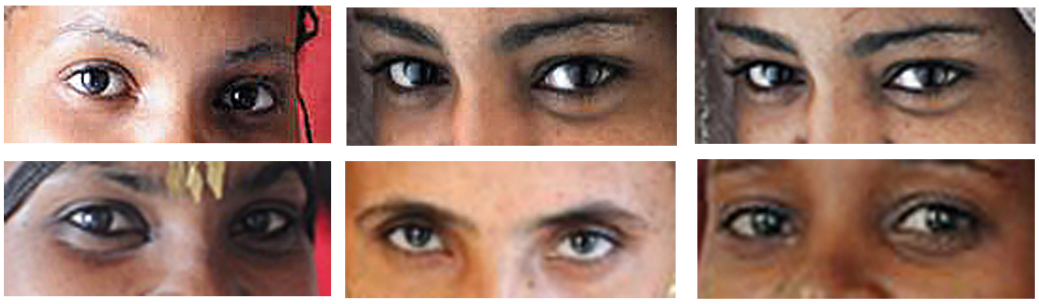
Comparative Research Report

Time to Look at Girls: Adolescent Girls' Migration in the South



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1. Introduction

1.1 Migration and adolescence

In the past decade the number of children that are leaving their places of origin in search of better livelihoods is increasing rapidly. The large majority of these children are adolescents, and many of these adolescent migrants are girls (see Temin et al 2013). In the literature on migration and development the migration of children and adolescents is mainly described in the context of trafficking and exploitation. The focus on exploited and abused child migrants in international advocacy has made it difficult to recognise and address the needs of other migrating children. A number of studies (see for example Whitehead, Hashim, and Iversen 2007; Jacquemin 2009; Hashim and Thorsen 2011) have criticized this approach, by showing that early migration is often children's and adolescents' own decision and that their reasons for migrating are often very similar to those of 20-25 year old. In the past five years an increasing body of literature has been published that pays attention to the agency of children (see for example Huijsmans 2011), yet few of these more nuanced accounts have included the experiences of adolescent girl migrants. They are invisible in both quantitative and qualitative studies. Exceptions are a number of studies on domestic workers and sex workers in Africa and Asia (see for example Erulkar, Mekbib, Simie and Gulema 2006; Camacho 2006; Erulkar and Mekbib 2007; Jacquemin 2009; Klocker 2007; Van Blerk 2008; Guo, Chow and Palinka 2011).

While the link between migration as part of wider social transformations have been addressed to some extent in the literature (see Bakewell 2010; Castle 2010; Grabska 2013, 2014), there has been less focus, with a few exceptions, on the particular effects of migration on the individual life course (Bretell 2002). The link between transitions into adulthood has been only to a limited extent examined by academic scholars.

Yet adolescent girls are increasingly being identified as a crucial segment of the population, whose successful transition into adulthood is of major importance for their own lives and that of the people around them (see Temin et al. 2013). The general idea is that girls who are healthy and educated will marry later and have fewer children, which will improve their economic prospects and positively affect the lives of their children. This notion, which is nowadays known as the Girl Effect, has inspired an increasing number of international organizations to start investing in girls, aiming to break the cycles of poverty and in doing so work towards the social and economic development of the population as a whole.

The migration of adolescent girls can have major implications for their transition into adulthood. Migration can be a response to the lack of opportunities in their home communities; for some it is a response to acute family needs, for others to their unmet aspirations. Many girls migrate for work but employment is not always the main factor behind girls' decision to move (see for example Jacquemin 2009). Migration can also offer girls escape from difficult circumstances, and it can be a way to express agency, escape dominant gender regimes, and to build independent resources. Migration can be inspired by a desire to continue education, and related to decisions about marriage and reproduction. The decision to migrate intersects with other important decisions in the lives of adolescent girls, and affects girls' transition into adulthood in various ways. While migration of girls is sometimes negative, when they are trafficked and exploited, the mobility of others and sometimes of these girls too may offer them new and better opportunities with positive implications for their future lives.

1.2 Background of the study

Between January 2014 and June 2016 the research project *Time to Look at Girls: Adolescent Girls Migration and Developmen*t was carried out. The main aim of the research was to answer a number of questions around adolescent girls' migration in three countries in the South: Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Sudan. These three countries were chosen because of the increasing numbers of adolescent girls who are migrating internally and internationally within and through them, the different types of migration they cover and the long-standing experiences of the principal researchers in these countries. The research mainly focused on the experiences, life choices and aspirations of adolescent girls and young women who migrate internally and internationally. It specifically looked at the life course and at how the decision to migrate intersects with other important choices, this characterise this particular life stage. By examining choices related to education, marriage and having children the study provides insights into young women and adolescent girls' aspirations and decision making capacity as well as into any changes in women's status as an effect of migration. The research also looked into some aspects of the wider effect of girls' migration for migrants and their households.

The research mainly focused on the circumstances under which adolescent girls take the decision to migrate, how this decision is related to other choices such as those around education and marriage, and the responsibility of the girls back in their place of origin. In addition, in Bangladesh and Ethiopia fieldwork was carried out in places of origin in order to assess the impact of migration on the families of migrant girls and the views of their peers on migration. In Sudan, interviews were conducted with family members who either came to visit migrants in Khartoum or moved to join them. Public interventions with regard to girls' migration and existing policies were reviewed as part of the research questions in the project. One of the objectives of the research is to provide recommendations for interventions to improve the lives of migrant girls.

The overall project was funded by Swiss Network of International Studies (SNIS) in Geneva, Switzerland. The project was carried out under the umbrella of the Global Migration Centre of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. The project feeds into the global campaign "Destination Unknown" recently launched by Terre des Hommes (TDH) who was a project partner. The research contributes to global policy debates by producing policy relevant analysis, data and recommendations. The Bangladesh case study has been carried out in partnership with Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit (RMMRU), University of Dhaka, with the logistical and administrative support of Terre des Hommes Italy, Bangladesh Country Office, and their local partners ARBAN (Association for the Realization of Basic Needs) and Aparajeyo Bangladesh (AB). The case study in Ethiopia was financially and logistically supported by Girl Effect Ethiopia. The case study in Sudan was carried out in cooperation with Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman, Sudan. In 2015 a short documentary entitled *Time to Look at Girls: Migrants in Bangladesh and Ethiopia* was produced with financial assistance of Feminist Review Trust, Terre des Hommes, the University of Sussex in the United Kingdom and ZXY International.

1.3 Research questions

The research considered four broad sets of questions:

1. Migration choices and trajectories: what are the reasons for the first migration and for the subsequent choices; under what circumstances was the decision to migrate taken?
2. Young girls' life course transition/s: how does migration as a spatial shift intersect with other transitions for adolescent girls and in what ways does it affect their life trajectories in terms of education, marriage, work and childbearing?
3. What makes adolescent migrant girls vulnerable and what sources of support are there for them?
4. What are the legal frameworks and policy that shape adolescent girls' migration and how do national and regional policies and projects address their needs and priorities?

2. Adolescence, Gender and Migration

2.1 A broader approach to adolescence

In this study we focus specifically on adolescent girls and adolescence because this phase, between 11 to 20 years of age a crucial one in the individual life course; a period of critical transitions when major life decisions are being taken, albeit in context specific ways (Bucholtz 2002; Del Franco 2012). The spatial shift implied in migration is one such critical transition that intersects with other choices that that are being made (Gardner and Osella 2003; Gardner 2009; Grabska 2010). Bucholtz (2002) points out that age is not the only important factor that determines adolescence. Youth is a flexible and social category and is based on locally and context-specific practices and norms.

In our research we take a broader view of adolescence than the one implied in earlier psycho-biological interpretations. These assumed that individual growth and its phases are shaped by genetically determined physiological changes (Hall 1916). In this view, puberty and sexual maturation are seen as the starting point of a universal temporal phase of individual development that ends with the acquisition of full adulthood and adult responsibilities. A broader view of this phase recognizes that, as a social stage in the life cycle, adolescence may vary in different societies in terms of 'duration, intensity and ritualization' (Erikson 1968: 155). It also acknowledges that in the process of identity formation that characterizes this stage there is a continuous interplay between the psychological and the social: 'we deal with a process located in the core of the individual and also in the core of its communal culture' and a 'process which establishes in fact the identity of those two identities' (Erikson 1968: 22). History and society can thus shape in a variety of ways the duration and constitution of social adolescence.

Erikson (1968) recognizes that the process of identity formation can be seen as having a relative and contingent character but in his view social identity implies a strong sense of coherence and continuity. This conceptualization of social identity is controversial and founded on a very culture-specific concept of the self as linked to an inner identity which constitutes the essence of an individual. Social identity is rather something that 'has to be established socially through a set of discourses that are both discursive and practical' (Moore 1994: 37) or as Stuart Hall (1991), building on Foucault, argued as the relationship between subjects and broader discursive practices. Adolescence is thus 'a socially constructed and multiple identity whose relations to other social formations are constantly in flux' (Austin and Willard 1998: 3).

This broader view of adolescence deliberately does not adopt approaches that confine adolescents (and children) to the passive position of incomplete human beings, who are in the process of being socialized into adult social roles, such as found in a 'socialization' framework (see Schlegel and Barry 1991). Rather, our approach resonates with research on youth culture with its emphasis on young people as active agents within complex social contexts engaged in the construction of their social identities through on-going processes of negotiation within social relations (Bucholtz 2002).

We refer to girls between 13 and 20as adolescents, rather than children or youth, because this places them within a developmental stage entailing a complex and multifaceted process of transition, which involves physical, psychological and social dimensions. The acquisition of an adult identity is defined not only in terms of occupational, marital or any other social position,

but more profoundly as a sense of selfhood, that is also, but not only, made out of one's social position.

2.2 Migration and transitions

Both adolescence and migration connote a journey. The term 'adolescence' contains the ideas of both transition and development: the Latin verb *adolescere* means to grow up and the past particle of the verb is *adultum* which means grown up. Migration implies both a temporal and spatial shift (see Grabska 2016). This research looks at how the process of migration intersects in different contexts with the processes of transition to adulthood, which shape and transform young women's sense of self-hood, affect the kind of social person they want to be/can become and their capacities to choose, control and shape their own lives. The transitions they face through their adolescent journeys are multiple, but we focus on, those related to education, work, sexual initiation, marriage and having children.

Migration and education choices potentially intersect and affect each other in different ways. Some studies show high levels of independent child migration in communities where there is a high proportion of children that have never attended school (Hashim and Thorsen 2011; Custer et al. 2005) and that children drop out of school in order to migrate (Khair 2008). In contrast to the view that migration has negative impacts on educational levels, other studies show that children sometimes migrate in order to cover the costs of their education over a long time frame (Hashim 2007; Hashim and Thorsen 2011). It is highly likely that there are relevant gender differences in this contrast. Girls appear to drop out of school early for other reasons too such as poverty, early marriages and negative attitudes towards girls' education (Lloyd 2005; Giani 2006; Kifle 2002). Girl migrants often come from communities where fewer girls than boys attend school. On the other hand migration is sometimes a way to continue education, for example in the case of relatives in urban areas who are willing to host young girls and send them to school in exchange for domestic help (Camacho 2006) and when girls' labour migration contributes to the school costs of siblings back home (Afsar 2003; Camacho 2006). In addition to this, as Hashim and Thorsen (2011) argue, migrant adults and children may decide on the basis of their own perception of what education means. More than formal schooling, they may value informal training for life and skills they can build on for their future work.

How decisions about sexual initiation, marriage and reproduction intersect with the decision to migrate is particularly important for girls and may have lasting significance in relation to family size. As well as intersecting in different ways with the choice of when and who to marry, migration decisions have to do with girls' aspirations about work and education and affect their future life trajectories (Temin et al. 2013). Early views were that the migration of adolescents leads to early sexual initiation and pregnancy, but this is contradicted by other studies. Longitudinal research in Mali for example showed that the increase in girls' migration was accompanied by a rise in the age of marriage for both men and women, who also appear to have gained more control over their marriages (Hertrich and Lesclingand 2012). In Bangladesh both girls who migrate to take up jobs in garment factories and for higher education tend to marry later (Hossain 2012; Del Franco 2010). South Sudanese refugee girls in Kenya and Egypt also postponed their marriages and childbearing (see Grabska 2010, 2015). Similar situation has been observed in a few demographic studies on internal migration in Kyrgyzstan (Nedoluzhko and Andersson 2007; Nedoluzhko and Agadjanian 2009), and in research about Ethiopian domestic workers in Yemen (de Regt 2012). The postponement of marriage decreases the rate of early pregnancies and the health risk for mothers and children (Finlay, Ozaltin and Canning 2011).

Girls who marry later are less at risk of domestic violence, tend to have fewer children who will have a better chance for survival and will be more likely to go to school (Lloyd 2006).

A further key area of investigation relates to the impact of work on girl's economic and social empowerment. Again there are both positive and negative outcomes reported. Migrant girls are often employed in the formal sector in jobs with poor conditions, low pay and high levels of risk. Siddiqui (2009) for example, emphasises the exploitative nature of garment work, risks of accidents, sexual harassment and abuse in Bangladesh, as do Pearson and Kusakabe (2012) for young women workers in Thai garment factories. Other research has suggested that this must be set against the positive effects of entry into the workforce. In Bangladesh garment factory workers' increased contribution to the family budget has been interpreted as leading to an improvement in their fall-back position in the household (Kabeer 2000; Kabeer, Mahmud and Tasneem 2011; Kabeer and Mahmud 2004). In addition, girls' mobility and their visibility in public spaces have increased (Hossain 2012). For South Sudanese girl refugees, return to South Sudan resulted in transfer of new ideas about more equal gender relations through greater access for girls to education and work (see Grabska 2011, 2014).

Our approach to 'adolescence transitions' allows us to explore how concepts of adolescence and adulthood for girls are being transformed in the context of migration. The research thus elaborates on the type of choices that are being made by young female Bangladeshi, Ethiopian and Eritrean migrants, at times leading to immobility in one's life course.

3. Research Realisation

3.1 Selection of country case studies

We have elected to compare Bangladesh, Sudan and Ethiopia as they bring interesting insights into comparative migration studies. The selection criteria were several. First, the migration of adolescent girls and young women has been recognised by international and local NGOs in these countries as an important but under-researched issue. Second, the countries cover different kinds of south-south migration flow, both internal and international, and come from three different regions (South Asia, the Arab world, and East Africa). The Sudan case study provides a strong methodological link with Ethiopia, as a large number of adolescent girls from Ethiopia migrate to Sudan. Comparing Ethiopian migrants with other migrants in Sudan provides a more complex view of the Ethiopian migration. Ethiopia and Bangladesh provide an interesting comparison of internal migration, where there are profound differences in their social and cultural contexts. Last, but not least, as individual researchers we each have long standing experience in one of these three countries.

3.2 Methodologies and methods

A common methodology was adopted across the different country studies. Data were collected using a mixed multi-methods while privileging a qualitative approach to ensure the participation and involvement of migrant and refugee girls. Prior to the fieldwork the research teams in each country were trained on methodology and research methods.

In **Bangladesh**, the research focused on women who had migrated from rural areas to Dhaka and looked at two main groups: young women and girls working in the garment manufacturing sector, and beauticians who are employed in 'beauty parlors'. The first group consisted of 47 Bengali migrants, who ranged in age from 12 to 34 at the time of the study. This group included mostly women who have worked or are working in the garment sector and a minority of women who have worked or are working in sectors other than the garment industry. Eleven Bengali girls moved to Dhaka when they were below 13 years of age, 30 of them between 13 and 17 and 6 between 18 and 20. The second group of migrants, those working in beauty parlors, comprises 13 girls and young women belonging to the Garo ethnic minority. Most of these migrants (11) moved to Dhaka when they were between 13 and 17 and 2 between 18 and 20. Contrary to the initial plan to interview equal numbers of recent migrants and older women who had 10 or more years of residence at destination (30 of each), we interviewed only 17 (11 Bengali, 6 Garo) migrants who had been living in Dhaka for more than 10 years. The majority of the respondents 37 (33 Bengali, 4 Garo) had migrated up to 5 years before. Family members of 8 migrants were also interviewed in their village of origin, and some non-migrant adolescent girls.

In **Ethiopia,** the research focused on two groups of migrants. 30 of them were domestic workers or sex workers, as they form the large majority of adolescent internal migrants in Addis Ababa. 15 migrants in this group were between 12 and 17 years old when they were interviewed and 15 between 18 and 24. They were all between 12 and 18 years old when they migrated. The second group comprised 30 young women who migrated to the Middle East while they were under 18 and who returned to Addis Ababa where they were interviewed. Twenty-four of them were 18-24 years old at the time of the interviews and 6 of them more then 24.

In **Sudan,** the research focused on girls who had moved from Ethiopia and Eritrea when they were under 22 years of age (and mainly under 20). At the time of the interviews, the majority of both Ethiopian and Eritrean respondents were between 18 and 24 years old, with only 3 below the age of 18. Most migrated when they were between 13 and 20 years of age Only 1 had migrated when she was less than 13 years old and 8 Eritrean had migrated when they were older than 20 years old. Some family members of migrant girls who either came to visit or reside in Khartoum were also interviewed as were some Eritrean refugee girls and young women who had been were born in Sudan to get a different perspective from that of more recent refugees.

In all three countries data was collected in different phases. In Bangladesh, the fieldwork took place between January and December 2014. It was carried out by Dr. Nicoletta Del Franco supported by a research team composed of a research assistant, a counselor from ARBAN (Association for Realization of Basic Needs), a project coordinator from Terre des Hommes Italy and five adolescent girls who helped with administering the questionnaires.

The fieldwork in Sudan took place between March 2014 and September 2015. It was carried out by Dr. Katarzyna Grabska (the Graduate Institute in Geneva) supported by a research team composed of four research assistants who were recruited among the Eritrean and Ethiopian migrant and refugee adolescent girls and young women. They were involved in administering the qualitative questionnaires and translating and transcribing interviews.

The fieldwork in Ethiopia took place between March and September 2014. The research was carried out by a team of Ethiopian researchers under supervision of Dr. Marina de Regt (VU University Amsterdam). The main researchers were Felegebirhan Belesti and Arsema Solomon. Aynadis Yohannes and Medareshaw Tafesse carried out interviews with young women who returned from the Middle East. Two migrant girls assisted in identifying migrant girls for interviews and carried out interviews themselves.

Methods

Survey questionnaire:

All three country studies used the same questionnaire which was prepared jointly, tested, translated and adapted for each case study.

In **Bangladesh**, sixty questionnaires were filled in by interviewing migrants of which 13 from the Garo community, working in beauty parlors and 47 from the Bengali community who at the time of the interview were mainly working in garment factories.

In **Ethiopia**, thirty questionnaires in Amharic were carried out with internal migrants, of which fifteen questionnaires with sex workers and fifteen with domestic workers. Thirty questionnaires, also in Amharic, were filled in from interviewing returnees from the Middle East, of whom fifteen had been deported during the large-scale deportation campaign in 2013-2014, and fifteen had returned for other reasons.

In **Sudan** thirty-two questionnaires in Tigrinya were carried out with Eritrean adolescent migrant girls who had come to Khartoum in the past six years and sixteen questionnaires were conducted in Amharic with Ethiopian adolescent girls and women who migrated between 2 and 30 years ago to Khartoum.

Life stories

In **Bangladesh,** sixteen life stories have been collected by visiting and talking to some of the girl migrants more than once over 2014. Meetings with these girls took place not only in their homes but also in other locations and occasions such as the botanical garden and cinema hall. The life stories have been transcribed in Bengali and some of them translated into English.

In **Ethiopia**, twenty life stories were collected and recorded. Ten life stories with migrant girls who migrated to Addis Ababa in the past five years and ten with women who migrated to Addis Ababa as adolescent girls, but had been living in the city for more than five years. Of the twenty life stories, ten were from sex workers and ten from domestic workers. The life stories were transcribed and translated into English.

In **Sudan,** fifteen life stories of Eritrean and ten life stories of Ethiopian girls and young women were collected, recorded in Tigrinya or Amharic, transcribed and translated into English. This group includes Eritrean adolescent girls and young women (up to 25 years old) who migrated to Khartoum in the last 6 years. Life stories were recorded in girls' and women's home, in work places, as well as at the home of the researcher.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

In **Bangladesh,** seven FGDs were conducted: one with young girls working in beauty parlours; two with migrants who were living in either Bauniabandh or Bhola slums; one with (mainly) young domestic workers who are receiving some assistance from 2 local NGOs in the context of a European Union funded project; two with women who were about to migrate abroad to Middle Eastern countries; one with a mixed group of migrant women who are members and beneficiaries of AWAJ Foundation, an organization that campaigns for garment workers rights. The FGDs have been recorded and transcribed in Bengali. Two of them have also been translated in English.

In **Ethiopia,** six FGDs were conducted. Two FGDs were with migrant girls in Addis Ababa (one with domestic workers and one with sex workers); two other FGDs were with peers of migrant girls outside Addis Ababa (one in Amhara region and one in Shashemene); one FGD was done with migrant girls who returned to their place of origin (in Amhara region) and one FGD was done with migrant girls staying in a shelter in Shashemene (waiting to return to their place of origin). The FGDs were recorded and transcribed literally into English.

In **Sudan,** five focus group discussions were conducted with Eritrean migrant girls. Two FGDs were with migrant/refugee girls in an Eritrean refugee school. They included both girls who arrived more recently (in the last five years) and those who were either born or came as small children to Sudan. Two FDGs included groups of girls who arrived in the last five years. And one included girls who arrived more than five years ago. The FGDs were recorded and transcribed literally in English.

Expert interviews

In **Bangladesh** six expert interviews were conducted with representatives of local and international NGOs working on issues related to internal migration and adolescence.

In **Sudan**, fifteen interviews were carried out with representatives of international and local non-governmental organisations involved in migration policies and programs. One donor government

representative working on migration issues in Sudan and the region was also interviewed. Five researchers working on similar issues in Khartoum were interviewed. All interviews took place in Khartoum, and hand-written notes were taken. Three interviews with government representatives are planned for May 2016.

In **Ethiopia,** a total of twenty interviews were done with representatives of (non-governmental) organisations involved in migration policies and programmes. Ten interviews were done in Addis Ababa, five interviews in Estie/Amhara region and five interviews in Shashemene. The expert interviews in Addis Ababa were not recorded digitally. The interviews in Estie and Shashamene were recorded with a digital voice recorder and transcribed in English.

Collection of secondary data

In all three countries secondary data, such as research and policy reports, were collected and reviewed. In some cases, however, it was difficult to obtain any statistical data or policy reports from governmental institutions. While the importance of the phenomenon of adolescent girl migration is acknowledged by many stakeholders in the three countries there are limited specific policies or interventions and no reliable statistics.

In the three countries insights on the issues around adolescent girl migration were also gained via informal conversations with the research assistants, the interviewees, family members and friends of the interviewees, other migrants, people working in NGOs, slum residents and others. In Sudan observation in churches, community gatherings, schools, markets, in the places of work, at home, and attending ceremonies were also carried out and five in-depth discussions with family members of the migrant girls from Eritrea: two included mothers, two were with siblings and one with a husband. Observations were noted in field diaries.

3.3 Challenges, constraints and limitations

There are large numbers of adolescent migrant girls in Dhaka, Khartoum and Addis Ababa. In our research, we have experienced various constraints in accessing the different groups and we had to design differentiated strategies that would allow us to gather the desired data.

In Dhaka it was relatively easy to locate the migrants, since most of those who move to the capital from rural areas to work in garment factories tend to find cheap accommodation in slum areas. We decided to focus on two slums where Dr. Del Franco had previously worked and where Terre des Hommes Italy, with their partners ARBAN and Aparajeyo Bangladesh, have been implementing development projects mainly in the field of education, for more than 10 years. The collaboration of these NGOs was essential in facilitating the access to the slums and locating the migrants.

Five adolescent girls known to these organisations contacted their migrant peers in Bauniabandh area by visiting all the households of the slum and enquiring about the presence of migrants in each of them. Other respondents were identified through the Aparajeyo Bangladesh office where a first focus group discussion with 12 migrant girls living in the Bhola slum, oraganised. With respect to the Garo/Mandi migrants most of those interviewed were already well known to the main researcher from previous visits to Bangladesh. The research team established a strong rapport with some of the migrants that lasted over the whole year (2014), and allowed us to follow up the main events in their lives and the changes in their circumstances.

The main obstacle was the very limited free time that garment workers have. Working hours are on average from 9 in the morning to 7-8 in the evenings, including overtime, and six days a week. Almost all the garment factories in Mirpur, where the Bengali respondents were employed, are closed only on Fridays and in busy periods not even once a week. This meant that we had to concentrate most of the interviews in one day a week or on holidays. Overall the migrants were where very interested in the research and eager to participate. They were happy to give us their parents' addresses so that we could visit them.

In Khartoum and Addis Ababa we faced a number of different challenges and limitations. First of all, domestic workers and sex workers in general are difficult to contact. In both Khartoum and Addis Ababa almost every family has a domestic worker, but approaching and interviewing them is almost impossible. Most of them live and work in the house of their employers and have hardly any time off. In Sudan, contact had to be negotiated through mostly Sudanese employers who were not always willing to cooperate. They also insisted on being present during the interviews, and thus, the trust and openness of the respondents was very difficult to judge. This was one of the reasons why there were fewer Ethiopians interviewed there (only 16 instead of planned 30). In Ethiopia most of the domestic workers were met through a school that gives evening classes to boys and girls unable to attend regular school. The school director was willing to facilitate the research.

Sex workers have much more freedom of movement; they live in many cases on their own or with friends, but their work schedule (evening and nights) makes it problematic to find them since they sleep during the day. With these constraints, building up a relationship of trust and confidence and getting more insight in the lives of these migrants, by sharing it, as anthropologists commonly try to do, is very difficult, if not impossible. Access to sex workers was facilitated by two local NGOs. NIKAT is a self-organization of sex workers in Addis Ababa. It was established in 2006 with the aim to improve the living conditions of sex workers in Ethiopia, and to fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS. NIKAT has a drop in center where sex workers can come to relax, rest, meet others and have access to information. The first FGD, which was a pilot, was carried out at the drop in center of NIKAT. Two girls that participated in this FGD were asked to assist the researchers with the questionnaires. They were instrumental in contacting other sex workers. The second NGO that facilitated access to girls was Timret Le Hiwot (TLH). The organization was established in 2004 with the aim to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. TLH also has programmes directed at sex workers and their clients. With the help of TLH a number of adolescent sex workers were found for interviews.

In Khartoum, the research was carried out with the support and under the aegis of the Ahfad University for Women in Omdurman. Dr. Grabska carried out most of the interviews in public (safe) spaces, including churches and restaurants. Interviews were also conducted in respondents' homes, at work places, at social gatherings.

One of the main challenges both in Dhaka and Khartoum was the high mobility of migrants. Eritrean migrants move due to security reasons but also because they want to migrate further outside of Sudan for better life opportunities. Therefore, it has been challenging to find both Eritrean and Ethiopian respondents who migrated as adolescent girls and who have spent more than 7-8 years in the country. In Dhaka one of the reasons we were not able to find many older migrants among the Bengali, could be that after some years of work and/or after marriage, with an improvement of their economic situation, the migrants move to a different area of the city. We found this had happened to five of our respondents. As we focused our search for adolescent migrants in 2 *bustee* (slum) areas, we tended to find there only those who had migrated recently, who were single and whose income was not enough to afford better housing.

One of our intentions was to carry out research in cooperation with adolescent girls since we believed that this would have greatly improved the quality of the research results. This has not always been possible to the extent we wanted. In Ethiopia, the two migrants who assisted in administering the questionnaires were very helpful and the accounts of their lives and their responses to the stories of other sex workers gave the local researchers more insight in the issues around adolescent girls' migration. We were not able to involve them more than this, which is a pity as is the absence of a domestic worker as a migrant girl assistant. In Sudan the principal researcher asked migrant and refugee girls to administer some of the questionnaires. Eritrean migrant girls have also been involved in data gathering, identifying respondents, transcribing data and doing initial analysis. In Bangladesh the possibility of involving the migrants in collecting data was ruled out because of their time constraints. Instead five adolescent girls who had been living in the slum for long time, selected in cooperation with the local NGOs, helped in administering the questionnaire and in locating the migrants.

A major limitation of the research in Ethiopia was that we were unable to interview family members, such as parents or siblings, in the place of origin of some of the interviewed girls. None of the interviewed girls was willing to give the contact details of their relatives back home. Their reasons varied: in some cases their relatives did not know their whereabouts, in other cases they had lost contact with their relatives or their relatives did not know what type of work they were doing in Addis Ababa. Instead of visiting the families of the interviewed girls, we decided to do fieldwork in two areas outside Addis Ababa; one a rural area that is well known as a sending area in migration, and one a town which is a hub for migrants from the southern part of the country.

In Bangladesh, it was mainly due to time constraints that we were not able to visit more households in the places of origin of the migrants. The migrants interviewed in Dhaka were mainly from a wide spread of districts, Bogra, Netrakona, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Barisal and Bhola and from different villages of the same district. We could only choose initially five girls coming from two different districts and focus on visiting their households and communities. Netrakona district was chosen because it includes the hilly northern areas where the Garo girls come from and Bogra district was chosen because of the very good rapport that had been established with two girls coming from that area. Three more households of migrant girls were also visited in Bogra.

The research team in Sudan was unable to interview the families of origin in Eritrea due to the security situation. The households of migrants from Ethiopia could not be reached because of lack of funding to cover the costs. In order to gain insights on the perspective of migrant girls' family members, we interviewed instead relatives of migrants who had come to reside in Khartoum.

In all the three countries confidentiality and anonymity were important priorities. All interviews were coded, files were safeguarded, and pseudonyms were used in order to protect all the respondents. The names of the respondents were also changed in this and other reports, and the stories slightly altered in order not to endanger the situation of the girls and young women. The information from migrants in Sudan was often very sensitive, due to their irregular status as foreigners residing illegally, or as vulnerable refugees.

In Sudan, the young women who worked in the project as research assistants had often been through often traumatic experiences themselves and Dr. Grabska was concerned that listening to other traumatic stories was a tremendous emotional strain on them. After each visit the interview was discussed to make sure that the research assistants were able to process the information. The

team took breaks in the fieldwork, as at times, the stories were too dramatic and space was needed to reflect and disconnect. The team also assisted several girls and young women in accessing potential protection and assistance services, whenever needed. Some of the research assistants attended trainings related to gender-based violence, rights of refugees, and services available for those who suffered abuse in Khartoum. Two of the research assistants became very active in helping their own communities and identifying those who needed urgent assistance.

4. Situating Girls' Migration within the Three Contexts

4.1 Migration trends in the three countries

Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Sudan are countries in the Global South characterized by high level of population movements, including increasing numbers of adolescent girl migrants. Bangladesh and Ethiopia are both highly populated countries (Bangladesh has 156 million inhabitants and Ethiopia 90 million) with high poverty rates and scoring low on the HDI index (Bangladesh is 142 out of 188 and Ethiopia is 174). Sudan is less populated (39 million in 2008) but also very poor; the country ranked 167 on the HDI index. All three countries have experienced a rapid population growth in the past decades and the percentage of the population that is younger than 25 years old is very high. In Sudan more than 62.2 per cent of the population is under 25 years old; in Ethiopia 45 per cent of the population is under 15 years of age and in Bangladesh 30 per cent of the population is between 10 and 24 years old (UNFPA 2014). Migration is an issue in all three countries, although the types and forms of migration differ in various ways.

Bangladesh and Ethiopia historically have high rates of internal migration while in Sudan the number of internally displaced people is very high as a result of the ongoing conflicts (according to UNHCR 2,9 million people were internally displaced in 2014) (UNHCR 2014). Migration is a major feature of Bangladesh's recent and less recent history, with many citizens today migrating internally from rural to urban areas, and increasingly also going abroad, mainly to the Middle East and South East Asia. International migrants also go to India and Malaysia and countries such as the US, the UK and lately Italy are significant minority destinations. In Ethiopia, until the 1990s population movements consisted mainly of rural-urban migration and of large-scale refugee flows to neighbouring countries and the West. In the past two decades Ethiopia has become a sending countries in international migration with movement to the oil producing countries in the Middle East particularly common.

Sudan is mainly known for the large number of refugees that have fled, and are still fleeing, war, violence and conflict. The total number of Sudanese refugees residing abroad was over 640,000 people, according to UNHCR statistics (UNHCR 2015).[1] Yet, Sudan has also received a large number of refugees, mainly from South Sudan but also from Eritrea. Recent statistics speak of 130,000 officially registered refugees from Eritrea, but the number is likely to be much higher. In addition, Sudan is both a destination and a transit country for migrants from Ethiopia: girls and young women often come to Sudan as labour migrants. Male migrants intend to migrate to Europe more often, and usually stay in the Sudan for a shorter time.

Adolescent girls' migration is in all three countries on the rise. In Bangladesh and Ethiopia rural-urban migration of girls is an age-old phenomenon, with rural girls mainly migrating to become domestic workers for (often distant) relatives, sometimes in exchange for education. In the past decade in Bangladesh, with the rise of the export garment industry, the number of girls migrating to Dhaka has rapidly increased, although there is no official statistical data on their numbers. A minority form of migration is that of the girls and women from the Garo ethnic group who work predominantly in beauty parlours. In Ethiopia domestic work continues to be a very important

[1] This number might include also citizens of South Sudan as in some cases there were no separate statistics available see UNHCR 2015.

labour sector for migrant girls, but an increasing number works as sex workers (see Van Blerk 2008; Girma and Erulkar 2009). In addition, Ethiopian adolescent girls also migrate abroad, to Sudan and to the Middle East (see Jones et al 2014). Girls under 18 years old are legally not allowed to migrate internationally, but it is easy to change legal documents such as birth certificates. In addition, many girls cross the border to Sudan illegally. While there is limited independent internal migration of adolescent girls in Sudan, the country receives large numbers of adolescent girls from Eritrea and Ethiopia. The country is easily accessible; it has a large border, border controls are not very strict and smugglers are very active. In addition, there are large and well-established Eritrean and Ethiopian communities in Sudan. The motivations to migrate to Sudan are very different for Eritreans and Ethiopians, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

4.2 Background of the case studies

Bangladesh
The Bangladesh economy has grown steadily from 2000 onwards, but despite a decade of economic and social gains for most of the population, it remains one of the world' poorest nations. Overall entrepreneurial activity is hampered by an uncertain regulatory environment, poor infrastructure and the absence of effective long-term institutional support for private sector development. Internal migration has been on the rise, linked to the expansion of the manufacturing sector in more urban areas and to the gradual worsening of livelihood options in rural areas. From 1980 to 2010 agricultural production dropped from 32 per cent to 19 per cent as a share of GDP and the share of industrial production rose from 21 to 28 per cent (UNDP 2013). The high proportion of landless households chasing lowly paid agricultural work, together with increasing land scarcity and poor returns to farming push rural people to look for work elsewhere. These vulnerabilities are exacerbated by riverbank erosion and seasonal flooding in the South West, or conversely drought in the North East. The number of migrant women and girls is also on the rise and the increasing demand for female workers in the Ready Made Garment sector (RMG) is an important factor here. According to Ahmed (2009) there were about 1.7 million women employed in the sector in 2009, with 60 per cent of them under 25 years of age.

There has been an exponential growth of the garment industry since 1976, which today accounts for 80 per cent of Bangladesh total exports. There are about 5000 garment factories that employ more than 3.5 million people. The majority of garment workers are migrants from rural areas and women and young girls constituted, about 85 per cent of them at the end of the nineties' (Afsar 2003). More recent surveys show that women garment workers are about 1.7 million (Ahmed 2009). Migration by girls from rural areas to nearby district towns and to Dhaka to be employed as domestic workers also remains very significant. In 2006 the ILO estimated that there are about 2 million domestic workers in Bangladesh and that 400.000 0f them are children of different age groups: 23 per cent started working at ages below 8 years, 33 per cent at age 9-11 years and 33 per cent at age 12-14 (ILO 2006). Girls are the majority; they account for 78 per cent.

Research on garment workers has focused mainly on work conditions and on assessing the impact of women's work on indicators of economic and social empowerment (Hossain 2012). In the case of domestic workers the focus of policy makers and research has been mainly on their exploitation by traffickers and employers rather than on their choices, the circumstances under which migration is undertaken and their motivations and aspirations. According to Phulki, an NGO that works with domestic and garment workers, girls are still migrating to Dhaka to work

as domestic workers as young as 8 years old. Some of them return to their villages at puberty to get married, while others move on to work garment factories.

The personal care industry has also developed and provides employment to about 100,000 women (Akter 2009) in about 2000 registered beauty parlours, mainly in urban areas all over the country (Rahman 2010). Although the parlours are usually owned by Bengali Bangladeshi, the workers in them are often young women belonging to the Garo ethnic minority. The Garo living in Bangladesh are between 80,000 to 100,000 and are now scattered all over the country, with more than 2000 of them working and living in Dhaka. They are mostly Christians, either Catholic or Baptists. Women are mainly employed as cooks, housekeepers and babysitters as well as in beauty parlours, in NGOs and church organizations; men as garment workers, drivers, night guards and NGO staff. Many Garo, both men and women, also migrate to Dhaka to study. Since partition in 1947, the Garo occupy, like the other 20 to 56 ethnic minorities, a marginalized social, political and economic position in respect to the Muslim majority (Bal 2007). Another group of female migrants are girls who move from rural villages to district towns and to Dhaka to study at university. These migrants mainly come from middle class and upper-middle class households.

Ethiopia

Similar to Bangladesh, the Ethiopian economy has improved considerably in the past ten years, yet the country remains one of the world's poorest countries. Economic growth was more than 10 per cent in 2014 (World Bank 2015), and the country has been able to attract many foreign investors with its liberal economic policies. The government mainly focuses on developing the manufacturing sector, and agriculture and construction are also important economic areas. Yet, while certain segments of the population benefit greatly from the economic opportunities, large parts of the population live on less than 2 USD per day. Migration is considered one of the main ways to improve one's livelihood. The increased migration aspirations of Ethiopians, and in particular of youth in rural areas, are related to economic, political and social circumstances of the past two decades. While the government has put a lot of effort in improving the educational level of the population, the labour market has not expanded to the same extent and educated youth have difficulties finding reasonably paid jobs. Most jobs can be found in the agricultural sector, in infrastructural projects, and in the service sector, and there are hardly any jobs available for educated youth. In addition, the creation of jobs cannot keep up with the rapid population growth (Ethiopia has one of the highest birth rates in the world). As a result, large numbers of youth are unemployed, among them many young women. In addition, the economic situation in rural areas is deteriorating which leaves farming families destitute (see Carter and Rohwerder 2016; Dom et al 2015).

Internal migration has been the focus of many studies, and the large-scale migration and employment of children from rural areas has not gone unnoticed (see for example Erulkar et al 2006; Erulkar and Mekbib 2007; Van Blerk 2008). As mentioned before, girls' migration is to some extent a normality in Ethiopia, with girls migrating for domestic work in recent decades. International labour migration commenced in the early 1990s. Whereas labour migration was restricted under the socialist regime of Mengistu, the government that came to power in 1991 made free movement a constitutional right. The large majority are young women who migrate to the Middle East to fill up the demand for domestic labour. Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States have become major destinations for Ethiopian women migrants, but as mentioned earlier, economically less developed countries such as Sudan and Yemen also receive Ethiopian migrants (see De Regt 2010; RMMS 2012). Initially it was mainly young women who had finished at least some years of secondary education who migrated, but nowadays adolescent girls with no education or only basic education are also moving abroad. Some of these girls are recruited in

their home villages but others have first migrated to small and middle-sized towns, and from there migrate abroad (see Jones et al 2014). In November 2013 the Ethiopian government announced a temporary ban on migration to the Middle East because of the large number of human rights violations. This ban has not been lifted as of May 2016. As a result many women who were intending to migrate are stuck in Ethiopia, or decided to migrate over land to Sudan or Yemen instead. In addition, migration via Kenya increased because Ethiopians do not need a visa to enter Kenya. Brokers facilitated the use of these irregular migration routes, with all its consequences. In response to the Ethiopian ban Sudanese consulates put a ban on granting visas to young Ethiopians, especially women. As a consequence, irregular migration to Sudan has increased, with the consequence that girls and younger women are at greater risk of abuse and exploitation by brokers and smugglers.

Sudan

Sudan has been a host to Eritrean refugees and migrants for at least three decades. After the 1952 federation with Ethiopia, and then the de-facto annexation by Ethiopia, many migrated first to Addis Ababa. In the 1950s, less privileged Muslims left for nearby Arab countries, first as migrant labour, but then in the 1960s, as Eritrea's nationalist struggle against Ethiopia intensified, increasingly as political refugees (Kifleyesus 2012; Connell 2013). Most of the Eritrean refugees residing in Sudan stem from the independence war against Ethiopia. A large Eritrean diaspora was created as a result. Some estimate that some one million Eritreans live outside the country across Africa, the Gulf, Middle East, Europe, the U.S., Canada, Australia and Israel (see ICG 2014). The Eritrean People's Liberation Front won the de facto independence from Ethiopia in 1991 (de jure in 1993). Many decided to return to build a new state and contribute to its growth. While the relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea at first seemed to normalise, they deteriorated further into war a couple of years after Eritrea introduced its own currency in 1997. Another war broke out in May 1998 over a border dispute, but more concretely over differences relating to ethnic tensions and economic approaches. It resulted in 100,000 deaths and millions of dollars diverted from much needed development into military activities and weapons procurements. It also led to the closing of the border between the two countries, with families being divided by the new political situation.

The recently discovered oil fields in Sudan have led to a sudden growth of the economy and the formation of an urban middle class. These middle class families are in need of household personnel, such as domestic workers. Migrant domestic workers come from different parts of the world, including Asia, but the large majority is Ethiopian. Ethiopia and Sudan have long-standing links and there is a large Ethiopian community in the country. Some estimate that there are between 2 and 3 million Ethiopians in the country. In the 1980s and 1990s Ethiopians arriving in Sudan were mainly refugees, fleeing repression and conflict. With the downfall of Mengistu's regime in 1991 the borders between Ethiopia and Sudan opened and labour migration increased. Most of the Ethiopian population resides in the eastern areas of the country and is extremely mobile. Many are seasonal workers; others spend a few years in Sudan and then move on, either to another country in the region, further to Europe or return to Ethiopia. While a significant percentage of Ethiopians who arrived in Sudan during the Ethiopian-Eritrean war and the Ethiopian conflict in the 1990s were perceived as refugees, those arriving more recently mainly come for other reasons than political. The large majority crosses the border illegally and is undocumented, among them many adolescent girls. Ethiopian girls mainly work as domestics whereas Eritrean girls also take up other types of labour, such as in hotels and restaurants, or as tea sellers.

4.3 Politics and policies

The political situation in the three case studies is to some extent similar with governments pretending to be democracies but in reality accepting little to no opposition. The People's Republic of Bangladesh was established in 1971 after a bloody war with Pakistan which left the country in a dire economic situation. Sheik Hasina, daughter of Mujibur Rahman, the 'Father of the Nation', is the current prime minister. The Awami League, the party she leads was the only one to participate in the national political election in January 2014. The election was boycotted by all the opposition parties including the main one, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party of Khaleda Zia, widow of the late General Ziaur Rahman. In Ethiopia, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Federation (EPRDF) came to power in 1991, after a coup against the dictatorial regime of Mengistu. The EPRDF has introduced a system of ethnic federalism, consisting of nine ethnically ruled federal states, intending to diminish the ethnic factor in politics. The government has been able to increase the country's economic growth, yet poverty rates remain very high and inequalities between the different segments of the population are very big. While Ethiopia is considered a democracy, the ruling party has been in power since 1991 and elections are not free and fair. In Sudan the National Congress Party has been in power since 1989 after a coup against Sadiq al-Mahdi. In 1993 the country turned into an Islamic totalitarian state under the guidance of Omar al-Bashir. In the same year sharia law was introduced. Opposition is not allowed.

The political situation impacts in various ways on adolescent girl migrants. Ethiopian and Eritrean girls in Sudan are subjected to the restrictive environment of a conservative Muslim society. They are not allowed to move around freely, and living alone as single women without male protection affects their social status negatively. They are stigmatised and discriminated against and can be subjected to violence and abuse because they are women, non-Sudanese and non-Muslims. In Bangladesh and Ethiopia politics affect migrant girls less directly yet the fact that there are such large numbers of girls leaving their families behind to migrate shows that government policies are not successful in guaranteeing human security for an important part of the population. Rural families are destitute, educated girls and boys do not see a future in their places of origin, and the limited number of jobs available for girls and young women are just a few examples of the impact of the political situation on migrant girls.

Migrant girls are also affected by the policy framework in the three countries. Internal migration in Bangladesh and Ethiopia is not regulated and anyone willing to migrate is allowed to do so. Migration of minors is also not forbidden and adolescent girls can move around freely in the country. In Bangladesh girls older than 14 can easily find work in the garment industry. In Ethiopia, adolescent girls under 18 can only find work in the formal labour market when they have a legal guardian, which is the reason why many migrant girls become sex workers. Domestic employment agencies are not allowed to employ children under 18 years of age, with the result that adolescent girls turn to illegal brokers. These brokers often arrange work for them in hotels where they are forced to do sex work. The only other option they have is to become domestic workers, yet the payment and treatment is often so bad that girls prefer to become sex workers. In Bangladesh and Ethiopia international migration is regulated via various legislative instruments, by stipulating agreements with destination countries and by enacting strict regulations to discipline and control the employment agencies through which workers are employed. As mentioned earlier, girls under 18 years of age are not allowed to migrate internationally in Ethiopia; in Bangladesh the age limit is 25 years. As a result, many adolescent girls change their birth certificates or declare a different age at the moment of requesting their passport, in order to be able to obtain a visa and work permits.

The policy discourses in Ethiopia and Bangladesh emphasises trafficking, in particular of girls and women, with the result that other forms of migration, such as voluntary migration (also via irregular channels), are neglected and disguised. This is similar to the situation in Sudan, where much of the discourse and policies at national, regional and international level focus on combatting traffickers and smuggling. Legislation in Sudan focuses on punishing the traffickers, with little to no recourse to protection of victims. As the victims enter the country without proper documentation, they can then be tried under the 1994 Immigration Law for illegal entry. This is the case for Ethiopian and Eritrean girls as most of them are smuggled into Sudan. They arrive illegally, although recently there has been some relaxation of the rules at the border. Some might be subjected to trafficking. There has been much international pressure on Sudan to combat trafficking and smuggling by curtailing irregular migration (see the Khartoum Process and the current financial support of the European Union to Sudan for mainly border control programming). Yet, the weak rule of law in Sudan in general and with respect to trafficking and smuggling in particular makes this pressure not effective.

The fact that Ethiopian and Eritrean girls in Sudan are international migrants and refugees affects their living and working conditions to a large extent. Those who do not have refugee cards, are perceived as undocumented migrants- This makes them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, as they are not protected by the law. In addition, their social status as foreigners, as non-Sudanese and as non-Muslims, affects their lives greatly. As mentioned before they are stigmatised and discriminated against by the local population. In addition, much of the harassment of Ethiopian and Eritrean girls comes from the Public Order Act of 1991. The Act prohibits mixed social gatherings and has been the basis for the almost complete exclusion of women from public life. Women have been subjected to official harassment in the enforcement of dress codes and public association. Ethiopian and Eritrean girls are widely seen as "loose" and easy, interested in sex, and easy to get sex with. This is very similar to the experiences of Ethiopian girls in the Middle East, who are also stigmatised and discriminated against because of their age, ethnic background and status as foreigners. The strict migration policies on the Arabian Peninsula, where migrants are legally tied to their employers who are their sponsor (the so-called *kafala* system) impact greatly upon migrant girls; running away from situations of abuse and exploitation turns them automatically into undocumented migrants with the risk that they will be arrested and deported. Between November 2013 and April 2014 more than 160.000 Ethiopians were deported from Saudi Arabia because they were undocumented, after the end of a seven months amnesty period (see De Regt and Tafesse 2016). Among the deportees were many young women.

4.4 Life in the cities

The lives of migrant girls in Dhaka, Addis Ababa and Khartoum show similarities and differences. In Dhaka, migrant girls' lives centre around their work in the factory. They wake up early to go to work and return late to their homes in the slums. Slums, known as *bustee*, are built on government or private land and are characterized by poverty, very low quality housing, high population density, and limited access to services. Slums are usually controlled by local 'leaders' who are well connected to the local police and/or some political party. The control they exert over young people's behaviour, especially young women's, occurs in the context of widespread parental concerns for the sexual security of girls and the predatory behaviour of men. All the Bengali migrants interviewed during the research were still residing in the slum area where they first arrived, but not always with the same people and in the same room or house. Some of those who moved to Dhaka with a relative felt uneasy and moved into a rented room alone or with other girls. Some of the girls mentioned that they felt it inappropriate to share a room with young nephews and other felt threatened by promiscuous arrangements. Familial networks were sometimes considered a source of social control. Girls mentioned that they found it hard to

adjust to the harsh living conditions of the slum. They complained about the food, the lack of clean water and toilet facilities. Girls often fell ill with jaundice, hepatitis, food poisoning or diarrhoea in the first few months of their stay. While many were homesick in the beginning, they started to appreciate life in Dhaka after a while and in particular the possibilities to meet new people, buy different kinds of goods and the freedom of movement. Friendships easily develop between girls who work in the same factory or live together. They visit each other and despite the social limitations go out together for shopping and the like.

The experiences of migrant girls in Dhaka are to some extent similar to those in Addis Ababa: they also emphasised the advantages of the city in terms of the availability of shops, products, and services, and the possibilities to develop friendships and relationships. This was particularly so for sex workers, who experienced a much greater freedom of movement than domestic workers and as a result had much more chances to meet other people and enjoy the positive sides of the city. Domestic workers' lives are confined to the house of their employers. Sex workers in Addis Ababa live in rented rooms, alone or shared. It is difficult to find affordable housing and they often move around from one place to the other. In addition, they want to hide the type of work they are doing for their surroundings. Those who live on the outskirts of town complain about transport costs: they depend on buses, minibuses and private taxis to take them into town, which is particularly difficult at night when they have finished their work. They therefore prefer to live close to the areas where they work.

In Khartoum most of the girls live in overcrowded accommodation, usually sharing with family members or other girls or women. Renting has become increasingly expensive due to the economic situation and the perception of landlords that foreigners have better incomes, which has forced migrants to share housing. Sharing is, however, also a strategy to overcome loneliness and harassment from Sudanese neighbours and landlords. Young girls and women are not allowed to share accommodation with (unrelated) men because of the strict policies with regard to gender segregation. Similar to migrant girls in Dhaka and Addis Ababa, the daily life of migrant girls in Khartoum is dominated by work. Because they work long hours and have to commute to work, they have very little time to themselves. They wake up early and return home in the evening, have to clean and cook and go to bed late. The only time off is on Friday, when they go to church and visit friends and relatives. Churches fulfil a very important role in the lives of migrants in Khartoum; they do not only offer mental support but also a social network and sometimes logistical support (see also chapter 7). Sharing food and preparing coffee ceremonies are another favourite pastime of migrant girls. Only when they have saved some money, they go shopping in one of the shopping malls in Khartoum. The situation in Sudan is comparable to the Middle East, where Ethiopian domestic workers often have very little freedom of movement, unless their employers allow them a day off. In that case they spend the day with friends in a shared room. Yet, almost all of the returned girls from the Middle East we interviewed complained about very heavy workloads, isolation and no to very little freedom of movement.

Adolescent migrant girls are in all three case studies subjected to strong systems of social control, and often experience stigmatisation, discrimination and harassment. Gender, age and migration intersect in such ways that migrant girls are extremely vulnerable and run great risks; the mere fact that they are living in the cities without the protection of their parents and in particular without male relatives, and in doing so do not conform to the dominant gender order has a great impact on their social status and as a consequence on their vulnerability. The cities, however, offer also chances to pursue different choices, increase girls' options in terms of lives that they desire, and enlarge their view of themselves in the work. We will elaborate on these risks and vulnerabilities in the following chapters, but also discuss their resilience and agency in coping with their living conditions.

5. Migration Motives

5.1 Migrants' circumstances: survey responses

In this chapter we will discuss migrant girls' circumstances and motivations for migration. We start by looking at the replies given to the question of the survey questionnaire that asked the reasons for leaving one's place of origin. We then analyse and interpret these replies in the light of the more articulated and detailed explanations that the migrants provided during the life stories interviews and the FGDs. While the questionnaires show more simplified answers that emerged in the first encounters with the girls, the life stories reveal more complex and multifaceted decision-making processes.

The respondents were given a free choice to questions regarding their reasons for migration in the survey and they could also identify more than one answer. Most of the respondents in the three countries identified several reasons and key turning points that led them to take the decision to leave their places of origin. Many Ethiopian and the Eritreans in Sudan talked about the dire economic or political situation of their families back home and the desire to help them; 29 respondents out of 48 described their households either 'poor or 'very poor'. Similar answers were provided by Bangladeshi migrants, with two thirds of them quoting poverty and 17 seventeen claiming they wanted to help their family members. In Ethiopia only one third of the migrants mentioned poverty among the reasons for migration.

In the three countries the majority of the migrants' households were described, according to the local perceptions of poverty and well-being as either 'poor' or 'very poor', lacking both economic (land, animals) and social resources (only one breadwinner in the family, no social networks to count on). In Bangladesh, however, there is a larger percentage of migrants coming from 'very poor' households. According to the migrants own evaluation of the socio-economic condition of their household, comparatively, Bangladeshi-Bengali migrants come from poorer households than Garo migrants, Ethiopians in Sudan come from poorer households than Eritreans, and returnee international migrants in Ethiopia come from poorer households then internal migrants.

In migrants' words, 'poverty' itself is a condition of different situations and circumstances. In Bangladesh most migrant girls talked of poverty as a situation of '*obhab*' (literally lack) that in most severe cases was connected with the death or illness of the family breadwinner, the lack of support from brothers, some environmental disaster, or a sudden emergency, such as having to pay a large dowry for a daughter's marriage. In Sudan, Ethiopians and Eritreans who described their families as 'poor' or 'very poor' had often experienced some type of household crisis, with the death of one or both parents, severe health problems or a divorce. In Ethiopia, most of the girls who declared they wanted to help their families came from rural households, mostly female headed. The death of one or both parents was quoted as a reason for migration by one third of the internal migrants interviewed in Addis Ababa. In the interviews with returnees from the Middle East poverty and the wish to help the family had also been the main reasons for migration: twenty-four out of thirty returnees had been going to school prior to migration; some of them had been working but their income was not enough to sustain themselves and their families.

In Sudan, political circumstances were pointed out as the main reason for the movement of Eritreans into Khartoum. Eritrean refugee girls and young women often referred to the pressure

of national service, the lack of work opportunities, political and religious persecution, as well as the impossibility of achieving the life they desired.

Ethiopian internal migrants also mentioned the wish to continue their education, the fear for abduction and early marriage, and escaping the restrictive gender norms and values in the places of origin. Ethiopian and Eritrean adolescent girl migrants in Khartoum similarly mentioned gender and generational pressures from the family side having played an important part in their decision-making. A number of girls left in order to avoid arranged marriages. Among returnees from the Middle East poverty was mentioned as the most important reason, and conflicts with parents and escaping restrictive social environments were mentioned much less.

In Bangladesh the emphasis that migrants put on describing a situation of lack of material resources is consistent with older and recent studies where poverty appears as the driving force of migration for garment work (Amin et al 1997; Kabeer and Mahmud 2004; Kibria 1995; Feldman 2001). This motivation largely overshadows other reasons mentioned by a minority: the desire to escape difficult and in some cases abusive relationship with step-parents, or to avoid an unwanted arranged marriage, or a desire for more freedom, or because of a failed marriage. Only four Garo migrants mentioned the desire to continue studying as the main reason for moving to the capital.

5.2 Migrants' migration motives: life stories

Through a closer analysis of the life stories collected among migrant and refugee girls, a more complex picture of their motivations for and their expectations from migration emerge. Girls in each country had specific, often very personal, reasons for leaving their places of origin. Their decisions are located within often extremely precarious and difficult economic or political situations, as well as oppressive gender regimes, and difficult or abusive family circumstances. There are, however, differences between countries and between different groups of migrants in the case studies.

For Eritreans in Sudan, the role of the Eritrean Diaspora's images of the outside possibilities, and the visible impact of remittances, combined with a changing youth culture in Eritrea, contribute to the desires of the young to migrate abroad. Both girls and boys, take a decision to search for a 'choice' and 'chance' somewhere else. They make a deliberate choice to escape in search of a better future for themselves, and their families. As one of the research assistants, a refugee young woman, explained, "*In fact, when I decided to leave Eritrea, I made a choice. I rejected the current situation in which I was living and lack of opportunities in Eritrea. So, you can say, that when people are leaving Eritrea they are making a choice. They usually say that they did not have a chance (edil) in Eritrea, that's why they left.*"

For Ethiopians in Sudan, motivations go well beyond the 'poverty' discourse: there is an increasing importance of (imagined and at times realisable) potential to 'change one's life'. The tangible 'success' of other migrants who have been supporting their families in the places of origin through remittances, constructing new homes and contributing the improved daily life are attractive alternatives. Also, the growing influence of social media and the global consumerist images of 'good life' circulating on TV, social media, phones, create new images of possible lives. Most of the Ethiopian girls and women interviewed in the research mentioned that they were attracted to Sudan because they have heard that it was easy to make money there. Some pointed out that their neighbours who had worked in Sudan were able to buy nice cloths, jewellery and build new houses. There is a new 'culture of migration', as some of the Ethiopian girls described it. Peer and community pressure (e.g. "*migration has become a competition*") often stigmatises those

who decide to stay behind. This also came to the fore in the interviews with Ethiopian girls that returned from the Middle East, and it was the case for Eritrean families as well. Eritrean family members who came for a visit to Khartoum[2] mentioned how proud they were of their daughters (and sons) who migrated outside of Eritrea. They usually referred to them as the 'successful ones', while the children who were still in Eritrea did not have as many chances, in their views.

This positive, even romantic image of the destination stood in sharp contrast with the ideas the majority of Bengali migrants had of Dhaka prior to their migration. Dhaka was far from representing 'the promised land' that would change their lives. Many of the interviewed Bengali girls said that they could not imagine what the actual work and living conditions would be after migration, and they did not have high expectations of their future lives in the capital. They vaguely knew about the possibility of earning some money by working in a garment factory from relatives or neighbours who had been or were in Dhaka. On the one hand, the decision is in part way generated by a perceived lack of livelihood alternatives at home. At the same time, the stories of migrant girls show that, after a conscious evaluation of different possibilities, often discussed with the other family members it comes to be perceived as a chance to improve one's future prospects. After her father's death Lamia worked as a domestic in the village. Her mother was also doing the same type work and her sister was still at school. At some point Lamia realized that she would not be able to secure her livelihood in this way: *"I was only getting food three times a day and no money, nothing else…in this way my life wouldn't improve. One has to think at the future… there were two of us working there and the other girl said: I am going to Dhaka, are you coming?"*

The data from Ethiopia, both among internal migrants as well as those who migrated internationally (whether to Sudan or to the Middle East), show that girls' migration is often perceived as a sacrifice for the well-being of their families. Migrating for one's own benefit is less acceptable. Hayat, who lost her father when she was 10 years old, first worked as a nanny and then decided to go to Addis Ababa. In the interview she emphasized that she migrated to support her mother but she continued: "*I was so fed up with the life back home. I kept on nagging my mom that I want to leave to Addis Ababa. When my aunt came for a visit I insisted that I wanted to go with her. My mom didn't have any money so my aunt covered the expenses and brought me to Addis. It was a hard decision especially for my mom but I was more serious on the matter. The fact that we also see Addis as a bigger place fulfils people's needs. I was so eager. My mom said that she needed me by her side for good or for worse but I convinced her that I am not able to help her if we don't have money*."

There is an important methodological issue that also needs to be considered in interpreting girls' migration motives. Especially when replying to questionnaires, in a context where a relationship of trust between researcher and researched is not yet established (usually questionnaires were administered during the first meeting with respondents) people tend to give socially acceptable answers, especially to sensitive questions. In all three case studies, the emphasis girls and young women put on wanting to help their families by migrating and contributing to their livelihoods could be the most socially acceptable answer. This is not to say that girls lied but their explanation of their choice to leave the family had to be presented to others and perhaps sometimes to themselves in these socially acceptable ways, even if in reality, the decision to migrate might entail also more personal and individual hopes and aspirations.

Considering the often young age at migration and the actual dire economic situation of most of the girls we interviewed in Bangladesh, Ethiopia and in Eritrea (see Chapter 3) and their experiences prior to migration, it not surprising that they saw the choice to migrate almost

[2] The family visits included those who could afford to pay their travels, and thus represent the more successful migration experiences.

completely in relation to their parents and to family well-being. Their objectives and plans were linked in most cases to improving their household's livelihoods.

Most of the Bengali interviewees in Dhaka come from remote rural areas and from villages where migration of young women for work in garment factories is not a widespread phenomenon. Migration was often interpreted by respondents as a response to rural poverty. The neighbour of a migrant said: "*They cannot eat, they earn just enough to eat, they survive mainly on daily labour and they have no land. Educated people have no opportunity of employment because they cannot afford paying bribes*". "*Adolescent girls should be cared for by their parents. Nowadays the opposite happens, and this is not good.*" Some respondents expressed worries about girls' reputations (*man shonman*, honor, prestige) and about the risks of traffickers. Intergenerational relationships are framed by a sense of hierarchical love[3] and respect due to parents (and elders) that certainly make it difficult for a young daughter to express individual preferences and desires and declare wanting to pursue more individual objectives.

During the focus group discussions in Dhaka migrant girls did not talk necessarily about themselves and instead mainly referred to other girls' stories when some less socially acceptable motivations were mentioned. "*Many came without telling their parents, many came to avoid getting married with someone they did not like. Girls don't like to get married at a very young age, so they came to escape the family pressure".* Interestingly, when researchers visited the villages of origin of some of the girls, in three cases they found out that some of the migrants had been married and divorced before migrating. In such cases, migration had been an opportunity to escape the social stigma and shame attached to being divorced. In addition, being away from the family might increase their probability of remarrying, as girls in Dhaka could easily pretend never to have married. While one of these three girls mentioned that she had migrated to Dhaka because of poverty, her parents' view was that she wanted to earn her own money to buy clothes and cosmetics and what "girls of that age like". The need to save money to pay the dowry for one's marriage was mentioned during one of the focus group discussions.

The stories of Ethiopian and Eritrean migrants both in Ethiopia and Sudan show that the desire to escape abusive family circumstances and oppressive gender regimes are important motivations for migration. In Ethiopia among the internal migrants, there was a strong link between the decision to migrate and the negative role of step-parents, aunts and uncles, who abused the girls physically, mentally or sexually. Girls who moved to Addis Ababa from rural areas also described a situation where restrictive gender norms were limiting their mobility and their life choices. Parents fear that girls may start sexual relationships, get abducted and raped, or become pregnant and therefore keep them at home and do not allow them to continue their education. Elsbieta, who grew up in the region of Menz (Amhara) said that she liked to play with boys and girls but her parents would punish her when she would come home too late: "*When this happened I would go to my brother or sister and they would let me in late at night after everyone had gone to bed*". Her friendships were, however, innocent and she did not have any boyfriends: "*It's not common in our culture to have boyfriends. It's considered bad to have a boyfriend. You won't have a good image in the community. It would also mean that you won't be fit to be chosen to marry. It's mostly a brotherly friendship and nothing more. If a family finds out that someone's son touched their daughter, it can escalate to the level of killing people. It's the same if you're found drinking or going out at night.*" And Hayat, another sex worker, said: "*Getting pregnant without wedlock is frowned upon and parents may ask children to leave their house for being a disgrace. In some instances if other people didn't know about it they might keep her in the house until she gives birth*".

[3] *Bhakti kora* (express devotion) is the Bengali term that best expresses the kind of respect and hierarchical love due to parents and elders by young people, as well as to her husband by a wife, while in return elders, parents and husbands are expected to provide guidance and economic support to their inferiors.

A number of internal migrants in Ethiopia and Ethiopian and Eritrean girls in Sudan also left to avoid arranged marriages. Both Eritrea and Ethiopia have laws prohibiting marriage under 18 years old and changing social norms about marriage are changing slowly. Even so, especially in rural areas of Ethiopia (for example the Amhara region is infamous for abduction of girls for marriage)[4] and to lesser extent in Eritrea, girls as young as 12 still face the danger of arranged marriages. Two of our Eritrean respondents had been married very young and against their will.

The more complex qualitative material from our migrant and refugee respondents shows how there are elements of agency, as well as pressure, in the motivations in the choice to migrate and in the way the decision to migrate is taken, as will be discussed further in Chapter 8. Individual decisions are taken within very constrained options and can result from contrasting (diverse) factors: the struggle to survive versus following aspirations and desires. These factors are dependent on one's age, previous experiences, level of education, marital status and socio-economic condition of the family of origin and the socio-political context of the country.

[4] The Amhara Region in Ethiopia has the lowest median age at marriage in the country at 14.7 years –significantly below the national figure of 16.5 years – according to the Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey of 2011. This Region has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world though the Family Codes of the Region as well as the country provide that the minimum legal age of marriage is 18 for both girls and boys. Fifty-six per cent of Ethiopian girls marry before the legal age. (See more at: http://www.unfpa.org/news/award-winning-programme-gives-ethiopian-girls-safer-transition-adulthood#sthash.MozypSMH.dpuf) accessed 29 March, 2016.

6. Risks, Vulnerability, and Volatility

The types of risks adolescent girls experienced in their places of origin, during migratory journeys, and in the places of destinations as migrants expose a range of their specific vulnerabilities. One of the suggestive findings of our research is that differences in the reasons why girls are migrating and how well they fare during their migratory journey and in their places of destination is affected by their childhood experiences. For example, among the Ethiopian and Eritrean migrant and refugee girls in Khartoum those who recounted positive memories of their childhood found it relatively easier to cope with the experiences of migration in the place of destination. Among the internal migrants in Ethiopia, those who went through crisis and shocks in their households (whether divorce or death of one of the parents, early marriage, abusive household relations, experience of sexual violence at an early age) as children found it more difficult to build positive experience in their places of migration and often ended up in sex work as a means of earning living. We will first discuss the range of risks affecting girls in each of the places of their migratory journeys, and then turn to the discussion of vulnerabilities and volatilities.

6.1 Risks

Risks can be understood as 'known uncertainties' or 'known probabilities of outcomes'. As Horst and Grabska argue, "the concept of risk is based on a full understanding of possible outcomes and of the likelihood of those outcomes occurring – without knowing which outcome will occur in each individual instance" (2015: 2). As such, the concept of risk can be understood as "a framing device which conceptually translates uncertainty from being an open-ended field of unpredicted possibilities into a bounded set of possible consequences" (Boholm 2003: 167). Whereas much of the research on risk as calculated uncertainty comes from economics, a socio-cultural approach towards risk "acknowledges the fact that risk knowledge is seen as historical and local, as constantly contested and as a subject to disputes and debates over their nature, their control and who is to blame for their creation" (Zinn 2006: 278).

In the place of origin, during the journey, and at the destination, migrant girls encountered a range of risks. As described in the chapter on girls' motivations to migrate, girls were subject to male predatory behaviour, at home, during the journey and at destination. Some experienced physical and psychological violence from their fathers, step-fathers, or other male members of the family. Others decided to leave due to the violence that they experienced in their marriages, especially in Bangladesh. The story of Sharmeen who decided to leave her abusive husband and her parents-in-law and move to Dhaka in search of independent work at a garment factory reveals the risks that girls faced when married at an early age without a more secure position within their household. During the journey, Eritrean girls who crossed borders to Sudan are especially likely to have experienced rape and sexual violence at the hands of smugglers, fellow migrants, Sudanese security personnel, or Rashaida kidnappers[5]. At the place of destination, Ethiopian internal migrant girls as well as those who migrated internationally to Khartoum and the Middle East and ended up working as domestics often experienced sexual violence or threat of such from their employers.

[5] Rashaida tribes live on the Eritrea-Sudan border. As a marginalised group, they make their living from trading in arms, smuggling and kidnapping. They have been actively involved in smuggling and kidnapping Eritreans over the past several years (see Humpris 2013).

Moreover, girls also experienced risk of abuse from their female family members. This was especially visible in the narratives of Ethiopian internal and international migrants. Orphans and children who are born out of wedlock are often considered "cursed" in Ethiopia, especially by relatives who feel forced to take care of the children of their deceased sister or brother. They are seen as an economic burden on the family, and are used for domestic work and not treated like the other children in the family. For some girls this was a reason to come to Addis Ababa. Helen grew up with her aunt, thinking that it was her mother. She was abused and exploited continuously. "*I used to ask myself "Why would my mom do that?". (…) When I asked people why she was beating me so much, they told me that she was not my mother*". Helen decided to run away with a boyfriend. She took a risk by migrating to Addis Ababa, but could not stand the level of abuse anymore.

Girls in all three case country studies were subject to pressuring and constraining gender norms especially at home and at the destination. Many of these gender norms are related to the sexuality of girls and their 'readiness' to be married. In Bangladesh, for example, when a girl reaches puberty people say that '*boyos hoece*' (she has come to age) and from that point onwards girls mobility is limited by the observance of *purdah,*[6] and adults and parents try to keep the occasions of interaction between boys and girls to the minimum. Adults view adolescence and youthhood as a problematic period; puberty onwards is commonly considered a phase of particularly strong emotionality. Young people, irrespective of gender, are considered to be *abeg probon* (prone to passion), even more so than adults. They are said to be exceptionally *gorom* (hot), to have hot blood[7] and this is deemed to depend on their sexual maturation. The word *probon* can also be translated as 'addicted' and the expression *abeg probon* conveys also a sense of weakness, dependency and incapacity of control. Every form of cross-gender interaction before marriage is considered very dangerous because of the strong force of young people's sexuality and every kind of interaction between boys and girls is easily labelled as having a sexual connotation, and as such being illicit. Their parent's fear that daughters may lose their chastity or acquire a bad reputation and lose their honour by engaging in premarital relationships is one of the reasons why parents tend to arrange their daughters' marriage as soon as possible. Despite the increase over the years of the age at marriage for girls, marriage before the legal age of 18 is still a common reality both in rural and urban contexts (Amin, 2015). According to UNICEF Bangladesh 66 per cent of girls are married before 18 and about 33 per cent are married before 15 (UNICEF Bangladesh 2008). The strength of the dominant views of sexuality, honour and gender circumscribes the risks and the vulnerabilities that girls face.

Strong social pressures for girls who have reached puberty to marry are also present in Ethiopia and in Eritrea. Gender affects children's lives from the very beginning; it affects the way they are treated by their parents, siblings and relatives, the type of work they have to do in the household and on the farm, their education, their freedom of movement, their relationships with friends, and their ambitions and aspirations for the future. Numerous studies have shown that Ethiopian girls are at a disadvantage when it comes to issues regarding education, health, and basic human rights. In 2013 Ethiopia was ranked 173rd out of 187 countries on the Gender Development

[6] Purdah, which literally means curtain, has not to be understood only in the limited meaning of the physical seclusion of women inside the house. Both for Hindu and Muslims purdah entails an ideal of modesty enforced through '*prohibition on movement, gesture, speech and association and the development of feminine characteristics like virtue and* shame' (Ahmed 1993:60). Papanek argues that *purdah* operates through two different principles: '*separate worlds*' and provision of '*symbolic shelter*' (Papanek, 1982:6). The first is mostly related to the division of labour and a series of rules regarding the use of space. The second underlines the tension between the private domain pertaining to women and the outside world.

[7] Osella and Osella (2002:119) notice that bodily heat and strong sexual desire are, in Kerala, an attribute of both young males and females, in contrast to what appears from other anthropological sources, where women are depicted as more prone to it.

Index (undp.org). Government campaigns have extended educational opportunities countrywide, and strengthened girls' access to education, as well as criminalising under-age marriages. The sexuality of adolescent girls, however, is still strictly controlled and premarital relationships are not accepted. As a girl's virginity is valued highly for securing a good marriage and respectability, parents and guardians often resort to 'protecting' girls from engaging in sexual relations. Adolescence is a key moment when girls are both eager to experiment with sexuality, as well as at risk of being perceived as sexual objects by boys and men. Parents and guardians thus often stop girls from going to school, where they fear the negative consequences of co-ed education. They also are afraid of the potential abduction of girls into marriage, especially in the Amhara region. Parents and guardians also see arranged marriages at a younger age as a way of keeping control of girls' sexuality. A number of Ethiopian girls interviewed for the project confirmed these concerns. Several girls were married at the very early age of 13 or 15. Those who got pregnant from their boyfriends and were then rejected by them felt stigmatised in society. According to the report *Girls Not Brides* (2015), in Ethiopia, two in every five girls are married before their 18th birthday and nearly one in five girls marry before the age of 15. Rates vary greatly by region. The Amhara region has the highest rate of child marriage with nearly 45 per cent of girls married before 18. Early marriage is deeply rooted in many Ethiopian communities, perpetuated by poverty, a lack of education and economic opportunities, and social customs that limit the rights of women and girls.

The situation for Eritrean girls is slightly better, where similar gender norms that give male children a higher value in the family, and girls 'marrying out' are in place. Some progress was made in terms of achieving gender equality during the struggle for national liberation, where women were very active in combat and the liberation movement. As a result, early marriages have been made illegal in Eritrea since the early 1990s. The Eritrean People's Liberation Front sought social transformation around women's issues and pushed for legislation that abolished forced marriages, child marriages and dowries. The Eritrean Civil Code (articles 329 and 581) sets the minimum age of marriage at 18 years for both girls and boys. However, there is a lack of awareness about the illegality of child marriage and its harmful impacts. A major difficulty in tackling child marriage is the conflicting nature of Eritrea's legal systems, as formal and customary laws are not harmonised. Customary law carries great weight in Eritrean society and provides for a minimum age of marriage, which is 15 for females and 18 for males (see www.girlsnotbrides.com). According to *UNFPA Child Marriage Profile: Eritrea* (2012), limited access to education is associated with the high prevalence of child marriage in Eritrea. 64 per cent of women aged 20-24 with no education and 53 per cent with primary education were married by 18 years, compared to just 12 per cent of women with secondary education or higher. While the Gender Equality Index has not been calculated for Eritrea, according to the 2014 Human Development Index, Eritrea was positioned at 186 out of 188 countries and territories in the world.

Another set of gender norms affecting risks and vulnerabilities of girls is related to the access to education and work. This is despite the increased educational opportunities being created for girls in rural and urban areas in these countries. However, girls often give up education in order to help out their families, as we have seen in the cases of internal and international Ethiopian girl migrants as well as in Bangladesh. In Ethiopia and in Eritrea, it is first-born girls who have tended to leave schools in order to help out their families in securing livelihoods. They often contribute to the costs of educating of their younger (male) siblings. While education is now more widely available and more acceptable for girls, as we have seen in our case studies, many girls still face constraints and obstacles in accessing and continuing with education.

These findings on girls' schooling may be related to the extremely limited scope for wage employment for women and girls in rural areas. In all three countries, women belonging to the poorest landless families may take work as daily labourers in the fields, where they work for very low daily rates, or more often as domestics in neighbouring houses, where they are most likely paid in kind. In Bangladesh, these jobs, apart from having a low return in economic terms, are perceived as contrary to *purdah* norms and women who have to take them are held in very low esteem. In Ethiopia and in Bangladesh, a few educated women may find employment in NGOs, or as teachers, but the supply for such jobs is still much higher than the demand. The rate of girls' enrolment in secondary school has significantly increased in the 2000s in all three countries, reflecting a widespread awareness of the importance of education. Yet, in Bangladesh, for example, rural households, especially landless or functionally landless agricultural families, can hardly afford providing education up to higher levels despite the economic incentives provided by the state such as the stipend program[8]. Completing the first cycle of secondary school, and obtaining a Secondary School Certificate, is expensive and not perceived to lead to any desirable form of employment for girls in Ethiopia and in Bangladesh. With investment in education not ensuring a return, marriage remains for poor parents the best way to secure a daughter's future. There is consensus however that this scenario has been significantly altered with the expansion of the garment manufacturing industry in Bangladesh that has become the first type of mass wage employment for women and girls outside home (Hossain 2012). Migration for wage employment in the RMG sector has become a feasible alternative to early marriage and childbearing for rural teenagers. In a similar way, in some rural areas in Ethiopia international labour migration of girls has replaced (early) marriage as the main strategy for rural families to improve their livelihood and benefit from their daughters. In Eritrea, access to education is much more valued for girls than in other countries in our research, under the influence of highly pro-gender equality policy discourses in the country. Yet, due to the obligation of national service and limited work opportunities (for boys and girls), girls have very few work options.

Another set of risks was related to girls experiencing abuse, deceit and exploitation at the hands of those who enabled their journey to the cities or abroad. In the case of Ethiopian girls migrating to Sudan, some ended up in bonded-labour like conditions, being cheated by the (usually male) agents who brought the girls to Khartoum and collected their salaries for the first months, controlled their access to employers and their living conditions. With limited networks in a new place, the newly arrived girls were cut off from sources of protection. Similar stories were shared by some of the young women who returned from the Middle East.

Some girls talked also about risks associated with developing cross-gender relations in the destination. Most talked about the risks of being cheated by men and taken advantage by them. Tsirite, a 22 year old from Ethiopia working as a tea-seller in Khartoum said: "*We do not trust Ethiopian men, and neither the Sudanese. They want to make friends with you, but what they really want is to control you and your income. They want to take your money and then also expect you to work for them doing domestic work while they are relaxing on their beds. It is better not to have boyfriends here. This is not a good place for boyfriends*." In Bangladesh, most of the girls we talked to declared that the main reason they came to Dhaka was to work to help their families and stated that they were not interested in any form of entertainment. They smiled and giggled when we asked them if they had boyfriends. Yet, the majority admitted only to phone conversations with someone. There is also widespread mistrust in boys/men and fears of being cheated by young and older suitors. This is in many cases justified by experience. As Lamia said: "*In Dhaka…… relationships with boys… there is a different 'system'. Actually they don't have relationships...they just pass their time. After sometime you will realize that they are married and they have children at home, but they flirt -just to enjoy."* Another girl in Dhaka said

[8] In rural areas girls are provided a stipend to cover education costs up to grade 12.

that boys run after girls who have money and that they don't consider those who live in the slums: "*The bad thing is that this is a slum environment, the good thing is that boys would not disturb girls who live in the slum because they would think that these girls are dirty and that there is no advantage in mixing with slum people.*"

As a consequence, most of the migrant girls we talked to in Bangladesh do not openly take advantage of any potential opportunities that Dhaka might offer and tend to maintain a very restrained attitude. During a FGD one girl said that she was looking forward to going back home because in Dhaka "there is too much freedom" ('*shadinota*'). We were told the same by Halima, who repeatedly told us that she was spending her days between her room and the factory with no interest and trust in colleagues and neighbours. "*Life in the village was good. Here people don't talk to each other. Nobody would say anything to a girl who goes home at 10 -11 in the night. In the village it's not like this, it doesn't work like this. In the village there are people who check on you, here there aren't.*"

The situation for migrant girls in Addis Ababa, as well as in Khartoum, is similar. They usually keep a low profile, tend to spend most of their time between work and home, and have no time for other activities. In Khartoum, the only social activities that the girls and young women participate in are their visits to churches, and occasionally visiting friends and attending weddings.

The types of risks that the adolescent girls and young women experienced at home, during their journeys, and at the place of destination is linked to their vulnerabilities. The risk of sexual violence, exploitation, early marriage, and others mentioned in this section undermine their ability to cope with their migratory experiences. We turn to this discussion next.

6.2 Vulnerabilities

In this section, we follow the definition of vulnerability offered by Robert Chambers. As he argues:

> Vulnerability refers to exposure to contingencies and stress, and difficulty in coping with them. Vulnerability has thus two sides: an external side of risks, shocks, and stress to which an individual or household is subject; and an internal side which is defencelessness, meaning a lack of means to cope without damaging loss. Loss can take many forms – becoming or being physically weaker, economically impoverished, socially dependent, humiliated or psychologically harmed (Chambers 1989: 1).

The sources of vulnerabilities for migrant and refugee girls and young women are multiple: their position as women, as girls, of a specific ethnic and national background, their legal situation as foreigners, the absence of parents, guardians or relatives who could provide support, the nature of their work, their level of education, and the almost non-existing support from international, national and community organisations. These vulnerabilities constitute risks, shocks and stress that girls and their households experience and contribute to their internal defencelessness. There is, as Moser and Holland argue, a social element to vulnerability, "the insecurity of the wellbeing of individuals, households, or communities in the face of a changing environment" (1997: 5). These make migrant girls more vulnerable than their local peers, who were born and grew up in the places of destination. The journeys they make can also be moments of acute vulnerability for some migrants. Those who travelled with complete strangers from Eritrea or Ethiopia to Sudan for example, and relied on unknown networks of agents were in greater danger of experiencing deceit and violence. For others, it was a 'pure luck', as the stories of Eritreans show. Some were caught by Rashaida smugglers, abused and demanded ransom, and others managed to escape.

Those whose families were able to pay usually did not experience sexual abuse. The context of migration is major source of vulnerability, with some girls being more vulnerable than others depending on their situation, as it will be shown subsequently.

Status: between legality and illegality

One of the key sources of vulnerability of girls, especially those who migrated abroad, was their legal status in the country. The often irregular status of adolescent girls' and young women migrants in Khartoum is found to be a key issue that affects their vulnerability. While Sudan has been hosting refugees and migrants for decades, according to the official policies, refugees are supposed to stay in refugee camps, not in cities. Those who move to Khartoum are often subjected to arbitrary arrests, harassment from the police, detention or even deportation. While most migrants and refugees are subject to such treatment, young girls and women are at a greater risk of sexual violence. Several girls shared their stories of random pick-ups by police or other Sudanese men who then raped them. Stories of harassment, both verbal and physical, had a prominent place in young women's narratives. In Khartoum, we witnessed several round-ups around the Ethiopian church in Khartoum 2 just after Sunday prayers. A 21 year old Hannan from Ethiopia explained: "*You know, these security people come in civil clothes, they sit with us, drink tea and chat, and then, they start rounding up people and put them to jail. They pretend they are out brothers, but they cheat us." Helen commented: "I wish I could tell Sudanese that we, Habasha, are also human beings. They treat us like rubbish. But we have our humanity, we have our culture, we deserve respect.*"

As part of the research in Ethiopia thirty young women were interviewed who migrated to the Middle East when they were under 18 years old. They had changed their birth certificates in order to be allowed to migrate. Yet, many of them became undocumented after having ran away from their employers. Running away is one of the few possibilities of leaving a situation of abuse and exploitation and could be considered an act of resistance. Undocumented migrants run the risk of being arrested and deported, and are very vulnerable for violence and abuse. The stories of those who were deported from Saudi Arabia during the large scale deportation campaign in 2013-2014 were particularly shocking. More than 160,000 Ethiopians were deported in a period of four months after the end of an amnesty period. The interviewed girls who were deported went through violent arrests, imprisonment, sexual harassment and rape. Zemzem was arrested when she was out in the street: "*It was so bad, the police caught me when I went to a shop to buy oil. They put me in a car and took me to prison. In the prison I saw many Ethiopians, some of them were dying. The Saudi police put drugs in our bread to make us sleep because many people were having mental breakdowns".*

Being alone

One of the main sources of vulnerability of migrant girls and young women was the limited network of community relations they had, especially during the first years of their arrival in the city. Tsedi, a sex worker in Addis Ababa, said: "*Life in in Addis is challenging. You can only cope with the city if you are a fast learner, or if you have a good family who gives you directions. But I didn't have anyone to give me advice and I did things as they came. This led me in the wrong direction.*" One of the main sources of vulnerability for migrant girls is the absence of their parents, or other close relatives, who can provide for them and support them. Family relations are of utmost importance in Bangladeshi, Ethiopian and Eritrean societies and form the main source of an individual's support, both mentally and financially. Girls who have left, or lost, their parents in their places of origin are therefore extremely vulnerable for abuse and exploitation.

The absence of any male relatives is an added source of vulnerability. Girls who do not have a father or brothers are more vulnerable than girls who have male relatives in the places of origin.

Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Eritrea, and Sudan are patriarchal societies where the status and living conditions of women and girls largely depends on the presence of men. Women and girls without male protection are faced with numerous challenges, and those who have migrated to the city are even more vulnerable. The alternative support networks migrant girls create are very fragile. Yet, it is important to remember that not all families are sources of support, certainly not for those girls who were vulnerable by abuse at home and for whom migration was an escape.

This paradox emerged clearly in Bangladesh, where with protection comes control. In Bangladesh young female migrants often initially moved to be with an elder sister or distant relatives, who may treat them less well than would their parents at home. However, migrant girls can incur in further risks if they live alone and they lack '*an umbrella over their heads*' as a neighbour said referring to a migrant girl: Jamila. In Jamila's case the symbolic umbrella missing over her head was the presence of her uncle whose family she lived with for a few months after arriving in Dhaka. This is common to most of the young migrants we interviewed that distinguishes them from other adolescents who had been born in the slum or had migrated and live with family members. As the girls' stories show, living with close relatives is a source of support as well as control and limitations. By leaving her uncle's house after a few months in Dhaka, Jamila put herself in the condition of being more independent but even much more at risk of incurring in different kind of dangers. Even more vulnerable among the group of migrants are those who do not have any male relatives or a reliable neighbour in the village of origin who can take care of their female relatives. These relatives also sometimes travel to Dhaka to intervene in the lives of the migrant girls. The younger migrants felt helpless and insecure because of the absence of their parents and the lack of emotional support. They found themselves shifting overnight from a position of dependency on their parents to one of '*shadinota*' (freedom). This brought some of them to regret their situation in the village where they felt controlled but also cared for.

Some older migrants were in a more secure and stable situation. This was the case of those had been living in Dhaka for longer and were earning an higher salary who felt self-confident enough to try to migrate further afield. This was also the case of some young women who married successfully at destination where they had also been able to move from the *bustee* to better accommodation.

Being a (migrant) girl

In some respects, migrant and local girls share similar sources of vulnerability and constraints due to their age and gender. For example, they share the same constraints in terms of mobility, possibility of cross-gender interaction, the same risks in terms of physical and sexual violence and ultimately the same social sanctions when and if they do not conform to the social norms, which regulate the transition to adulthood, sexuality and marriage. In all three case studies, these norms deny and repress cross gender premarital attraction and intimacy and limit the possibilities of experiencing friendly relationships and developing reciprocal knowledge between boys and girls before marriage. In Bangladesh, the social gender norms and sanctions for breaking these norms seem to be more severe than in Ethiopia and Eritrea. For migrant girls living in the Middle East or in Sudan, there is an additional layer of gender norms operating in the host society that places them in a lower societal bracket than local girls. As mentioned in chapter 4, Ethiopians and Eritreans are often seen as 'loose' and sexually available, thus, in the eyes of the host society, the abuse towards them seem to be justified.

This discrimination and stigmatisation of migrant girls is another source of vulnerability. The fact that migrant girls are doing low status jobs and are living without the protection of their family affects their social status negatively. In case of problems, neighbours or other local people rarely

support them. According to the interviewed girls in Addis Ababa people turn their heads away and do not want to involve themselves when there are conflicts. More importantly, law enforcing bodies, such as the police, do not support migrant girls when they are the victims of crime. Sex workers in Addis Ababa in particular complained about the lack of respect for them and the various ways in which they are discriminated and stigmatised. When they are confronted with violent clients, the police often turn a blind eye. In Khartoum, migrant girls and young women face constant fear of arrest and imprisonment based on lack of residence permits, or their perceived breaking of moral codes.

Ethnic origin

For some migrant girls, their particular ethnic origin was the main source of vulnerability. The discriminations suffered by the ethnic minority Garo are reflected in the great obstacles migrant Garo girls encounter owning and running their own beauty parlours.

Low education and being young

In Ethiopia and in Bangladesh, as well as among Ethiopian migrants in Khartoum, another source of vulnerability is that many girls have not been able to finish their schooling and have too few educational qualifications to take up jobs that may help them improve their lives. As domestic workers and sex workers they have little or no chance to continue their education and are consequently stuck in low paid work. The lack of other jobs for girls with limited educational qualifications makes them very vulnerable. In Bangladesh, low educational status makes it difficult to progress to better paid jobs in the factories. In Ethiopia, migrant girls have often no other choice than to work as domestics or sex workers. People under 18 years old need a legal guardian to be able to take up a formal job. Illegal brokers are willing to function as legal guardians but often lure girls into domestic work or sex work. Both types of work are highly vulnerable to abuse, violence and exploitation. With a limited support network and no supportive family around, migrant girls in Ethiopia are prone to be misled, abused and exploited.

Nature of their work

The nature of their work was a source of vulnerability for some migrants. Those working as domestic workers, waitresses in bars especially during night-shifts, tea-sellers often experienced physical, sexual and emotional abuse. These unregulated work terrains and spaces leave the girls at the mercy of their employers and customers. The vulnerability of Ethiopian adolescent girls who migrate to the Middle East and to Sudan is mainly related to their living and working conditions in the private sphere of the house of their employers, and the fact that they are abroad. They live isolated lives and often experience different forms of abuse and exploitation. They are very vulnerable because they have limited freedom of mobility and few contacts with peers and fellow Ethiopians. This is comparable to domestic workers in Ethiopia, yet the fact that they are in a foreign country and are legally tied to their employers through the sponsorship system increases their vulnerability.

Living in the city, living on rent

Another important source of vulnerability is that migrant girls in Dhaka, Addis Ababa, and Khartoum, with the exception of live-in domestic workers, live in rented housing. As a result and also because they have not been living in the city for a long time, they occupy a lower layer in the power hierarchy of the residential areas. In the slums of Dhaka, informal power is wielded to the

'*istanio*', and newcomers, migrant girls especially can easily become homeless, for example if they do not conform to the unwritten rules that govern the slum.

All the girls interviewed said that one of the most important improvement in their situation would be to have their 'own place' to live. For Ethiopians and Eritreans living in Khartoum, the insecurity of rental situation, high inflation and increasingly difficult economic situation makes them subject to the pressures and potential exploitation from property owners. Young migrants and refugees tended to change their living areas quite frequently, and as they were also in rather insecure working situations, they often lacked funds to pay the rent and thus needed to move frequently. As mentioned in chapter 4, sex workers in Addis Ababa also move houses frequently because of the high rent, but also because they did not want to become known as sex workers in the area where they were living.

Limited support system

In all three case studies, limited institutional support from community organisations, international and national organisations, the national government, or embassies abroad further marginalises migrant and refugee adolescent girls and young women (see chapter 7).

These vulnerabilities of the migrant girls and young women expose the multi-faceted aspect of vulnerability: political, economic and social. At times sources of vulnerability are individual risk factors while at others they are structural/institutional norms and regulations and operating gender norms. Chambers' draws attention to the distinction between vulnerability and poverty. Vulnerability as we have presented here, "means not lack or want, but defencelessness, insecurity, and exposure to risk, shocks and stress" (Chambers 1989: 1). Our examples point to individual, household and structural characteristics and outcomes. In this way, they show the links of vulnerability to access and ownership of assets, and the role of social ties and institutional arrangements. An important further structural aspect of vulnerability is volatility, which as demonstrated by our research, is omnipresent in the lives of adolescent migrant girls and young women.

6.3 Volatility

A longer perspective on the lives of adolescent girl migrants and refugees demonstrates that their lives are overwhelming volatile. We follow the metaphor and approach developed by Room (2000) in particular who emphasises one key dimension of vulnerability. 'Snakes and ladders' refers to expected and unexpected variability that can lead to advance (ladder) or decline (snake) in well-being. In the following, we present how due to the extreme volatility that marks the everyday experiences of migrant adolescent girls, they find it difficult to carry out their plans or even to make other than very short-term ones. Their lives are marked by protracted uncertainty and precariousness (see Horst and Grabska 2015).

Our data for the three case studies vividly illustrates how volatility and vulnerability are part of everyday experience. In Khartoum, for example, throughout the fieldwork, girls' and young women's circumstances were changing very fast. Losing and changing jobs and housing was something of common, almost daily, experience. Ruptures and crises in the families who stayed behind, perhaps leading to unpredicted arrivals of siblings, put frequent pressure on the young women.

In Dhaka the whole garment industry is characterized by insecurity and precariousness. The factory may suddenly close down and jobs be lost; hours and wages may be cut down. The girls themselves may have to leave because of health emergencies and returning home for treatment, they lose their jobs. Like all those who live in the *bustee*, but more likely than most, migrant girls are at risk of eviction. As we observed by following some of the migrants over more than one year, their situations, as well as that of their families are also quite volatile. The fate and well-being of a girl migrant and those of her family can change overnight. They are affected and by many different factors and events: the sudden death of parents or siblings at home for example, the illness of children, getting married or divorced, the intrusive surveillance of neighbours, all can completely modify the migrant's opportunities and obligations.

In Ethiopia, financial volatility was constant in the lives of sex workers who always ran short of money and whose income was unstable and unpredictable. Other financial difficulties arose when they had to change their accommodation, which happened often.

Ever-present volatility in their lives affects migrant girls' ability to plan longer-term, and undermines their ability to respond to sudden changes in their situations and to withstand shocks. Being out of their protective environment exacerbates these difficulties and the additional penalties of being adolescent or young, of being girls or women and being migrants reinforces the fragility and precariousness of their lives.

In all three countries, the risks, vulnerabilities and volatilities that are associated with being migrant girls are very acute and often more acute than those of girls and women who have not moved. They are certainly different and often more severe than those of young males. Their stories demonstrate how the experience of risk, vulnerability and volatility is gendered and potentially limits or affects the course of changes in gender relations. Yet, some of these risks and vulnerabilities might be mitigated by the available institutional support system, but also by the girls' own agency in expanding their social capital. We will turn to this discussion next.

7. Sources of Protection

7.1 Organisational and institutional support

Despite the large numbers of adolescent migrant girls and the presence of many international and local organisations in Dhaka, Addis Ababa and Khartoum, institutional support networks that could protect them are lacking. Adolescent migrant girls are clearly visible in the urban landscape of the three capital cities, but they are largely invisible for those planning and implementing development interventions. Government institutions have no particular policies focusing on migrant girls and national and international organizations rarely distinguish them as a separate group for project and programmes.

In Bangladesh, policy and development interventions have been focusing on adolescent girls mainly in connection to and as possible victims of child marriage. Most of these interventions are framed in the language of human rights and identify the spreading of secondary education as the main tool to postpone girls' marriage and tackle its negative consequences: early child bearing and the consequent risks for mother and child's health, domestic violence and the generational transmission of poverty. Some projects also try to postpone girls' marriage by providing opportunities for training and involvement in income generating activities.

The Population Council Bangladesh has been running a project called BALIKA (Bangladeshi Association for Life Skills, Income, and Knowledge for Adolescents) to evaluate the effectiveness of different approaches to prevent child marriage. There are several components of the programme. One, through education support girls receive tutoring in mathematics and English (in-school girls) and computing or financial skill training (out-of-school girls). Two, in life-skills trainings girls received training on gender rights and negotiation, critical thinking and decision-making. Three, in livelihoods training, girls received training in entrepreneurship, mobile phone servicing, photography and basic first aid.

In a similar line the 'Kishori Abhijan' (literally 'adolescent journey') project is another example of a comprehensive attempt to postpone marriage for girls and promote 'girls' empowerment'. A pilot phase of the Kishori Abhijan ran from 2001 to 2005 and a second phase, funded by the European Union Delegation to Bangladesh, from 2006 to 2011. The project was jointly implemented by UNICEF Bangladesh and the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) and some local NGOs. There are two main objectives of the programme: "to empower adolescents, especially girls, to participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their lives (including education, livelihood strategies and increasing age at marriage) and to become active agents of social change and -to create and sustain a supportive environment for adolescent girl development at the household and community level" (Sood et Shuaib 2011: iv).

Another major area of intervention focuses on improving the working conditions of garment workers. Yet, there are no particular interventions directed at adolescent migrant girls. A recent three-year project funded by the Europe Aid and implemented by three local NGOs focused on rural-urban migration of children and involves mostly child domestic workers.

In Ethiopia, the migration of children, including adolescents, has recently become an area for interventions of local and international organisations. The Population Council in cooperation with the OAK Foundation and Save the Children have, for example, carried out studies and initiated interventions in order to protect and support "children on the move". Save the Children

is a partner of Terre des Hommes and in that capacity involved in the "Destination Unknown" campaign. Local organisations such as CHADET have initiated programmes targeting independent migrant children. The main goal of these interventions is to prevent children from migrating and to rehabilitate children that have run into problems. More recently, projects are being developed that focus on ensuring safer migration of children instead of preventing children from migration. The Bureaus of the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth are involved in protecting and rehabilitating children that migrate independently and take their responsibility very seriously. There are, however, no interventions or support mechanisms that focus on adolescent migrant girls as a separate group. Adolescent girls are mainly the focus of development interventions in the field of education, campaigns against early marriage, and HIV/Aids (see for example the projects of the Population Council and Girl Effect Ethiopia). In addition, there are a number of local NGOs that focus on sex workers, such as NIKAT Charitable Society and Timre Le Hiwot. While a considerable number of sex workers are under 18 years old and many have a migrant background, adolescent migrant girls are not distinguished as a group that needs special interventions. Yet, these organisations provide important support for migrant girls, and those that are involved and benefit from their activities are often very positive.

In Khartoum, international organisations are abundant but none of them focuses specifically on adolescent migrant girls. UNHCR offers financial, legal and psychosocial referrals for registered refugees. With their commitment to gender and generational issues, UNHCR has special focal points responsible for dealing with children, trafficked persons, and those who suffered from gender-based and sexual violence. However, none of the Eritrean girls who participated in the research was aware of the presence of UNHCR in Khartoum. Other organisations, such as UNICEF and Save the Children focus on the Sudanese population, even though they argued that their mandate includes all those residing in Sudan. None of the Sudanese government institutions have any specific programmes or projects addressing young migrants or refugees. In terms of local NGOs, most of them focus their programmes on women and girls in general, without being specifically open to migrants. One of the few local organisations that assist migrant and refugee girls is SEEMA, a center for training and protection on gender-based violence. They provide psychosocial and legal assistance, capacity building of service providers and expanding the network of NGOs working with IDPs and refugees. Another organisation is Al Fanar, which offers psychosocial assistance to refugees. SIHA, a regional network working on the rights of women, had a number of projects focusing on migrant communities including girls and women. Yet, these activities were not known to the girls who participated in the research.

Ethiopian migrant girls working as domestics in the Middle East have very limited sources of support and protection. There are hardly any legal frameworks that protect their rights, and in case they are available, girls do not know how to access them. Domestic labour is not covered by the labour laws in the Middle East so migrant girls that run into problems cannot complain about their working conditions. There are very few NGOs that protect the rights of migrant women in the Middle East, and in particular on the Arabian Peninsula where civil society organizations are strictly controlled by the state, and migrant organisations even more. In case migrant girls are able to leave the house of their employers to seek help, they contact the Ethiopian embassy. Yet, only those with a legal status are being assisted. The fact that adolescent girls often entered the country undocumented, or with false documents, affects their chances to be assisted. Ethiopian Associations, which are linked to embassies, sometimes provide financial and legal assistance and offer temporary accommodation but they lack the capacity to help large numbers of girls and women.

7.2 Informal sources of protection

In the absence of institutional support networks, adolescent migrant girls turn to informal sources of protection, such as those offered by social and religious networks. The importance of religion often increases among migrants; religious networks can provide mental, practical and sometimes financial support. In Ethiopia and Sudan churches in particular were major sources of support. Ethiopia is a highly religious country with the main religious denominations being Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Muslim or Protestant (often Pentecostal). In Sudan Islam is the state religion yet other denominations can practice their religion. There are Catholic, Protestant and Ethiopian Orthodox churches, whose main adherents consist of migrants and refugees (also from South Sudan). When asked whether religion had become more important in migration, an Eritrean girl in Khartoum who became a member of the Pentecostal church said: "*Of course it has. Most of us here in Sudan, in Khartoum, we are alone. We spend our days worrying, and struggling. When we come to the church, we are close to Jesus, we are happy. We can share with others, and we hear from the pastor that we are not alone, that Jesus is with us, even if our lives are difficult, we are not alone. This makes me happy. When I leave the church, I feel happy, I feel uplifted.*"

For adolescent migrant girls in Addis Ababa the church was mainly a source of mental support. Tigist, who is a sex worker, said: "*I love going to church when I am depressed. I love praying to God to help me stop doing this job. Although I never wanted this life, I thank God for everything*". Yet, she also mentioned that people discriminate her and criticise her for going to church. "*People say: How can you go to church while you are doing this type of work?*" Churches in Ethiopia do not offer practical and financial support to migrant girls; girls only go to church for mental support. In Bangladesh, the Catholic and Protestant Church and some missionary congregations active in the capital and in the area of origin of the Garo migrants constitute an important source of social security for migrant girls, in addition to providing employment opportunities.

Socially, adolescent migrant girls in Sudan and Ethiopia who have freedom of movement sometimes frequent places where they can meet others and obtain support and information, such as Internet cafes, shops, restaurants and coffee places. In Khartoum, for example, internet cafes serve as major advertisement places of marriage offers to Diaspora members. Cafes and restaurants are also places where Eritreans and Ethiopians could socialise, spend time together, share food, exchange the newest information, meet potential smugglers and minimise their isolation. Most of these places, however, are inaccessible to the girls and young women, due to strict gender norms and gendered division of space. Unless they work in these places, otherwise, they are mainly frequented by men who, as a result, have a better access to information. The differentiated access to jobs and public spaces for girls and young women influences their access to information and their ability of creating social capital. In consequence, those who work in more isolated jobs (live-in domestic workers) have less possibilities of enlarging their repertoire of opportunities.

In Bangladesh, adolescent migrant girls are also restricted in their freedom of movement. First they have very little time available to go out and visit public spaces, and second their social reputation is at stake when they are seen in (internet) cafes or restaurants. Shopping is one of the few leisure activities that are acceptable for adolescent migrant girls. In view of the restrictions on their mobility, the role of mobile phones has become extremely important in the lives of adolescent migrant girls. Once they buy a mobile phone they start widening their social network and overcome initial fears and shyness. Also in Khartoum, mobile phones play a very big role. Ethiopian and Eritrean girls stay in touch with their families back home, but also with friends and relatives in other parts of the world. They are often active on Facebook and obtain great pleasure from posting pictures of themselves (see Grabska forthcoming). For domestic workers in the

Middle East mobile phones are also crucial to keep in touch with their beloved ones. Yet, not all the migrants can afford buying a mobile phone, and many cannot afford a smart phone. Domestic workers in Addis Ababa often earn too little to be able to purchase a mobile phone.

7.3 Building social capital

One of the main ways in which adolescent migrant girls support each other is by sharing resources, houses, money and food. Connecting with other migrants, those who have been in the city for a long time, relatives or friends, serves as a major support system. Building social capital was therefore a key element in most of the girls' narratives. They often talked about the help that they received from strangers, other young migrants, or community groups, or in the case of Eritreans in Khartoum from church groups. They developed new networks of friendships. As was mentioned in chapter 4, friendships develop easily between girls that are working in the same factory in Dhaka, work as sex workers in the same area in Addis Ababa, or share a room in Khartoum. Profound affective friendships may develop into important sources of support in times of need.

The examples of strangers helping each other point to the ability to recast social and kin relations in the place of migration. "*We did not know each other before coming here. But these girls saw me suffering in Shegerab camp (in Sudan) and then they helped me to come here. Since then we have been staying together and sharing together. We help each other.*" said Almas, a 21 year old Eritrean refugee girl in Khartoum. At times, girls would meet by chance their neighbours or distant relatives from back home. Others would try to create good relations with their neighbours. Mashou, an 18 year old in Khartoum, explained about the atmosphere at their compound, where she shares a place with her Ethiopian girlfriends: "*All the neighbours who live here love each other. If they make coffee we all drink together. I don't drink coffee normally but if they offer me I drink it out of respect. We build relations with everyone. They (the neighbours to the right) are from Eritrea. Two girls work for Sudanese family with me. They are from Ethiopia.*" The vulnerability of girls and women is thus minimised due to their capacity to create a safe environment, or the capacity for the environment to be safe.

Domestic workers are more isolated and have fewer possibilities to build social capital. For migrant domestic workers in Addis Ababa attending evening classes can be a strategy to build social capital; they meet other girls and build up friendships, and sometimes they assist and advise them. Their teachers can also be important contacts in case they are in need of assistance or advice. Domestic workers who are not allowed to leave the house unaccompanied or who have a very heavy workload have much less possibilities to build up social capital. They depend to a large extent on their employers and their willingness to assist them in case they are in need. This is particularly the case in Sudan and on the Arabian Peninsula, where domestic workers are often very isolated and have very limited freedom of movement.

In the interviews with sex workers in Addis Ababa the expansion of their social network was often mentioned as one of the positive sides of their migration. Hiwot said: "*Previously I was not good at approaching people. But now the work itself has changed me, it forces me to communicate with people, it makes you meet people and it makes you free. Before I used to get shy talking about sex but now we talk openly about sex, condoms, sexually transmitted diseases. I also teach others about those things.*" Fire also thinks that her communication skills have improved: "*With regard to my social life, I have learned to communicate with other people and have a good relationship with them. My awareness about many things has increased.*"

Concluding, there is very little institutional and organisational support for adolescent migrant girls in all three cases. They therefore depend to a large extent on informal networks. Those who are

able to build social capital are better able to protect themselves than those that have a very limited social network. In the next chapter we will discuss the various ways in which migrant girls exert agency and show resilience as a way to protect themselves and cope with situations of vulnerability and risk.

8. Resilience and Agency

In this section, we discuss adolescent girl migrants and refugees' agency and how they manifest it through their actions and choices. The idea of agency of children on the move has been taken up theoretically by a few key studies, by developing notions of "thicker and thinner" agency (Klocker 2007) or "tactical" agency (Honwana 2005). In her research with child domestic workers in Tanzania who work long hours and face a range of abuse Klocker offers the idea of thick and thin agency to understand the continuum of children and young people's constrained agency in different contexts. She argues that,

> "thin" agency refers to decisions and everyday actions that are carried out within highly restrictive contexts, characterized by few viable alternatives. "Thick" agency is having the latitude to act within a broad range of options." (Klocker 2007: 85).

Over time and space, as well as across different relationships, a person's agency can get "thicker" or "thinner". The concept of "tactical" agency developed by Honwana in her research among child soldiers in Mozambique emphasises the coping with the concrete and immediate conditions of children's lives. "Their actions, however, come from a position of weakness" (2005: 49). The analysis demonstrates that child soldiers occupy an in between position of both being victims and perpetrators, innocent and guilty, and thus, showing that the "tactical" agency includes vulnerability that enables one to cope, even in the situation of being "weak". In this way, the agency of children and young people in difficult circumstances is often referred to as "an agency of the weak".

The relational nature of agency of children and young people is an important element in understanding the interconnectedness of children and young people's ability to act. Others (White and Choudhury 2010; Punch 2001, 2015) have shown that far from being autonomous, children's agency needs to be negotiated, and often supported by adults. In this way it is more of a collective agency (White and Choudhury 2010) than an individualised one. Punch's long-term research among children in Bolivia elucidates to the need to understand children's agency in relation to negotiated and constrained interdependencies within (between and among siblings) and across generations (children-parents) (Punch 2016).

8.1 Footprints of agency: the decision to migrate

Our data demonstrates that resilience and agency can be found in many phases and instances of migrant and refugee girls' lives. The decision to migrate is one of such instances. In all three case studies, most of the girls who migrated were facing extremely difficult circumstances at home, or in their country of origin. They left with the hope of improving their livelihoods, their own and their families' security, and their own or their siblings' educational level. While it is difficult to assess how the decision to migrate came into being, as it is often a complex set of factors that contributed to girls' migration, most of the girls in Ethiopia and Eritrea mentioned that they took the decision to migrate themselves. The decisions for Eritreans were taken in secret, without any family members or friends informed in order not to put them at risk of arrest and imprisonment. Due to the strict rules of the police state, evading national service and leaving without permission might lead to long-time imprisonment. For the Ethiopians, on the other hand, the decisions were taken both against the will of the parents as well as with the blessing of the family, individually, or often collectively. Almas, for example, did not tell her family:

I decided to come to Sudan because there were many other people coming and I heard that one can make a lot of money here. There was a man in our village who was telling us and convincing us to come here. We had to pay him 8,000 Birr (400 USD), in order to bring us here to Sudan. But when we arrived here I realised that the life was very difficult. I did not tell my parents that I was coming. I decided by myself. They wanted me to stay in Ethiopia, but I knew that I needed to help them.

Eritrean and Ethiopian girls often talked about planning the journey with some other friends or neighbours who were interested in leaving. They would then find 'samsara' (agents) who would help them to arrange the travel. Thus, rather than brokers, it was the political situation in the country, the particular family situation, men as enablers of leaving and sometimes the incentives for doing so (girls following boyfriends or escaping arranged marriages) that emerged from the research as the main influences inspiring the decision to migrate. This contradicts the dominant political and public discourse that firmly describes the migration of adolescent girls and young women from Ethiopia and Eritrean to Sudan as enforced trafficking (see IOM 2013). It rather demonstrates a negotiated and calculated ability to make decisions within highly difficult and constrained circumstances. This is an example of "thin" agency (see Klocker 2007).

In chapter 5 we already mentioned that for many migrants in the three countries, one of the main reasons for migrating was the desire to help their family of origin. One way of doing that for Ethiopian girls is to support their male siblings' education. Meseret for example was proud of her choice of running away in secret from her family to come to Sudan. Her parents preferred that she stayed at school and continued her education, "*but how could I do that? We were poor and I needed to help my siblings*", she explained. She started working when she was 13 years old. These acts of 'self-sacrifice' for the benefit of family should not be, however, seen, as acts of defeat. Rather, they demonstrate the ability of the girls to act against and upon very constraining environment and take action to change the lives of their close ones and their own.

Girls were also often running away from the gendered pressures and norms operating in their local communities. A number of Ethiopian girls, some from Eritrea as well as a few girls in Bangladesh mentioned that their parents or grandparents arranged for them to be married at early ages. The pressure of the parents, the failure of an arranged marriage, the violence experienced by the girls from their much older husbands or their parents-in-law, often accompanied by miscarriages, or giving births at very early age (14 or) were mentioned as reasons for girls' movement. Girls often referred to their situation in Ethiopia as 'no hope' (see Mains 2012 for similar expressions by young and unemployed Ethiopian men). They often felt trapped between lack of viable economic options, lack of educational prospects, and constraining gender norms. Within these dire and constraining circumstances, girls' decision to migrate can be interpreted as a sign of a 'thin' agency, an agency of "the weak."
In Bangladesh, the decision was at times taken jointly with other family members. The majority of the migrant girls mentioned the dire economic condition of their family and the need to help their parents as a reason for migrating. Few research participants in Dhaka mentioned more individual objectives, and only a few motivated their migration with wanting to escape familial pressure and control and/or planned of moving to the capital permanently. We cannot say, however, that these girls have been forced to migrate, that they have simply complied with a decision taken by someone else or that they have just passively responded to the pressure of the circumstances. Rather they have shown a capacity to evaluate and consider their different possibilities, building on their own experiences and their own perceptions of where their immediate interest lie. As one of them said: "*I had the sense to come here when I realized how difficult it was for my parents*". Some others during an FGD said: "*Parents would not push their daughters to migrate.*

We came after realizing how bad our family situation was and how much hardship out parents were going through. Nobody told us to come. We came after becoming aware of our parents' difficulties."

Running away from restrictive home environments was another example of girls' ability to act. Fire, a sex worker in Addis Ababa, was very unhappy at home, she was not allowed to go anywhere and hated the restricted environment in her parental house. She decided to run away when she was 13 years old. She lived in different places, worked as a cleaner for the military, and came to Addis when she was 18 years old. She stayed for a while with her aunt but they were arguing all the time and she decided to leave. Reflecting on her life, Fire said: "*I always worry about my life, thinking about what I did yesterday, what I am doing and what I will be tomorrow. I feel more freedom now than before. Even though I am a sex worker I feel freer than before. My life depends on this work, even though I face the worst things in this work. Some people force me not to use condoms saying that they will give me more money. I face psychological problems as a result of what I face during the work. Wherever I go with a client, we are not treated equally. They call me names saying that I am a prostitute.*" Fire regrets that she ran away from her parents because she thinks that she could have improved her life in other ways. Yet, she realised that she made a conscious choice when she decided to run away, and is able to reflect on her decision and life in hindsight.

8.2 Access to work and increased ability to make choices

One way of improving the available choices and expand decision-making for girls was through access to paid work in the place of migration. Most girls found work upon arrival in Dhaka, Addis Ababa and Khartoum. In terms of available jobs, in all three cities, there is limited choice in the urban labour market for adolescent girls. For domestic workers in Addis Ababa and Ethiopians working in Khartoum there was often little agency in the choice for a particular type of work. They had often been invited by a relative or acquaintance to come to Addis or to Khartoum and were employed as domestic workers without having a say in it. In Dhaka, most migrated with the objective of working in the garment industry, some as domestics, and some to work in beauty parlours or to do piece work jobs such as sari embroidering. In Khartoum, the labour market is also rather limited with domestic work, work as street tea-sellers, cleaners, waitresses in restaurants, being the main areas of employment. While there are also girls involved in sex work, none of the girls interviewed for the study admitted doing such a work.

In Addis Ababa, entering sex work can be perceived more of a choice for girls. A large number of girls in our study became sex workers after having worked as domestic workers. They had been disappointed by their lives as domestics, frustrated because their dreams of continuing their education were not fulfilled or harmed by the abuse and exploitation they encountered. Sometimes other girls convinced them to run away and to take up other work, first in waitressing, and then as sex workers. In some cases brokers arranged sex work for girls, but the girls worked mostly independently. They could work in hotels or on the street. Street workers are more independent than sex workers that work in hotels, yet we did not come across stories in which girls were exploited by the brokers or hotel owners. Entering and doing sex work therefore seems to allow more agency than entering domestic work.

Agency and resilience are also demonstrated in the ways girls cope with situations of abuse, exploitation and violence at destination. For example, girls who migrated to Addis Ababa internally or across the border to Khartoum had high hopes of their futures but were disappointed because they ended up working as domestics for the relatives who had promised to send them to school, but instead abused them and exploited. Their actions show their ability to cope and resist. Hayat came to Addis to live with her aunt who promised to arrange her

education but instead made her do household chores. Hayat was raped by her uncle and the way she dealt with this shows her resilience:

> *I felt very sad and angry. To lose your virginity this way is the worst feeling for a young girl. The pain of the actual incident and the pain of having my virginity taken by someone I had high regards for were unbearable. I didn't tell my aunt fearing that I would disrupt her marriage but also fearing that she would not believe me. I thought she would think I was making up stories. It's not a story that I could easily tell anyone let alone my aunt. The fact that I kept quiet actually encouraged him to try and rape me again and again until I left. After seven months in that house I told some girls that I met around the school what had happened to me. They told me that it was good for me to leave the house after such a bad experience. They told me that I could stay with them and at that time it seemed a better alternative to me. I left that house without even telling my aunt.*

One of the main ways of escaping situations of abuse and oppression is to run away. This is what many sex workers did when they were employed as domestic workers. Hayat also entered sex work after having run away from her aunt's house. The girls that she had met happened to be sex workers and convinced her to start doing sex work as well. "*I needed money to survive so I gave in."* While Hayat ended up in sex work, her decision to leave abusive family shows her resistance and ability to make a choice, even if a very limited one.

For newcomers without links to networks in the city the first months are challenging. In Khartoum, a large number of Ethiopian girls arrived through middlemen who arranged their journeys (Abbas 2012). As they did not know anything about and anyone in the city, they had to rely on the agents for basic survival. Tsirite who was 18 when she came from Axum explained:

> *We did not see much of the city at first. We arrived on a truck, late at night and were taken to some house in Omdurman. We did not even realise it was already part of Khartoum. Next day, we were put to work with a Sudanese family as domestics. Mashou, my friend, who was 16, she was afraid and she was not that strong. She just accepted to work for 250 SDG (23 USD) per month, with one day off during the week. Me, I tried to argue, even though I did not speak the language. They paid me eventually 350 SDG (28 USD). But we did not see any of this money. The samsari (agent) would take it. We worked like this for almost 2 years. Once we knew the language, and a bit about the city, and met other Ethiopians, we ran away.*

This shows how girls also increase their ability to act with time and experience, and accumulation of human capital, in terms of learning new skills and ways to survive in an unknown environment.

Sex workers in Addis Ababa complained about the fact that they were unable to leave sex work because they had got used to earning much more money than they would get as domestic workers, in waitressing or in other jobs such as hairdressing. It is interesting that the most common statement was "it is easy to enter sex work but very difficult to get out". This shows that entering sex work is sometimes a personal choice, but also that leaving sex work is considered impossible and therefore not a choice. It shows the tension between agency and structure.

8.3 Increase in agency as the capacity to decide about the direction of one's life

At the time of leaving, girls' objectives, plans and motivations for migration were embedded in their childhood social relations and closely interlinked with their status as girls, with their particular birth and sibling order. Yet, as our data demonstrate, over a period of time, the gender and age power relations shift, as a result of the spatial shift linked to migration and their experiences at destination. This shift intersected with a process of personal growth and development of an adult identity with the capacity to decide about the direction one's life was going to take even in contrast sometimes with norms. Sanjida migrated for the second time to Dhaka as a domestic worker at around 13. She did it unwillingly and under the pressure of her family. This second experience however turned out much more positive than the first one mainly because of the relationship that Sanjida established with her employer who realized how upset Sanjida was for leaving her parents and family behind and tried since the beginning to console her. Even when at 15-16 both her 'auntie' (her employer) and her parents thought that it was time that Sanjida got married she refused and decided that she would rather keep working and helping her family.

> *When I was 15-16 they wanted me to marry, I said that I didn't want to marry, I wanted to work. I wanted to work and with the money that the 'auntie' was giving me every month I could somehow find out a way to improve my family's situation, but I needed more time. My sisters were still little, one was in class 3 and one in class 4-5, so there were costs for their education, I could save all the money she gave me because I didn't have any expenses, so with that money I was helping my family and my idea was that I would bring my family to a better position. I wouldn't marry, I would work.*"

Finally Sanjida found a good job in an NGO and since then she supports her family and in particular her younger sister's schooling.

> *Then after joining that office almost 8 years had passed, I started with a salary of 2000 taka (about 26 dollars), now my salary is 12000 taka (about 154 dollars) and something more, my family is fine. One of my sisters passed the intermediate exam, found a job and probably she will keep studying. My family is more or less in a good situation. They get more support from me than from my older brother. They respect me so much that, as I took responsibility for the whole family, they feel they have to do according to my will. It goes on in this way: they do what I say without complaining and they never asked: you are a woman, why do you talk? My situation now is good, after I found a job there has been a lot of improvement in my family situation, in my personal situation, from all points of view.*

In Sanjida's case the good relationship she established with her employer has been essential for the development of her self-esteem and she has become assertive enough to refuse to marry and pursue her objectives with great determination. On another occasion she said that she felt that her parents were now treating her as a boy.

(Re)negotiating norms around gender identities and womanhood is another dimension of migrant adolescent girls and young women's agency. While the socially accepted ways of becoming a woman might not be easily attainable for example in Sudan, some Ethiopian and Eritrean youth are slowly carving out alternative ways of becoming adult women. Most of the girls talked about the fact that the experience of migration brought changes into their lives. They referred to the fact that they have become responsible and independent. Helen, from Eritrea, for example explained that:

Even though my mother wants me to get married because I am 26, I cannot and do not want to do it here. I want to study first; I want to get a good job. (…) Although I am still single, here I had to grow up very fast. Now, I am responsible for my family in Eritrea. I am the oldest one. I have a responsibility here for them and for myself. I earn money, and I pay for my expenses. I am somehow grown up now. No one else is responsible for me here. I can also decide what I want and how I want to live my life.

Migration and the related events such as living alone far from the family, being financially independent and earning money through one's own work, as well as at times being able to help the family members who stayed behind financially, or assist younger siblings in pursuing education and in their migratory trajectories internally or internationally, were often perceived by girls and their family members as a way to become an adult. Gaining responsibility through the act of independent migration, and thus gaining some level of independence, growing up, decision-making space gave a sense of an alternative adulthood.

For some, however, migration resulted also in 'getting stuck' in their status as girls. Some girls and young women felt that due to migration they were unable to get married and have children, and that they had to postpone these transitions to a later stage. Thus, for some, migration resulted in delaying the stages of social transitions into adulthood.

8.4 Protecting themselves and building social capital

Invisibility: Navigating the everyday harassment and insecurity

Stories of harassment, both verbal and physical, had a prominent place in young women's narratives. Especially in Khartoum, we witnessed several round-ups around the Ethiopian church in Khartoum 2 just after Sunday prayers. 21 year old Hannan told us: "*You know, these security people come in civil clothes, they sit with us, drink tea and chat, and then, they start rounding up people and put them to jail. They pretend they are our brothers, but they cheat us.*" Girls adopted a variety of strategies to remain invisible in the city, by often wearing black *abayas* (black robes worn in Islamic states) and headscarves, an outfit seen as appropriate attire of a Muslim girl in Sudan. They also preferred to share accommodation with other girls or families, in order not to stay alone or with men and be exposed to additional harassment from police and Sudanese neighbours. When seeing police and security pick-up trucks on the streets of migrant neighbourhoods, girls would instinctively hide inside the shops or behind houses. Even those who had legal residency documents (which had to be renewed every 6 months and paid for to the police) were constantly vigilant. "*If they catch you, they do not care around your document. Even if you have a valid residence, they will tear it and tell you to go to jail*" young Eritrean women explained. It was better to stay invisible, even if you were legal. These strategies of blending in were aimed at hiding 'otherness: through altering external appearance and national or ethnic identity and taking on the appropriate appearance of the gender identity. Eritrean and Ethiopian adolescent girls and young women complained about the restrictions on dress code and on their interactions with men that they were subjected to in Sudan. This, in turn, affected their conceptions of the type of adolescent girls and young women they could or should be in Sudan, as opposed to who they wanted to be.

As mentioned above, both domestic workers and sex workers in Ethiopia and in Sudan are confronted with abuse and exploitation and develop coping strategies to protect themselves. "*No one protects you here, you are on your own. You have to learn how to protect yourself*" was the usual response of the interviewed girls and young women. Learning to protect oneself was also often seen as a

positive consequence of migration. "*If I go home now, even if I have not made a lot of money, I have seen many things in my life, I have faced many hardships. I learned how to take care of myself*", said Helen.

Some girls are more resilient and strong in responding to abuse than others. Those who are very submissive usually experience a greater exploitation. Girls who had worked since they were very small, came from harmonious and protective households, and were better educated found it easier to deal with adverse circumstances. Unfortunately we do not have much material about the ways in which domestic workers deal in their daily lives with abuse and exploitation because the girls did not speak about their coping strategies in the interviews in Ethiopia. In Sudan, some girls mentioned their strategies of leaving domestic work, or negotiating their salaries and treatment with employers who were keen on keeping them. Some girls mentioned how they on purpose misbehaved at work in order to 'punish' their employers' for abusive treatment. As mentioned before, running away was mentioned by sex workers who had previously worked as domestics. Sex workers sometimes spoke about their strategies dealing with clients, trying to convince and argue with them when they wanted to do things that they did not like, but in the case of drunken and violent clients their agency was very limited. They were often beaten up and could not do much against it. Hayat said: "*I don't feel there is protection from the government or the police for people in our line of work. The police either try to use us for sex like any other guy or come to rescue us after we have been badly hurt by someone.*"

In Bangladesh where girls' movements in the narrow lanes of the slums are constantly under the public gaze, young women try to avoid being given a '*durnam*' (bad name) and being subject to eve-teasing and harassment by walking back and forth from the factory or the market place only in small groups or in a couple. Secret cross-gendered relationships are initiated and nurtured through phone calls and Internet social networks.

Social capital

Building social capital is one of the ways to diminish the vulnerability of migrant girls. As Moser shows, "the means of resistance are the assets and entitlements that individuals, households, or communities can mobilise and manage in the face of hardship. .... The more assets people have, the less vulnerable they are, and the greater the erosion of people's assets, the greater their insecurity" (1998: 3). As we discussed in chapter 7, girls and young women built new social networks in the cities in order to increase their ability to cope with their situations.

One element of migrant girls' individual development is the space that they have in the city to build social capital. This was a key element in most of the girls' narratives. They often talked about the help that they received from strangers, other young migrants, or community groups, or in the case of Eritreans in Khartoum from church groups. They developed new networks of friendships, were able to pursue their religious believes (for example Pentecostals who are persecuted in Eritrea for practicing their religion).

8.5 Agency: self-esteem, choices, aspirations

The impact of migration and work on the lives of the girls was viewed very differently in the three case studies, but also the views varied among the different groups in each country. In Bangladesh, for example, according to the survey for about two thirds of the migrants migration and work had had a positive impact on their sense of self-hood and self-esteem, on their mobility and on an increased decision making power in their daily life. This sense of personal growth has been expressed by some migrants in terms of an

increased capacity 'to understand' (*bujha*) an important concept that can be understood as the knowledge that derives from experience and the consequent ability to perform one's duties and behave according to social norms but also as the capacity to assume adult responsibilities. As a village girl who had just arrived in Dhaka Tasmina felt lost: "*I am a village girl. I didn't know anything. At that time I didn't know anything. I was afraid, I got lost, I was standing in the street and crying."* As a working woman who can support her parents she now 'understands' and she is in the position of deciding that she wants to postpone her marriage. "*Now, you have to consider that I work independently, I stand on my own feet, I earn money, I can help my parents. Now I understand everything. I will not marry now, a bit later, it's not time now. I want to keep working."*

On the one hand, when parents say about an obedient and respectful child that he or she 'understands', '*bujha*' seems to imply conformity: the knowledge and respect of social norms and the capacity to adhere to and behave according to social expectations. On the other hand, our data shows that when 'understanding' is related to working, being able to live in Dhaka without one's parents while keeping intact one's reputation, it means also to be able to manage one's life and act in one's interests. It presupposes the individual capacity to assume responsibilities in different domains and activities, not necessarily according to what the hegemonic gender norms prescribe. It is associated then not only with the adherence to social obligations, but also to the ability to negotiate them and exercise a degree of agency.

For some, however, when faced with daily challenges of survival, harassment insecurity and volatility of their conditions, girls and young women often found it difficult to see the positive sides of migration. While most girls and young women in Khartoum did not point to a major change in their lives, when prompted they talked about small specific personal changes that took place in their lives, the small steps of change and transition. They often referred to the fact that despite the social norms constraining their mobility as young foreign women and girls in Khartoum, they felt freer in Khartoum. While discussing their memories of childhood and becoming adolescent in their places of origin, both Ethiopians and Eritreans talked about the differentiated treatment, rules and household duties that they were subjected to as girls. Parents would not allow them to move around freely without parental or male control and protection. Mothers would very often control the mobility of girls in order to protect their virginity and control sexual relations. While interactions between boys and girls were allowed, pre-marital relationships were out of the question. In Khartoum, girls and young women talked about a greater sense of freedom, of greater mobility, less social control, in the absence of parents and close (male) relatives. This also allows girls to experiment with cross-gender relationships.

Salam is 23 years old and migrated 9 years ago from Ethiopia to Sudan:

> *Migration for me on one side it is good and on the other side it is bad. When I say it is good because I know many new things. Even if I do not have much money, I have learned how to manage alone with a small amount of money. I have seen many things since I left Ethiopia. I have worked for many years, but no change (in terms of money). So if I go back to my country even if I have five Birr (0.25USD), in my life I have passed many thing because I was not like this and I have seen many things. In terms of health, I was fat but now as you see me I am thin. Migration has taught me many things. I know how to decide by myself now.*

Although Salam was unable to continue her education after coming to Khartoum, migration has been a way of learning about the world, and learning skills. Thus, migration, separation from family, and having to rely on oneself is a form of education.

The narratives of girls and young women also reveal that migration and a geographical shift has been a way of developing themselves. They are developing a sense of self in the place of migration, and in the wider world. This is also illustrated by girls' awareness that there is really no option of going back now. While for Eritreans, becoming a person is linked to a movement forward in the world, to moving (see Treiber 2014), for Ethiopians, it is the sense of change in their own personalities as a result of migration. As Salam said commenting on her experience of returning home from Khartoum for one year when she was 15, "*once you left your home, once you have seen other places, you cannot just go back and sit at home.*" Almass, a 26 year old, who migrated first from Addis Ababa to Khartoum when she was 18, and then went back twice (once for 18 months when she got married, and then to see her daughter whom she left in Addis Ababa), "when you go back, you just sit. And you have to be able to move in your life to achieve something. There is no chance (*mircha*) in Ethiopia. So it is better to migrate."

For Bangladeshi migrants, migration has positively affected a process of personal growth that is much more visible for those migrants who have been more successful in terms of work and earning and those who have been residing in Dhaka for longer. Plans for the future have also become more defined and realistic. Three young women, Lamia and Monira and Salma have, despite initial and current difficulties, managed to save some money and establish a good network of 'friends' so that migration abroad has become an option. At a more general level, all girls and young women interviewed for the research showed a great deal of resilience in their ability to confront the constraints, limitations, challenges and setbacks they have to face at home, during journey and at destination.

Long-term aspirations

The experiences of the adolescent girls and young women in the three cities demonstrate that their migration might lead to further migration. For example, the determination with which Lamia in Dhaka pursued her decision to migrate abroad shows her increased ability to make a decision and a choice for her life. She did not see any future prospects by working in a garment factory in Dhaka and decided to migrate abroad where she hoped to earn more and be able to save money, buy some land and build a house in her home village for her and her mother. Before moving to Oman she said: "*The decision has been taken, if I die I will die abroad, If I live I will live abroad*". Her plan is to stay in Oman for at least 2 years and then go back to the village and settle there.

Many of the interviewed domestic workers in Addis Ababa who were attending evening classes were hoping that they would be able to continue their education and get better jobs in the future. They aspired to get married and have children but considered themselves still too young. Only a few girls mentioned migration to the Middle East. Tiggy wants to help her mother by migrating abroad. She discussed her plans with her employer who advised her to migrate only in a legal way. Some of the interviewed sex workers also aspired to migrate to the Middle East. Selam, who ran away from home because her parents were too restrictive and is now doing sex work, said: "*I want to stop this work. I want to borrow money and go to one of the Arab countries. Whatever abuse I will face there I want to go and work in order to change my life. If I stay in Addis I will not change my life. Life is very expensive here. I cannot afford to pay the rent.*" Almost half of the returned women from the Middle East aspired to migrate again. While they were often happy to be with their families again, they were disappointed by the lack of jobs and the low salaries in Ethiopia. In addition, their social status was low, which affected their marriage chances.

For most Eritreans, Khartoum was never a destination in itself. Thus, when they are unable to move forward quickly, without making long-term plans and investing in making a 'home' as well as faced with adverse circumstances in Khartoum, they usually get very frustrated and depressed.

Without being able to move, and progress to a life somewhere else, they feel they are not in control of their lives. Listening to stories of girls and young women who had been waiting for a long time to move on - stories of long-term suffering, family separation, loneliness, not being able to continue what they planned to do, not being able to support their families back home, feeling they are failing in their migratory project, and with very limited access to legal ways of migrating further - it became clear as to how and why young women take the risk of dangerous journey through Libya. Being pushed against the impossibility, the permanent impermanence, the radical and protracted uncertainty in their lives and the precariousness of their existence they are left with nothing else but taking a risk. As there is no point of return for Eritreans, there can only be onward movement. "*You can die trying, or you can die here*", told us one of the young girls who eventually made it to Germany. When asked about their long-term plans, all Eritrean girls and young women, including those interviewed at refugee schools in focus group discussions, declared that they want to move to "another country outside of Africa". They all wanted to pursue further education, to get a good job, and to be able to help their families back home. Khartoum and Sudan were not the 'dreamed places of destination' and not even offering additional services was going to change this.

For Ethiopian girls in Khartoum, the range of scenarios for the future was larger. Almost all mentioned the option of eventually going back to Ethiopia, building a house and starting a business. Some wanted to have a trading company, some selling clothes, others thought about opening coiffure saloons. Although Ethiopians have a possibility of going for visits to their places of origin, in reality most of the girls and young women were unable to do it. This was due to very low salaries and the lack legal papers, as well as restrictions of migration for young people from Ethiopia to Sudan. Also, girls realised that in Ethiopia they also had limited work opportunities. Agaresh, a 35 year old, who came to Sudan for the first time when she was 19, decided to return for good and open a beauty salon in Addis Ababa. She took her three children and went back. When we visited her in Addis Abba she told us that she had been staying with her parents without a job. The costs of opening up a business in the capital were too high, and she lost some 1,500 USD just trying to find a place. After 7 months, she decided to return to Khartoum. She was planning to join her husband who was going to be resettled to Australia. Salam also thought about going back to Ethiopia. She said:

> *I will go back, the life here is too hard. I want to get married, my time is passing. And then, if it is too hard there, I will go to Saudi Arabia. (*Her friend commented: *But do you know the Arab states are bad at this time.) Yes I know that. What if you have no choice , even if the life here is bad, if in Libya is bad, even if in Ethiopia is worse, then what (is) the solution? I will work there as a domestic cleaner that is the only job they have.*

The narratives of migrant girls and young women show the limits and the constrained choices that girls are faced with. Yet, they also demonstrate that girls and young women are aware of the hazards of the journey, as well as the dangers of different migratory destinations. They were considering the different options carefully, taking into account the experiences on the way versus the experiences in the places of destination. They realised that a simple return to Ethiopia was no longer possible, given their inevitably low position because they had not achieved the imagined financial stability.

The capacity of girls to create a safe environment through navigating constraining political and social environment in the city and their own lack of financial and family resources. In this context of protracted and volatile uncertainty, adolescent girls and young women's actions are an evidence of their agency and a desire for a different (gender) identity as girls and as women. While constantly being confronted with adversity, they remain flexible in a world of deep

uncertainty and unpredictability. Their circumstances also tend to change rapidly, and this great volatility contributes to limited chances of planning for the future. These observations should not take away the gravity and importance of girls' and young women's suffering caused by their migration and the situations in which they find themselves. Yet to focus exclusively on the negative, would be to deny the capacities and the abilities of the young women themselves to make sense of the tensions in which they find themselves.

9. Beyond Survival: The Wider Impact of Girls' Migration

While initially our research intended to look at the long terms effects of migration on the lives of the girls as well as on their households left behind, we were unable to collect enough data to provide in-depth account of such impacts. We had difficulties finding respondents who have been in Addis Ababa, Dhaka and Khartoum for a longer period of time. In Dhaka, the majority of older migrants either moved back to their places of origin or migrated abroad. In Khartoum, most Eritreans migrated further away. In Addis Ababa the challenges of finding adolescent girl migrants affected the time available to find older migrants, who had come to the city as adolescents. The majority of the girls and young women in the three country studies who were interviewed for the research spent between 2 and 6 years in their places of destination. We did interview some older Bangladeshi in Dhaka, a number of older domestic workers in Addis Ababa and five older Ethiopian migrants in Khartoum. This gives us only some general trends about the long-term changes in the life course of young migrants. What emerges is that even for those who have spent over 10-20 years in their destinations, the benefits of migration beyond survival are difficult to discern. Most married later and had less children, and were also able to have their children educated. Yet, they feel they were not able to buy land and build the dream house back home nor able to return.

In this chapter, we discuss the findings that provide insights about what girls and young women do once they have established themselves and secured their living. In what follows, we present findings related to sending remittances, supporting household members, investing in the future, impact on households and on the status of migrants vis-à-vis their families. In this way, we are able to comment on some wider impacts of girls' migration.

9.1 Supporting those left behind: remittances, investments, emotions

Remittances

Among migration and development specialists, financial remittances are usually the first indicator of the wider impacts of migration. The ability for the migrants to remit and support financially those who had stayed behind is a dominant paradigm in determining the success of migrants. Nina Sorensen-Nynberg (2012) described in details the glorification of Nicaraguan migrants in the US by their relatives who stayed behind as "migration heroes", while those who failed to remit and in addition were deported from their places of migration were referred to as "deportee trash". As migration is predominantly a youthful activity, it is these young migrants who are responsible for the much-valued remittances and who, optimists hope, will themselves benefit.

In our studies, the ability to remit and support families who stayed behind was part of the migratory project of some girls, but not all, as we have seen in the chapter on motivations to migrate (Chapter 5). For example, among the internal migrants in Ethiopia, according to the survey, a little less than half of the interviewed migrant girls in Addis Ababa said that they sent money home (13 out of 30). Those that were remitting money were sending it to their parents, and some to their siblings. Remittances were used for a variety of things, such as daily expenses, health care, education of siblings and the like. Six girls said that they did not know where the money was spent on. Seven girls said that the condition of their family back home had improved

economically. Most said that there was no real improvement in their family's living condition (20 out of 30). Among the survey respondents in Khartoum, only 17 out of 48 declared sending remittances to their families back home. Among them, there were four Eritreans and 13 Ethiopians. Ten sent at least once or in the past, whereas some 21 reported never have sent financial support. Among those, there were 20 Eritreans. These results point out to the diverse reasons of girls' migration to Sudan. While for Ethiopians Khartoum is often a destination from where they have to support families, for Eritreans, Khartoum is a waiting point to somewhere else. The amounts sent varied, but usually were very small, about 100-150SDG (8 to 12 USD) per month. Most of the respondents collected money over a period of a few months and then sent bigger amounts using a network of trusted agents, middlemen, smugglers, and friends. Tea makers were usually able to send higher amounts than those working as domestic workers.

Usually, women who have been in Khartoum for a longer time have been able to send increasing amounts of money. At the same time, due to the worsening economic situation in Sudan, and the increasing living costs, migrants are less and less able to support their families in Ethiopia. What they earn is spent on their own survival. Among the older women interviewed for the research, two returned to Ethiopia during the course of the fieldwork, as they were unable to maintain their families in Khartoum.

As the remittances are rather small, the impact on the families left behind is not usually very significant. Among those who have been able to send money or other support to their families in their places of origin less than half in all three case studies reported that their lives have improved, even if slightly. This shows that migration has mainly affected the lives of the girls themselves and not so much the lives of their parents and other relatives in the place of origin. The salaries of domestic workers in Addis Ababa or Khartoum (unless they work for ex-pats) are often too low to make a significant change in the living conditions of their families. Sex workers in Addis Ababa who are still in touch with their family are sometimes able to send money home. Some girls do not stay in touch for the reason of being ashamed and unable to support their parents or siblings. Others send money to their parents occasionally but the amount is not sufficient to make a substantial change to their parents' lives. Hirut, a domestic worker in Addis Ababa, commented: "*I don't send that much money unless my mother is sick. They live by themselves. They have not changed because I am living in Addis". (…) The community gives a special place for someone who lives in Addis. They think you have money. My grandmother expected clothes from me whenever I go to visit them. They respect someone who lives in Addis*." Mekdes thinks that women who have migrated to the Middle East have a special place in the home communities because of the stories about abuse. But they are not worried about women who work in Addis Ababa because they are closer by. The general view is that migration to the Middle East is financially more beneficial than migration to Addis Ababa, but the treatment of women and girls in Arab countries is considered worse. The impact of migration to the Middle East on the families left behind was bigger than of internal migration. Most of the women had remitted the money that they earned to their parents and sometimes to siblings or others. The remittances were used mainly for daily expenses but also for other things such as health care.

In Bangladesh two thirds of the interviewees, 39 (31 Bengali and 8 Garo) claimed that their family of origin's condition had improved. Thirty-five migrants who mentioned an improvement in the economic situation of their family referred almost exclusively to an increased capacity to cover basic daily expenses and health emergencies. In spite of the fact that most of the migrants claimed that their objective for the future was to save enough money to invest in assets at origin (e.g. in land) there is not much evidence from older Bengali migrants that they have been able to do this. According to Bengali social norms, with marriage a woman is supposed to become part of her husband's family and is not supposed and usually not allowed by the in-laws, to look after

her parents. Thus, some migrants have decided to postpone their own marriage to be able to help their parents and younger siblings in their studies. Many girls said that their parents could not count at all on their married brothers even though these are the ones who should be responsible for their old parents and younger siblings.

Garo social norms about the responsibilities of grown-up children are different. They frequently keep supporting their parents even after they have married. The newly wed Garo couple usually settles on its own in town and in laws usually live in the village. In the case of Garo in, long-term migration has visibly changed the villages of origin. In some of them every household has one or more members who have migrated either to Dhaka or to other towns and the flow of remittances has been substantial. Brick houses have been built in the villages of origin where in some cases only the elderly reside for most of the year.

While domestic workers, garment workers, and even tea-sellers in the three countries carefully used money and send whatever they could to their families, sex workers expressed often more regret about their decision to migrate and were disappointed by what migration had brought them. They earned much more money than domestic workers but were hardly able to remit money to their family and/or save money for the future. They considered the money that they earned "bad money" (or devil's money) because they had earned it with having others "spoiling them". They used the money for make-up, clothes, drugs (mainly chat), cigarettes, and for the rent of their house, transport and daily expenses. They did not show much appreciation of their jobs and their income, complaining that the money disappeared quickly because it was bad money.

In general, in all three country studies, it is evident that the earnings of the adolescent girls and young women are usually so small, the expenses of their stay in the city, are high, and as a result, they are unable to fulfil their dreams of changing the living conditions of their parents in a more structural way, at least in the short and medium-term. Haimanot is a domestic worker in Addis Ababa, and said: "*They (people in the village) told me that I would change my life once I get here. But nothing changed except helping my mother with the money that I make. (…) They think that I am lucky because Addis Ababa is a very good place to live. But I keep quiet because I didn't find anything. They think that I have changed and have good things. But as for me, I haven't seen any change yet.*"

The remittances of Ethiopian girls who worked in the Middle East and in Sudan were higher compared to those of migrant girls that stayed in Addis Ababa. The remittances of the returnees were mainly used for daily expenses, education of siblings, and improving the house and buying consumer goods such as television and DVD sets. The returnees were often disappointed by the extent in which they had been able to change the lives of their family structurally. They had migrated abroad hoping to make a considerable contribution but their salaries were insufficient to do so. This was for some returnees in Addis Ababa the reason to aspire to migrate again. Most Eritreans did not support their families back home. Some sent money occasionally, but others used their meagre earnings for their own daily survival. Some also tried to save some money in order to migrate further.

Investments

One major contribution of especially the Eritrean girls and young women was a financial and social network support provided to their siblings in enabling their migration to Khartoum and further on to Europe. This was, however, a huge burden and a responsibility, creating much stress for the young women. Helen, 26 years old, struggled to survive for 5 years in Khartoum. First her brother arrived without informing her and she had to provide ransom and pay his trip

from Eritrea, which cost her about 3,500 USD. The brother then left through Libya to Italy and further to Germany, finally claiming asylum in the Netherlands. This trip costed her another 4,500 USD. She was very stressed, as she had to borrow money and was constantly thinking how to repay her debts. A few months later, her younger sister showed up from Eritrea and she had to pay for her trip as well. Her mother eventually came in an attempt to join the little brother who applied for asylum in the Netherlands. Helen had to provide for all family members, and was under a lot of pressure. Her cousin, Meriam, a single mother of a 2 year old who arrived in Khartoum 6 years earlier explained:

> *It is very hard to be here in Khartoum. It is hard for girls here. They have to support their siblings who come and want to go to Libya. Like Helen, look at her, she supported her brother first, and then her sister. The brother is now fine. I saw his photos on Facebook; he is in good condition. He is in Holland. Have you seen Helen's sister? She is also strong, not like Helen. Helen is suffering because of all of them. The same for me. Look at me, I am a single mom and have to support the whole family who also came* (to Khartoum) *after me.*

Supporting siblings' education back home for migrant girls in Dhaka and in Khartoum was seen as an important investment in the future of the family as well as positive way to improve the social position of the household. There is no such evidence among Ethiopian internal migrants in Addis Ababa. Most of the Ethiopians in Khartoum were supporting their brothers, while in Bangladesh it was a combination of supporting both sisters and brothers. Among 39 respondents in Bangladesh who claimed that the situation of the families back home improved, 19 declared that this improvement concerned the education of siblings or children left behind. Investment of in education of others was seen by the girls as a longer-term strategy to improve the prospects of their families. Among the Ethiopian internal migrants, none of the women said that the condition of the household had worsened after their migration. In half of the cases it had improved economically, and in 12 cases with regard to education of siblings.

As in Bangladesh, support towards education of siblings meant that Ethiopian and Eritrean migrant girls decided often to postpone their own marriages in order to provide a better and more stable future for their siblings. At the same time, some Eritrean refugee young women decided to accept the pressure of the family to marry Diaspora men in order to be able to access resettlement to a European or North American country. This was also a form of investment that the girls were making for their households left behind as their marriage was a promise of better ability to support family members financially or with access to legal migration abroad. Providing financial help for marriage arrangements of the siblings was another important investment that the girls and young women were making. At a more general level, as migration has become a popular way of improving the household's conditions in Bangladesh, Eritrea and Ethiopia, having a successful family member in the city or abroad improved the social status of the family back home.

9.2 Impact of the support provided on the status of girls

Being able to support families back home, through sending remittances, supporting siblings' education, or migration, were seen in the eyes of the girls as changing their position in the family and community at large. But also, at times, destination of migration and the type of work that the girls were involved in had negative effects on their social position and self-esteem. In Ethiopia, half of the interviewees considered their life better than before migration, while eight said that it was worse than before. The last group referred in particular to stress and a lack of self-esteem, while four said that it was economically more difficult. Most, however, said that it had not

worsened, but improved in economic terms. Seven women said that their self-esteem had improved because of their migration. Those with bad experiences may have less self-esteem and those with good experiences more (although overcoming bad experiences may also be empowering).

In Khartoum, most girls reported that their social status has improved in the eyes of their families, even if they suffered from a decreased social status as foreign migrant girls in Khartoum. Almas talked about the feeling of her family towards her because of the support she has been sending them to Ethiopia: "*My family in Ethiopia they say that they are proud of me that I am working and sending money to them. I am able to support them. This is what they say. The money that I am sending will not change their lives in big ways. It is only for clothes, food, and nursery of my daughter. They will have to continue working to survive. If they are sick, I will send all my money to help them.*"

Girls and young women in Sudan were very proud of telling about their younger or older brothers graduating from college thanks to their support. They usually had pictures of their siblings' graduation displayed in their rooms, a visible manifestation of girls' contributions. Salam from Humora, who has been supporting her family for nine years said: "*I have my 6 brothers and sisters there in Ethiopia. I didn't get a chance to learn* (finished 5 classes) *so I didn't want them to lose that* (opportunity*) even if our family is poor. I want them in a good class, I want them well educated. If they are ok then I will be ok. My parents are proud of me, because I am able to help now. My older brother just graduate from college."* Her narrative, which was illustrative of other girls' evaluations of their own choices and decisions, demonstrates how the sense of personal self-accomplishment for the girls is intertwined with the well-being of their families. As other migrant girls, Salam was especially keen on her brothers finishing education. There was also a recognition that as educated men they will be able to get well paid jobs and eventually take on the responsibility for their households. The girls' decisions how to invest in the future of their siblings were deeply embedded in the prevailing gender norms. While they supported brothers' education, they invested in their sisters' future by supporting their marriages. This often involved underage girls marrying men not of their choice. Salam, for example, sent money to support the marriage of her 16-year old sister. When I asked her why she was not supporting her sister's education, she mentioned: "*She is already big, she should be a woman now. And if her husband allows her, she can continue education later. Also, for girls it is difficult to get well paid jobs, even if they are educated.*" Thus, the investment in education of boys seemed to be a better move rather than in the girls', reflecting both gendered structures of labour market, but also permeating gender norms and identities.

In Bangladesh, migration of young unmarried girls to work in the city is commonly seen with suspicion. People in the villages expressed worries about girls' reputation (*man shonman*, honour, prestige) and about the risks of incurring in traffickers. The aunt of a girl who lives in Dhaka said: "*We don't know what kind of people they would meet, they risk marrying with someone and then discover after a while that he doesn't have a position, that he is married with someone else*". Dhaka is definitely commonly seen as a dangerous place not suitable for young unmarried girls who are supposed instead to live under the control of their parents and relatives. Their migration is commonly justified only by economic need. Some migrants were very negative about what people think of migrant garment workers. Lamia said: "*If they know that a girl earns 5000 taka per month the people in my village would say: 'she must be a prostitute'. That's what they think, that's why we don't have any more a good reputation in the village. We can't talk to anyone with our head up, we have to talk keeping own head down.*" On the other hand other migrants reported that once they started sending money at home people's perception changed. Some girls have actually become the main breadwinners in their households and this has significantly improved their position inside their household and increased their decision making power on family matters.

9.3 Wider impact of migration

One visible impact of such migration is the changing composition of households, across places, creation of transnational households and transnational families. This also results in changing position of women (and men) within the household and power relationships regulating household relations. An Eritrean mother who came to visit one of her daughters in Khartoum commented on the impact of migration of her children on her life in Eritrea:

> *I feel so bad because I am a mother, so a mother wants all her kids to be around her. But in Eritrea the life is too bad. So all my children are leaving. First in was Helen, then her younger brother, now Luam, the younger sister. It is too difficult to be a mother, a parent in one place, and all your children are in another place. For us, it is good to be together in one house. But now we all are in different places. Scattered… Even when I eat food I do not feel it is good for me to eat. I was born and grew up in a big family and now I have a big family* (7 children)*, so I want all my family to be around me. I came here to Khartoum because my children asked me to come. And I want to live with them. But now, I left some children and my husband in Eritrea. This is also not good.*

The wider impacts of migration on social development might be difficult to assess, given the limits of the project. A more longitudinal research among families in the places of origin, and those in the wider Diaspora as well as a longer-term follow up with the girls and young women in Dhaka, Addis Ababa and Khartoum would be necessary to answer these questions. The increasing participation of young girls in the labour market in their places of destination, their increasing contributions to the household economies, even if minimal, have effects on gender and generational relations both within households and in the market. In the short term, the effects of migration on the girls and their households are rather negative. The risks and set-backs and the volatile nature of adolescent migrants' lives in the cities are so great that it takes a longer-term investment to see the more positive outcomes. Yet, one needs to also pay close attention to the conceptualisation of "change" that the migrants and their families employ. While big immediate positive change might not be visible, small steps of transformations do take place. This research attempted to make them visible in order to emphasise the great risks, costs and sacrifices but also enormous contributions that the adolescent migrant and refugee girls make for their households and wider communities.

10. Conclusions

The aim of this research was to contribute to a gendered analysis of migration, and in particular a better understanding of the drivers of migration, the decision-making processes, and the intersection of decisions around education, marriage and reproduction in the lives of adolescent girls and young women. As the three different country studies show, adolescent girls' migration is not just the result of structural factors but inspired by complex choices and aspirations, both collective and individual. In addition, migration has positive and negative effects, both for the migrant girls themselves as for their families. In this chapter, we organise our final thoughts around three thematic strands. First, we reflect on how the choice to migrate and the experiences of migration have affected the young migrants' life trajectories and how they have intersected with their transition to adulthood. Second, in all three case studies the gender order has had profound effects on the decision, experiences and consequences of migration for the girls and their families. We look specifically at social relations and at gender norms. Finally, we conclude by reflecting on whether migration is a good idea for girls.

10.1 Transitions and migration

In all three case studies, our data demonstrates that migration has contributed to challenging established trajectories into adulthood for girls and to open other pathways for becoming an adult woman.

The narratives of adolescent girls and young women reveal that migration and the resulting geographical shift have been a way of developing a new sense of self-hood. Through the new experiences at destination, many girls gained a sense of independence and widened their social world beyond the circle of their own household and childhood relationships. Migration and its related events such as living alone far away from family, earning money and becoming financially independent, as well as at times being able to help family at home financially (or to assist younger siblings in accessing education (for Ethiopians in Khartoum and Bangladeshi in Dhaka) and in migrating to Khartoum and beyond (for Eritreans)) were often perceived by girls and some of their family members as a way to becoming an adult. Gaining responsibility through the act of independent migration, and thus gaining some level of independence, growing up, and making decisions not only is an alternative adulthood, but gave some young women and girls a sense of themselves as adults in a different way. This was expressed for example by some Bangladeshi girls in terms of an enhanced capacity 'to understand'. Importantly, in other contexts some girls felt stuck in adolescence because they had significantly postponed the possibility of forming their own families and having children. This was for example strongly felt by Eritrean girls in Khartoum. For them migration had postponed their transition to adulthood.

Migration is in different ways interconnected with decisions about education. Most Bengali girls in Bangladesh as well as Ethiopians and Eritreans in Sudan had stopped their education before migration. Others dropped out because they decided to migrate. In the case of Ethiopian internal migrants, some Eritreans and some Garo in Bangladesh migration was mainly motivated by the desire to continue studying but in both cases this proved not to be possible. Overall our research suggests that in all three case studies, despite the importance given to education by both young people and adults, and despite the migrants' aspirations, migration has mainly coincided with leaving school for good. Only few migrants have been able to enrol in evening classes (domestic workers in Addis Ababa) or specialised courses at destination (Eritreans and Ethiopians in Sudan).

In all three countries, while marriage retains ideally its importance as a social institution and as fundamental step in the life trajectory into adulthood, the timing, prospects, decision-making, circumstances and purpose of marriage are changing. Marriage is often postponed by Eritreans, Ethiopians and Bangladeshi who move internally or cross-borders to escape early arranged marriages and/or to evade constraining gender norms. Marriage is also delayed for most of the young women who migrate out of economic need and whose short or long-term priority becomes to earn an income and contribute to their families' livelihood. In some cases this sacrifice is made to assist younger siblings in accessing education (for Ethiopians in Khartoum and Bangladeshi in Dhaka) and in migrating to Khartoum and beyond (for Eritreans). For some young women migration translates in an increased decision making in the choice of a husband and in choosing whether to marry or not. Some had suffered violence and sexual abuse from men and did not want to get married.

In all three countries each individual situation is complex and depends on the migratory experience, the kind of work women engage in and their experiences prior to migration. For all access to work and a certain degree of economic independence is linked to a wider capacity to take one's decisions and to manage one's life. Migration opens other ways of becoming an adult and most of the migrants, by earning an income assumed de facto a different role in the gender division of labour within the household. They often assumed adult responsibilities towards themselves and their family members. As we said above, migrant girls and young women highly value economic independence and the capacity to stand on their own feet. Yet, not all work gives life-long stability. The Bangladeshi garment workers, for example, do not perceive this occupation as leading to life security and as a viable long-term income generating activity.

While some migrants deliberately decide that marriage would not be necessarily their main life priority, for some others this is less of a choice. In Bangladesh a divorced woman has less chance to find a second husband unless she abandons her children. The same is true for Eritreans who had been raped or had been subjected to violence during the migratory journey. For those who become mothers as a result of a rape the situation is even worse. Sex workers in Ethiopia were also aware that their chances to find a suitable husband were limited because of the stigma of their work, while others did not want to get married because of their negative experiences with men.

As we have demonstrated, migration contributes to postponing marriage and it may represent a significant turning point in migrant girls' life trajectories especially when linked to acquiring economic or social autonomy. What emerges from our data is also that the way in which migration intersects with marriage choices and possibilities is strongly linked to gender orders, both in places of origin and in places of destination.

10.2 The gender order

The lives of adolescent migrant girls in all three case studies are greatly affected by the gender order and norms, in the place of origin and in the place of migration. These gender norms can be divided into those related to social relations and those related to values around morality.

Social relations

Conceptualizing gender as social relations means to interpret gender relations as the socially constituted historically specific form that relations between men and women take in a given society. These relations are characterized by cooperation and mutual support but also by

opposition and conflict and imply unequal distribution of power and structural differences in the status of men and women in different domains (see Whitehead 1979).

In Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Eritrea, societies are highly hierarchical with strong gender and generational inequalities. Gender norms regulate and influence the lives of children from the very beginning, with girls given less value within the households, as well as in the wider community. As in other male-dominated societies, male children are valued higher than female children because they will continue the patrilineal family line. Children get their father's names, and traditionally boys would continue to live with their parents after marrying, while girls move out on marriage. Gender norms determine how girls are treated, their responsibilities and the type of domestic and farming work they have to do, their education, their freedom of movement, their relationships with friends, and their ambitions and aspirations for the future.

Prior to migration, in all three cases, girls are to a large extent dependent on their families, and in particular their parents. Most migrant girls grew up in rural areas, had to take on domestic chores from a young age, had for different reasons scarce access to education. In all three countries early arranged marriage is a predominant reality. From puberty onwards the mobility of girls in rural areas is restricted, which is often related to the fact that parents are afraid that girls will get in touch with boys and become sexually active, and in the worst case become pregnant. In all three case studies premarital sex was condemned, in particular for girls. Dominant views on sexuality affect the lives of girls to a large extent. Girls are not allowed to have boyfriends, and those who enter into relationships with boys are stigmatised. In the places of origin, social control is very strong and girls are subjected to strict surveillance, which leaves them very little freedom of movement.

Girls that grow up in families with one parent, or without parents, are more vulnerable than girls that grow up with their parents. These girls often have an even greater responsibility to help their mother with household chores, and sometimes have to take up paid work at a young age. Migration is for them another way of trying to support their mother and siblings. Girls who had lost both parents were even more vulnerable. They depended on relatives, who did not always treat them well. Orphaned children are in some cases considered a burden for the remaining family, and used as domestic help.

While families, and in particular parents, are in all three case studies the most important source of protection, this does not mean that girls who grow up with their parents and siblings are not at risk and vulnerable for abuse. Poverty mainly, but also conflicts between parents could affect the lives of girls negatively, and inspire the motivation to migrate.

In the place of migration social relations are affecting the lives of girls in other ways. Living independently from their parents, siblings and other relatives, migrant girls lack the most important source of social protection. The absence of male relatives in particular increases their vulnerability. They become dependent on relations with other people, which are in most cases their peers, female relatives, neighbours, and boyfriends. Building social capital is one of the most important strategies to improve their living and working conditions. Yet, the ways in which they can develop social relations is again strongly gendered. Migrant girls are stigmatised when they move around the city freely and establish relationships with non-relatives, and in particular men. This is particularly the case for girls who have migrated internationally. They are confronted with different gender norms and social relations in the countries of migration. Ethiopian and Eritrean girls who have migrated to Sudan and the Middle East have to adjust to more conservative gender norms. They have to restrict their contacts with unrelated men and their mobility in the

public domain and cover their bodies in order to avoid stigmatisation and harassment. Yet, even when they adapt, they are still recognisable as foreigners.

Migration also affects social relations in other ways. The migration of adolescent girls has a large impact on the families at home. Migrant girls sometimes become the main breadwinners for their families and in doing so increase their decision-making power. Yet, while migration may enhance the social status of girls in some respects, in other cases it can make them more vulnerable. Their role as breadwinners may hinder their aspirations to continue their education, marry or develop their lives in other ways. They may feel responsible for their families and sacrifice their own lives for their parents and siblings. In other cases migrant girls lose contact with their families back home, and establish new social relations in the places of migration. This was particularly common among sex workers in Ethiopia; they broke with their families because of the stigma attached to their work. Migrant girls are often also subjected to the predatory behaviour of men in the places of migration, which affects their social status negatively. While they value their economic independence, their (relative) freedom of movement, and their new social relations, they dislike the fact that their social status is low and their marriage chances are limited.

The negative experiences with boyfriends and in short-lived marriages that some migrant girls have had or were observed for their peers, make young women aware of some men's exploitative intentions yet on the other hand, especially in Bangladesh, the presence of men as brothers, fathers or husbands is perceived as a source of protection and social prestige. Women's roles might be changing in some domains, mainly because of economic autonomy, but their social position is very much defined by their social web of relations, where men are an essential resource.

Women as bearers of morality

The data from all three case studies demonstrates that girls and women are perceived as bearers of morality. Often, their mobility linked to migration within and outside countries puts their status as 'good girls' at risk. In some cases migration might lead to a higher social status of girls due to their ability to contribute to their family incomes and wellbeing. At the same time, adolescent girls are also punished for their migration, as they are at times perceived as transgressing social norms (see also Grabska 2015). The fact that they live alone without the protection of their family, and in particular (male) relatives, affects their social status. This is especially so for those who migrate outside of their countries, especially to the Middle East and to Sudan. They are often perceived as being "taken advantage of" by men in the receiving countries. Their sexuality is questioned (whether voluntarily or involuntarily), which affects their social status upon return home. This is similar to the experiences of migrant girls and women in other places where they are often perceived as "fallen or loose women" and were subject to moral outrage (see Grabska 2015). Girls who migrated to the Middle East from Ethiopia, for example, found it much more difficult to marry upon their return. They were often stigmatised by their communities back home. In this way, the young women bear the burden of the challenge that their migration and the experience of migratory trajectories is making to the gender norms and to the society as a whole.

In Ethiopia, migrant girls are particularly stigmatised because they may end up doing sex work, or are suspected to being sexually violated by smugglers or their employers. They have fallen outside of the society, and are seen as crossing a critical gender norm. This affects their own reputation very negatively and also the reputation of their families. This leads them to severe relations with parents, siblings, and communities back home and the consequent psychological loss. They also experience stigmatisation in their host communities, where they are often 'ostracised' for the type

of work they are involved in, for their independent movement, and for not having a male protector. Again, their sexuality is of main importance for their social status. The strong notions about gender and sexuality in the three countries, where premarital sex of girls is condemned and where social control is to a large extent focused on controlling girls' sexuality, have great implications for migrant girls.

Even so, migration is at times seen to be a new norm, with girls' mobility sometimes acceptable. In Ethiopia or in Bangladesh, girls' migration internally into domestic work is commonly accepted. Particularly, girls moving to live with families that they do domestic work and also other work such as selling in the market are seen as within the norm. This type of movement is not understood to be putting girls outside of society. Yet, whereas domestic work is in a sense a normality, domestic workers have a low social status because it is considered unskilled work and puts them in a low position within the employing family. These domestic workers run the risk of being taken advantage of by men as well.

10.3 Migration and adolescent girls

There are many economic and political reasons why migration, internally and internationally, is increasing and is 'not going away', as now widely recognised (International Migration 2012). This research is directly addressing the increasing numbers of adolescent girls on the move within and across borders (Temin et al. 2013). It has also been widely documented that migration can contribute to, or undermine development, depending on migration experiences. Yet policies have regularly failed to enable migrants to make the most of these experiences. Changing this would require challenging entrenched power relationships at many levels, including within countries, and internationally.

The importance of looking specifically at adolescent girls has also been recognised by policy makers and global development strategies. For example, the 2030 Millennium Development Agenda includes the unique needs and priorities of adolescent girls and examines the critical role girls have to play in the development of their communities worldwide. As the girls' and young women's narratives suggest, migration for them is an expression of agency and a complex choice, which may be motivated by a desire to improve their lives or those of their families' lives, or to escape oppressive gender and political regimes.

While mobility of girls might be seen as transgressive to some gender norms, it has also become a necessity due to changing global labour markets, increasing impoverishment of rural families who need to rely on the labour of their daughters, and increasing lack of local livelihood options. As this research has found, migration generates both opportunities and risks for adolescent girls. In order to assess whether migration of girls is beneficial for them, and for their own communities, we need to have a better understanding of the situation of these girls before migratory journey. It is in these circumstances that explanations for the decisions of adolescent girls to migrate and their experiences as migrants can be found. Migration is not taken by the adolescent girls as the first resort to find solutions to the difficult circumstances that they find themselves in. As some of the girls' experiences have shown, in some ways, migration is a form of (social) suicide. It is usually the last resort. Our study shows how important it is to understand the particular circumstances of the life of young people living in the communities back home, and the type of gender pressures, opportunities and risks that exist there to understand the imperatives for the migration decisions that girls are making.

Instead of preventing girls' migration the key question is how to ensure a safer and more positive

migratory experience for adolescents and young women. This particular age group is of great importance in terms of when in the life course the spatial move takes place. The spatial move is closely intertwined with other life transitions: into work, education, marriage and having children.

The existing policy interventions locate adolescent migrant and refugee girls as victims of trafficking, smuggling, abuse and exploitation. There is a need to recognise the complexity of each girl's situation, her age, particular reasons for movement, her educational level, and the context of her host community. Policy makers must recognise the diverse potentials of migrating girls and young women, and move beyond the focus on their physical vulnerability and the need for reintegration and address directly their individual needs.

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