Radboud University

Capturing a transnational arena

An ethnographic study on the attitudes of female Ghanaians regarding migration to 'Destination Europe'
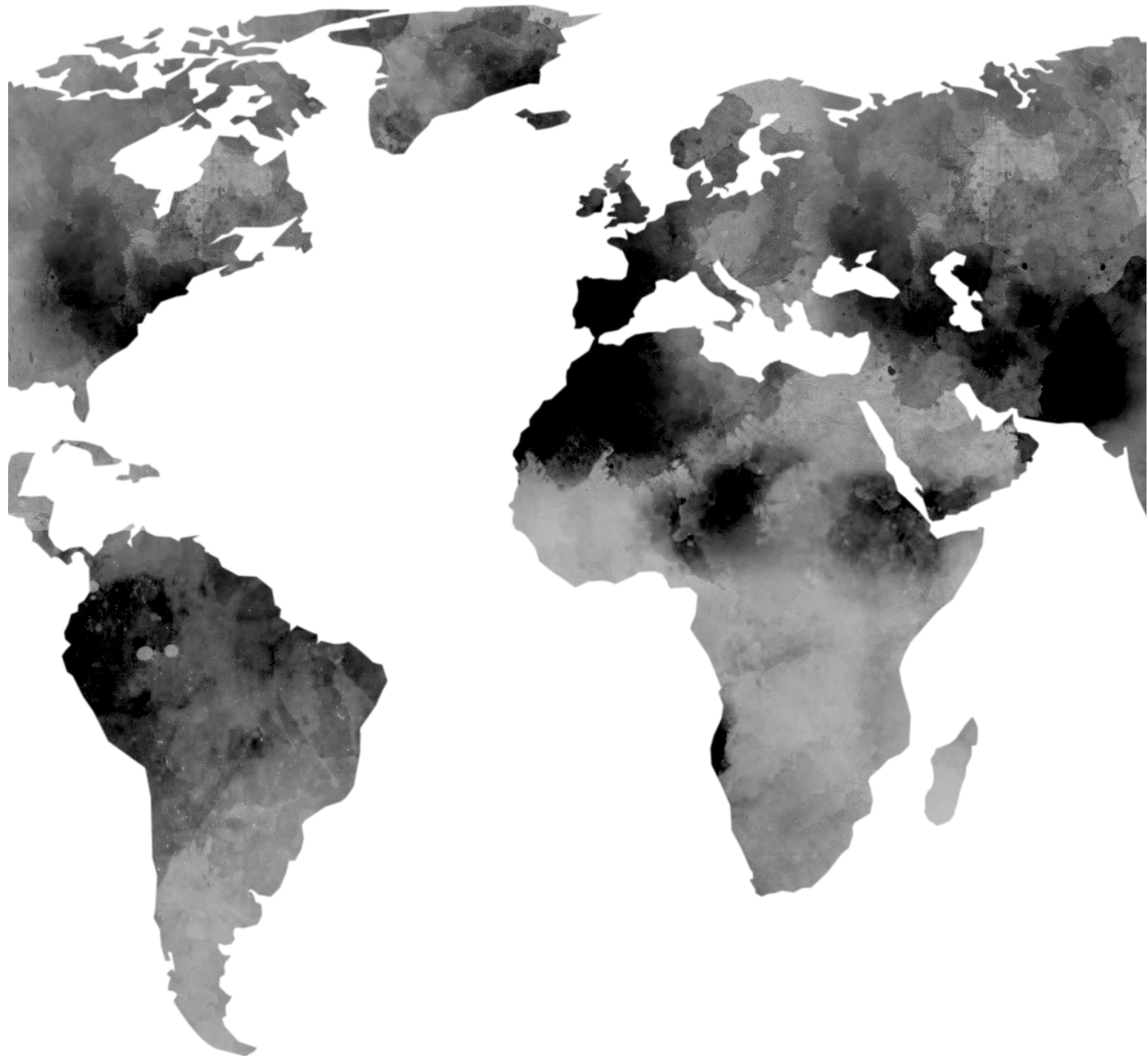
Johanna Theresa Longerich

s4187784

Radboud University

Capturing a transnational arena

An ethnographic study on the attitudes of female Ghanaians regarding migration to 'Destination Europe'

Master's thesis Human Geography – Globalization, Migration and Development

Author:
Johanna Theresa Longerich
Student number: 4187784
Human Geography
Specialization: Globalization, Migration and Development
Nijmegen School of Management
Radboud University Nijmegen
Contact: Hanna.longerich@gmail.com

Supervisor:
Dr. Joris Schapendonk

Nijmegen, 11.12.2017

*Photo on front page: Longerich, L. (2017). *World map in watercolour* [Custom-made Photoshop creation]. Personally retrieved on December, 2nd 2017.

"Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference" [1]

[1] Winston Churchill – Citation retrieved from Ballon, B. C., & Skinner, W. (2008). "Attitude is a Little Thing That Makes a Big Difference": Reflection Techniques for Addiction Psychiatry Training. *Academic Psychiatry,*

Preface

After writing this thesis on the topic of transnational migration, I came to realize that the entire time of my stay in the Netherlands could also be considered a journey. Before I came here I had an imagination in my head about the country I was going to and how my life was going to look like over there. I was facing challenges, as I had to learn another language, establish a new network and somehow experience the pain of cutting of ties from my already existent one. However, I also was able to collect many valuable experiences. All of this shaped my attitude towards being abroad and living on my own.

Even though the entire past five and a half years have been a journey, the past ten month have been the most intense one. I had been on a double journey, as I was not only traveling to Ghana and Italy and returning back to the Netherlands, but also on a journey to finish this project that you are about to read. During this journey I met some very important people that I would like to express my gratitude to.

First of all, my sincerest gratitude goes to all the wonderful people that participated in my study. During my time in Ghana and Italy I was able to talk to forty-two men and women that provided the deepest insights into their life stories in order to support me and this project. I am very thankful for all your willingness and trust, the stories that you shared even when it was difficult for you to talk about certain things and the inspiration I got from our meetings. Not only did your stories contribute to this research, but I also learned a lesson for myself. A special thank-you also goes to Francis*, who helped me with organizing my stay in Italy, in regard to accommodation and access to several of my respondents. Moreover, I want to thank Afram* and Efia* for opening their home to me and inviting me into their family during the time I was living with them in Italy. Thank you all so very much, Medase paa!

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Joris Schapendonk, who guided me on this entire journey. Without your support, this journey for sure would have been much more 'bumpy' then it turned out to be. Your input, ideas and enthusiasm about this project have been a great motivation for me. Even though there were ups and downs, the way you challenged me to think outside the box, made this project become what it is today. Thank you!

Thirdly, I would like to express my gratitude to my strong ties, meaning my family and friends and the emotional support they provided all the time. Friends in and outside of the Netherlands, that had no other choice but to cope with the fact that I was basically unavailable all the time. Thank you for always supporting me during this entire journey and for never really complaining. Lena, thanks for being there for me over the distance and for always cheering me up during the most stressful phases. Your friendship means so much to me, especially during those past few months! Also thank you, Lisa and Liza, for the amazing time we had together while being in Ghana.

Mum, Dad, I think my deepest gratitude goes to you two. During this entire journey I often experienced how stressful and painful it can be to always be far away from home. However, both of you always managed to support me no matter what, financially as well as emotionally over the distance. Thanks for the numerous late night phone calls that I sometimes needed to get back on track, for always believing in me, as well as in my skills and dreams. Your love and support over the last 25 years helped me to become the person that I am today and for that I will always be grateful. Lukas, thank you as well for always having an open ear and especially for designing the cover photo of this thesis.

Jakob, you know just as I, how hard it can sometimes be to experience separation and having to combine two life worlds at the same time, always with the awareness of not being able to capture what is going on at the other place. Living this kind of parallel life for the last six and a half years has been the most painful but at the same time greatest experience I could

IV

have made. Not only did I develop my academic skills during this journey, but I also became an independent person, something that you never tried to oppress. Thank you so much for always supporting me with whatever decision I came to you, for never putting any kind of pressure on me but always offering emotional support and showing understanding. Thank you for never holding me back, when I felt like going and for always catching me when I thought I would stumble. Thanks for all your love and friendship and all the tears and laughter that we shared especially during the last 4 years. As you will read in this thesis, waiting for someone to return is not an easy process as one often experiences the feeling of being left behind. Therefore, thank you for waiting patiently; I am now about to return and I cannot wait to write another chapter; only this time it will be ours.

Johanna Longerich
Nijmegen, December 2017

Table of Contents

List of figures and boxes

Figures:

Boxes:

List of Acronyms

EU: European Union
AU: African Union
IOM: International Organization for Migration
NELM: New Economic of Labour Migration
RM: Return Migrant
NM: Non-Migrant
AM: Actual Migrant

Chapter 1 Introduction

In the summer of 2011, Tawiah, a by now 36-year-old Ghanaian lady arrived in Milan, Italy. She came as a trained nurse and was hoping to further her education in Europe and make a lot of money to be able to provide for her family back home. However, things did not work out as planned and her dream to continue schooling got destroyed.

"… [I]f you think back in time", I asked, "before you came here, what did you expect to find here…?" "Like many I was expecting there is money on the tree" Tawiah explained. "There is money on the tree?" I asked surprised. "…Yes because … in my country, Africa, they told me there is good money on the tree, when you come there you just make a rich person …[also] I never think I will see a fly in Europe". "A fly…?" I asked even more surprised, "why, how?" "Because when we are children [back in the] older days, … our view was that Europe or abroad … is like a … nice place …that is what our grandparents always told and they say that there is no mosquitos, no houseflies [and that] you have to learn hard so that you can come to abroad. So I thought there is no fly, there is no rat, there is no insect because I thought there is only walk on ice … I was expecting good, I, … we [were] watching movies, you know? … [B]ut I couldn't make it here … [and now] I have to work, to help my family at home …" "So they are kind of expecting from you that you take care of them?", I wanted to know. "Yeah", she confirms, "they think you find the money on the trees, if you tell them there is no money, they don't even [believe you and] why should [they]? Even myself when I was there I was like 'I don't believe you'." "… There is nothing being easy to be in Italy … I tried … three times, … I was trying all abroad, I tried UK, they refused me, I went to Denmark, the same thing, but Italy." "… If I had job in Ghana, a better job, better salary, [there would be] no need for me to travel". "[And] … what were you … thinking, … the day you arrived, … when you left the airport…?" "Ahh", she says with an excited voice, "I said, this is all abroad? … My goodness, I go back." she adds and laughs. "… I was happy, I was excited, … [and] I really miss my mum, the moment from the airport I call my mum, 'mummy I am here, Malpensa, I've seen housefly', [my mum] said: 'no its not true', I said, yes!" (Parma, 23.6.2017)

1.1 Research problem

This vignette shows an extract from a conversation that I had with a lady during my fieldwork period in Italy. With her few statements, Tawiah already reveals the main focus of this study. In her friend´s small city apartment in Parma, Tawiah explained excited and at the same time shyly, what it is like to live a transnational life as a Ghanaian female migrant in Europe. She shared her hopes and expectations as well as her fears and struggles. She talked about how her imaginations, her social network as well as she as a person get affected by the changeability and friction that takes place in the transnational arena, where different people and different expectations clash and how her various experiences shaped her attitude towards migration.

In our globalizing world such kind of cross-border relationships are getting more and more common and important. Transnational spaces are being shaped and they in turn can create contrasting attitudes towards migration. However, so far many studies only emphasize how migration gets perceived from a European citizen perspective, not taking the attitudes of the migrants itself into account. Yet, getting to know these attitudes is vitally important for our field of research to understand the motivations, expectations, worries and sorrows that people have about their personal migration process, moving to Europe or returning back home. This is why this study focuses on giving a voice to individuals, explaining and

analysing their experiences and attitudes towards migration from their own point of view, in Africa as well as in Europe.

In social science different migration theories are being handled. This study will not provide an historical overview of those theories, rather it aims to explain that migration is more than simply the movement from location A to B. According to Schapendonk & Steel (2014) migration often gets analysed from a perspective of fixed locations, not taking trajectories or transit locations into account that can change the entire migration process and peoples attitudes towards migration either in a good or bad way (van der Velde & van Naerssen, 2011; King, Lulle, & European Commission, 2016). Yet, with the transnational turn, a new thinking pattern and understanding of the term migration arose (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1995). With the concept of transnational migration, migration could no longer be just seen as the movement from one state of fixity to another (Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). The focus shifted to "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Glick Schiller et al., 1995, p. 48).

Consequently, this research connects the concept of transnational migration with the emerging field of trajectory research that challenges the notion of a pure transnational research, by pointing toward the importance of taking migrant´s mobility processes and experiences, and therefore their in-between journeys into account. This trajectory sensitive focus will help to detect the spatial frictions that migrants encounter along their trajectories (Schapendonk, 2011; Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). While being in the field I was highly involved in the lives of some of my respondents, as I got housed in their homes, participated in church services, visited their working places and met with them on markets or in restaurants. This helped me to not only comprehend the stories they have told but also to understand how migrants deal with their social network in reality and "how they experience certain parts of their trajectories" (Schapendonk, 2011, p. 58). Hence, in order to understand the deeper dimension of transnational migration and its performing actors, it is particularly important to pay attention to various processes of mobility as well as people and their locations that span transnational networks across borders. Amongst others, this is why I decided to conduct this research from a truly transnational and therefore multi-sited perspective. The additional value of looking at the problem from two different geographical angles will be explained throughout the entire thesis.

According to Boyd & Grieco (2003) there is still a significant lack of reliable and valid data on international female migration even though "migration within and from Africa [...] is increasingly becoming feminized" (Adepoju, 2004, Section II, para. 1-2). This is why this study puts its entire focus on female Ghanaians. Back in time it was common that men were the ones that moved whereas the women stayed at home to take care of the family. As a result of that, different migration patterns developed between genders (Awumbila & Ardayfio-Schandorf, 2008). However, women are strongly becoming more independent to fulfil their own needs and dreams (Adepoju, 2004; Grillo & Mazzucato, 2008) and transnational migration creates new opportunities especially for them (Coe, 2016). The story told in the beginning of the chapter already revealed some factors that can create and influence women´s attitude towards migration. This study will investigate those attitudes from the perspective of three different groups of female migrants (see 1.2). Hereby, it is important to notice, that whenever I refer to the term 'migrant', I refer to all three groups under study including the non-migrants, unless otherwise specified. Furthermore, in this thesis the term does not refer to internal migration in Ghana.

Ghana and Italy have been chosen to be the countries under study (see Box 1). This due to the fact that this research was not only conducted for the purpose of my independent project but because it is also strongly connected to the Veni-research of dr. J. Schapendonk,

wherein he focuses on West African migrants and their intra-EU mobility. According to Schapendonk (2014) the group of West-African migrants is "highly associated with contemporary unwanted migration to the EU". This association makes it especially interesting to uncover the different attitudes that Ghanaians have towards success and failure, hope and despair in terms of migration in a transnational world.

Box 1: Choice of countries and short migration-historic overview

Ghana

Migration has always assumed a significant role on the African continent and thereby also in Ghana (Smith, 2007). "Transnational migration has been a known and valued phenomenon in Ghana since the colonial era, as Ghanaians travelled for work elsewhere in West Africa and for education in Britain" (Coe, 2016, p. 40). Ghana especially became a "[country] of emigration in the 1970s and 1980s, as economic and political conditions worsened" (Black et al., 2006, p. 31). However, in the past few years a significant return to the country has been measured, as well as immigration from surrounding countries, which possibly came with the "establishment of an apparently robust multi-party democratic system" (Black et al., 2006, p. 31). This trend shows that the focus can no longer be put on out-migration only. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) only 2,84% of all citizens of Ghana lived outside their country of origin in 2015.[1] The rising return to Ghana therefore makes this country the perfect 'candidate' for this study because a strong focus will also be put on return mobility and migrants' attitudes towards return. For an excellent and more detailed overview of Ghana´s migration trends and its economical-political development see Smith (2007).

Italy

Italy has been chosen to represent 'destination Europe' and to investigate the attitudes of actual female Ghanaian migrants there. Since the 1980s, Italy cannot only be seen as a country of emigration but also turned into a country of immigration (Caponio, 2008). According to IOM, Italy became a favourable destination over the last few years[2], mostly because of its location on the sea and therefore its accessibility. If people do not decide to stay there, at least they pass through Italy on their way to their final destination. IOM statistics reveal, that at this moment in time, 46.548 Ghanaians are living in Italy.[3]

[1] Number retrieved from http://www.iom.int/countries/ghana
[2] http://migration.iom.int/europe/
[3] http://www.iom.int/countries/ghana

1.2 Research Objectives and – Questions

This research aims to gain first hand empirical insights into the contrasting attitudes that female Ghanaians have towards migration from Ghana towards Europe and or back, in order to understand the social and geographical complexity of the phenomenon of transnational migration and the contrasting realities that migrants find themselves in. For this, an actor-

oriented approach has been handled. In this research this means that the voice has been given to the women concerned, as the issue of migration should not only be judged from a top-down perspective, rather it should be the migrants themselves that give a definition of their migration story in terms of success and failure, instead of researchers (Wang & Fan, 2006) or voices in society. This interpretation corresponds with Nyamu-Musembi (2002) who states that a problem can best be understood from an actor-oriented perspective, by paying attention to "the concrete experiences of the particular actors involved" (p. 1). Based on that I will analyse how the women´s contrasting attitudes get shaped in a transnational arena.

To understand the reality of African migrants in contemporary Europe, it is crucial to investigate as well what is known in Ghana about the issue of migration and how people are thinking about this phenomenon. The different attitudes that female Ghanaians have towards migration to Europe while living in Europe will therefore be contrasted with the attitudes that exist about migration in Ghana. By investigating the contrasting attitudes of Ghanaian women in both countries under study, the concept of transnational migration will not only be handled as a theoretical starting point but will actually be realized in practice.

The research puts its focus on three main groups of female Ghanaians:
1. Female non-migrants in Ghana
2. Female return migrants who have been in Europe for at least 6 month, but voluntary or involuntary returned back to Ghana temporarily or permanently
3. Female actual migrants who are currently living in Italy since at least six month

Relating to what already has been introduced in the 'research problem', the three main objectives of this study are to:

(1) Conduct multi-sited in-depth interviews among female Ghanaians, in order to (2) discover the thoughts and imaginations that exist towards migration and 'destination Europe' from both geographical angles and how they might change dependent on a person´s migration experience or social network, in order to be able to (3) understand and explain the extent to which the transnational space between Ghana and Italy creates those contrasting attitudes towards migration.

From these objectives the following **main question** as well as sub questions resulted:

> What contrasting attitudes towards migration exist among female Ghanaians in a transnational space between Africa and Europe and how can they be explained?

With 'contrasting' I refer to the different viewpoints women have within Ghana and within Italy but also the different viewpoints that exist between Ghana and Italy.
In total there are three **sub questions**. Each sub question will be answered in a separate chapter. The three concepts under study 'imaginations, social networks and experiences' will also individually be introduced in the following chapter.

1. What kind of images do exist about 'destination Europe' and how does studying those images help to understand the changing and contrasting attitudes of Ghanaian women living in the transnational arena?

The first sub question aims to gather the different imaginations that women have towards migration and Europe in particular. How these imaginations get formed and how they can change after arrival or after receiving first hand stories from friends and relatives abroad.

2. How are social networks formed and transformed in a transnational space and how do they affect the women´s attitudes towards migration?
The second sub question studies the formation and changeability of transnational social networks and the effects that various ties can have on migrant women. Different kinds of impacts will be illustrated and analysed in order to understand their influential power.

3. How do the women´s diverse migration experiences affect their attitudes towards migration to Europe?
The third sub question studies the migration experiences of all women under study. Special attention will be paid to experiencing family separation, place attachment and well being abroad as well as reintegration in Ghanaian society after return migration.

1.3 Scientific relevance – Touching upon a deeper dimension of migration

In order to detect the women´s multiple attitudes regarding migration to 'destination Europe' and how they might contrast each other dependent on the geographical context, this research aims to strengthen the transnational approach, by following the multi-sited approach that has been handled amongst others by Dietz, Mazzucato, Kabki & Smith (2011), Grillo and Mazzucato (2008), Levitt & Jaworski (2007), Mazzucato, Kabki & Smith (2006) and Riccio (2005a). This approach gets combined with a trajectory perspective (Schapendonk & Steel, 2014), by addressing questions about the migrant's journeys and changing imaginations, networks, experiences and identities. In this way, this study will make a contribution to an existing debate within the field of human geography. The outcomes of this study will then provide insights that could show *what* transnational research can actually contribute to the further understanding of migration in general.

With globalization, transnational linkages increase with the development of information and communication technologies and it is no longer difficult to maintain relationships abroad (Castles, de Haas & Miller, 2014). Flows of people, ideas and money get easier and cheap traveling possibilities are supporting the migrants to "live 'transnationally' " and all in all it becomes easier to maintain "significant social, economic and cultural ties with countries of origin, and with fellow migrants elsewhere" (Grillo & Mazzucato, 2008, p. 176). Those networks and locations as well as various other factors that will be elaborated throughout this study, seem to influence migration processes (Boyd, 1989; Hagan, 1998) as well as the attitudes that people have towards migration. However, a transnational life can also be stressful and challenging for the migrant because they often need to manage two different lives at the same time (Grillo & Mazzucato, 2008). This is in line with King (2014), who in his book review about Hans Lucht´s book 'Darkness before Daybreak: African Migrants Living on the Margins in Southern Italy Today' writes: "Globalisation does not always entail much interconnectedness and support; rather, it imposes a life-world of exclusion, marginality, setbacks and failures" (p. 2054). Chapter 2 and 5 are further investigating this issue, by challenging the notion of a frictionless space, since transnational debates are often assuming that people are unproblematic and without interference, connected with each other. This study will thus make a useful contribution, by showing that challenges and miscommunication can arise, often due to the exchange of biased information across

borders and high expectations that exist in a transnational world. Those insights in turn could destabilize the 'culture of migration' in a way.

Since this study aims to make a contribution to the methodological and theoretical debate that already exist about transnational migration, a big focus will be put on mobility patterns, which remain mainly unconsidered in classical migration theories. Especially functionalistic push-pull models struggle when "explaining return migration and the simultaneous occurrence of emigration and immigration" (Castles et al., 2014, p. 29). In order to find out how looking at different mobility patterns will help to understand the complex phenomenon of transnational migration, immobility has to be taken into account as well (Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). This focus forms another significant strength of this research, since it does not only pay attention to women that experienced migration by moving, but also takes the perspective and migration experiences of non-migrants into account. The concept of non-migration is likewise important to identify the general attitude towards migration (King, 2015). It will reveal how non-migrants perceive and appreciate migration in terms of success and failure and whether they value migration as a strategy or life experience. By linking up the transnational approach to mobility research, two debates that have been rather disconnected, will be combined and a dialogue between them will be created.

1.4 Societal relevance – Understanding migration here and there

To create a better understanding of transnational migration this study puts its focus on a trans-perspective taking the 'here' and 'there' both into account.[2] By looking at both sides of the same coin the results of this study could help to identify whether and how the existing attitudes and perceptions of the different respondents contrast each other, dependent on their geographical position, imaginations, social networks or experiences. The attitudes that exist towards migration in Ghana will therefore be mirrored with the attitudes that female Ghanaians have towards migration while living in Europe. This strong transnational focus makes this study unique because the voices and attitudes of the persons concerned will be discovered from more then one perspective and it will help to create a picture that tells more about the social and geographical complexity of the phenomenon of transnational migration that can be so important for certain communities and the public notion of migration in Ghana and beyond. Thereby, it could explain in which way migration is part of societal processes here (Europe) and there (Africa).

With the help of gender sensitive research it will be possible to demonstrate the meaning of migration in a different light, which is why I believe that focusing on this issue will make a theoretical *and* societal contribution to our field of research.

> Transnational migration transforms gender relations. Men and women are differently affected by transnational migration and this may be reflected in different transnational practices (in respect of earning a living, what is done with remittances, involvement with religious or secular associations, or the extent to which men/women move jointly with, or independently of, partners). (Grillo & Mazzucato, 2008, p. 188)

As the statement by Grillo & Mazzucato (2008) reveals, gender matters. However, diving into the work of Awumbila & Ardayfio-Schandorf (2008), Boyd & Grieco (2003), Pedraza (1991) or van Naerssen, Smith, Davids, & Marchand (2015) revealed that there still exists a significant lack of reliable and valid data on international female migration. Even though

---

[2] In the course of the thesis, the association 'here' and 'there' will be used frequently. 'Here' thereby refers to Europe and 'there' to Africa, Ghana.

several studies put their focus on gendered migrations (Duncan, 2013), women and migration (Boyd & Grieco, 2003), the international migration of women (Morrison, Schiff, & Sjöblom, 2008) or gender in transnationalism (Erel & Lutz, 2012; Salih, 2003), gender literature does not automatically focus on a female perspective, which makes women still an understudied group in migration literature. Moreover, many of the studies that do concentrate on females, often deal with issues such as female exploitation and human trafficking, deportation (Ratia & Notermans, 2012) or economic related issues (Babou, 2008; Buggenhagen, 2012; Coe, 2016), which do not cover the entire scope. Therefore, a change in perspective seems to be necessary.

Diving into the history of mankind as well as the work and data of various scholars, it becomes clear that women always have been on the move. Villares-Varela (2013) therefore states that instead of undergoing a feminisation of migration itself we are rather experiencing a "feminisation of the scientific interest in the issue of gender and migration" (section I, para. 3-4). Besides, more than thirty years ago, Morokvasic (1984) already emphasized that

> rather than "discovering" that female migration is an understudied phenomenon, it is more important to stress that the already existing literature has had little impact on policy making, on mass media presentation of migrant women, but also on the main body of migration literature. (p. 899)

Nonetheless, "the so-called 'feminization of migration' has contributed to the increased attention for the participation and role of women in international migration" (van Naerssen et al., 2015, p. 5). This attention and the necessity to raise some awareness emphasises that society should not only focus on women as 'the victims of migration' but on women as independent actors in a transnational space. This could help to create exactly the kind of awareness that Morokvasic (1984) and van Naerssen et al. (2015) have described. Hence, even though more focus is put on women, their voices remain mainly unheard.

By focusing on all three groups of women under study two different perspectives towards the issue of female migration will be created. First, a perspective from the point of view of the women that have experienced migration geographically, secondly, from a perspective of non-migrants, that will reveal more about the general notion of migration in Ghana. On the one hand, both perspectives will help to create a deeper understanding of migration, on the other hand paying serious attention to the attitudes of women can help to improve policies as well. In her working paper on gender and migration, Oishi (2002) claims "most studies simply compile descriptive country cases without systematic comparisons, or present theoretical assumptions without providing empirical evidence" (p. 2). Considering this fact, this study will work towards a closing of this gap.

Furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that this study will not only put its focus on women that came to Europe following their husbands or fathers, but includes also those who came there independently (Oishi, 2002) and were thus not forced by their parents to go abroad in order to provide for the rest of the family back home (Ratia & Notermans, 2012). According to van Naerssen et al. (2015, p. 5) "these [independent] women are representing new groups or categories of migrants that have hitherto not been considered or gone unnoticed in classical studies of migration." It will therefore be particularly interesting to hear their stories.

1.5 Organization of the thesis

This thesis exists of four different main parts. Part one introduces the reader to the research problem under study and its relevance (Chapter 1), as well as the most relevant concepts

and/or theories that will be discussed in connection to it, creating a dialogue between two rather disconnected debates: transnationalism and mobility research in combination with an intensive focus on the concept of attitudes and the three components that the empirical analysis will be based on (Chapter 2).

In the second section the entire focus lays on the methodological set-up that has been used to conduct the research and discover the contrasting attitudes women have towards migration. Therefore multi-sited ethnography has been chosen. The chapter provides a detailed explanation of the choice of methods and concludes with a critical reflection on its reliability and the challenges and achievements I encountered (Chapter 3).

Section three consists of the three empirical chapters, that each discuss one of the presented sub questions. The respective chapters focus on imaginations about 'destination Europe' (Chapter 4), migrant´s social networks (Chapter 5) and their migration experiences (Chapter 6). The collected data will be presented in a very innovative way, namely by 'letting' the women present their attitudes towards migration themself, in the form of various transnational dialogues.

The last section forms the conclusion of the thesis, including a short reflection on the research´s limitations and recommendations for future research and policy-making (Chapter 7).

a) Ethnographic sketch – Looking behind concepts

In order to be able to understand concepts and theories to the fullest it takes much more than going through the books over and over again. Especially terms such as 'mobility' and 'transnationalism' seem rather complicated to the ordinary reader, including me when I learned about them for the first time. What really helped me to discover the true meaning of those words or even add an own interpretation to it was not only the various conversations that I had with my respondents, but experiencing those concepts in real life myself. It is now six years ago that I left Germany and went abroad to work and study. Realizing my own double engagement and the feeling of having to be present in more than one place at the same time, therefore helped me a lot to understand the concept of transnationalism. Furthermore, in order to study (the thoughts behind) mobility, I decided that it was time to become mobile again myself, which is why I moved to Ghana and from there straight to Italy in order to kind of experience the journey many of my respondents were taking, paying attention to my own change of network as well as to my imaginations and attitude during the entire process. All this helped me to approach people, understand their stories and what it means to live a transnational life.

Figure 1. On a formative journey, Mole National park, Ghana. April 15, 2017. Photo by the author.

Chapter 2 Theorizing about the attitudes of (im)mobile women in a transnational arena

Migration, in times of globalisation, can result in contrasting realities, which can be studied from different angels. This research focuses on the relationships between three main concepts: Transnationalism, mobility and attitudes. In order to understand how attitudes actually develop or change, the following three dimensions are central to this study, as they form the 'attitude-shaping-cycle': Imaginations, social networks and migrant experiences.

2.1 Transnationalism

The concept of transnationalism refers to "processes by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1995, p. 48; Riccio, 2008, Castles et al., 2014). This interpretation is important for this study because according to Schapendonk & Steel (2014) migration often gets analysed from a perspective of fixed localities, not taking trajectories or transit destinations into account that can change the entire migration process and peoples attitudes towards migration either in a good or bad way (Van der Velde & Van Naerssen, 2011; King, Lulle, & European Commission, 2016). This concept of transnationalism therefore "differs from the standard conceptualization of international migration" because it has its focus on the complex relations that exist between people and takes the various connections that are established between two or more different places into account (Mitchell, 2004, p. 125). Moreover, the mobility of migrants gets increasingly seen as multi- directional, which makes their lives and the understanding of movement less place-bound.

However, the concept of transnationalism includes not only those who leave but also those who stay behind (IOM, 2010). Furthermore, while being abroad migrants support their families and communities at home and conversely, often in form of financial or social remittances, which makes "migrants operate in a social field of networks" (Mitchell, 2004, p. 125). The operationalization of this concept is pictured in figure 2. It illustrates that the position of two fixed locations changes in one dynamic arena, as the focus shifts to the 'middle-part', which represents the on-going connectivity and the amount of exchange that takes place in a transnational arena, forming and transforming it at the same time (Dahinden, 2010). Apart from that, migrants are also contributing to the society and economy of the receiving country (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). However, as Grillo & Mazzucato (2008) point out this double engagement can create problems and challenge the migrants further trajectories, as they often feel pressurized to balance the 'here' and 'there' simultaneously. This notion will further be investigated in chapter 5 that extensively discusses the power and dynamics of social networks.

Therefore, applying the concept of transnationalism will help to understand how people are living in different places and keep their connections alive. Having such a transnational perspective on migration becomes more and more relevant "due to the forces of globalization and their impacts on mobility" (IOM, 2010, p. 1; Krumme, 2004). According to Faist (2000, p. 197) "the development [and investigation] of transnational social spaces thus offers a unique opportunity to look into the formation of groups that span at least two nation-states". By studying people's attitudes towards migration and 'destination Europe' it should be possible to detect the notion of changeability and friction that many transnational studies still do miss.
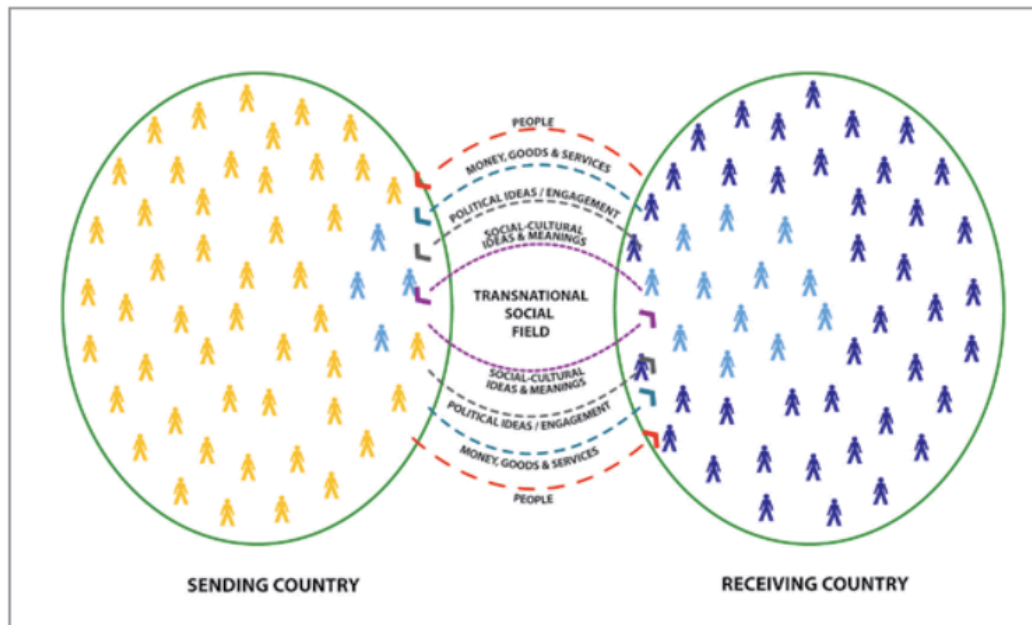
Figure 2. [Migrants] Transnational Activities and Social Fields. Reprinted from "Transnationalism: A New Mode of Immigrant Integration," by Lima, A, 2010, *The Mauricio Gastón Institute, University of Massachusetts Boston*, (p. 5).

2.2 (Return) Mobility

According to de Bruijn, van Dijk and Foeken (2001) mobility is "fundamental to any understanding of African social life" (p. 1). Therefore, taking various mobilities into account is highly relevant because it can tell a lot about migrant´s transnational lives and their attitudes towards migration, as well as the restrictions and possibilities they encounter along their trajectories. This is why this study does not only focus on onward mobility towards Europe, but also puts its focus on return mobility and the women's attitudes towards return. Furthermore, when studying mobility, immobility and restrictions in mobility also need to be taken into account.

With the new paradigm of the mobility turn, Sheller & Urry (2006) pointed out to the "complex relations between different mobilities" (Dahinden, 2010, p. 69) and the fact that mobility and in that sense also migration has not thoroughly been studied in social science (Schapendonk & Steel, 2014). Sheller & Urry (2006) argue that it is especially the processes of mobility that need to be given more attention as this will help to move away from the perspective of fixed localities. Thus, the concept of mobility can also be framed as a way of seeing the world, as it can help to understand the values and practices that exist in a transnational arena that are shaping people´s trajectories. However, it appears that the wish of having a mobile and transnational life almost developed into a habit and/or desirable goal, as mobility often gets connected with the connotation that being mobile comes along with personal development, better opportunities and success in life (Smith, 2007). However, mobility cannot only be reduced to the movement of people (Cresswell, 2006). In the contemporary globalizing world, where time and space are closing ranks, mobility processes also refer to the exchange of financial and various kinds of social remittances (de Haas, 2008). These kind of cross border exchanges in turn are highly relevant for the "production and reproduction of transnational spaces" (Dahinden, 2010, p. 52).

Even though this study focuses on 'destination Europe', a person's migration process does not have to end over there. People return back home for various reasons: voluntary or

involuntary, temporarily or permanently. Cerase (1974) and Cassarino (2004) even differentiate between different types of returnees that will further be discussed in chapter 6. So far, return migration, compared to outward migration, has received less attention in migration research, "in part because of data limitations" (Bartram, Poros & Monforte, 2014, p. 121; Koser, 2000). Therefore, including the group of return migrants, also in combination with studying migrant's attitudes seems highly relevant, as it will be possible to collect more information about the notion of success and failure. Previous studies have shown that especially involuntary return gets seen as a huge failure from the perspective of the migrant herself but also from friends and family (Ratia & Notermans, 2012). Furthermore, it also needs to be considered that a return to Ghana can also be followed again by another return to Europe, which makes the meaning of the term 'return migration/mobility' rather complex. The phenomenon of return migration will not only be studied from the perspective of the actual return migrants, but also from the perspective of non-migrants as well as the women that are currently still living in Italy.

Various studies (e.g. Cassarino, 2004; Dako-Gyeke, 2016; de Haas, Fokkema & Fihri, 2015; King & Christou, 2011; Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011; Sinatti & Horst, 2015) focused on return migration and their insights will further be discussed in the course of this thesis. By way of example, Sinatti & Horst (2015) state that migrants often have the aspiration to return home because of a strong feeling of belonging. According to Levitt & Lamba-Nieves (2011) the temporarily or permanent return of migrants can have a great influence on the behaviour and the attitudes that non-migrants have towards migration, more than education or media. Throughout the empirical chapters, where the women are going to present their stories and attitudes towards migration, a focus will be put on the women´s various kinds of mobility (mainly by dividing them in three different groups) as well as on the strong interconnectedness that exists not only between the three groups under study but also how framing and experiencing migration in combination with one´s social network can create different stories of pride and concern. However, through this interconnectedness, people's transnational engagements in space and their possibility to either move physically or mentally between places, "the distinction between mobility and immobility and migration and non-migration becomes blurred" (Schapendonk, 2011, p. 193).

2.3 Understanding attitudes

In social psychology the term 'attitude' gets defined as something that "refer[s] to a general and enduring positive or negative feeling about some person, object or issue" (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996, p. 7). Therefore, the concept of attitudes is especially important for this particular field of research since it can help to predict and understand the behaviour of people (Petty & Cacioppo, 1996). However, it also depicts an important concept within the field of human geography as it helps us to re-enact the decisions that migrants make and therefore understand their expectations, hopes, pride and sorrows towards migration, which in turn will help to create a deeper understanding of this societal phenomenon, as well as the frictions that can arise and clash in a transnational space. Hence, it is important to investigate what kind of feelings people tend to have towards the topic of migration. Are they happy, satisfied or disappointed? By paying attention to those kinds of aspects it will become more clear whether women consider migration more as a pathway into social success or a trap (into misery). According to Svašek (2010, p. 876) attitudes are formed "by peoples emotional judgements and habitus", which indicates that migrant´s social behaviour (within their networks) as well as their imaginations do affect the changeability and formation of their attitudes. Moreover, Svašek (2010) indicates, that a change of perception can be caused by a person´s experiences.

Unfortunately, most of the research studies that are focusing on attitudes towards migration, put its focus on the attitudes that 'natives' from the respective country of destination have towards migration and immigrants coming to 'their countries' (e.g. Mayda & Facchini, 2009; McCollum, Nowok, & Tindal, 2014) and not so much on the attitudes that the actual, return, or non-migrants have towards migration and 'destination Europe'.

In order to understand and analyse the women´s contrasting attitudes that 'live' in the transnational space 'Africa – Europe', it is necessary to choose some components from the field of migrations studies that have been discussed in previous literature and have been proven to be able to reveal some information about attitudes or the change of attitude. Therefore, the following three highly interrelated dimensions have been chosen: 'Framing Europe', 'Social Networks', and 'Migrant Experiences'. One by one, all three will be explained and set into context in the following three sub sections, discussing the main ideas that already exist in literature. In chapter 4-6 I will pick up on the three aspects again bringing the theory together with the migrants stories.

2.3.1 Framing Europe: Imaginations in a globalized world

"Imagining the world as it is and as it might be seems to be a rapidly expanding form of activity" (Weiss, 2002, p. 93). When imagining places and processes as for example Europe or migration in general, ones attitude towards those particular topics gets formed, as one hopes or believes reality to match with ones imagination. According to the postcolonial writer Appadurai, imagining other places and better opportunities elsewhere seems to be a result of the impact that globalization entails as images and ideas can easily cross international borders. This is in line with Schapendonk (2011) who also states that images and knowledge about 'better places' can spread and be shared in a quick and easy way due to new communication methods and social media.

In his work 'Modernity as Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization', Appadurai (1996) tries to "conceptualize the global from the perspective of the local" (Fielder, 2002, p. 164). Especially when studying the concept 'Framing Europe', analysing globally spread imaginations from a local perspective seems to be useful as it will help to reveal more about their origin and changing character. Appadurai (1996, p. 53) further states "the imagination – expressed in dreams, songs, fantasies, myths, and stories – has always been part of the repertoire of every society, in some culturally organized way". Given that transnational migration has been a known and valued phenomenon in Ghana since the colonial era, stories and images of numerous generations have been transferred and are still living in Ghanaian society, on whose basis attitudes get formed. Weiss (2002), however, talks about the dynamic character of the act of imagination, wherefore one cannot assume that the imagination´s origin is linked to a specific place. Appadurai (1996, p. 7) then argues that "the imagination, especially when collective, can become the fuel for action", which means that an initial imagination can turn into a persons motivation to go. However, because of the fact that imaginations need to be seen as something dynamic (Weiss, 2002), they can change when one gets confronted with reality. Therefore focusing on this concept of imagination seems to be important, as it will help to reveal the likewise dynamic character of attitudes.

Studies of various scholars reveal people´s imagination towards Europe to be overall positive. Prinz (2006) presents several features that get associated with European politics, as for example "democracy, peace, the protection of human rights, […], as well as less corruption among politicians" (p. 108). Furthermore, Europe gets seen as a place of opportunities, as it offers "better living standards and a high per-capita-income" (Prinz, 2006, p. 93) and in addition "working conditions in Europe are valued highly positively" (p. 165).

Salazar´s study, which is based on his fieldwork in Tanzania, explains, that 'the West', or in Swahili 'the things up there' often gets "used as a synonym for Europe or the West" (Salazar, 2010, p. 57). The word 'up' in this very translation aims to refer to overall better living conditions (Salazar, 2010) one imagines to find over there. Moreover, the anthropologist points out that 'the West' does not refer to "a specific geographical location", it rather "refers to a list of countries associated with certain features such as high level of development, wealth, social security and political power" (Salazar, 2010, p. 57). Herefrom it becomes clear that these overall positive connotations can easily shape peoples imagination and the way they think about (going to) Europe. Furthermore, Salazar (2010) talks about the influencing power of television programs that are very much responsible for creating certain imaginations, as they "offer fantasies of an aspirational lifestyle", which can create the impression that overseas migration would be "the solution to all their problems" (p. 57). Nyamnjoh & Page (2002) on the other hand state that "western media representations are not always positive, but African consumers of these images are prone to selective retention of those representations that perpetuate their fantasies and keep alive their hopes of personal wealth" (p. 628). However, Nyamnjoh & Page (2002) also emphasize that "Africans are bombarded with mass-mediated accounts of the glory of Western cultural achievements and the local sense of self-worth is eroded on a daily basis" (p. 631). Even though people might "doubt the veracity of these images, they also wistfully hope that they might be true" (Nyamnjoh & Page, 2002, p. 631).

According to Salazar (2010) not only does media play an important role in transferring images about 'here' to 'there', but also migrants and returnees themselves, often being friends or family. Cassarino (2004, p. 259) also states, "returnees [do] have a limited innovative influence in their origin societies". Thus, return migrants can be seen as "agents of change" (Nadler, Kovács, Glorius, & Lang, 2016, p. 11, also see Giddens, 1984) as they are able to affect the public imaginations about migration that exist in Ghana. This, due to the fact that they take along with them the perspectives from other places when returning back which in turn can have an impact on the social patterns as well as "the social value system" that exist in Ghana (Nadler et al., 2016, p. 11).

Ferro (2006) adds that besides the information and images that get transmitted by media and social network ties, it is also through experiences that attitudes towards migration can change. Therefore, it already becomes apparent that the three main components under study 'Framing Europe', 'Social Networks' and 'Migrant's Experiences' cannot be seen as unmated concepts, as one seems to influence the other. This is why the next two paragraphs will provide an introduction to the other two components that will help to explain the influences they might have on the attitudes that Ghanaian women have towards migration and how those contrast each other depending on the women´s geographical context.

2.3.2 Social Networks: A dynamic concept

In migration studies the concept of social networks has become very central to the understanding of migration, since the relationships migrants establish with others (in the destination, along the way of back home) can have a significant effect on different aspects of their lives (Bartram et al., 2014). Moreover, migrants' social networks do not only consist out of strong ties, such as family and close friends, but also get formed through loose contacts or volatile acquaintances; weaker ties, that can bear a helping hand while being on the journey or wanting to settle down in the new location, by helping with finding accommodation or work, based on their previous knowledge and experiences (Granovetter, 1973; Ryan, Sales, Tilki & Siara, 2008). Depending on a number of factors, such as "pre-migration ties" or the duration

of stay in a certain location, "migrant networks can look quite different from native networks" (Bartram et al., 2014, p. 96).

Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, & Taylor (1993) provide a definition of the term that includes all three groups of migrant women under study: "Migrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin" (p. 448). In 1930, Gamio already discovered that social networks play a crucial role in migrant´s mobility and in the 1960s, scholars were paying attention to the so called 'chain migration', which implied that potential migrants would tend to move to places where other migrants recently settled or did so in the past (see Banerjee, 1983; Böcker, 1994; MacDonald & MacDonald, 1964).

The migration network theory explains this creation and maintenance of social ties that migrants have with others (Castles et al., 2014). Palloni, Massey, Ceballos, Espinosa, & Spittel (2001) expound that being part of a social network facilitates social capital. This concept was firstly introduced by the French sociologist Bourdieu (1986). Portes (1998) provides the following definition of the term: "... social capital stands for the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (p. 6). However, social capital does not only bring positive implications along, but also entails the negative consequence of social control (Portes, 1998) that can lead to further problems (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005). Grillo & Mazzucato (2008) examine the condition of 'double engagement', stating that migrants' are often struggling to balance the 'here' and 'there' simultaneously. This double-sided character that social networks have will further be investigated in chapter 5, where we are going to look into the issues that can facilitate (e.g emotional support) and challenge (e.g. social pressure) the migrant's lives. Moreover, it will become clear that social networks always have a say during the entire migration process, not only in times of departure or right after arriving.

When moving around or being connected to someone that does, former socio-economic ties change, new ones get developed, and others might break down. This change of ties over time and space (Boyd, 1989; Granovetter, 1973; Ryan et al., 2008) reveals the dynamic character of the concept of social networks (Faist, 2000; Pathirage & Collyer, 2011; Schapendonk, 2015; Smith, 2007). According to Schapendonk (2015), putting the focus on those network dynamics will help to understand the significance of non-static connections and the establishment of social capital in migration studies. However, moving between places and establishing new connections at the right time also requires a lot of time and effort (Schapendonk, 2015), an issue that will also be touched in chapter 5. Beside the establishment of new ties and the maintenance of weak and strong ties, some connections also turn out to be of a negative influence, making it desirous to cut of contacts purposely. This is why, in order to truly grasp a migrant´s lifeworld and mobility pattern in all dimensions, one also needs to pay attention to "network failures, disconnections, social frictions, and hard network work" (Schapendonk, 2015, p. 818; Bartram et al., 2014) as well as "cultural understandings and miscommunication" (Smart & Smart, 2008, p. 104).

Even though this double sidedness of social networks has been determined, it appears that some migration researchers still consider social networks as a given fact, and the establishment of new ties as something easy, thinking "that migrants arrive and simply slot into networks that provide them with resources and emotional support" (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 676; Wierzbicki, 2004 and Boyd, 1989; Schapendonk, 2015[3]). In addition, Somerville (2011)

---

[3] The authors in this listing disagree with this assumption.

states that framing networks in such a naïve way would imply that newcomers would only make use of already existing connections, rather then creating their own new ties.

However, in our globalizing world, new information and communication technologies are constantly getting developed and improved. Also travelling options become faster, cheaper and therefore easier (Grillo & Mazzucato, 2008). These developments increase the spreading of transnational networks (Vertovec, 1999) whereby it becomes easier to maintain relationships over the distance. Since social networks can reveal a lot about general migration patterns and the connections that migrants have with places and people back home (Castles et al., 2014), exploring them can be of added value (Faist & Özveren, 2004). Moreover, social networks inform aspirations and imaginations as well as decisions to move. Palloni et al. (2001) argue that people, who have migrant contacts abroad, are in favour to migrate as well. However, based on the New Economic of Labour Migration theory (NELM) it can be stated that social networks are not only facilitating or triggering migration, but also enable people to stay. Very often families only send their "best-equipped household members to gain a higher income which can be remitted and used to invest" (de Haas & Fokkema, 2011, p. 776).

Paying attention to those different opinions, it becomes clear that social networks seem to have a huge impact on people´s imaginations, decision-making processes, well-being and thus also on their attitudes (Ferro, 2006). This makes the concept highly relevant for this study, as it will be used to understand the impact that the existence of networks can have on the attitudes of female Ghanaians. By diving deeper into the concept and various factors connected to it, it will be possible to detect what kind of information does get shared in the transnational space and how such kind of networks actually get formed or transformed.

2.3.3 Experiencing Migration

"The experiences of migrants, even those from the same class and cultural backgrounds, are enormously diverse. People's motivations, experiences, and ways of internalizing the experience of migration vary widely" (Gmelch, 1995, p. 5). Those diverse migration experiences can activate different feelings, which in turn can form certain kinds of attitudes.

Several scholars studied migrant experiences (see Dreby, 2007; Githens, 2013; Lucht, 2012; Mazzucato & Schans, 2011; Pratt, 2012; Riccio, 2001; Van Meeteren, Engbersen, Snel & Faber, 2014), however, so far not in connection with the concept of attitude. Yet, studying their experiences seems to be very important when trying to understand people´s attitudes and their changeability, since life experiences are known to have an influential effect on human behaviour (Champagne & Curley, 2005). Not only will it be possible to detect the content of the women´s opinion towards their movement, return or daily lives (Sinatti, 2011; McHugh, 2000), but also study the process of transformation. The process of transforming experiences links up to the two other dimensions discussed in this section. Since imaginations as well as social networks have been considered dynamic, experiences change accordingly.

Chapter 6 deals with the women´s diverse experiences at both geographical locations. The issue of family separation (Dreby, 2007; Pratt, 2012) deserves some more attention, as it can provide insights about how non-migrants experience migration, even when staying back. Carling & Erdal (2014) conducted research about the interaction between transnationalism and return migration and therefore reintegration in Ghanaian society. According to Bartram et al. (2014) return migration often gets seen as an easy process of 'just going home', in which the struggles of reintegration are often not taken into account and in what migrants often put too much "hope and optimism" (p. 122). This is in line with Boccagni (2011) and Tannenbaum (2007), who observed that returnees expect their return to be more straightforward and often seem to be disappointed after arrival. Paying attention to stories

about separation and reintegration will help to discover contrasts between people and locations, as well as the mutual influence that migrants and non-migrants have on each other and that can shape their migration experiences (being connected to someone that migrated or returning home with certain values and perspectives). Also van Meeteren et al. (2014) argue that migrant's reintegration experiences are strongly "affected by their transnational practices" that they used to perform when being abroad (Carling & Erdal, 2014, p. 4).

When studying reintegration and the various types of return (Cerase, 1974), it would seem plausible to study integration as well. However, since the concept of integration equates a state concept, it does not function as the right concept to capture the women´s experiences in Europe, namely exploring their well-being as well as the challenges they are facing. In her chapter "The dynamics of migrants' transnational formations: Between mobility and locality", Janine Dahinden (2010) handles a concept that captures the migrants' transnational life (experiences) abroad by looking into a combination of mobility and locality. In this regard, she clusters migrants with regard to their level of transnational mobility and degree of local anchorage. Dahinden (2010) differentiates between four "ideal types" of transnational formation (p. 53), but also explains that there are migrants that do not fit into her "transnationalism paradigm" (p. 62). Nonetheless, according to the author it seems to be important to find out "how mobility and locality shape these different transnational formations" (p. 59), as dependent on their interaction, migrants seem to experience their personal migration differently. Factors, which are likely to play a role when evaluating a persons' local anchorage (e.g. language, work and money issues or experiencing racism) will further be discussed in chapter 6.

Since migration needs to be seen as a dynamic concept, the experiences of migrants are dynamic as well. Dahinden (2010) writes about the importance to understand "that migrants can and often do change their transnational ways of being over the course of time: mobile migrants can settle down or vice versa, and these changes affect the ways in which they are transnational" (p. 52) as well as how they perceive their position in the transnational space. This statement can be seen as another prove that studying different types of mobility is important to warrant a deeper insight into the mobility patterns of West African migrants' and to understand the full dimension of transnational migration.

2.4 Conceptual Model

Figure 3 is a schematic representation of the study's main pillars. Migrants and non-migrants are living in a transnational space in which their various attitudes towards migration develop. Those attitudes in turn get affected by three main dimensions: Social networks, imaginations (framing Europe) and migrant experiences, however, attitudes in turn also have an impact on the three dimensions. For instance, the migration experience a person has, can influence her attitude towards migration, her attitude in turn can have an influence on what the person is experiencing and how she will deal with the results. The same interrelation applies for social networks and imagining Europe. However, the three pillars also form interdependency one below the other. For example what a person experiences can have an impact on a person´s social network, as her behaviour might change or the information that she transfers to others (back home). Also imaginations can change dependent on what someone experiences, as they either match or not match with reality, which can lead to the formation of new imaginations, experiences or connections that might shape others as well.

Attitudes are dynamic and also depend on context and location. Dependent on where a person is staying, she might think differently about migration. This shows that attitudes are never really fixed, as they can change all the time. Since this study is emphasizing narratives,

the way of representing all concepts in a cycle, where they all mutually influence each other, seemed to be the most logical solution. Even though arrows are used in this model, they never are one directional, as this would have oppressed me in presenting and analysing the complexity, the nuances and the different layers of migrant´s life worlds.

Transnational Space 'Africa – Europe'

Imaginations (Framing Europe)

Social Networks

Women´s attitude towards migration

Migrant Experiences
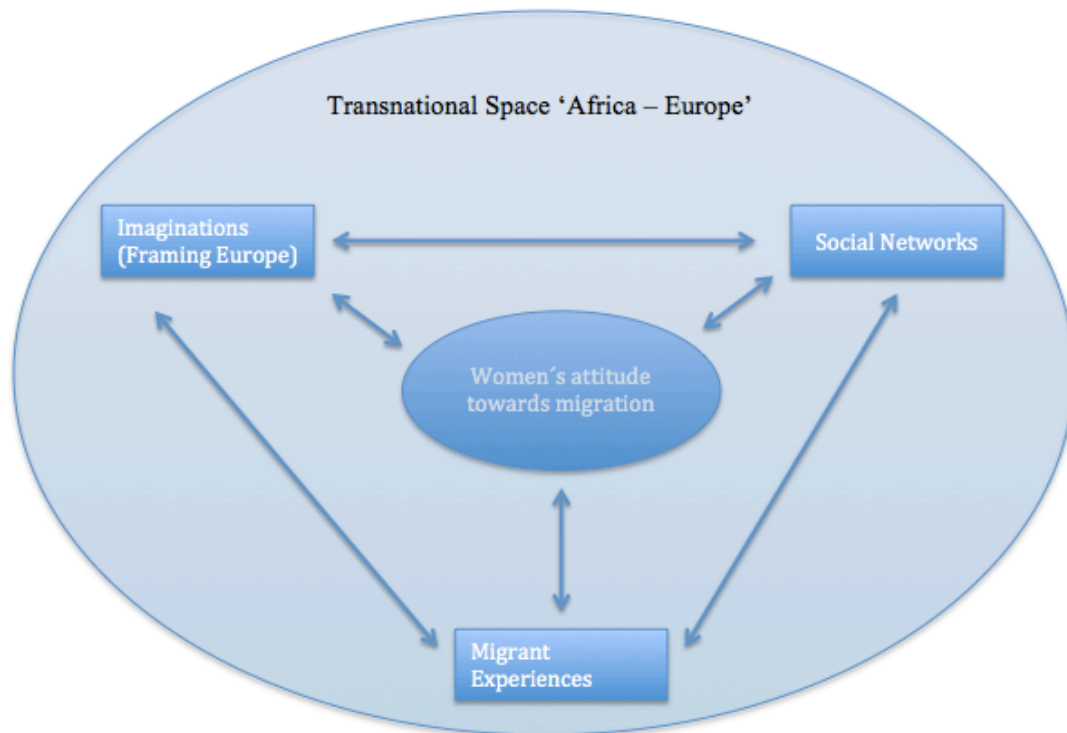
Figure 3. The 'attitude-shaping-cycle'. Authors own creation

b) Ethnographic sketch – It's all about networking

Before I started my research in Ghana, using qualitative methods, in-depth interviews in particular, for the first time, I felt barely prepared for doing fieldwork; little did I know that it is one of the greatest things when it comes to academic work. It was not that I was scared to approach people but more that I did not know where and how to start. Being a member of the Veni-research team therefore was of great help, since I was able to participate in a preparation session on ethnographic research with some fellow students. Exchanging thoughts and experiences with others definitely helped me to build up some confidence.

During my time in Ghana, as well as in Italy I was constantly amazed by the power of networking. As will be explained in the following chapter the snowball technique has been used to find the women that participated in this study. However, never did I expect that the 'snowball' would role that quick. Everywhere I went I met somebody that knew somebody else that wanted to help me or at least showed interest in this project. By the end of my time in Ghana it sometimes took me more than one hour to walk down the street to my house when coming home from work because I had to stop at almost every shop to catch up with everybody. The willingness of the people to participate and the fact that they were so caring helped me a lot to gain enough confident about this project and therefore collect my findings in a little while. Once the contact was established it was often them that kept in touch with me or introduced me to a friend or colleague of them voluntarily. Apart from doing my interviews I spent a lot of time on the streets, walking on the markets, driving around in trotro´s, joining the Sunday service or attending a wedding. I absorbed the language and the culture of the country, which also had an impact on my respondents, both in Ghana and Italy. I definitely learned, that one cannot do ethnographic research without opening oneself to the culture and the people of that place.

Figure 4. Networking after church, Udine, Italy. June 17, 2017. Photo by the author

Chapter 3 Discovering contrasting attitudes through multi-sited ethnography

3.1 Ethnography

"Ethnography is about telling a credible, rigorous and authentic story"

– David Fetterman – [4]

This study tells a story about people. As explained in the two previous chapters it aims to discover the contrasting attitudes towards migration that exist among female Ghanaians in a transnational space between Africa and Europe. The word 'ethnography' can be split into two discrete words. 'Ethnos' meaning 'people' and 'grapho' meaning 'I write', which is exactly what has been done. While being in the field I was listening to the women´s stories, observing them in their environment and subsequently writing about it with the intention to capture the voices of the women and to create insights that usually are not visible. This strategy reaches an agreement with Fetterman (2010), who states:

> Ethnography gives voice to people in their own local context, typically relying on verbatim quotations and a "thick" description of events. The story is told through the eyes of local people as they pursue their daily lives in their own communities. (p. 1)

Because of the fact that this study focuses on attitudes, which is a rather dynamic, personal and somehow psychological concept, the entire research is of qualitative nature. Quantitative methods therefore seemed not appropriate enough because of the fact that "human behaviour is, in fact, subjective, complex, messy, irrational and contradictory" (Clifford, Cope, Gillespie, French & Valentine, 2016, p. 6) and therefore methods such as in-depth interviews, participant observations and focus groups are much more suitable since they "explore the meanings, emotions, intentions and values that make up our taken-for-granted lifeworlds (Clifford et al., 2016, p. 6) and as stated by Reeves, Kuper & Hodges (2008, p. 512) especially "ethnography is the study of social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organisations, and communities". Those definitions therefore reflect the methods that have been chosen.

In order to not only detect but also to understand the attitudes that Ghanaian women have towards migration, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted in Ghana as well as in Italy. In addition participant observations as well as informal conversations were used to create a fuller picture. On top of that, I have also spoken with two experts from the 'Centre for Migration Studies', at the University of Ghana, whose perception towards my topic challenged my own understanding of it. This data triangulation is extremely relevant for this kind of study, as the "different sources of data [helped] to examine a phenomenon in several different settings and different points in time or space" (Reeves et al., 2008, p. 513), and it helped to keep an eye on the fact that "what people say about their behaviour can contrast with their actual actions" (Reeves et al., 2008, p. 514).

Ethnographic fieldwork can be conducted from either a single- or multi-sited perspective. Despite the fact that a single-sited research design, which looks at issues from a place-based perspective, is also able to reveal interesting insights about the lives of transnational migrants (see Gielis, 2011; Hage, 2005), this study handles a multi-sited research design, which orientates itself more on a mobility and network perspective.

---

[4] Fetterman (2010, p. 1).

According to Marcus (1995) it is important to disengage oneself "from the single sites" in order "to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space" (p. 96). Conducting research in two places with a totally different country context, makes it possible to gain a better understanding about the attitudes that live in both societies and how they change depending on one´s location, imagination, experience or social network. Furthermore, Smith (2007) stresses the importance of integrating in migrant´s trans-lives in order to really understand its complexities.[5] To be able to create a finely nuanced and in-depth inside of what migration means to Ghanaian women living in a transnational space, multi-sited research seems to be the most valuable since those studies help to better understand "the forming of transnational communities" and make it possible to show "the interaction between the migrants' 'places of origin' and 'destinations'" (Schapendonk, 2011, p. 51; Riccio, 2005b), which is ideal for a comparative study like this.

  While being in the field I experienced that diving into other peoples life stories and interacting with them on a constant and intense level can create a familiarity that sometimes even develops into friendship. I quickly realized that this reflexivity, meaning the relationship that developed between me and my respondents and the world that I was investigating, became a "central element of [my] ethnographic work" (Reeves et al., 2008, p. 513). Therefore, similar to Riccio (2005a), I informed my respondents about the purpose of my research, communicating clearly that I was a Master student, working on a project about female migration.

  Throughout this chapter the methodological choices that have been proven to be appropriate for this kind of research will be exemplified and reflected upon to demonstrate the various facets of carrying out ethnographic fieldwork in Ghana and Italy.

3.2 Methodological choices

3.2.1 In-depth interviews (semi-structured)

"The scientist is not a person who gives the right answers, he´s the one who asks the right questions"

– Claude Lévi-Strauss – [6]

The main technique that was used for this project was face-to-face in-depth semi-structured interviews. The interview guide combined both closed as well as open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions as for example "How many years have you been abroad?" were included because they helped me with comparing my respondents somehow, since I was engaging with three different groups of women. Others, such as "Do you have children?" or "How many siblings do you have?" which I always asked in the beginning of the interview, helped me to encourage the women to open up to me about their family life and made the interview seem as something rather easy for them to do. Furthermore, those questions helped me to create an open atmosphere (Crang & Cook, 2007; Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011). However, since the personal thoughts and experiences of the women are in focus of this study, more open-ended questions have been asked, since "the telling of stories is one of the practices by which people reflect, exercise agency, contest interpretations of things, make meanings, feel sorrow and hope, and live their lives" (Lamb, 2001, p. 28). Issues of migration

---

[5] Smith (2007); E-mail conversation with L. Smith, 2017, September 21.
[6] Shilling, L. M., & Fuller, L. K. (Eds.). (1997). *Dictionary of Quotations in Communications*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group. (p. 183).

therefore can be understood the best by paying attention to those kind of stories. The various everyday statements that I collected during my fieldwork period have a certain connotation about the image of migration, which I aim to discover since they help me to understand the image that lives in or was taken back to the Ghanaian societies and transforms them.

Furthermore, using a semi-structured interview guide helped me to stay flexible. I was able to add certain questions and avoid others in situations were I felt they would have been inappropriate to ask. Also the women were able to express themselves in a more personal way (Longhurst, 2016), which faded on the entire study. Even though interviewing people takes much more time and delivers a smaller sample size then when for example doing an online questionnaire, I was able to get first hand insights into the mind set of my respondents and since this research puts its focus more on the quality of their answers than on the quantity, this method just seemed to be the right one.

In order to understand the transnational engagement of those women, or "double engagement" as described in Grillo & Mazzucato (2008) questions have been raised about their engagement with friends and family while being abroad or staying in Ghana, the stories that get shared with whoever stays behind, the amount of contact that they have and through which medium and whether remittances are transferred and their thoughts about that. Furthermore, when asking about their thoughts towards migration or even Europe in general I was interested in different kind of perspectives, namely before leaving, on their way, after arriving, after staying for a certain time or after returning back. Non-migrants were asked about their thoughts towards migration or were asked to share insights of the migration process of someone they knew and reflect on that. Other questions such as "Do you think migrating is different for women than for men?" or "If you could travel from Ghana to Europe again for the first time, what would you do differently?" or "If you have to describe what migration means to you with just three words, which words would you choose?" and their answers will be more deeply discussed in the following two chapters.

3.2.2 Participant observations

"If you make listening and observation your occupation, you will gain much more than you can by talk"

– Robert Baden-Powell –[7]

"Nowadays participant observation and interview techniques are paired as the dynamic duo of field research" (Sperschneider & Bagger, 2003, p. 42). According to Walcott (2005, p. 154), "Hang around." "Talk to folks." "Try to get sense of what is going on." can still be seen as the best way to describe ethnographic participant observation. Whenever I was observing, it was important to act non-judgemental, in order to make sure people would grow used to my presence, continuing with their normal business (Hennink et al., 2011), which kept up the reliability of my research. Making those observations really helped me to gather information and insights about the lives of women and therefore their attitudes that usually are not available to the outside world (Laurier, 2016). To see how the women were actually coping with their decision and situation abroad or after having returned also helped me to understand their interpretation of success and failure in a non-verbal way by focusing on their feelings and interactions with others. Hereby, I have to add that some people were easier to observe

---

[7] Hall, P., & Simeral, A. (2017). *Creating a Culture of Reflective Practice: Building Capacity for Schoolwide Success*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD. (p. 40)

than others. Some I only saw an hour a day, some just walked pass by me and some others shared their homes with me for weeks.

During my first weeks in Ghana I was only observing and having informal conversation. This really helped me to stay open-minded and to create adequate interview questions and develop empathy with my future respondents (Hennink et al., 2011). According to Blommaert & Dong (2010) this seems to be a normal development since they state the following: "you start by observing *everything* and gradually start focusing on *specific targets"* (p. 29). As an example I became really involved in the daily activities of some of my respondents, as I visited there shops on the markets in Ghana, had lunch, dinner or TV-evenings together or accompanied them in various "migrant places" (Schapendonk, 2011, p. 63) as for example church gatherings. However, apart from observing people I was also observing places, as for example the women's homes in Italy, or the way Europe got presented in the streets of Accra - or Ghana all over Italy. One friend in Ghana told me "I would never go to Europe because I would miss our food too much", however when I was out and about with my respondents in Italy I visited several African shops were one could get absolutely everything reaching from fufu plantain flour to fake hair extensions.

c) Ethnographic sketch – Living among my respondents

The day I decided to start my fieldwork in Italy, I moved in with Afram and his wife Efia. Francis, the priest of the Ghanaian community in Conegliano picked me up at the train station and brought me to their home. Afram, Efia, their son Emmanuel and his wife Janet were all sitting in the living room of their third floor apartment when we entered. Francis and I had been in contact for around two month before I came to Italy. I received his number via the brother of a Ghanaian lady that I met in Accra. Francis promised to organize an accommodation for me and when he came to pick me up I was really relieved, however also very nervous since I was not sure whether the couple that was going to host me was very happy about it. However, when I introduced myself to the whole family in 'Twi', I felt like I had won their hearts. All of them were very surprised and amused to hear a white lady speaking their local language and showing interest in their lives. Therefore, my initial nervousness disappeared. That day the family did not feel bothered at all by my presence and continued watching their Ghanaian TV show, however, when lunch got served I experienced the true meaning of Ghanaian hospitality since only the best of the best was offered to me. I felt touched and uncomfortable at the same time and explained to them that no extra effort was necessary. From that day on I continued having my meals next to Afram on the couch, eating my fried yam or 'Jollof' rice with my hands while watching Ghanaian movies.

I had my own room and even received my own latchkey. This made me really happy since I was able to move around independently and withdraw myself in my private space. Living among my respondents was great since I was able to observe their daily lives, watching them leave for their shifts in the factories, helping them prepare Ghanaian food and laughing with them about Ghanaian TV shows. I was involved in their lives as if I belonged to their family. The day that we all attended a Ghanaian wedding in Udine, they even insisted on ironing my dress for me since they disliked the way it came out of my suitcase. When I joined their Sunday mess, I got introduced to the entire religious community and even ended up holding a speech at the lectern. Everyone made it really easy for me to integrate into their community and wanted to hear about my experiences in Ghana, like this we could just exchange stories. However, sometimes I also felt the need to just be for myself, also to reflect on my observations and catch up with my interview transcriptions. Everybody understood when I went to my room, however, it made me feel very guilty since I was living under their

roof, using their shower, food and Wi-Fi but not dedicating all my time to them. On the other hand I also did not want to be around all the time, since I was afraid to interfere too much in their private space. In that sense it was difficult to navigate my two identities: being a researcher, doing the work a researcher needs to do as well as spending time with my new friends. At the end this really had some major effects on my research since I was not able to get a lot of work done besides the great amount of interviews I was conducting in a very short time. The interviews itself however were not effected by my double identity and I was able to conduct them in the same professional way than I did in Ghana, only with the difference that I met my respondents in their homes instead of public places. All in all it was an amazing experience, since I was able to really dive into the lives of some of my respondents, observing the differences in their behaviours that they showed when being at home, interacting with their social network or being outside on the streets.

3.2.3 Informal conversations

"… [T]he art of making small talk … is an important if not central ingredient of working in the field"

– Henk Driessen & Willy Jansen –[8]

Besides from conducting interviews and observing people I also had many informal conversations with random people I met on the streets. Most of those talks did not happen out of research interest, but were just normal engagements with the locals. Those informal talks mostly happened when I was driving in a trotro or taking a taxi, when strolling over markets, or when eating dinner and watching TV together with the family that hosted me in Conegliano. Those conversations felt very relaxing because I was able to gather information easily and sometimes subconsciously without the responsibilities and tasks of a researcher. Often it was my interlocutor that turned towards me asking me something about Europe or my stay in Ghana and after answering I often returned those questions. I felt that those informal conversations were a great addition to what I collected with the other two methods because people were talking to me without thinking about it, me not knowing them, they not knowing me (in most of the cases). Furthermore, it helped to "establish, maintain, and expand" my social network (Driessen & Jansen, 2013, p. 250). Not all informal talks were automatically useful for my study, however whenever I had an interesting conversation I made notes about it in my observation diary.

3.3 Implementation

In this sub section I will explain how and where I gained access to my respondents. The sampling method will be elucidated as well as the ways the data got documented and analysed.

3.3.1 Research setting and population – about the where, who and how

Where – Introducing the fieldwork location
Three month of my multi-sited research I spent in Accra, doing a full time internship at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and besides that conducted my fieldwork in

---

[8] Driessen & Jansen (2013, p, 249).

Accra and Kumasi, focusing on return and non-migrants. From the end of May until the beginning of July I resumed my fieldwork in various regions of Italy, where I focused on the actual migrants.

19 out of 25 interviews that I conducted in Ghana were held in Accra. The other 6 were conducted in Kumasi, where I spent a longer weekend visiting one of my contact persons. Most of the time an open location was picked for the interview. Very often I met my respondents in a restaurant called 'PeterPan', after both, they and I finished work. The restaurant had a strategic location and was usually not very occupied around the time I met with my informants. Other interviews were conducted in a café at Accra Mall, on various markets in Kumasi as well as in Accra or in the working place of my respondents (The embassy of the Netherlands, various offices, shops, university, hospital, hostel and at a playground).

In Italy, 8 out of 17 interviews were conducted in Conegliano, in the province of Treviso, which is located in the region of Veneto. Others took place in Verona (1) and Tezze di Arzignano (5), also located in the region of Veneto. One interview was held in Pordenone, which is situated in the region of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, one in Parma, in the region of Emilia-Romagna and one in Naples, which is situated in the region of Campania. This shows that all but one interview were conducted in the Northern region of the country. In Italy only three interviews were held in a public spot (one in a café and two on a market square), all other interviews were either conducted at the women´s home or in the living room of one of my contact persons. In order to give a visual overview where I was exactly located a country map of Ghana (Figure 5) as well as Italy (Figure 6) has been inserted, divided into its regions.

The Northern region of Italy has been chosen out of various reasons. First of all, this part of Italy is well known for its industries, which attracts many factory workers. Secondly, my contact person in Ghana introduced me to my contact persons in Italy, which were located in exactly those areas, thirdly, also the Veni-project focuses on the Northern regions of Italy. Furthermore, during informal Internet research I found out that especially the regions Veneto and Emilia Romagna are known as regions with a significant Ghanaian population.

Figure 5. Reprinted from *Ghana Political Map* (2012), by [MapsofWorld]. Copyright 2012-2013 by Maps of World. Retrieved from https://www.mapsofworld.com/ghana/ghana-political-map.html Reprinted with permission.

Figure 6. Reprinted from *Italy region Map* (2013), by [MapsofWorld]. Copyright 2013 by Maps of World. Retrieved from https://www.mapsofworld.com/italy/regions.html Reprinted with permission.

Who – An overview of my respondents

In total I interviewed 42 Ghanaian people with different kind of backgrounds: 12 non-migrants, 13 return migrants and 17 actual migrants (Figure 7). Even though this study focuses on the attitudes of women I also interviewed some men from each category in order to be able to tell what attitude they have towards women migrating and whether a huge difference between male and female thinking patterns does exist. Each category had its own interview guide and all interviews were conducted and transcribed in English. Furthermore, all but four interviews were recorded. A tabular overview of all the participants can be found in appendix I, however all names have been changed into pseudonyms in order to provide adequate protection of their privacy.
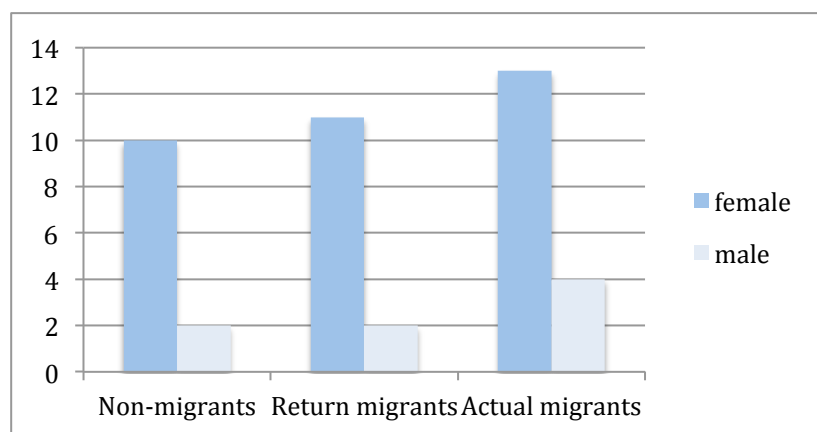

Figure 7. Total amount of participants per category and gender

Before going to Italy I contacted various migrant organizations all over Italy, whose addresses were provided to me from IOM. Unfortunately, none of them got in touch with me. Furthermore, I tried to contact four women in Italy in advance, whose contact details I got from other people I have talked to in Ghana. Admittedly, two of them invented an implausible excuse for not meeting with me, one did not reply back at all and another one withdrew after I asked her whether I could meet her while being in Milan.

Apart from one lady that overstayed her papers in Italy and one that was dragged into human trafficking, all return migrants came to and stayed in Europe with the acquired documents. Also all actual migrants were in possession of legal documentation (residence permit or even Italian passport). Moreover, all of them came to Europe by plane, however some of them crossed other countries on their intended journey towards Italy.
Many of the return migrants had been to Europe out of educational reason or job opportunities and stayed for a shorter period compared to my respondents in Italy, where almost everybody was employed as a factory worker or domestic help, doing this kind of job for more than 15 years. In general everybody was happy to be part of the project, especially the women in Italy, as two of them explained to me that I have been the first white person showing an interest in their lives and visiting their homes during the 20 years of their staying. All in all I had the feeling that all respondents were very open and seemed to trust me, which I could tell from the kind of stories they were sharing with me and from the way they did.

How – Using the snowball technique

The research population has been formed through a purposive selection in combination with the snowballing technique. In qualitative methods purposive sampling is very common because compared to questionnaire research "the aim of an interview […] is *not* to be representative […] but to understand how individual people experience and make sense of their own lives" (Valentine, 2005, p. 111). Furthermore, a particular focus has been put on finding female migrants that have stayed abroad for a duration of at least six month or longer, since this study considers someone a migrant only after the person has stayed abroad for this amount of time.

Speaking a little bit of 'Twi', one of Ghana´s local languages, helped me a lot in approaching the women and winning their trust. Especially in Italy it became one of the strongest instruments I possessed.

In order to find enough as well as relevant participants for my study I made use of snowball sampling, a technique based on social networks and shared knowledge (Hennink et al., 2011). Yet, Johl & Renganathan (2010, p. 42) state: "Gaining access [to participants] involves convincing people". According to van Maanen & Kolb (1982) this makes the task not an easy one and will require some more consideration and strategic planning but also luck. However, recruiting my respondents through 'snowballing' was a rather easy task for me because many participants were actively helping me by connecting me with their colleagues or acquaintances (Valentine, 2005; Longhurst, 2016). My first respondent I met at a conference that I attended at the University of Ghana. She in turn told me about an organization called 'Ahaspora Young Professionals'. I contacted the leader of the organization and a little later I was able to attend their meeting where I presented my project and two women came to talk to me afterwards. From there on the 'snowball' began to roll not only within Ghana, but also across borders since two of my contacts in Italy, whereof one was Francis, my main contact person, were already established via WhatsApp while still being in Ghana. Once I relocated my research to Italy the 'snowball' therefore continued rolling. Two other respondents in Italy were found via a Facebook group called 'Ghanaian people in Italy' and 'Ghanaian Culture (Verona-Italy)', one other lady via the mum of my contact person in
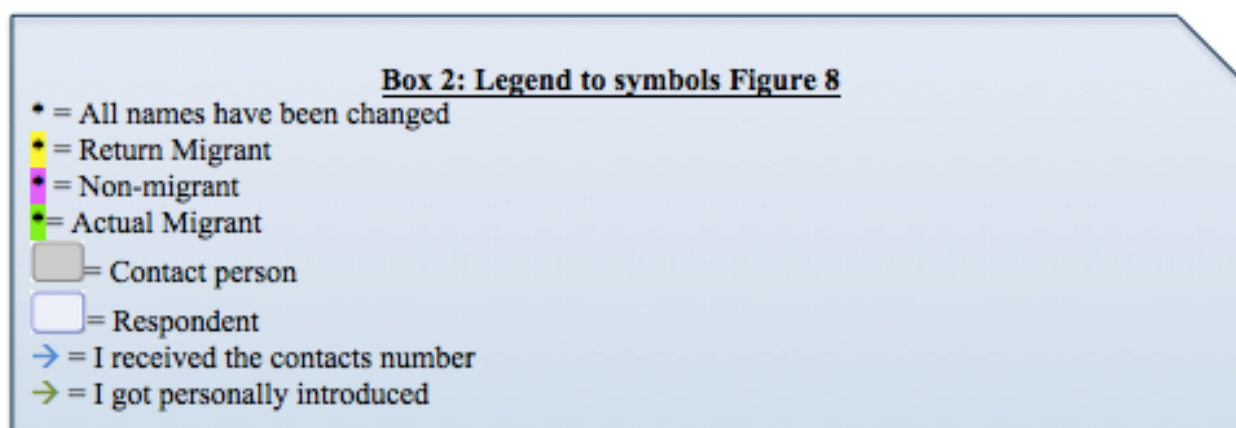
Kumasi, who lives in the Netherlands. The rest of my respondents were more or less picked by my contact persons in Conegliano and Tezze di Arzignano, who wanted to make sure that all ladies were able to talk to me in English. They helped me to organize everything, from finding a place to stay, to getting to the various locations. When I arrived people were already waiting eagerly to meet with me because they had been kind of prepared and I did not have to invest a lot of time in convincing people. Having my contact person, especially in Conegliano, was a great advantage. Since he accompanied me to almost every women I talked to, I could always be sure that my respondents were telling me the truth about their past, not only because he was their priest but also because he knew them all very well.

Because I wanted to avoid ending up with only talking to people from the same social network, which can be a limitation of the snowballing technique, I followed the advice of Hennink et al. (2011, p. 101) making use of "several different starting points for snowball recruitment", which is why I changed cities in Italy to not only talk to women from the same Ghanaian community. Throughout the entire research I stayed in contact with a number of (non)-migrants by either visiting them and spending time together or texting and calling via Whatsapp, to collect some further observations about the women´s attitudes.

Figure 8 is a schematic representation of my 'snowball-network' and shows all contact persons, respondents and the way we got connected. Moreover, it symbolizes the dimension of the transnational space under study and shows how useful and important a transnational social network can be. The 'snowball' jumped back to the Netherlands twice, which in turn brought me almost all of my respondents in Italy. The following chapter will show that such geographically dispersed contacts also affected my respondents in many ways.

3.3.2 Data documentation and analysis – about coding and interpreting

All interviews have been transcribed with the online software 'Transcribe', but were subsequently coded with 'Atlas.ti'. The interview transcripts have been analysed by using the principles of Grounded Theory. I started with 'open coding'. In this phase of the coding process I stayed very close to my material, using a lot of 'in vivo coding' as well. Memos and comments have been added to certain codes whenever they asked for further explanation. Afterwards, I went over those codes a second time to see whether some of them could be simplified or merged together. In the second phase I moved from a more descriptive coding to analytical coding and started creating categories by sorting my initial codes into 'families' (Cope & Kurzt, 2016; Corbin & Strauss, 2013; Creswell, 2013), that mainly match the three factors under study: 'framing Europe', 'social networks' and 'migrant experiences'. Based on those categories I wrote the actual analysis of this thesis.

Box 2: Legend to symbols Figure 8

- • = All names have been changed
- • = Return Migrant
- • = Non-migrant
- • = Actual Migrant
- ☐ = Contact person
- ☐ = Respondent
- → = I received the contacts number
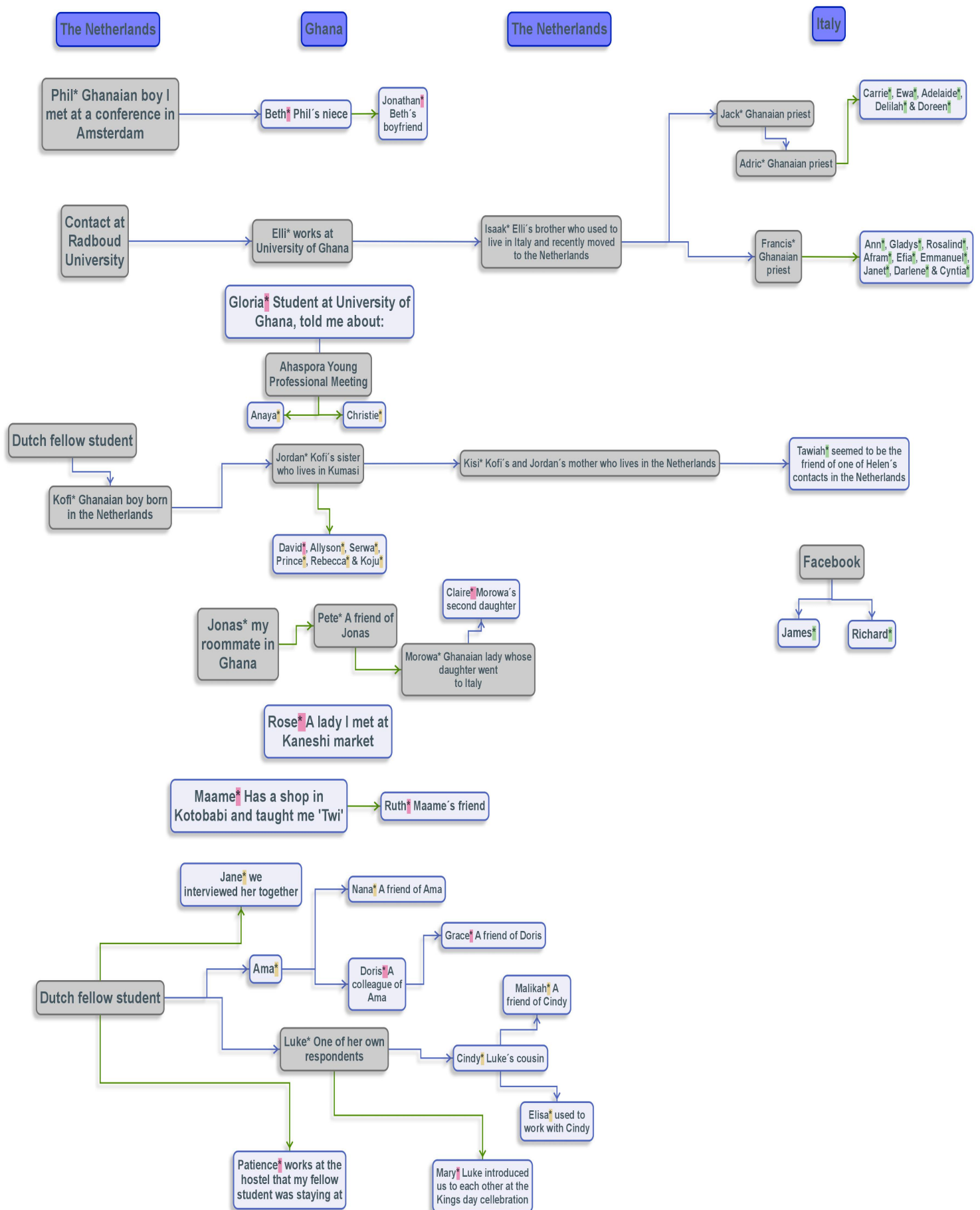- → = I got personally introduced

Figure 8. Schematic representation of the 'snowball-network'. Authors own creation

3.4 Methodological reflections

"We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience"

– John Dewey* – [9]

Almost every study comes with restrictions, so does this one. This sub chapter touches upon the dimensions of validity and reliability violation and discusses the challenges I encountered and the achievements I scored during the ethnographic fieldwork process. Even though I was facing some small challenges, the research process went very smooth and I am satisfied with the outcome of my research. Therefore, I can confirm with certainty that those weak points have not prevented me from achieving the objectives of the study or answering the research as well as the sub-questions in a reliable and valid way.

Reflections on the process

Most of my respondents in Ghana were very well educated. Even though I tried to balance the amount of educated and less educated people within and between each category, I ended up with 10 educated and 3 less educated return migrants as well as 10 educated and 2 less educated non-migrants. Yet, in Italy I talked to 4 educated and 13 less educated migrants. Since the level of education had some great influence on the women´s attitudes towards migration the validity of the research could have been improved by creating a better balance.

Furthermore, I was almost only able to conduct research in Accra because of the full time internship that I was doing, which tied me to that location. Hence, not much attention was paid to the origin. I am convinced that I missed out on some interesting stories by not talking to women in the more rural areas of Ghana. Retroactively it would have been particularly interesting to go to the Brong-Ahafo and Western region since many of my respondents in Italy migrated from those areas.

Also the physical location of the interviews needs to be reflected on. According to Elwood & Martin (2000, p. 656) "space matters and affects us" and also Crang (2002, p. 5) mentions the fact that "the physical location of interviews affects discussion". Therefore, I need to mention that while being in Ghana I almost only talked to people in public places, whereas in Italy I almost only went to their homes. This might have had an effect on the way people behaved while talking to me, however I dare to say that it did not so much effect *what* they were actually telling me, since the interviews in Ghana were much more in depth and extended than those I conducted in Italy.

As much as speaking a little 'Twi' helped me to connect with the women, it also worked as a downside not knowing it well enough. Most of the interviews were conducted in English, only in seven cases I had somebody with me that helped with a little translation. Admittedly, sometimes the translation in both directions was much shorter or longer than the original saying and therefore I cannot be absolutely sure whether the translator reproduced everything my respondent or I were saying in the right way. Especially when a question needed further explanation I sometimes had the feeling that my translator included his/her own interpretation by providing examples to the respondent or indicating his/her own point of view.

---

[9] Quotation does not literally (*) appear in Dewey´s work (for an explanation of its origin, see Lagueux, R. C. (2014). A spurious John Dewey Quotation on Reflection. Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/17358587/A_Spurious_John_Dewey_Quotation_on_Reflection

"Considering the nature of qualitative studies, the interaction between researchers and participants can be ethically challenging for the former, as they are personally involved in different stages of the study" (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014, p.1). [10] Reflecting on my position as a researcher I can conclude that I did not face too many difficulties. Among my respondents there was not a single person that made me feel uncomfortable or expected any kind of payment for their participation. On the contrary, it was often the case that they insisted on treating me. Often I got paid for a drink or ice-cream, my contact persons in Italy drove me around to visit my respondents, I got hosted at their places where food was always shared and one of my respondents even had a dress custom-made for me as a surprise when I came and visited her for the first time. First, this made me feel a little uncomfortable, but I quickly realized that it was their way of showing affection and thankfulness to be part of this project and that it was seen as very rude not to accept their offers. Furthermore, I enjoyed interviewing my respondents in an amicable way and was therefore able to create a very comfortable research setting. However, sometimes this challenged me in my role, being a professional researcher because I often developed a strong sympathy, which sometimes distracted me from gathering all the information needed. Nonetheless, as a qualitative researcher one needs to be extra sensitive when it comes to "the relationship and intimacy that is established between the researcher and participants" in order to fully respect the persons privacy and to create "honest and open interactions" and "avoiding misrepresentations" (Sanjari et al., 2014, p. 3; Warusznski, 2002).

Yet, finding my respondents and interacting with them was usually easy and I realized that telling my personal story of being a migrant myself somehow had an impact on their state of mind and generated more open answers. Even though our life experiences were not fully comparable they often saw me as 'one of them': Being a foreigner, on my own and struggling with the language. Resultant, I was able to talk to them on an equal level, from woman to woman, rather than from interviewer to interviewee. This also helped me to build up trustworthiness and I had the feeling that my respondents felt secure enough to share their life stories with me. Moreover, I designed a confidentiality agreement that every participant could sign, to assure them that their responses would only be used for the purpose of this study and in an anonymous way. According to Richards & Schwartz (2002) and Sanjari et al. (2014, p. 3) it is especially those factors: "anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent" that need to be seen as ethical concerns and therefore communicated clearly to all participants.

Even though Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick (2008) state that using a camera or field recorder might have a negative influence on the respondents behaviour and the quality of their answers I did not experience that, as many of them shared their stories in such a vivid way, expressing their feelings and asking questions in return. Recording helped me a lot, since I experienced asking questions, taking notes and creating a natural conversation at the same time as quite challenging.

Apart from data triangulation I also made use of inter-rater reliability. Before conducting my first interview I had my interview guides double-checked by another researcher. In addition, in between discussions on process and data collection were held. This reliability check did not only increase my confidence, but made sure that no unethical questions were included in my interview guides.

---

[10] The real page numbers of this article were not indicated, which is why I used the numbers that I found in this pdf version, even though they are not made for citation:
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4263394/pdf/jmehm-7-14.pdf

3.5 Concluding remarks

"Travel changes you. As you move through this life and this world you change things slightly, you leave marks behind, however small. And in return, life – and travel – leaves marks on you"

– Anthony Bourdain – [11]

After being in the field and reflecting on those five months and all the experiences I had abroad, I can definitely say that ethnographic fieldwork is not only about collecting 'the data'. Blommaert & Dong (2010) state that fieldwork "essentially […] is a learning process" (p. 27). From my own point of view I definitely agree with their statement. Not only did I gradually develop my research skills, having done qualitative research for the first time, but I also developed as a person. As the citation above expresses very well, going to different places goes hand in hand with changes.

　　　When deliberating on the outcomes of my interviews and the relationships I built, I can confirm that a social connection can be seen as the best foundation for good ethnographic research. Depending on the degree of the connection I was able to raise different or even more personal questions, which were a big contribution to this project since they provided deeper insights into the lives and thoughts of those women. Even though many ethnographic researchers experience this 'special connection' with their respondents it was still very helpful and valuable to experience it myself. Therefore, I can only hope for any future research of mine that this wonderful 'side-effect' will always be present.

---

[11] Bourdain, A. (2008). *The Nasty Bits: Collected Varietal Cuts, Usable Trim, Scraps, and Bones*. New York, Bloomsbury Publishing USA. (Preface, section 6, para. 1-3)

I. A transnational dialogue – a guide for the reader

This study tells a story about people. However, since this study also aims to give a voice to the women, it will not just be me telling a story about them, rather it will be them telling their story to you. The following three chapters aim to present the various contrasting attitudes that women have towards migration and that I was able to collect during my research. Presenting and analysing their stories and behaviours will therefore answer the first part of the main research question: What contrasting attitudes towards migration exist among female Ghanaians in a transnational space between Africa and Europe?

Throughout the following three chapters Rosalind will be sharing parts of her migration story with us. We met on June 15th at her place in Pordenone, Italy, as Francis and I were invited for lunch. However, her and the other women´s stories will be presented in a rather unusual way. Women from all three categories will discuss their thoughts, feelings and experiences with each other in form of transnational dialogues that have been created. Those dialogues did not happen like this in reality, but are basically written out of the statements I gathered during my interviews. When possible I kept the original saying, only sometimes I had to insert and change some words or correct some grammar, in order to create a more fluent interaction between the different actors. Box 3 provides a legend to symbols, which will help to understand all changes that have been made. The content of their sayings, however, never has been changed. Therefore, everything that gets provided throughout the following three chapters can be found back in the transcriptions of the interviews.
Out of all my respondents, Rosalind´s story has been picked, as she covered almost all factors with her story, that I consider relevant and wanted to discuss. Most of the time, she will be the one leading us through the chapters and I will let my other respondents comment on or question her statements. Since it was logically not possible to gather a non-, a return and an actual migrant at the same place, I was not able to set up a real focus group discussion. However, I am convinced that opposing the different stories will explain the contrasts in attitudes in a very interesting and innovative way, which is why this transnational focus group discussion has been created in order to let all women converge in one transnational arena.

With the content represented and analysed in Chapter 4, the first sub question will be answered: 'What kind of images do exist about 'destination Europe' and how does studying those images help to understand the (changing) attitudes of Ghanaian women living in the transnational arena?' Chapter 5 aims to answer the second sub question, 'How are social networks formed and transformed in a transnational space and how do they affect the women´s attitudes towards migration?' Chapter 6 deals with sub question 3: 'How do the women´s diverse migration experiences affect their attitudes towards migration to Europe?' Furthermore, every chapter will end in a small conclusion that will help to answer the research question at the end.

Box 3: Legend to symbols

RM = Return Migrant
NM = Non-migrant
AM = Actual Migrant
 … = One or more words left out from original transcript/combination of two
　　 disconnected sentences
[ ] = Word addition, or change of upper and lower case
{ } = Fictional statement
(…) = Unclear/not understandable
< > = Description of facial expression or meaningful gesture
word = Words with underlining were vocalized with special emphasis

Chapter 4 Destination Europe – Women's imaginations here and there

Rosalind's story

In September 2000, Rosalind, a by now 50-year-old Ghanaian lady, decided to leave everything behind and boarded a plane that would bring her to Europe, Italy, where she finally would be reunited with her husband.

      The two of them met when Rosalind was still in secondary school. Gabriel, however, felt the strong aspiration to leave Ghana and to start a new life in Europe. Going abroad and especially to Europe was always something that Rosalind thought about, also because two of her brothers had already moved: one to England, and the other one to the United States. However, she was still in school and not ready to give up everything by that time. The young couple was faced with a difficult decision and at the end Gabriel left to Italy and Rosalind stayed behind to further her education, but promised to wait for him. Gabriel returned several times for temporary visits, during which they got married and both of their sons were born. All in all they almost had to spent ten years apart from each other before Rosalind was able to follow him to Italy. "…I also wanted to come to Europe…", Rosalind said. "[S]ince … my husband was already [t]here I knew very well that one day … I will also come to Europe." However, being able to reunite with her husband meant that she had to take the most painful decision that a mother can take at all. "…[W]hen I was coming to Europe, I did not come with [my] boys, I left them behind …." Finally, in 2003, after being separated for three long years Gabriel went back to the Brong Ahafo region and brought their sons with him to Italy.

4.1 Imagination versus Reality

Europe very often gets framed as a pathway into social success, as it seems to be the place where one encounters endless opportunities. However, upon arrival, when being confronted with reality, migrants often end up being disappointed as their imaginations are far away from the truth (Staring, 2001; van Meeteren, Engbersen & van San, 2009).

> Rosalind (AM): "I thought that things are going to be somehow easy … here. … [W]hen we were in Ghana we all hear to come to Europe means you are coming to see a better life, we are having that in mind. … So I was … pray[ing] that God should help me so that the dreams can come true. … But when I came to Europe I realized that … it's not … [like that]. You have to work hard and … especially Italy here, the Italians don´t have women jobs and men jobs, it's just the matter of knowing how to do it, … if they tell you to do this and you are able to, its your job. … So the work is very difficult for especially the women, … and its not even easy to get job. … I was lucky by Gods grace I got a job immediately …." (Pordenone, 15.6.2017)

> Malikah (RM): {"Before I went to England for my studies}, I was thinking freedom, … I was 18 and … trying to find myself … I felt like Europe is the best place and has the best possibilities for women. African women. … When I was going I didn´t have any preconceived ideas about what it was going to be like. I was just going on an adventure. … [E]verything that I encountered I took as an experience and I roll[ed] with it …. {But still, it was a} totally different system and … {I had to learn} that if you are late for the bus, you really are late for the bus." (Accra, 18.4.2017)

Beth (NM): {"Really? I imagined} … women are more … disadvantage[d] in migration. … I am not really a fan of migration. I don´t really want to travel to work. Many women are traveling, it is very [difficult] because women are more … vulnerable, especially when they travel outside the country, the kind of things some of them do, you know they end up selling their bodies in prostitution. … {Personally I think people} … just want[] to go … [to] work to get money. … But it's nice because they do … send stuff over here." (Accra, 8.4.2017)

Claire (NM): {"No one is sending me anything.} [M]ost of them they go and depend on somebody, … whatever he … or … she has over there, its small small, … its not easy." (Accra, 21.4.2017)

Ewa (AM): "… [W]hite people, they all having big houses, this idea is still in Ghana, those who doesn´t travel they know that when you are outside then you are [in] heaven, you are staying well and having a lot of money, so when I came, I was really disappointed because that time … we were staying together [with] another couple … in an apartment, … I wasn´t happy … because in my hometown I was having my home, … when I came here, I was expecting more." (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

Nana (RM): {"I agree with you Ewa} [M]y first time in Europe, … it was not what I expected, I know it was my country of choice but definitely it was not what I expected, I [also] expected things to be so much easier. … [I]n France there is all the bureaucracy, … all this steps you have to take to achieve something …, I was definitely frustrated, … extremely frustrated … because I had expectations that were just killed with the reality." (Accra, 18.5.2017)

Paying close attention to the statements provided by these women, it is inevitable that one notices the dynamic character that Weiss (2002) ascribed to imaginations. Imaginations changed either directly after arrival (after being faced with reality), or due to experiences or stories told by others. Nana, Ewa and Rosalind shared that being in Europe is/was not easy, especially when one realizes that one came with the wrong expectations. Literature, but also other men and women I spoke to, showed that there exists a certain image of Europe in Ghanaian society, whereof people get influenced. Some put all their trust in those societal images, as they might not know a certain someone, who would disabuse them. Positive stories seem to confirm ones imagination, whereas negative stories do not necessarily seem to generate negative images. Like Tawiah explained in the very beginning of the thesis, Delilah, a 60-year-old lady who came to Italy already in 1988, shared a similar incident with me, after I asked her whether she is sharing the struggles she encounters with people back home in Ghana:

Delilah (AM): "Sure, sure, sure. We tell them, but … they don´t believe, they want to come and see for themselves." (Tezze die Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

What Tawiah and Delilah are sharing, illustrates the existing discrepancy between imagination and reality that can develop within transnational spaces. It shows how different perspectives in communication encounter each other and how challenging being 'here' and 'there' can be, especially when people at home expect ones life to be different from what one tells them, as they might hold on to certain images. According to Palmberg (2001) the term 'image' so far does not have a "firmly accepted scientific definition". Boorstin (1961), however, as cited by Palmberg (2001, p. 11) came to the conclusion that reality does not seem

to be as important as "projected images". This statement confirms that people might tend to put more faith into certain images than believing in reality.

However, of course there are also women that have an originally negative image about (migrating to) Europe or let themself get convinced by the negative stories and experiences of others. Non-migrant Claire, a 29-year-old mum, student and employee at the ministry for food and agriculture in Accra, shared with me how the stories she had heard from her migrant acquaintances shaped her attitude towards Europe.

> I: So … do you know anybody else that travelled abroad besides your sister?
> R: lots of people
> I: And what kind of stories do those people tell?
> R: bad bad <smiles shyly>
> I: Bad stories?
> R: Yes, that place is very stressful
> I: Europe is stressful?
> R: <nods> (Accra, 21.4.2017)

This imagination of Europe being a stressful place, I came across several times when talking to my respondents. Actual and return migrants shared their experiences with me, and non-migrants their assumptions or the stories they heard from others. Various non-migrants shared that they do not understand why someone would like to move to a place where life becomes stressful, when one can have a more relaxing life in Ghana. In the study of Nyamnjoh & Page (2002) I came across the following statement that one of their respondents made: "They have some funny diseases like stress. Stress is a disease of the Whiteman" (p. 628).

4.1.1 The formation of imaginations towards migration to 'the West'

As has been illustrated in paragraph 2.3.1 imaginations towards Europe or 'the West', that exist in the Ghanaian society, can arise due to certain influential factors. Salazar (2010, p. 57) talks about two main sources: First, "global popular culture" (represented through mass media) and secondly, "migrant or returnees", referring to the stories those share with others. Both sources seem to affect the women´s imaginations and therefore attitudes.

Migration towards the western world gets framed as something particularly desirable, as it only seems to bring advantages and promises a rising quality of life. A couple of studies, however, have shown that it is not so much about the geographical location of the western countries, but rather about the attribute that get ascribed to the term 'the West'. In her diploma thesis 'Imagine Migration', Prinz (2006) examines the process of migration and 'destination Europe' from a Tanzanian perspective. She detected that Europe often does not even get seen as a geographical union, as it is more about a certain selection of countries, which get ascribed certain features. According to Prinz (2006) "these often stereotypical features include economic wealth, high education rates, plenty of employment opportunities [or] good working conditions" (p. 90). Salazar (2010) depicts that often certain imaginations get connected to western countries, even if in reality those countries might be located in the northern, eastern or southern part of the world. Prinz (2006) assumes that 'features' and 'locations' do have an effect on each other. For this, she provides the following explanation:

> So on the one hand a country is attributed to Europe because it shows certain features
> (e.g. the U.S., Australia, Japan, or Canada), and on the other hand a country may be

assigned to certain features because it is located in Europe (e.g. Albania, Macedonia, or the Czech Republic). (p. 90)

The assumption that certain countries with certain features get ascribed to Europe was something I also came across in my own research. On April 28th I met with Rose, a young mother and marketing student, who has a small shop at Kaneshie market in Accra, where she sells cloth. She herself did never travel outside of Ghana but was sharing the experiences of one of her friends who used to live in Europe:

> Rose (NM): "Yes, she was okay, but she said … the issues she faces was that you have to wake up early because the busses go on time, … you are always in a rush … that's what she told me about it … [and] anyone who goes to Europe and come back that person becomes time conscious, … so … it gives you experience …."(Accra, 28.4.2017)

First of all, this statement shows that Rose is acquainted with the European time consciousness, which indicates that stories of migrants or returnees can have an effect on how non-migrants imagine Europe or migration to be like, based on what others share with them, which in turn can affect their attitudes. However, when I asked her about the country her friend was staying in, we had the following conversation, which confirms Prinz´s location/feature assumption as well as her following statement: "Among the non-European countries which were claimed to be European are mainly Canada and the USA" (2006, p. 92).

> I: Äh but, which place was she in Europe, do you know that country?
> R: ähhm it seems Canada! (Accra, 28.4.2017)

However, according to Schapendonk (2011) media and people´s personal experiential stories cannot be seen as the only 'image-builders'. Therefore, Schapendonk (2011) refers to "the educational system, which in many African countries is still orientated towards 'the West'" (p. 86). One of his respondents explained that schools very often work with European examples, which suggest the impression of Europe as a better place. Also when being on my observational walks through Accra, I came across many posters (Figure 9), advertising precisely the kind of 'the West' as has been discussed by Prinz (2006) and Salazar (2010).

4.1.2 When anticipation turns into disappointment

Europe, a place in heaven

Gladys (AM): "The time I was still in Ghana, … I hear [people] … say 'abroadgee, abroadgee', … I am going abroad, abroad, … but I [was] thinking that abroad is the <laughs> heaven. So the time I hear abroad … I like to come and see that abroad people saying, … that is my motive, I came here … [because] when the people came from abroad to Africa their life is very good … because … Africa is … very difficult … to get anything you like … there we can´t get work everyday, … but I hear that if you came to abroad you can find more job … [and] good living in your life. … I was happy to [go] here and then I tried myself. … When I enter Europe then I see that there is no difference [with Ghana], … Italy … is still on earth. … I [was] not happy, … I see that there is house[s] and … everything like Africa." (Conegliano, 14.6.2017)

Both Tawiah (see introduction chapter 1) as well as Gladys experienced disappointment upon their arrival in Italy when they realized that the location of origin and destination did not differ according to geographical features. The two of them were not the only one that shared this feeling with me. Salazar (2010) provides a possible explanation for this special imagination of Europe being a place in heaven. He came across a similar image when doing fieldwork in Tanzania. In paragraph 2.3 I already explained how in Swahili, 'the West' means, 'the things up there'. Salazar (2010) therefore states the following:

> The 'up' is explained by Tanzanians as referring to the high living standard (implying distance from the daily life of most people), the orientation on a map (in the north), or the fact that they must fly to get to the West. (p. 57)

One might assume that in the course of time the connotation of 'up' relating to Europe turned into the image of Europe being 'a place up there in the air'. This possible misinterpretation has to do with the content, that migrants or returnees pass on to their families back home. As one will see in the following chapter migrants do not always share the entire truth of their experiences abroad. Some even oversell their situation in order to avoid calling attention to the struggles they are facing in reality - a protective mechanism I title 'mental photoshopping'. Keeping this in mind, I assume that the imagination of Europe being a place in heaven must have arose from peoples circumscriptions of their experiences abroad, as some might use expressions like 'I feel like I am in heaven' or 'this is a magical place'. Those metaphors used by former migrants might have changed into real images through oral tradition and are therefore still manifested in African societies.

Return migrant Jane explained that this glamourized mind-set was something people still had around the time she left Ghana, which was 14-years ago. However, by now things have changed. The conversations with others confirmed this assumption, since apart from Tawiah, it was only the older migrant women I met in Italy that came with this image in their heads. None of the return migrants, who were significantly younger than the women I spoke to in Italy, had this metaphorical image in their mind before coming to Europe, as well as non of the non-migrant women, who differed considerable in age.

When talking about disappointment, the concept of hope needs to be mentioned as well, since according to Vammen (2017) "disappointment is … enclosed in hope" (p. 42). Therefore, a person with lower expectations does not experience disappointment as much as someone who has very high hopes. According to Kleist (2017b, section II), hope is composed of "potentiality as well as uncertainty". Since hope gets mirrored in people´s imaginaries and even in the way reality gets perceived (Kleist, 2017a), handling "hope as an analytical prism" can help to reveal more about the "mobility paradox … of … West African migration" (Kleist, 2017b, section II).

Bloch (1996) as discussed in Vammen (2017, p. 42) considers hope as something that leads to action instead of standstill, as he considers the "wishing for something better" as a "driving method" (Vammen, 2017, p. 42). This insight can help to reveal more about how imaginations affect peoples' attitudes, as hope inspires people to move on (either preparing for migrating or coping with disappointment afterwards), which can shape their further trajectories.

The contrasting mind-sets of other women

When arriving at a place one had dreamed about for month or years, far away from home and family, discovering that the expected paradise at first sight does not seem to be too different from where one just came from, it is not astonishing that people´s positive imaginations change into a clouded attitude. However, as the following dialogue will reveal, it is not only Europe´s external appearance that creates a change from anticipation into disappointment. Most of the women I talked to, confessed that their initial disappointment had something to do with the living and working conditions they were facing, which eventually destroyed their primary hope to start a new, great and successful life.

> Adelaide (AM): "… [I]n the beginning … I was disappointed, when I went first time here (Italy), … I was comparing it with the work I was doing in Ghana, … I was very, very sad, … to work in an office in Ghana and coming here washing … place[es], cleaning bath …."(Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

> Maame (NM): "We don´t have money here, yeah, we work for years before you be rich, but Europe when you go for some time you will be rich…." (Accra, 29.4.2017)

> Rosalind (AM): {"Not really,} …when I came, I realized if you are in Europe and you don´t work, you can never be happy … because of the money, the money that we receive cannot satisfy us, … its too less, … we saw that the life here in Europe is not like the way we were thinking about it when we were in Ghana. … {Who is shaping those image?} [T]hose who came here first …here are so many people that already came here and returned to Ghana. … [T]hey didn´t share, [its] … the way the person dress, the way he behave, … you get money, … so not that we … heard it from the media, no we just saw it … ourselves that if somebody comes to Europe the life can be better that is why we also came here, … but later we regretted." (Pordenone, 15.6.2017)

What Rosalind shares, that observing returnees and their promising lifestyle, made her want to experience the same 'over there' gets confirmed by Salazar (2010), who explains that it is especially the young generation who does pay attention to returnees, as they come back

"refined, sophisticated, educated, and always well dressed" (p. 58). Furthermore, he states, "the perceived new authority and cosmopolitan identity acquired through the western experience has a huge effect on the migration imaginary" (p. 58). The existence of this effect I discovered during the conversation I had with Patience, a young lady who works in a hostel in Accra and dreams about going back to school. She is now working in order to save some money to afford her schooling, however the successful story of her friend makes her believe that it would be much easier to reach this goal in Europe.

> Patience (NM): "I think it is good to be there [in Europe], … if I will be there I will be in school. … I know a friend who travelled to Italy, {his stories make me} … feel like I also be there <laughs>. When he was in Ghana, … it wasn´t easy for him to continue schooling, but when he went there now he is schooling." (Accra, 22.4.2017)

Schapendonk (2011) explains that those images of Europe being a paradise (in this case, Patience imagining Europe to be the place where she could easily go to school) often get "confirmed and reinforced by translocal interactions between migrants in Europe and their communities in their countries of emigration" (p. 84). Coe (2012) even states that the world often gets framed as a hierarchy. Her paper deals with the understanding that Ghanaian children have about transnational migration. It seems that those children were putting different places of the world in a certain ranking, which was based on the amount of remittances that a migrant family member was able to provide. Sub-Saharan African countries as well as southern Africa got ranked underneath Europe or the US. As a consequence of this the "dichotomy between 'here' and 'there'" gets perceived even stronger (Salazar, 2010, p. 57). However, as previously mentioned and as will be shown and analyzed in the following chapter, migrants do not always tell the entire truth about their life abroad. Also Schapendonk (2011) specifies that migrants often "remit biased information about 'the good life' to their family and friends, thereby strengthening the connection between migration and social prestige" (p. 84). One of Schapendonk´s respondents (a Senegalese women, living in Spain) framed this issue perfectly, by telling the following:

> When I go back to Senegal for holidays, I take my most beautiful dresses with me, just to show my family and friends I am doing MORE than fine ... . African people do just not tell the truth about living in Europe. Why? Because they just cannot, and when they tell the truth about the difficulties here, people in Africa would not believe them ... . Why? Because all the information they receive is telling them the opposite. (p. 84)

This citation in combination with what Tawiah and Delilah were describing, sharing the truth with home but people not believing them because of other stories they had heard and seen, shows that:

> Even if migrants speak more openly about the hardships of their migratory processes, images of the 'good life' would still reach African would-be migrants. One reason for this is that there is evidence of migrants' successes in their countries of origin - manifested by the flows of goods, remittances and investments. (Schapendonk, 2011, p. 85)

Carrie (AM): …{"I came to Italy because} my parents were here [already], … they brought me at the age of 16 years. I was 16. {Let me tell you}, … when you get to Ghana, the perception of being in Europe is different, so … my parents [were] in abroad and … they send me money, they send me pictures. … I was like … enthusiastic to come and know what really is happening. … [In Ghana] they are giving you all sorts of stories. …

[But] when I came and I saw the situation, I have seen the reality so I … want to go back."
(Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

Nana (RM): "I do think [that migration] is something that you have to think about before
you do [it] … I think the solution that people think its all better on the other side which is
not true, you always have to have a plan …, there is so many people who see TV and think
its all easy and then they go and its like wow, what did I do, so I definitely don´t think its
something you have to close your eyes for (…), but if you have a plan, go for it,
absolutely." (Accra, 18.5.2017)

Grace (NM): "Exactly, {if I would ever go,} I had to go with a plan. … [But then], so
maybe you might plan to go to school but then you get there and then something happens
and then you don´t end up going to school, it is not always, you can plan but maybe in the
long run you can´t go by your plan, something [c]ould interfere with your plan." (Accra,
28.4.2017)

The various stories shared by those women show that a better preparation in advance could
have been of advantage. However, to come back on the feature/location paradigm described
by Prinz (2006), many people just decide to go to Europe as they imagine all of Europe to be
that great place with lots of opportunities, not for example thinking about language issues that
might impede work and social life. Also Schapendonk & van Moppes (2007) emphasise that
many migrants are prepared to face difficult conditions abroad, nevertheless, there is also still
a great number of migrants "arriving misinformed and ill-prepared" (p. 2). Salazar (2010) on
the other hand talks about the global character of imaginations and illustrates that due to the
power of media, people are able to receive all kind of imaginations about mobility, since
information can easily be spread across the world, which can evoke the impression that
people are constantly aware of what is going on.

4.2 Concluding remarks

This chapter aimed to answer the first sub question: *What kind of images do exist about
'destination Europe' and how does studying those images help to understand the changing
and contrasting attitudes of Ghanaian women living in the transnational arena?* Many stories
revealed that Europe very often gets framed as a magical place full of opportunities that
promises a pathway into social success. However, after arriving at the destination many
women felt disappointed, as Europe did not seem to be that much different as imagined. This
insight already challenges the assumption of a 'frictionless space', since my transnational
respondents proved that life abroad is not uncomplicated and undisturbed. Moreover, the fact
that imaginations can change very quickly, after being confronted with reality, revealed their
dynamic character (Weiss, 2002). On the other hand we have seen that Europe also gets
perceived or framed as a very stressful place.
      How do those different images arise? Salazar (2010) differentiates between the
influential character of the mass media on the one hand and the migrants or returnees and the
stories they share with their social network (back home in Ghana) on the other hand.
Schapendonk (2011) who also reflected on the work of Appadurai (1996) concludes that it
would be "naïve to think that … images of Europe are only transmitted by migrant
connections or social networks" (p. 88), rather it is due to migrants' daily practices and
interactions that take place within Ghana, Africa or the global world. Schapendonk (2011)
provides an enumeration of daily actions, which form "daily imaginations of a better life

elsewhere" (p. 88) and show that the development of images really can take place all the time and everywhere during "daily businesses, daily television broadcasts, daily telephone calls, daily church visits, [or] daily confrontations with history …" (Schapendonk, 2011, p. 88).

After having a closer look on the women´s imaginations and trying to follow how certain (positive) connotations can shape them, we are able to conclude that especially collective imaginations "can become the fuel for action" (Appadurai, 1996, p. 7). Also the short excursus about the concept of hope revealed that identifying hope, which gets mirrored in imaginations, helps to reveal more about West African mobility (Kleist, 2017b). Therefore, Vammen (2017) states "[t]he more vividly the goal is imagined, the stronger the wanting is or, in other words, the active process of going towards the goal" (Vammen, 2017, p. 42).

Studying people's imaginations from a multi-sited perspective, talking to people in Ghana and Italy helped to understand why attitudes can change and what they can change into. Dependent on what people are sharing or observing in daily practices, the thoughts, imaginations or aspirations of others might get influenced. If a migrant frames Europe as a very positive place/in a very positive way, her relatives at home might develop the wish to engage with her in a more social way and will also start to expect much more. Chapter 5 is going to discuss the role of social networks that can have the power to create those imaginations. However, even though those two dimensions are very strongly interconnected, social networks also play a separate role in the transnational arena.

Capturing those daily exchanges and practices can be important when wanting to capture the transnational arena, as they will also reveal more about the norms and values as well as expectations that get created in the transnational space affecting migrants as well as non-migrants and the general notion of migration that exists in Ghanaian society. "Human beings live only in the present moment, but imagination allows us to travel to the past or to the future" (Serrano, 2008, pp. 4-5). This mind traveling between past and future, and country of origin and destination will also further be discussed in chapter 5.

d) Ethnographic sketch – Coping with challenges in a 'not so frictionless' space

At the age of seventeen, Jane, an ambitious and cosmopolitan young woman, moved to Belgium at the request of her parents, who had migrated there already in the nineties. When her parents confronted her with their decision, she was excited to go on the one hand, as she had heard countless and very promising stories about 'destination Europe', but she also explained to me that she felt forced at the same time because she had no other option then to go, since that was, what her dad wanted her to do.

Jane and I met in a café at Accra Mall on April, 7ᵗʰ in 2017, where she very openly shared her entire life story with me. During her time in Belgium and later on also in the Netherlands, Jane learned the Dutch language and became a successful pharmacist, always aiming high. In our conversation, however, she confessed that the direction she was going to, made it very hard for her to relate to her Ghanaian friends back home and gradually they mutually lost their connection and contact. While being in Europe, Jane worked really hard and became so stressed that she had almost no time for social interactions and no strength to make an effort, which is why the connection to her Ghanaian church community also gradually weakened. Jane did not feel very comfortable while living abroad and was constantly present with her mind both 'here' and 'there', which eventually let to her return back to Ghana in 2014 together with her husband and children. Despite her wish to return, Jane was worried about going back at the same time, since she had lost the contact to all her friends in Ghana and felt the pressure of her family, who could not understand her decision to go back. While talking with each other she confessed, that she felt very lost in both worlds, as she was not sure anymore where she really belonged and how to handle her double life situation and the feeling of being 'here' and 'there' at the same time.[12]

Jane´s story made me wonder - how do social networks really affect people living in a transnational space? How important are contacts in the place of destination, how do new ties get formed, how do others change? And most importantly, what roles do those play that we leave behind? Those and other questions will be answered in order to find out more about how women´s attitude towards migration might be affected by their social networks.

Figure 10. On a bumpy road. Pompeii, Italy. June 5, 2017. Photo by the author

---

[12] The interview with Jane was conducted in Accra on April, 7th 2017.

Chapter 5 A bumpy road: The power of migrant´s social networks

Jane´s life story, compressed in the vignette above, already reveals some important insights that will be discussed in this chapter. Her example shows very well that all three groups of women can be affected by their social ties, as she as a returnee, experienced migration as a 'member' of every 'migrant group'. The sketch provides an insight into the bumpy road of migrant´s social networks, as it shows that the maintenance of social ties can be off great importance as well as how social ties do massage peoples imaginations or experiences and the struggle to live up to one´s own and others expectations and dealing with disappointment in oneself and other ties.

In this chapter different dialogues will be presented that focus on relevant issues that can be associated with social networks and can cause contrasting attitudes at the same time. Some of the factors under study do get echoed in hitherto existing literature such as Dako-Gyeke (2016), Erdal & Oeppen (2013), Granovetter (1973, 1983), Grillo & Mazzucato (2008), Mazzucato (2008), Ryan et al. (2008), Schapendonk (2011, 2015) and many more. Moreover, just like Granovetter (1973, 1983), Ryan et al. (2008) and Schapendonk (2015), this study makes a differentiation between strong (5.1) and weak ties (5.2). Peoples strong ties are composed of family and a closest friends. Like many authors, I agree, that migrant´s strong ties need specific attention. In his study, Granovetter (1973) states that "[t]ies discussed in this paper are assumed to be positive" (p. 1361), however, this study will also bring out the negative ties, or at least the negative consequences that some ties can entail, as this issue often gets forgotten in transnational debates where it often gets assumed that people are unproblematic and without interference, connected with each other. Schapendonk (2011) confirms this assumption by stating that current transnational research does not pay much attention "to the friction that emerges in transnational social spaces" (p. 239). Therefore, I have chosen to add an additional dimension to the conventional network approach about strong and weak ties, by taking the changeability of social networks along the migrant´s trajectories, into account. Ties over time vary in terms of strength and by studying the changes and the efforts that people are investigating in their networks, it will be possible to discover more about the double role of networks and the emotional and financial burdens and challenges connected to that; having to balance the 'here' and 'there' simultaneously (Grillo & Mazzucato, 2008; Mazzucato, 2008).

Since this study focuses on the attitudes that women have towards migration and how social networks can affect those, the purpose of diving into the issue of double engagement is to see how this balancing act can lead to a change of feelings and thoughts, and how the existence of and the involvement in transnational social networks influences the women in terms of worriedness, sadness, happiness, hope or pride. Apart from the element of supporting relatives at home with money or goods, the double engagement phenomenon in this study concentrates on the women being present 'here' and 'there' with their minds. This is what I call 'the trajectory of the mind', as all my respondents, irrespective of their geographical location, are constantly mind-traveling back and forth, as they are constantly thinking about 'the other place' as well. Anyhow, the issue of experiencing two places will then be discussed in the following chapter.

5.1 The significance of strong ties: How the 'there' influences the 'here'

According to Granovetter (1973), "the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie" (p. 1361). This very section discusses three

different factors that seem to influence the women´s attitudes profoundly and can be traced back to their strong ties, more precisely to family and friends (in Ghana).

5.1.1 Emotional support: Surviving in a new place

Boyd (1989) and Cornelius (1982) state that personal networks can provide emotional support. In this section the meaning and relevance of this issue will be discussed. Based on the study of Ryan et al. (2008), attention will also be paid to the important role that a migrant´s mother seems to represent.

  The assumption that social capital can easily be found in any place of destination still exists in some migration literature. However, the stories that people shared with me, and the observations I made, revealed "the importance of spatially dispersed networks" (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 684). Also Kelly & Lusis (2006) talk about the importance of those scattered networks, as migrants very often seem to need the emotional support from people back home instead of addressing people from their new local network. Women from each migrant category also explained to me the importance that the transnational communication with home, has for them. Due to the development of new communication methods and social media, receiving emotional support from home is becoming much easier, which in turn can affect the transformation of social networks.

> Patience (NM): "Everyday he whatsapp[s] me and I am replying and also sometimes he call[s]. … But whatsapp and sending messages is every day." (Accra, 22.4.2017)

> Doreen (AM): "… thanks to social media even though I prefer to chat with them, to see them but … it really really helps. {I share everything with my people in Ghana}, … photos, pictures, they are [my] number one." (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

> Nana (RM): "When I moved there the internet was not as big as now, or the social media was not, … right now you can call anyone on whatsapp, when I moved you had to buy a call card, … it was a lot more difficult … and texting was expensive either, … but when social media came … everyone was just only a click away." (Accra, 18.5.2017)

The work of numberless scholars, focusing on transnationalism, has revealed that migrants perpetuate ties with their origin. Kelly & Lusis (2006) emphasize that those linkages can have a significant effect on the migrants lives as well as on the lives of those who stay behind. Portes (1998) mentioned 'family support' as a beneficial outcome of social capital, which can shape the women´s attitudes towards their migration experiences in a positive way. In their study 'The Health-Related Functions of Social Support', Schaefer, Coyne, & Lazarus (1981) discuss three different types of social support amongst others "in relation to stressful life events", namely, "tangible, emotional, and informational" support (p. 381). It is different people that offer those various kinds of support, which implies, that support can even be given across borders (Ryan et al., 2008). Also Granovetter (1973) states that emotional support is not limited to people that stay within spitting distance. Thanks to the already discussed ways of modern communication there are no boundaries set to exchanging support, which is why Ryan et al. (2008) state that "transnational links with people 'back home' may continue to play a supportive role even after migration" (p. 674).

Claire (NM): "We don´t know which place/state [my sister] is in now, [but] … if right now she would come, … I will allow her to come and stay at my place and check her." (Accra, 21.4.2017)

Anaya (RM): "… I still have my parents, not that I ask them for money but I know that they are there for me so I am not alone." (Accra, 6.4.2017)

Tawiah (AM): "… [T]wice a week I have alarm "call your mum". … [W]hen I see the alarm its that I miss my mum, [so] I have to call her. [But] my mum doesn´t disturb me, she always encourage[s] me to have faith, I have to believe her. … [M]y mum is like my boyfriend, … [s]he listens <u>everything</u> … I want her to know what I am doing." (Parma, 23.6.2017)

In their study based on Polish migrants living in London, Ryan et al. (2008) found out that especially the mothers of migrants play an important role when it comes to emotional support. Many of their respondents revealed that they still see their mothers as the main contact person who offers the most "advice and support" (Ryan et al., 2008, p. 684). Tawiah´s statement confirms their assumption as she explained that the love, interest and confirmation received by her mother keeps her going and she started to develop a more positive attitude towards her personal migration. The various conversations I had, revealed that migrants do see their mothers as so-called lynchpins (Williams, 2006; Ryan et al., 2008). They seem to be an important bridging factor that keeps up the transnational space, as well as the wish to return for occasional visits. Delilah, Ewa and Rosalind all explained to me that their mother's funeral was the last time they went back to Ghana.

Emotional support from family at home thus seems to give the women the strength they need to carry on with their new life, especially directly after their arrival, as they feel supported and understood in their new environment. Ryan et al. (2008) present the story of Amelia, who followed her husband to London, where she arrived being pregnant. Since she did not know anybody there her transnational network with her family back home "proved particularly important" (p. 684). However, in other cases women also entirely "depend on their spouse to find emotional support and for sharing their problems" (Davids & Ruben, 2008, p. 100). My own respondents also shared this with me. Eight out of thirteen women I spoke to in Italy migrated there to join their husbands abroad and found themselves in a dependent position because there was no one else they could rely on. Ewa, a 52-year-old lady I met in Italy shared the following with me:

Ewa (AM): " … that time there was nobody around, … I think we were the first Ghanaians or so. … I would say that because I didn´t meet anyone, there is only the friends of my husband, not all of them brought their wives." (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

This is in line with Ryan et al. (2008) who state that emotional support "provided by close relatives or a partner" can help to "combat[e] homesickness and loneliness" (p. 674). When Ewa arrived in her new home she felt nothing but strange, especially because she was not able to understand the Italian language. Having somebody to rely on, in this case her husband, made it easier for her to settle down and cope with the challenges she encountered, also because he motivated her to study Italian. Nana, a return migrant from France experienced the opposite. She went abroad by herself as a very confident woman, however doubted her decision when she found herself in an unpleasant situation, in which emotional support from home would have been necessary, but could not been given.

Nana (RM): "You know in France I was completely alone, … it was [difficult] … For example one time I was robbed. … [That] was the only time were I was like wow, I am in a country by myself, I have no one, like that was the one time when I really felt, oh my gosh, this may not be good…." (Accra, 18.5.2017)

The incident and feeling she describes, shows that strong ties do not always result in support when it is particularly needed and that loneliness and a lack of those strong ties also affect people's attitude towards migration in a negative way, making life abroad more complicated. However, in the course of this chapter we are going to see that a too intense contact with home can also implicate more challenges.

5.1.2 Social pressure: Remitting biased stories and the unattainable wish to return

As the previous subsection revealed, emotional support provided by transnational ties can ease the arrival, however, having such strong ties across borders also can have a downside as it entails the negative consequence of social pressure and control (Portes, 1998; Inkpen & Tsang, 2005). As a consequence, very often people do not share all what they experience or only factoids, especially when it comes to the challenges they are facing abroad and do not want their relatives at home to know about.

Rosalind (AM): "No, we don´t tell them. You know, we are far away … They think we are living better, so if you tell them … you too … are having a problem it will even be a disgrace for us. So we don´t share all. … There are certain things we tell others, this we don´t tell." (Pordenone, 15.6.2017)

Ewa (AM): "I tell them everything that happens but I don´t tell the men anything, … I was … argu[ing] with my brother because he was saying that I came here about 25 years ago and what am I doing, all these things because he know[s] that in our place they think more about possession, wealth … But then, they don´t think that you are here, you have children, you are looking after them, they are going to school, you have to pay their fees, all these things. … [T]hey don´t think, but they always … expect more. So I was very angry with one of my brothers …."(Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

Claire (NM): " I have a sister who also travelled … [But] sometimes when I communicate with her via Whatsapp, she doesn´t give me the response I want …. [Its] because she feels like she tells me something, I tell my mum …. She will be worried, so she doesn´t like that. And you know, she is older than me and probably she should have been like married now and have kids even since I am the youngest with two kids." (Accra, 21.4.2017)

Mary (NM): "I don´t think they share everything because … well you know in Ghana there is usually this notion of moving abroad [and] that you are always better of [when] moving abroad. [F]rom what I get from some of my family members out there its not the case because some of us here in Ghana are so to speak better off then them but … its also a bit difficult coming back because its more like people here expect more of you since you´ve been there … and I feel like maybe they hold some things back because they don´t want to disappoint us when it comes to the expectations that people have off them being in … Europe or in the States or elsewhere." (Accra, 28.4.2017)

Elisa (RM): "I always tell people Europe is not all that you think it is … beautiful systems are in place but if you really want something meaningful for you life its better to stay in Africa, I always [say] that. … [I]ts rather unfortunate that Africans never see it …." (Accra, 21.4.2017)

The dialogue reveals the obvious strong influence that strong ties can have on migrants. Non-migrant Mary described that migrants fear the judgement of their relatives about unfulfilled expectations, which makes them withhold information or lie about their achievements, a technique that can be called 'mental photoshopping', which in turn influences or manipulates the imaginations of non-migrants (as outlined in chapter 4). Claire´s statement perfectly shows that those who stay behind expect a lot of those who leave. She is aware that her sister is holding back information and criticizes her for not corresponding to the Ghanaian family pattern. Moreover, the role of the mother gets mentioned again. Ryan et al. (2008) state that "[t]hrough passing on news, gossip and information, a lynchpin can help to keep people up to date with what is going on across the network" (p. 684). Clair´s story shows, that exactly this can also be a problem, as her sister abroad fears that her mother would tell everyone about her situation, which would make her look weak.

Besides the statements presented in the dialogue, many more women I spoke to, confessed that they do not share their problems with family back home, as they are too concerned about losing the initial respect they gained from starting a new life in the Western world. In her dissertation about 'the transnational trajectories of Iranians leaving Sweden', Kelly (2013) also emphasizes the issue of pressure, as she explains that one of her respondents "felt considerable pressure to achieve success in his life" (p. 258). The man (Hassan 2) explains himself: "I think one of the problems in my life has been that you always have to prove that you´re good. And since you were, you have to continue with that …." (p. 258).

Since many migrant are leaving West Africa with the notion to find success in Europe, not finding it would destroy the public notion of migration in Ghana and turn initial hopes into disappointment. Understandably, saving one´s face is very important, especially because being able to migrate says something about a person´s status and gets connected with respect. Actual migrant Efia told me that her well-educated migrant sister refused to call Efia 'sister' and only addressed her with her first name, to avoid an association. Now that Efia migrated herself:

R: … I get another respect …
I: okay so now they call you sister
R: yes, sister <laughs>
C: … because she too has travelled, experienced something, when she gets back there 'sister, will you eat this', 'shell I do this', 'shell I bring you this'. (Conegliano, 22.6.2017)

However, it often gets forgotten, that it is not only the migrants that remit biased stories. Also the non-migrants in Ghana send out biased information to their friends and relatives abroad, urging for (financial) help, which might not actually be needed and can pressure the actual migrants. Unfortunately, non of the non-migrants I talked to shared such an incident, however, Emmanuel, the son of the couple I was staying with in Italy, shared the following with me:

Emmanuel (AM): … sometimes it is difficult, … like you are here … you send money to the person … you [hear] nothing, meaning he or she has wasted the money …." (Conegliano, 19.6.2017)

He confessed that it makes him very unhappy to send his money to Ghana and to find out later that the money did not get spend on what it was intended for. The distance and the space that exist between both worlds make it difficult for people to double-check the information, values and practices that get exchanged. With her statement Rosalind confirms this assumption: 'you know, we are far away', meaning that what others cannot see, they do not need to know about. However, those individual cases could have a big effect on the general understanding and expectations towards migration that get formed in Ghana and create the motivation for others to migrate as well.

Restrictions in mobility: When going back is no option

Malikah (RM): {"What Mary just said is true.} I just didn´t [share], … maybe because I thought it would make me seem like … I was chicken, afraid … I just managed it, I don´t know why I didn´t tell, … maybe if I told my mum she would have gotten on the first plane and gotten me out of there which is something she was end up doing anyways. Because I remember one of the days I said to her, ja you know that job situation is really getting to me and I go to the interviews and … I am not making any headway, and she goes 'you know they are stressing you out why don´t you get a ticket and come home', so I thought, okay I get a ticket, I need a break! (Accra, 18.4.2017)

Jane (RM): "[Yes] a lot of people are moving back, a lot of … Ghanaians are moving back now to Ghana because of the opportunities, they think they have better opportunities here then there, but the older generation, … they still have the older mentality that the greener pastures are all there, to make it in life you have to move to Europe." (Accra, 7.4.2017)

Patience (NM): "[Going] without returning? … I don´t think it is good … . Because lets take it. If I am a Ghanaian and I travel outside without returning, meaning I don´t care about my family." (Accra, 22.4.2017)

Rosalind (AM): {"You know, Patience}, [I think] if you are in Ghana and you come to Europe and you want to go back [again], it is better you go earlier, maybe [after] two or three years you can decide to go, but if you don´t go and you stay till like as I am here, [which is] almost 17 years now, if I go to Ghana [now] without achieving something, what would people say about me? Even your family, your family will insult you … 'you don´t have aim', 'you went to Europe and you came … empty handed'…. You can´t go and stay with them … you can never be happy …. So whether good or bad, we have to stay …. So we didn´t go, I didn´t go because I wanted to achieve something better, that is why I am still here. So I am ready to face all the consequences, I know it is not easy but I am still in it to see how best I can do <smiles>." (Pordenone, 15.6.2017)

This dialogue points to the issue of 'restricted mobility'. To understand migration to the fullest, it is important to also pay attention to immobility, whereupon immobility is not something limited to non-migrants. Even after experiencing migration, people still can become immobile, at least in a certain direction. Rosalind describes her unattainable wish to return. As much as she would like to go back to Ghana, she feels restricted by her social network and the pressure that it exerts on her. This proves the importance of the concept of social networks and how this can influence a person´s attitude. Since Rosalind is not able to decide unrestricted about the further course of her life she finds herself in a 'trap of misery',

not due to a lack of money but due to a lack of a certain degree of freedom. Decisions about migrant's mobility therefore do not only get determined by the migrant herself, but are also strongly connected to the ties a migrant does or does not have. In her paper 'We never plan to return home' Dako-Gyeke (2016) also mentions the "fear of stigma or shame from friends and family", and explains that migrants rather prefer to migrate to a different country instead of returning home (p. 177). Rosalind, at this moment, is preparing her intra-EU migration to London:

> R: … I can say the blacks feel better in London then here [Italy]
> I: So would you also like to go there?
> R: … I go! … I go because my husband is already there. … I don´t know when, but I am preparing to go (Pordenone, 15.6.2017)

Do non-migrants receive a different treatment?

> Gloria (NM): "…[W]hen [people] find out that you have family and friends abroad, they kind of feel like oh you´re getting money, they send you money, so then, yes, to some extent they will say yes you are rich because they fell you get remittance from them, they send you money and you have a better life then they." (Accra, 29.3.2017)

> Mary (NM): "… I [also] remember when I was in school and my dad used to travel a lot, … I think people I won´t say treat you differently but … maybe they just want to be associated with you." (Accra, 28.4.2017)

The two statements show that transnational social networks can also affect the attitudes of non-migrants. Some of them shared to receive a different treatment within Ghanaian society because of them having connections abroad. Just by being part of a migrant´s social network a non-mover suddenly finds herself living in a transnational space. The way that other non-migrants treat those non-migrants, who have a migrant connection, again affects their imaginations about Europe.

Moreover, migrants can also put pressure on those they leave behind. On the one hand non-migrants can lose their dignity in their social environment when a family member returns unsuccessfully, which can have a significant effect on their attitude towards migration, but on the other hand non-migrant women, whose husbands migrate, can experience a lot of pressure as they have to take over "the position of household head, [and are] responsible for both the children as well as the activities and assets of the family …" (Ardayfio-Schandorf, 1995, p. 73).

5.1.3 A double engagement: Bridging and balancing the here and there

The two previous subsections presented the double-sided character that social networks have. When receiving emotional support on the one hand and social pressure on the other, migrants often feel torn between their two lifeworlds, and not seldom find themselves living a parallel kind of life, as they feel the need to engage themselves in the country of origin and destination. Experiencing this 'double engagement', as Grillo and Mazzucato (2008) call it, is something inevitable when living a transnational life and as outlined before it does entail challenges and consequences. Grillo & Mazzucato (2008) and Mazzucato (2008) put a special focus on the financial double burden that migrants experience when supporting their relatives

back home with business investments, educational support, daily expenses and their duty to participate in the economy of the destination country as well (Mazzucato, 2008). In the following subsection the women will discuss the issue of financial remittances, as well as the issue of balancing the 'here and there' in connection to the geographical but also theoretical separation from their families. In chapter 6 the issue of family separation will be picked up again but under the focus of 'experiencing migration'.

Sending remittances: A burden or a privilege?

Richard (AM): {"I know it´s just you ladies talking, but I would also like to share something.} African … families expect a lot of help from us. Because they think everything is very easy here, … but its not always the case. …. You have to give remittances for studies, for food, for health for everything. {How are you ladies handling this?"} (Naples, 4.6.2017)

Christie (RM): "… [W]e always use to send money back home like to my grandmother, [or we] sent goods … [Those] remittances for example [are a] huge part of our economy." (Accra, 8.4.2017)

Carrie (AM): {"They don´t expect me to do it}, … its just when I feel like doing it I just do it." (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

Rose (NM): "If someone lives in abroad there is a perception that in abroad the little work you do you earn a lot of money. So if your relative or someone you know lives there you expect something from them, money or items …." (Whatsapp conversation, 29.10.2017)

Delilah (AM): "[N]o, no, no, no they are all okay, they are working, why do I send them money, no, there is no need, I have to take care for myself." (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

Grace (NM): "For me I honestly don´t expect anything from them since I think its quite difficult living abroad with the standard of living and the bills they have to pay and all that." (Whatsapp conversation, 28.10.2017)

Mary (NM): "… [W]ell those of us also here in Ghana we are doing well for ourselves, I mean quite well, … and we also understand that its not always easy being abroad so … maybe [when] there is a family event or something … we all pitch in, okay then everybody just brings in money or whatever that is needed, … [but] not on a regular basis, no. Its usually when it comes to like certain family events like … recently we lost an uncle and we were just you know pitching in to just bury him, … just have the ceremony and everything, so I mean things like this that happen we just feel like okay its a family gathering so we have too, … everybody just pulls in something." (Accra, 28.4.2017)

Malikah (RM): "[I]t is also … considered prestigious if you are from nowhere and you manage to get abroad then its like you become a … superhero or something like that and you can send in the dollars and the pounds and euros and then you become somebody." (Accra, 18.4.2017)

The dialogue foregrounds the multiple attitudes that exist towards sending or receiving financial remittances and already gives an idea about how this issue seems to influence the

migrant´s mind. Richard and Christie share that sending money or support in general goes without saying and that they aim to measure up to their relatives expectations, which is why they share, the little they have. This is in line with Dannecker (2015) who states that "… expectations structure the transnational space and constitute female migrants' subjectivities and their social behaviour, and, hence, the sending of remittances" (p. 128). Also Kunz (2015) and Suksomboon (2008) focus on the financial burdens that female migrants in particular have to deal with. With her statement, non-migrant Rose provides a fitting confirmation, as she explains that it is common to expect your relatives abroad to help others out financially. However, non-migrant Grace shows that this thinking pattern does not apply to everyone. Suksombook (2008) mentions the issue of the "successful pioneer models", a condition that many migrant women aspire to fulfil (p. 472). Caused by the high expectations that people in their home societies have towards remittances (Curran & Saguy, 2001) and the resultant "transnational frustrations" that emerge when expectations do not get fulfilled (Schapendonk, 2015, p. 813), women experience a lot of pressure and a feeling of helplessness, which is why they often end up "apply[ing] a certain degree of 'impression management' to cope with these expectations and pressure" (Suksombook, 2008, p. 472). In the previous section, the issue of social pressure already has been discussed as well as the fact that women often tend to remit biased stories in order to not lose their dignity, nevertheless, the appliance of impression management also points to their parallel life and an observation I was able to make: By passing on unreal stories, being somehow forced to tell lies, their lives suddenly resemble a performance, according to Schapendonk (2015) a phenomenon that has not often been studied in connection with migration networks.

Actual migrant Carrie shared that she only remits occasionally, which gets confirmed by non-migrant Mary, who also does not receive remittances on a regular basis. Moreover, she mentions the topic of funeral contributions, which has also been discussed by Mazzucato (2008) and Mazzucato, Kabki, & Smith (2006). "Funeral spending is one of the main ways that migrants remain engaged with their home communities" (Mazzucato, 2008, p. 205). De Witte (2001) also explains that being able to make funeral contributions is quite important for migrants, as it allows them to show how great they are doing abroad. Their financial contribution can thus be seen as a sign of success, which can also lead to an increase of status and respect. This is in line with what return migrant Malikah explains when she talks about 'prestige' and 'becoming somebody'. On the one hand migrant women thus feel that being able to help their relatives can be seen as a privilege as it allows them to present themselves in a better light, on the other hand, the financial burden also makes them worried, which they subliminal insinuated. This shows that expectations from both sides can have an influential role.

Living a parallel life

In their study 'Migrant Balancing Acts', Erdal & Oeppen (2013) write "… migrants straddle societies of settlement and origin, living their everyday lives locally, but also connected within a transnational social field" (p. 877). This straddle, or as I call it 'parallel life', will be reviewed in this subsection, to reveal more about the women´s thoughts and feelings and the responsibilities that a transnational life entails.

Malikah (RM): "…[It] was [difficult] sometimes but other times, I mean there was skype and you could talk, I mean you could be walking through town and you could be on skype with mum and dad and I am also kind of a bit of an independent person so I can exist kind of without them." (Accra, 18.4.2017)

Mary (NM): {"I agree with you.} [T]echnology have given room to more connectivity, more communication with people even though they are not physically present and that has somehow kept the bond together, I mean if … there wasn´t any whatsapp or facebook I don´t think I would have kept in touch with family abroad so, those are some of the good things that have really really come about as a result of migration you know." (Accra, 28.4.2017)

Efia (AM): {"Its difficult} because first time my family they didn´t care for … [my daughter], that also anytime I think [about] … being with her … {I am worried."} (Conegliano, 22.6.2017)

Delilah (AM): "… I don´t have any divided mind, … I feel like part of … this country." (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

Tawiah (AM): {"I agree.} Its not that bad, I don´t think I go far outside I am okay with that, I am okay, I am free mind because they don´t disturb me." (Parma, 23.6.2017)

Having "to deal with a multiplicity of contexts and social and cultural realities" is what defines the "multi-sited" or parallel life that many migrants are living (Grillo & Mazzucato, 2008, p. 176). It is therefore not only the financial engagement that creates this 'dual life' character, since "[t]ransnational activities can be economic, political and social …" (Bartram et al., 2014, p. 98). Furthermore, the norms and values that migrants remit home can cause friction and miscommunication as well. This shows, that even social remittances can cause double engagement, which can be sensed as a burden and even lead to conflicts. Nonetheless, everyone whose social network transformed into a transnational social network seems to experience the double-sidedness because people are settled in more than one country, communicate across borders and are often able to speak multiple languages (Bartram et al., 2014).

What has been outlined in subsection 2.3.2 about the increasing development of new communication methods and technology also gets mentioned again by Malikah and Mary as they state that due to social media they perceive their parallel lives as much less parallel because interaction with people back home is cheap and possible all the time. Before the social media revolution it was e-mail, text messages and cheap phone cards that made the "involvement in social life 'back home' … possible" (Kelly & Lusis, 2006, p. 842).

Efia shares how having to live a parallel life causes her worries and sleepless nights as with her mind she is constantly present at a different location which does effected her personal well being. Being a mum or a dad from the distance can cause some painful experiences, which will further be investigated in chapter 6. Even though Grillo & Mazzucato (2008) argue that it is especially the second generation that experience their origin and destination countries to be strongly interconnected it was especially the older first generation that shared this perception with me. However, as explained by Delilah and Tawiah, not everybody experiences having a parallel life as a burden, as one can also get used to the situation and the feeling it might create.

However, in other cases, migrants still assume a decisive role in the lives of their strong ties (friends and family) in Ghana, even though they have build up life and work in their new location (Smith, 2007).

Maame (NM): "[M]y [nephew], he is in Europe, he is in Denmark. … he is working hard … he bought his own car in Ghana here, that means he is doing good there. He has his

whole money, come and give my mum money, … so is living good. … [W]hen he bring[s] the money in Ghana here he can do his projects. " (Accra, 29.4.2017)

Afram (AM): "[T]he parents all the time … [say] I have to come and make something because Italy is not my home. … Ghana is my home, so I have to plan and go and do something in Ghana so that in future I can help my family, … not go and stay but something like go and build a house. (Conegliano, 20.6.2017)

The two examples presented by non-migrant Maame and migrant Afram also refer to the issue of expectations that non-migrants have towards their migrant relatives, as they expect them to not only provide them with personal remittances but also to start a business or build a house in their country of origin, which makes the migrant´s life literally parallel. However, as much as the sending of remittances can be experienced as a burden, building up something in Ghana comes along with "recognition and status enhancement" (Riccio, 2008, p. 231). Anyhow, the examples show that migrants are thus still participating in "cultural and social activities through transnational exchanges" whereby they "remain part of their home society" (Schapendonk & Smith, 2008, p. 126), which in turn can affect their migration experiences in regard to integration. Friedmann (2002), as cited in Kelly & Lusis (2006, p. 836), also discussed the simultaneous way of living before, by paying attention to the migrants "disorientation and displacement … as they attempt to navigate a new habitus" (Kelly & Lusis, 2006, p. 836).

5.2. The significance of weak and new ties

De Haas (2010), Granovetter (1973), Ryan et al. (2008), Schapendonk (2015) and many other scholars have shown, that a migrants social network is not composed of family members only, but can be much more complex. Collyer (2005) and Granovetter (1973, 1983) emphasize the importance of 'weak ties' as it may be those connections that actually can have a big impact on a person´s trajectory in many respects. Also Djelic (2004) and Smith (2007) state that migrants tend to create networks wherein they combine strong and weak ties. Furthermore, besides bridging those ties (Djelic, 2004), migrants also establish new ties in the place of destination (Somerville, 2011). Yet, so far, research has not given much attention to the issue of how migrants create new connections when being abroad (Ryan et al., 2008). To a certain extent, all of those ties seem to be very important for the migrant as they all provide different resources, help or knowledge. As has been outlined in the previous section, having strong ties with family back home can bring both advantages and disadvantages. In this section we will now pay more attention to the significance of weak and new ties and the way they can affect migrant women.

5.2.1 A helping hand

As already mentioned in sub section 2.3.2 migrant´s weak ties usually consist of loose contacts or travelling acquaintances that assist other migrants during their travels or the process of settling down (recommending jobs and accommodation and providing access to ethnic communities). Therefore, one can state, that it is especially those weak ties that lead to a network expansion over time, as they "provide an information bridge between more dense network clusters" (Wilson, 1998, p. 394). Because of the fact that Rosalind did not share with me too much about receiving any help from acquaintances, as it was basically her husband that helped her to prepare her journey and settle down in Italy, Ama, Gladys and Claire are going to share their story about important 'weak ties' in their personal network, that helped

them with accommodation, legal issues, or in case of the non-migrants, staying in contact with their relatives abroad.

Ama (RM): "I went … to do my masters in Gent, in Belgium, … the day I was leaving, [I] didn´t even know where I was going to sleep but fortunately I´ve gotten in touch with … one Belgium who was a friend of my friend … I told her that this was my situation and so like if she could help me out when I get to my final destination, she can meet me at the train station [and] we can see if we can get a place cause … I had to submit the documents for the school to process everything. … [S]o the first few weeks I actually stayed with a Ghanaian family I never met before but I still got connected to them because this Belgian lady …, her fiancé was Ghanaian so then this guy knew this family … and then later on … I started getting to know my schoolmates." (Accra, 11.4.2017)

Gladys (AM): "[I] chose in Italy … [because] … I know my country people is already in Italy. … [S]o … when I started to come Italy, I come and join my people in Palermo, … one Ghanaian helped me. … I … planned only … two years or three years and then I go back …I stayed. … I stay there to learn language, to find job and then after that … I hear that they have … two kind in Italy, South and North <totally happy> … and then people say that North you can find company work …, but Palermo you can´t get company job … just house cleaning, [but] … if you get company work, it will help your documents … I [have] some friends in North … I started to contact them to help me to come North … and then they say that if I like I come and join them … and then I came here because of my documents. … [T]hey helped me to get … company job and then when my documents … expired …, company helped me …." (Conegliano, 14.6.2017)

Claire (NM): {"I only have a short story to share. It's about my sister again. I already explained that} she doesn´t want to communicate that much … because any time my mum asks me…. But she usually communicates through her … colleague at the office {where she used to work}. … [S]o if there is any information I need then I just go to the colleague and ask. … [But] … I just don´t ask him a lot of questions, just small small. … I know if I ask him so many questions he will be like 'why don´t you ask your sister?'

All three stories shared by those women revealed the importance and 'strength of weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). Ama met a lady, who was a friend of a friend who happened to be engaged to a Ghanaian, who in turn could help. Gladys decided to migrate to Italy, since she new about the Ghanaian communities over there and received necessary help by various Ghanaians. Even Claire, as a non-migrant, profits from being connected to her sisters friend, as he seems to function as the contact person between the two sisters. All three women showed a very "proactive attitude" (Schapendonk, 2015, p. 815) in making an effort to build up a new social network, based on their weak ties. Gladys for example tried to build up her network in the North by asking others to help her move, find a job and regulate her legal documentation. According to Pathirage & Collyer (2011) and Schapendonk (2015) this can be seen as a clear example of network work. The fact that all of them successfully accomplished what they were aiming for indicates the importance of doing network work, or as Schapendonk (2015) states "establish[ing] and expand[ing] [ones] social connectivity … [will help] to get ahead in life" (p. 815). It is thus the right combination of strong and weak ties that forms a person´s social network.

5.2.2 Losing ties

However, just like family and transient acquaintances support each other, the opposite can also be the case, as ties can get cut off purposely or in other cases simply be buried in oblivion, as they might not have been as important as assumed and were therefore not strong enough to survive the distance (Collyer, 2005).

As much as migrant network, transnationalism, diaspora as well as migration system theories are "useful to understand the crucial role of migrants' agency" they all come with some weaknesses as well (Castles et al., 2014, p. 45). Those theories struggle in explaining why pioneer migration does not automatically create migration networks (Castles et al., 2014; de Haas, 2010). Moreover, as mentioned in sub section 2.3.2 migration used to be understood as a circular process (Böcker, 1994), which is why those theories struggle to explain why networks extenuate, stop developing or break down completely (Castles et al., 2014). Another criticism towards those theories has to do with social capital, as it can cause social pressure and stress but also "exclusion of non-group members" that can "lead to the breakdown of networks" (Castles et al., 2014, p. 46). Additionally, Böcker (1994), Castles et al. (2014), Collyer (2005) and de Haas (2008) explain another phenomenon, namely the shifting from being 'bridgeheads' to 'gatekeepers', which implies that migrants are cutting off their ties with home, as they fear new migrants to become competitors. Due to this reluctance to help others in finding their way to Europe, it is not surprisingly that ties with home can extenuate (Chipkin & Ngqulunga, 2008). All those mentioned issues could thus lead to a network transformation.

> Delilah (AM): "… I don´t feel like going back. Because I have a sister … <laughs>, I don´t know how to describe her … she doesn´t like me … The problem is there, I am putting up a building … in Ghana. … I moved my mother into that building and when our mother died and I came back I took in some couples to stay there so they would take care of the house for me. … [Later] I decided to sell it, … [but my sister] said that the building was for out mother and that she won´t allow me to sell the building … and she put a big … note on the wall in front of the house that the building is not for sale … without asking me … and since then I also not heard anything … no contact … maybe next year I be going down to Ghana to settle things with her. (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

Even though Delilah is still thinking about going to Ghana to fix things with her sister, her sisters' behaviour temporary destroyed their relationship, as both of them felt hard done-by. Her sister did not understand that Delilah was not able to finance the house after their mother´s dead all by herself and Delilah obviously did not realize the meaning that the house had to her sister. Due to this miscommunication the two women distanced themselves from each other, putting their contact on hold, which let to a transformation of both women´s social network.

5.2.3 Establishing ties beyond the own ethnic group

As much as people tend to prefer and enjoy staying among their own ethnic group when going abroad, establishing new contacts beyond the diasporic community is highly important. Chapter 6 will go further into detail by discussing the issue of integration, however, as has been shown in the previous sub sections developing an exclusive dependency on strong or weak ties only, can also cause pressure and miscommunication that can lead to a network breakdown, which is why the issue will also shortly be discussed in this sub section.

When Emmanuel (AM) decided it was time for him to get married, a friend of him introduced him to Janet, a young lady who was still living in Kumasi by that time. He went there in 2014 to meet her in person and one year later he and his whole family flew over for the engagement and wedding. Emmanuel went back to Italy to prepare her documents and eight month later Janet was able to join her husband in Italy. Based on their fresh marriage, Janet´s migration to Italy thus happened on compassionate grounds. Her migration process was thus rather easy, as her husband prepared all the legal requirements for her, her uncle accompanied her during the journey and she was received in her in-laws house.[13] By now Emmanuel and Janet have their own place, but due to language difficulties Janet has not been able to develop any new ties beyond her family network and Ghanaian church community were she actively participates. However, this implies, that instead of having different people providing all different kinds of support (Schaefer et al., 1981), it is always the same people offering support to her, which makes it really difficult for Janet to establish and form a wider and balanced social network. Portes (1995) and Ryan et al. (2008) describe such kind of network as 'multiplex', whereas Coleman (1990) considers such a case example a closure of social networks, since Janet was unable to build up her own new connections. Receiving informational as well as emotional support from the same people can create a negative kind of dependency that in turn can have a strong impact on a person´s attitude:

> Janet (AM): "… [T]he time I came here, when I wake up in the morning my husband left me home, … anytime I want[ed] to be in Ghana, I feel lonely… no one to speak for… so when I … go to office to do my documents only my husband [can] take me there, I can´t go alone because of the language, they can´t understand me and I can´t understand them … and any time I have an appointment <laughs> … there, my husband ask permission from work and take me there … I can´t speak with them, I can´t go anywhere with myself." (Conegliano, 19.6.2017)

Since I was living together with Emmanuel's parents, I saw him and Janet almost every day and paid a special attention to Janet´s and Efia´s behaviour. Even though Efia (Emmanuel's mother) came to Italy 18 years ago she only speaks very little Italian and English. When Efia comes home from her night shift, she and her daughter-in-law always spend the afternoons together waiting for their husbands to come home, sitting inside their living room, watching Ghanaian TV shows. Latest by now one can understand why some migration researchers still argue that newcomers only dive into already existing networks, an assumption criticised by Boyd (1989) and Somerville (2011).

However, this example only shows the complex and diverse character of such "ethnic communities" where people automatically seem to get attached too (Kelly & Lusis, 2006, p. 841; Ryan et al., 2008). I am convinced that this attachment is a naturally process, as I observed the forming of ethnic clusters as well in my own environment (e.g. at my university, foreign students with the same nationality always seem to find each other), simply because 'the known' appears to be tempting, since it is comfortable and can safe a lot of time and effort. However, as one can tell from Janet´s story, she is really unhappy about the dependent position she finds herself in and by the time of our conversation she only had stayed in Italy for half a year. Moreover, she told me that she is willing to actively do something against her problem, by enrolling into a language course that was going to start in September. In the beginning of September I texted her to find out whether she had started and she confirmed (1.9.2017). Janet´s story has been chosen to explain the importance of new contacts beyond the own ethnic group since Ryan et al. (2008) conclude that:

---

[13] The house, in which I was also staying in during my fieldwork period in Conegliano.

> [R]esearch suggests that migrants who maintain strong ties exclusively with groups of co-ethnics may be socially disadvantaged (Wierzbicki, 2004) and immersion in ethnic-specific networks can foster ghettoization (Griffiths et al., 2005). (p. 675)

The "localisation of transnational ties", as Kelly & Lusis (2006, p. 841) wonderfully refine the ethnic community, does seem to entail consequences and on top can shape the women´s attitudes towards migration in a negative way. In chapter 6 more attention will be paid to this issue, by listening to the women´s separation, integration and reintegration experiences. Tawiah´s story on the other hand, shows how extending her social network beyond her ethnic community made her become a new and sociable person and she developed a positive attitude towards her migration story.

> Tawiah (AM): "I don´t had a friend but now I … do mingle with people to understand people, fight with them, the more we talk, [the better it gets], [even] misunderstanding ourselves. I have to mention … when I was there [in Ghana] with my mum and my sisters in the house, I don´t have friend, I don´t come to you if you see me, [now] it changed completely." (Parma, 23.6.2017)

What Tawiah explained is in line with Putnam (2000) and Ryan et al. (2008). Back in Ghana she was a loner. However, when she came to Italy she met fellow Ghanaians, with whom she established close friendships, which shows that the process of migration can influence social networks and once more points to the changeability of migrant contacts and Tawiah´s own personality. On top of that she made an effort to learn the Italian language and even managed to get her drivers license. Those new skills helped her to build up a network beyond her own ethnic group as she is now living with and working for an Italian lady, which made her become economically stable and integrated in Italian society. Or as Curran & Saguy (2001) frame it: "Exposure to new networks with different beliefs will serve to challenge one's established world-view and offer alternative value systems" (p. 59). Again, all this can be seen as an evidence of the dynamic character of migrants' social networks and how they can affect the women´s attitudes.

5.3 The effort/time issue

As aforementioned, the issue of effort and time does play a big role in the formation or transformation of a migrant´s social network. Bourdieu (1986), Pathirage & Collyer (2011), Ryan et al. (2008) and Schapendonk (2015) all emphasize the amount of time and effort that is needed to keep alive already existing social ties or build up new social capital. Tawiah´s story above confirms this assumption. Since she invested time and effort in learning a new language, she was able to expand her social network. Also Etzold (2017) refers to a change of the migrants' social position that takes place over time, often due to their dynamic livelihoods. In conformity with Glick Schiller & Çağlar (2011) he states that due to the "process of adaption and integration as well as resistance and separation … socio-cultural transformations among migrants communities and recipient societies [evoke]; thereby the relations between the new and the original residents gradually changes" (Etzold, 2017, p. 60). This statement reveals the importance of conducting more trajectory-oriented research (e.g. as done by Schapendonk, 2011). Being able to follow the migrant over a longer period of time will help to reveal those changes that they undergo and experience along their trajectories.

However, not only does the time it takes to establish new ties and the general changes that take place over time become an issue, but also the fact that many migrants experience

having 'a lack of time'. Many of the women (and men) I talked to either felt like there was no time for socializing as they felt so occupied at work:

> Anaya (RM): "I never have time to enjoy social life …" (Accra, 6.4.2017)

Or they simply do not have any time, since many of the women I met in Italy are working in the industrial sector, which often involves shift work. Efia was one of them and since I was living together with her, I witnessed her leaving in the evening, returning home early in the morning and sleeping during the day, which leaves her no time to put much effort into social interaction. Having a lack of time as an actual migrant does also affect the (strong) connections with non-migrants back home, as they feel neglected and start associating Europe as being a stressful place, which in turn affects their attitude towards migration.

> Claire (NM): "[M]ost of them … [who] come down here, … they are not okay. That´s how I see it. … Because of the stress, some … go through so many things over there …." (Accra, 21.4.2017)

Also return migrants shared that having a lack of time stressed them out, which in Jane´s case caused her wish to return:

> Jane (RM): " [T]he lifestyle in Europe was … a bit too stressful for me… I remember when I was in the Netherlands, they had to take me to the lung specialist because I was always hyperventilating … they thought it was like asthma but it was not asthma, it was just stress, so I was always stressing, I had to wake up early in the morning… I get home very late and then the next day I have to rush back …. [W]hen I come here, [Ghana] I will be less stress[ed] so my quality of life will be better." (Accra, 7.4.2017)

Moreover, apart from the migrant´s occupation abroad, it is also their connection with strong ties in Ghana that win favour with them. We have seen that relatives very often still play an important role and are still passing on the native norms and values, which can make it very challenging for actual migrants to find the time and motivation to build up new connections with the natives of the host country. This points again to the challenges that can arise when having to combine transnational engagement with building up local anchorage.

5.4 Concluding remarks

The chapters' purpose was to answer the second sub question: *How are social networks formed and transformed in a transnational space and how do they affect the women´s attitudes towards migration?* Social networks, especially migrants' social networks are dynamic, as ties can change along a person´s trajectory, which means that social networks transform over time and distance (Ryan et al., 2008; Schapendonk, 2015; Wallace, 2002). Through the way the chapter has been structured, we have seen that those networks are formed out of strong ties (family and friends in Ghana) as well as weak ties (acquaintances within or beyond the own ethnic group). Moreover, it has been exemplified that ties also get loosened, either intentionally or gradually with time, or are simply replaced with new connections. Thus, social networks are in constant change. Furthermore, the chapter emphasised that different people in a person´s network are providing different kind or support or even put pressure on the migrant. We have seen that support and pressure can both be emotional, social or financial and all come with different consequences, that can make living

abroad either easier, parallel or more complicated to the point of restricted. Whenever social networks are changing, the migrants' attitudes towards migration change as well, as their contacts expectations, opinions or actions can strongly affect them. Hereby, it is important to keep in mind that this mutual influence is not a one-way street, but that actual and return migrants do have a strong influence on their non-migrant relatives and friends as well, as the (biased) stories they share and the actions they perform can shape or change a non-migrant´s imaginations about Europe and migration, as well as their own status in Ghanaian society. Also, this shows again that the strong influential power of the attitude-shaping-cycle´s three dimensions goes beyond international borders. Moreover, Ryan et al. (2008) state the following: "In our view, it is important to differentiate between the sorts of support that may be derived from these varied networks rather than focusing only on local sources of support and resources" (p. 685). With this statement they refer to the importance to pay attention to migrants transnational social networks. By only focusing on local networks and activities we would not be able to understand the concept of transnationalism and also would not be able to recognize the great impact that strong ties can have across borders and what it really means for those women to live a life between two worlds. De Haas (2010) supports this conclusion with the following words:

> If we apply Granovetter's (1973) hypothesis of the 'strength of weak ties' and Portes' (1998) 'downside of social capital' to the theory of migration system formation, we can therefore hypothesise that a certain optimal balance between strong intra-community ties and 'weak ties' is a necessary condition for migration to gain its own momentum. (p. 1610)

e) Ethnographic sketch – Experiences shape people and attitudes change with experience

When I arrived in Mantova, Italy on June 23rd, Tawiah came to pick me up at the train station. We met for the first time but it felt like we knew each other because we already had been connected via Whatsapp, while I was still working in Ghana. We had shared stories and some of our experiences via that medium and when we were driving together in her car we could just continue from that, which led to a really open and amicable conversation about our personal lives and how we both think about and experience migration. Later on, during our 'interview' I asked her what she connects with her personal migration story after all that she experienced and she explained the following to me: "It was nice, ... painful, ... [and] [i]t makes me different". "It changed you?", I wanted to know. "It changed me". "In a good or a bad way?", I continued to ask. "It changed me in a good way, ... migration has made me a woman."[14] This statement touched me deeply and I started to wonder – if migration can change people, or lead to a personality or identity change, how does it change relations and reshape imaginations, also those of the non-migrants? And most importantly, how does experiencing migration affect the women´s attitudes towards migration in general?

Figure 11. Moving in different directions. Accra, Ghana. February, 2017. Photo by Lisa Biermann

---

[14] Extract from the interview, Parma, 23.6.2017

Chapter 6 Experiencing migration in a transnational arena

During my stay in Ghana and Italy, I listened to so many different stories and experiences. Tawiah's story is one of them and her short statement clearly shows that her migration experience affected her life and the way she thinks about it by now. One could argue that contrasting attitudes towards migration emerge in the transnational arena since every person experiences differently. However, this assumption would not help to answer the last sub question, namely *how* the women´s diverse migration experiences affect their attitudes towards migration to Europe. In order to answer this question it is important to pay attention to the similarities and differences that occur in transnational migration. This will be done by looking into how transnational families experience separation from each other. Secondly, attention will be paid to local anchorage (Dahinden, 2010) that might be influenced by several different factors and how this affects the women's well-being abroad. Thirdly, four different types of return migration will be evaluated (Cerase, 1974) and how the women are coping with - and reflecting on reintegration.

Since this study puts its focus on two different geographical locations, it is not only the mobility aspect that needs to be taken into account, but also locality, as both concepts are necessary to understand the meaning and functionality of transnationalism, as well as the migrants' transnational experiences. Dahinden (2010) exemplifies the importance of a simultaneous focus by stating, that "transnational patterns are built upon the simultaneity of mobility and sedentariness in two different geographical spaces" (p. 56) and that "in order to become 'transnational', migrants must touch down somewhere" (p. 69). Also A. Dietz (2011) and Flynn (2007) explain that movement and settlement need to be studied combined, by which they refer to "the processual character of migration" (A. Dietz, 2011, p. 33).

With the term 'locality' Dahinden (2010) refers to the condition of "being rooted or anchored – socially, economically or politically – in the country of immigration and/or in the sending country …" (p. 51). The concept of anchorage will be used to explain the diverse migration experiences that the women experience abroad and how they experience reintegration in their country of origin, after having to loosen their anchor, or separation after losing their anchorage in terms of family division. The focus of this chapter - studying the migrants transnational experiences and exploring the similarities and differences that occur- does illustrate an addition to the mobility/locality concept introduced by Dahinden (2010) as it will help to develop a more advanced understanding of the meaning of living a transnational life. Since migrant experiences are even more dynamic than migrants' social networks, the aspect of changeability will also be present in this chapter, which in the end can be linked to the "processual dimensions of transnational pattern" (Dahinden, 2010, p. 53) and migration in general.

6.1 Separation – Experiences of transnational families

Delilah (AM): "…I came here [to Italy] in the year 1988. … My husband came here first and I joined him. … {Like Rosalind, I had to leave my children behind}, they came later. … [M]y son came first … through a friend. [He went] to Germany and some month later he joined me here. … [L]ater on after some years I tried the documents, … we tried all our best but we couldn´t bring the girl because she was out of age, she was above 18 … so it was difficult. … [L]ater … there was a law in Italy that you can employ somebody as a worker for you … so through that [our daughter] was able to join me here." (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

Carrie (AM): {"My parents also came here far before me, but for me} [t]hings were not all that difficult because I was staying with my grandparents. But the fact that they were going outside the country and it will keep long before I see them again was so sad but at the same time happy because I knew I will get some biscuits and tea. … I didn´t feel like they had left me, just that I had to go to my aunt for most of the things I needed … and that at times makes it difficult for me." (Whatsapp conversation, 5.11.2017)

Jane (RM): "…[M]y parents had moved when I was 4, … when I was about 3-4 years, to Belgium to get a better living, for greener pastures, … which means from age of 5 till 17 years I was living with my aunties here in Accra." (Accra, 7.4.2017)

Doreen (AM): {"Same for me}. [M]y dad came here when I was 11 month old so I was a baby <smiles> and then my mum came here when I was 7 years old so I joined them when I was almost 18 years. {I was living} with my uncles, my relatives … we are very very close." (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

Jordan (NM[15]): "I [was] very young child[] then, but can remember vividly how it felt. Not to have the comfort of your mother and father with you and always being lonely. Not able to share your feelings, thoughts, plans with others cause you felt like an outcast. It's a very bad experience especially … when you have no parents because of migration, wished mine have never left me." (Whatsapp Conversation, 7.11.2017)

Two fathers that I met in Italy also explained to me how hard their life as a migrant can be, when one has to separate from wife or children.

Afram (AM): "I have two girls, two boys. {Three of them are in Italy by now but one of my daughters is still in Ghana.}… I [am] thinking about her [all the time], … I am responsible for her, … I sponsor her, … sometimes I thinking how [could] I [ever] leave her alone in Ghana, all the family is here, so all the time I just advice her to take time, I come and make document to come and bring her here. So sometimes I can´t feel happy, I can´t feel happy <sad> because if she is here with me, I will like it." (Conegliano, 20.6.2017)

James (AM): "[I]ts not easy … sometimes you aren´t even sleeping, you be thinking about them [wife and children]… you always expect to hear good things from them, … you always miss them." (Verona, 27.6.2017)

What people are sharing in this dialogue about leaving their children behind is not something uncommon. Especially in African cultures, child caring is not only based on motherhood. Claire confirms this by sharing that she even had to move with her grandparents, although none of her parents had migrated.

Claire (NM): "…Some of the old people they want like their grandchildren to be around so I was taken to the Northern part of Ghana, … [where] I grew up from 4 to 9." (Accra, 21.4.2017)

Being separated from siblings, parents or children is thus something normal. Nevertheless, it made me wonder: Does having to break one´s close kin ties not affect one´s attitude towards

---

[15] Jordan was my contact person in Kumasi, I did not have an in-depth interview with her, but I stayed at her house for 3 days and was able to observe and interact with her a lot. We are still in contact through Whatsapp.

migration, as people automatically might start to reflect on 'was this the right thing to do'? People on both sides sure must feel lonely at some points in time and they will be missed, others might feel left behind or excluded from their relatives migration experience. Since this chapter deals with the women´s experiences, experiencing family separation due to migration needs to be probed as well and not only from the mover's perspective, but also of those who stay behind.

Scholars Mazzucato & Schans (2011) question the well-being (e.g psychological) of children that are part of transnational families and were left behind because of their parents migration. However, the researchers conclude, also on the basis of Graham & Jordan (2011), "context must be taken into account when comparing the effects of migration on child well-being around the globe" (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011, p. 707). In some cultures children were psychologically affected due to family separation, in other cultures they were not. In a possible follow up study more attention would need to be paid on cultural issues in order to analyse the issue for this specific Ghanaian case. Nevertheless, Dreby (2007) and Salazar Parreñas (2005) state that children do experience a feeling of abandonees, which can even lead to family detachment (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011). Even though none of my respondents mentioned such a problem, it is still important to consider, as it is not something that could be overlooked and would probably affect the attitude, which both, parents and children, have towards migration. Mazzucato & Schans (2011) and R. C. Smith (2006) also affirm that due to a geographical separation parents are not able to engage in their children's life the way they both wish, which can cause frustration, helplessness or disappointment, a feeling that also came through in the statements of my respondents. Also jealousy is a feeling that often occurs, especially on the side of non-migrant children, when parents start expanding their family with new children abroad (Yeoh & Lam, 2007; Dreby, 2006). On the parent's side, this can also cause a feeling of being overextended and emphasizes again the parallelism in their lives.

However, as we have seen in the previous chapter, those who stay behind also profit from their relatives migration network. At some point, when the family separation seems to be emotionally processed, people tend to notice the positive side-effect that comes along with their parents migration (Dreby, 2007), in terms of remittances or the chance to travel as well (see Carrie´s statement). This experience in turn can lead one´s attitude again into a more positive direction. All in all this shows, that a person's experiences are strongly connected to a person's social network, as people can influence the course of their lives. Dreby (2007) concludes with the following statement: "… experiences of separation are linked to children´s ability to manifest power in their families and to shape families' subsequent migration trajectories" (p. 1062). Actual migrant Darlene shared the following with me, that fits Dreby´s statement perfectly. Her migration trajectory gets determined by her children not wanting to move back with her to Ghana, which puts her in a 'waiting position'.

> Darlene (AM): "… when our work finish everything of my experience should go home … I [do] no[t] want my daughters to travel to another country … I want them to come, ja to take them back … [but] /they [don´t] want to come … because they grow up here/ … that´s the problem. … [S]o I was thinking about it how to … take them back because its so difficult when you from your country to another country … I didn´t like it. (Conegliano, 21.6.2017)

Before I move on to the next section, I would like to put some focus on the issue of 'waiting'. In connection to separation, waiting for a family reunion can be a very painful and difficult experience that can definitely shape a person´s attitude towards migration. In her book 'Families Apart: Migrant Mothers and the Conflicts of Labor and Love', Pratt (2012)

introduces the reader to the short film 'When the Rain Stopped' which from the perspective of a child shows a man and a woman leave, accompanied with the words: "First I say my mother leave" and "Then I say my father leave" (Pratt, 2012, p. 41) which she brings in connection with Mildred Grace´s installation 'Waiting'. The installation is accompanied by the following words, also presented in Pratt (2012):

> What is it that a person is really waiting for? Waiting for a bus, a train, flight schedule or airplane, time passes by. Waiting for your travel documents to get approved, saving enough money to book that plane ticket, and packing your suitcases, time passes by. Waiting for the moment to see your family you've never seen for years, to kiss your mother and father hello, to hug your child you've been separated from, to cry in someone's arms while she is hugging you—before these moments, there is waiting. Waiting also conveys the notion of "When?" and the notion of "Will."
>
> Questions such as "When will there be a chance for the good life?" "When will this pain go away?" "When will the justice come?" The questions are never-ending . . . and the answers demand waiting.
>
> But what is waiting? For migration, waiting is either for a green pasture or a torture chamber. (pp. 41-42)

This extract from Pratt (2012) has been picked as it shows that it is not only those who actively migrate that are having migration experiences, but also those who stay behind, since their lives are about to change such as much, even if in a different way (see Jordan´s statement above, where she claims that she felt like an outcast after her family moved and left her behind or Carrie´s statement where she admits that she enjoyed profiting from receiving remittances that made her feel special). By being part of someone´s social network, even those non-migrants, who do not aspire to go abroad, get influenced and affected, which makes their lives suddenly transnational as well.

6.2 Local anchorage – Experiencing life in Europe

According to Ager & Strang (2004) integration very often focuses on "markers" like "housing, employment [and] education …" (p. iv), which is why this term did not seem to be the right one, when analysing the women´s experiences in Europe. Kelly (2013) confirms this by stating that the concept of integration resembles the concept of assimilation and that policies more often speak about "civic integration rather than multicultural belonging in many Western countries" (p. 47; also see Brubaker, 2001). Therefore, trying hard to learn European languages and mingle and engage oneself in society is not enough, people are almost expected to conform and blend in to the European way of life and that as inconspicuously as possible. For that reason, the term 'local anchorage' has been chosen as it captures the true meaning of a migrants transnational life, being rooted 'here' and 'there', experiencing two places at the same time. Dahinden (2010) even states that "transnationality … [can be] seen … as an alternative to integration" (p. 70).

In this section we focus on the women´s well-being abroad, in the sense of how they feel and how challenges and achievements shape their thoughts about migration. We have seen already that "transnational ties … represent a challenge to migrants' successful integration" (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013, p. 868; Snel, Engbersen, & Leerkes, 2006) due to the strong connections migrants have with their relatives back home, as the norms and values they receive in form of social remittances make it difficult for migrants to adapt to a new culture. Furthermore, we discussed the issue of time and effort as well as the challenge to

balance the 'here and there'. However, when talking to, interacting with and observing my respondents I realized that there are more issues to name that can make local anchorage difficult and therefore create mixed feelings about ones' personal well being, that might affect ones' attitude towards the current life situation and the way one think about migration. Below, three main challenges will be discussed that the majority of the women mentioned to me. They will talk about language struggles, work and money issues, as well as racism.

  With the four types of transnational formation, Dahinden shows, how different transnational formations can be (see Dahinden, 2010; 2014). Dependent on a person´s 'mobility-locality-interaction', the meaning of living a transnational life and therefore migration can be perceived differently. However, in contrast with Dahinden, in this chapter the meaning of local anchorage goes beyond a local diasporic anchorage and I especially refer to the interaction with the local natives. Furthermore, similarities or differences in experiencing migration and the transnational formation of people cannot be seen as a pure "outcome of migration, but also of local contexts" (Dahinden, 2014, p. 6). Dependent on where a person comes from and where she settles down, differences can occur. Also the issue of time an effort plays an important role in establishing local anchorage.

'Language is the biggest problem'

The majority of my respondents claimed language to be the biggest obstacle that prevented them in finding access to the locals. Actual migrant Ewa and Emmanuel even confessed that their initial language insecurity restricted them in their daily activities. Both explained that they were too afraid to leave the house because they did not feel secure enough to interact with the Italians. This shows the great impact that language can have. Not daring to leave the house because one has to fear to fail in a conversation can exert mobility restrictions on those migrants and can hinder people in establishing those important 'new ties' we discussed earlier and make anchorage in the host society very difficult. Ewa even considered returning back to Ghana because of her antipathy of the Italian language. Other women (also return and non-migrants) explained that they felt very unhappy as their personal well-being and self-consciousness got affected a lot.

> Gladys (AM): "… [T]he time I enter[ed] [Italy], … I am not happy because of the language, … I find difficult, find very very difficult … because I don´t hear language, I can´t speak language, where can I get money? … [B]ut … when I learned the language small small and then I tried to speak small small by that time I started to feel happy." (Conegliano, 14.6.2017)

> Mary (NM): "[P]eople are always not receptive to other people particularly when it comes to different culture and … different way of life, I mean different thinking, different language and … particularly my cousin in Italy … she found it a bit difficult to move around particularly with the Italian language." (Accra, 28.4.2017)

> Delilah (AM): "… [Yes] whenever you travel to any place, … you have to first learn the language, … it is very very important to learn the language of that place, of that country … because with the language you can move on." (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

> Doris (NM): {"Yes, this is why I think}… migration is good [because] its gonna help you to learn languages [and] character difference[s] … how you approach issues, how you

understand people from other countries and then how you … even handle time." (Accra, 21.4.2017)

Cindy (RM): "… I think it took me 1 year or even less to learn the language, [but] … when I eventually went to started like school with like Dutch students that was when I felt, you know it was difficult, of course you are still shy, like when I was learning the language it was all with foreigners and then you could still hear people making mistakes and … you were allowed to make mistakes but when you then actually start school you are with all Dutch people who can easily tell you … 'I don´t understand' … it made you feel insecure … cause then you are scared to say something wrong." (Accra, 18.4.2017)

Anaya (RM): "… I think … maybe I got … a good experience also because of my education. … I know a lot of women who are struggling like for me there would be some comments that I wouldn´t say were racist but very prejudice like 'oh you speak so well for an African', … I would get that. And it is really annoying and … especially in France I met a couple of some Ghanaian women who you know obviously they come for to improve their economic condition, for opportunities … I realized that we are from such different worlds because of different background …." (Accra, 6.4.2017)

This discussion shows that language indeed is a very crucial factor when it comes to integration, especially when being in a country like Italy, where English is not commonly spoken or understood. People, who have experienced migration already, are passing on the advice to study the language of the destination country properly, which also has an influence on the non-migrants that receive this information, as some of them shared to see language as a problem, whereas others see it as the perfect opportunity to increase their personal abilities.

     As Janet already said earlier and what Delilah also points out now, is the fact that language is needed to move, to be free and to be able to communicate your requests and concerns. Githens (2013, p. 150) even states that the "… inability to communicate effectively with government agencies, schools, and a whole host of community services has created serious isolation for women and contributed to a feeling among them that they don´t exist (De Silva 2004[16])".

     Anaya reflects on her positive experiences and comes to the conclusion that her educational background is mainly responsible for her success abroad. Earlier, I mentioned already that it would be advisable to pay more attention to factors such as age differences, education and family background when doing further research on this topic, in order to be able to make even better comparisons and detect the similarities in the experiences of 'highly educated' migrants. Also Al-Ali, Black, & Koser (2001) mention that job possibilities, and therefore the possibility to build up a desired life, are "related to factors such as language skills, education, professional background and experience…" (pp. 627-628). Nevertheless, the different stories prove that in connection with the same issue, people in each migrant group are having different experiences or thoughts towards their experiences.

Work and money issues and the European lifestyle

Rosalind (AM): "I came to Italy here, year 2000, … after three month, [I received] my soggiorno, the work permit, … I was able to get job at that time, … only that … the type of work I was doing, … was not the type of work I wanted or … expected. … I [was] …

---

[16] Original source could not have been found

working in … factory…. Something difficult but I have to do it because with these two kids my husband alone can not satisfy me…[so] I worked hard, I tried all my best to do all that I can do. … But now I am not working because the type of job I use to get in Italy , … it was not a permanent job for me, we were working on contract basis …. we saw that in fact its not easy to stay Europe, its not something easy, … some of us even regret from coming." (Pordenone, 15.6.2017)

Jane (RM): "… I lived in Amsterdam Zuid Oost but I was working in Amsterdam Noord so I have to take the metro, when I get I have to rush, when I get there I have to take the bus, the lifestyle was just rush, rush, rush, I just wanted a life where I could go to work but like calmly, … that was also another factor that kept me thinking of maybe moving back home …" (Accra, 7.4.2017)

Grace (NM): {"I think its also the} [n]umber of jobs they do, as in they barely rest sometimes so [that] makes it difficult to get in touch [with them]." (Whatsapp Conversation, 28.10.2017)

Anaya (RM): {"Its true,} my job was really demanding and I felt like that I wasn´t living …." (Accra, 6.4.2017)

Maame (NM): "… I hear … if someone travel to US or Europe for 5 years, when he return back, and you you are in Ghana here, you are working, he will be richer … than me. So Europe there is lots of money than Ghana here. Thats why they wanted to travel. Gets things easy there then Ghana here." (Accra, 29.4.2017)

Janet (AM): {"Its not that easy, Maame}… I [also] thought in Europe … you get a job, job was very available, … <laughs shyly> there in Ghana …, I have my own job, like I´m a hair dresser … I do my work, I have my shop, my apprentice, and I left them, I left my shop and came here, here I don´t work." (Conegliano, 19.6.2017)
Cyntia (AM): "… I am okay, having a good job and you know a place to stay. … [First I was] doing lets say cleaning job in a bank, … I just thought [Cyntia] is this really the work you want to do? So, I said no, I would like to continue my school. … [T]hen I got this job here which I think is not bad … at the office … I am the only … lets say African person, oh no even not African person, foreign, … I like the work that I a working, [but] … I am very careful, … I am afraid of what maybe they might think in case I make a mistake so I try to be cool…." (Conegliano, 22.6.2017)

Malikah (RM): "… [I]t did get a little tough after school when I was trying to get a job and with that it became more obvious that if you are a non native of the country it was not going to be an easy process even if you are brilliant or you are good at what you are going to do. I mean you really had to convince somebody and you had to do like 50 times the convincing that anybody else would do. … So you miss out on opportunities because of things like that in the system. … I graduated with honours and distinction in my class, [but in the end] its somebody else who you know was like the really second best in the whole process. So it was a bit disheartening and in the end I had to do something like teach just so that I could get by in life instead of realizing my full potential in this places." (Accra, 18.4.2017)

This dialogue presents the different working experiences of the women and the non-migrants thoughts towards them. Campani (1993) states that not being able to find a job, can make

integration very challenging as it is "a major obstacle to stabilization" (p. 516). One big similarity between the various women is that many shared that hoping for a job, settling with one that is under one´s quality or dignity, or having one that takes away all your energy and stresses you out, makes life abroad and anchoring in 'destination Europe' very difficult. This is also something that non-migrants perceive either through experiencing neglect or remitted stories. Having to constantly worry about one´s existence, not knowing how to provide for family abroad and back home, feeling rejected and different all the time, not receiving the same chances, even though one possesses the same or better qualities, sure does affect the way one starts to behave or think about the place one is located at, as well as further aspirations in life (Ferro, 2006).

Coping with racism

In the following dialogue, some very touching stories will be shared, about experiencing inequality or even racism in Europe. Personally, I was not expecting to hear so many stories in this vein and I was not sure whether it would be advisable to share those stories, since I do not want to awake any biased impressions or stereotypes about Africans and Europeans. However, while being in the field, I got the impression that those incidents the women were sharing really had an impact on their thoughts and feelings and there life abroad, which is why I decided that it is still an issue that needs to be discussed, when talking about the women's well being abroad. Erdal & Oeppen (2013) even state that "[r]ace and racism are often unacknowledged in debates about migrant integration" (p. 870) and with the help of a survey study, de Haas et al. (2015) proved that people, who underwent racist experiences, are more likely to consider return migration an option. Also Githens (2013) states, "the wish to be free from the discomfort of conflicting cultural values and norms takes the form of a desire to go back …" (p. 155). Since those studies have proved that having to deal with such negative experiences can persuade someone to change his life situation, it indicate as well, that a person´s attitude towards migration in general could get affected by having such kind of experience. Moreover, Githens (2013) states that "… Africans and the Chinese encounter[] more serious problems of integration and acceptance than European immigrants …", as they, due to their different "physical appearance" immediately get associated with being "foreign" (p. 34). Several of the examples that the women will give in the following dialogues, prove this assumption.

> Rosalind (AM): "…[E]ven though I stayed here for so many years and I deserve to be given the passport, … I am still a Ghanaian, I am still black. … Even if I am having the passport in hands … [and] … they classify me as Italian, … officially, official I am still a Ghanaian … we know we are not from here, we are how do you call it … strangers … we are foreigners, that´s the right word." (Pordenone, 15.6.2017)

> Jane (RM): "… I had just moved to Belgium [and] I … realized people were shocked to see a black student in the faculty of pharmacy, … nobody come to sit beside me, like I didn´t have friends, … I never felt comfortable in my skin. … I always have to prove myself, after I had finished my masters I was working as a pharmacist…. [One day] … I had this occasion … I greeted the patient politely, oh you like to see the pharmacist, here am I, 'no, I said I want to speak to the pharmacist', I said yes, I am the pharmacist, 'no you can´t be the pharmacist', … what is wrong if I am the pharmacist …? 'Oh okay because we didn´t know that black people can be pharmacist'." (Accra, 7.4.2017)

Malikah (RM): "{When I moved to England}… I knew that … you could get negative treatment of the colour of your skin … [s]o encountering it when I was in England it didn´t move me that much because … I knew what I wanted to get out of my experience there." (Accra, 18.4.2017)

Cyntia (AM): "… [W]hen I came here at first, … it was too horrible, … they are just coming … to hit you or maybe just to pull your hair. … So I ja, remember that always I was just in silence in the corner maybe break time, it was only me just be at the corner and I was there because that was it. … But now, now I think that Italians are changing. Ja now they are changing. Its not like at first." (Conegliano, 22.6.2017)

Mary (NM): "… [E]ven in Africa … we do have cross culture, I am working in an international organization … [so] from the international people … there are times when you feel like you are a team and there are times when you just know, okay we are … different people … I think [in] this world we need to communicate with each other, I mean really, if you are able to experience other culture, other people you realize that even though we are different in colour, we are different in complexion, we are really, really the same … inside … migration can help solve most of these issues but the world is not just taking advantage of it …." (Accra, 28.4.2017)

Anaya (RM): {"Let me share a special story with you.} … I thought like the French are just cold and … very unfriendly. And in the beginning I wandered is it because I am black or African or a women. But I had the impression they were just mean anyway to everybody …. [One day] … I was stopped by the police … I forgot that I had the flashes on so the police stopped me. … I have been told by other Africans that they are not very friendly to Africans because they see Africans as migrants and … they kind of look down on them so… they came to me and asked if everything was okay and I said 'oh sorry I forgot the flashes'. They … asked for my license. … Luckily I still have my American license because you are allowed to drive for one year, … when he sees it he got excited because he said oh you are American you speak such good French and do you like France? I mean I was really surprised because I didn´t expect that as an African but of course he didn´t see me as an African immigrant but as an American immigrant that is more probably interesting…. … And then he had asked for my insurance and I had forgotten to put the new sticker and normally I would have to be arrested or they would seize the car … [b]ut they let me go. I said I am very sorry, I had it, I had it you know and I just forgot to put it on the car and he said 'okay'. And I was really shocked because I didn´t expect that. … And I think it´s because of the American, … I am not sure that if I had a Ghanaian … license, …how they would have treated me …." (Accra, 6.4.2017)

By presenting those cases I do not mean to claim that every migrant woman gets confronted with racist issues, nor that those who do, automatically feel or think bad about migration in general. Malikah, for example shared a very dramatic story with me, but ended her statement with the words: "I knew what I wanted to get out of my experience there", which shows that she was not going to let this particular incident shape her entire life. During my time in Italy, I also got to witness engagements between Ghanaians and Italians that happened at eye level and I also had women in all three categories that declared that they did not even encounter racism or heard stories about it. The latter of course could also be due to the issue of 'mental photoshopping' that we discussed earlier.

Grace (NM): {"My friend who is abroad} … he hasn´t said anything about racism or anything like that." (Accra, 28.4.2017)

Efia (AM): "… Europe here, the one thing I know here, when somebody want to talk to you, you don´t hear the language, that one a problem, … but if not that one, I not get any problem here." (Conegliano, 22.6.2017)

This shows that the issue of racism alone, or even the issue of local anchorage is not the most crucial factor that shapes a persons attitude towards migration. It is rather their position in space that creates contrasting matters of opinion. In chapter 5, I introduced that actual migrant Efia prefers to limit her interaction to her Ghanaian community, which proves that she is even happier when staying in her ethnic bubble not having to interact with the Europeans, as it gives her more stability and security. Others might live the perfect life, being fully integrated language and workwise, but might still feel unhappy about their lives because they might not be able to remit the desired support. I just only presented three factors that are known for having some influential power on a person's well-being abroad but there are so many more pieces missing to finish the puzzle called 'local anchorage'.

Nevertheless, it is important to let the women share their negative stories as well; as they for sure can make them feel uncomfortable or insecure and raise awareness about the fact that racism is still happening, even in the 21 century. However, it might be relevant to make a differentiation, when talking about racism. According to Kelly (2013, p. 274) there are "structural conditions", something that Malikah experienced when sharing her experiences about getting disadvantaged in the job market. Then there is the most obvious form of racism, which is the verbal or physical discrimination, something that Jane and Cyntia experienced. However, the most painful experience, according to Kelly (2013) is the kind of experience Rosalind shared with us; the feeling of not being considered an Italian citizen. Even though one day she will possess the Italian passport, she will always be a Ghanaian, always be a foreigner. However, the story that return migrant Anaya shared probably can be seen as the most 'special' one and forms a 'new form of racism'. She was clearly irritated by that incident she described, having to experience that she 'mistakenly' had been treated better because of her American papers, but it also shows the changeability of having a 'transnational status'. While she encountered racist experiences during her stay in the US, being there in the end made her transnational life in Europe easier.

6.3 Reintegration – Experiencing the return to Ghana

The previous chapters already revealed insights into the difficulties that can come along with return migration and reintegration. Several women spoke about the pressure, the restrictions they experience in their mobility, and the fear towards returning. However, return migration and reintegration does not have to end up negatively, in fact returning home does not even mean that a migration cycle has ended (Cassarino, 2004; Setrana & Tonah, 2016). In this section the women will share their experiences and thoughts towards reintegration, both positive and negative. How did it feel to be back, did anything they learned abroad proofed useful back in Ghana, how did the family react on their return and how do they think about migration now after experiencing it themselves.
Cerase (1974) differentiates between four kinds of return: 'Return of conservatism, return of innovation, return of retirement and return of failure' (p. 251). During this subsection I will try to apply those different forms of return by presenting respective dialogues. However, most of my respondents cannot just be pegged into one of those four 'drawers'. This distributed

way of demonstration has mainly been chosen to create a reader-friendly overview and does not imply that this structure is the only way to analyse return migration. Still, the differentiation shows that every return can be different, dependent on different factors, or as Cassarino (2004) states: "return is also a question of context" (p. 257). By making a differentiation between 'success and failure', Piore (1979) also points to the dynamic character of a person´s migration. Some migrants go abroad with the intention to only stay for a short period and return successfully after reaching their financial goal. Others plan to leave forever, but can just not make a living abroad in which case their return is therefore seen as a failure (Bartram et al., 2014). However, initial intensions can also change, people might stay longer or shorter than planned whereby the notion of 'success and failure' does change as well. Whether a returnee or her migration story gets perceived as successful, strongly depends on what one experienced (Davids & Ruben, 2008). Cassarino (2004) therefore states: "Returnees' success or failure is analysed by correlating the "reality" of the home economy and society with the expectations of the returnee" (p. 257). Dependent on the 'type of returnee' I expect to find different interpretations of success and failure and therefore different attitudes towards (return) migration (de Haas et al., 2015).

'Return of failure'

Cerase (1974) ascribes the 'return of failure' to those who have had a miserable life abroad and Cassarino (2004) adds that it includes people that were not able to integrate in the destination country, due to encountering racism and prejudices. However, I think when talking about return one should not only look at what happened abroad, but also how the actual return turned out. Almost all women, who still had their families in Ghana, shared that their family members were happy about them being back. Furthermore, apart from return migrant Rebecca, who became a victim of human trafficking by the age of twelve and who was forced to work in prostitution until she managed to run away, no other women mentioned her return to be a failure. Rebecca did not share anything about her reintegration experiences but due to the negative experiences she made abroad, she considers migration a failure, the actual return however, cannot be considered a failure. She confessed that she is very happy now in Ghana and will never go back.

> Rebecca (RM): "You don´t need to travel, travel is no good. You should work hard in Ghana." (Kumasi, 1.4.2017)

For Malikah and Nana, returning back to Ghana was also not easy. They did not face to many serious problems abroad, nor did they struggle with respect and status issues upon their return, which is why their return or reintegration can not be considered a failure, however, they still experienced the return as something rather difficult as Malikah felt she had lost her cultural connection in terms of language and that her western way of thinking made it hard for her to reintegrate into the Ghanaian society, accepting the hierarchical system, which Nana confirmed. Moreover, Malikah also mentions the struggles of aiming to become a businesswoman in Ghana, as the gender role allocation there is still handled in a conservative way, which makes reintegration for highly educated return women probably harder than for men.

Malikah (RM): "… I had become what the Ghanaians would say … 'obroni'[17], … meaning like … if you say to me that I meat you there in 15 minutes, I will be there in 15 minutes. … I would you know, do the system properly. … And everybody was like 'what is wrong with you?'… So it was a bit difficult and it didn´t help that I didn´t speak the language. I didn´t speak my mother tongue properly before I left, when I came back it was worse …. … [Also] I struggled to get a job … because it now had become you are too educated and they couldn´t afford you. Those were the excuses … [y]ou can be too educated in Ghana. It means like you won´t take instructions, thats what they think and it is a concept about respect for older people …. … [I]ts a serious struggle, he? And you are a woman, that is even worse, … you are a woman so they say you should stay at home, why aren´t you at home and helping your mother … if you get to good a job or if you are too educated … you won´t get a husband …. … I think {when I came back} … it probably made me confused for the first 6 month because Europe is a very different place from here … you need a … rearrangement … of your mindset and … you need to … get back to some thinking so I wouldn´t say the things I learned or experienced … in Europe made it any useful … for me here. Not really. … If anything, it made it harder. Cause then you do really have to acclimatize to the environment that you are in and you have to think like the people. Ja maybe you could be a bit more organized and see if you can pull everybody in to be organized as well, but it wasn´t always the case." (Accra, 18.4.2017)

Return migrant Nana shared a similar story. After being abroad for eight years and back for two years, she is still struggling with Ghanaian society:

Nana (RM): "{Its difficult} … I am used to things working. … I feel like you know everything takes twice as long, I don´t understand the attitude. Before I never worked in Ghana, my working experience was always outside. … Its very frustrating. … I am releasing the problem in our education system, being back like its … such a problem <sounds exhausted>. … [W]ith my family its been fine. … Its when I am interacting with society. Then I am having issues, you know, [i]ts so different. [However] … [i]n France I feel like … I got more tolerant. I think France prepared me for Ghana, … if I would have a flight from the US to Ghana it would be woooow, … I definitely think France prepared me for Ghana and all the hick ups here. … It … definitely was a great transition <laughs>. … {Now that I am back,} I question a lot more, speak up more." (Accra, 18.5.2017)

Rosalind (AM): {"Yes, speak up, I agree,}… when you move from Africa to this place … it[] helps us, it opens our brains, our understanding to know many, many things. … And I know from here, if I go back to Africa I can also use my knowledge or what I´ve learned from Europe to educate others …." (Pordenone, 15.6.2017)

Return of innovation

Jane experienced her return and reintegration in an even more life changing way. She lived in Belgium and the Netherlands for more than ten years together with her parents, whom she followed when she was seventeen years old. She became a pharmacist and was working really hard, however, she suffered from several breakdowns caused by exhaustion as she experienced her life to be only work and stress. When she decided to return back to Ghana, she was struggling a lot, not knowing where exactly she belonged but after a while, she found

---

[17] 'Obroni' in 'Twi' means foreigner, or more specifically white person. While being abroad I also experienced being called like that. For a more detailed explanation of the term, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oburoni

her way and is now making use of the knowledge she acquired abroad. Her return story is an example of what Cerase (1974) calls 'innovation', which Bartram et al. (2014) ascribe to "migrant[s] who … absorb some of the values and practices of the destination country and return[] intending to catalyse changes at 'home' using what they have learned while away" (p. 122). Moreover, once more she explains the balancing act of being 'here' and 'there' and at the same time 'nowhere':

> Jane (RM): "… I am happy here but … I feel like I am not safe. … I realized … I can´t live here and when I go back there I say I can´t live there, so I was torn between both worlds, … also because I also didn´t have friends when I came back. … When I was returning my family didn´t understand, they were like huh? People want the opportunity to come to Europe … and you are going, what is wrong with you and you´ve just given birth, you have a baby, why are you taking the baby to Africa? … And I told them … when I come here I will be less stress[ed] so my quality of life will be better, …{my family here in Ghana,}… they were very happy … to see us but they also didn´t understand why we … move back home…. [S]o far as I think I am happy here because …I can make the same amount of money, but then be with people that accept me [and] … so far I can also get the opportunity to always go back to the Netherlands or Belgium so that I don´t lose touch …. … I am satisfied with my situation …. You have the opportunity to start your own business, to start things because you have gone to the Netherlands you know how things work better there, so right now I know that the pharmacy system in Ghana is lacking so based on my experiences in the Netherlands or Belgium I can come and set up a business here that will … fetch me much more money ….[W]hen we came in 2014, I had to move back to the Netherlands almost every three month … because I was also not happy here, when I came here it was so difficult for me so I was like, ha [Jane] you are lost like I wanted to come back here but when I came I felt like I am also not … at home. … I was missing a lot of things, … how things are done in the Netherlands, … [E]ven like with the roads when we are driving somewhere, a lot of (...) holes, the … lighting system, basic necessities of life are not basic necessities here." (Accra, 7.4.2017)

Even when returning back with the intention to make use of all the skills and knowledge one acquired abroad, people find themselves not fitting into the system anymore, or at least not understanding it. Malikah, Nana and Jane all felt like they had been 'Europeanised', a condition that Anaya explained to me, only that she felt influenced by American culture and society, where she had lived before she moved to Europe.

> Anaya (RM): {"Coming to Europe,} [i]t wasn´t a real like happy experience because I think I was so Americanised. And in America live is easy. … And so I felt Europe and France especially was very different, … you know from peoples attitude, I feel people were very cold." (Accra, 6.4.2017)

However, after I asked her whether migration, according to her, is something that one should experience, she answered the following:

> Anaya (RM): "[J]a because for me I think it helped me to grow up a lot, … it was really about me developing as a person. … [I]t helped me to be more adaptable and not feel so entitled, … to be more open with my expectations. That maybe I should first go to a country and experience it without imposing what I expect you know, expect France to be America for example. … [W]hen I was disappointed in France then I stopped being so disappointed in Ghana … [b]ecause I realized okay actually it is not just Ghana thats

bureaucratic and inefficient and bad customer service. … And I am not saying it is good, but it helped me to be … a bit more … gentle with my home country, not to critical, … [b]ecause I realized other countries are like that and these other countries are portrayed on the media as like heaven on earth but it is not really hundred percent like that." (Accra, 6.4.2017)

What Anaya is sharing here, presents the value of this chapter very well and can also be linked to the statement made by Tawiah in ethnographic sketch e). Anaya´s story touches upon a deeper dimension of migration, as she shares what migration 'has done to her'. How she was able to develop personally and how she changed due to her experiences, the people that surrounded her, and being more open with expectations and imaginations. Her everyday statement creates a certain connation about the image of migration and by bringing back this image into Ghanaian society, passing it along in her social networks, society, people and their attitudes towards migration get transformed. This again proofs the interconnection of the three dimensions of this study: Imaginations, social networks and experiences, which all together can shape a person´s attitude.

'Return of retirement'

Ewa (AM): … [W]hen I came here then I wanted to go back to my place but then as time goes on I´ve … become used to this place and then when I go home to … Ghana, after one week, two weeks I wanted to come back [to Italy]… because I have become used to here, … so at times my friends asked me, 'will you go back home as you are growing old' I said I don´t know <claps her hands>, I work here, I´ve stayed here, my children are here… what am I to do home I don´t know …, I leave it to God that is what I always say." (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

Gladys (AM): Now I … am happy, but I am not more happy because of now I am old, … I am not like in the time I came here, … I don´t have energy … I am thinking [about] … go[ing] … back … because … I am getting to 60 … you see me, I don´t have any strength to do work again. … [S]o I am here … because of my last daughter …." (Conegliano, 4.6.2017)

Gladys example represents another mode of return migration, as described by Cerase (1974): Retirement. Due to her exhaustion and lack of energy she feels it is time for her to return to Ghana, where she hopes to find a less stressful life. As soon as her daughter finishes with school, she would like to go back home. Therefore, her story is also another example of how a person´s social network, in this case her daughter, affects her own migration trajectory and attitude towards it, as Gladys finds herself in the position of 'waiting'.

'Return of conservatism'

Allyson (RM): "[I] did not experience any problems with reintegration. Everybody wanted to hear [my] story … friends were also really happy for that [I] got the opportunity to go. … [My] mother invited [me] and [I] was staying at her place for the entire stay." (Kumasi, 1.4.2017)

Allyson´s example could be considered an example of what Cerase (1974) calls 'conservatism', as she "never really tried to integrate thoroughly in the destination country

and return[ed] without having been much affected by the migration experience" (Bartram et al., 2014, p. 122). Allyson went abroad three times and always had a very short migration experience, but whenever she was there, it was never her aim to try for integration. Sampaio (2017) adds the following to the definition of 'conservatism' as he states that those migrants are often "… focused on working hard to afford a future return …" (p. 242). In my study, none of the return migrants I spoke to confessed that they only went abroad to make money, however, actual migrant Delilah shared the following that does strengthens the definition of Sampaio (2017).

> Delilah (AM): "[T]he imagination was after two years I go back … to Ghana, … but later on things didn´t work as I expected … because two years, it wasn´t all that easy going back, … two years you have not enough money, … not enough money, how do you go back … so … I was working, working, working, up to late." (Tezze di Arzignano, 28.6.2017)

Return migrant Anaya also did not try to integrate so much into the French society, even though this was mostly caused by her lack of time and desire to be able to move back to America.

> Anaya (RM): "[W]hen I came I thought oh I am just going to do what I need to do so that I can just go back to the US. … I didn´t experience it much because I didn´t move out, I didn´t explore as much as I could. … I had to work so hard for my job that I didn´t really get to enjoy this European lifestyle so to speak." (Accra, 6.4.2017)

Anaya´s example shows that one really needs to be careful with distributing return migrants in either one of Cerase´s types of return. The conversation we had revealed that she was one of the returnees that probably got the most affected by her migration experience, as she already explain above. Her not being able to set her anchorage properly in French society can thus not be equalized with her not getting affected by her migration experience, this as a critique to what Bartram et al. (2014) state. I think that especially having a lack of local anchorage can have a strong effect on a person´s migration experience, which in turn would affect the person. To analyse this concretely we would need to find out more about the motivation behind local anchorage. Moreover, not making a big effort to integrate into the host society does not eliminate the possibility that one returns with an innovative wish. However, as aforementioned the distributed presentation has helped to show that a return can happen out of diverse motives and gets perceived differently by any individual according to their transnational formation.

Moving back into a different system

> Beth (NM): "… I think that people should just travel to see …. Not really work but just to see other places. Just come back to their countries … they should return … this is were they belong … [and] they should know what is going on so when they come they won´t be disappointed because some time they are really surprised, some even don´t think that we have roads in Ghana because when they were leaving the roads were bad, … so they have this mental picture so when they come they [are] really disappointed." (Accra, 8.4.2017)

> Mary (NM): " … [T]hose who find it more difficult to integrate are those who … went when they were really young, so they didn´t really get the chance to build any long time friendships here before they actually left … I have actually spoken to a few … Dutch

Ghanaians who have also moved back, … who went quite early but then they´ve been able to … move into the system because they already somehow integrated with the Ghanaian community within the Netherlands as well … and then just found themselves in circles … also here in Ghana." (Accra, 28.4.2017)

Also Davids & Ruben (2008) are responsive to the issue of 'moving into a new system'. They ascribe the difficulties that people encounter in their home country to "their modified identity" that they developed after being exposed to other "norms and values" (p. 100), that formed their transnational lives. Mary´s statement can be seen as a great addition as she explains the importance of migrants social networks from a non-migrant perspective and explains that those Dutch Ghanaians were able to profit from their local anchorage in the Netherlands even after being back in Ghana, which shows again that the factor of locality can be as important as mobility when studying migrants transnational formations in a transnational arena.

> Anaya (RM): "… I know a lot of people who also struggle with moving back and it takes a long time to adjust. For me it was … the work that helped me to buffer it. … [O]ne day a friend told me, 'I think I am being to hard on myself, nobody is forcing me to stay here if I am not happy' and I feel the same way and I think we do this all or nothing 'you have to move back to Ghana or stay there' [but] maybe you can live in between and maybe you can do other countries like me and maybe you come for a while and then you go somewhere else it shouldn´t be so rigid, … I feel like 'is this where I´m meant to be?'… and that is the most important question, you know if you have peace about where you are, … then fine. … I didn´t realize that it would be such a good … emotional experience." (Accra, 6.4.2017)

Anaya's statement 'maybe you can live in between' captures the transnational arena very well and the importance of trying to capture it. It shows that migration can not only be studied from fixed locations, meaning country of origin and/or destination. It emphasises the exchange and the thoughts that exist in the transnational space and that they need to be taken into account as well. Even though many women in this study revealed that experiencing 'inbetweenness' causes them struggles, it is an issue that can reveal a lot about the true meaning and the processual character of transnational migration.

6.4 Concluding remarks

The aim of this chapter was to answer the third and last sub question: *How do the women´s diverse migration experiences affect their attitudes towards migration to Europe?* We have seen that attitudes towards migration do change with experiences, which also confirms the processual dimension of migration. The chapter did not only focus on the mobility aspect (moving to Europe and back) but also on locality, which helped to understand migration and the meaning of living a transnational life in a deeper sense. Places and the attachment towards or the anchorage in those places shaped the women´s migration experiences and the way they frame it. Moreover, we have seen that it is not only those who travel that experience migration, but also those who stay or get left behind. By paying attention to return mobility and reintegration it was possible to detect how the women´s attitude towards migration changed after experiencing it while being abroad and coping with the aftermath of their experiences when reintegrating in the Ghanaian system. Furthermore, it became very clear how deeply interconnect the three dimensions (Framing Europe, social networks and migrant

experiences) and people living in a transnational space really are, as the experiences of migrants are strongly connected to their social networks, as people can influence each other and those experiences get passed back into Ghanaian society and can reshape the overall existing images towards migration.

Of course, experiencing migration is very subjective and also depends on a person´s family or educational background, which could be taken into consideration in a follow up study of this topic:

> Malikah (RM): {"I agree with you,}… It depends on the individual and what they are, what they seek to get out of it and what they experience. … I wanted to see what I could become outside of this space. And that´s what I got. I got to be a confident woman, a woman who understands her abilities, … her limitations, … I got to be somebody who could enjoy life and not feel confined. So if now I am confine because of the experience and the changes in my life I am fine with it because I got to live. … I learned to be happy with what I have, that´s actually another thing that being abroad taught be." (Accra, 18.4.2017)

> Nana (RM): "… I just think a lot of … {the things I learned abroad} … is based on lots of factors, you know your gender, your destination, your race, religion so this is just my experience, … I think it would have been a very different experience … if I was not educated 5 years, I did not have the experienced background, I think it would have been very different." (Accra, 18.5.2017)

However, by detecting all the differences and similarities in my respondents migration experiences, the impact that those stories can have on majority became clear, as every actor involved in a migrant´s social networks seems to learn and profit from the experiences that others, and they in turn themselves, make. Non-migrant Mary confesses that listening to other people´s experiences evokes the aspiration in her to migrate as well, or at least to go and make some experiences abroad.

> Mary (NM): "…I think I have always wanted an experience for myself, … when I was young my dad also used to travel a lot because of his work and he use to always … tried to describe to us what things were you know in advanced countries … it was always at the back of my mind that okay I just don´t want to hear the stories anymore I just want to you know, know it for myself and then maybe I can understand it better." (Accra, 28.4.2017)

With this statement, Mary closes the 'attitude-shaping-cycle', as she affirms what Tawiah and Delilah were explaining in chapter 4 about the sharing of experiences (even when bad), which arouses the non-migrant´s aspiration to go and experience as well and which shapes their imaginations about migration as well as 'destination Europe'.

Almost all of the stories that the women shared have one particular thing in common. Even though some of the women are really receiving a lot of pressure from home, suffer from racism, are not able to find a job that suits them, are feeling homesick or stuck, they are able to see the positive side effects that migration has brought them, as well. This is also something that Grillo & Mazzucato (2008) conclude, based on a study of MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga (2002): "The exigencies of economic, social and political life have obliged Africans to learn the art of 'making do' in whatever situation they find themselves, and this is a skill they take with them wherever they go" (p. 185).

A very important question that I asked almost all of my respondents was the following: 'If you have to describe migration and what it means to you, in just three words, which words

would you pick?' This question made it possible for me to reveal not only the contrasting attitudes that the different migrant women were having in either Italy or Ghana, and how those differed from each other, it also made it possible to reveal the contrasting attitudes within one person. Rosalind, who has shared her story with us during this entire analysis and who expressed several times how much she is suffering under her decision and even mentioned regretting it, still manages to see the one factor that makes the whole experience for her not a failed one:

> Rosalind (AM): "It is terrible, … miserable…, [but also] … it's a lesson because we learn something from it …." (Pordenone, 15.6.2017)

> Doris (NM): "… migration of course as I said it helps you develop yourself, so development, … and then networking. … So I think migration is good, its good to migrate because its widens your understanding … and then it helps you to you know, know how to cope with people and then with the networking …

> Jane (RM): "… it broadens you, it forms you as a person as to me it has been a success, I can never say migration has been a failure, no, … all the experience, my education, the exposure to the world, … my mentality, perception on life, how I look at things its all changed, I am well formed because of migration …" (Accra, 7.4.2017)

Rosalind´s statement about her experiences shows the dynamic character of a person´s attitude. Also Doris and Jane explain that due to the changeability of their imaginations, networks and experiences they and their attitude towards migration changed. It demonstrates how this dynamic character can affect a person´s transnational formation and according to Dahinden (2010) it is the dynamic of those transnational formations that need to receive some more attention in migration studies.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to gain insights into the attitudes that female Ghanaians have towards migration to Europe and/or back, in order to create a deeper understanding of the social and geographical complexity of the phenomenon of transnational migration and the contrasting realities that different 'categories of migrants' find themselves in. Therefore, a multi-sited ethnography has been conducted in Ghana and Italy, whereby 'the voice' has been given to the women under study. This actor-oriented approach made it possible to study and contrast the women´s diverse thoughts and experiences from a more bottom-up, instead of top-down perspective. Through that I was also able to observe and learn about the challenges and miscommunications that can arise in a transnational arena, often due to unrealistic expectations and the exchange of biased information. Those insights therefore challenge the notion of a frictionless space.

To provide an answer to the main research question – '*What contrasting attitudes towards migration exist among female Ghanaians in a transnational space between Africa and Europe and how can they be explained?'* – I have operationalized a transnational dialogue between the three groups of women under study (non-, return, actual migrants). This dialogue has been presented through all three empirical chapters, that each answered one of the three sub questions, putting an empirical focus on first, the issue of framing 'destination Europe' and how women get affected by those imaginations, second the changeability of social networks as we studied their formation and transformation in a transnational arena, and finally looking into how migration experiences shape people, by studying the women´s local anchorage and reintegration, which showed again the importance of conducting a transnational study from different geographical angles.

The stories presented by my respondents illustrated that the women were all having different migration experiences, either being a migrant themself or being connected to one. They engage in different social networks and remit and receive different stories, which in turn shapes their imaginations towards Europe and migration in general. At the end it is all those three factors under study that need to be taken into account to really understand the concept of attitude. This is why the model of the transnational 'attitude-shaping-cycle' (chapter 2) has been invented. It exemplified the very strong interconnectedness of the three dimensions that helped to explain the existing contrasts in the women´s attitudes.

In chapter 4, I discussed the kind of images that exist about 'destination Europe' and how studying those images can help to understand the changing and contrasting attitudes of Ghanaian women living in the transnational space. We have seen that imaginations are strongly linked to a person´s social network as people influence each other mutually and remit different kind of (biased) stories. Through social media and other technologies it also becomes easier to share stories and images across the transnational space. Moreover, we have seen that those living images often can lead to disappointment when experiencing migration, as they often do not conform reality. This observation has been linked to the issue of hope, also discussed by Kleist & Thorsen (2017). Hope and disappointment seem to be both sides of the same coin, as having high hopes can lead into much more disappointment than no or low hopes.

Chapter 5 dealt with the power and dynamic character of social networks and how those get formed and transformed in a transnational space and along a person´s trajectory (Ryan et al., 2008; Schapendonk, 2015). Different types of social ties have been discussed as well as their changeability and the mutual influence they can have on all actors living in the transnational arena. By figuring out how social networks really work I was able to already gain a deeper insight into the meaning of transnational migration.

Chapter 6 concentrated on the experiences of the migrant women under study and how those experiences have shaped people, either when being left behind, being abroad or returning back to Ghana. Special attention has been paid to the issue of family separation, as well as the women´s local anchorage that can be shaped by the interplay of locality and mobility, which can create such transnational formations (Dahinden, 2010), as well as different types of returnees (Cerase, 1974; Cassarino, 2004). Comparing two different geographical locations has shown that it is not only about the local or being mobile but that it is the interaction between those two that shape the degree of a person´s transnational status and can reveal more about how people experience transnational migration, also because migrants undergo different kinds of mobility. "To stay mobile, however, the migrants have to develop networks with local actors …" and therefore it is important for all kinds of migrants to establish "local footholds" (Dahinden, 2010, p. 57), which in turn are important to capture as they can help us to create a better understanding of people´s individual perceptions and migration experiences, and therefore the attitudes that can emerge out of those experiences.

Towards an 'attitude-shaping-cycle' approach

The main message of this study was to detect and explain the contrasting viewpoints that women have towards migration and 'destination Europe'. Based on that, we learned about the mutual influence between the three factors that form the 'attitude-shaping-cycle'. Since imaginations, as well as social networks and people themselves can change, producing new and different experiences, attitudes need to be seen as something dynamic as well, as they change dependent on those factors.

We have seen that there were certain strategies that seemed to reinforce each other. One strategy that quite a number of my respondents applied (consciously or unconsciously) has been the one of 'mental photoshopping', the act of remitting biased information in either direction, whereby migrants unintentionally reinforce but also manipulate each other's behaviour through means of their transnational exchange in both directions. Nonetheless, both migrants and non-migrants also profit from migration through the exchange of (biased) information, and by that also the non-migrants get to experience migration. This useful insight should definitely be kept in mind, when conducting future transnational research.

Moreover, this study provided an interesting insight into the dimension of time. The stories shared by the women showed that transnational practises change over time, as the transnational character of a migrant changes as well, partly due to a persons degree of mobility-locality interaction, which can also be seen as an indication for the processual character of transnational migration (see Dahinden, 2010). This character also becomes clear, when considering that migrants find themselves in an on-going process of movement (Dietz, 2011), as for example through intra-EU-mobility, migrating again after returning home or even by sending remittances across borders, as well as through their constant engagement in contrasting "social relations and practice" (Holm Pedersen, 2013, p. 17). Talking about the dimension of time, the issue of 'waiting' needs to be added as well, as it became clear that even people that did not geographically migrate (non-migrants), can get affected by their social network and those people's movements and experiences, which in turn shaped their own imaginations as well and created a different kind of migration experience (e.g. the feeling of being left behind).

All three factors that constitute the 'attitude-shaping-cycle' are dynamic and never fixed. Attitudes get formed and transformed in different times and locations, due to a person´s migration experience (in either one of the locations or while traveling), the way of imagining migration and dealing with reality and the changeability of one´s social network. However,

we have seen that it is also the location a person obtains in the transnational space and the degree of mobility that can have an impact on how someone perceives and experiences migration. Capturing the transnational arena showed that all those factors intermingle and that there might even be more to detect in future research.

While comparing peoples stories, trying to re-enact the possible changes of attitudes that took place, it became clear that it is not only a migrants geographical trajectory that can have an impact on a migrants life and attitude, but also what I call the 'trajectory of the mind'. By studying mobility in combination with two different geographical locations it became clear that people do not only move and exchange goods in that transnational space but that they are constantly mind traveling back and forth, feeling present both 'here and there' which some perceive negatively in form of double engagement or as something that hinders them from developing a true feeling of belonging or local anchorage in the country of destination, and others need in order to keep going as "they are aspiring to have the best of both worlds by combining local realities with global possibilities" (Willems., 2014, p. 332).

The "kind of ties that migrants have are very much conditioned by the experiences of migration and the processes they go through as migrants" (Bartram et al., 2014, p. 95), which indicates that when wanting to capture the transnational arena migrants are living in, one cannot only pay attention to the actual border crossing movements (Bartram et al., 2014). Being able to detect the interconnectedness of factors involved, helped to create a finally nuanced and in-depth inside of what migration really means for Ghanaian women that are living in a transnational space. The various stories that the women shared with us "not only show[ed] the possibility of different transnational morphologies existing simultaneously within one and the same group of citizen, but also how these forms can become contradictory" (Dahinden, 2010, p. 68).

With this approach I was able to show that being sensitive to contradictions, power relations and character changes, that take place over time and space, really matters, when wanting to capture the entire construction of a transnational arena. Moreover, I claim that studying the concept of transnational migration from multiple perspectives helped to challenge the 'culture of migration'. Nowadays, migration has become something normative and many West-African youngsters almost feel pushed to migrate, as this seems to be the only way to find social success in life. Return migrant Jane confirmed this notion:

Jane (RM): "… to make it in life you have to move to Europe." (Accra, 7.4.2017)

With this research and the people that participated in the transnational focus group discussion I created an open space, where there was/is room for also those stories that narrate rather negative attitudes towards migrants or migration or finding success abroad. The conflictive viewpoints that I was able to gather therefore helped in a way to destabilize the 'culture of migration'.

7.1 Reflection and recommendations for future research

There are a couple of recommendations that build on the approach that has been applied in this research. First, I am going to reflect on what should be done differently when conducting a follow-up study. Secondly, I am going to raise a new empirical question that could be interesting to examine in future research and that builds on the same approach that has been used in this research already.

At the end of chapter 3 I already reflected on the research process as well as the ethics of this study and presented some recommendations for improving the validity of the research,

as for example creating a more balanced distribution of participants with a comparable level of education, since I assume that the level of education had some impact on the way the women thought and were able to reflect on migration. Other socio-demographic characteristics that should be taken into account are age and family background. Ferro (2006) states, "[a]ge affects the attitude towards an experience abroad: because young people are still at a growing phase of their career, they have a greater tendency to look for improvements and chances abroad, as they are also more adaptable to new conditions and environments (p. 181). In this study no attention has been paid on the respondents age, which led to the fact that most of the actual migrants were much older than the women from other groups, which might have created an unwished contrast between the three groups.

Furthermore, this study has been conducted as a multi-sited one, however research only has been done in two countries. In order to create a wider insight into the three dimensions of the attitude-shaping-cycle, it might be interesting to conduct this research again in other European countries, especially in the United Kingdom or countries where the English language is more actively spoken and understood, then in Italy. As we have seen, struggling with languages formed a crucial factor in developing local anchorage or coping with reality after arrival.

Moreover, when conducting a follow up study of this research one should pay more attention to the fact that many migrants provided negative examples when answering my questions, sharing mostly their struggles and not so much their achievements. I do not know whether this can be connected to the way I was asking my questions or whether it needs to be seen as a reflection of the 'mental photoshopping'. Maybe people where mostly sharing negative impressions and talked more about their barriers as they (un)intentionally were hoping to receive some kind of help.

As we have seen in chapter 5, transnational practices change over time. Future research should therefore pay more attention to the temporal dimension of transnational migration and should also not assume that migrants simply settle into already existing networks, but rather create their own new ties (Somerville, 2011). It will definitely be interesting to find out why some migrants are more likely to establish weak ties and others prefer not too (Ryan et al., 2008). Like this it would be possible to detect even more about the dynamic and changeable character of transnational migration and to find out how and why migration keeps being framed as 'the possibility' to reach a good life even though we are living in a world, where many are currently fighting against migration-flows and that are "… characterized by protracted crisis and restrictive mobility regimes" (Kleist, 2017b).

However, aside from improving this present study, the results that came out of it should also be used to build on another relevant issue that could help to gain even more insights into the construction of the transnational arena. Schapendonk (2011) states that the images about a better life in Europe would still reach "African would-be migrants" even if people would share the challenges they encounter (p. 85). He explains that those images get established amongst others through the goods that migrants are remitting home (Schapendonk, 2011). Return migrant Jane, shared the following:

Jane (RM): "… so you can look at migration in different areas but the checkpoints are equal, even though I had the legal document to live their, if I came back and I was not educated, … I didn´t dress good, I didn´t have a car, then even though you have legal documents they will still say you [failed] because the checkpoints were not met. So irrespective of how migration is, for migration to be a success in the Ghanaian context, these checkpoints should be filled out …" (Accra, 7.4.2017)

This statement made me wonder. If success only gets measured in terms of material goods, instead of receiving the citizenship (which one might think would be the ultimate definition of 'making it') and therefore the legal rights that can ease life abroad, more research would need to be conducted on the issue of expectations that exist in Ghanaian society and how those can lead to a manipulation of material remittances, for example people only sending the most expensive gifts, or wearing their finest clothes when visiting. In turn through these actions the entire notion that exist about migration in Ghana gets manipulated as well. So why do those people that already experienced the challenges of migration bring those glamorized pictures to Ghana, knowing that others will follow? Is it really only about the question of receiving respect? Therefore, it might be interesting to study whether people remit manipulated goods conscious or unconsciously. Furthermore, this question could be combined with the issue of faith. Many of my respondents admitted that God would be the one leading them into social success or not.

> Darlene (AM): "… anything wrong I just take it because … I was thinking that maybe God created me just to be like that …" (Conegliano, 21.6.2017)

And also Kleist (2017b, section V) wrote: "… their social hope is embedded in moral and religious beings, rather then in following state logics". Since hope and expectation towards a successful life seem to be affected more by religion, future research would also need to take this into consideration and how those moral and religious values might influence the exchange of goods in the transnational arena. Maybe this could also be used as a starting point to figure out why the visual things matter more then receiving legal rights.

7.2 Recommendations for future policy-making

Previous research dealt with the attitudes that exist towards migration, however, always from the perspective of the natives of the 'affected' country. Within the debates about migration, the stories and voices of the people concerned often get overlooked or ignored, even though we have seen that they can reveal great insights that in turn can promote policy-making processes.

At the end of November 2017, the 5th EU-AU summit has been held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast under the issue of finding ways to cleverly investigate in the youth in order to guarantee for a sustainable future.[18] During this summit African and European leaders came together to discuss and determine the future directions of their cooperation.[19] The enormous lack of job opportunities on the African continent has been one of the central issues that the leaders debated on, aiming to create better future prospects for especially the younger generations that should prohibit people´s urge to emigrate in an irregular way. Subsequent to the summit, France's president, Emmanuel Macron visited several African countries, thereunder Ghana. He held a very long speech about the regular pathway of migration and promising better development aid, whereupon Ghana´s president Akufo-Addo explained that Ghana no longer wants to be depend on the means of development aid. Such migration-development-discussions are important to keep an eye on, as they reveal what the issue of migration is dealing with right now.

This recent example shows that European policies are always Eurocentric, which is logical on the one hand as they are made for Europe, however, there is also another side to the story, namely the Ghanaian perspective. Establishing more jobs in Ghana and discouraging

---

[18] https://au.int/en/AUEUSummit2017
[19] http://www.consilium.europa.eu/de/meetings/international-summit/2017/11/29-30/

people that they cannot establish a proper life in Europe, will not discourage people from emigrating. As explained above there still exists the very strong notion of a 'culture of migration'; if one wants to be successful in life, one needs to move to Europe. If the Ghanaian perspective does not get listened to, policies will turn out ineffective. Therefore, looking at the contradictions and capturing the contrasting attitudes that live in a transnational arena might help to broaden the public notion that exists about migration in Ghana and beyond. The stories revealed by my respondents showed that the normativity to 'be on the move' should be questioned and therefore it can be very important to highlight the values, norms and pressures that get constructed within and through the transnational arena and that are central to understand how migration is perceived and valued in a public debate. Therefore, listening to both sides is extremely important, so that policy-makers can work towards those contrasting issues. For policy-making practices to be successful it is thus highly relevant to understand the transnational arena that this study captured and to move away from the local bounded realities.

However, policy makers so far do not see or even ignore the transnational dynamics in which the firm discussions about migration take place. Yet, capturing those would be important to be able to create different tools or different policies that might be more effective then simply 'creating jobs'. This analytical argument that derived out of this study, might therefore be very helpful to policy makers.

Yet, when applying the transnational approach it is important to also think about policy impacts here and there. Women that experience better local anchorage conditions in Italy also have an impact on the discussions and the attitudes towards migration that exist in Ghana. This is something that governments need to be aware of as well as the fact that the 'culture of migration' partly gets formed by the migrants living abroad that remit biased information in their network. This in turn leaves us with the question about how effective those policies can be when people are only highlighting the good things and erasing the bad things through 'mental photoshopping', as this again leads to the creation of manipulated imaginations, values and practices.

Looking at the already existing policies, Dahinden (2010) argues that migrants often have very little to no legal rights in the various countries of destination and explains: "the dynamics of transnationality are always intimately related to the migration policies of European states" (p. 59). Consulting with ethnographic researchers with an expertise on transnational migration could therefore help to create policies that at least try to take action against the "processes of exclusion and inclusion" in our "modern globalised world" (Dahinden, 2010, p. 70).

In order to grant access and sympathy to the issue of transnational migration to the general public, the transnational arena that has been captured could also be translated into a theatre play or short film. This could help to give people a reality check and might lead to a change of European citizen´s often throughout negative perceptions of migration and add something to the societal understanding of migration. Those plays could then be performed at certain political events related to the issue of migration.

7.3 Final concluding remarks

To conclude, I agree with Dahindens' (2010) statement: "the dynamics of transnational formations merit more attention" (p. 53), as they not only help to detect the contrasting attitudes that live up in a transnational arena but also help to create an in-depth inside into transnational migration for research as well as societal understanding. However, those transnational formations and practises only develop in interaction with the possibilities and

restrictions that arise in certain contexts (Dahinden, 2010), which is why we can state that to truly understand the phenomenon of transnational migration, we have to look beyond the movement from fixed locality A to fixed locality B and focus on the mobility and exchanges that happen in between and are responsible for the shaping of migrant´s attitudes, as the attitude-shaping-cycle revealed. Therefore, I can state that it was not only very interesting but also important to capture the imaginations, changeability of social networks and experiences of migrants living in a transnational arena. Throughout this research I have learned that viewing the world not from a locational perspective but from a transnational perspective actually changes the world:

Anaya (RM): "So for me it helped me to grow up and just understand that the world is full of differences, each country has its own you know unique … kind of signature. … I went for superficial reasons, … [but] I learned so much about the world just by having Taiwanese classmates and Japanese classmates and Mexican classmates … and I think it made me a better person and hopefully I also show them that Ghanaians, or Africa is not all about what you see on CNN or BBC you know … it is really important because we get beyond the stereotypes." (Accra, 6.4.2017)

Cindy (RM): "… I mean looking back its its a good thing to, I think everyone should at least live abroad for maybe 3-6 month, it helps you to appreciate what you have and also it helps you to broaden your view. Your world view." (Accra, 18.4.2017)

Appendix I

Overview respondents

Code	Name (pseud.)	Sex	Age	Location interview	'Type of migrant'
Gha1	Gloria	F	27	Accra (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha2	Allyson	F	38	Kumasi (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha3	Serwa	F	45	Kumasi (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha4	Prince	M	>25	Kumasi (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha5	Rebecca	F	50-55	Kumasi (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha6	Koju	M	36	Kumasi (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha7	David	M	37	Kumasi (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha8	Anaya	F	>32	Accra (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha9	Jane	F	32	Accra (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha10	Beth	F	24	Accra (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha11	Jonathan	M	20	Accra (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha12	Christie	F	28	Accra (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha13	Ama	F	29	Accra (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha14	Malikah	F	31	Accra (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha15	Cindy	F	>33	Accra (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha16	Elisa	F	30	Accra (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Gha17	Claire	F	29	Accra (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha18	Doris	F	25-30	Accra (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha19	Patience	F	24	Accra (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha20	Grace	F	30	Accra (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha21	Mary	F	25	Accra (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha22	Rose	F	28	Accra (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha23	Maame	F	>40	Accra (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha24	Ruth	F	52	Accra (Ghana)	Non-migrant
Gha25	Nana	F	30-35	Accra (Ghana)	Return Migrant
Ita1	Richard	M	35-40	Naples (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita2	Ann	F	37	Conegliano (Italy)	Actual

					Migrant
Ita3	Gladys	F	59	Conegliano (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita4	Rosalind	F	50	Pordenone (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita5	Emmanuel	M	>27	Conegliano (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita6	Janet	F	27	Conegliano (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita7	Afram	M	>55	Conegliano (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita8	Darlene	F	>44	Conegliano (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita9	Efia	F	55	Conegliano (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita10	Cyntia	F	26	Conegliano (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita11	Tawiah	F	36	Parma (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita12	James	M	40-45	Verona (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita13	Carrie	F	34	Tezze di Arzignano (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita14	Ewa	F	52	Tezze di Arzignano (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita15	Adelaide	F	63	Tezze di Arzignano (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita16	Delilah	F	60	Tezze di Arzignano (Italy)	Actual Migrant
Ita17	Doreen	F	25	Tezze di Arzignano (Italy)	Actual Migrant

Bibliography

Adepoju, A. (2004, September 1). Changing configurations of Migration in Africa. *Migration Policy Institute.* Retrieved from http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/changing-configurations-migration-africa

Ager, A., & Strang, A. (2004). *The experience of integration: a qualitative study of refugee integration in the local communities of Pollokshaws and Islington.* (Home Office Online Report 55/04). Retrieved from https://www.lemosandcrane.co.uk/bluesalmon_trial/resources/Home%20Office%20-%20The%20Experience%20of%20Integration.pdf

Al-Ali, N., Black, R., & Koser, K. (2001). Refugees and transnationalism: the experience of Bosnians and Eritreans in Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 27*(4), 615-634.

Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Ardayfio-Schandorf, E. (Ed.) (1995). *The changing family in Ghana.* Accra, Ghana: Ghana Universities Press.

Awumbila, M., & Ardayfio-Schandorf, E. (2008). Gendered poverty, migration and livelihood strategies of female porters in Accra, Ghana. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift - Norwegian Journal of Geography*, *62*(3), 171-179.

Babou C. A. (2008). Migration and Cultural Change: Money, "Caste," Gender, and Social Status among Senegalese Female Hair Braiders in the United States. *Africa Today*, *55*(2), 3-22.

Banerjee, B. (1983). Social Networks in the Migration process: Empirical Evidence on Chain Migration in India. *The Journal of Developing Areas, 17*(2), 185-196.

Bartram, D., Poros, M. V., & Monforte, P. (2014). *Key concepts in migration.* London, England: Sage.

Black, R., Crush, J. S., Peberdy, S., Ammassari, S., McLean Hilker, L., Mouillesseaux, S., Pooley, C. & Rajkotia, R. (2006). *Migration and Development in Africa: An Overview* (Vol. 1). Institute for Democracy in South Africa.

Bloch, E. (1986). *The principle of hope.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Blommaert, J., & Dong, J. (2010). *Ethnographic Fieldwork: A Beginner's Guide.* Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.

Boccagni, P. (2011). The framing of return from above and below in Ecuadorian migration: a project, a myth, or a political device?. *Global Networks, 11,* 461-480.

Böcker, A. (1994). Chain Migration over Legally Closed Borders: Settled Migrants as Bridgeheads and Gatekeepers. *The Netherlands' Journal of Social Sciences,* 30(2), 87-106.

Boorstin, D. (1961). *The image, or, What has happened to the American dream.* New York, NY: Atheneum.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. G. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook for Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241-258). Greenwood, NY: Greenwood Press.

Boyd, M. (1989). Family and personal networks in international migration: recent developments and new agendas. *International Migration Review*, 638-670.

Boyd, M., & Grieco, E. (2003). Women and migration: incorporating gender into international migration theory. *Migration Information Source*, *1*, 1-7.

Brubaker, R. (2001). The return of assimilation? Changing perspectives on immigration and its sequels in France, Germany, and the United States. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 24*(4), 531-548.

Buggenhagen, B. (2012). Fashioning Piety: Women's Dress, Money, and Faith among Senegalese Muslims in New York City. *City & Society*, *24*(1), 84-104.

Campani, G. (1993). Immigration and racism in southern Europe: The Italian case. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 16*(3), 507-535.

Caponio, T. (2008). (Im)migration Research in Italy: A European Comparative Perspective. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *49*(3), 445-464.

Carling, J., & Erdal, M. B. (2014). Return Migration and Transnationalism: How are the two connected? *International Migration, 52*(6), 2-12.

Cassarino, J-P. (2004). Theorising Return Migration: The Conceptual Approach to Return Migrants Revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies, UNESCO, 6*(2), 253-279.

Castles, S., de Haas, H. & Miller, M. J. (2014) *The Age of Migration* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

Cerase, F. P. (1974). Expectations and Reality: A Case Study of Return Migration From the United States to Southern Italy. *The International Migration Review, 8*(2): 245-262.

Champagne, F. A., & Curley, J. P. (2005). How social experiences influence the brain. *Current Opinion in Neurobiology, 15,* 704-709.

Chipkin, I., & Ngqulunga, B. (2008). Friends and family: Social Cohesion in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies, 34*(1), 61-76.

Clifford, N., Cope, M., Gillespie, T., French, S., & Valentine, G. (2016). Getting Started in Geographical Research: How this book can help. In N. Clifford, M. Cope, T. Gillespie, & S. French (Eds.), *Key Methods in Geography* (pp. 3-18)*.* London, England: Sage

Coe, C. (2012). Growing Up and Going Abroad: How Ghanaian Children Imagine Transnational Migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 38*(6), 913-931.

Coe, C. (2016). Orchestrating Care in Time: Ghanaian Migrant Women, Family, and Reciprocity. *American Anthropologist, 118*(1), 37-48.

Coleman, J. S. (1990) *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Collyer, M. (2005). When Do Social Networks Fail to Explain Migration? Accounting for the Movement of Algerian Asylum- Seekers to the UK. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *31*(4), 699-718.

Cope, M., & Kurtz, H. (2016). Organizing, Coding, and Analyzing Qualitative Data. In N. Clifford, M. Cope, T. Gillespie, & S. French (Eds.), *Key Methods in Geography* (pp. 647-664)*.* London, England: Sage

Corbin, J.M., & Strauss, A.L. (2013). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Cornelius, W. (1982). Interviewing Undocumented Immigrants: Methodological Reflections Based on Fieldwork in Mexico and the U.S. *International Migration Review, 16*(2), 378-411.

Crang, M. (2002). Qualitative methods: the new orthodoxy? *Progress in Human Geography, 26*(5), 647-655.

Crang, M. & Cook, I. (2007) *Doing Ethnographies*. London, England: Sage.

Cresswell, T. (2006). *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World.* London, England: Routledge.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Curran, S. R., & Saguy, A. C. (2001). Migration and Cultural Change: A Role for Gender and Social Networks? *Journal of International Women's Studies, 2*(3), 54-77.

Dahinden, J. (2010). The dynamics of migrants' transnational formations: Between mobility

and locality. In R. Baubök & T. Faist (Eds.), *Diaspora and Transnationalism. Concepts, Theories and Methods* (pp. 51-71). Amsterdam, Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press.

Dahinden, J. (2014). *The circulation of people. Understanding the dynamics of transnational formations among Albanian-speaking migrants in Switzerland by bringing in theories of mobility, social inequality and ethnicity* (UniNE Working Paper No. 6). Retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/d932/fed43f74ab5f41b9b74f412eed739fe12eb7.pdf

Dako-Gyeke, M. (2016). We never plan to return home: voices of pre-migrant Ghanaian youth. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *19*(2), 169-182.

Dannecker, P. (2015). Gender and Remittances in the Constitution of a Transnational Religious Space: The Bangladesh–Malaysia Connection. In. T. van Naerssen, L. Smith, T. Davids, & M. H. Marchand (Eds.), *Women, Gender, Remittances and Developmtn in the Global South* (pp. 119-138). Farnham, England: Ashgate.

Davids, T., & Ruben, R. (2008). Return migration and development: a complicated marriage. In P. Hebinck, S. Slootweg, L. Smith (Eds.), *Tales of Development. People, Power and Space* (pp. 93-109). Assen, The Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum.

de Bruijn, M., van Dijk, R., & Foeken, D. (2001). Mobile Africa: An Introduction. In: M. de Bruijn, R. van Dijk, & D. Foeken (2001) (eds.). *Mobile Africa. Changing patterns of movement in Africa and beyond.* Leiden, Boston & Köln: Brill.

de Haas, H. (2008). *Migration and development. A theoretical perspective.* (IMI Working Paper No. 9). Retrieved from https://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/publications/wp-09-08

de Haas, H. (2010). The Internal Dynamics of Migration Processes: A Theoretical Inquiry. *Journal of Ethic and Migration Studies, 36*(10), 1587-1617.

de Haas, H., & Fokkema, T. (2011). The effects of integration and transnational ties on international return migration intentions. *Demographic research, 25*(24), 755-782.

de Haas, H., Fokkema, T., & Fihri, M. F. (2015). Return Migration as Failure or Success? The Determinants of Return Migration Intentions Among Moroccan Migrants in Europe. *Journal of international Migration and Integration*, *16*(2), 415-429.

de Witte, M. (2001). *Long Live The Dead! Changing Funeral Celebrations in Asante, Ghana*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: Askant Academic Publishers.

Dietz, A. (2011). *Dimensions of Belonging and Migrants by Choice: Contemporary Movements between Italy and Northern Ireland.* Münster, Germany: Waxmann Verlag.

Dietz, T., Mazzucato, V., Kabki, M., & Smith, L. (2011). Ghanaians in Amsterdam. Their "Good Work Back Home" and the Importance of Reciprocity. *Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective, 6*(1), 132-143.

Djelic, M-L. (2004). Social networks and country-to-country transfer: dense and weak ties in the diffusion of knowledge. *Socio-Economic Review, 2*, 341-370.

Dreby, J. (2006). Honor and Virtue: Mexican Parenting in the Transnational Context. *Gender and Society, 20*(1), 32-59.

Dreby, J. (2007). Children and Power in Mexican Transnational Families. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 69,* 1050-1064.

Driessen, H., & Jansen, W. (2013). The hard work of small talk in ethnographic fieldwork. *Journal of Anthropological Research, 69*(2), 249-263.

Duncan, P. (2013). Gendered Migrations: Transnational Feminist Perspectives. In M.W. Karraker (Ed.), *The other people: Interdisciplinary perspectives on migration* (pp. 37-53)*.* New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Elwood, S., & Martin, D. (2000). "Placing" interviews: location and scales of power in

qualitative research. *Professional Geographer, 52,* 649-657.

Erdal, M. B., & Oeppen, C. (2013). Migration Balancing Acts: Understanding the Interactions Between Integration and Transnationalism. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 39*(6), 867-884.

Erel, U., & Lutz, H. (2012). Gender and transnationalism. *European Journal of Women's Studies, 19*(4), 409-412.

Etzold, B. (2017). Mobility, Space and Livelihood Trajectories. New Perspectives on Migration, Translocality and Place-making for Livelihood studies. In L. de Haan (Ed.), *Livelihoods and Development – New Perspectives* (pp. 44-68). Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.

Faist, T. (2000). *The Volume and Dynamics of International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Faist, T., & Özveren, E. (Eds.). (2004). *Transnational Social Spaces: Agents, Networks and Institutions.* Aldershot, England: Ashgate.

Ferro, A. (2006). Desired mobility or satisfied immobility? Migratory aspirations among knowledge workers. *Journal of Education and Work, 19*(2), 171-200.

Fetterman, D. M. (2010). *Ethnography: Step-by-step,* (3rd ed.). (Applied Social Research Methods Series, v.17). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Fielder, S. (2002). Reviewed Work: Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization by Arjun Appadurai. *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice, 46*(2), 164-166.

Flynn, M. (2007). Reconstructing 'Home/lands' in the Russian Federation: Migrant-Centred Perspectives of Displacement and Resettlement. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 33*(3), 461-481.

Friedmann, J. (2002). Placemaking as project? Habitus and migration in transnational cities. In J. Hillier, & E. Rooksby (Eds.), *Habitus: A Sense of Place* (pp. 299-316). Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing.

Gamio, M. (1930). *Mexican Immigration to the United States.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society.* Cambridge, MA: Polity Press

Gielis, R. (2011). The value of single-site ethnography in the global era: studying transnational experiences in the migrant house. *Area, 43*(3), 257-263.

Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal, 204*(6), 291-295.

Githens, M. (2013). *Contested Voices.* New York, NW: Pelgrave Macmillan.

Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., & Blanc, C. S. (1995). From immigrant to transmigrant: Theorizing transnational migration. *Anthropological quarterly*, 48-63.

Glick Schiller, N., & Çağlar, A. (Eds.). (2011). *Locating Migration. Rescaling Cities and Migrants.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Gmelch, G. (1995). *Double Passage. The lives of Caribbean Migrants Abroad and Back Home.* Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Graham, E., & Jordan, L. P. (2011). Migrant Parents and the Psychological Well-Being of Left-Behind Children in Southeast Asia. *Journal of Marriage andFamily, 73,* 763–787.

Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The strength of weak ties. *The American Journal of Sociology, 78,* 1360-1380.

Granovetter, M. S. (1983). The strength of weak ties: a network theory revisited. *Sociological Theory, 1,* 201-233.

Grillo, R., & Mazzucato, V. (2008). Africa<>Europe: A Double Engagement, *Journal of*

Ethnic and Migration Studies, *34*(2), 175-198.

Hagan, J. M. (1998). Social networks, gender, and immigrant incorporation: Resources and constraints. *American Sociological Review, 63*(1), 55-67.

Hage, G. (2005). A not so multi-sited ethnography of a not so imagined community. *Anthropological Theory*, *5*(4), 463-475.

Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative research methods*. London, England: Sage.

Holm Pedersen, M. (2013). *Iraqi Women in Denmark: Ritual performance and belonging in everyday life.* Manchester, England: Manchester University Press.

Inkpen, A. C., & Tsang, E. W. (2005). Social capital, networks, and knowledge transfer. *Academy of Management Review, 30*(1), 146-165.

IOM (2010). International Dialogue on Migration; Intersessional Workshop on Migration and Transnationalism: Opportunities and Challenges [Background Paper]. Retrieved from: https://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/microsites/IDM/workshops/migration_and_transnationalism_030910/background_paper_en.pdf

Johl, S. K., & Renganathan, S. (2010). Strategies for gaining Access in doing Fieldwork: Reflection of two Researchers. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, *8*(1), 42-50.

Kelly, M. (2013). *Onward Migration. The Transnational Trajectories of Iranians Leaving Sweden* (Doctoral dissertation, Uppsala Universitet, Sweden). Retrieved from http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:615215/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Kelly, P., & Lusis, T. (2006). Migration and the Transnational Habitus: Evidence from Canada and the Philippines. *Environment and Planning A, 38*(5), 831-847.

King, R. (2014). Darkness before Daybreak: African Migrants Living on the Margins in Southern Italy Today, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 40*(12), 2053-2054.

King, R. (2015). Migration comes of age. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *38*(13), 2366-2372.

King, R., & Christou, A. (2011). Of Counter-Diaspora and Reverse Transnationalism: Return Mobilities to and from the Ancestral Homeland, *Mobilities,* 6(4), 451-466.

King, R., Lulle, A., & European Commission. (2016). *Research on migration: Facing realities and maximising opportunities*: a policy review. Luxembourg: Publications Office.

Kleist, N. (2017a). Introduction: Studying Hope and Uncertainty in African Migration. In N. Kleist & D. Thorsen (Eds.), *Hope and Uncertainty in Contemporary African Migration* (pp. 1-20). New York, NY: Routledge.

Kleist, N (2017b, February 15). Hope and Uncertainty in Contemporary African Migration [Web log post]. Retrieved from https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2017/02/hope-and

Kleist, N., & Thorsen, D. (Eds.). (2017). *Hope and Uncertainty in Contemporary African Migration.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Koser, K. (2000). Return, readmission and reintegration: changing agendas, policy frameworks and operational programmes. In B. Ghosh (Ed.), *Return Migration: Journey of Hope or Despair?* (pp. 57-99). Geneva, Switzerland: International Organization for Migration.

Krumme, H. (2004). Fortwährende Remigration: Das transnationale Pendeln türkischer Arbeitsmigrantinnen und Arbeitsmigranten im Ruhestand. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, *33*(2), 138-153.

Kunz, R. (2015). 'Moneymaker and Mother from Afar': The Power of Gender Myths. In. T. van Naerssen, L. Smith, T. Davids, & M. H. Marchand (Eds.), *Women, Gender, Remittances and Developmtn in the Global South* (pp. 207-227). Farnham, England: Ashgate.

Lamb, S. (2001). Being a Widow and Other Life Stories: The Interplay Between Lives and Words. *Anthropology and Humanism 26*, 16-34.

Levitt, P., & Jaworsky, B. N. (2007). Transnational migration studies: Past developments and future trends. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *33*, 129-156.

Levitt, P. & Lamba-Nieves, D. (2011). Social remittances revisited. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 37* (1), 1-22.

Lima, A. (2010). Transnationalism: A New Mode of Immigrant Integration. Report of the Mauricio Gastón Institute, University of Massachusetts, Boston, pp. 1-16. Retrieved from http://www.bostonplans.org/getattachment/513ee414-e5ec-4c38-868c-d879d6df18ff

Longhurst, R. (2016). Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Groups. In N. Clifford, M. Cope, T. Gillespie, & S. French (Eds.), *Key Methods in Geography* (pp. 143-156). London, England: Sage

Lucht, H. (2011). *Darkness before daybreak: African migrants living on the margins in southern Italy today.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

MacDonald, J.S., & MacDonald, L.D. (1964). Chain Migration Ethnic Neighborhood Formation and Social Networks. *The Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly,* 42(1), 82-97.

MacGaffey, J., & Bazenguissa-Ganga, R. (2000). *Congo-Paris: Transnational Traders on the Margins of the Law*. Oxford, England: James Currey. Piore, M. J. (1979). *Birds of Passage: Migrant Labour and Industrial Societies.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

McHugh, K. E. (2000). Inside, outside, upside down, backward, forward, round and round: a case for ethnographic studies in migration. *Progress in Human Geography 24*(1), 71-89.

Maps of World. (2012). *Ghana Political Map* [Image of Map]. Retrieved from https://www.mapsofworld.com/ghana/ghana-political-map.html

Maps of World. (2013). *Italy region Map* [Image of Map]. Retrieved from https://www.mapsofworld.com/italy/regions.html

Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The Emergence of Multi-Sided Ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 24*(1), 95-117.

Massey, D.S., Arango, J., Hugo, G., Kouaouci, A., Pellegrino, A., & Taylor, J. E. (1993). Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal. *Population and Development Review, 19*(3), 431-466.

Mayda, A. M., & Facchini, G. (2009). *Individual Attitudes Towards Skilled Migration: An Empirical Analysis Across Countries.* (Development Studies Working Paper No. 281). Retrieved from http://www.dagliano.unimi.it/media/WP2009_281.pdf

Mazzucato, V. (2008). The Double Engagement: Transnationalism and Integration. Ghanaian Migrants´ Lives Between Ghana and The Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 34*(2), 199-216.

Mazzucato, V., Kabki, M., & Smith, L. (2006). Transnational Migration and the Economy of Funerals: Changing Practices in Ghana. *Development and Change, 37*(5), 1047-1072.

Mazzucato, V., & Schans, D. (2011). Transnational Families and the Well-Being of Children: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 73,* 704-712.

McCollum, D., Nowok, B., & Tindal, S. (2014). Public Attitudes towards Migration in Scotland: Exceptionality and possible policy implications. *Scottish Affairs*, *23*(1), 79-102.

Mitchell, K. (2004). Transnationalism in the margins, Hegemony and the shadow state. In: P. Jackon, P. Crang, & C. Dwyer (2004). *Transnational Spaces.* London and New York: Routledge. 122-146

Morokvasic, M. (1984). Birds of passage are also women. *The International Migration Review, 18*(4), 886-907.

Morrison, A. R., Schiff, M., & Sjöblom, M. (2008). *The international migration of women.* New York, NY: World Bank and Palgrave Macmillan

Nadler, R., Kovács, Z., Glorius, B., & Lang, T. (2016). Conclusions: Current and Future Perspectives on Return Migration and Regional Development in Europe. In R. Nadler, Z. Kovács, B. Glorius & T. Lang. *Return Migration and Regional Development in Europe. Mobility Against the Stream* (pp. 359-376). London, England: Palgrave.

Nyamnjoh, F. B., & Page, B. (2002). Whiteman Kontri and the enduring allure of modernity among Cameroonian youth. *African Affairs, 101*, 607-634.

Nyamu-Musembi, C. (2002). *Towards an actor-oriented perspective on human rights* (IDS Working Paper No. 169). Retrieved from https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/123456789/3931/Wp169.pdf

Oishi, N. (2002). *Gender and Migration: An Integrative Approach* (CCIS Working Paper No. 49). Retrieved from http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0s04g29f#

Palloni, A., Massey, D. S., Ceballos, M., Espinosa, K., & Spittel, M. (2001). Social Capital and International Migration: A Test Using Information on Family Networks. *American Journal of Sociology, 106*(5), p. 1262-1298.

Palmberg, M. (Ed.). (2001). Encounter Images in the Meetings between Africa and Europé. Uppsala, Sweden: Nordic Africa Institute.

Pathirage, J., & Collyer, M. (2011). Capitalizing social networks: Sri Lankan migration to Italy. *Ethnography*, *12*(3), 315–333.

Pedraza, S. (1991). Women and migration: The social consequences of gender. *Annual review of sociology*, 303-325.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1996). *Attitudes and persuasion: classic and contemporary approaches* ([New ed.].). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Portes, A. (Ed.). (1995). *The Economic Sociology of Immigration. Essays on Networks Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship.* New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Portes, A. (1998). Social capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *24*, 1-24.

Pratt, G. (2012). *Families Apart: Migrant Mothers and the Conflicts of Labor and Love.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Prinz, V. (2006). *Imagine Migration. The Migration Process and its Destination Europe in the Eyes of Tanzanian Students* (Diploma thesis). Retrieved from http://www.oefse.at/fileadmin/content/Downloads/Publikationen/Foren/Forum28.pdf

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks.

Ratia, E., & Notermans, C. (2012). "I was crying, I did not come back with anything": Women's Experiences of Deportation from Europe to Nigeria. *African Diaspora*, *5*(2), 143-164.

Riccio, B. (2001). From 'ethnic group' to 'transnational community'? Senegalese migrants' ambivalent experiences and multiple trajectories. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 27*(4), 583-599.

Riccio, B. (2005a). Exploring Senegalese Translocal Spaces. Reflections on a Multi-sited Research. *Proceedings of the Workshop about Problems and Possibilities in Multi-sited Ethnography (27-28 June, 2005)*, Sussex: University of Sussex. Retrieved from http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/56/1/brunoriccio.pdf

Riccio, B. (2005b). Talkin' about Migration - Some Ethnographic Notes on the Ambivalent

Representation of Migrants in Contemporary Senegal. *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für Kritische Afrikastudien, 5*(8), 99-118.

Riccio, B. (2008). West African Transnationalisms Compared: Ghanaians and Senegalese in Italy. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 34*(2), 217-234.

Richards, H.M., & Schwartz, L.J. (2002). Ethics of Qualitative Research: Are there special Issues for Health Services Research? *Family Practice, 19*(2), 135-139.

Reeves, S., Kuper, A., & Hodges, B. D. (2008). Qualitative research methodologies: Ethnography. *BMJ, 337*, 512-514.

Ryan, L., Sales, R., Tilki, M., & Siara, B. (2008). Social Networks, Social Support and Social Capital: The Experiences of Recent Polish Migrants in London. *Sociology, 42*(4), 672-690.

Salazar, N.B. (2010). Towards an anthropology of cultural mobilities. *Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture, 1*, 53-68.

Salazar Parreñas, R. (2005). *Children of Global Migration: Transnational Families and Gendered Woes*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Salih, R. (2003). *Gender in Transnationalism: Home, longing and belonging among moroccan migrant women* (Transnationalism, 11). London, England: Routledge

Sampaio, D. (2017). 'Is this really where home is?' Experiences of home in a revisited homeland among ageing Azorean returnees. In Z. Vathi., & R. King (Eds.), *Return Migration and Psychosocial Wellbeing. Discourses, Policy-Making and Outcomes for Migrants and Their Families*. (pp. 240-256). Abingdon, England: Routledge.

Sanjari, M., Bahramnezhad, F., Fomani, F. K., Shoghi, M., & Cheraghi, M. A. (2014). Ethical challenges of researchers in qualitative studies: the necessity to develop a specific guideline. *Journal of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine, 7*(14).

Schaefer, C., Coyne, J. C., & Lazarus, R. S. (1981). The Health-Related Functions of Social Support. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 4*(4), 381-406.

Schapendonk, J. (2011). *Turbulent Trajectories. Sub-Saharan African Migrants Heading North*. (Doctoral dissertation, Radboud University, Netherlands). Retrieved from http://repository.ubn.ru.nl/bitstream/handle/2066/91326/91326.pdf

Schapendonk, J. (2014). Fortress Europe as a Mobile Space? Intra-EU Mobility of African Migrants (Research proposal).

Schapendonk, J. (2015). What if Networks Move? Dynamic Social Networ*king* in the Context of African Migration to Europe. *Population, Space and Place, 21*, 809-819.

Schapendonk, J., & Smith, L. (2008). Remittances versus migrants: disjointed flows in a globalising world. In P. Hebinck, S. Slootweg, L. Smith (Eds.), *Tales of Development. People, Power and Space* (pp. 123-134). Assen, The Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum.

Schapendonk, J., & Steel, G. (2014). Following migrant trajectories: The im/mobility of Sub-Saharan Africans en route to the European Union. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 104*(2), 262-270.

Schapendonk, J., & van Moppes, D. (2007). *Migration and information: Images of Europe, Migration Encouraging Factors and En Route Information Sharing*. (Migration and Development Series Working Paper No. 16). Retrieved from http://www.academia.edu/1137938/Migration_and_Information_Images_of_Europe_ Migration_Encouraging_Factors_and_En_Route_Information_Sharing

Serrano, J. (2008). *The Imagined Return: Hope and Imagination among International Migrants from Rural Mexico* (CCIS Working Paper No. 169). Retrieved from https://ccis.ucsd.edu/_files/wp169.pdf

Setrana, M. B., & Tonah, S. (2016). Do Transnational Links Matter after Return? Labour

Market Participation among Ghanaian Return Migrants. *The Journal of Development Studies, 52*(4), 549-560.

Sheller, M., & Urry, J. (2006). The new mobilities paradigm. *Environment and Planning A, 38*, 207-226.

Sinatti, G. (2011). 'Mobile Transmigrants' or 'Unsettled Returnees'? Myth of Return and Permanent Resettlement among Senegalese Migrants. *Population, Space and Place, 17,* 153-166.

Sinatti, G., & Horst, C. (2015). Migrants as agents of development: Diaspora engagement discourse and practice in Europe. *Ethnicities, 15*(1), 134-152.

Smart, A., & Smart, J. (2008). Transnational Social Networks and Negotiated Identities in Interactions Between Hong Kong and China. In M. P. Smith & L. E. Guarnizo (Eds.), *Transnationalism From Below.* (pp. 103-129). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Smith, L. (2007). *Tied to migrants: transnational influences on the economy of Accra, Ghana.* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands). Retrieved from https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/4158506/52926_smith_totaal.pdf

Smith, R. C. (2006). *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Snel, E., Engbersen, G. and Leerkes, A. (2006). Transnational involvement and social integration. *Global Networks, 6*(3), 285-308.

Sperschneider, W., & Bagger, K. (2003). Ethnographic Fieldwork under Industrial Constraints: Toward design-in-context. *International Journal of Human Computer Interaction*, *15*(1), 41-50.

Staring, R. (2001). *Reizen onder regie. Het migratieproces van illegale Turken in Nederland.* Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Het Spinhuis.

Suksomboon, P. (2008). Remittances and 'Social Remittances': Their Impact on Livelihoods of Thai Women in the Netherlands and Non-migrants in Thailand. *Gender, Technology and Development,* 12(3), 461-482.

Svašek, M. (2010). On the Move: Emotions and Human Mobility. *Journal of Ethics and Migration Studies, 36*(6), 865-880.

Tannenbaum, M. (2007). 'Back and forth: immigrants' stories of migration and return'. *International Migration, 45*, 147-175.

Valentine, G. (2005). 'Tell me about… using interviews as a research methodology', In R. Flowerdew and D. Martin (Eds.), *Methods in Human Geography: A Guide for Students Doing a Research Project* (2nd ed.) (pp.110-127). Harlow, England: Addison Wesley Longman.

Vammen, I. M. (2017). Sticking to God: Brokers of Hope in Senegalese Migration to Argentina. In N. Kleist & D. Thorsen (Eds.), *Hope and Uncertainty in Contemporary African Migration* (pp. 40-57). New York, NY: Routledge.

van der Velde, B. M. R., & van Naerssen, A. L. (2011). People, Borders and Trajectories: a Model of Immobility and future cross-border labour migration in and to the European Union. *Area*, *43*(2), 218-224.

van Maanen, J., & Kolb, D. (1982). *The Professional Apprentice: Observations on Fieldwork Roles in Two Organizational Settings.* (Sloan School of Management Working Paper). Retrieved from http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA117035

van Meeteren, M., Engbersen, G., Snel, E., & Faber, M. (2014). Understanding Different Post-Return Experiences. *Comparative Migration Studies, 2*(3), 335-360.

van Meeteren, M., Engbersen, G., & van San, M. (2009). Striving for a Better Position: Aspirations and the Role of Cultural, Economic, and Social Capital for Irregular Migrants in Belgium. *International Migration Review, 43*(4), 881-907.

van Naerssen, T., Smith, L., Davids, T., & Marchand, M. H. (Eds.). (2015). *Women, Gender, Remittances and Development in the global South* (Gender in a global/local world). Farnham, England: Ashgate.

Vertovec, S. (1999). Conceiving and researching transnationalism. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 22*(2), 447- 462.

Villares-Varela, M. (2013, April 19). The feminisation of migration: are more women migrating? *Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford.* Retrieved from http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/opinion/view/209

Walcott, H.F. (2005). *The Art of Fieldwork.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Wallace, C. (2002). Opening and closing borders: migration and mobility in East-Central Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 28*(4), 603-625.

Wang, W. W., & Fan, C. C. (2006). Success or failure: selectivity and reasons of return migration in Sichuan and Anhui, China. *Environment and Planning A, 38*(5), 939-958.

Warusznski, B.T. (2002). Pace of Technological Change: Battling Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research. In W.C. Van den Hoonaard (Ed.), *Walking the Tightrope: Ethical Issues for Qualitative Researchers* (pp. 152-159). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Weiss, B. (2002). Thug Realism: Inhabiting Fantasy in Urban Tanzania. *Cultural Anthropology, 17*(1), 93-124.

Wierzbicki, S. (2004). *Beyond the Immigrant Enclave: Network Change and Assimilation.* New York, NY: Lfb Scholarly Publishing.

Willems, R. (2014). Local realities and global possibilities: deconstructing the imaginations of aspiring migrants in Senegal, *Identities, 21*(3), 320-335.

Williams, L. (2006). Social Networks of Refugees in the United Kingdom: Tradition, Tactics and New Community Spaces. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 32*(5), 865-879.

Yeoh, B. S. A., & Lam, T. (2007). *The costs of (im)mobility: Children left behind and children who migrate with a parent.* Invited paper for ESCAP Regional Seminar on Strengthening the Capacity of National Machineries for Gender Equality to Shape Migration Policies and Protect Migrant Women, UNESCAP, 22 – 24 November 2006, Bangkok, Thailand.

Summary

In our globalizing world images of cross-border relationships are getting more and more common and important. Transnational spaces are being shaped and they in turn can create contrasting attitudes towards migration. Getting to know these attitudes is vitally important for our field of research to understand the motivations, expectations, worries and sorrows that people have about their personal migration process, moving from Ghana to Europe or returning back home. This is why this study focuses on giving a voice to individuals, explaining and analysing their experiences and attitudes towards migration from their own point of view, in Africa as well as in Europe (Italy). Moreover, this study handles a gender perspective, the actors that are sharing their thoughts in the transnational arena, are all females, partly because there still exists a significant lack of reliable and valid data on international female migration.

In the **introduction, chapter 1**, I argue that migration needs to be considered more than just the movement from one location to another. This is why the concept of transnational migration gets connected with the emerging field of trajectory research that challenges the notion of a pure transnational research, by pointing towards the importance of taking migrants' mobility processes and experiences, and therefore their in-between journeys into account. In order to capture the entire scope of the transnational arena, it is important to consider different kind of mobility processes as well as the people that occupy different geographical locations and span transnational networks across borders. Therefore, this study focuses on female non-migrants and return migrants in Ghana as well as actual migrants that I met in Italy. The research was designed to discover the contrasting attitudes that female Ghanaians have towards migration from Ghana towards Europe and or back, which will help to understand the social and geographical complexity of the phenomenon of transnational migration and the contrasting realities that migrants find themselves in. Due to the increased development of new communication technologies it becomes easier for migrants to keep up their relationships abroad. Distance does not seem to be an obstacle anymore as people can travel easily and convenient. However, living a transnational life also brings challenges along and can be perceived as very stressful. All this leads to the following main question: *What contrasting attitudes towards migration exist among female Ghanaians in a transnational space between Africa and Europe and how can they be explained?*

Chapter 2, deals with the relevant concepts and theories that help to capture the attitudes of female Ghanaians living in a transnational arena. The research is mostly inspired by the concept of transnationalism and (return)mobility. Moreover, I introduce the 'attitude-shaping-cycle', a model that I invented to explain how that attitudes towards migration are shaped in a transnational space by three highly interrelated dimensions: Imaginations, social networks and experiences. Each of those dimensions gets outlined in connection with the most matching and relevant theories of our field of research.

In **chapter 3**, the methodological choices of this research get outlined. I have chosen to conduct a multi-sited ethnography that involved research in Ghana as well as Italy. The main research method that was used in both countries, were semi-structured in-depth interviews, in combination with participant observation and informal conversations. I discuss all three methods at length and from there I pass to the implementations where I elaborate the research setting as well as research population. At the end I reflect on the methodological choices that have been made. After the methodological chapter I present a guide for the reader that shows how this thesis is operationalized. The data that I collected gets presented in form of various transnational dialogues that run through the entire thesis. Presenting the results this way, helped to detect the contrasting viewpoints that exist between and within the different groups.

Chapter 4 is the first empirical chapter and puts its focus on the various imaginations that exist towards migration and 'destination Europe' both in Ghana and Europe. In the first section I discuss the issue of imagination versus reality. Many women experience disappointment after arriving in Europe for the first time, as it seems that their imaginations do not match with reality as many arrived with very glamorized expectations. The stories presented reveal the dynamic character that can be ascribed to imaginations and show how migration experiences, social connections, mass media as well as regional education systems can affect imaginations. Often it is also the general notion towards migration and Europe that exists in Ghana and that forms the women´s imaginations and functions as a

driving factor for migration. Besides presenting the formation of imaginations towards migration to 'the West' I also put some more focus on the issue of disappointment, also in connection with hope and the issue of framing Europe as a place in heaven. Moreover, we see that it is not only Europe´s external appearance that creates a change from anticipation into disappointment, but also the working and living conditions that the women are facing. The chapter manages to challenge the notion of a frictionless space, since many women provided stories about the difficulties they encountered. Capturing those imaginations helps to reveal more about the norms and values as well as expectations that get created in the transnational space affecting migrants as well as non-migrants and the general notion of migration that exists in Ghanaian society.

Chapter 5 puts its entire focus on the dynamic concept of social networks, their formation and transformation as well as their influential power. Migrant´s ties have been divided in strong and weak ties and their particular impacts. With strong ties I refer to a migrant´s family and friends, weak ties are a person´s acquaintances that may have assisted them on the journey towards Europe or when settling down in the destination. Both ties can have positive as well as negative impact on the migrant thoughts and lives, which in turn affect their attitudes towards migration as well. I point towards a strategy that many migrants make use of, namely the one of 'mental photoshopping', whereby biased information gets transmitted in both directions, which can have some great impact on the women´s life in both locations. Receiving emotional support on the one hand and social pressure on the other, as well as the feeling of living a double-sided live which can create the feeling of having to be present at two places at the same time, can challenge the migrants enormously. Moreover, I depict, that ties can vary over time in terms of strength and by studying the changes and the efforts that people are investigating in their networks, it will be possible to discover more about the double role of networks and the emotional and financial burdens and challenges connected to that. Diving into the issue of double engagement will show how this balancing act can lead to a change of feelings and thoughts, and how the existence of and the involvement in transnational social networks influences the women in terms of worriedness, sadness, happiness, hope or pride.

Chapter 6 forms the last empirical chapter where the women´s diverse migration experiences are discussed. The first section points out to the issue of family separation and explores how women from different geographical contexts perceive it. This section also points out to the migration experiences of non-migrant women. In the second section, I discuss migrants' achievements and challenges in connection to local anchorage and how their experiences in Europe have shaped them. The last section concentrates on the issue of returning home and reintegrating in Ghanaian society. Thereby, I discuss four different types of return migrants and how they as well as society perceive migration.

The conclusion and recommendations for future research and policy-making are presented in **Chapter 7.** In the first part I summarize the main results of this study. Moreover, I accentuate that the three different dimensions of the 'attitude-shaping-cycle' are indeed highly interrelated, which helped to explain the contrasting attitudes that exist towards migration in the transnational space between Africa and Europe. I stress that this approach made it possible to show that being sensitive to the contradictions, power relations and character changes, that take place over time and space, matters when wanting to capture the entire construction of the transnational arena. Moreover, I determine that conducting this study from multiple perspectives helped to challenge the 'culture of migration' and therefore the notion that exists about migration in Ghanaian society. In the following section I reflect on the proceeding of this research and try to raise a new empirical question that could serve as a starting point for future research, but also builds on the approach of the 'attitude-shaping-cycle'. In the next section I present some recommendations for future policy-making, also reflecting on the recent EU-AU summit that was held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. I claim that European policies are always very Eurocentric and often forget to take the Ghanaian (or African) perspective into account as well. Moreover, I state that the normativity to be on the move still exist in Ghana and that capturing the contrasting attitudes that live in a transnational arena can help to broaden the public notion that exists about migration in Ghana and beyond. Finally, I conclude that in order to understand transnational migration to the fullest, it is important to look beyond fixed locations and focus on the mobility and especially the exchanges that take place in-between and are responsible for the shaping of migrants' attitudes.