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**Expectations abound: family obligations and remittance flow  
amongst Cameroonian “bushfallers” in Sweden. A gender insight**

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## **Abstract**

In Cameroon, there is a tradition for heterosexual family system inherent in a patriarchal order of things; accordingly, this study shed light on how gender pervades into, and ‘force’ migrants to remit in order to fulfill family expectations at the country of origin. Contemporary academic studies and reports from various organizations have highlighted the active role of women as migrants and remitters. There is a growing stream of literature which demonstrates that men and women’s experiences of migration are gendered; accordingly, their remittance behavior is also gendered. However, an understanding of how socio-cultural (structural level) forces affects migrants remittances requires a comprehensive analysis in the context of the complexity inherent in contemporary international mobility and migrants transfers; that is, it requires an emphasis on how the combined effects of gender, legality and to some extent class shape remittance flow. This is because the market (employers and employer organizations/institutions), the state, and the family as socio-cultural and economic institutions that shapes migration and remittances are gendered; this genderedness is of a deterministic nature in influencing how and why migrants remit and to whom.

This study employs a qualitative research method, it departs from the premise that international migration through remittances is a way to find work and support families in many developing countries including Cameroon where income opportunities are hard to come by. Through a review of related literature and theoretical framework, the phenomenon of transcontinental migration known in Cameroon as *bushfalling* are explored, the gender dynamics in migrants’ remittances behavior have also been looked at. The results of this study show that non-economic factors such as legality, gender, and class influence remittances flow. Most importantly, this study shows that everything being equal, being in a position to remit is sometimes a matter of luck, women remit more than men, documented migrants are more likely to remit more than undocumented migrants, and migrants’ class position in country of departure also affects remittance flow. I argued that socio-cultural variables such as migrant rank position within the family, photos, gestures influence family expectations for remittances.

**Key words:** *bushfalling*, remittances, family expectations, gender, legality

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## **List of abbreviations**

- GDP: Gross Domestic Product
- GNI: Gross National Income
- INSTRAW: United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
- IOM: International Organisation of Migration
- MDG: Millennium Development Goals
- LDCs: Least Developed Countries
- SAP: Structural Adjustment Programs
- SSA: Sub Saharan Africa
- UNDP: United Nations Development program
- UN: United Nations
- USD: United States Dollar
- UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund
- UNRISD: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
- WB: World Bank

# Table of contents

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgement.....	ii
List of abbreviations.....	iii
Table of contents .....	iv
Thesis structure .....	vii
Chapter 1: General Introduction .....	1
1.1 Overview of migration and remittances .....	1
1.1.1 Women, migration, and remittances .....	3
1.2 Focus .....	5
1.3 Study objectives.....	5
1.4 Research problem and question.....	6
Chapter 2: Background and literature review .....	7
2.1 Description of Cameroon (see map above).....	7
2.2 Gendered migration in Cameroon’s history .....	9
2.3 International migration in contemporary Cameroon .....	12
2.3.1 A note on <i>bush falling</i> .....	14
2.3.2 Witchcraft, secrecy, and international migration from Cameroon.....	16
2.4 Situating the family in the context of Africa—Cameroon .....	18
2.5 Remittances flow and determinants.....	21
2.5.1 Gender, legality and remittance flow.....	23
2.6 International remittances and development: Cameroon .....	25
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework.....	28
3.1 New Economics theory of Labor Migration (NELM) .....	28
3.2 Feminist theory of intersectionality.....	30
3.2.1 The concept of intersectionality .....	31

3.2.2 Intersection of gender, class, and legality linking remittances.....	32
3.2.3 Closing theoretical discussion.....	33
Chapter 4: Research methodology .....	34
4.1 Qualitative method .....	34
4.2 Case study.....	35
4.3 Recruiting informants: sampling.....	36
4.4 Interviews .....	37
Chapter 5: Data analysis.....	38
5.1 The interviewees and the interviews .....	38
5.2 Luck, trust and remittance flow .....	50
5.2.1 Luck as an issue in remittance flow.....	50
5.2.2 Trust and conflict in remittance flow .....	52
5.3 Telephone numbers, <i>bush calls</i> , and <i>bush photos</i> versus remittance flow .....	53
Chapter 6: Conclusion, recommendation, future research.....	55
6.1: Concluding remarks on the impact of migrants' remittances on gender.....	55
6.1.1: ... on legality.....	56
6.1.2: And on women's economic empowerment .....	56
References.....	59
Appendix 1 :remittance flow to Cameroon between 1996-2006.....	70
Appendix 2: Interview guide .....	71

Map of Cameroon showing the country's ten provinces and some main cities



Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/cameroon/cameroon-political-map.html>

## Thesis structure

This thesis begins with a general overview of migration and remittances, followed by a review of women, migration and remittances. The delimitation, that is, the study focus, research objective, research problem and question has also been mentioned.

Chapter two begins with background information or a description of Cameroon socio-economically and geographically. I briefly re-visit historical movements in Cameroon during the colonial period which (as the literature has shown) was very much gendered and male dominated. This is followed by contemporary movement within and out of Cameroon which shows a different picture from previous mobility patterns. Next, I examined what is bushfalling, who is a bush faller, and how did this concept come to be used with transcontinental migration from Cameroon. It was not just enough to use the word *bushfallers* referring to migrants, or Cameroonian migrants (to be more specific) without actually making the reader to understand the social meaning associated with this term and how it came to be use.

Contemporary international migration from Cameroon is not void of certain socio-cultural belief patterns, some of which has to do with the fear of, and practice of witchcraft. Whether such beliefs are true or false is not important for this study, my aim has been to show how witchcraft triggers fear, and translate into secrecy as far as international migration from Cameroon is concern. Besides, this study revolves around remittances and family expectations so it was important to show how certain socio-cultural belief patterns operate within family networks in the Cameroonian society. This is followed by a description of the family structure in Cameroon. The flow of remittances is affected by certain factors called determinants; I have highlighted some of these determinants and went further to explore two of these determinants; that is, gender and legality since these are central to this study. The remittance-development nexus have been re-visited taking the case of Cameroon.

Chapter three is the theory chapter where I explored the New Economics theory of Migration (NEM) and the feminist theory of intersectionality. The underlying argument in the NEM is that migration is a family affair and remittances from migration are a way for families to diversify income and minimize risk. Since my study centers around remittances, family, and gender, using this theory was the best thing to do. Bringing in intersectionality was a way for me to shift from the dominant economic studies on remittances by looking at how non economic factors such as gender and legality affect migrants' remittance flow. At the same



time however, female migrants are not a homogenous group, they are differentiated based on some other social attributes such as marital status, ethnicity or race (as some would prefer), class position, legal status, and sexuality. This is also true for migrant men, and all these tend to affect remittance flow; therefore using the theory of intersectionality was very vital. Chapter four is the method chapter where I explained which research methods was used and why, data analysis follows in chapter five and chapter six is the conclusion.

# Chapter 1: General Introduction

*Like many birds, but unlike most other animals, humans are a migratory species. Indeed migration is as old as humanity itself (Davis, 1974) in Massey et al, (2008:1).*

*When it comes to remittances and helping family back home, there is a disease of non appreciation from some people, or from most people [...]. People back home have unending expectations for money to solve unending problems [...], they think the same; they think that those in Europe are living in paradise which is not true. (Interview with a respondent, 2011.02.21, in Sweden)*

*I send money because I have the feelings for my family, I feel for my family, I have the concern for them; I want them to be fine. I have to make sure my family lives better (interview with a respondent, 2011.02.14 in Sweden)*

## 1.1 Overview of migration and remittances

International migration known in Cameroon as *bushfalling* is a common practice and a widely talk about phenomenon; from the neighborhood in the villages to towns and cities. Migration in general and international migration in particular is both a practice and a process that has been going on over centuries. People move for different reasons; in search of fertile soils as was the case in early ages in Africa or for economic reasons, or due to a disaster, or due to conflict—wars. Motives for migration are sometimes multilayered and this makes our understanding of migration even more challenging. As Massey et al have pointed out in the above statement; humans are also a migratory specie with a very long and changing migration history (ibid). To them, the modern history of international migration can be divided into the mercantile period, the industrial period, the period of limited migration, and the post industrial period (ibid:1-2). Each of these periods is marked by different migratory waves and hence a clear example of the fact that humans, just as goods and services have been/ and are constantly on the move, culminating into a situation that seems that the entire world is on the move as in *Worlds in Motion* by (Massey et al, 2008).

In an era where globalization has become the *buzz words* (Lie, 1996:585 ) and causing constraints on geographical and socio-cultural mobility to recede (White, 1995) in (ibid), intercontinental and transcontinental movement of people is on the increase and have become

more debatable within academia and in government policies. Similarly, Akokpari affirms that there is a close connection between globalization on the one hand, and migration (both intra and inter-state migration) on the other hand; that is, globalization is masterminding the increasing trends of global migration and the “seemingly unmanageable migration *problematique* in Africa” (Akokpari, 2000:72-73).

International migration can be said to be a two-way process of mutual benefits between the developed and the developing countries. On the one hand, many people in Africa just as in other developing countries migrate to seek better opportunities for themselves and their families; and on the other hand, developed countries need cheap (unskilled, semi-skilled) migrant labor. The International Organization of Migration (IOM) estimates that the number of international migrants has increased over the last 10 years from 150 million in 2000 to 214 million today (<http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/about-migration/facts-and-figures/lang/en>).

Related to increases in international migration are also huge amounts of remittances to migrants' home countries. Remittances as defined by some authors, agencies and institutions are the proportion of migrants earnings sent back from the country of employment to the country of origin (Russell, 1986:677, Adams Jr and Page, 2005:1645, Molua, 2009:1668, IOM, 2005). Although remittances have been define by many in monetary terms, it also encompasses gifts and other goods and services which migrants send back to their countries of origin. In a sense, it also include what Levitt called “social remittances”, which are the ideas and behavior pattern by immigrants from host to sending communities (Levitt, 1998:927).

On the one hand, some authors have argued that remittances sent back to migrants' countries of origin (mostly developing countries) have solved some basic household problems; that is, remittances is helping not only families but it is also aiding the development of migrants sending countries (Kapur, 2004:7). Similarly, Massey, maintain that the strategy of risk diversification elucidates that households are free to send members out of the community on a temporal basis (members can migrate nationally or internationally); and these members have to remit part of their earnings to the family (Massey et al, 1987, Stark, and Lucas 1987) in Massey, (1990:10).

On the other hand, some authors e.g. (de Hass, 2005, de Hass, 2010) have argued that the impacts of international remittances originating from individuals as well as from diaspora associations do not only sustain household and family needs, remittances have far reaching

effect in aiding countries development because it forms a crucial source of foreign exchange for many developing countries, and also help to sustain such countries' balance of payments (de Haas, 2005: 1277). Accordingly, remittances, according to Kapur, (2004) have become the new “development mantra”; he adds that immigrants, rather than governments have become the largest provider of “foreign aid” (Kapur, 2004:7). This is because, remittances according to de Haas, is freer from political barriers and controls than either products or other capital flows (de Haas, 2005:1277).

Statistics for 2008 shows that total remittances flow to Sub-Saharan Africa in particular was 21.4 billion USD and the total sum to developing countries was 324.8 billion USD (WB, Migration and remittances fact book, 2011)<sup>1</sup>. These figures do not however, include informal remittances transfer to family members and friends<sup>2</sup>. At 126 billion in 2004, remittances constitute the second most largest foreign direct exchange to developing countries, (Africa Renewal, 2005)<sup>3</sup>; hence a lot of attention is given to remittances due to its development agenda.

### **1.1.1 Women, migration, and remittances**

Women, as well as men do migrate. However, traditional studies on international migration have rendered women as dependents on the male. According to this tradition, women migrate to re-join their husbands or male partners who had migrated before. This stereotype is rapidly changing nowadays as both women and men occupy significant spaces in the “migratory train”. Female migrants constitute about 49 percent of migrants worldwide (UN, 2009). Not only has the number of female migrants increase, but also the character of migration has changed.

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<sup>1</sup>World Bank, Migration and remittances facts book (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/SSA.pdf>), accessed, February 8, 2011

<sup>2</sup> There are two channels of remittances flow—formal and informal. Formal transfer use banks, money transfer agencies and sometimes the internet. Unofficial transfer are sent through friends, relatives, or by migrants themselves (Africa Renewal, 2005) <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol19no3/193remittance.html>, accessed, February 5, 2011

<sup>3</sup> Africa Renewal, (2005) downloaded from <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol19no3/193remittance.html> (accessed, September 21 2010)

At the wake of the global financial crises, women's roles have, and are continually (re)defined. Women are also heads of households and are continually migrating independently from their male partners. They are also main providers of assistance to their families, a practice which is inherent in women's traditional care-giving roles. This increased attention paid to female migrants by researchers and scholars within studies on migration have resulted into a situation which Piper described as the *feminization* of migration (Piper, 2008:1287-1288, Oishi, 2005); in short, one could say that we live in an era of migration and female migration *par excellence*. Similarly the UN maintains that:

Academic studies and reports from international organizations on contemporary flows of migration have increasingly acknowledged and highlighted a number of issues related to one of the key features of international migration today: its feminization (UN, 2004) quoted in Piper, (2008:1287)

The 'feminization of migration' is understood and explained in various ways; however, Piper recommends that a comprehensive analysis should be the way forward in the wake of many complexities surrounding international migration patterns (ibid:1287). This is because the migration experiences of male and female migrants differ. Such differences are perhaps due to some gender-related, socio-cultural and economic factors. However, one thing common in this 'new wave' of men and women autonomous migration is that through remittances, both genders are involve in family wellbeing and by extension to economic growth of their region of origin.

On the one hand gender issues in migrants' remittances are a relatively new area of research when compared to other issues within mainstream migration studies; yet gender remains a crucial factor in our understanding of any social phenomenon such as migration. Gender as a social construction organizes relations between men and women—who does what? How? Who decides? (to name a few). Such relations can differentiate the causes, processes, and impacts of international migration and remittances. Hence analysis with a focus on family and gender patterns which highlights the impacts of remittances on family wellbeing would contribute to a better understanding of how socio-cultural and economic factors shape the contours of international migrants' remittances.

## **1.2 Focus**

The theme of this study is limited to family expectations and remittances flow taking the case of Cameroonian migrants in Sweden. Remittances are the main theme of this study while gender and il/legality constitute my analytical focus. However, I will also have a look at class; that is what is the class position of these migrants—rich, poor, or average? Migrants' motivations for migration will not be overlooked either. I will not include migrants from wealthy families who go abroad for visits or for holidays. Important for this study are migrants who come from families where financial and other means for migration are hard to come by, or not so readily available. By gender, and il/legality, I will examine the remittance experiences of men and women and how their legal statuses affected and/ or is affecting their remittance pattern.

Included for this study are migrants between the ages of 20-40, made up of students and non students, as well as documented and undocumented Cameroonian migrants. While focusing on transcontinental migration, I will however give a brief summary of historical movements within Cameroon as this may have an impact on, or help us to understand contemporary international migration from Cameroon. I will overlook migration within Africa; that is, migration from Cameroon to other African countries. My concern is on international migration to Western Europe and America but dealing specifically with Cameroonian migrants in Sweden. The new economics theory of migration and the feminist theory of intersectionality will constitute my theoretical framework.

## **1.3 Study objectives**

International migration is widely discussed in everyday jokes and conversations in Cameroon; from the villages to the towns and cities, amongst the young and the old. This theme of discussion is perpetrated by the country's economic hardship which has shed hopes for a decent future amongst Cameroonian youths. Most studies on transcontinental migration from, and/or transcontinental remittances to Cameroon have been gender neutral, or have inadequately explored gender issues e.g. (Fleischer, 2007, Jua 2003, Molua 2009, Ngomba 2010, Nyamnjoh, 2005, Pelican et al 2008). It can be said that women, just as men are motivated to migrate in search of a better life; accordingly, Kofman et al add that male and female migrants faced different lived experiences. To these authors, migration may empower

women economically, and improve on the financial status of their families (Kofman et al, 2000:22).

In line with the above argument, it is therefore imperative to incorporate a gender and socio-cultural (non economic) aspects to the dominant economic oriented transcontinental studies on migration from, and remittances to Africa. Although it can be said that structural circumstances such as economic adversity play a role in the migratory, and most importantly, the remittance trend of Cameroonians in Sweden, individual and family level forces also play a huge role. Hence in this study I will examine migrants' relationship with their families in terms of how and why migrants remit.

Also, studies on il/legality and migrants remittances to Africa—Cameroon from a gender perspective still remains underexplored. In this regard, I will investigate how migrants' residential statuses (documented or undocumented) influence their remittance behavior.

Furthermore, students seldom occupy a central part in studies on migration—remittances—development and/or family wellbeing; at the same time, they (students) constitute one of the migrants' categories. In my study, I will venture into this inadequately explore area in the remittance—family wellbeing nexus.

## **1.4 Research problem and question**

In Cameroon, family solidarity is entwined in a web of exchanges that creates family bonds and solidarity. However, at the same time, such exchanges go with expectations and obligations that [sometimes] are differentiated on the basis of gender. In this regard, it is therefore important for this study to understand how family dynamics affects male and female migrants' ability to send back remittances; as well as explore how migrants' residential statuses (documented/undocumented) within a nation-state influence his or her remittances behavior pattern. With such problems in mind, this research is based on one main research question:

*How do migrants' legal and gendered statuses affect their remittance flow*

## **Chapter 2: Background and literature review**

### **2.1 Description of Cameroon (see map above)**

Cameroon is situated on the Guinea coast of West Africa. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century, the country was subject to a Hausa-Fulani land invasion, and Portuguese slave trading on its coast (Fearon, & Laitin, 2005). Later on in 1884, Germany was in control of the territory but was later defeated by Britain and France after the First World War; the country was shared and ruled by Britain and France. French Cameroon was called East Cameroon and British Cameroon was called Southern Cameroon (Awasom, 2000:93-94). Fanso's study shows that French Cameroon gain independence in 1960 (Fanso, 1989:128). Southern Cameroon joined East Cameroon in 1961 after the UN organized plebiscite (Jua and Konings, 2004:612).

Today, Cameroon has a total of ten provinces, eight French speaking (Francophones) and two English speaking –Anglophones (South West and North West provinces) given rise to a multiplicity of a political and socio-cultural structure. Forje maintain that the country has a total of about 273 ethnic languages and groups excluding the two official languages of English and French (Forje, 2007:9), and has a total population of about 20 million people with a population density of about 37 persons/sq km (World Population Prospects, 2008) most of whom are youths between the ages of 18-35 years. Pidgin is the lingua franca of Anglophone Cameroon.

Cameroon has one oil refining company located in the South West province; it also has seven state-owned universities and many other institutions of higher learning. Most Cameroonians, (more than half of Cameroon's population) depends on agriculture and it related activities for their livelihoods; most of the country's raw materials such as cocoa, rubber, banana, tea, palm oil, timber, to name a few comes from the South West province due to the presence of the Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and the volcanic rich soils in this part of the country. It is also said that this plantation economy constitute the backbone of Cameroon's economy. Figures from the World Bank shows that Cameroon's GDP per capita in 2009 stood at 1.119USD, total GDP was 21.8 billion USD. In 2008, the country's GNI stood at 58.412



billion USD (World Bank, 2010 statistics)<sup>4</sup>. Cameroon is bounded to the north by Nigeria, to the east by the Central Africa Republic and to the south by Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Post colonial Cameroon after 50 (fifty) years of independence is still faced with so many challenges—socio-cultural, economic, as well as political squabbles. The country is entrapped into a web of who belongs and who does not; a situation which some have described as a conflict of belonging between ‘indigenes’ and ‘non-indigenes’, that is, between autochthons and allochthons (Geschiere and Nyamnjoh, 2000:424), Konings, (2001) in de Bruijn et al (2001 :169). According to Konings and Nyamnjoh, this quest for belonging has given rise to what has come to be known as the ‘Anglophone problem’. A problem which could be traced from the “unholy” marriage between the two Cameroons (French and British Cameroons), that is, a union of two territories of different cultures—one French, the other British. Konings and Nyamnjoh, (1997:207) maintain that this union turned out to be an assimilation and/or marginalization of the Anglophones by the Francophones.

Not only is there an Anglophone problem, but the country is also inflicted with the social ills of nepotism, tribalism, bribery and corruption, to name a few. The phenomenon of “god father”—man-know-man where in, one needs to have the necessary “connection” to get admitted into a government-owned professional school or into the civil service are issues eating into the fabric of contemporary Cameroon. According to the *corruption watch dog* of transparency international, Cameroon came last in a list of about 85 countries that were surveyed; meaning that Cameroon was the most corrupt nation during this year (Transparency International, 1998)<sup>5</sup>.

Also, Nyamnjoh, (1999:118) maintain that as the ‘national cake’ diminishes with worsening economic crises and other social and political discontents, there is dire need for Cameroonians

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- <sup>4</sup> World Bank indicators, April 2010 ([http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/ddpreports/ViewSharedReport?REPORT\\_ID=9147&REQUEST\\_TYPE=VIEWADVANCED](http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/ddpreports/ViewSharedReport?REPORT_ID=9147&REQUEST_TYPE=VIEWADVANCED)) accessed, September 29, 2010

- <sup>5</sup> Transparency International. (1998). *Corruption watch dog* [http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/previous\\_cpi/1998](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/previous_cpi/1998), accessed, September 29, 2010

to have something to fall back on, what he calls “survival strategies” (pg 116) becomes even more important. He adds that “the system has little regard for virtue and proves to have more room for loyal mediocrity than critical excellence. It thrives on appearances and not substance, making subservient mediocrities feels more important than real achievers...” (Nyamnjoh, 1999:107). One of the survival strategies that Cameroonians, (especially young people) have employ is international migration in a bid to escape the many uncertainties that lies ahead of them in Cameroon. Even the few who manage to secure a job in Cameroon are poorly paid given that state financial resources are most often diverted to other activities like football and during political campaigns. The consequences of such ‘misappropriation’ of state budget is evident in the high emigration rates of some educated and/or employed Cameroonians; many of whom abandon their jobs for “greener pastures” abroad while others just simply can’t get a job and tend to *bush falling* as the only way out for themselves and their families. E.g. statistics shows that most of those leaving the country are the educated, that is, about 17 percent of Cameroonians with higher education migrated (Docquier and Marfouk, 2005) in (IOM, 2010 reports on migration in Cameroon).

Furthermore, it is said that during the 1995-2005 period, 46 percent of Cameroonian medical doctors and 19 percent of nurses migrated abroad to some selected countries (Clemens and Pettersson, 2007) in (ibid). Data from the Cameroon Medical Association shows that about 4200 Cameroonian doctors, mostly specialist are working abroad hence creating a high doctor-patient ratio. In sum, Cameroonian emigrants for 2007 was estimated to be 170.363 in 2007 (IOM, 2010:16, 2009 reports on Cameroon) and these figures seems to be on the increase.

## **2.2 Gendered migration in Cameroon’s history**

Bearing in mind the fact that contemporary migration from Cameroon cannot be studied in isolation from its socio-economic, political, and historical underpinning, I will, in this subsection give a brief account of the gender antecedents in Cameroon’s mobility pattern. To begin with, it can be said that the movement of women in Cameroon as elsewhere in Africa have been largely regulated either through defined states’ policies or through cultural practices that inhibits their movement. Similarly, in his study, Gugler affirms that in large parts of Africa, women came to towns and other urban areas largely as dependents (Gugler, 1989) in Baker and Aina, (1995:257).

Women in Cameroon and Africa have traditionally been relegated to the private sphere. Colonialism, it seems, left women worse off than ever before in terms of power relations between men and women. It was expected that capitalist production will bring in a new era for women of Africa and Cameroon, on the contrary, Goheen argues that capitalist relations became locally incorporated and shaped by indigenous cultural systems (Goheen, 1996:3); systems that denied, and in some cases still denies women full equality with men in all domains.

Similarly, some authors assert that, generally, African women unlike their autonomous western counterpart leave rural areas to join their husbands who have secured employment in the cities( Connell et al, 1976, O'Connor, 1983) in Brockerhoff and Eu, (1993:562). Morokvasic adds that, in response to societal pressures resulting from divorce or widowhood, women without husbands may be motivated to migrate to seek employment in other places (Morokvasic, 1984:898); or in the case of Cameroon, women may migrated to get married (Podlewski, 1975) in (Brockerhoff and Eu, 1993:562).

With the introduction of plantation agriculture by the Germans which later became known as the Cameroon Development Corporation in 1946 (Ardener et al. 1960, Epale, 1985, Konings, 1993) in Konings, (2001) in de Bruijn et al, (2001:173) Cameroon women's mobility (especially women from the northwest province of Cameroon) became even more restricted and controlled. Konings further maintain that large numbers of male labor from rebellious areas were seized and sent to the plantations to work (ibid). Similarly, Obbo contends that chiefs in Africa have been primordial in safeguarding male control over women, both productively and reproductively; and justifying their actions as African 'traditions' (Obbo, 1980) in Konings, (1996: 330). He adds that women who manage to escape such patriarchal controls and migrated to towns had to bear the brunt of social ostracism as 'prostitutes' for the rest of their lives (Obbo, 1980) in (ibid).

In the Ndu tea plantation of Cameroon, the chief of Ndu went into an accord with the plantation owners that he will only allocate land for the opening up of a tea plantation on one condition: " no employment of female labor and the exclusive recruitment of male labor" (Konings, 1996:335). With worsening economic conditions and confronted with many impossibilities, some *stubborn* women had to break the rules by migrating to towns and plantation to look for jobs. Such women were refer to as "akwara" (a pidgin word for prostitute). In this regard, there is all indication that women only had to migrate as dependents

(wives). The right to migrate in their own capacity as women was socio-culturally, and by extension, structurally confuted.

Whereas Cameroonian women's migratory right was shown up, that of men became even more popular with the famous "bamenda-come-down" process. This was an activity wherein male labor was brought down from the North West province to work in the colonial plantation; the main goals for such movements according to Alpes, was money making, to work and earn money, that is; "to work money" (Alpes, 2008, 8th month paper) which was fostered by the concept of the male bread winner. Continent wise, Amin maintains that, with the introduction of capitalist economy in Africa, migrants (and in the case of Cameroon, male migrants') labor was recruited to work in the plantations. Such recruitments methods, he adds, were both persuasive and coercive, including "forced recruitment" (Amin, 1974) in Adepoju, (1995:346).

Similarly Konings, adds that the increasing number of migrants (predominantly male labor migrants, my addition) from the Northwest Province to the coastal areas was due to the fact that the Northwest province had a larger population density, it was much later in development in cash-crop production, and it lack job opportunities outside the traditional sector (Konings, 2001) in de Bruijn et al, (2001:174). Also some authors maintain that the migration of women, especially single women in Cameroon just as elsewhere in Africa was further inhibited by the police who will forcibly returned single women back to their villages (Obbo, 1980, Ruel,1960, Walker, 1982) in Konings, (1996: 330).

Although Cameroon has been use here as an example, this gendered migration trend was also evident in some countries in Sub Sahara Africa during the colonial period; e.g. Konings shows in his study that the colonial state of Zambia in response to the chief's complaints that female migration to the Copperbelt towns is a threat to male authority and food production, implemented measures to block the migration of women to towns (ibid).

However, in contemporary Cameroon, this men-only pattern of migration is hardly present. Both men and women in Cameroon today migrate from one town/city to the other, some also migrate out of the country. The public versus private divide have become more porous, and hence challenging the male breadwinner model. More and more Cameroonian women are migrating not as dependents on their fathers or husbands but as autonomous migrants, migrating abroad on their own in order to support themselves and their families. Such change in the migratory pattern, according to Oishi is due to the global restructuring which is playing

a significant role in this change of attitudes towards the migration of women (Oishi, 2005:2) and most especially, the migration of single women.

## **2.3 International migration in contemporary Cameroon**

In this era of globalization and in the wake of the global financial crises, international migration and migrants' remittances has been used, and is still being used by many people from the developing countries as a way-out of their adverse conditions, that is, as a means to support themselves and their families. In the context of Cameroon, international migration is widely discussed and practiced, in fact, there seems to be what some authors would describe as a "culture of migration" (Cohen, 2004:5, Hahn and Klute, 2007:13,) starting from the pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial movements. Similarly, Schrieder and Knerr affirms that Cameroon has a very mobile population, both international and nationally—nationally from one province or one division to the other; migration, they maintain, is use as a means of obtaining income and food security in Cameroon (Schrieder and Knerr, 2000: 226).

While Cameroonians have been migrating abroad for many reasons such as visits, family reunion, studying, and other reasons, the upsurge of finding a better life, or the "search for greener pastures" in *Whiteman kontri* (pidgin word for the West, central Europe and America) gained eminence in the 1990s. This is due to some socio-economic and political predicaments which left many Cameroonians and their families worse off than ever before. Some of such exigencies include: the fall in the prices of oil and agricultural products in the late 80s and 90s, the subsequent introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP), corruption, as well as other political contingencies.

Cameroon's economic and political liberalization of the late 80s and 90s came in line with SAP where many workers were retrenched. Some authors' maintain that the country's crises reach peak it the early 90s with the redundancy of many workers and about a 70 percent cut of salaries of civil servants (Molua, 2009:1669, Schrieder and Knerr, 2000:227). There was also the devaluation of the CFA franc in 1994 which led to a decrease in local buying power (Konings, 1996, Monga, 1995) in Pelican et al, (2008:117). With a fall in prices of agricultural products and a decrease in the purchasing power of many Cameroonians, many resorted to devising different coping mechanisms; one of which was international migration and sending home remittances.

Such strategies employ by Cameroonian migrants seem to hold true with Adams and Page argument that there is a cordial relationship between poverty and migration (Adams and Page, 2005). Hence many Cameroonians in response to this state of poverty are using international migration with the resultant effect of remittances "...as a substitute for missing financial and insurance markets which can smooth temporal financial stress" (Schrieder and Knerr, 2000:223). Dia also affirms that apart from general financial risk diversification, migration also reduces food insecurity in many household in sub-Saharan Africa (Dia, 1992) in (Ibid: 224-5). In this regard, remittances from migration " help to replace risky cash sources" (Schrieder and Knerr, 2000: 224) which is the case with contemporary international migration from Cameroon.

Moreover, apart from the fall in agricultural prices, and the introduction of SAP with its calamitous consequences, Cameroon's democratization has been marked by what Boulaga and Zingy refer to as "corrupt and illegal practices" (Boulaga and Zingy, 2002) in Pelican et al (2008:117) or what Nyamnjoh describe as "cosmetic democracy" Nyamnjoh, (2002). In a *Culture of Corruption* (Smith, 2007) Cameroonians are discontented with the country's conspicuous socio-economic and political atmosphere. As the February 2008 civil unrest<sup>6</sup> confirms, many Cameroonians have thus turned to *bush falling* as the only way out due to the absence of a decent future back at home. Most have focus on transcontinental migration to Europe and America where opportunities for a better life are thought to be plentiful.

In a country ridiculed by "the scarcity of an ethic of the public service" (de Sardan,1999:31) the few Cameroonians who manage to get hold of the "national cake" tend to amass wealth leaving majority of the masses in suffering and misery orchestrated by massive unemployment. As a result, many have resorted to outmigration as an escape to what they consider a better life e.g. statistics shows that 17 % of Cameroonians with higher education migrated in 2000 (Docquier and Marfouk, 2005) in (IOM, 2010:15). Between 1995-2005,

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<sup>6</sup> The February 2008 civil unrest was a nationwide strike that took place in Cameroon due to increase in prices of fuel and other basic commodities. Costs of living have become extremely high with more and more people being unable to meet up with daily needs for human survival. As a result, Cameroonians (mostly the youths) started protesting to call the government's attention to the mass suffering of Cameroonians.

46% physicians and 19% nurses migrated from Cameroon (Clemens and Pettersson, 2007) in (IOM, 2010:15)<sup>7</sup>.

### **2.3.1 A note on *bush falling***

The practice of international migration in Cameroon is referred to as *bush falling*. “To fall bush” in Pidgin English, (the lingua franca of Anglophone Cameroon) means to migrate to the West either for studies, or to work and earn money. A *bush faller* is someone who has been to the West and succeeded or someone who has “made it”, that is, an achiever (be in a position to help him/herself as well as his/her family). Similarly, Pelican et al maintain that a *bush faller* is someone who left Cameroon and now live a better life in the West; *falling bush*, they add, implies going to the bush to hunt, gather, or harvest meaning that one never returns from the bush empty handed (Pelican et al, 2008:119). In the same way, Jua, elucidates that, *bush falling* is commonly used when referring to transcontinental migration in Cameroon, that is, migration to the West; its source and literal meaning is not so clear. Simply put, it is assumed to be informative of lived realities in Africa where one goes to the bush so as to return with food or game to feed the family (Jua, 2003:22-23). Accordingly, migration from Cameroon to other African countries especially within the Sub-Saharan region does not qualify as *bush falling*. In this regard, *bush falling* serves as a pathway for aspiring Cameroonians (especially the youths) to realize their dreams. In a sense, it provides a window of opportunity for many aspirants to “reach the final port of call” (ibid, 2003: 23).

*Bush fallers* are said to belong to a generation of affluence, they are of a “different level”; these differences are visible in modes of dressing, riding in big cars, to name a few; an opportunity which is limited only to the rich in Cameroon. In my point of view, they can be referred to as *les nouveaux riches* (the new rich).

Pelican et al add that although *bush faller* is a contemporary term, the term *been to* is a similar term which had existed before. This term refers to elite members of the (colonial, my addition) and post-colonial era who travelled abroad to study and return to take up white-

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<sup>7</sup> IOM, (2010). Migration in Cameroon. 2009 report., pg 1-121. [http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/Cameroun\\_Profile\\_2009.pdf](http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/Cameroun_Profile_2009.pdf) (accessed, September 29, 2010).

collar jobs with the government and international corporations in Cameroon (Pelican et al, 2008:119). Similarly, Martin maintains that during the time of transition from colonial to post colonial period, the *been tos* were popular in most West African countries; she adds that:

The term was widely apply to describe persons who had travelled abroad to be educated, mainly to Europe or America. After returning, they worked in prestigious and well-paying jobs as administrators, lawyers, engineers, or medical doctors and were looked upon with respect by those who had never been able to see the 'white man's kontri' at first hand. "Been-tos" were easy to recognize by their appearance (suit and tie), their use of language and pronunciation (English with British or American accent), their cultural speech and by their distinguished behavior [...]. Many "been-tos" have achieve leading positions in politics, business and administration in the course of decolonization, and in this context the term symbolized western knowledge, progress, material wealth and social prestige (Martin, 2007) in Hahn and Klute, (2007:208-209).

Just as the *been tos* were identified from their dressing and language, so too are today's bush fallers in Cameroon. The difference here is that, bush fallers come mainly for visits, most often during the month of December. Perhaps if the country's socio-economic and political atmosphere is conducive as it was the case before the social ills sets in, (some) bush fallers would return home to stay and work as they will be assure of a decent future just as the once upon a time *been tos*. Although they do not occupy top positions in the government, *bush fallers* posses great social prestige and are look upon with great admiration by those who have never been to *bush* (the West, *white man kontri*). The West by many in Cameroon is associated with affluence, in the same way, Bochow confirms that the West is metaphorically paraphrased as 'paradise' or 'heaven' (Bochow, 2002) in (Martin, 2007, in Hahn and Klute, 2007:211), hence in Cameroon anyone who dare to say anything 'bad' about *white man kontri* is consider to be irrational.

There is a strong belief in *bush* as a place where life is at its best; It is consider as a land of adventure and an issue of luck, if A does not succeed, B may succeed. Even when some *bush fallers* try to explain that life in the West/*Whiteman kontri* is also difficult, many back home dismiss the idea in response that, if truly life in *bush* is difficult, then most or all migrants will return home, or no one will want to go; or irrespective of how difficult it may be, it is always better than life back in Cameroon.

At this juncture, one could say that mobility, that is, international migration and migrants remittances is consider to be an acceptable path towards achieving family wellbeing in



Cameroon. It is perceived to be both a means to an end and an end in itself for many who wish to better their lives and that of their families.

### **2.3.2 Witchcraft, secrecy, and international migration from Cameroon**

Out migration from Africa just as in many developing countries seems to be on the increase. In the case of SSA, Adepoju maintains that rapid population increase together with economic hardship have led to increase poverty and deprivation of the wellbeing of many families. He adds that, migration in all its forms (nationally and internationally) “responds essentially to the same underlying factors—the pull of opportunity and the push of abject poverty” (Adepoju, 2000:383). This is also true in the case of Cameroon as evident in the country’s high emigration rate. However, one thing which is peculiar with international migration in Cameroon is its secrecy resulting from fear of witchcraft.

The family in Cameroon plays an important role when it comes to migration in terms of financial and material contribution, as well as in deciding who migrates and why (Fleischer, 2007:421). However, secrecy due to witchcraft is also present ; family tensions, envy, and jealousy can spark off witchcraft hence all aspiring migrants have to keep their departure secret or inform very few trusted people who in turn also have to keep the migration plan secret. Other relatives and friends will only get to know once the migrants have arrived at the final destination, or what Jua called “the final port of call” (Jua, 2003: 23). Witchcraft as a practice can be manifested in many ways, e.g. it can be used to bewitch the potential migrants and the migration plans may fail and this reinforces the need to keep it secret.

Also, witchcraft, known as “nyongo”, “famla”, “kupe”, or “msa” (Geschiere, 1997, Nymanjoh, 2005) in different regions of Cameroon is a popular form of sorcery mostly between relatives and extended families; wherein people possessing nyongo can kill others and use their bodies to slave for them as zombies in a foreign land; as a result, the killers/sorcerers become rich at the expense of the lives of the afflicted (Nyamnjoh, 2005:242). Witchcraft accusations usually occurs between kins, and in some cases, one has to show prove of intimacy with the (would be) afflicted—“sorcerers seen as jealous and destructive “eat” or deplete their victims through words and action. Their victim must be kin as they are expected to prove intimacy...” (ibid: 246). Similarly, in *The Modernity of Witchcraft*, Geschiere maintain that one can be recruited into a “famla” or what may also be called “nyongo house” without knowing. He gives an example in Cameroon where a man

goes to town and accepts beer from some strangers. In this process, he innocently join a “nyongo house”; upon realization, it was too late, he has contracted a debt that he only has to pay off by selling one of his close relatives (Geschiere, 1997:158).

At this juncture, one can begin to understand why ready-to-go migrants have to prepare for their departure in great secrecy. Given that the would-be migrant in some cases is seen as the only way out for the family, especially if much has been invested in the migratory journey, there is need to keep the journey secret from other ‘untrusted’ friends and family members for one never knows who is the next victim to be afflicted. If supposedly this victim is the to-be migrant, this means a great loss to the perceive betterment of the family in the nearest future.

It can be said that jealousy and witchcraft can destabilizes family harmony when it comes to international migration because people tend to choose who and who not to tell about their departure plans. Similarly, Geschiere, (1997) affirms that witchcraft is the dark side of kinship, but at the same time, one cannot do without family ties. The family is still very important, what is require (as a popular Duala<sup>8</sup> proverb says) is that “one must learn to live with one’s sorcerer” (Ibid: 212); he writes:

Witchcraft is still the dark side of kinship in several senses. It expresses the frightening realization that aggression threatens from within the intimacy of the family—that is, from the very space where complete solidarity and trust should reign without fail (...) they express the frightening consciousness that there is jealousy and therefore hidden aggression among those with whom one has to live and collaborate. Nearly everywhere in Africa, it is inconceivable, still today, to formally refuse maintaining family ties: the family remains the corner stone of social life and one cannot live without intimacy. Yet it is precisely this intimacy that harbors deadly dangers since it is the very breeding ground for witchcraft (Geschiere, 1997:212).

Given that there seems to be a positive relationship between and family intimacy and solidarity, it is evidently clear as the above authors have pointed out that, in Cameroon, as in other African countries, one cannot do without such consciousness inherent in the discourses and practices of witchcraft, not even when one attempts an understanding of the secrecy surrounding international migration from Cameroon. Not only is there a close connection between witchcraft and the family, but it seems that such practices transcend into the wider society. In *Sorcery, Power, and the modern state in Cameroon*, Rowlands and Warnier shows how witchcraft is also manifested in wider fringes of the state by some elites to consolidate

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<sup>8</sup> The Dualas are one of the ethnicities/tribes in Cameroon

power. They add that “political elites have been credited by the villages with occult powers” and at the village level, power politics is viewed as a battle between prominent politicians using their occult power to win success (Rowlands and Warnier, 1988:128). In line with these authors, president Paul Biya in his address to the nation after the February 2008 uprisings says that he knows that such acts of ‘public disturbance’ are masterminded by the *les apprentis sorciers* (sorcerers). In response, Awillo (as he is popularly called), a Cameroon journalist and singer in one of his songs asks *qui sont les grands socieres* (who are the big sorcerers).

In such state of affairs, one can tend to understand how and why it is (perhaps) important to be very cautious of witchcraft practices and the extent to which the possessors can manifest their actions; hence ready-to-go Cameroonian migrants need to be even more cautious and keep their departure secret until they arrive at the “promise land” (country of destination).

## **2.4 Situating the family in the context of Africa—Cameroon**

Unlike the nuclear family system that operates in the West, family in Africa and Cameroon in particular is broader and has a much wider meaning. In Cameroon, just as in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, there is a tradition for heterosexual family system which is hierarchical in nature according to gender and sometimes age—what Oyewumi describe as seniority (Oyewumi, 1997). Men (fathers and sons) are usually the heads of family and they take responsibility in making certain decisions within the family. Age wise, an elderly woman possesses more power (in terms of decision making) and respect than a younger man/son/male child.

Families are usually large, with average of may be 4 children per family. In an African setting, a family is made up of both the nuclear and the extended family; families can be consanguine (related by blood) and/or affinal (not related by blood). Marriage is central to family and is particularly important for the socio-economic status of women and children. Adepoju (1997) adds that within family networks in Africa, a woman’s status is largely a derived status: “—she is someone’s wife, the mother of a son and to a lesser extent someone’s daughter [...] a married woman enjoys higher status than an unmarried one. Having children confers additional status” (ibid) in Adepoju, (1997:9)

Similarly, some authors maintain that in Cameroon, customary (traditional) marriage determines the affiliation of children, and children belong to the lineage of the husband even

if the latter is not the biological father (Brian, 1972, Nelson et al. 1974, Houseman 1988) in Calves, (1999:293). Children are raised by parents, that is; unless otherwise, the parents are responsible for children upbringing. Also the definition of a father/mother is wide; it can be consanguineal (biological) or affinal (not biological) and the same applies for a definition of a child/children; hence even what one may refer to as social parents/foster parents are also responsible for children upbringing.

The fact that the concept of the family in Cameroon is broad and extensive makes its definition complex. This complexity is made worse with Cameroon's ethnic diversity. However, Tiemoko notes that, central to the concept of family is the bond of solidarity and belonging where its members tend to support each other; but also, this involves responsibilities and obligations (Tiemoko, 2004:157). Family plays an important role in the socio-cultural and economic sphere; and these roles, Lacohe adds, are gendered (Lacohe, 1989) in (ibid). A woman's access to power, including power to make certain decisions is still to a large extent limited; in addition, Calves notes that the situation is worse when it comes to inheritance rights and other rights to landed property by women and a woman's social identity still very much depends on her being married (Calve, 1999:293) hence single women seem to be ineffectual.

Furthermore, it can be said that families constitute the basic unit where certain decisions are taken; hence to understand the socio-economic and perhaps cultural need when it comes to sending home remittances, one must have a critical look at the family and the importance it plays in the Cameroonian society. Duties, obligations, expectations, and responsibilities are essential in Cameroon's family organization, and division of tasks based on gender is strong. The man (father, or first male child) remains the acknowledged head of family. Hence when it comes to taking certain decisions within the family, the man's role is very primordial, even in decisions that for example concern the migration project of a family member or receiving remittances.

Also, Findley adds that mutual help and obligations characterized most African families. He maintains that when it comes to migration, migrants are obligated to remit as much as, and as often as they can. The most common form of helping is financial (Findley, 1997 in (Adepoju, 1997:120). In the case of Cameroon, Franqueville, (1987) asserts that migrants send back gifts of money to their lineage as a way of expressing their solidarity and support for the family (ibid, in Findley 1997) in Adepoju et al, (1997:120)

Moreover, the strong sense of bonding and support that operates in Cameroonian families could be due to the “filial affection” (Anderson, 1977) in Finch (1989:67) which is present in most Cameroonian families; it can also be due to mutual advantage(s) rather than a sense of duty in, for example financial relationship between kin (Finch, 1989:67). Family support, especially between the young and the old can be exemplify with the pidgin saying that *pekin na the waka stick for old age* (children are the walking sticks when one gets old) ,hence children have it as an obligation to take care of their parents and younger ones<sup>9</sup>. In the absence of social welfare services to careter for the old, investing in children can be synonymous to preparing for old age since taking care of the old is a family and not a state affair. With such obligation, plus the absence of a descent future for most young Cameroonians, *bush falling* seems socio-economically correct and indispensable for many Cameroonian families. In such circumstances, (international) migration and remittances according to Nyarko and Gyimah-Brempong, (2010:1) serve as social safety nets to many families, lifting them out of poverty in the long run; according to Mazzucato, it also informs us of the dynamics in transnational reciprocity inherent in Africans’ migration (Mazzucato, 2008).

Furthermore, it could be said that understanding family structures/organization in Cameroon and Africa at large is intricate; this intricacy becomes intense when one attempts an understanding of family roles, duties, and obligations. This is because, in real life, the way one defines a family and it roles as an institution within the larger society is affected by many socio-cultural and economic factors; how one demarcate the boundary of his or her family with regards to international migrants remittances can be best explain from the migrants perspectives of what constitute a family to him/her when taking Cameroonian families as example. Similarly, Tiemeko affirms that, “in practice, the definition and perception of a family are highly related to the cultural and material settings in which the individuals and family members live and have lived. For this reason, we might expect that migration itself constantly shapes and reshapes conceptions of the family” (Tiemoko, 2004:157).

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<sup>9</sup> An example of such sayings came up during a brief discussion with a Cameroonian mother I met in Paris on (20:11:2010) . She explained to me how life in Europe is so hard, but her children remain her only hopes. She told me that “my daughter, life here is so difficult [...]. My younger brother who is in Cameroon is even better than me here, but when you tell people back home, they don’t understand [...]. Even if Sarkozy don’t want us to live here, my two children are my retirement [...]. Even if it just fifty Euros that they will be sending to me, that will be enough...”

## 2.5 Remittances flow and determinants

Inherent in the discourses of international migration is the continuous upshot of remittances and its role in migrants' family wellbeing, as well as in the development of migrants' sending countries. The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) notes that remittances are among the most tangible links between migration and development (as well family wellbeing). In 2009, official remittances flow totaled over 414 billion USD with more than three quarters (about 316 billion USD) sent to developing countries ( MPI, 2010)<sup>10</sup>; these figures do not include informal remittances sent via friends and other family members. Also, Ratha et al maintain that remittances are more than double official aid and nearly two-thirds of foreign direct investment flow to developing countries. These authors add that remittances are known to be the largest source of external funding to many countries of the global south (less developed countries); remittances (they argue) have been less inconstant than other sources of foreign exchange earnings to developed countries (Ratha et al 2007:2).

Between 2002-2007, total remittances flow to developing countries increase from 166-240 billion USD, out of these figures, 11 billion USD was remittances flow to Sub Sahara Africa (Ratha et al, 2007:1)<sup>11</sup>

This growth in remittances could be explain to be as a result of mass movements of people from the developing to the developed countries *pushed* and *pull* by a number of factors. In the case of Sub-Saharan Africa, these mass migration out from this region is due to socio-economic downturns, including political upheavals and wars, and to a larger extent, the unintended consequences of the SAP plus the fact that living conditions for most of the countries in this region are worst now than they were just after independence; that is, in the sixties and early seventies (Adepoju, 1991c, 1995, 2000). Also, conflicts, poverty, and environmental upheavals that have affected these areas in the last decades (Krokfors, 1995 in Baker and Aina, 1995:51) have, and are still responsible for out migration in many African and other third world countries. The hardships precipitated by economic downturns have

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<sup>10</sup> Migration Policy Institute, (October, 2010) Statistics on remittances. Available online at (<http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/index.cfm>) accessed, October 27 2010

<sup>11</sup> Ratha et al, (2007). Migration and remittance trend 2007. Migration and development brief 3 (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTDECPROSPPECTS/Resources/476882-1157133580628/BriefingNote3.pdf>), accessed 2010.10.28

resulted to individuals and families seeking strategies to diversify their income and provide opportunities for family survival through remittances (Stark and Lucas 1988:465, Taylor 1999:74).

Although such high levels of migration could have a positive effect on remittances in migrants' sending countries, remittances does not take place in a vacuum, it flow is shape and reshape by many factors, or what Sorensen call determinants, she identifies the following as some of the determinants of remittances which include:

- Legal status of migrants, the job availability
- living expenses in the country of destination and the number of, and the relation to dependents back home
- the number of works abroad, wage rate, economic activities in host and home countries
- exchange rates, relative interest rate between host and home countries, political risk factors,
- facilities for transferring funds,
- the gender composition of migrants household in home and host countries, marital status,
- household income level, employment status and occupational level of household members in home and host countries, length of stay abroad and the occupational level of migrants (c.f. Sorenson, 2004:25) and Russell, (1986) in ( ibid).

Added to this list of determinants is “the quality of relationship between the migrant and the family member” (Kabki et al, 2004:90) as well as the quality of relationship between the migrants and non kins. This is because an intimate, or close relationship seems to generate some kind of financial assistance from the migrants to those left behind; in most instances, e.g. in Ghana, parents turn to receive more remittances than other extended members of family (ibid). Two, of these determinants that is, gender and legality and it impact on family wellbeing are central to this piece of write-up and this is discussed in the paragraphs below.

### **2.5.1 Gender, legality, and remittance flow**

More than 215 million people, that is, about 3 percent of the world's population live outside their country of origin (World Bank, 2010). The UN reports that women constitute about 50 percent of total migrants stock (IOM, 2010). According to Docquier et al, (2006) "women have long been viewed as dependents, moving as wives, mothers and daughters", the percentage of female migrants according to these authors have increase from 48.9 to 52.2 percent between the period 1960-2005 (Docquier et al, 2008:2).

Similarly, Donato et al affirm that when it comes to international migration, as evident in the Mexico-US migration, social networks are powerful and gendered, and maintain the institutionalized process of migration (Donato et al, 2006:12); these networks according to Boyd, are "conduits of information and social and financial assistance" (Boyd, 1989:639). Also, Sorenson asserts that women's marital status, skills—categorized as highly skilled or low skilled, poverty, and education are some of the factors affecting women's (autonomous) migration (Sorenson, 2005b:2).

Accordingly, this gendered nature in the migration experiences of men and women, their skills (categorized as low skilled and highly skilled), their educational level, and residential status (categorized as documented and undocumented) tend to affect the employment possibilities and remittance flow from these migrants. Sorenson notes that women, as it is assumed, tend to remit more than men (Sorenson, 2005b:3). When looking at gender and remittances, Sorenson cautioned that questions such as who moves and who stays, for what purpose, under which conditions, exactly what and how much flows, through which channels, and what sustains gendered transnational practices should be considered (ibid:3-4).

Sorenson, (2004) categorizes remittances into financial/monetary and social remittances. Financial remittances are the liquid cash sent by migrants while social remittances have to do with some "kind" of transfers; to Levitt social remittances are " the ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving to sending communities" (Levitt, 1998:927). Although not so much attention has been paid to this form of remittances, Levitt maintains that they remain central to our understanding of how migration modifies the lives of those who remain behind (Levitt, 2001) in Sorenson, (2004:7).

Furthermore, a UNFPA report says that migrant men are more likely to have better jobs with higher wages than migrant women, this could be explain to be as a result of the fact that women are often limited to low skilled jobs or what is refer to as "female jobs" such as



domestic work and sex work. In most cases, these jobs are lowly paid, coupled with poor working conditions and the fact that these workers (women) tend to lack access to social services (UNFPA, 2006:22, 34). However, this same report reveals that the remittances sent by women can alleviate family and community level poverty, that is to say that “despite the paucity of data, one thing is clear: money that female migrants send back home can take away poverty in the family and even in the community” (ibid: 29). Some authors add that due to their altruistic behavior, women are more likely than men to remit to a wider range of family members (Kofman and Raghuram, 2009:14). Also due to traditional gender roles, women migrants, especially single women may be pressured by their families to send remittances to support the family back home; compared to men, women tend to send back a higher proportion of the salaries as remittances to their families (IOM, report, no date)<sup>12</sup>.

Also, Ramirez et al assert that women whose principal motive is to sustain their families tend to remit more than others, that is, more than women who migrate as dependents on husbands (Ramirez et al, 2005:26). Although it is said that generally women remit more than men, as the above literature has shown, there are some variations to this general claim depending on some other factors e.g. migrants legal status in the host country, this legal status according to Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark, (2002:601) affects the kind of jobs un/documented migrants get and the amount of wages earned. However, Kunz claims that such generalizations about the gender dimensions of remittances are dubious, and one needs to take into account the specificities in a given context; to Kunz, “we need more context-specific analyses of gender implications of the GRT<sup>13</sup> on the ground. This means moving beyond generalizing about women’s and men’s remittance behavior to examine why people behave in certain ways in specific contexts...” (Kunz, 2008:1404, 1406); this is because remittances are not always beautiful (ibid: 1406) hence one has to be cautious of its ugly side as well e.g. how recipients used these transfers.

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- <sup>12</sup> IOM report, (n.d). Gender, Migration and Remittances. Available online at [http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published\\_docs/brochures\\_and\\_info\\_sheets/Gender-migration-remittances-infosheet.pdf](http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/shared/mainsite/published_docs/brochures_and_info_sheets/Gender-migration-remittances-infosheet.pdf) (accessed, 2010.11.17)

<sup>13</sup> GRT: Global Remittance Trends (Kunz,2008:1389)

Boussichas, (2009) maintains that there are millions of undocumented migrants in many migrants receiving states, and that these migrants contribute to increase productivity in host countries since they usually receive lower wages; however, there is very little information about these migrants (ibid: 2009:2) e.g. information on their remittance behavior. He adds that there is a significant difference between remittances for documented and undocumented migrants; from his studies, he concluded that remittances flow from undocumented migrants tend to be lesser (Boussichas, 2009:1-2)

Although there are differences in terms of remittance flow for documented and undocumented migrants, the NEM theorists argue that remittances contribute to family sustenance (see section 3.1). However, sending back remittances also has its own drawbacks on both the sender and the receiver. At the receiving end, it can result to dependencies (de Haas, 2005:1274) that is; families tend to depend solely on remittances which can lead to remittance fatigue by the migrant. Sorenson adds that although family and kinship links provide network support, they are also a source of perhaps never ending obligation and this poses a substantial drain for migrants (Sorenson, 2004:17). However, one cannot overlook the fact that international migration through migrants remittances according to Sorenson, is capable of transforming the destiny of individual migrants as well as their family conditions in places of departure; in many parts of Africa, remittances are part of a livelihood and poverty reducing strategy at the individual and household level (ibid:5, 18); it also raises immediate living standards of recipients (Russell, 1986:678).

## **2.6 International remittances and development: Cameroon**

The remittance-development nexus phenomenon notes that remittances have a positive effect on migrants sending regions' economies. In particular, some authors argue that remittances tend to reduce poverty and inequality in recipient countries as well as increase aggregate investment and growth (Fajnzylber and Lopez, 2008:2). Kapur notes that remittances have emerge as the least unstable source of financial flows for countries afflicted by "shocks". Consequently, remittances can be view as a self insurance mechanism for developing countries where by countries international migrants help in diversifying it sources of external funding (Kapur, 2004:6). During hard times, migrants send more funding to help their families and friends (Ratha and Mohapatra, 2007:2). Therefore it is not surprising that

remittances emerge as a critical insurance mechanism for residents of countries afflicted by economic and political crises, by natural disasters, or where state has crumbled—“failed states” (Kapur, 2004:7) or in the case of Cameroon where the state budget alone seems insufficient for the country’s development agenda. Remittances in this case, (as one would argue) is aiding development; or according to Kapur, it’s the new “development mantra” (ibid).

Ratha and Mohapatra (2007:2) add that by compensating for foreign exchange losses orchestrated by macro economic shocks, remittances tend to smooth consumption and contribute in stabilizing developing countries’ economies; in a sense, de Haas and Vezzoli (2010) affirm that remittances from migration can be capable of removing more general development obstacles. They argue that through education, agriculture, and business investment, remittances have spurred economic activities in migrant sending communities and non migrants also indirectly benefits, the inflow of remittances substantially contributes to income growth in these regions (ibid:23, 25). At the micro level, Fajnzylber and Lopez, (2008:2) maintain that remittances allow poor recipient households to increase their savings, improve children’s health and educational outcome.

Worldwide flows of remittances were estimated to reach 318billion USD in 2007 of which 240billion USD were sent by migrants from developing countries, showing an increase from 221billion USD in 2006 (Ratha et al, 2007:2). These figures do not include informal flow of remittances via friends and relatives. Compared to other migrant sending regions like Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean, Sorenson maintains that data on remittances sent to Africa suffer from a lack of reliability (Sorenson, 2004:17) coupled with high prevalence of informal flows (Sanders, 2003) in (ibid). In the case of Cameroon, total amount of official remittances flow was 167, 162, 148, 148 million USD from the years 2007-2010 respectively (World Bank, 2011 report:85)<sup>14</sup> and the table below shows remittances trends to Cameroon from 1996-2006 (see appendix 1 for table).

The above table shows the amount of remittances in liquid cash by Cameroonian migrants abroad in millions of Francs CFA

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<sup>14</sup> World Bank, Migration and remittances facts book, 2011

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLAC/Resources/Factbook2011-Ebook.pdf> (accessed, 2011 february 12)

These numbers includes all money that was received in Cameroon by institutions like Western Union, Moneygram, Money exchange and other money sending institutions, but do not include informal flows of remittances.

These increase trends of remittances sent to Cameroon could be due to economic downturns which have led to the increase demand for remittances. Similarly, Kapur contend that the frequency and intensity of financial crises in many developing countries over the years have resulted to an increased need for social safety nets, hence intensifying the demand for remittances (Kapur, 2004:8). However, if managed properly, remittances together with the Cameroon's government budget can lead to sustainable economic development in Cameroon.

Although remittances contribute substantially to countries' income e.g. as in the case of Cameroon, the migration of many Cameroonians most of whom are the educated and active population results to brain drain and can also weaken economic growth. Brain drain can however be compensated with brain gain when migrants return. Also, Kapur, (2004) argue that brain drain can be compensated with remittances (ibid: 9) plus new knowledge, trade relations, innovation, attitudes and information (de Haas, 2005:1272).

To conclude, the desirable goals of remittances and economic development can only be achieved if states design and implement effective policies. Remittances, Fajnzylber and Lopez argue, should not be consider a panacea or an alternative to sound economic policies (ibid, 2008: 3); creating a conducive environment for migration and remittances to contribute to broad-base income growth in migrant sending countries like Cameroon is the key to promoting development (Taylor, 1999:81). In sum, de Haas maintains that apart from remittances and investments, the development impact of migration also has a socio-political dimension. He adds that through social and political investment, migrants can contribute in making their societies better-off than before. (de Haas, 2005:1273), and in the long run, remittances can lead to an increase general prosperity of the migrants-sending areas (ibid: 1275).

## **Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework**

### **3.1 New Economics theory of Labor Migration (NELM)**

Within migration research, many theories have sprang up in explaining e.g. the initiation of migration (the neoclassical economic theories) (Massey et al, 1993), the continuation of migration flow (network theory) (Massey et al, 2008) and the relationship between remittances and migrants' family (NELM) (Stark and Levhari, 1982, Katz and Stark, 1986, Lucas and Stark, 1985, Stark and Lucas, 1988, Stark and Bloom, 1985, Stark, 1991, Massey et al, 1993, 1994, 2008, Taylor, 1999).

In contrast to the macro economic theories which sees migration as resulting from push and pull factors in the sending and receiving states, the NELM also known as the New Economics of Migration (NEM) (by Mazzucato, 2006:2, 2008) sees migration as a family affair and strategy to diversify risks. This is especially true with out-migration within and out of Africa. In sum, Findley asserted that the claim that migration is a family affair is nowhere more true than with Africans migration (Findley, 1997) in (Adepoju, 1997:118).

Some studies on migration in SSA have empirical evidence of migration and remittances as a risk diversifying activity e.g. Lucas and Stark, (1985) studies on Botswana and Schrieder and Knerr, (2000) studies on Cameroon. These studies on Botswana and Cameroon showcase the importance of remittances to rural areas during crop failures, in providing health care and education and other household needs. Over time, intraregional and intercontinental migration have gained prominence and remittances from these migrants are also aiding families to diversify risk and smooth family income as evident in Lucas, (2006) and Mazzucato, (2006) studies.

Furthermore, some authors in the NEM school view remittances (both national and international) as components of a self-enforcing mutually concerted and beneficial contract between the migrant and the family (Lucas and Stark, 1985), Stark and Lucas, (1988). Migration, it is argued, is a family and not an individual affair since cost and benefits are shared in an “implicit contractual arrangement between two parties”—the migrant and the family (Stark and Bloom, 1985:174), Katz and Stark, (1986:136). Hence sending of remittances to families is both an altruistic and a risk sharing behavior by migrants and their families (Agrawal and Horowitz, 2002).

In addition to remittances as risk diversification strategy and a contractual family arrangement is also the fact that remittances serve as some kind of insurance scheme for many families in migrant sending countries. Besley maintain that, in developing countries formal insurance are lacking or only partially exist (Besley, 1995) in Mazzucato, (2006:2). Therefore in such societies, according to Mazzucato, insurance is provided through mutual help relations known as informal insurance (ibid). E.g. empirical studies show the importance of international remittances in taking care of the old in Ghana (Mazzucato, 2008). Stark adds that, this mutual helping (co-insurance) covers risks of losing income and allows the family to smooth its consumption (Stark, 1991:39). Nyarko and Gyimah-Brempong, (2010:1) describe such mutual form of helping as “social safety nets” which are crucial for the survival of household in LDCs.

Furthermore, some proponents of the remittance-family wellbeing nexus see remittances as an implicit loan agreement between the migrant and the family for future mutual benefits. For Poirine, “remittances are implicit loans made by emigrants to children or kindred to finance their education back home...” In such family networks, Poirine adds that the migrant becomes the insurer (Poirine, 1997:590). Also, the impact of remittances may not only be felt by the immediate family (nuclear family), it transcend to the extended family and to the community at large. Similarly, Rapoport and Docquier (2005:5) affirm that “remittances are increasingly recognized as informal social arrangements within the extended families and the communities”. Seen from this prism, the flow of remittances according to Stark is not a random by-product of an individual, but rather as an integral part of family’s strategy for sustenance (Stark, 1991:39).

Seeing migration as a family affair, and migrants remittances as beneficial to the family means that in some situation, migrants are ‘force’ to remit as a means of fulfilling family duties, obligations, and above all expectations that characterize most transcontinental migration from e.g. Africa. However, Stark cautions that, placing the family rather than the individual at the center of a migration decision does not mean that the individual behavior should be overlooked. On the contrary, Stark suggests that remittances accruing from migration can best be understood if studied in the context of the family (Stark, 1991: 39). At this juncture, it can be said that irrespective of what motivates migrants to remit, remittances, to a greater extent, impacts positively on families left behind—it helps family diversify risks, smooth family income, and serve as insurance. Mazzucato et al, (2006) add that remittances

are also used in burial ceremonies in Africa (Ghana). Hence it can be said that, at the family level, in the case of Africa, remittances impacts on both the living and the dead.

### **3.2 Feminist theory of intersectionality**

*Gender is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, forces shaping human life, and accordingly it influences migration and migrants' lives* (Mahler and Pessar, 2003:812).

Although gender is one of the, or the oldest forces shaping human life and migration, as seen from the above statement, it was not until a few decades ago that scholars started incorporating gender into migration studies. Contrary to traditional mobility pattern where women only migrated as dependents (mostly as wives), women nowadays are also bread winners and migrating independently. Some authors have question the marginality of gender in migration and/or remittance research and have attempted to do justice to this missing link or inadequately explore area e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999, 2000, Mahler and Pessar, 2001, 2006, Marokvasic, 1984, Parrenas, 2009, Pedraza, 1991, Persah and Mahler, 2003, Piper, 2008, Kofman et al, 2000, Kofman and Raghuram, 2009, Kunz, 2008. Hondagneu-Sotelo cried out loud with regards to the way gender has been absent in mainstream migration studies, she notes that feminist concerns that makes central the analytic category of gender, remain marginalized from the core of international migration research (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999, 2000).

Although some authors have incorporated gender into studies of migration, it is still hard to find studies on migration that made use of the intersectionality perspective, this is made worse when one look at studies on migrants' remittances. Although Brooks and Redlin, (2009) use the concept of intersectionality in explaining rural-urban migration of white, black and Hispanic male and female chances for leaving rural counties; research on migrants' remittances from an intersectionality perspective is still hard to find. In the paragraphs that follow, I will start by introducing the concept of intersectionality, an intersection of class, gender, and legality linking remittances will follow suit; this subsection will end with a closing of the theoretical discussion.

### **3.2.1 The concept of intersectionality**

The concept of intersectionality was first introduced by Kimberly Crenshaw (1989) in an article where she sought to understand how race and gender is reflected in feminist theory and antiracist politics. In 1991, Crenshaw used the term again in identity politics and violence against women of color (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). It can be said that the concept sprang up in a context where black feminists criticized white feminists for homogenizing women and hence failing to recognize other aspects in the lives of women such as power hierarchies and other differences among women. The concept of intersectionality was later use by Collins in her writings on Black Feminism. In her work, the interconnection between and among social variables such as gender, race, sexually, class, and nationality are (re)examined (Collins, 2000). Also, in her article, Yuval-Davis examine some of the analytical issues involve in the interrelationships of gender, class, race, ethnicity, and other social divisions/categories (Yuval-Davis, 2006:194).

According to Brooks and Redlin, the theory of intersectionality at its roots, examine how social characteristics influences people's live experiences (Brooks and Redlin, 2009:131). For them, this framework posits that these axis of power, that is, race/ethnicity, gender, and class, are experienced concurrently (Brooks and Redlin, 2009:132). Hence it is important for researchers to take note of how such factors interplay in studies that for example concern migrants' remittances and family wellbeing.

In line with Crenshaw and Collins who in their works asserted that socio-cultural patterns are related and are interlocked by the intersectional system, I am using the theory of intersectionality , first, to bring in something 'new' in studies on migrants' remittances to Africa—Cameroon and other migrant sending countries. Secondly, I want to examine how gender and legality, and (to some extent) class shape migrants' remittances. Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark affirm that legality affects migrants wages (ibid, 2002:599) and hence remittances; this is also true with gender and class which also primary remittance determinants.

Parrenas maintain that we can still do gender in migration research by focusing only on women (Parrenas, 2009:4); I resist from using such an approach, because migration with the resultant effect of remittances as the NEM argue, is a family and not an individual affair (the



family in this case includes both men and women). That is why using the NEM and intersectionality by focusing mainly on gender (men and women) and legality, and to some extent class, remains ideal. Through this approach, I hope to contribute to the discussion of how gender and legality and other relevant variables e.g. class intersect to shape the remittance pattern of Cameroonian migrants in Sweden. Also, Hondagneu-Sotelo, (2000:114) adds that a “woman-only” approach retards our understanding of how gender as a social system affects the migration-remittance pattern for all immigrants men and women.

### **3.2.2 Intersection of gender, class, and legality linking remittances**

The issue of class hitherto seen in research on migration and migrants remittances; but at the same time, class relations operate in all societies. That is why I decided to incorporate the issue of class into gender and legality which are primarily the focus of this write-up. I didn't go in-depth into debates and scholarship surrounding class, for more discussion on class, see e.g. (Acker, 1990, Andersen and Collins, 2006, Crompton 2001, Baxter and Western, 2001, Sokoloff and Pratt, 2006).

According to Coward, (1999) the continuous upsurge towards gender equality has challenge the dominating position of men as heads of household. Economic conditions, plus increase in women's rights have challenged this patriarchal belief; women now are also heads of household and taking up important position in the society. She notes that:

The combination of feminism and the changes in the economy have shattered the easy way in which men could assume that their masculinity entitled them to a superior position. Now we have to acknowledge that gender is only one among the many divisions in truly uneven heterogeneous societies (Coward, 1999:211-212).

Coward's above argument is enclosed in our understanding of gender and class in contemporary society. In this state of affair, intersectionality is useful in revealing the perhaps complexities in the migratory experiences of men and women and the way gender and legality influences migrants' remittances. Similarly, Hondagneu-Sotelo affirms that, “if the domestic sphere is to woman as the public sphere is to man, then gender need only be examined in immigration studies where family and household levels of analysis are pursued” (ibid, 1999:567). However, even when gender comes into play in such studies, these research are conducted as if gender and legality, as well as class relations are non informative; whereas, at

the same, these factors respond to each other and to migrants remittances pattern in many ways; therefore the notion of intersectionality becomes even more important.

Furthermore, Acker observes that it is important for us to take note of class in research that for example employs theories such as intersectionality because to her, “we are enmeshed in class relations” (Acker, 2006b: 47). She adds that class relations are reproduced in our day-to-day behavior patterns and activities e.g. work (Acker, 1983:5) and migrants remittance behavior (my addition).

The arguments in this subsection clearly bring out the interconnectedness in gender, class, and legality as factors that offer a ‘new’ way of understanding and analyzing migrants’ remittances from a NEM and an intersectional research agenda. Similarly, Mahler and Pessar maintain that although gender is prime factor that organizes human life, it cannot stand alone; they note that “gender is a principal factor that organizes social life [...]. Yet gender cannot be viewed and analyzed in isolation. Rather, gender is dynamic and it articulates with other axis of differentiation...” (Mahler and Pessar, 2006:29) e.g. class and legality.

Therefore, I would say that recognizing that gender, class and legality are embedded in institutions that shape migration and migrants’ remittances, that is, the family, state, and market is imperative because such institutions are gendered. In the same way, Hondagneu-Sotelo, (2000) affirms that families, immigrant social networks, communities, labor recruitment policy, and job demand are highly gendered (ibid:115-117) and this tend to affect who remits (more) and why. Researching migration and migrants’ remittances in this way according to Hondagneu-Sotelo, (1999:568) render some “correctives in the gender and immigration scholarship”.

### **3.2.3 Closing theoretical discussion**

In this chapter, I have made use of the central theoretical arguments of the NEM and the feminist theory of intersectionality. Given that migration and migrants’ remittances is a familial activity/process as argued by the NEM, it was important for me to bring in the theory of intersectionality to showcase the ways in which “constructions of masculinities and feminities organize migration and migration outcome” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999:566, 2000:114) as well as remittances.

Also, I have examined how gender, class, and legality can be related to remittances. To me, this approach is the best because these structural forces (gender, class, and legality) are of a deterministic nature with regards to how and why migrants remit and to whom. Although migration is a familial and not an individual affair according to NEM theorists, we should not ignore the fact that migrants are, according to Brooks and Redlin, individuals who experience the world (and migration) through their race/ethnicity, class and gender (ibid, 2009:131). Hence examining the interconnection of gender, class, and legality broaden our understanding of how societal ideological forces affect migrants' remittances behavior.

In sum, I embrace Mahler and Pessar argument that gender is a principal factor that organizes human life, and Acker observation that human beings are enmeshed in class relation, as well as Koussoudji and Cobb-Clark thesis that legality affects migrants' employment and wages. All these are useful in our understanding of the remittance-family expectations dynamics.

## **Chapter 4: Research methodology**

### **4.1 Qualitative method**

The method chosen for this study is qualitative research method. Qualitative research is known for its inclusiveness which covers a wide range of empirical data collection and analysis. Most studies on remittances employ a quantitative research methodology. Since most remittances flow go through financial institutions, it is easier to quantify how much have been sent and receive, and how often do these flows occur. Such method provides explicit figures for cross country comparison and generalization, as well as data on remittances as percentage of countries' GDP. Some of these studies include: Stark and Levhari, 1982, Lucas and Stark, 1985, Katz and Stark, 1986, Stark and Lucas, 1988, Agarwal and Horowitz, 2002, Taylor and Wyatt, 1996, Adams Jr and Page, 2005, Mazzucato et al, 2008, Adams Jr, 2009. A major weakness in this method of researching remittances is that not all remittances pass through formal channels. Besides, quantitative method only provides us with figure-like information on remittance pattern and its frequency within a certain time frame through statistical calculation; such numeric information according to Feagin et al (1991:17) transcend into formulations, refinements, and testing of hypothesis.

This study is not intended to formulate and/or test hypothesis, it principally deals family expectations and remittance flow; in this regard, understanding the intricacies in remittances and family dynamics require an in-depth investigation, a task which cannot be adequately carried out with quantitative method. Similarly, Buchanan affirms that, the quality of qualitative research lies in its power to uncover a clearer picture about ourselves and our common humanity (Buchanan, 1992) in Silverman, (1997) in Miller and Dingwall, (1997:19).

Also, qualitative researchers sought to see things in context (Silverman, 1995:31), and to describe and understand social phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. This method produces rich data for theoretical knowledge and practical use (Boeije, 2010:11). Therefore using qualitative research provides me with an in-depth understanding of the issue under study. Also, Boeije, (2010) maintains that qualitative research deals with “what” “why” and “how” questions (ibid:24-25); given that the research question in this study deals with “how” (see section 1.5), employing qualitative research in this study remains ideal.

## **4.2 Case study**

In order to get a detail picture of the phenomenon under study, a case study has been used. According to Sjoberg et al, (1991) “a case study involves characteristics or configurations of a particular unit of analysis—be this individual, a community, an organization, a nation-state...” (ibid) in (Feagin et al, 1991:36). To de Vaus, a case is an ‘object’, it is the unit of analysis which we collect information. These units can be individuals, a family, a household, places, organizations (de Vaus, 2001:220). In this study, “the case” are individuals within a nation state, that is, Cameroonian migrants in Sweden. Choosing this case opens up investigation for remittance pattern among Cameroonians in Sweden where no previous research has been carried out. Also, the fact that I live in Sweden, it would be easier for me to meet with the informants.

Also, Yin asserts that case studies are preferred when “how” and “why” questions are posed and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context (Yin, 2003:1) e.g. migration and migrants remittances. Since the research question of this study deals with “how” gender and legality affects remittances, a case study is preferable because according to Flick, much information can be generated from respondents in the specific phenomenon under study (Flick, 2009:134). In addition, Cameroonian migrants, just as all migrants have different migratory and remittance experiences, hence a case study becomes even more imperative to get a detail picture of such experiences.

Although plausible, a case study is not flawless; to Bryan, a major limitation with case study research is that its findings cannot be generalized to the larger population (Bryman, 2008:55). It is not expected that the findings of this research could be generalized to all migrants; or to all Cameroonian migrants in different parts of the world. The aim of this research is to investigate the intricacies in migrants' remittance behavior from a gender and legality perspective from the narratives of the interviewees. However, (Porta, 2008) notes that it is still possible to do generalization in case study research; this can be done through further research of the issue under study (ibid) in (Porta and Keating, 2008:206). In addition, Stake, (2001) in Gomm et al, (2000:22) notes that, when studied properly, researchers may use case studies in generalization with similar cases.

### **4.3 Recruiting informants: sampling**

The method used for recruiting informants for this study was purposive sampling. Generally, this type of sampling technique helps the researcher to select the 'right' informants with the 'right' information for the study. O'Reilly, (2009:194) maintain that sampling involves selecting from a broader set of choices, and the chosen cases should be representative of the population. She adds that, purposive sampling, as oppose to quantitative random sampling entails that "all criteria of relevance are included" (ibid: 197). She further contends that when it comes to studies on migration (and migrants' remittances) not only are criteria such as gender, age, ethnicity, and social class relevant, what is also central is the time spent in the host country (O'Reilly, 2009:197). In line with O'Reilly, I will interview immigrants from different social backgrounds, tribes, gender, age, and educational level. What is also taken into consideration is the time spent in Sweden by these interviewees. By so doing, I conform to Flick proposition that, in purposive sampling, cases, or groups should be selected according to concrete criteria to fit the content of the research (Flick, 2009:134).

Furthermore, in purposive sampling, cases are intentionally selected according to the needs of the study, this technique study the phenomenon in-depth with large amount of information being generated (Boeije, 2010:36-36). Accordingly, in this study, I excluded migrants from wealthy families who travel abroad for a few weeks/months for holidays. Hence by taking into consideration length of time spent in Sweden, gender, migrants' social and legal statuses and other relevant criteria, I hope, as the above authors have argued, to get a detail picture, concrete, and reliable data/information for my chosen topic.

## 4.4 Interviews

Many will agree with Olsen and Pedersen, (2005) that in qualitative research, interviews play a central role because while interviewing, viewpoints, signs, and intentions are made explicit. Dingwall, (1997) adds that interviews are some kind of discussion between researchers and informants where the researcher posed questions hoping to get answers from the respondent (ibid) in (Miller and Dingwall, 1997:58-59). In this study, I will make use of semi-structured interviews with open ended questions. Formulating questions in this way according to Mikkelsen, allows for flexible checks and guides (Mikkelsen, 2005:169).

Furthermore, Flick, (2006) adds that respondent's viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in an openly ended question. Given that this study deals with migrants' remittances, an openly ended question such as what do you think about sending home remittances (see appendix for interview guide) will allow the respondent to fully express his/her view on the subject. Similarly, Payne and Payne, (2004:133) affirm that qualitative interviewing provide flexibility and elaboration of answers.

A total of eight (8) informants have been recruited for this study. They come from different regions and tribes in Cameroon, and they are made up of students and non students, documented and undocumented, men and women. With respect to research ethics and confidentiality, the respondents have already been informed that any information given is solely for research purposes and that their names will be changed, that is, their identity will be protected. The interviews will be conducted in English, French, or pidgin.

In order that empirical data be better organized and analyzed, Mikkelsen, (2005:169) suggested that main themes and concepts should be clearly stated in an organized manner and this should be done during data collection. Accordingly, the interview guide questions for this study is structured and divided into three subject matter which will later be use during data analysis. The division is as follows:

- The first section contain questions related to demographic and family characteristics of the migrants
- The second concentrate on the migrants migratory trajectory
- The third section focus on questions related to the migrants' communication with family back home as well as migrants' remittances behavior (see appendix for question)

## **Chapter 5: Data analysis**

To analyze how family expectations influence remittance flow among Cameroonian *bush fallers* in Sweden, this study, as discussed in the research question and theoretical framework uses a gender, legality, and to some extent class perspective. Given that gender constitutes one of my analytical variables, I decided to interview 4 men and 4 women to compare their remittance behavior. The interviewees are made up of students and non students aged between 25 to 38 years old. Out of this number, some have been through tough times (as they told me) trying to regularize their stay in Sweden, while some still haven't get there and others are students and working part time. Although this study will be analyze using the above mention variables (that is gender, legality, and to some extent class), one thing central to the remittance trend of the interviewees (just as the case with most migrants) is the unequal economic conditions between Cameroon and Sweden.

The discussion is divided into common themes that reflect (that is, either conform and/or refute) arguments in the theoretical chapters and review of related literature with the actual experiences of the respondents. Interviews are discussed in connection with the chosen theories; at the same time however, the analysis followed common subject matter that sprang up during data collection without connection with theories e.g. the family rank position of a migrant, number of siblings a migrant has and their occupation, the issue of trust, that is, trust between remittance senders and their family (receivers).

### **5.1 The interviewees and the interviews**

The interviewees come from different regions and tribes in Cameroon, they are made of both French and English speaking Cameroonians representing diverse socio-economic backgrounds based on motive for migration, family class position in Cameroon (rich or poor family), gender, educational level, position of migrant within his/her family of origin. I would say that these interviewees form a representative sample of Cameroonian migrants not in terms of actual numbers but in terms of the above mention characteristics. The minimum age of the interviewees was 25 years and the maximum was around 38 years confirming

findings from literature that migrants are usually the young. The number of years spent in Sweden by these informants range from 18 months to 11 years.

Informants told me that economic hardship in Cameroon and the urge for family survival are the main motif for their migration and remittances respectively. When I asked why they migrated from Cameroon, and why they remit, the answer they gave me was the same, or similar – *I want to better my family condition; things are so hard back home*. For the students that I interviewed, a common answer was: *I came here to study so that I can finish and have better opportunities to help my family*.

Due to the existence of various Cameroonian associations in Sweden, with branches in Malmö and Lund, it was not difficult for the researcher to locate informants for the study. However, what remained very challenging for me was how to convince the informants that any information given was solely for research purposes, this was especially the case with informants whose legal situation in Sweden is still dazzling. However, due to frequent contacts and meeting with them many times during Cameroonian gatherings, (since I am also a member of these associations), I easily established trust with the informants a few months before the actual interview took place. Also, due to time limit and because this study is qualitative, I could not go beyond the selected 8 (eight) interviewees.

A brief summary of the study was explained to the interviewees prior to starting the interviews. Questions were made clear and took the form of a discussion. During the interview process, I took down notes that were immediately transcribed at the end of each interview. Interviews were conducted in migrants' houses and this took the form of a discussion; interview times lasted for about 55 minutes to 75 minutes. Initially, I wanted to interview both the migrants and their families back home in Cameroon but due to financial and other circumstances beyond my control, only the informants were interviewed. Sometimes questions were not asked according to the way in which it appears in the interview guide, at certain times, questions were reformulated and explained in more profound manner and this led to many further follow-up questions. Also, at the end, respondents were asked if they have anything to add which has not been asked, the follow-up questions and this led to other emerging themes and issues relating to migrants' remitting behavior some of which are absent from the literature on remittances that I have consulted and hitherto not known to me the researcher.



In this analysis, I used italics when quoting answers from the respondents; for me, this can be interpreted as the researcher speaking with the voice of the informants. Accordingly, the reader gets a clearer understanding of the data being analyzed. I have used fictive language when describing an undocumented migrant e.g. a phrase such as “...by those whose legal condition are still dazzling”, this is a way of protecting informants identity. Even when these informants describe their situation, some of them did use phrases such as “I’m trying to sort myself out, my condition”, to name a few. Similarly, de Genova, (2002:419) describe the concept of illegality and undocumented migrants as an epistemological, methodological, and political problem. He argues that:

It is insufficient to examine the “illegality” of undocumented migration only in terms of its consequences and that it is necessary also to produce historically informed accounts of the sociopolitical processes of “illegalization” themselves, which can be characterized as the legal production of migrant “illegality”. (de Genova, 2002:419)

The use of quotation marks in the word illegality brings out its problematique(s) and the varied debate surrounding this term within studies on migration and remittances. In this study, I used the term to distinguish between those immigrants who have been granted the right to stay in Sweden and those who have [still] not. In some sections, I have invoked some discussions before or after certain quotations, while other quotations speak for themselves. Initially, I had used interviewer referring to me—the researcher, but it was suggested by my supervisor that I replaced interviewer with my name which is Christina.

The first section of the analysis will be seen from the theoretical perspectives with particular attention paid to gender and legality and to some extent class where in the actual experiences of the interviewees will be analyzed to confirm or refute the theories. The second part of the analysis is based on common themes that emerged very often during data collection and in my everyday interaction with other Cameroonian migrants in Sweden.

The paragraphs below provide and overall analysis and discussion of the interviews.

**Chaleju** is female, aged between 30-32 years; married and has two children, one in Cameroon and the other in Sweden, all of her other siblings are in Cameroon. She is the first in her family. Prior to her migration, she had been married in Cameroon but divorced. Only very close family members knew about her departure and she is now trying her best to help them as well. Chaleju has been living in Sweden for 4.5(four and a half years), she tells me that, as a

woman, she has to fight for her life, not only for her life but that of her family and children as well:-

*My sister, when you are born a woman, you know that you don't have to sleep. Nowadays, things are hard. You have to fight hard to survive. We all know how Cameroon is, so if we don't struggle, we cannot survive. I came here to fight for my family and for my children; I do all my best to make sure that my family is fine.*

Chaleju's statement confirms with some of the argument in the review of related literature which says that financial difficulties in many developing countries (including Cameroon) have led to increase demand for remittances (Kapur, 2004:8). Chaleju adds that as a woman you don't have to sleep, in other words, you don't have to be lazy because things are hard these days. This new way of thinking can be explained to be as a result of financial constraints in Cameroon that has, and is altering gender roles of the man as the sole bread winner within family settings. Similarly, Coward adds that such financial crises and feminist movements have challenged the way men think that their masculinity gives them a superior position over women (Coward, 1999:211-212); I would add that such superior positions are orchestrated by heterosexual norms that privileges men as heads of family.

When I asked what she meant by doing all she could to make sure her family is fine, Chaleju replied that:

*When I say fine, I mean to make sure they live well. I sent my mother money for food, and also take care of other things like hospital bills and school fees. I sent money for food every month, and especially to my mother who is taking care of my child. I also send sometimes to my other family members and to my uncles and aunts like during Christmas period.*

Christina: What motivates you to send money to your family?

*You know that those of us who are out have to help our families behind. You don't need to be told, you know that your family is expecting you to do something and you have to do it. You have to help them; you have to change their condition. My family is not rich, if we were rich, I would not have come here to be struggling, but I thank God for His grace.*

By saying that if her family was rich, she will not find herself in Europe brings out the element of class as an issue in migration and migrants' remittances. At this juncture, I would say that those who belong to the wealthy class in migrants' sending countries will hardly think

of migrating for family survival, their pattern of migration will be different, perhaps migrating for leisure. This concurs with Acker's argument that class creates social division and can be observed in people's lifestyles, status display, and consumption habits (Acker, 2006b:47)

Christina: Have there been any changes with your remittance pattern?

*Yes, before it was not easy for me, my condition could not permit me to work and/or send money home, it has not been easy for me. In short [...] but I thank God that today I am able to help my family. At least now I have a job and I have money that I can live on, as well as still send some to my family. With the help that I'm giving to my family, they are able to live a good life*

Christina: What do you mean by a good life?

*By good life I mean (pause for about 5 seconds, then continued), I mean for example, there are some families in Cameroon who are not able to have something to eat, clothes to wear, or money to go to hospital, so I make sure that my family has all these things and that they are happy. You know being a woman, you cannot forget your family, and you always have to think about them. So I always try to do my best for them. It's not easy, but I try my best. So for now, I can say that my family is better than what it used to be, things have changed, things have really changed.*

Before now, Charleju's legal status could not allow her to remit, or to remit as much as she is doing now. She tells me that her remittance pattern has changed because she was not in a position to remit. This concurs with Kossoudji and Cobb-Clark, (2002:601) observation that legality affects employment, wages, and hence remittances. In addition Charleju says that because she is a woman, she cannot forget her family. Her response fits well into the NELM which sees migration as a family affair for risk diversification and family survival. Besides, her response concurs with Ramirez et al, (2005:26) observation that women's position within the family is an important factor that conditions remittances. Charleju is the only one among her other siblings who is in Europe, all her other siblings are in Cameroon with no decent jobs. The remittances that she sends has helped to change her family position, at least for now, (as she tells me); her family is assured of food to eat, school fees, hospital bills. At the same time however, Charleju complains that the need to better the life of one's family creates immeasurable needs and expectation to be satisfied. She tells me that: [...] *even though one does these things, sometimes the problems are just too many that you cannot solve all [...]*

*that is why sometimes I don't give out my telephone number to everyone, I don't want people to be calling me left and right asking me for money [...]. I try to do the best of what I can do because family problems and their expectations will never end as long as one is here in this Europe.*

In such state of affairs, I would say that the issue of remittances and family dynamics can be describe as two sides of the same coin: on the hand, the family provides support to the migrant before departure, but at the same time, according to Sorenson, the family is a source of never ending obligation for remittance flow (Sorenson, 2004:17). Therefore when it comes to migration and remittance flow, the family and migrant could be describe as mutually interdependent.

**Kalinska :** Kalinska is a female, aged between 26-30 years, she has been living in Sweden for the past 3 years. After a brief summary of my research, she begins by telling me the predicaments she is going through in trying to regularize her situation here in Sweden, but at the same time tied up in a web of never ending family expectations for remittances. She begins by telling me:

*My sister, as you see me here like this, life is not easy here. I came here as a visitor, but you know, things just turn out to be the way it is now. My family, that is, my parents were the ones that paid for my travel, and you know, you have to do something.*

Christina: What do you mean by to do something?

*You know that you have to help them, you don't have to wait until they ask; you have to just do because you know that they are expecting something from you. But for me, I send when I have, when I don't have, I stay, because it not easy for me here; I'm still even trying to sort out myself here, but things are hard. The problem is that those back home will never understand, they will never understand the life people face here in Europe, they think that everything here is good. But I try to explain to my family that it not easy for me too, and that any little thing I send, they should just manage. Others may be sending much, or sending money many times, but me I don't have the means to do that because of "my condition", it not easy for me now, but still I try to do my best.*

Although Kalinska legal status now is still pending, she tells me that she tries to do her best for her family, she thinks and care about her family and so she has to *do something for them*. Kalinska is not alone; there are many immigrants in the same situation with her. One of the

interviewees, Nchuding has been through the same circumstances Kalinska is in now. Nchuding is a male, and he is 34 years old who have been living in Sweden for the past 11 years. The difference here is that while Kalinska keeps in contact with her family and tries to send money home, Nchuding when under Kalinska's situation ceased to be in contact with his family, talk less of sending money home. He tells me that:

*[...] I suffered when I came because I was trying to regularize my stay here; so at that time, I could not send anything to my family. Even to call them was hard for me. During that time, I stayed for one year without calling my family, I was not in contact with them because it was like hell for me at that time, living in hiding, can't even work, [...] but now I'm trying my best to help them.* Analyzing the experiences of Kalinska and Nchuding, I maintain that Kalinska is more altruistic in her remittance behavior. From a gender perspective, as argued by Ramirez and his colleagues, women have a greater propensity for sending home remittances (Ramirez et al, 2005:25) than men irrespective of their situation or how much they earned as wages. Such behavior pattern brings out clearly the societal normativity in women as care givers. In a sense, it points to the fact that the social construction of gender, places women at the center of family welfare which is reflected in many ways even in sending home remittances.

When I asked Kalinska how often she sends remittances and what motivates her to remit, she had this to say:

*As I just said, I don't send that often, I send when I have. Even though the pressures are there on me, because back home there are usually many problems, but I cannot do otherwise, I cannot kill myself. I am really sad for my family that I am not able to help them the way I wish I should do, but I know that I will do that with time. The little I have, I mostly send for school fees, for health purposes like to pay hospital bills. I mostly send to my parents and to my brothers and sisters. Since I don't have much, I don't send money to many other family members, I can just help when the need arises and when I have money at that time to help that person [...].*

To Kalinska, sending home remittances is good amidst the pressures from families, she sees herself at the center of her family survival; she explains that:

*To be honest with you, this whole thing of sending money home is good for me, although sometimes one feels so pressured due to the many things that one is expected to do to families*

*back home, it is still good to me because if we here don't help them, there is no one who will do that. For those people who come from rich family, they can just sit here and enjoy all their monies or some of them don't even see the need to come to Europe, because life is also hard here as well. But for those of us who are poor, we can't help but to do what we can do. I wish I was able to do more than what I am doing now, but I know by the grace of God, I will do it in the nearest future. We need to help them, may be it different for different people, but for me, I really have to do something to them, I really have to do something.*

Kalinska's response attests to the fact that, there are variations in terms of the way migrants perceive remittances as well as why they remit. To her, remittances are good because she needs to help her family. Accordingly, Stark noted that remittances is not merely a random by product of an individual migration, it constitute an integral part for family survival (Stark, 1991:39). Exploring further Kalinska's response, I'll say that she does not remit just for the sake of remitting, she feels compel to do so because she is a woman—*You know as a woman you always have the feeling for your family, especially for my parents, so I am just trying to see that I send something to them, even if it small but I cannot stay without sending.*

The sending of remittances also invoke jealousy and envy, and at times tensions within family settings; as a strategy to escape this, Kalinska tells me that *[...] also because am not "fine" for now, I avoid having contacts with many people, both here and back home. Like for example back home, I only give my number to very few people, and I tell my family not to give it out because some people will just be disturbing you here and there, sometimes just beeping<sup>15</sup> you, or sometimes calling you to ask for money and if you say you don't have, they will say you are wicked; that you don't want to help, or that you only help your own family and forget them [...] so I want to avoid some of such things[...].*

**Berparsly:** Berparsly is a female, aged between 26-30 years, second child in a family of 8 (eight) girls, father is of late and all other siblings live in Cameroon. She has two children who live with her here in Sweden and she has been living in Sweden for about 5 years now. Berparsly story is not so different from the above two women, that is, Charleju and Kalinska. She told me how she managed to get to Sweden and things were not easy for her, but now, things are better. She began by telling me the following:

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<sup>15</sup> To beep is to flash someone sometimes with the expectation that s/he calls back

*I am really happy that you came here as a student and struggling to finish up with your studies, that is a very good thing. If some of us had this kind of opportunity to go to school up to this level and travel to Europe the way people like you came, then what happened to me would not have happened. Mum<sup>16</sup>, I have suffered here in this Europe, what I have been through, in short what I have seen, is not something that I will like any of my own person to pass through. But I thank God that the story today is different and am able to talk to my family, to call them, to send something to them, to walk around freely without being afraid of the police [...]. When I looked behind and see my family today, I just give the glory to God [...].*

Christina: How do you help them and are you helping them because they paid for your travel or what motivates you to help them?

*No, it not like that. Whether they did pay for my travel or not does not have anything with the help that I have to offer to them. They are my family, they brought me into this world, they raised me up so when I have reached a certain age, I have to help them as well. If I had the means that I could just travel without asking money from them, I would have done so, but still I would still have to help them. That is something which you know you have to do, it our culture, all these you have to know, you don't need to be told [...].*

Berparsly justify her remittance behavior for fulfilling family expectations as a cultural thing, it's not something that one needs to be told. Or to complain about, it is inherent in African cultural traits of duties, responsibilities, and obligations within family settings. While others remit as a result of altruism, Berparsly sees it as a socio-cultural obligation. Similarly, de la Briere et al, (2002:310) affirm that specific categories of migrants have different motive to remit.

Christina: What are some of the family expectations on you and what kind of help do you offer to your family?

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<sup>16</sup> In Cameroon, to call someone mum who is younger than or of the same or similar age as you is a polite way of addressing that person. To call someone sister, brother does not necessarily mean biological, it describes the fictive kinship system which operates in the Cameroonian society. Besides, it signifies politeness and shows some friendly relationship with the person in question. In addition, calling an elderly person by name whether related biologically or not is impolite, in fact, it is consider rude. An elderly person is refer to as sister, brother, uncle, aunty, mami, papa (to name a few) depending on the age difference.

*They are expecting me to take care of them, to take care of them in many ways. For example now that am here, the only way I can help is to send them money so that they can use the money to buy what they need and solve some other problems back home. [...]; you know since my father died, my mum has been the only one struggling with us, so I have to do everything in my power to satisfy her and my other brothers and sisters.*

When I asked Berparsly what she thinks about the family expectations on her, she tells me that: *I don't have any problem with that, we are Africans and we know that these things are there, so whether your family openly expects by asking you for money or whether they just silently expect (assuming that you know what you have to do), you just need to do it [...]; besides I'm a woman so I have to think about my family.*

Christina: What do you mean by the fact that you are a woman so you have to think about your family?

*I mean, as a woman you always have to think about your family whether you are married or not. But am not married, but still that is not the issue. A man will remember his wife, but sometimes some men think about their family too. But for a woman, you always have to do something for your family [...] but there are some stupid women out there who don't care about their family. They listen to everything their husbands or boyfriends say, and sometimes they may tend to forget about their family [...].*

Christina: Have there been any changes with the way you send remittances back home?

*Yes, before, I was not even sending anything, or just very little because of "my condition". But when things got better for me, I got a small cleaning job which I used to pay my rents and send some money home. For the past one year, since I gave birth, I have not been working. It's just the little money which I have that I squeeze-out something to send home. So I don't send huge amounts, but I try to send something. I have to help my poor mum with no husband.*

Once more, Barparsly reiterated the issue of women in care giving positions with the proclamation that as a woman, you always have to think of your family. She classifies women who do not think of their families as stupid. Comparing these women and the men interviewed for this study, one finds a different tone of response as to why they remit. While the underlying rational for remittances remains family survival orchestrated by unending family expectations, I will say that women are more attached to their families than men, at least for the case of the women interviewed. This observation seems to concur with de la Cruz



(1995) argument that men remit to invest while women remit to insure family and assist siblings (ibid) in de la Briere et al, (2002:310). In such circumstances, the migrant, (that is, the women) become the family insurer (Poirine, 1997:590) much more than migrant men.

Furthermore, although marital status is a main determinant for remittance flow amongst all migrants (Sorenson, 2004a, 2004b, 2005,) it differs for male and female migrants. Although married, Charleju (female) tells me that she can never avoid sending money to her family. On the contrary, she explains that *[...] you know when you are married your family even expects you to send more because they know that your husband is taking care of you. They don't know that this is Europe and it different here.* Charleju remittance behavior goes contrary to Nchuding (male) whose marital status have impaired his remittance flow— *Before I got married, I used to send money to my family every month, but now I don't do it again because I now a family here to careter for as well.* This findings contrasts Piper's observation that women ceased to send money to their families of origin but to their husband's family when they get married (Piper, 2005) in (IOM, 2007:2).

Furthermore, Sorenson maintains that economic activities in host and home countries determine remittance flow from migrants (Sorenson, 2004a:25). From the receiving end, this means that, the economic activities of migrants' family at home determine remittance flow since family expectations of remittances tends to increases. When I asked Nchuding what are his family expectations on him, he tells me that: *Looking at the family that I come from, I will say that the expectations are plentiful. I have to help my family in many things e.g. sending my sisters to school, helping my parents when they are sick, help other family members. The expectations are many because I want my family to be fine; but it not easy to satisfy all these expectations [...].* He adds that *even when you send and send and send, when you don't have it, people will not understand. [...] You can never fulfill all the expectations that people back home have on you, I try to do my best [...], it not easy, it not really easy [...].*

On the other hand, Dinwhi, a male Cameroonian migrant age between 31-35 years who have been living in Sweden for the past five years doesn't feels obligated to remit as Nchuding. He tells me that: *For me, I don't have any expectations from my family; I am not pressured by them. I can say that my family is not that poor. Even though my father is of late, my mum does her business, my sister in Cameroon is married and the other one is in Germany. So I am not expected to send that much to my mum. [...] my mum is like the engine in her family, everyone*

*in her family depends on her. I asked Dinwhi whether such high family dependence on his mum is related to the fact that he and his sister are bushfallers; he replied that: No, not really [...] but perhaps yes. I will say that it not really because I and my sister are in Europe that is why there is so much dependency on her; but I will not also deny the fact that this can be a contributing factor as well. But even when I had not travelled, it was still the same situation, may be it has increased now because the other family members are saying that she has children abroad and hence she's better placed to provide for the whole, or majority of the other family members.*

From the above responses, I adhere to Stark and Lucas, (1988:466) argument that remittances constitute an anti-risk coping strategy for many household in migrant sending countries. The income that Dinwhi's mother get from her business [seems] to compensate for high expectation on Dinwhi for remittances while this is different for Nchuding who is expected to remit as much as he can to his family. At this juncture, I agree with Schrieder and Knerr, (2000:223) claim that remittances tends to substitute for the lack in financial and insurance markets in Cameroon.

However, Nchuding laments on the behavior of remittance receivers and recommends that migrants should tell their families the truth about the life they are facing in Europe. He cautions that: [...] *I also want to say that it is good to tell the truth. If you don't have money, tell your family and friends that you don't have. Don't tell them that I can't send it now; I will send it in a week or in a month. When you say like this and in a week's time you are not able to send, it increases their expectations and you yourself feel pressured that you have to send money.* He condemns the behavior of some remitters receivers—friends and families; he says that: [...] *when it comes to remittances and helping family back home, there is a disease of non appreciation from some people, or from most people back home. People come out with so many stories, just trying to take money from you; [...] so this issue of sending money home is good and bad, its good because you help your family to be better-off, but it becomes bad when people just keep disturbing you every now and then because people back home have unending expectations for money to solve unending problems.*

## 5.2 Luck, trust and remittance flow

### 5.2.1 Luck as an issue in remittance flow

While Cameroonians back home consider those who are already in *bush* as the lucky ones, migrants' sometimes think of themselves as laborers who labor not for themselves but for their families. During informal discussions with other Cameroonian migrants (who could not be formally interviewed for this study), many issues with regards to family expectations for remittances are expressed in different ways. As far as luck is concern, a friend told me that, speaking on phone one day with one of his/her brother back home, he said that “*my dear, happy are those of you in Europe, at least you are free from all these sufferings back home [...]. You are the fortunate few who were blessed from creation*”. In trying to explain to this brother in Cameroon that it not easy here as they think, the brother recounted that “*even if it not, at least the good thing is that you are in bush, that is what is important [...]; please, December is coming and it will be nice if you can think of me*”. This friend tells me how frustrated s/he feels hearing such demands for money when s/he is barely just struggling to pay his/her rents. Another friend got an email from a sister for the same reason, below is a copy of the letter:

*Subject: greetings*

*How are you? Hope everything is fine with you. Please I have a small problem and I don't want to tell brother ABX<sup>17</sup> because he will say he does not have money, in short I don't even want him to know about it. It so serious and very urgent and I know you are the only person now to help me. Please I have some problems in my job side and there is some money that I have to pay. It 100.000FCFA<sup>18</sup> and I only have 30. So please am begging that if you have the rest 70 or some of it, please do help me. I am so desperate and I don't know what to do now. You can call me through my number (and then she gives a telephone number)<sup>19</sup>*

*Thanks for your understanding.*

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<sup>17</sup> The original name has been changed to ABX

<sup>18</sup> 100.000cfa is about 150 euros

<sup>19</sup> A telephone number was written in this mail but i took it out to protect the sender's identity

The above discussion shows how migrants are sometimes tied up in unending demand for remittances. They are considered as the lucky ones who have been fortunate to be granted a visa and to see *White man kontri*—the West (including Sweden) at first hand; hence they are obligated to remit to families and friends back home. However, from the migrants' perspective, not everyone is lucky to be in a position to remit, some may tend to remit the very first few months upon arrival while for others, it can take years as confirmed in my empirical material. The process of securing the right to stay in migrants receiving states including Sweden is arduous and complex; accordingly, it becomes hard for migrants to get a job and be in a position to remit to their families.

Jeremiah (male), Macleans (female), and Frolechak (male) are some of the informants that were formally interviewed for this study; all three of them are students. Jeremiah tells me that it is not easy to find a part time job, it's sometimes an issue of luck, and other times a matter of connection:

*You need to know someone somewhere who can connects you to any job, even to clean or all these kinds of odd jobs that we go around doing. However, there are some people who are very lucky, they come this week and by the next week or month they have a part time job that they are doing [...]. Those are the kind of people who are better placed to remit to their families. In such cases, you can see that there is luck in everything, [...] even this Europe that we live; there are some people who are lucky to “make-it”<sup>20</sup> faster than others [...]. But the bad thing is that whether you have this job or not, people back home only know that you are in bush and so you are fine and they are expecting from you; they don't understand one's own trouble that s/he is going through here, I tell you that it not easy [...].*

For Macleans, one has to fight hard, she maintains that getting a job in Europe is an issue of luck but at the same time one needs to knuckle down: *[...] we all know that it not easy here too, but when one thinks that you have a family back home, you have to try to something while studying. [...]. My family expectations can wait for now, I know I have to care for them, but not now. When I will be fine, I will do that, for now, am still struggling [...]. However,*

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<sup>20</sup> To “make-it” means to be able to careter for the family back home through sending remittances in cash and kind e.g. cars and other goods

*last time I sent them something<sup>21</sup> for Christmas because at least you know, it Christmas and one could not just stay like that, so I sent them something which they can use for Christmas.*

Frolechak does not differ in his opinion of luck when it comes to getting a job and sending home remittances. However, for him luck as a remittance determinant, [...] *has to do with the way you integrate yourself in the country when you come. You know when you go to a new place, you first have to get acquainted with the place, [...] but the truth in the matter is that getting something to do here in terms of job is a nightmare, but at the same time, it involves being lucky, you know, some people are luckier than others in everything. But the thing is that, if you can't work, then you can't help the family back home who are there looking upon you [...].*

While some academicians may dismiss the idea of luck as having anything to do with one's experiences in life, the above discussion shows that luck is an issue which cannot be ignored when one attempts an understanding for differentials in migrants transfers in fulfilling family expectations. Much as one will not deny the fact that hard work pays off, we cannot also ignore the fact that some are just born lucky as seen from the view of the informants.

## **5.2.2 Trust and conflict in remittance flow**

The issue of trust when it comes to who receives what is being sent home is not void of conflict among migrants' families, and/or between the migrant and his/her family which intend provokes anger, envy and jealousy. During data collection, many interviewees told me that they send money to their parents, sisters, brothers, friends. In short, it all about whom you trust. Frolechak recounts his experiences for preferring his wife as the receiver: [...] *I sent money to my wife and instructed her on what to do and how she should share the money. [...] it turned out to be a big problem; [...] my mum called me on phone to ask me why I prefer to send money to her but through my wife [...]. You know, I'm not a child, so they just have to take it as I do, that problem didn't change my mind, up till today, I still send money home through my wife, they are my family, yes; but she is also my wife and taking care of my children.*

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<sup>21</sup> "Something" is a slang referring to money. It is very common in Cameroon to hear people say please send something to me, most often than not, this "something" refers to money. But when it comes to remittances, "something" can be financial or material, but in this particular case, "something" here refers to money.

In sum, I'll say that family expectations for remittances sometimes generate conflicts and create problems, the very problems which it intend to solve. Everything being equal, migrants will prefer to send money to a person whom they trust, be it a family member or not because money, being a solution to all, if not, most problems, remains the root of all evil and can ruin social ties and family relationships.

### **5.3 Telephone numbers, *bush calls*<sup>22</sup>, and *bush photos* versus remittance flow**

One will wonder why the inclusion of a question on telephone numbers on study that concerns remittances. To begin with, when I asked to whom migrants give out their telephone numbers a common explanation was that, they want to avoid unwanted calls, most of which revolves around people calling to ask for money, while some just call to greet. Five out of the eight interviewees say “*I don't give out my number to just anyone, and I tell my family not to give it out*”. One of my interviewees adds that: *what is most annoying is the fact that, when you send this money, sometimes they will not call to say thank you, they will beep so that you call, and they will say, I have collected the money, thanks. [...] people back home think we just walk in the streets and pick the money to send to them [...]. That is why I say I don't like to give out my number.*

When it comes to bush calls, the story is similar. Much as receiving a *bush* call (call from abroad) in a mist of friends can give someone in Cameroon pride, joy, honor, and status; it is not void of its own setbacks. All interviewees explained that when one calls to greet people back home<sup>23</sup>, it provides an opportunity for demands to be coming up, this and that problem. Some of the interviewees recount that: *when you don't call, they say you are wicked, you have*

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<sup>22</sup> Bush calls here refers to calls from abroad, that is, calls from migrants to their friends and family back home. Bush photos are also photos taken in Europe and sent to families in Cameroon by migrants

<sup>23</sup> In Cameroon, once you become a bushfaller, there are higher expectations on you to call people back home, not because you are far from families and friends, it is, to a greater extent a way of showing that you are good. When one is in Cameroon, it doesn't really matter that much whether you call your family or not, but once you travel abroad, it becomes a duty. I find this difference in the interpretations given to bush calls and local calls quite interesting; bush calls are associated with pride and status while such symbolic meanings are absent in local calls. No wonder in one of his songs entitled NO FORGET MY NUMBER by Njohreur, Anna feels disappointed because her friend who is now a bush faller has suddenly forgot her number. The song can be accessible via (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viSRsQYvaKI>)

*gone to Europe and have forgotten about them and when you call, they have nothing to tell but to ask you for this or that.*

As far as bush photos are concern, some (about five in number) Cameroonians in Sweden over lunch tells me that: *[...] sometimes, we are the ones that make those back home feels that we have money, and then when they expect us to send, we say we don't have money and they conclude that we are wicked. For example the kind of photos we send home, you send photos when you are on the street, or in a super market doing shopping, or in the snow, or somewhere having fun. When they see these things, they will of course conclude that we are enjoying here and it will be difficult for them to believe that life here is not the best [...].* One of the persons with whom we were together continued that: *next time when I'm sending photos home, I will send but those pictures that I was suffering [...]* so that they will know that I am feeling bad here as well [...]. (The discussion went on and we ended up laughing).

Similarly, seeing a photo of one of his/her friend on face book, Cami<sup>24</sup> made a comment—*the photos say it all, you are of a different level now, who says bush is not good.* In another photo that was taken in Cameroon, there was a comment which read thus: *you look fresher than a bushfaller, there is no need for you to fall bush.* The former statement signifies that bush fallers have higher status and the latter attests to the fact that bush is only for those who do not have the opportunity to make it in Cameroon due to the country's socio-economic downturns. If you look fresh (as stated in the above comment) meaning living a good life—have a decent job in Cameroon, then bush is not for you.

At this juncture, I would say that much as migrants are, (as the norm stipulates) obligated to satisfy family expectations via remittances, the above discussion (in section 5.3) shows that the image Cameroonian bush fallers portray of themselves through photos, and other gestures expressed by some bush fallers when they visit Cameroon shows that life in Europe is the best; accordingly, families and friends back home are expecting their own bit of such affluence through remittances.

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<sup>24</sup> Cami is a pseudo name

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion, recommendation, future research**

The aim of this thesis has been to explore the role of remittances in satisfying unbounded family expectations for survival. Legality, gender, and to a lesser extent class have been central using a NELM and an intersectionality research paradigm. To better understand the current migration from developing to developed countries associated with an upsurge of remittances flow to countries of origin including Cameroon, one must consider the family as a central player both in the way it organizes migration and expect to reap the benefits from such migration in the form of remittances.

Furthermore, migrants are usually young and educated whose main goal is for family survival. Unemployment in most developing countries has led to increase migration of men and women. Women are also on the move, migrating independently and remitting for family sustenance. Remittances are most often sent for food, health, and education.

This study shows that luck is very important when one considers differential patterns in migrants' remittances flow. It also shows that phone numbers, international calls, photos, and the rank position a migrant occupies within his/her family of origin are also main remittance determinants. Everything being equal, a migrant who occupies an elderly position in his/her family tends to remit more than a younger person. However, this is also dependent on employment status of the other siblings back home. Trust is needed in determining who receives what and why.

### **6.1: Concluding remarks on the impact of migrants' remittances on gender...**

Information from the interviewees reveal that gender dynamics are established within particular socio-cultural and economic systems that shape the remittance behavior pattern of male and female migrants. Gender relations within families and households in migrants' regions of origins determine remittance flow in terms of who receives what and why. Similarly Ramirez et al affirm that the sending and receiving of remittances and the impacts of such flows are not gender neutral; households are subject to tensions that result from power negotiation among family members (Ramirez et al, 2005:31-32). While all migrants, if not, most migrants tend to remit, their actions are differentiated on a number of factors including gender.



Furthermore, the gender differences that determine remittances reveals that sending home remittances is an act carried out by individuals called migrants whose actions are influenced by micro and macro institutions such as the family and nation-states. Therefore the concept of gender, as Yuval-Davis argues, “should not be understood as a social difference between men and women, but as a mode of discourse which relates to groups of subjects whose social roles are defined by their sexual/biological difference as opposed to their economic positions ...” (Yuval-Davis, 1997:9) within societal collectivities (my addition). She adds that the social roles differ depending on sexual/biological difference (ibid). In line with Yuval-Davis, it was revealed in my study that the sexual/biological difference is a strong remittance determinant.

Also, I will say that remittances derived from [transcontinental] migration from Cameroon provide a gate-way for gender relations to become (re)negotiated, confronted, and (re)configured within family settings. Through migration and remittances, women are increasingly becoming main family providers in Cameroon and many parts of the developing world. For me, such actions alters gender roles at a symbolic level and confer in women social privileges previously denied them due to socio-cultural belief systems. In a sense, it provides an opportunity for women to transgress gendered borders; that is, to transgress the boundaries that spell out the meaning of masculinity and femininity in SSA countries including Cameroon.

### **6.1.1: ... on legality**

Ramirez et al note that the ways in which states manages migration have a direct effect on migrants legal status which in turn conditions possibilities for integration (Ramirez et al, 2005:28). They add that states integration policies are usually hard to come by and even when they do, they usually target only legal migrants while overlooking the specific contexts of migrant women (ibid:29). In addition, I would say that states actions in host countries are central to migrants’ ability to find jobs and be able to remit. Within the last decades, many migrant receiving states have closed, or are designing tighter immigration policies. This have an adverse effect on migrants legality and remittance behavior; in addition, Piper maintains that being legal does not necessarily mean complete integration (Piper, 2005:21)

### **6.1.2: And on women’s economic empowerment**

To begin with, I would like to recount an example in the speech tone in a response I got from one of my female interviewees. She tells me that : *[...] I work my money so I have the right to send it to my family or use it the way I want without anybody asking me any question [...]*. The use of “my” here shows some sense of self autonomy—“my money”, yes indeed, it her

money! To my point of view, such language shows some economic independence, which differs from the conventional form of family organization in the Cameroonian society where husbands take care of their wives and provide everything for the family—(household). In the same line, Ramirez and his colleagues maintain that migration and remittances are capable of transforming social relations and gender roles within households; they add that any analysis on the developmental impact of these two processes, that is migration and remittances must take into account the way these processes impacts on women's empowerment. (Ramirez et al, 2005:36).

Furthermore, Jolly and Reeves, add that, the income from migration, that is, remittances earned is capable of giving migrant women and their families some autonomy, self confidence and status (Jolly and Reeves, 2005:1). Piper affirms that through migration, women can gain social empowerment, that is, confidence in managing their lives and an increased decision making power within the family especially for return migrants (Piper, 2005:13).

I agree with the above arguments; however, I wish to add that remittances, are not merely occasional flows of financial and non financial transfers, they are as a result of, and result to complex relations of gender roles and norms in fulfilling unbounded family expectations for survival.

## **Recommendation**

Although remittances play an important role for family survival and the economies of migrant sending countries, it should be noted that remittances cannot replace governments' actions for sound economic policies that create employment opportunities to reduce brain drain from migration and encourage brain gain from returned migration. By so doing, international migration might become a matter of choice and not a necessity for family survival in migrant sending countries including Cameroon.

## **Future research**

In this study, I have attempted an investigation of remittances with a combination of a migration and a feminist theory of intersectionality. Brooks and Redlin, (2009) made use of intersectionality in their study of migration from rural to urban county in the United States,

however, studies that employ an intersectionality theory to investigate remittance dynamism are still hard to come by. To this respect, more of such studies are needed.

This research focuses on a qualitatively one-sided approach of family expectation on remittances from migrants. Due to time and other factors, I could not explore a two-sided approach. More research is needed to investigate on migrants expectation from families (if any) to get a balance picture of the phenomenon under study.

Responses from the interviewees reveal that luck is important when it comes to migration and remittances; not everyone is lucky to be granted a visa to travel, or to be granted a right to stay in the host country, or to be able to get a job; and all these affect remittance flow. More research, (perhaps a socio-anthropological research) is needed to better understand for example what are migrants' perceptions of luck? How is it defined and how does it reflect in their everyday realities, and much more.

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## Appendix 1: remittance flow to Cameroon between 1996-2006

envois des fonds des travailleurs a l'exteriure (reçus par le cameroun) en millions de FCFA							
Année	montant						
1996	4,510.70						
1997	5,108.40						
1998	6,441.30						
1999	5,079.80						
2000	8,434.90						
2001	4,976.10						
2002	9,861.80						
2003	35 196,00						
2004	51 976,00						
2005	35 408,00						
2006	61 517,00						

source : Ministère des Finances /Direction des Affaires Economiques/Division de la Balance des Paiements

Table 1

## **Appendix 2: Interview guide**

### A) Demographic and family characteristics

1. Name, sex, marital status,
2. How many children do you have (if any)
3. How many brothers and sisters do you have (if any)
4. Level of education

### 5. Age

- a. 15-20
- b. 21-25
- c. 26-30
- d. 31-35
- e. 36-40
- f. 41-45
- g. 46-50
- h. 51-60
- i. 61+

### 6. Employment status

### 7. Ethnicity/ tribe

### 8. Religion

### B) Migratory trajectory

#### 9 Years spent in Sweden

#### 10 How did you come to Sweden

#### 11 Who paid for the travel

#### 12 Whose decision was it for you to travel

#### 13 Who did you tell about your departure and why?

#### 14 What do you think of yourself as a bush faller here in Sweden and what are some of the family expectations on you being a Cameroonian migrant here in Sweden

### C) Migrants communication with, and remittance flow to families



- 15 How often do you call your family
- 16 To whom do you give your phone numbers to and why? Who do you call? Who calls you? What strategies do you put in place not give out your phone numbers
- 17 How often do you send remittances back home and what motivates you to remit
- 18 In what circumstances do you send back remittances and to whom and why this choice of person
- 19 Have there been any changes with regards to your remittance pattern since you came to Sweden? If so how? What can you say accounted for these changes
- 20 What are some of the things you sent back home to your family
- 21 Could you please tell me what you think about sending home remittances?