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Helping, Struggling or Working?
Exploring labour migration trajectories of street vendors at a Havana Street Market in Windhoek, Namibia

A research report by
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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Migration and Displacement

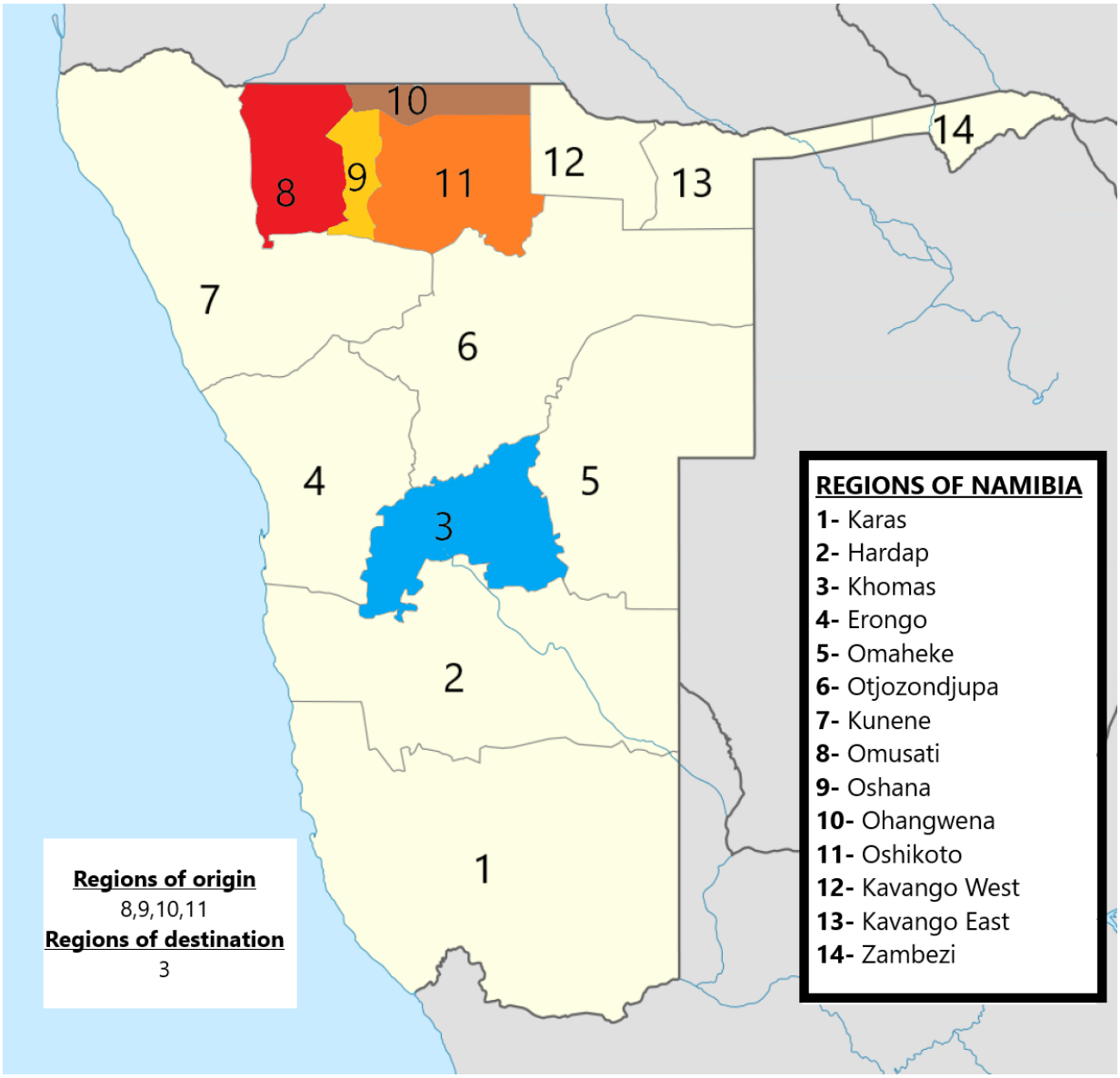
Johannesburg, July 2020

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MAPS

Figure 1. Regional Map of Namibia indicating research participants regions of origin and region of destination. (©Dedering, 2010).

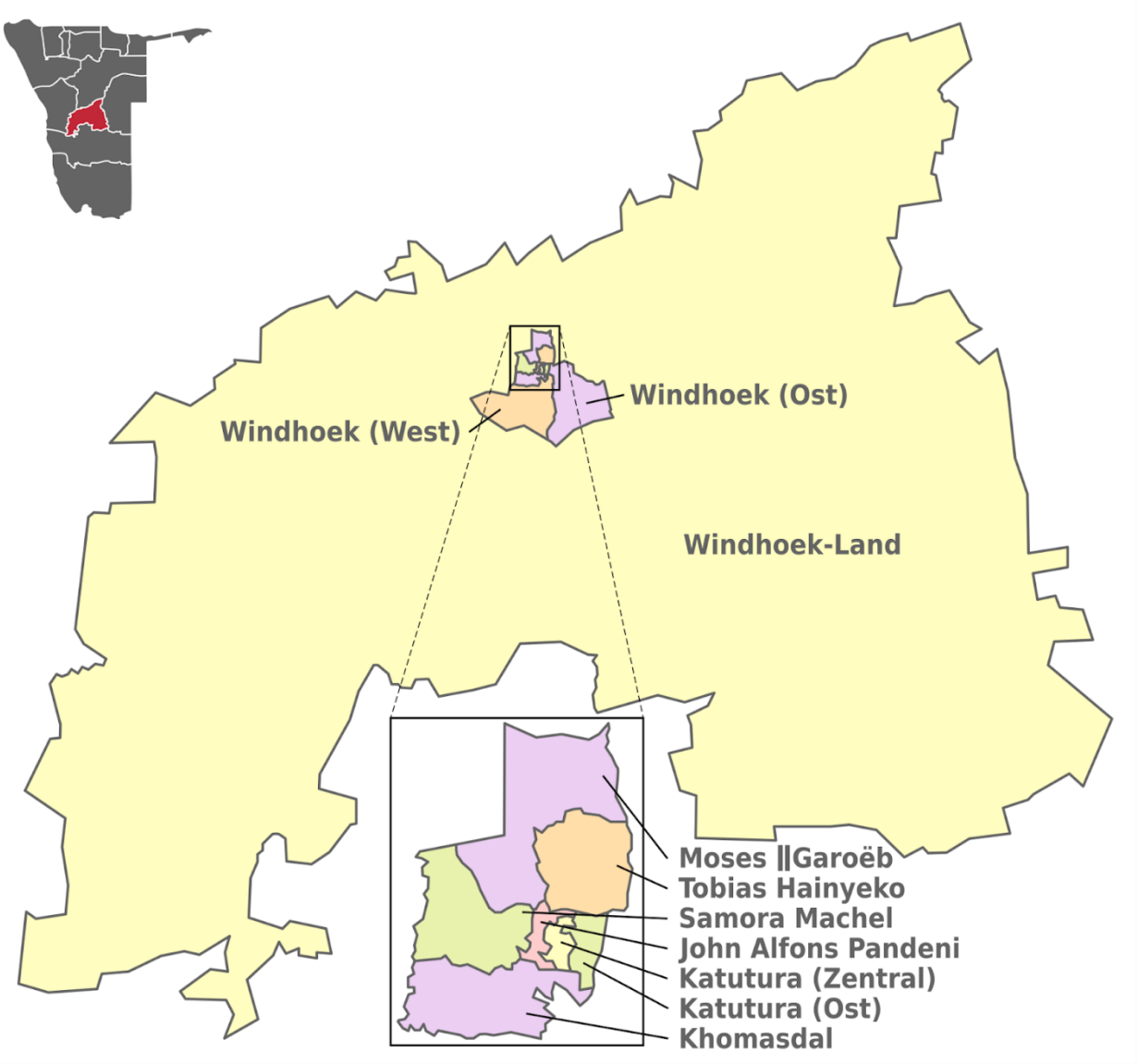


Figure 2. Khomas Region Map, illustrating Windhoek and constituencies therein including Moses //Garoëb Constituency. (©NordNord, 2019).

ABSTRACT

Set in Havana informal settlement, this study explores how Aawambo women street vendors at the Kabaka Street market reflect on their decisions to migrate to Windhoek, Namibia. Through its exploration of migrants' emic perspectives, this study probes the economic rhetoric that labour migration can be reduced to 'migrating to find work.' It describes what 'work' subjectively entails for rural migrant women moving to Windhoek and what working in Windhoek means for migrants from their own vantage points. I use a qualitative research design highlighting migrant subjectivities to propose that economic triggers of migration are experienced in a multitude of ways mediated by factors such as gender and class. Embedded in the project is an investigation into migrants' perceptions of work, Windhoek, places of origin and the role of migrant networks in their migration and work.

DECLARATION

I, Anna Nalweendo Kharuchas, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in my references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Migration and Displacement at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.



Signature: Anna Kharuchas
Signed in Windhoek on 22 July 2020

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This study explores the idea of "reductive" economic motives for migration and other human processes (Venditto, 2018: 102); meaning it asserts economic drivers of migration as subjectively experienced. If motivations to migrate can be generalised as economic, for instance, migrating to find work or a job – what is work to a migrant and how do they come to work? I discuss how female street vendors describe what work is to them and why they move to work to understand their particular manifestations of labour migration. Specifically, this study aims to discuss how Aawambo women reflect on their decision to migrate for work from the north of Namibia to Windhoek post-independence (Gugler & Ludwar-Ene, 1997; Posel, 2004; Winterfeldt, 2002).

I argue that women in this study perceive and experience labour migration in subjective ways, yet intersecting identities – namely ethnicity, race, gender and class – inform similar perceptions and responses to economic triggers of movement. Nonetheless, people under similar structural constraints can still perceive and respond to economic triggers in different ways which inform their labour migration. Through this discussion, I show how the varying approaches migrants seek and come to work reveals much about their roles as economic actors across rural and urban areas.

Background

Namibia is a "middle-income" country located in southwest Africa with a population of 2.5 million people (World Bank Country Overview, 2020). It gained independence on 21 March 1990 from the Union of South Africa. South Africa had occupied Namibia – then called South West Africa – as a mandated territory of the League of Nations since 1921 when Germany surrendered its colonies (Wallace and Kinahan, 2011). At the time, "native reserves" and the Police Zone geographically split the country. The Police Zone covered at least two-thirds of the country, including the majority of central and southern Namibia (Wallace and Kinahan, 2011). Germans and then later Boers took ownership of this area of the land after the violent displacement of the Nama, Damara and Ovaherero people (Wallace and Kinahan, 2011).

Africans were not permitted legal entry into the Police Zone from the 1920s until the early 1970s unless they had a pass or were contract workers (Wallace and Kinahan, 2011). In the aftermath of the 1904-1908 Herero and Nama genocide and towards the end of German colonialism, the migrant

labour system profoundly impacted migration patterns in the country (Wallace and Kinahan, 2011). The migrant labour system imposed extended periods of circular labour migration, including migration from north-central Namibia where Aawambo lived (Winterfeld, 2002). Within the system, Black African men worked in mines, commercial farms and urban centres, located in the Police Zone, as contract workers. These men would work for 6 to 18 months at a time; without the opportunity to travel and live with their families (Wallace & Kinahan, 2011; see also Kamwanyah, 2014; Winterfeld, 2002).

Three factors predominantly led to Awambo being a supply for migrant labour. Firstly, colonial and apartheid administrations created native reserves and implemented taxing policies therein, that fixed communities in demarcated areas and facilitated their coercion into the wage/cash economy (Wallace & Kinahan, 2011). Secondly, the implementation of legislation such as the Suppression of Vagrancy and Idleness Proclamation No. 25 of 1920 and the Prohibited Area Proclamation No. 15 of 1919 which constricted movement. Thirdly, environmental disasters such as the rinderpest of 1897 impacted the economic self-sufficiency of communities (Wallace & Kinahan, 2011). According to Wallace & Kinahan (2011), colonial administrative authorities sought to capitalise on the unexploited labour of Aawambo due to the increased demands of the mining and construction industries. Aawambo did not historically experience the same military, economic or political coercion to participate in wage labour before the 1920s as the Nama, Damara and Ovaherero people, most of whom lived in the central and southern parts of Namibia and were more vulnerable to the violence of colonial and apartheid forces (Wallace & Kinahan, 2011). Aawambo's relative autonomy was a result of their geographic location and demographic composition as the largest population group in the country (Wallace & Kinahan, 2011).

Winterfeldt explains that before the 1920s, the most common form of migration was poor "peasant" Aawambo men leaving homesteads for a small period as a result of "seasonal rhythms of agriculture" (2002: 41). Among the significant impacts of the contract migrant labour system is that it gradually based Aawambo women in the subsistence economy and men in the wage economy; affecting the mobility and work responsibilities of each group (Seckelmann as cited in Niikondo, 2010; Winterfeldt, 2002). African women, including Aawambo women, were restricted from moving because they were not legally permitted to receive passes neither were they offered contracts to work (Winterfeldt, 2002). Towards the 1970s women would eventually be legally

allowed to live and work in urban areas, however, Winterfeldt (2002) suggests that women migrated to urban areas to escape harsh economic and environmental conditions rather than because of direct links to waged labour.

Contemporary internal labour migration patterns in Namibia show continued colonial and apartheid-era 'north-to-south' labour migration; specifically, migration from Oshana, Omusati, Ohangwena and Oshikoto regions to the Khomas Region (Pendleton, Crush & Nickanor, 2014; see Figures 1 and 2). Namibia's urban population increased from 42.8% of the total population in 2011 to 47.9 % in 2016; while the rural population decreased from 57.2% to 52.1 % during the same period (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2017). Windhoek, Namibia's capital city, is located in the Khomas Region which has the largest share of the total population (17.9%) and receives one of the highest percentages of migrants in the country (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2017). Increased urbanisation has caused a dilemma for local authorities in Windhoek because unemployed or underemployed migrants, who live in informal settlements, cannot afford either housing or municipal services or both (Frayne, 2007; Indongo, 2015). Many do not have work through which municipalities can access tax contributions that can fund service delivery in those settlements (Frayne, 2007; Indongo, 2015; Kinyanjui, 2014).

In the face of relatively high unemployment rates in the country (34%), Devereux (as cited in Frayne, 2007: 92) notes that "many unskilled shanty dwellers are forced to eke out a subsistence in the urban informal sector in Namibia" – 70% of informal workers are women (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2015; see also Ngatjiheue, 2018). One of the ways people eke out a living in urban areas is through street vending; which Frayne (2007) describes as one of the more oversaturated markets in Namibia. The significant migrant population in Windhoek; migrants' higher propensity for engaging in informal work; as well as the continental occurrence of women being more likely to join the informal economy may suggest that street vending in Windhoek is a trusted avenue for rural Aawambo women migrating to find work (Frayne, 2007; (Kinyanjui, 2014).

The above gives a brief historical background of labour migration among Aawambo in Namibia. It illustrates the gendered and racialised nature of labour migration patterns during the colonial and apartheid era. Considering this history of labour migration, post-independence urbanisation

and rising unemployment in urban areas, the objective of this study is to describe how Aawambo women eke out a living in urban areas and understand why they choose to do so.

Significance

When compared to other southern African capital cities, Windhoek does not have a rich history in ethnographic study and research on the experiences of internal migration; especially of migrant women. This study contributes to the literature on migration in Namibia, the migration of women, and the multiple ways labour migration manifests. This research helps fill an empirical gap considering the centrality of migration to Namibians' lives. Furthermore, it also engages broader debates on what triggers or motivates people to move as well as the role of gender and class in experiences of labour migration. This information is useful for understanding how people come to work in the city, why they do the work they do and the circumstances that initiate their migration. Gender tends to have cis-heteronormative interpretations and such interpretations are the common basis of assessing gender in quantitative studies (Mahler & Pessar, 2006). It conflates gender with biological sex – a concept with its limitations and biases. Therefore, although I refer to gender in this study as a difference between women and men, gender is much more fluid than that binary implies; it is "saturated with meanings and evident in relations that are not static nor by any means universal" (Mahler & Pessar, 2006: 32).

In this chapter, I introduced this research project and outlined the objectives, aims and significance of this study. I discuss what theoretical perspectives within the literature on gender and labour migration can offer for why these participants migrate to Windhoek in **Chapter 2**. In **Chapter 3**, I describe how I operationalise my study and outline my research design, data collection and data recording processes. **Chapter 4** describes and discusses the findings and implications of this study. In closing, **Chapter 5** summarises the project and my conclusions.

CHAPTER 2 **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Introduction

This study discusses how Aawambo women subjectively describe why they decide to migrate for work and how they describe the work they do. I presuppose that their motivations for migrating are "economic in nature" in that it is part of an "upward mobility" strategy (Bastia, 2007: 658; see also Awumbila, 2017; Camlin, Snow & Hosegood, 2014; Gugler & Ludora-Ene, 1997; Jacobs & du Plessis, 2015; Olurode, 1997). Nevertheless, I acknowledge that beyond physical survival, economic interests are socially constructed. Therefore, this study proposes that migrants' descriptions of their journeys illustrate how they define and go about pursuing economic interests. Ultimately, this demonstrates that there are numerous manifestations of labour migration for economic purposes. I also discuss how intersectional systems of oppression mediate similar perceptions, experiences and responses of economic triggers of migration on a collective level.

In this literature review, I present selected academic scholarship on the feminisation of migration, segmented labour markets and migrant networks to deliberate how women in the informal economy can experience and perceive work. I engage such literature to situate Aawambo migrant women's descriptions of work and experiences of movement within the context of women migrating for work in post-independent Namibia, the impact of globalisation on labour markets and how migrant networks foster labour migration and work opportunities. These address why women have migrated in the past for work and what work they have been able to access; what informs access to work; and lastly, how women migrating from rural areas have found work in the urban areas.

The Feminisation of Migration

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this research discusses Aawambo women's labour migrations since the dawn of Namibian independence. The feminisation of migration describes some of the structural conditions and ideological departures that assert why women have been migrating at a higher frequency in the last 30 years (Camlin et al., 2014). This section outlines some debates on the feminisation of migration and how these inform my discussion on why Awambo women migrate to work and what work they migrate to do.

The feminisation of migration is a phenomenon identified through the "significant growth in critical analysis of migration through the lens of gender" since the 1980s (Camlin et al., 2014; see also Olurode, 1997; Jones-Dube, 1997; Little, 1973; Posel, 2004). Simply put, it refers to an increase or the "improved statistical visibility" in the migration of women – most frequently towards urban areas (Piper, 2007: 4; see also James & Phillips, 2014; Posel, 2004). It is also a term used to describe the involvement of women "in most, if not all, migration streams" (Piper, 2007: 4). Various academic scholars within Africa attribute the feminisation of migration in different societies on the continent to "high levels of poverty"; the deterioration of the rural economy; fleeing authoritarian or patriarchal ties of their communities and elders for the "independence" of the city; "disease"; "male unemployment"; "increased education"; political instability in countries of origin and communities of origin; difficulties arising out of the disintegration of relationships; the absence of parents/guardians as breadwinners and women as sole breadwinners of households (Piper, 2007: 5; Adepoju, 1997; James & Phillips, 2014; Jones-Dube, 1997; Lefko-Everett, 2007; Marchetti & Salih, 2015: 153; Winterfeldt, 2004).

For Piper (2007: 4), an integral part of the feminisation of migration is acknowledging "women dominated migration as work migration in its own right". This positions the feminisation of migration as a phenomenon whereby labour markets increasingly absorb women's labour and the "participation of women in economic streams" being the reason behind their increased migration (Marchetti & Salih, 2015: 158; see also Piper 2007). On the one hand, economic rationales such as the "increased absorption" of women's labour in "urban labour markets"; migration as a "result of men's inability to find employment"; as well as "needs and market demands in feminised sectors" are agued as the reason why women are moving more to urban areas (Piper, 2007: 18 see also Kihato, 2007; Marchetti & Salih, 2015; Mkhize & Msomi, 2016). On the other hand, the feminisation of migration can have social-cultural causations such as independence, education or freedom from patriarchy (Kihato, 2007; see also Nghiulikwa, 2008; Ross, 2010). Within migration studies, debates on what fundamentally makes people move prominently feature assigning cause of movement to socio-cultural or economic causations (de Haas, 2014). My approach for this study is that social-cultural causations, some of which I have listed above, are predominately a result of economic causes. I should note that this cannot possibly account for all migrations as economics

alone cannot justify all forms of labour migration (Kihato, 2007; Massey, 2002). An example reinforcing my approach for this study is how, Kihato (2007) argues that as men become less able to dominate households due to their faltering earnings or unemployment, women are in a better position to autonomously migrate. Thus, without financial or economic power, patriarchy can be undermined; indicating how economic conditions facilitate cultural-social causations of movement.

The virtuosity of the feminisation of migration is contentious because it can obscure "complex and ambivalent dynamics, and does not necessarily translate into concrete and clear opportunities for autonomous mobility for women" (Marchetti & Salih, 2015: 141; see also Piper 2007). The gendered nature of labour markets compromises "concrete and clear opportunities" that can facilitate increased freedom and autonomy of movement, through limiting the acquisition of economic power or financial autonomy (Marchetti & Salih, 2015: 141; Piper, 2007). I say that labour markets are gendered because women primarily find work in "reproductive spheres of the labour market" or within "feminized industries", such as domestic work and other care work, in places of destination. In such spaces, but not exclusive to them, their work may be "socio-legally not recognised as proper work" (Piper, 2007: 18). Furthermore, "temporariness, difficult working conditions and poor legal protections" characterises work opportunities for female migrants (Marchetti & Salih, 2015: 161).

Gendered labour markets are a consequence of, "hard-nosed economic imperatives which clearly favour men" and in so doing demarcate what is skilled and unskilled in favour of cis-heteronormative patriarchal constructions of gender among other factors; positing skilled work as having more value and thus more fairly remunerated (Dodson cited in Piper, 2007: 5). These categories do "not always reflect or recognise the actual level of skill or professionalism", but are instead, "rooted in the economic and gender disparities that exist between origin and destination countries as well as within societies." (Piper, 2007: 14). Biases according to culture, race and socio-economic class are entrenched in categories of skilled work and unskilled work; these, in turn, affect remuneration, safety and temporality of work (Piper, 2007).

Black women from rural areas experience specific obstacles affecting job prospects as they relate to their gender, race, ethnicity and their socio-economic class. For instance, women from lower socio-economic backgrounds may be unable to access the same work opportunities as those from middle- and upper-class backgrounds because of disparities in access to education and social networks. Using Crenshaw's intersectional framework, I propose that the experiences of male counterparts nor experiences of women from other races, ethnicities and class backgrounds do not wholly encapsulate Aawambo women's labour migration experiences from rural areas. Thus, labour markets do not 'treat' workers the same. For example, economic conditions do not impact female migrants in the same ways as male migrants in addition to not having the same capacities for action in response to economic conditions. Therefore, the feminisation of migration should not only be an analysis of the increased movement of women within labour markets but also how systems of oppression affect how different women migrate for work, why they migrate and what work they can do once they migrate. This includes how readily labour markets value, acknowledge and compensate different women for their labour. To discuss how migrant women in this study describe work and why they migrate to work for economic purposes, I must, therefore, consider how ethnicity, race, gender and class mediate Aawambo women's migrant experiences within this study.

The feminisation of migration is a phenomenon that asserts women as migrants in general but significantly also as labour migrants. Before such scholarship, more often than not, men existed – in a literary sense – as the primary labour migrants, as is the case in most Namibian literature. Intersectionality serves as a useful tool analytical tool for questioning the inherent "focus on the most privileged group members", which in this case are male labour migrants, and how this "marginalises those who are multiply-burdened" (Crenshaw, 1989: 10). Furthermore, the intersectional impact of race, gender, ethnicity and class on the lives of participants in this sample, may result in experiencing work and migrating to work in broadly similar ways but also allow for differences that may occur within this group (Crenshaw, 1989). As touched on in the previous chapter, Aawambo women do not have the same historical experiences of waged work as their male counterparts. While Aawambo men experienced coercion into the migrant labour system, Aawambo women were impeded through legislation from migrating altogether and thus, potential efforts to migrate for work or participate in the wage economy were actively obstructed (Wallace

and Kinahan, 2011). Before apartheid legislation, other women in German South-West Africa from the Ovaherero and Nama communities worked in urban areas and farms as domestic workers, but Aawambo women would not be able to access such work because they lived relatively far from central and south Namibia. In any case, that work that Ovaherero and Nama women had was ultimately solely designated to Black men (Wallace and Kinahan, 2011). These experiences of work were particular to Black African women because white settler women's movements were not policed. They were not legally barred from working outside of "native reserves" before independence nor did they experience the same economic and political coercion in addition to environmental effects that could necessitate waged work (Wallace and Kinahan, 2011). Nonetheless, I do not position participation in the wage economy as a necessarily virtuous activity or desire. What I highlight is that within the oppression of Black people as a whole, colonialism and more so apartheid in Namibia would institutionalise racialised patriarchal parameters of who is a worker and who can work – that is, work for a wage. That said, women did have some authority over land, having subsequent responsibility for the reproduction of the rural economy in addition to their unpaid labour for reproducing migrant labour supply (Federici, 2006; Winterfeldt, 2002). However, this authority did not supersede that of male traditional authorities (Posel, 2004). African Black women's limited access to wages was thus a form of restricting their financial power and independence.

Migration of rural women in post-independence in Namibia may give or have given women opportunities for financial independence that can ensure and realise autonomous mobility. As I briefly mention in my background, these work opportunities are largely within the informal sector. I do argue, however, that the structural obstacles that regulate movement are still pervasive when assessing perceptions of work; especially in Black women's experiences of work in southern Africa. Therefore if "currently more women participate in paid employment than at any other time in history" how do factors such as gender and socio-economic class currently mediate their work? (Tacoli, 2012: 16). In particular, how do these mediate how Aawambo women from rural areas come to work and how they perceive their work? In the next section, I will discuss categories of work in the context of an economic logic of migration and how class and gender can mediate what 'work' is and what work is accessible.

The Meaning of Work

This section discusses some concepts that speak to describing work as it relates to the purpose of this study. How society organises labour and the language societies use to refer to work, reflect values placed on different kinds of labour (Clair, Bell, McConnell, Hackbarth & Mathes, 2008). Values which have implications for remuneration, safety, social benefits and work temporality in addition to the purpose and meaning workers themselves place on 'work'.

In Feldberg & Glenn's *Job versus Gender Models in the Sociology of Work,* the authors describe disparities in analyses of work and how gender mediates what is 'real work'.

> Separate job and gender models rest upon a concept of work that places importance on "paid work" as the only form of real work as a result, men tend to be treated as workers and women workers as non-workers (Feldberg & Glenn, 1979: 532).

This logic of work identifies parameters for what is work or real work according to gender (Clair et al., 2008; Kulik, 1997). Keeping in mind that there are different ways societies value work, I interpret 'real' as the more economic or societal value work has, the more real it is. For example, work that is "typically but not always only performed by women" such as housework, care work or "feminised work", can be inadequately compensated when compared to compensation for stereotypical "male" work and thus could be classified as not real work (Tacoli, 2012: 5). Due to patriarchal and misogynistic views of so-called, women's work, and industries where women concentrate as workers, their skills, labour and efforts may be under-compensated and are likely to be exploited because of their gender. Another powerful influence on how work is valued is capitalism. For example, Adam Smith provides a capitalist framework of work which devalues labour that is "seasonal", "recreational" or "easy"; in Clair et al's research this is impactful in how participants identified work. In that study participants associate work or a real job with "organization jobs", "corporate jobs" and "professional jobs" (Clair et al, 2008: 9). While I can concede that these valuations can be context-specific because university students comprise the sample group, these perceptions illustrate how real work is connected to formal (academic) education or whether that work is productive - in an economic sense (Harvey, 2018). In the end,

both patriarchy and capitalism influence the realness or the validation of different kinds of work, where money or compensation is a “material representation of value” (Harvey, 2018).

Furthermore, the model that Feldberg & Glenn (1979) refer to has its roots in the sexual division of labour in industrial capitalism. It entails work analysis based on job and working conditions for men while using “employment as a derivative of personal characteristics and relationships to family situations” for women (Feldberg & Glenn, 1979: 256). This essentialises relationships to work according to sex as well as assumes all men and all women have homogenous relationships to work. Therefore, this mode of analysis cannot account for potential differences within sex and gender groups according to criteria such as class, ethnicity, race, citizenship or labour market changes that may occur over time (Feldberg & Glenn, 1979; see also Crenshaw, 1989). Nor does it pay much attention to how or what structural conditions inform work analysis and the circumstances that influence work conditions (Feldberg & Glenn, 1979; see also Crenshaw, 1989).

I refer to this to illustrate how analytic models re-inscribe patriarchal and classist positions on what is ‘real’ work and demarcate who is a ‘real’ worker. Since Feldberg & Glenn’s study, many more studies explore women's experiences as workers (Camlin et al, 2014; James & du Plessis, 2014; see also Posel, 2004). Still, not giving enough attention to women's relationships to work through their capacity and experience as workers, in addition to acknowledging the personal and meso-level circumstances that inform how they come to work, can undermine how multifaceted experiences of work are in reality. It additionally obfuscates how gendered and racialised economic structures impact working conditions and why women work. For instance, Mkhize & Msomi (2016: 328) found that due to high rates of unemployment and poverty among predominantly “non-professional” Black African women, they “were not in a position to pick and choose a career”. This means that institutionalised racism and sexism within the framework of capitalism mediate the impact of socio-economic factors such as poverty. They limit the freedom to choose what work to do, what work Black African women can access and how they can get compensated. Thereby, increasing their chances of working in underpaying jobs, in potentially harmful environments because of a limited ability to choose. When I speak of the freedom to choose, I refer to the fact that these women may generally not have the time or resources to pursue a career – in a conventional sense. Particularly, a career which may give greater returns over time,

that can address their needs or desires because they are not preoccupied with ensuring their immediate survival and that of their dependents (Mkhize & Msomi, 2016).

In the face of rising unemployment and casualisation, the informal economy gives people, particularly women, a "fallback option" or an option for work where none existed (Bureau & Fendt, 2011). However, even within the informal economy itself, women still "tend to concentrate in lower quality, more precarious forms of paid work…and to earn less" (Tacoli, 2012: 17; see also Sassen, 2000; Webster, 2005). Webster (2005) suggests that globalisation enables multiple trajectories of work in southern Africa, that is to say, weaving between the informal ("making a living") and formal economy ("earning a living"). The informal economy functioning as a "fallback option, substitution effect" for workers in the formal economy, specifically in times of crisis, is one manner in which these sectors are interdependent (Bureau & Fendt, 2011: 89). A brief description of informal work or the informal sector is that it lacks features associated with the formal sector such as contracts and social security benefits (Webster, 2005 see also Bureau & Fendt, 2011; Olu & Ayo, 2017). Once you enter the informal sector due to instances of retrenchments or job dissatisfaction in the formal sector, Bureau & Fendt (2011: 88) argue that it is difficult to return and find work in the formal economy thus weaving between these sections may mostly only occur in one direction – from the formal to the informal.

Mkhize & Msomi (2016: 323) suggest that under-representation in the formal or "professional" and "semi-professional" sectors, as well as overrepresentation in the informal economy, are some causes of insufficient literature on working-class Black African women's work and career. Although informal work and experience within the informal economy are the subjects of increased research, it is arguably still under-researched in comparison to the personal experiences of work of those in formalised sectors; especially regarding workers across the gender and class spectrum (Clair et al 2008; Mkhize & Msomi, 2016). As more studies before and in the advent of the feminisation of migration can attest, due to the socio-economic realities of women in contexts such as southern Africa, Black African women within the region have complex histories of work and labour migration (Camlin et al, 2014; James & du Plessis, 2014; see also Posel, 2004). A feminist approach encourages analysis of labour and labour migration through "the way capitalism has used the wage to mobilise women's work in the reproduction of the labour force" (Federici, 2006). This

is while also considering how gender hierarchies and the sexual division of labour impact Black African women from rural areas because of their race, gender and class. Describing different experiences within groups in a burgeoning informal economy provides further understanding of the myriad ways people migrate for work during a time where consistent secure or permanent work gradually becomes a thing of the past – or at least for an increasing amount of people (Webster, 2005).

The impetus for this work is to describe the work that women migrate to do – because work, as I have shown in this section, is not neutral. Structural conditions consequently inform work and analysis of work experiences. Migrant women's subjective experiences of coming to work can, therefore, show not only how economic factors trigger migration on a micro level but how some structural conditions I mention here, in turn, inform how they perceive, describe, experience and access work. One of the ways that economic structures relate to what work women can access and how their gender, race and ethnicity impact this experience is through migrant networks. In the following section, I discuss how migrant networks can indicate differentiation in migrating for work (Camlin et al., 2014; James & du Plessis, 2014; see also Posel, 2004).

The Influence of Social Networks on Labour Migration

> Ethnographers urge that migration is not merely a process best understood in economic and /or political terms, it is also a socio-cultural process mediated by gendered and kinship ideologies, institutions and practices (Mahler & Pessar, 2006: 34).

Macroeconomic and political structures have different socio-cultural implications and manifestations as exhibited by kinship and communal networks. For Simone (2004a; 2010b), city life in African countries involves the use of ad hoc strategies, including making and breaking various relationships to survive the harsh reality of 'city life'. Not only are the relationships formed in urban areas important to city life, but migrant networks include rural-urban social links who are central to the decision to move to urban areas and for coping strategies once they settle (Tvedten as cited in Nghiulikwa, 2008). Not having any knowledge – provided by these networks – of the employment environment in cities, can be disadvantageous to new labour migrants (Agyei, Kumi & Yeboah, 2015). For example, prolonging the time one may look for work or limiting the

possibility thereof. Networks also provide temporary or permanent places to stay and connect migrants to possible working opportunities via friends, family, neighbours and other associated networks (Botea, Chakravarty & Compernolle, 2018 see also Bonner, 1988; Nghiulikwa, 2008; Phillips and James, 2014). The closer the links are to potential work, the higher their chances of a migrant finding employment opportunities, whether this is in the informal or formal sector (Agyei et al, 2015: 17; Botea et al., 2018).

Additionally, social networks also help form "niche" economies or markets (Bastia, 2007). A niche economy is an economy where there is an "overrepresentation of ethnic or racial minorities in particular jobs" and are not particular to "self-employment" and "retail" industries "but can also be found in other sectors of the economy, such as civil service" (Bastia, 2007: 655). Because of the overrepresentation of women, particularly Aawambo women, I identify street vending in the context of this study a "niche economy". Of course, one cannot separate this from the fact that Aawambo have the highest population in the country. Nevertheless, niche economies within informal economies, in particular, can more readily provide migrant workers with work opportunities due to the constitution of their networks. Although ethnicity has been a focal point in studying niche economies, gender has increasingly become a focus in such analysis (Bastia, 2007). For example, in Bastia's study, men can acquire better-paying jobs because of the gendered nature of social networks that formulate these niche economies. She claims that men generally have more connections outside of kinship networks, in comparison to women, and this variety of links increases access to work opportunities that can result in upward mobility (Bastia, 2007).

Beyond positing that male networks differ from those of their female counterparts, this shows that networks are not benign entities. They are fluid entities also subject to the influence of labour markets, gender, race, ethnicity and so on (Mahler & Pessar, 2006: 34; see also Crenshaw, 1989). Niche economies can indicate what mediates the work migrants can access; what work can migrants' access through their networks, who are those jobs made available to and why? Therefore, understanding why Aawambo women move to work in the informal economy as street vendors requires that I describe the roles networks play in labour migration, the circumstances under which networks foster migrant labour migration and determine what work migrants move to do.

Conclusion

Although both men and women migrate for work due to economic factors, the circumstances and the realities of those labour migrations – although similar in that fact – arguably exhibit differences in addition to intra-group differences. In this chapter, I have outlined some factors that may inform this differentiation. In the context of a country such as Namibia where ethnographic research on women as labour migrants is mostly quantitative, qualitative research describing labour migration in ways that consider how classed, racialised and gendered economic triggers for migration are would complement such data. The feminisation of migration, work as well as migrant networks are concepts crucial to describing labour migrations. They all require intersectional analyses that interrogate how gender, race and class mediate why these women migrate for work and how they experience labour migration. Furthermore, patriarchal and capitalist frameworks of work inform compensation and what work women migrate to do. In this context, street vending, which falls under the umbrella of the informal economy, is an industry which provides African Black women from rural areas with opportunities of work when not many are forthcoming.

In light of this chapter, my discussion will explain the logic for why Black women from rural Namibia decide to migrate for work in Windhoek. Although previous research suggests that they may be poorly compensated or exploited, it discusses how women reinforce or challenge embedded social constructions of work when they describe their work. I clarify under what conditions, from migrants' perspectives, migrant networks provide aid that results in participants migrating to work and suggest why this might occur. I argue that these factors indicate how their labour migration is made possible in a multitude of ways on an individual level while having shared experiences and perceptions on the community and structural level. Thus, to summarise, I intend to outline Aawambo women's subjective descriptions for why they migrate to work, what that work means for them and outline the feminisation of migration within the Namibian context. I discuss how women describe their work and how gender, class and race mediate these perceptions. Lastly, I describe the roles of migrant networks in how women come to work in the street vendor industry in Windhoek. The next chapter outlines the methodology of this study.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This qualitative study gives primary focus to migrants' subjective descriptions of their labour migration. I incorporate cultures of migration, a structuration theory of practice and social network theory as a conceptual framework for discussing how domestic labour migrants' "emic perspectives" are a crucial component to understanding labour migration (Hahn & Kluthe, 2007; see also O'Reilly, 2012a; 2015b; Massey & Kandel, 2002). Through these reflections and perceptions, I argue that we come to know how migration for economic purposes, that is to say, migration motivated by the economic interests of migrants and their networks, resonates on the level of the individual and how the race, class and gender of migrants mediates labour migration experiences. I use this approach to propose that although economics on a macro level triggers movement, the subjective social worlds of migrants can particularly describe how this migration is realised. In this section, I briefly describe my research design; which includes the theoretical framework, research instruments and research procedures that I used to collect, record and analyse data.

Conceptual Framework

Cultures of migration foregrounds the emic experiences of migrants and illustrates how personal perceptions of experiences speak to structural contexts (Hahn & Kluthe, 2007; see also Abu-Lughod, 1993; Massey & Kandel, 2002). This concept can explore alternatives to economic approaches for explaining why people migrate; proposing that continued migration within social networks predominantly encourages migration (Hahn & Kluthe, 2007; Massey & Kandel, 2002). This study modifies this approach. Instead, I attribute and discuss how "locally defined valuations of lifestyle and patterns of preferential strategies" that individual social actors employ are responses predominantly triggered by economic conditions (Hahn and Kluthe, 2007: 13; see also Massey & Kandel, 2002). Besides, this approach takes into account how migrants' subjectivities do not exist in isolation and are subject to influence from their origin, transient or permanent communities (O'Reilly, 2012; see also Phillips & James, 2014). Emic perspectives of migration can thus identify factors which are more influential than economic conditions but also explain how economic triggers of migration manifest on a micro-level.

Instruments, Site Selection, Sampling, Data Collection and Recording

I conducted semi-structured interviews during December 2018 and January 2019. I constructed open-ended questions so I could elucidate migrants' brief migration history, migration experiences, and perceptions regarding work in Windhoek, but also be flexible enough to expand on experiences that were unique to participants[1] (Batuchina, 2015; Groenewald, 2004). An emphasis on the perspectives of the participants means that those perspectives do not have an objective view, lack historical context or do not explicitly make clear the macro-structural factors at play (O'Reilly, 2012a; 2015b). This study also provides historical and socio-economic context for migrants' perceptions and experiences but does not postulate such information as what participants mean (Abu-Lughod, 1993). I did this by conducting a desk review of the literature on theoretical approaches to migration, rural-urban migration trends, labour migration experiences of women, informal work experiences as well as observational notes made during and after interviews.

The site for this study is the Kabaka market in the Havana informal settlement; it is one of the largest informal settlements in the Moses //Garoëb Constituency, Windhoek, Namibia (Figure 2). Havana has a formal market space as well as some makeshift informal markets, such as Kabaka, where people sell goods on the sides of the roads. Havana also has a historically significant Aawambo population (Mukando, 2016). I decided to focus on Aawambo as the selected population group of this study because of how the migrant labour system impacted their migration patterns to urban areas from northern Namibian regions such as the Oshikoto, Ohangwena, Omusati, Oshana Regions since the 1920s (Mukando, 2016; Winterfeldt, 2002) (See Figure 2). All participants preferred to conduct interviews in Oshiwambo, where Onena Shivute and Kandoshe Shilula, volunteered to assist with the fieldwork portion of my research as translators. Although I selected participants at random, I discerned whether participants were suitable for this study based on whether they were from these regions and that they were street vendors/petty commodity traders/ micro-entrepreneurs at the Kabaka market. A couple of possible interviewees were not from these regions and were not of Aawambo descent. Ultimately, my sample group comprised of 11 unmarried Aawambo migrant women (between the ages of 20-50); the marital status of participants

[1] Appendix A

was a coincidence. I only conducted interviews after respondents' migrations — three months was the shortest length of time that elapsed since an initial move to Windhoek. This means that recollections of their experiences, including why they decided to migrate and perceptions of Windhoek, are subject to memory. I conducted the interviews while participants were working so that no participants lost potential sales as a result of taking part in the study. Lastly, after receiving consent from participants, a recording app was used to record interviews. I assured all participants that only the researcher, translators, my supervisor and external examiner(s) would potentially have access to these recordings. I uploaded all audio recordings onto a password-protected cloud service.

Explication of the Data and Study Limitations

The primary archive for this study are audio recordings of interviews and observational notes made during the fieldwork stage. I use thematic and interpretive analysis to explicate data collected (Groenewald, 2004). My secondary archive for this study is the literature on migrant women's experiences of rural-urban migration in Africa, labour migration theories and trends and women in the informal sector. The data from this study cannot and does not claim to make generalised deductions as its sample is not representative of all experiences of Aawambo women moving to work, their experiences and perceptions of work in Namibia nor of women elsewhere. Not collecting data that draws comparisons to other migrants based on ethnicity, race or gender could have strengthened some of the claims of this study and as such is a further limitation of this study.

Ethical Considerations

My study was subject to ethical clearance from the African Centre for Migration and Society at the University of the Witwatersrand. All participants volunteered to be a part of this research and consented to recorded interviews. All participants were made aware that they were free to withdraw from the research at any point and could contact the researcher at any point to retract their participation.

Conclusion

This section described the research design and the research procedures of this study. I conducted a qualitative study with a specific focus on migrant subjectivities and migrants' emic perspectives. This study aims to describe migrants' decision to migrate to Windhoek and the work they do in the city. I collected data via semi-structured interviews and explicated data through an interpretive and thematic analysis as well as engaged theoretical concepts such as cultures of migration and social network theory. With the above in mind, I present the findings of this research and discuss the data analysed in the following section.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

Instead of judging the validity of subjective experience and perceptions (O'Reilly, 2012a; 2015b), cultures of migration is a useful approach to get a sense for how people understand and describe their experiences of migration. It helps understand how migrant subjectivities explain why people migrate in the context of the world(s) they live in and who they are. The following chapter describes perceptions derived from semi-structured interviews with 11 Aawambo street vendors who migrated to Windhoek between 1993 and 2018. These descriptions touch on these Aawambo migrant women's pathways and experiences as economic actors within the contemporary context of the labour market in Windhoek, Namibia.

What we know from previous literature is that labour migrants move for work or due to economic conditions. The purpose of this study is to understand what this work entails and what aspiring to work in Windhoek means for migrants through their vantage points. Subjective perceptions of work and the purpose of migrating for work illustrate the complex and multiple ways women, in particular, migrate for labour. In this section, I describe why Aawambo women decide to migrate for work, how their perceptions of work illustrate how they subjectively value the work they do as well as what they consider the purpose of their labour migration. I do this to discuss how race, gender and class primarily mediate these perceptions, in addition to what implications these may have for the economic aspirations of rural migrant women in Windhoek.

Migrating for Economic Purposes: Pathways to Work

Economic triggers of migration include wage and income differentials in rural and urban or peri-urban areas (Awumbila, 2017; Camlin et al., 2014; de Haas, 2014; Gugler & Ludora-Ene,1997; Jacobs & du Plessis, 2015; Olurode, 1997), regardless of the low probability of acquiring jobs. Relatively high rates of unemployment suggest that it is difficult finding work in Windhoek (Namibia Statistics Agency, 2015). Lorna* explains that there is "no work here" so she "has to do something" for her children to eat. Whether this was a pre-existing view before her migration or whether Lorna staying in the city informs this perception of Windhoek, it importantly illustrates a perception that labour market(s) in Windhoek are unable to absorb her labour. This observation

identifies how lack of opportunity within or saturation of labour markets fosters informal entrepreneurship. This is to say, that her need to "do something" is triggered by a perception or experiences of not having access to work, requiring her to make a living for herself (Bureau & Fendt, 2015; see also Webster, 2005). Participants describing that they migrate to Windhoek to "struggle", "to get something" or to "find something" indicates that for a significant portion of women interviewed, they did not migrate for particular jobs or having secured work before migration. However, with those who did, the involvement of migrants' networks was crucial in such labour migrations as I will discuss later.

Nevertheless, in comparison to Lorna, Rauna* and Nangula* are more optimistic about the possibilities of finding work in Windhoek. Rauna explicitly makes this point by asking, "if you go home where are you going to find it?". For Nangula, Windhoek offers many work opportunities such as opening your kastola (stall or store). Windhoek being one of the most densely populated urban areas in the country is a motivating factor for some participants' migration because they believe that the more people there are, the more advantageous it is to set up their businesses or stalls in Windhoek. Although the above descriptions suggest how these women perceive labour markets in Windhoek and migrants' places of origin, they also tell us what women consider work. What kinds of work do women migrate to do or expect to do when they migrate? While Lorna expresses that there is "no work" – perhaps indicating a preference for formal work, Nangula believes in the possibility of finding work in Windhoek in addition to understanding "making a living" as a work opportunity or as the presence of work. Furthermore, associating lack of working opportunities with places of origin could not only point to the decline of the rural economy (Winterfeldt, 2004) but also indicates a perception that work in rural households is not considered 'work'. Alternatively, it may also be considered a different kind of work to that for which participants desire to migrate. Substantiating this interpretation, Sara* explains that she left her village because it is "not good" to lie at home.

I just wanted to find work so that I am able to support myself. I do not have to ask Mee mee (mother or honorific for women older than you) can you please help me with a N$100 so that I can get soap, body lotion or somethings to wear...Even if at the end of the month all you have is N$150, you must save the N$ 100 and use the N$ 50 to eat. So, in two months, you can have N$200. Money

> is something you should hold on to, not something you should lose...I only got to grade 10. My parents passed away so there is no one that can pay for my Namcol (Namibian College of Open Learning). So, I must just struggle

The issues Sara raises regarding money and participation in the cash economy are essential for understanding her labour migration as fundamentally a quest for financial autonomy and security. Work is pivotal to contemporary life because it is a way, through payments in kind, income or wages, to access what is needed to maintain contemporary life such as housing, water and food (Mkhize & Msomi, 2016; Olu & Ayo, 2017; Webster, 2005). Women migrating for work or migrating to work reflects the importance of participating in the "cash economy" (Tacoli, 2012). Its importance may also have its roots in the expectation of women to conduct household work, including Aawambo women's historical responsibility for the reproduction of the rural economy (Winterfeldt, 2004), and the fact that such work was generally not remunerated through some form of income. Migration can thus be a desire for remuneration for work in contemporary forms, in other words, to participate in the cash and wage economy (Tacoli, 2012; see also Federici, 2006; Federici in Taylor, 2019). Participation in the cash and wage economy – to get money through work or work to achieve some kind of financial autonomy and thus upward social mobility – is, in fact, ironically the same reason women describe as a difficulty of living in the city. Sara explicitly refers to the importance of the cash economy in Windhoek and describes that:

> you have to buy everything...it would be nice if you had to need the same things here as you do [at her village], you only need mahangu (pearl millet) to eat [there]…people at home do not know that I am just able to eat bread

Sometimes Sara resorts to eating at her neighbour's house and contributes between N$10 - N$20 for a meal when she can. Similarly, Christina* describes Windhoek as a difficult place to stay, where she has difficulty "feeding herself". Sara and Christina typify participants' experiences of onjala (hunger or poverty depending on context) in Windhoek. Seraphia prefers the village to the city because:

At home, it is nice because you can eat even if you do not have money. You drink for free. For all of the things you need here, you need money. If you don't have money here you do not eat, you do not wash. You won't have body lotion

With the above, Seraphia* outlines how the cash economy in Windhoek affects her life, suggesting that the things she needs in the city she could easily access at home. Maria*'s advice for new migrants to "think" and "know exactly what you are going to do here", shows the stakes involved in deciding to migrate; that "Windhoek and the village are very different". Food insecurity and access to food are frequently mentioned when participants spoke on the differences between rural and urban areas in their migration experiences. Regardless of whether participants receive advice that would encourage or discourage them from migrating to Windhoek, there is a sense that migrating to Windhoek personally and experiencing it for yourself plays a role in whether they migrate (Agyei et al., 2015). In her experience, Esther* explains that before her migration:

People would say that in Windhoek it's nice. They would say there is electricity. They would say that there are brick houses but when I came here [all I saw was] kambashus [corrugated iron houses] without electricity. The heat…Actually, yes, I would [come to Windhoek anyway]. So that I could see how things are...I would not have come here...but now that I am already here, things are okay, I am getting used to it

In instances where participants perceived that there are no jobs in Windhoek, they suggest that through one's efforts or "struggle" one can find "something". In a similar vein Lorna advises that "if you sleep you suffer; if you work, Windhoek is nice". Participants who overemphasise self-effort may display rhetoric akin to a Protestant work ethic that disregards the impact of structural conditions on the lives of people. It gives the impression that success or even just fundamental survival is all dependent on the actions of individual migrants. However, the role and assistance of migrant networks in this sample somewhat disputes this deduction. Nonetheless, this perception does not necessarily negate that survival or the difficulty of living and working in Windhoek is not due to structural obstacles that these women may face. Instead, I suggest these women may see that there is no forthcoming structural solution, that no one is going to help them but themselves

and those around them. Migrating for work is thus a means for self-determination via acquiring some form of financial autonomy or independence. If they do not get "something" themselves, they are left with nothing. Moreover, the decision to migrate is for some participants intimately attached to relationships within migrant networks, including dependents. For example, since Loide*'s partner passed away and his pension went to his parents, she is financially responsible for all her 6 children who live with her in Havana.

I'm struggling so that my children can eat. When I am older, I will go back to the north. Until they can work for themselves, I am just going to struggle

Irrespective of how long they have been in Windhoek since their initial migration, most respondents like Loide – who has lived in Windhoek since 2010 – intend to return and settle in places of origin. Even in instances of long-term stays in the city, migrants do not claim destination cities as their 'home' or where they intend to settle indefinitely, which is observed in other studies (Gugler & Ludora-Ene, 1995; Niikondo, 2010; O'Reilly, 2015; Řezáčová, 2016). Therefore, labour migrant is appropriate for describing the intended temporary nature of most of these women's migrations because they work in Windhoek but remain rooted in rural areas. Nangula, who is the only outlier, says that although her village will always be home, wherever she finds work is where she settles indefinitely.

Like Loide, Seraphia says that only once her young children finish school will she return to her place of origin. She explains that they go to an "expensive" school and to cover expenses she also washes clothes for people in her neighbourhood to supplement the earnings she makes at her makeshift stall. Many see their migration as a temporary endeavour where asset accumulation (de Haas, 2014) or the desire to accumulate resources plays an important role in why migrants say they move and stay in Windhoek. Asset accumulation is understood here as migrants desire to acquire financial resources or assets to provide for migrants and their dependents with basic necessities, furthering education or establishing and expanding stalls (de Haas, 2014). In this sample, the latter two may exist more as desire than actuality as most participants already find it hard to provide for their daily and basic needs through their current work. Their remuneration for work as street vendors may also impact how long they stay in Windhoek – in the event they receive a wage or income. They may not make enough to realise those desires and perhaps take time to do so or seek

other work that could supplement current earnings. Further evidence of financial constraints is that research participants do not make frequent visits to places of origin (Collinson, Tollman, Kahn, Clark, & Garenne, 2006). As one participant explains "it is not cheap to go to the north, so during the good months you save what you can to be able to afford the trip". Carling's "involuntary immobility" is a useful approach to explain the nature of these long-term labour migration experiences (de Haas, 2004). It describes the circumstance of potential migrants not being able to migrate from places of origin as a result of "negative freedoms" and "positive freedoms" (de Haas, 2004). I extend this concept to include circumstances where migrants who move from rural areas stay longer in destination cities because they do not have the positive freedoms to return to places of origin.

In the above, I mentioned why participants migrate to Windhoek and described some of their experiences. I believe that these are experiences that are arguably mediated by their race, class, and gender as is their desire to participate in the wage and cash economy. Aawambo women being historically excluded from the wage and cash economy due to the gendered demarcation of work during colonialism and apartheid, renders post-independence a possibly opportune time to find work in urban areas. However, women describing their labour migration as struggling may indicate that their work may not be able to sustain their stay in urban areas. Aawambo women describing that they "struggle" in Windhoek infers that they experience difficulties in acclimatising to the urban cash economy which in turn affects their quality of life and the duration of migration. While Loide says she will continue to struggle in Windhoek until her children are grown, others may not even be able to continue struggling in Windhoek. Some may return to their places of origin sooner than they thought or even constantly move between rural and urban areas because they find it difficult to sustain a quality of life they desire or one that ensures survival in both environments (Federici, 2006; Řezáčová, 2016). Nevertheless, in this sample group, support from migrant networks play an important role in sustaining migrants' lives in the city. In the following section, I describe the role that migrant networks can play concerning migration and migrating for work.

Migrant Networks: Remittances and Migrating to '*Kwafela*'

In rural-urban migrations, remittances can financially support those living in rural areas, especially within the context of "migration as a household strategy" (Adepoju, 1997; Awumbila, 2017; see

also Posel 2004). Although participants describe individual efforts of "struggle" and "finding something" or doing "something", these are not entirely self-serving or individualised economically triggered migrations as intentions to remit or infrequent remittances indicate. When she can, Maria buys soap, shoes and clothes for those living in her village. She says she has "to give because the only income back home is a pension…and this is not enough so I have to give". She also receives oilya (mahangu seeds), beans and corn from home, and notes that it is cheaper to get food from places of origin rather than buy them from shops in Windhoek. Lorna has similar experiences; she explains that although she feels like "everyday business is going down", she helps when she is "able to" or in cases of emergency. Additionally, when she visits home, she usually comes back to Windhoek with goods such as osila (mahangu flour).

Except for a few respondents, most in this sample are not regularly able to remit income or goods to places of origin. Most participants qualify their ability to remit; saying they only do it when they are "able to". Regardless of whether they remit or not, some participants still experience expectations from families to remit to places of origin. For example, Seraphia says one of the reasons she does not have a good relationship with people at her village is because they expect her to financially contribute to her rural household and remit, even though she is not capable of doing so. She says this pressure exists because she is one of the oldest in her family. Although Monica* also experiences this expectation to remit, she says:

if I have a little bit, I can send it. If there is nothing, there's nothing. They understand. I cannot help, how can I help them when I have nothing?

Rural households may expect less or rather pressurise migrants less if they have other sources of income and support. Loide mentions that her mother and sister do not expect her to contribute as much because they receive a pension and earn an income respectively. Similarly, Ndapanda* suggests that if her rural homestead requires assistance, they would rather contact her grandfather – who she is currently living with Windhoek. Nonetheless, she insists on not only helping her family back home but those who come to the city, because "you never know when you'll need help". The expectation of support is not unilateral as respondents also desire support from places of origin. Although Sara has not sent any remittances to her family for the last couple of years, she says that she would still like some support from her family and to receive osila and amavanda

(dried spinach cakes). Unlike Maria and Lorna, her family does not send her goods or any other kinds of support.

I would also like to be helped because when I'm in my house [needing assistance] none is forthcoming

The data suggests that regardless of whether participants remit infrequently, those who visit or can remit are more likely to receive food from places of origin, unlike those who do not. Therefore, enduring relationships with rural communities, expressed through material support, can prove to be beneficial for migrants in Windhoek. Particularly regarding food and combating food insecurity in the city. The rural communities which they may support to some extent thus play a role in sustaining migrants' stays in the city. Moreover, where participants explain that they migrate to kwafela (to help or assist) relatives in Windhoek, kinship ties play prominent roles in assisting their labour migration and on respondents' work after they migrate. In 2014, Seraphia moved to Windhoek with her aunt from the North. She stayed with her for four years before she was able to live on her own.

She helped me for a little while, little by little. I then thought that now I could open up my own business so I could look after myself...she would give me a small income every month-end and I used that money to buy sweets and chips which I began to sell. When I saw that the business was going well, I decided to sell fish

Participants also use information and resources from their networks to migrate, find work or establish their businesses. After leaving her place of origin in 1993, Nangula lived and worked at a store in Rehoboth. She got the job after a relative of the owner, who she knew from her village, told her about it and facilitated her move to Rehoboth. Currently, Nangula's sister, who is a municipal worker, owns the stall she has worked at since moving to Windhoek in 2017.

I'm satisfied with my job helping my sister. It also allows me to solve my own problems because my sister would be able to assist

She says she would like to open her shop to "solve her own problems herself" but has no concrete plans of doing that yet. While Nangula only moved to Windhoek to kwafela her sister after being unsatisfied with her previous work, Monica specifically moved to Windhoek in 2018 to help take care of her sister-in-law's children. Eventually, she also started selling her sister-in-law's goods at the market and does not receive a salary because all she does is "helping". She believes that because her sister-in-law helps her take care of her daily needs, a salary or wage is not necessary.

I'm with my sister in law...life is good...She is able to help me with food and clothes...She is the only one helping

As long as she still has a good relationship with her sister-in-law, Monica says that she will continue to kwafela her. Seraphia, Nangula and Monica all illustrate how participants work as street vendors because they are assisting relatives, who in turn "help" them. People employing relatives may be a strategy to address hardships they also experience within urban areas as well as hardships migrants may experience in rural areas, in mutually beneficial ways. Alternatively, it could also be a form of altruistic efforts to help those in their communities and those who assist are not necessarily self-interested. Because of a variety of factors including limited work alternatives, unemployment and the kind of work available, for example, street vending, babysitting or urban housework, women may be more likely to migrate to kwafela in urban households (Federici via Taylor, 2019; Tacoli, 2019; see also Winterfeldt, 2004). This work arguably contributes to the functioning of urban households as much as it is a means for some of these women to provide for their own needs and possibly maintain social relationships that can lead to further economic activity or opportunities.

Participants like Nangula and Monica do not exclusively perceive these relationships as transactional or as a resource to gain an income nor as a means to achieve personal economic goals. However, I argue that this does not mean that these social relationships do not still serve economic functions and migrants moving to work for relatives did so as economic actors. Those who migrate to help relatives get their proverbial foot in the door, regarding work in the city. Kinship networks provide relative ease of entry into economic activities in urban areas. It can also be a back-up plan for those who have either lost work or are dissatisfied with the work they do. Lastly, in addition to the creation of work through the kwafela migrant trajectory, employment creation is also linked

to non-relatives within migrant networks cultivating multiple streams of income in urban areas. Sara currently works at a stall owned by security guards after it was not feasible, due to their work, to continue minding the shop themselves. I speculate that if her employers had a more accommodating work schedule or perhaps if they had a family member to kwafela, migrants like Monica would potentially not be able to find work in Windhoek. Given the context of labour markets, this kind of work is a knock-on effect of the working conditions and circumstances of those in migrants' networks that makes it possible to create employment opportunities for newer rural migrants.

Wage workers who settle in the city utilise the assistance of migrants either in the private sphere as caretakers or at street vending enterprises to maintain urban households or tend to additional income streams. Although I do not substantially analyse respondents' relationships with those in their networks, class and gender within migrant networks play a role in identifying who migrates and for what. For example, those who have comparatively stable incomes are more likely to employ relatives who do not have many work opportunities (de Haas, 2014). That is to say, that there has to be some economic disparity that facilitates migration to kwafela; a need and a capacity to address that need has to exist on either side. The data substantiates this by the fact that for those who kwafela relatives, all were unemployed when they migrated and relatives all had jobs where they earned a living. In the two previous sections, I have discussed participants descriptions for why they decide to migrate and the economic circumstances which inform why migrants come to work in Windhoek. The following discusses migrants' work experiences and perceptions of their work to gauge what the purpose of their migration is.

Migrating to Struggle: Perceptions of 'Work'

Lorna* first migrated to Windhoek in 2000, "to come struggle at Ramatex". (Ramatex Textiles Namibia was a Malaysian-owned textile company that "promised to establish an environmentally friendly textile industry in Namibia, with thousands of jobs provided to Namibians in the process" (19 January 2018, The Namibian)).

I got the work by struggling at the gate, waiting to be given a chance [and if I did not get it that day], I returned the next day

After a few weeks of “struggling”, she was eventually employed at Ramatex until the factory abruptly closed down in 2008. Lorna earned N$1500 per month and describes that working at Ramatex was a good experience because her income satisfied her daily needs. When the factory closed down, she used some of her remaining earnings to buy onions and sweets, which she sold near a school in Khomasdal, Windhoek.

It was difficult. You have to carry the things on your head and then from school, back home. It was very difficult

Because walking and taking taxis to school were no longer viable options for her, she now sells her goods close to where she lives in Havana. When she compares her previous work at Ramatex to what she does now, Lorna says:

I would choose that work but if there is no work then this is work. Because this is not easy. You get rained on. The sun is hot

Like Lorna, other participants do not refer to street vending as work or they refer to street vending differently than previous or other potential working opportunities. I suggest this occurs because what they do diverges from what participants consider to be “a real job” or preferred work (Clair et al., 2008). When asked what kind of work they would desire to do or have previously applied for, participants mention work in stores, hospitals, police work, working in the military and as security guards and cleaners. Multiple women in this study express a desire for "office work" in this sample; one participant describes it as “good work”. Another respondent wants to save enough money so that she can do an office administration course to get an office job. However, these desires for office work were difficult to manifest; one participant explains that she does not know where she will find one because she tries to apply but has not been successful yet. Without explicitly saying why they prefer work such as ‘office work’, common features among desired work for migrants include different working environments – working inside a building – and a relatively stable wage. One can consider these as characteristics associated with formal work, but I cannot conclusively say so based on the data collected. What is useful to take away from this is that these respondents are not able to successfully access work they desire to do. However, this

does not mean that other participants do not still want to continue work in the informal sector and express ambitions to expand their stalls in the future or establish their own stalls. For Nangula,

the nice thing about selling goods on the street is that you can just put the money in your bag, it comes to straight to you. That way I am robbing no one and no one is robbing me

This emphasises how some see informal entrepreneurship or street vending as a means to achieve self-reliance and personal empowerment. Nevertheless, looking for other work proves to be a challenge for participants. Respondents suggest that not having academic qualifications limits the quality and frequency of job opportunities. From her experiences looking for work, Lorna suggests those without academic qualifications "struggle" – which she describes as "when you put in effort and see no fruit bear".

It is only when you have a Grade 12 that they will look at you but if not, they do not look at you at all...I just did all the work that I could find. I would just do whatever I can find as long as I have money to satisfy my needs

After her parents passed, Sara dropped out of school in Grade 10 because no one was able to cover the cost of her school fees. If she can make enough money, she says she wants to complete her education. Similar to Sara, other participants say they would like to finish their high school education or learn technical skills. However, considering some of these participants experience difficulties providing for their basic needs and those of their families (especially those who were mothers in the sample group), it may be challenging to fund furthering and completing their education at present. For example, one participant described that street vending "does not satisfy her needs but it helps". Along with other vendors at the Kabaka market, participants generally sold inexpensive goods including glucose biscuits, MTC airtime, onions, tomatoes and sweets. Only some sold more expensive products, such as meat, fish and cold drinks. Of those who said that they earned a relatively fixed salary or wage in this study, their income ranged from N$ 300 - N$ 1500 per month. To compare, the minimum wage for domestic workers in Namibia is N$1 564.39 as of October 2018 (The Republic of Namibia, 2017).

I interpret struggle in this study to refer to the speculative nature of entrepreneurship in general as well as the difficulty with which street vending provides for respondents needs and the obstacles respondents face in finding alternative work. Regarding the former, it identifies what they do as having an element of risk and not as a way to earn "easy money" (Bureau & Fendt, 2015). As one participant describes "in business, you sometimes just lose, you win and you lose. It is just how it is". Struggling also represents migrants need to make a plan for work because their access to work opportunities or their choices for work are limited as one participant explained, "you do any job you can". Some participants describe struggling as a result of lack of education. I believe that their respective intersections of race, class and gender inform the causes of those experiences, including poverty and income inequality. Furthermore, these perceptions reflect the idea that skills borne from academic or formal education are more valuable, as I have discussed in the literature review. Although migrants describe street vending as "struggle" or "not work" and that it does not fully meet their needs, this does not discount the value of their work. In that one of the aspects that prescribes value to their work is that it still helps some women generate forms of independence and autonomy – as one participant explains, "it feels good to earn my own money even though it is not enough to cover necessary costs".

Further Discussion and Study Implications

The primary concerns of this study are how Aawambo women describe migration and how their perceptions, in particular, describe the circumstances of their economically triggered migration. This discussion aims to understand why they migrate to work in the ways they do. Regardless of whether migration as an upward social mobility strategy centres around an individual or the collective, there lay structural obstacles in migrants' experiences of migration. De Haas (2014) argues that migrants' subjective experiences of migration showcase how migration works or succeeds in improving the lives of migrants. He infers that it is equally "unrealistic to depict all migrants as passive victims of capitalism, as it would be to depict them as entirely rational and free actors who constantly make cost-benefit calculations" (de Haas, 2014: 11). This perspective acknowledges how structural conditions such as capitalism impact how and why migrants move, but that the agency of migrants is equally important in driving migration in addition to how people respond to structural obstacles they face. Therefore, how women in this sample describe: labour markets of destination and places of origin; what kinds of work they desire to do; experiences of

work and looking for work; the roles migrant networks have in their migrations; and their remittance practices illustrate how structural obstacles may inform their experiences of labour migration but also how they actively respond to these.

However, being unsuccessful in finding work that can address all their needs and allows participants to further education, remit or accumulate desired assets does not mean they fail to achieve upward social mobility. So then, what exactly does this social upward mobility, this "something" or “it” (Nghiulikwa, 2008) that these women seek in Windhoek look like and what structural obstacles inform what they find in comparison to their ideal? Women moving to struggle or to find an amorphous work, is a search for an alternative to the work that they do in rural households. Women in the sample, describing that they can do any job or that they are grateful for work that is still unable to cover all expenses and desires illustrates this search for alternatives. An alternative to working in rural areas is thus a mode of upward social mobility. What I mean by this is that even in the cases where women are just helping out family members in urban households, women are building forms of independence; either cultivating, searching or waiting for other work opportunities. In arguing that most of the women in this sample are searching for alternatives from work in rural households, how do I account for those that are arguably replicating forms of unrecognised work in urban areas? Does it mean that they are not looking for alternatives? I think that they do those same tasks at a greater personal benefit than in rural areas. They may find other work through those urban networks, accrue the capability to create their stalls and perhaps most importantly gain some form of independence and financial autonomy they did not have prior to migrating - they can “help” themselves in new ways. However, the agency of migrants, expressed through these individual and collective self-help strategies are not enough to redress these structural obstacles (de Haas, 2014).

Once vendors were able to earn more money, they would sell more expensive goods like meat and fish or generally diversify their stock. While there were not many male vendors at Kabaka, I did observe that except for mobile airtime vendors, most sold relatively expensive goods in the market in comparison to the more homogenous and comparatively inexpensive stock that women sell. Vendors' stock may suggest differences in material capabilities in street vending based on gender (Companion, 2010). Consequently, it may illustrate different trajectories in street vending. This highlights a possible dilemma that many municipalities and local authorities face regarding the

informal sector. How do you go about providing institutional support for the informal economy or even redressing structural conditions that result in people having to do informal work? Based on the findings of this study, taxation of informal employees and employers in the street vending industry, for instance, may not be an entirely viable option as most participants in this study already find it difficult to support themselves. All of the women in this sample are unmarried. Most are mothers who are solely financially responsible for raising their children. Therefore, such taxing plans may impact women disproportionately, putting pressure on their incomes to provide for themselves and dependents. However, this sample did not include participants who were married, which could have affected the findings in general. Married women may have additional financial support and larger networks that could lead to other work or may also experience similar experiences to some of the women in this sample regardless of being married. Alternatively, they perhaps may also experience additional financial and social pressures linked to being married. Admittedly, I did not dwell too much into the marital statuses of participants to identify how that definitively affects how they experience labour migration.

Furthermore, only positing that people migrate to acquire jobs can obfuscate the value, purpose and circumstance of labour that are a significant part of migrants' labour migration experiences. Migrants who describe working for relatives in terms of "personal service" or migrating to kwafela exemplify this. In the context of her work with Wages for Housework movement, Federici (2006) formulates housework as "reproductive labour" which contributes to and is a "key source of capitalist accumulation" (see also Federici in Taylor, 2019). Housework within this framework is "not a personal service but the work that produces and reproduces labour-power" (Federici, 2006). Meaning that the purpose of housework is to facilitate and contribute to labour-power or workers "capacity to work" - workers being those who employ them (Federici, 2006). Struggle in this study may not necessarily be for such work to be remunerated or acknowledged as work per se. Instead, as I have suggested earlier, I interpret these more as efforts to actualise a different kind of work, a desire for labour-power that facilitates self-determination (Federici, 2006). Nevertheless, it is crucial to understand such labour migration as mediated through the intersections of gender and class of migrants because they also inform relationships within migrant networks and regulate who is more likely to migrate "to help" and under what circumstances they do this. Further research could perhaps describe the circumstances in urban households that perpetuate such migration and what kinds of relationships within networks facilitate such migration in much more depth.

Additionally, potential studies could also identify whether these manifestations of labour migration are specific to women in the street vending industry or whether men also migrate under similar circumstances.

In the following chapter, I conclude and summarise this study's discussion.

***Pseudonym**

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS

In this study, I discuss why Aawambo women decide to migrate to Windhoek and describe how they perceive work in general as well as the work they currently do as street vendors. My approach to understanding labour migration experiences is thus getting a sense of what getting a job or finding work means from the perspective of the individual migrating and describing various ways women migrate to work. I constructed a qualitative research design giving primary attention to migrants' subjective experiences but also acknowledging how gender and socio-economic class, as examples, mediate perspectives and experiences of economically triggered labour migration. Furthermore, this study found that because of the intersecting identities of these women, some responses to structural obstacles were similar. These also include similar perspectives and experiences regarding work, labour markets and relationships with migrant networks.

The findings of this study reinforce previous research on how the feminisation of migration results in more work opportunities for women, but that this does not necessarily involve a greater quality of work or compensation. Even though some women migrate to Windhoek with clear intentions of what they want to do and perceive the city as a place with work opportunities, others conceive their migration and subsequent work opportunities in Windhoek in vague, exploratory or non-existent terms. The latter group of descriptions reflects, as Marchetti and Salih suggest, that the work associated with the increased movement of migrant women does not translate into "concrete" and "clear" work opportunities. As I have mentioned in my literature review, entrenched biases in labour markets and work classifications have profound influences on societal perceptions of work. Those who describe their activities as 'not work', make a distinction between formal work and informal work or what is work. On some level, what participants do takes skill and requires effort. Therefore, as noted in my discussion, such categorisation is fundamentally about the lack of formal work opportunities. To some, there is no work but the work that they currently do. Compounding this with the preoccupation with education qualifications as an obstacle to work, some of respondents' perceptions of work and access to work reinscribe or rather reveal internalised classist and patriarchal parameters of work I have discussed earlier on. However, this does not apply to all respondents in this research.

So why do these women migrate? Because there is still work in Windhoek, but this work does not look like formal work, does not have contracts and may not even involve pay. What is crucial to understand is that these women are not naive about how they come to work and their options for work when they migrate. Hence, they say they struggle and are doing something to ensure a self-determined life. Although these work opportunities have shortcomings, they still provide for these women in ways they were arguably unable to access before migration. Women chose these strategies for coming to work because they inevitably do work in addition to the fact that that after they migrate, they have no choice but to make them work.

While it is important to recognise the cultural dynamics at play when women migrate to help relatives, it would be negligent not to acknowledge, based on the findings of this study, the impact of economic inequalities and gender within these networks that facilitate this kind of migration. Women who migrate to kwafela are vulnerable to potential exploitation through their kinship networks, under the guise of assisting unemployed migrants and weaponising migrants' gratitude for help. If social relationships - informed by this economic imbalance - break down, migrants may not have the material power to stay in places of destination. Work is thus on the terms of those relatives who assist migrants, that is until migrants find their own feet. However, further studies could provide further clarity on these internal network dynamics. What this does confirm is how economic power is still foundational to driving migration. It also shows how help, in particular, is a gendered articulation of an economic trigger for migration because it tasks women with assisting, that is, doing "invisible" and unpaid labour that can substantially contribute to the productivity of urban workers in Windhoek. Helping and struggling are both indicative of the structural obstacles that limit further or alternative work opportunities, as well as self-help responses, despite these structural obstacles.

Furthermore, intersectionality is first and foremost an analytic tool used to study the harm that systems of oppression can cause a variation of people in specific and differentiating ways. As Crenshaw puts it, this serves to name or identify the ways people experience oppression to seek ways of addressing them most efficiently. Understanding how participants of this study experience labour migration offers insight into how people who are multi-burdened employ their agency within contexts that restrict their capacities to be, and in this context, to work. Ultimately, with the intention of forming ways to help or address how these women access work. In light of this, and

the findings of this study, intersectional approaches perhaps illustrate these differences more starkly when in comparison to others' experiences. Although gender, class and race are most often used when academic scholars evoke intersectionality, these do not always necessarily comprise the most pertinent axes of oppressions when examining phenomena. Granted, they are widely used because of the significant effects gender, class and race have on societies globally. Nevertheless, the reason why I do not only refer to race in my background and literature review is in order to grapple with some of the existing historical data on working experiences across race and gender in Namibia. Applying such analyses similarly would be mostly conjecture. A contemporary comparison with, for example, white or coloured women would also not have made sense because those groups of women are largely not part of rural communities in the north and thus do not have experiences migrating from those rural areas to Windhoek. Therefore, an intersectional analysis is dependent on consideration of the context of the society in which phenomena takes place, not a blanket three-pronged analysis.

Migrant perceptions cannot be divorced from the societies people come from nor from the macro-structural influences that impact their lives. This study sought to identify migrants' perceptions and experiences of work to illustrate the multiplicitous and subjective yet structural nature of work. Because of how I collected my data, that is to say, it is mostly derived from subjective experiences of migration, it lessens the generalisability of this study. Although subjective experiences of phenomena are important to understand lived experiences, migrants' subjectivities also tell us more about the social worlds that inform their perceptions. That is why I believe it is most useful to use these in conversation with each other. Migrant subjectivities also require further interaction with facets of migrants' social worlds, for instance, media, educational materials, communities of origin and destination and to some extent academic literature. Lastly, migrant subjectivities are malleable and subject to memory. Migrants' perspectives of their own journeys and experiences can always change. Rather than identifying a crystallised experience here, I mostly capture perspectives at a particular time - ones that can change, but also tell how Aawambo women perceive and describe their labour migration post-1990.

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APPENDIX A

Questions for semi-structured interviews December 2018 – January 2019

1. Tell us about how you came to move to Windhoek?
2. Describe your first year(s) living in Windhoek?
3. Why did you decide to move to Windhoek?
4. Why do you live in Windhoek?
5. How have you experienced work in Windhoek?
6. What kind of jobs have you had?
7. If you worked elsewhere, how does it compare?
8. Does your work satisfy your daily needs and the needs of your family?
9. What kinds of work did you think would be available to you in Windhoek before you lived here? Why?
10. What kind of work have you looked/looking for? What kind of work have you had?
11. Why do you choose to work in Windhoek?
12. What do you want to achieve with your work?
13. What is your relationship like with your family (at your village)?
14. What would you tell yourself about living and working in Windhoek before you decided to live here? What would you wish you knew?
15. If someone from your village would tell you they want to work in Windhoek, what would you tell them? How would you assist them?