort as here :

Q   What do you think of migrants' wives situation?

A   Regarding what I know, they have advantages because their husband build houses and all the comfort that comes with it: television, fridge, furniture. In addition, every month they get money. They can't complain. They just have to call their husband to ask him to send money. Emigrants send their mother to the Mecca; their father to the Mecca. They buy cars [for their fathers], build houses. Every month they send 25000 CFAs to their father. Every evening they eat meat. Hence, I think they are in good conditions. When a woman has her husband abroad, she lives in good conditions (60 year-old woman, poor and not related to migrants).

But many women's observations are much more nuanced and less optimistic about their conditions.

Q   What are the types of difficulties that migrant wives face?

A   Yes, they face difficulties because people say you have everything. You are quickly subject to controversy and you cannot turn to anyone in case of problems because people say your husband has emigrated. They have to manage and bear the difficulties. They are told that their husbands send them this or that when it is not the case. When you have your husband besides you can always rely on him in case of need. If your husband takes a long time to send you money you can't ask anyone to help you. And when you turn to someone you are insulted. People think that when we are sent money we waste it (43 year-old migrant wife)

Thus a perception is now emerging (and this appears to be something recent) that women married to migrants are in a way 'fooled' when getting engaged and may be seriously disappointed and disillusioned once starting their married life. Often this contributes to divorce.

All the girls get married with emigrants for financial reasons. ... girls are in a hurry to get married but at the end, life is not so fun. Because what interests emigrants is to build nice houses like palaces. You must have visited K. [and seen the houses] and young women's parents think that migrants are wealthy. In fact they can hardly ensure their wives the daily expenses. They don't buy you jewelry, nothing. They stop giving after they get married (43 year-old woman, not married to a migrant).

« Hi ». I will never get engaged with an emigrant again. Emigrants do not support anyone, I mean their wives. They do not give anything to their wives. All my girl friends have emigrant husbands. They do not give anything to their wives. "Da gni Saagare rek" [they try to keep up appearances] (31 year-old divorced woman from a migrant)

The difficulty here is that the above quotes come from the observation of either a non migrant wife or from a disappointed angry divorced woman who was formerly married to a migrant. But how do women who are actually married to migrants express themselves regarding this issue of access to resources? Although it was not easy in the context of the interview where respondents would not easily talk openly about their daily life conditions, we nevertheless found some cases which confirmed the fact that they do not have full access to the resources although in a relatively discreet mode.

This financial control by the mother-in-law is confirmed by this 43 year-old woman who first lived with her in laws, and now lives in her husband's own house with her co-wife. She did not have full access to resources while living with her in laws and this could generate problems (now her husband has built his own house in which she lives apart from her family in law and being her husband's first wife she is the one in the household who controls the money her husband sends to his two co-wives) :

Q   When you were at your family in law's to whom was he giving the money for the daily expenses? To you or to his family?

A   The money went first to my family in law and then I would be given my share.

Q   Were there drawbacks with this?

A   Yes because you didn't know what was going on. You just got what they wanted to give you and you could not complain to prevent from bringing problems.

Even for the few women living apart from their in laws and thus having more control over the money sent to them by the husband, they still had distance-imposed problems being unable to turn to their husband in case of unanticipated needs; this highlights women's continued daily economic dependence on husbands.

For example, in my case, it is true that I am a migrant's wife but I would have preferred a husband living in Senegal and working here. … because it is hard to have a migrant husband. He leaves you here, you don't see him. When you have a problem, as long as he doesn't send the money, you can't solve it. Whereas if your husband works here, you will be able to see him, when you have a problem he will take care of it because he is next to you. … But emigrants, you leave your wife during a long absence, your wife is facing problems such as she won't be able to call you every day to talk about to you. All these situations, the woman has to bear them until you come back. It is a difficult situation. (24 year-old woman, married to a migrant).

Most migrant wives therefore have limited access to daily resources, are controlled by their in laws, and are susceptible to rumors. Almost everyone, migrant or not, is aware of this which is a far cry from the general perception in 1999 that migrants were wealthy, and that their wives and households lived in very good conditions. Young women's dreams of marrying a migrant have somewhat faded in 2007, leaving more ambivalent perspectives on life as a migrant wife.

Intergenerational relationships

Regarding intergenerational relationships, two perspectives emerge: that of elderly women, especially migrant mothers and that of elderly men, both having strong expectations from their migrant children.

The mothers

Most mothers of migrants played a role in supporting their sons in their migration process. Typical is the process described by this 30 year-old woman whose brother is a

migrant: how her brother was supported by his mother to migrate (many cases like this), how he started to send money to reimburse her loan, then to get married and then to build houses. His wives are at home, with her mother, herself and her sisters and he supports the whole family. More specifically what this quote highlights (and we find numerous other cases like this one) is the migrant son's duty to reimburse his elders who supported him and further on provide better living conditions:

When he found a job he sent us money until we could reimburse my mother's « tchamin » (friend who had helped her to support her son to migrate). He sent money until he could have a wife. He could build this building, then he built the other building. Until now he send money and comes back and forth. There are just his "djiguene" [women] who live in the house, he is the only one to take care of the house. [woman, sister of the migrant]

It is also important to realize that the mother in law, despite her authority as a mother and elderly, is also to a certain extent under the authority of her migrant son as expressed by this 65 year-old mother:

Q   And you, the money your son is sending, is it you who manage?
A   Me, what normally goes through me, goes through me because my son told me, what I'm sending to you, you must give as much for the daily expenses, I only follow my son's instructions.

Migrant mothers have two main concerns: that their migrant son will use his money to build a new house before getting married, further support them, including a hope that he will finance a trip to Mecca.

Q   But you, what do you want?
A   I want him to finish the house, that's all I want (laughs) because this is the priority. If he gets married when things do not work as it should it won't be good because there won't be what is needed in the house. If he takes a wife it may create other problems and women today it is difficult to understand them, it is a question of chance (50 year-old woman, mother of a migrant)

Older women without migrant offspring often dream of seeing their son being able to migrate for the economic security it would bring. This may also be a motivation for mothers to marry their daughters to migrant men as they hope to get some benefits from it (although not clear if it's for themselves or their daughter). This is because a universal observation is that migrants' support mainly goes to their own family through the building of a house and helping siblings or other relatives in their own migration

ambitions. More isolated families, with fewer resources, not only face daily problems but are unable to seek a way out through financing their own children to migrate.

Q   How do you see your future?
A   I wish to see my children succeed, that they work, that they emigrate to help us. Always, when I'm praying I ask this to God. Also, they too, they want to emigrate. God makes them emigrate so they can help us. God, makes all those who try to help their parents succeed (woman, 60).

Hence despite many criticisms addressed to migrants related to their individualistic motivation to migrate and sole focus on their families, it clearly appears from those left-behind from both migration and from the migrant network that they wish to enter this migration arena as it is seen to be the only alternative to better their daily lives.

Older men's perspectives

Among older men we find both positive and negative perceptions about migration, and like older women, it is more related to their own personal hopes of seeing their daily lives conditions improve if they are excluded from the migration arena.

Unsurprisingly older men who are connected to migrants and receive support are highly positive about migration as an institution. This is echoed by other older men who, even if not connected to migrants observe positively their accomplishments, although in the following quote it is not clear whether the young emigrants are actually migrating to support their families or to compete with their migrant peers in building big and luxurious houses:
Q   Have people changed since they travelled?
A   Yes, their houses have changes. A young man who has the will to travel, God will help him a lot to find a job. If he left a house in straw he will rebuild it, if he want he will add a terrace, otherwise he will construct a building. Young men compete with each other only for this now. Any young man who sees his peer traveling and coming back to rebuild his father's house will try to do the same, he will try to have his parents help him to emigrate.

Older men, like older women dream of their children migrating especially those who are poor and who would never be able to raise the resources necessary:

Q   You said you wanted your children to emigrate.
A   Of course, I want them to travel but if I don't have the means to help them traveling, when they will manage to travel, they will do it. But if I had means, I would

send one of my children and then he could make one of his brothers come and so on. You know many families do like this until there are no boys left in the family. (65 year-old man)

However, some men expressed frustration that their close migrant kin were not supporting them adequately; it was often poorer household; however such migrants from poor families probably had huge demands on them from a large range of other poor kin.

As expected, it is among older men not connected to migrants that we find the most severe criticisms against migrants: for them, migrants only invest in their own families and not the wider community, especially the youth. Although older men would like their own sons to migrate, they also express more general concerns about youth abandoning their studies and just pursuing the pavements lined with gold. There is a certain hypocrisy: they want this for themselves despite recognizing the wider social ill that it can bring.

…Emigration has influenced all the children. I have a son who was studying and …. he neglected his studies because he was seeing people leave and he had been promised to be taken with them. This is why he stopped his studies and he is so intelligent. I am sure that if he had continued his studies he could succeed but he was only thinking of emigration, that's why now he is always checking that his brothers study well and I am telling him that he is acting like a doctor after death (63 year-old man).

There is a general perception among all men that migrants should invest more locally and especially for the youth. As such, they are usually torn between positive and negative attitudes to migration as well. In general the elderly men express a worry for themselves and the next generations of elderly as they see less and less young people staying. This raises an important issue in countries where there is no widespread pension system for the elderly. This man is particularly critical as his son who is migrating is not supporting them adequately:
… In Senegal now all children want to travel. I don't know how the elderly like me will manage if all the young people leave. It is problematic. If at least some migrants invested in domains where youth who are staying here could find jobs… but those who migrate only think of themselves (68 year-old man).

There was a lot of talk about the difference between investment to provide jobs (which would be industry) and investment just to provide some work for the family (son / wife / mother) which would be to open a little shop. The issue about shops was that the market was saturated with the many tiny shops opened by migrants – all selling the same thing, and with not much money floating around. Furthermore, despite the migration stimulated

building boom, most local people in the housing trade didn't think that migrants invested adequately – because they didn't get the work – the migrants gave the work to their kin elsewhere (Louga, Touba etc.).

Conclusion / discussion:

Like migrants themselves the left-behind are very diverse. We consider the 'migration arena' as relating to the broad network local, national and transnational composed by migrants and the people related to them; in this arena we find different categories of left-behind, beyond the groups usually mentioned (women, children and elderly) depending on the degree of connection they have with the migrant and thus how they are likely to benefit from him or not. In that sense we are looking at what Knodel and Saengtienchai (2007) call the "modified extended family" and which includes close kin and the larger family both locally and transnationally. These left-behind may directly or indirectly benefit from migration essentially in financial and material ways. Others may be "left-behind" from these advantages although they are part of the migration arena. Finally we find those totally excluded from the migration arena as they cannot find support to migrate (young men) and are not connected to any migrant to get additional support (women or the elderly). In the latter case, this does not mean that those left-behind are poorer than those integrated in the migration arena although we found many cases in extremely modest conditions in this group.

Once this is said, what are the implications regarding the issues we focused on, gender and intergenerational relationships? We tried to match the experiences of migrant wives to the general perceptions the community has on their situations, often shaded by jealousy or suspicions on their behaviors during their husband's absence. Following Rigg (2007) it is essential to consider the Wolof and Mouride sociocultural context to understand women's situation: confirming what Resurreccion and Ha Thi Van Khanh (2007) showed, traditional gender roles may not only be maintained despite migration but they can even be reinforced, still in the disadvantage for women; this is particularly true in the Wolof patrilocal and masculine society. Hence, transnational relationships, made easier by the contemporary technologies, are not necessarily leading to major transformations in social dynamics; this appeared clearly when looking at how these relationships materialized within households and in the particular context of husband-wife and wife-family in law relations, how the traditional roles are not only maintained but also accentuated adding to quarrels and potential instability in the couple. Also the community plays an important role in aggravating the situation by spreading rumors or simply expressing certain perceptions of how migrant households are working (with migrant wives clearly disadvantaged).

Some methodological issues come out of this analysis. First, the fact that in some cases, couples may be formed before the man has migrated; the question is then to what extent this could have an impact on the couple's conjugal life compared to those couples where the man was already in the migration system and where the couple gets to know each other through regular phone calls and the migrant's visits? Are there marriage processes that are more likely to conduct to conjugal instability than others? This could certainly be explored into greater depth in a life course approach based on a retrospective event history survey and analysis. Another interesting question would be to further explore to what extent do the different departure conditions (in other words the migrant's family's socioeconomic characteristics and their ability to support him, his network both in Senegal and abroad, etc.) affect the impact of migration within the migrant's family.

As Bao (2007) shows, the three main left-behind groups (women, children and the elderly), encounter various problems, but in general their situation is not much worse than that of those living with all family members. In our specific context, families at large live together and often include non kin members (compounds include on average around 9 people in rural areas). The reasons why migration has developed in this community like in others in the country are initially related to the economic and agricultural crisis; among the families who became part of the migration arena some have seen their own situation improve, others not, although it did not necessarily worsen. This is related to both the migrant's own success in addition to his personal will to support his family. Therefore, the problems some left-behind experience cannot just be attributed to being left-behind individuals; instead, the fundamental cause is that many rural communities as a whole have been left behind economically and socially.

As suggested by Tiemoko (2004) and Snrech (1998), most investments brought by migrants are materialized by the luxurious houses they build for their families as well as by the various items they bring, especially phones, TVs and western clothing. Therefore, migrants were largely criticized for not investing locally and not supporting youth; these criticisms are mainly expressed by elderly men and women and more generally, by those excluded from the migration arena – those who cannot migrate or support their children in their migration process. Also, the elderly feared not being supported enough in their older days as they see most young men dropping school relatively soon to start gathering resources in order to plan their migration. In that sense and this should be explored further, as highlighted by Fall (2002) in his report to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, it is not clear to what extent migration brings social development for the community either in the present, or in the future. Interestingly we found voices for change among women who all insisted on the importance of education for themselves and their children. This could be related to what locals called the 'demystification of migrants' where many people now realize that emigrants' life conditions in the host society are extremely difficult and that

new alternatives should be considered (although it is not clear which ones).. There is a complex situation in terms of both the benefits and drawbacks of migration for the left-behind but at the same time no clear vision of what the future could be for this community without migration.

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