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Department of Social Work

International Master of Science in Social Work

GENDER, ETHNICITY, AND PLACE

Contextualizing Gender and Social Background to the Private and Public livelihoods of African women in the Diaspora (Case study - Gothenburg, Sweden).

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Abstract

Human beings in all societies are attributed to a gender that supposedly has/has not certain properties and with high identity-forming significance for the individual. Critical debates show that the magnitude and effect of gender symbolic construction, articulation as well as its dissemination differs for different groups of women depending on society and history. It is not uncommon that conflicts among women of some social backgrounds point to the careful adherence to culturally defined norms as the best guarantee for women's fulfillment rather than doing different. This study adopts a feminist social work perspective to explore and explain how the gender division of roles affect the status and position of a group of Sub Saharan African women (living in Gothenburg), both within their families as well as their general participation in the Swedish society. The study thus seeks to examine the gendered division of roles in African households with a particular focus on women's roles; the factors that engender women's roles; the impact of gender roles on the status and position of women within their families; as well as on women's participation in the Swedish society. The findings derived from interviews (with African women and professional Social workers); critical reviews of literature; as well as expert observations; reveal evidence of doing gender among these African women. Women dominate in roles such as care, nurturance, monitoring households and, supporting their spouses. All such roles culminate from socialization, institutional factors, as well as contingent on the context. The impact of such gender roles on women's status and positions varied depending on marital status and parental responsibility. Thus within families, women command significant autonomy and independence. Gender roles only had a limited effect to women's participation in the Swedish society compared to contextual effects that is, the political was more significant than the personal. The study thus concludes that the women's descriptions of their roles do not manifest pertinent progress towards gender equality and/or equity, but rather good gender relations; whereas their perceived autonomy and independence exhibit spousal autonomy under overarching male superiorities. General conclusions pertaining to women's participation in the Swedish society drawn from the evidence of women's reasonable educational attainments, yet without matching levels of career mobility - coupled with state measures developed and planned from a sorry based perspective, the study argues for the adoption of a development strategy that can enhance women's position; or that can promote their ability to participate fully with men as agents of development and change.

Key Words: Gender, Roles, Public/Private, African women, Sweden.

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Dedication

I dedicate this Master Piece to my husband Elisha Lugoloobi who has not only given me unwavering encouragement for the endeavor to pursue my Master's Degree in time, but has also been both a father and mother to our daughter during my entire absence from the family. Without such a generous and responsible parental character in you; I would not have made it to this stage. Finally to Shauna-Lisa Lugoloobi, hugs from mummy for enduring two consecutive years without a motherly embrace.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Every human being in our society is attributed to a gender which is supposed to have or not to have certain properties; and which has a high identity-forming significance for the individual. Darly and Rake (2003) have argued that gender as a social practice entails gender relations that in turn are composed of three elements that is: resources; social roles and power relations. That notwithstanding, research has shown that gender interpretation is dependent on society and history (Gruber and Stefanov, 2002). This means that the magnitude and effect of gender symbolic construction, articulation as well as its dissemination may differ for different groups of women - depending on the rate of traditionalism prevailing in a specific society/country (context) and/or time frame - in short, depending on time and space. Accordingly, the question is what happens to such gender dissemination and meanings when one moves to a different context that is not her/his own? Do such gender constructions and meanings disappear, adjust, or instead become stronger? Apparently, in the area of immigration, some gendered research has been done (for instance, Sawyer 1996, Gavanas 2010).

Academic research has explored the factors that influence and maintain the gendered divisions of labor in immigrant populations, and has definitely brought to the fore issues like race and class, showing how these intersect with gender to form a trap of disadvantage for immigrant women. However, much of the research has treated immigrants as one group something that tends to over simplify or exaggerate the phenomenon being studied. For instance, some immigrant groups (of women) are able to cope and adapt very quickly than others (depending on for example region/country of origin, level of education and skill level etcetera), which makes their experiences different. My study will contribute to and improve on these studies by narrowing down to a particular group of African women living in Gothenburg, Sweden. Further still, the few studies that have focused on Africans - (Sawyer, 2002), have investigated the gendered division of labor at the larger societal level - mainly outside the household. Besides, none of the studies has specifically focused on African women as group, not even to mention the impact of the gendered division of roles on the status of these women. Thus further examination is needed to show how the gendered division of labor impacts on the status and position of immigrant women within their families and participation in the larger societies of their destinations. In the current study, I seek to investigate and explain how the gender divisions of roles affect the status and position of a group of African women (living in Gothenburg) within their families; as well as their general participation in the Swedish society.

1.2. Problem Statement

In Nordic Countries, the house wife has essentially disappeared and economically speaking, the life course of Scandinavian women has definitely become masculinized (Esping-

Andersen, 2009). This revolution in women's roles has been facilitated by a number of factors ranging from women's' educational attainment, increased participation in the labor market and the presence of a good institutional framework - in the name a family friendly welfare state policy that plays a major role in gender equalization in home production. In Scandinavia the employment transformation began around 1960 and has been faster and comprehensive (Esping-Andersen, 2009). Hoem (1995) asserted that in Sweden the labor force participation rate of mothers with small children stood at 38 percent in the early 1960s, rose to 54 percent during the ensuing decade, and skyrocketed to 82 percent in the 1980s - a level that has been maintained ever since (Cited in Esping-Andersen 2009, p.22). As a result women have cut down on house work and men's contribution has increased (Esping-Andersen, 2009), although other studies view the pattern of change in terms of fathers' increase in time with their children than in housework (Stanfors and Dribe 2009,p.34). Besides, the increase in women's and men's acquisition of academic degrees and freedom of choice to pursue powered careers has led to increase in the existence of powered couples[1] in Sweden. It has also been articulated that changes in traditional divisions of labor are likely to come from women with higher education, who are professionals and have careers ; because the higher position and earnings a woman has, the greater is her bargaining power within the couple (Stanfors and Dribe 2009, p. 35). Today, women in Sweden embrace a lifelong commitment to employment as a personal decision rather than from the traditional norms of supplementing the husband's income. Besides, it is stated that as partners' market productivities become more similar, the basic rationale for gender specialization should also disappear. This has not only made Sweden a pioneer but also a fore runner in the gender equality field (Government Offices of Sweden, 2007).[2]

Since Sweden has demonstrated such great maturity in terms of gender equalization in both the family and public spheres, it is requite to examine the extent to which this equalization has trickled down to/or is existent in other groups within the Swedish society. Some research contests Sweden's gender equality discourse pointing out that it has become implicated in a new form of inequality, namely: '*the hierarchical categorization of the population of Sweden into 'Swedes' and 'immigrants with representations of gender unequal 'immigrants' taking prominence* (Towns 2002, p. 157).

Thus undertaking a study like mine will not only produce new knowledge regarding the gender distribution of roles and/or their impact on the status of African women, but will also extend existing literature by finding out if African women's roles match with those of the Swedish[3] women. In other words, is there a seemingly steady progress in African women's lives towards this wave; or the opposite that changes and enhancements in women's roles/status and positions have only been confined to Swedish women, or stratified to upper class and/or highly educated Swedish women. It is thus imperative to find out what happens in the private and the public lives of African women living in Sweden.

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[1] A powered couple is feature of modern life that is defined as two individuals, both having high powered careers or being influential (Costa et al 2000 cited in Stanfors and Dribe 2010,p.848)

[2] See the introductory chapter to the Action plan for combating men's violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honor and violence in same sex relationships -2007, Sweden.

[3] From here ,hence forth this tag will be used to refer to someone who has not migrated to Sweden.

Africans are among the many migrant groups that form part of the large multicultural society of Sweden. And the last decade demonstrated a steady and progressing increase in the number of African women moving to Sweden for different reasons ranging from: educational, familial, economical and political reasons; although there is no intention for analyzing such reasons in this study.

Table 1.1 shows the migration trends of African women, from different African countries to Sweden since the last ten years (2000-2011).

Table 1.1	Years and numbers of African women migrants.											
Country[4]	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Ghana	38	24	28	41	52	50	55	43	68	74	72	94	639
Cameroon	6	10	12	16	47	45	48	70	100	78	58	39	529
Kenya	45	39	38	44	51	64	68	72	77	88	102	127	815
Congo	16	15	19	19	18	19	35	31	34	37	26	35	304
Nigeria	15	21	22	38	41	78	106	85	123	143	164	159	995
Somalia	354	395	501	683	564	678	1 366	1 974	2 162	3 579	3 232	1 446	16 934
Uganda	28	26	46	31	38	35	56	78	79	71	95	97	680

Source: Statistics Sweden (www.ssd.scb.se). [Accessed 2012-04-13]

Despite the fact that Africa is not a homogeneous group, it is very much likely that many Africans share certain cultural beliefs and norms. Besides, research evidence shows that there are some uniformities throughout the agricultural societies of sub-Saharan Africa in the traditional division of labor by sex and the husband-wife relationship (Le Vine, 1996). In line with the gender distribution of roles, earlier research (Stock 1995, p. 244) demonstrated that *'tradition remains a very powerful force limiting the choices open to African women'*. While regarding change in women's roles, it is common that African women are always divided about the extent to which tradition should give way to greater choice. Accordingly, it is usual that many influential women argue that the best guarantee for women's fulfillment lie in careful adherence to culturally defined norms (Stock 1995, p. 244). It is such ambiguities that make this study worthwhile to examine the extent to which African women subscribe to the revolution in women's roles that is apparent in Sweden.

The current study therefore adopts a feminist social work perspective to investigate how African women define their roles (ascribed and non-ascribed) and how such roles impact on them. It will explore the inequalities that exist between men and women, the patriarchal assumptions that inhibit women's opportunities and life chances. My starting point is an acknowledgment of power and status differences between women and men as well as powerlessness resulting from both sexualized and racialised structures of society. Moreover my study will try to create a link between the 'personal' and 'political' issues in a way that enhances awareness and collective solutions to African women's issues basing on the recognition of their contribution to both their families and society.

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[4] The statistics show Countries that the respondents come from just for illustrative purposes.

1.3 Aim of the study

The study seeks to investigate the gender distribution of roles within the African (Sub-Saharan) families living in Gothenburg -with a particular focus to women's roles, and how such distribution affects and impacts on the status of women within their families, as well as on their participation in the public sphere in Sweden.

1.4 Research questions

The main research question is:

How does the gender division of roles affect the status and position of a group of Sub-Saharan African women living in Gothenburg, within and outside their families?

This question has been divided into four questions:

(a) What gender roles do African women who live in Gothenburg, assume in their families?

(b) Which factors account for the gender roles that African women (living in Gothenburg) assume within their families?

(c) What is the impact of gender roles on the status and position of women within their families?

(d) What impact do such gender roles have on women's participation in the public sphere in Sweden?

1.5 Disposition

The thesis has been structured into two major parts that have been worked out and developed into eight solid chapters. The next chapter (two) defines major concepts as well as situating the study in both academic discourse and real world context. In line with Moore's (1988) acknowledgement that writing is a collaborative activity; chapters (three and four) succumb to this affirmation by introducing the study into the scientific community. Thus, chapter three will present and provide a thorough discussion of existing literature in the field of gender and migration. Theories in line with the research topic will also be introduced (in chapter four) to enable our understanding of the how and whys. Precisely, that forms part one of the thesis. Part two will start with chapter five which will give an overview of the methods that were used and applied to obtain the data. It basically gives an account of the entire research procedure and process. This will automatically lead us to chapter six that presents the results from the interviews in their original form. Chapter seven will provide analysis to the findings in line with episteme and theoretical perspectives.

Finally, the report will end with a brief review of the findings and thus show gaps for further research (chapter eight). The study strictly adopts a woman centered perspective with respect to feminist social work, thus readers who are familiar with gender based perspectives, may regard my intention to leave men out of the study as a significant omission. However, I feel that general issues pertaining to gender have been partially covered in both the introductory and background chapters of this report. Besides, some gendered research has been reproduced in the literature review chapter. This study is specific in terms of both ethnic background as

well as sexual orientation. Thus it mainly studies a group of Sub Saharan African women currently living in Gothenburg at the time of the study. Perhaps other authors may take the formidable task of providing comprehensive accounts by incorporating men in this same field of research.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND
2.1 Understanding gender as a concept

Becker-Schmidt (1993) defines the concept of Gender as the cultural interpretation of the often suppressed physical fact of belonging to one and only one gender (Becker-Schmidt 1993, cited in Gruber and Stefanov 2002, p.1). This means that definitions of gender come into place as a result of broader interactions between individual socialization processes within families and wider social-cultural order. Besides, Buckingham-Hatfield (2000) has argued that the gender identity that individuals acquire over time implies two different kinds of relationships: *"that between the two genders and that between gender and society"* (Buckingham-Hatfield 2000, p. 67). Thus the gender category is of structural significance for determining the social organization of sexuality; as well as the division of labor and distribution of power within society. As such Gruber and Stefanov (2002) deduce that doing gender constitutes a significant factor of human life and existence. The implication of doing gender as a concept is that, women and men tend to always specialize in the conventional/traditional gender roles. That is to say, that they concentrate on pursuing tasks that are usually ascribed to them, by the social institutional framework- by virtue of masculinity and femininity. For example - women taking care of the home centered work - like preparing meals for the family members as well as care, whereas the men fend for the entire family. What is intriguing however is the way the gender language polarizes the gender specific roles in differing ways and moreover ways that undermine the status of one gender, while uplifting the status of the other. As a matter of discussion Metz-Gckel (1993) and Becker-Schmidt and Knapp (1995) have argued that the structural significance of gender is tied to the dual role of women in society: '*on the one hand in the private reproductive sphere controlled by patriarchal power structures and on the other hand in the market - induced societal sphere under the control of the profit-oriented organization of the productive sphere*' (cited in Gruber and Stefanov 2002, p. 3). And due to the hierarchical gender relationship, male dominance controls both spheres (Gruber and Stefanov, 2002; Le Vine, 1966).

2.2 Defining gender roles

Gender roles refer to the extent to which norms and behaviors are social and patterned for women and men (Darly and Rake, 2003). Parental and family roles are cases of how social roles prescribe particular behaviors for women and men. Since the description of a role may exhibit characteristics of actual behavior or rather expected behavior - implying a part to be played, and/or a script for social conduct; gender roles always provide a set of guidelines about how to behave, as well as conferring and affirming aspects of identity for individual women and men. Thus, I consider gender roles to be the kind of tasks that are normally divided along gender (masculine/feminine) benchmarks for instance: taking care of children; menial household tasks - like preparing meals, running the home, doing laundry, grocery shopping; and breadwinning for the family; among others. All these aspects are crucial for my research because in order to understand how social and behavioral norms (gender roles) impinge on the social status and wellbeing of women (in both the private and public sphere); it is pertinent to consider the amount of resources (in terms of goods and capacities) at the African women's disposal as well as the ability for these women to act (power relations).

Such aspects explicate the agency aspects (like, women's' earning power, economic role outside the family, literacy and education, property rights) that Sen (2001), sees as very positive contributors to the voice of women through independence and empowerment. Sen (2001) illuminates that, working outside the home and earning an independent income tends to have a clear impact on enhancing the social standing of women in the household and the society; as their contribution to the prosperity of the family becomes more visible and thus, gain more voice - as they no longer have to depend on others. Moreover outside exposure through employment, offers useful educational effects (Sen, 2001), which education may in turn also create further opportunities; thus influencing women's lifestyle, status and wellbeing. Sen (2001), argues that women's' powerful agency removes the inequities that depress the wellbeing of women- thus saving their own lives, their family members' as well as the general societal environment.

2.3 The Private versus the Public sphere
"The world is divided into two services: one the public and the other the private/.../ Is the work of a mother, of a wife, of a daughter worth nothing to the nation in solid cash/.../astonishing…"

*(*Virginia Woolf, Three Guineas, 1992 Cited in Buckingham-Hatfield 2000, p. 67*)*

Citing that quote Buckingham-Hatfield (2000), distinguishes between the public and private spheres showing that women are more dedicated to the latter as mothers, carers and domestic workers while men are more concentrated in the former (See also Donato et al 2006). According to Buckingham-Hatfield (2000) the private sphere is characterized of goods and services provided without pay or exchanged through a system of reciprocity whereas the public entails economic and political exchange. She also discusses the intermediate space between the public and the private (incorporating the community and the neighborhoods) seeing it a physical extension of the family household; and affirms that women mostly occupy this. It is also argued that even in the late twentieth century; women are not fully accepted in the public arena but are instead allowed to participate there only on sufferance (Buckingham-Hatfield, 2000). Accordingly, this leads to the division of tasks into productive (paid) and reproductive (unpaid) activities. As such Buckingham-Hatfield (2000) concludes that women are more likely to be involved in activities that, whilst essential for survival, involve no cash transactions and have accordingly, little status. However it is crucial to note that much as women may have many things in common like managing both the home and job, living with and caring for men, being mothers and caring for dependants; there are important differences between them which lead to diverse experiences and expectations like - employment patterns and status, ethnic differences, different experiences of being powerful or feeling powerless (Payne, 1997). For instance, a white woman in a professional job, with experience of being seen as competent and powerful on occasions, will have a different view of life and different expectations to those of a black woman in a manual job- who may feel powerless to affect her life (Payne, 1997). This argument is critical for my research since I take into account the fact that these African women (interviewed) are in a different context than their own, which aspect may/may not be influential on the perceived gender roles and relations. The private sphere for this research encompasses the unpaid work of women (including family and friends); on the

hand the public sphere will consider their engagement in the social life, involvement in paid work outside the family and participation in public education. Thus an analysis of the impact of the gender divisions of roles will focus on the status of women within their families and; also women's participation in the public life.

2.4 Understanding the gender role divisions in different contexts

Most Countries/Societies usually allocate different roles, responsibilities, and activities to women and men, according to what is considered appropriate in a particular culture something we can simply understand as the gender division of labor (Parpart et al, 2000). Thus it is vital to give a brief description of gender roles in the different contexts before going on to unravel how people experience gender roles when they are in a context that is different from their own - which is partly the gist of this research. Though the researcher is well conversant that neither Europe nor Africa constitutes single and/or universal entities; and also succumb to the views of diversity of experience as well as uniqueness in knowledge and strengths in the different contexts, the study will mainly adopt a generalizing tone when referring to issues pertaining to both continents (Europe and Africa). Precisely gender roles will be conceptualized on a general basis that is; European gender roles, or African gender roles.

2.4.1 European Gender roles

Gruber and Stefanov (2002) have investigated the impact of the gender roles on European women (for example Sweden, Great Britain, France, etc). They discussed that the review of the gender differences touches on the personal as well as the professional life situation for women and men. In their survey done in 12 countries of Europe, they found out that 90 percent of women valued the family as the most important sphere of their life (Gruber and Stefanov 2002, p.21). The two further state that in the vast part majority of partnerships in Central Europe, housework and caring for children are tasks performed by mainly women and that fathers mainly play and only share their leisure activities with the children. This literally means that the gender specific division of labor still exists in the European households. Gruber and Stefanov (2002) however observed that although greater economic independence of working women does not lead to the elimination of the traditional division of housework, partners of highly educated women who work full time are more likely to share the housework than partners of women who are only house wives or only work part time. While detailing the implications on the status of women, the state that doing unpaid work has caused discrimination against women causing more stress for women, less prosperity, low income, less power and low participation in decision making (about consumption, etcetera). They have thus concluded that men in most European countries have not changed or that the male revolution has not happened yet as; there is a discrepancy between the normative ideals of a family built on equality and partnership, and the reality in society (Gruber and Stefanov, 2000, p. 23).

In the same spirit, Esping-Andersen (2009) has made research on couple specialization in house work and child care among Spanish couples. Esping-Andersen (2009, p.43) based his study on the 2003 Spanish time-use survey and; reveals that couples in Spain constitute the 'doing gender thesis' which implies that gender inequalities remain substantial in Spain.

According to Esping-Andersen (2009), Spanish mothers dedicate more time for child care compared to fathers; whereas those who struggle to be productive have to sacrifice child care and even more house work - to the benefit of paid employment. He also found a positive relationship between education and gender equality as low educated couples tend to remain faithful and loyal to the conventional gender roles as compared to the highly educated ones who embrace more egalitarianism (Esping-Andersen 2009, p.43). He however concludes that although doing gender is very common in Spanish households, traditionalism weakens when the wife experiences a major increase in her bargaining power as a result of having paid employment.

2.4.2 African gender roles

Family and kinship are the most important institutions in African tradition, as much of its norms are very important in structuring social life (Therborn 2004, p.116). Thus, in Africa, gender is generally a collective category with regard to general norms and values (Adkins and Lury 1995, in Gruber and Stefanov, 2002) and it remains the central criterion of power and socialization. The major determinants of gender roles in Africa include: traditions and religion - mainly at childhood within the family, although the broader collectives of extended family and the community also influence what roles people assume in adulthood. In his discussion about gender roles in Africa, Le Vine (1996) asserts that:

"*Roles may be differentiated by sex within each of the major institutional aspects of the social system: the family, the economy, the political system, the religious system, etc, and the patterns in one aspect may not be consistent with those of another. To give an example in terms of sex status, it is not difficult to imagine a society in which women play an important part in family decision-making but are discriminated against in the occupational sphere"(Le Vine 1996, p.186).*

However, the major challenge experienced at the family level concerns the allocation of specific tasks to particular family members. Specifically in Uganda - my country of origin (particularly in my tribe Baganda - which is the majority group), talking about gender and sex is never relaxed, as it opens a vast field of feelings and emotions of what men and women ought to do. Thus, the *'Ideal woman'* should assume the role of raising children, caring for family members, taking care of the household (reproductive role) - usually unpaid; whereas men are traditionally seen as the breadwinners (productive role) for their families. In reference to African traditions, Therborn (2004, p.118) states that '*African custom is for male control of women*' and that wifely subordination is still a major phenomena of African social life. As for adults, household tasks for children are divided according to gender, with girls contributing more to reproductive work as they are supposed to help their mothers and boys more to- 'masculine tasks'; whereas children's (both girls and boys) labor in general, substitutes for fathers especially in agriculture; which implies that women without children suffer a lot. This male superiority is not only unique to Africa as Buckingham-Hatfield (2000) demonstrates that even in the Western Society (especially in the US) - which is predominantly Judeo-Christian; male characteristics such as assertiveness, dominance, competitiveness, aggression and logic are valued and nurtured in play and study, just as compassion,

cooperation and emotion are rewarded in girls. Thus such behavior is deeply ingrained in the daily interactions and is therefore reinforced.

In the meantime, the intensification and expansion of cultural flows across the globe[5] - facilitated by internet and telecommunications as well as the women's movement in Uganda have led to questioning of traditional gender meanings and obligations. Apparently, cosmopolitan women have joined the struggle to demand for gender equality and inclusion in almost all spheres of life like politics, the economy and social life. Consequently, on the look of things, it appears that men have instead taken a defensive attitude to the whole equalization process - condemning it as a Western ideology to erode the whole meaning of Ugandan femininity. This is for example evidenced in the aggressive language/abusive acts that men use over women such as on women activists (Tumwebaze, 2012). Such women can earn all sorts of names such as - 'masculine women'; or 'desperate women'; 'marriage drop outs' etcetera. In my opinion, such names manifest a sabotage of the whole gender equalization process and a scapegoat for men to maintain the patriarchal gender divisions of roles that keep women in low positions.

2.4.3 A comparative analysis

Kunovich and Kunovich (2008) provide a comparative and a multilevel analysis regarding gender roles and their sources in a number of countries. From a somewhat different perspective, they have studied the sources of attitudes towards the household division of labor (for example, attitudes toward how routine housework and childcare should be divided). They developed their hypotheses from Baxter and Kane's (1995) *Gender Dependence Theory*[6] with which they use to test on data from 32 Countries, Sweden inclusive. They obtained survey data from the International Social Survey Programme's 2002 Family and Changing Gender Roles III module, and country data from the United Nations. Grounding from this theory therefore, Kunovich and Kunovich (2008) made a couple observations some of which include; that married women have less egalitarian attitudes toward housework and childcare compared to women who are not married; men and women with higher educational qualifications have more egalitarian attitudes than those with less qualification; men and women who spend more time (in hours) at work have egalitarian attitudes - specifically that women who work more hours than their spouse have more egalitarian attitudes toward childcare. In addition, they suggest that social class is associated with egalitarian attitudes. One of their interesting observation relates to the finding that respondents in countries with greater gender equality (they give Sweden and Norway as examples) have more egalitarian attitudes toward separate spheres of work, but not toward housework or childcare. This finding means that these couples are open minded towards both the private and public spheres, but when it comes to child care there is a strong gender division with one sex dominating in the child care activities than the other. Finally they indicate that childhood socialization is a powerful variable in determining attitudes toward the household division of labor across the 32 countries they studied - stating that male and female respondents whose mothers worked for pay have more

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[5] See Manfred 2003 p.69- cultural dimension of globalization
[6] The major premise of the Gender dependence theory is that women's dependence on men shapes both women's and men's gender attitudes and that this dependence operates at two levels – that is, at the individual level and at the societal level (Kunovich and Kunovich 2008, p.398).

egalitarian attitudes toward separate spheres and housework. In summary their research concluded that factors like marital status, educational qualification, involvement in paid employment, child socialization as well as social class account for attitudes towards the household division of labor. However, their study was too broad and considered official data which may not necessarily be accurate. Besides, comparisons at country level may not tell the exact picture of individuals at household level.

2.5 The Swedish Gender Equality Perspective

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)-an international bill of rights for women; calls upon all member states to incorporate the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions (article 2a). Moreover, CEDAW (Article 5a), obligates States Parties to take all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women (United Nations, 1979). Accordingly, the government of Sweden has put in place several policies that work to elevate the status of women - which has made 'her' a trend setter for gender equality. According to the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality (2009), the Swedish gender equality policy is aimed at combating and transforming systems that preserve the gender-based distribution of power and resources in society; and, ensuring that women and men enjoy the same power and opportunities to shape their own lives. This is intended so that women and men share power and influence in all aspects of community life, thus facilitating a more fair and democratic society (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, 2009).

With such features along others, the Swedish gender policy aspects have become a central case for comparative gender policy analysts and a point of reference for policy makers in other advanced welfare states (Ferrarini and Duvander, 2009). For instance, Sweden has in place a dual earner model that is supported through public policies regarding - childcare arrangements and tax policy. The Swedish dual earner model basically rests on three pillars: being earnings-related parental leave benefit with long duration; affordable, full day public day-care from the child's first birthday; and individual income taxation (Ferrarini and Duvander, 2009). Such a model has a myriad of benefits when it comes to for example the division of labor within the family; because then, couples tend to negotiate their roles depending on their will so as to reconcile family and work life.

In addition, the dual earner model also encourages Parental leave as parents learn that they will be compensated for their lost incomes. In Sweden each parent is entitled to 225 days of full time leave, of which each parent is entitled to take at least two months (Gruber and Stefanov 2002, p.28). This arrangement can facilitate equality between parents since the obligatory 'Papa months' can serve as a stimulant to fathers' participation in the unpaid caring role. Moreover, publicly financed/or affordable child care relieves all partners (especially women) of the full time child care. This not only enables women to get rid of the stress, but also avails them with free time to take part in other activities outside the household for instance pursuing a career, or participating in the social activities in the society. Due to such

initiatives Sweden has not only achieved an increase in dual earner couples but also 'dual career'[7] couples (Stanfors and Dribe, 2010, p.849).

However, there are loopholes in the system as some research (Gruber and Stefanov, 2002) has indicated that only one third to two fifths of all fathers take the parental leave, which implies that women take up the major part of this leave (Stanfors and Dribe, 2009). Besides, studies like that of Ferrarini, and Duvander (2009) have expressed that such a scenario makes it hard for women to compete with men on equal terms, something that has caused gender wage gaps for men and women in Sweden. They make the point clearer by citing Korpi et al. (2009) who indicates that there is only a ten percent chance for any woman of working age (in Sweden and in most rich countries) to be in the highest wage quintile (Cited in Ferrarini, and Duvander 2009, p.4). Moreover, despite a substantial increase in women's employment rates and women's time in paid work, some research suggest that their time spent in unpaid work has not declined enough to compensate for this (Bianchi et al cited in Stanfors and Dribe 2009, p.33). Such revelations indicate that despite the government's effects to ensure gender equality for both men and women in all aspects, more work in terms of attitude change is still needed to ensure that these well intended measures and policies are met. Specifically the government of Sweden needs to work on the patriarchal power structures that maintain the traditional divisions of labor along gender lines both within the families and outside.

This background chapter has mainly focused on normalizing concepts that are used in this research. Thus it began by defining gender in terms of its significance in social organization of sexuality; division of labor, as well as distribution of power within society. The chapter went on to describe gender roles as norms and behavior that are usually attached to a gender identity. The chapter also considered the difference between the private and public spheres with a strict emphasis on the high concentration of women in the former, as well as in the intermediate space between the two spheres. Besides, accounts of the gender roles in different contexts have been explored. And last but not least, a human rights perspective has been incorporated by considering the Swedish government's role in the field of gender and /or gender equality. Thus the chapter concluded by paying a critical examination to the measures undertaken by the government of Sweden - acknowledging that much as country deserves respect for its endeavors in the area of gender equality, there is still more to be done. This is an issue that I will discuss in more detail later on in this report.

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[7] From Stanfors and Dribe's (2010) description, dual career means combining both family and career.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores earlier studies concerning gender roles and their impact on migrant women. Finding relevant literature for my study has not been an easy road, thus the literature I review in the subsequent section has been broadened to include migrant women as a general category and, not only African women. The literature also includes the situation of migrant women outside Sweden - basically to show broader perspectives from other contexts.

3.1 Gendered division of roles in immigrant populations residing in Sweden

Sawyer (2002) writes about the gendered division roles that exist within the African entity carved out in the city of Stockholm. Sawyer's (2002) study was about how abstract and generalized descriptions of the processes of globalization form the negotiation and production of identities in everyday encounters and spaces in the city of Stockholm, Sweden. She carried out participant observations as well as structured interviews with the instructors and students of the African dance in Stockholm. In particular, Sawyer (2002) studied how racial ideologies are enacted in constitutive, yet shifting relation to class, gender, and other ideologies of power; arguing that:

"...while processes of globalization (mobility of individuals, ideas, goods) have contributed to the meeting of peoples once thought to be "far away"— power asymmetries articulated through categories of "race," gender, and national belonging, are not necessarily discarded in spaces of African cultural production and consumption in Sweden" (Sawyer 2002, p.201).

Sawyer (2002) discussed the ways through which the travel of peoples, goods, and capital also brings about new encounters and negotiations of meaning and power that occur in the "non-spectacular" aspects of everyday lives of Africans living in Stockholm. Regarding the gendered division of roles; Sawyer (2002) notes that most African men take on the entrepreneurial roles; as they are mostly in the African discotheque and dance and drum businesses/courses; whereas African women mostly occupy in the lower jobs like in the sale of food, hair, and clothing. Thus, she argues that African men are mostly interested in creating public spaces - something that they interpret as a way through which they can redefine historical meanings of Africa. Sawyer (2002) in agreement with other researchers[8] discusses the public work environment that migrant women encounter. In her argument she makes it explicit that today, women in Sweden continue to work more than men, and are often described as "working double"- as they still have the main responsibility for reproductive work. Besides gender, race also jeopardizes the life courses of migrant women living in Sweden; as they not only have to "fill in the gaps" for Swedish women; but they also face the problem of managing earning, caring, and domestic responsibility (Sawyer 2002, p.205).

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[8] Gavanas & Williams 2004; Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2002; and Nyberg 2003.

Similarly, Gavanas (2010) discusses the exploitation, sexual harassment and gendered aspects of social exclusion that are faced by migrant women in Sweden. Her study examines why migrant women are majorly preferred as domestic workers and/or sex workers. She asserts that 90 percent of all domestic workers in Sweden are female whilst large shares of them are migrants. Gavanas (2010) draws her conclusions from recent research[9] that suggests that:

"Working conditions in domestic services are heavily gendered, ethnified, "classed," racialized and sexualized meaning that demand and client – worker relations are often influenced by intersecting social constructions and practices around femininity and "culture" (Gavanas 2010, p.43).

As such Gavanas (2010) elaborates how clients' and employers' conceptions of worker characteristics (based on gender stereotypes) influence the prospects of migrants on the formal and informal labor markets arguing that migrant women and men are differently positioned within in/formal labor markets as well as social networks. Migrant women in the domestic sector are exposed to gendered aspects of control, blackmail and pressures from clients/employers/entrepreneurs such as male employers' expectations for sexual services from these domestic workers. Consequently, it is very common for domestic workers in Stockholm to stipulate *"No Sex"* in their advertisements for work (Gavanas 2010, p.46-48). Besides, Gavanas (2010) argues that in European contexts, care and household labor have been traditionally seen as women's domain carried out for free as a labor of love; but however notes that with the introduction of tax deduction for domestic service in- 2007, it marked the upgrading in the Swedish women's rights - since it enabled them to compete with men on the labor market. Apparently Esping-Andersen (2009) clearly spells out the challenges that the welfare regime is likely to face as a result of the masculinisation of the female life course. Accordingly, as the Swedish women's conventional caring role diminishes there has to be alternatives, perhaps this role may have to shift to the migrant women to fill in the gap. Thus with such a deeply engrained structural division of labor one may be inclined to conclude that whereas female migrants may escape domestic work from their own families, they end up in the same trap by performing the reproductive work of other upper class Swedish women.
For that reason it is paramount that an intersectional perspective is adopted in approaching gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity as constitutive systems of domination.

From a different perspective, Bredström (2005) has explored the ethno sexual gendered relations manifest in Sweden. She has thus revealed that there is a perceived dividing line between *gender 'equal Swedes' and 'patriarchal others'* citing stereotypical differences between Immigrant men and Swedish men, as well as between Immigrant women and Swedish women. Thus, her study challenges the dominant discourses prevailing within the Swedish society that represent Swedish men as perfect; and Immigrant men as failures regarding gender equality; as well as, representing Swedish women as living a life in freedom

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[9] Anderson 2000, Ehrenreich & Hochschild 2002, Momsen 1999, Lutz, 2008, Parrenas 2001

and being (almost) equal, while their Immigrant 'sisters' are perceived to be carrying a heavy burden imposed on them by their culture, religion, and tradition (Bredström, 2005). It is unknown if such discourses could perhaps be rooted in an internalized and thus reproduced racist and stereotypical understandings of blackness and Africanness held by the majority white Swedish Society (Sawyer, 2008). Subsequently, Sawyer (2008, p.98) asserts that when larger numbers of Somali and Congolese refugees arrived in Sweden in the 1990s; '*each of these groups brought with them internal class, ethnic, and gender divisions*; and argues that these understandings served as a basis for community. Besides, in instructing the African dance; African men in Stockholm have got an invisible agenda of redeeming Africans and African culture from the 'degrading' Western, and Swedish, meanings (Sawyer 2002, p.205).

Apparently, by revealing this hierarchy between Swedish and non-Swedish gender roles and identities, Bredström's (2005) study seems perfect for anti-discriminatory practice since it challenges the preconceived ideas that normally influence our judgment towards the 'Others'; 'Different' and/or the 'Unknown'. However, her study lacks the solution to the factors that lie at the core of these discourses, which further necessitates a study like mine to find out the gendered division of roles and their impact on the status and position of immigrant women, moreover with a narrower focus- to a group of African women living in Gothenburg.

In conclusion, much of the section has mainly proved the existence of a sexualized division of roles in migrant populations living in Sweden. However as we have observed, there seems to be no easy consensus as some other authors instead demonstrate that these migrants are misunderstood by whoever attempts to define their cultures.

3.2 The changing gender role - migrant women in other Contexts

Chai (1987) has investigated the status of Korean immigrant women living in Hawaii (cited in Brettell 2008, p.127). Chai discovered that middle class and well educated Korean women that are normally relegated to the domestic sphere in their home society; rather, as migrants, they usually take on waged work outside the home and/or domestic sphere. Accordingly, this leads to a more flexible division of labor within their households; more involvement in decision making; and flexible parental responsibility; as well less sex segregation in social and public places (Chai 1987 Cited in Brettell 2008, p.127). To the contra, recent research (DRC, 2009) attests that migration can both exacerbate the impact of existing gendered roles and bring about significant changes in gender norms, as migration streams, migration work destinations, and migration impacts - always show marked differences between men and women. Many migrant women are employed in the informal economy, particularly as domestic workers, care workers, nurses or entertainers – hence, reinforcing traditional gender segregation and inequalities in the labor market (Anja and Andrea 2010, p.48). Moreover, such work is normally low paying, hazardous to women's health and more so, associated with low self-esteem. Dorantes and de la Rica's study on *'Labour market assimilation of recent Immigrants in Spain'* (2007) undermines and questions the quality of jobs held by immigrants in general; specifically stating that, African women are segregated into lower ranked occupations than native women and practically lack upward occupational mobility (Dorantes and de la Rica 2007,p.275). They invoke such a scenario to be rooted in lesser skill

transferability, language proficiency and /or labor discrimination and above all, in the existing gender differences in the schooling received by immigrant women back in their home countries (Dorantes and de la Rica, 2007). Comparable points have also been made by Bradely and Healy (2008) in their study about the labor market position of women from minority ethnic backgrounds (African, African-Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani) that live in the United States and United Kingdom. Their study specifically outlines the type of jobs that ethnic minority women do, the extent to which they work full time or in non-standard jobs and the degree to which they are clustered in particular occupations and labor market segments. Some of the most useful parts of their arguments pertain to the fact that they study the extent to which women are able to pursue careers, the particular obstacles they face; in addition to discriminatory practices that most women have to contend with as they try to trek on their roads to change their status and positions in all spheres of life. Accordingly, Bradely and Healy (2008, p.38), in their vocabulary, attest to the strong association of 'Blackness' with care work, especially of a 'heavy or dirty kind'. As such the historical trend in the United States has been that of concentrating women of color in the back-room jobs of reproductive labor (Duffy 2005 cited in Bradely and Healy 2008, p.39). This study exhibits peculiar objective characteristics that are close to mine but the difference is that this one was more focused on public environment in terms of the role played by government institutions, employment structures, as well as trade unions. Thus, no attempt was made to study the family environment or in particular, the impact of gender roles on these women's life courses.

Additionally, Brettell (2008) has presented a variety of anthropological research on the significance of gender in the life courses of immigrant women; that is - framed in relation to domestic/public models and/or opposition between production and reproductive spheres. She cites the research of Kibria (1993) and Foner (1997a) that focused on the role and experiences of women in migration; while specifically looking at the changes that occur in family and kinship patterns as a result of migration. Brettell (2008) further contemplates on the different questions that have been explored by different researchers (such as Mills 1998; Hirsch 1999; Prenas 2001; George 2005). Some of these questions include:

"(a) whether wage earning serves to enhance the power and status of immigrant women within their households; (b) whether greater sharing of household activities emerge as a result of work obligations of women; (c) and how changes in employment, family structure and lifestyle affect women's own assessments of their well-being" (Brettell 2008, p 127).

Brettell (2008) also presents Bhachu's (1988) findings on wage work of Sikh immigrant women in Britain who accordingly, has moved:

"beyond the simple thesis that wage labor equals liberation" and has gone on to argue that *"women's increased ability to develop more self-defined roles has been aided by their increased access to cash, which has allowed them to invest and consume in their own interests and for their own benefit"* (Cited in Brettell 2008, p.127).

Bhachu (1988) also argues that specific cultural values and social patterns have undergone radical changes as a result of both migration and women's waged labor.

Drawing on empirical material from such studies (like that of Bhachu, 1988), Brettell (2008) has put light to the new sense of control that women gain as immigrants - that lead to varying attitudes of men and women toward both life abroad and return. Thus, while immigrant women may at times yearn for the homeland (Goodson-Lawes 1993 in Brettell 2008, p.127); research has demonstrated that women are often more reluctant to return to the sending country than are migrant men (Barou1996, Cited in Brettell 2008, p.127).). This is because returning may mean giving up some of the advantages (like authority and power) they may have gained while abroad (Brettell, 2008). In spite of that however, Dorantes and de la Rica (2007) think otherwise - that successful immigrants return to their home countries upon achieving a goal. Brettell (2008) concludes that in order to gauge the extent of gender equality achieved for both men and women; differences must be explained by a close examination of cultural factors (including gender ideology) and economic constraints. This is in tandem with de los Reyes's (2002) ideology of the concept 'gender equality' as racialized, and as well as an ethnic marker (Cited in Bredström 2005, p.526).

This chapter has provided an overview of the wide range of literature that exists in the area of gender roles and their impact on women especially from different contexts. The contribution of earlier scholarship has been to demonstrate the complexities of social constructions and practices around femininity that intersect and determine migrant women's life courses. The argument has mainly centered on how gender, race, sexuality and ethnicity constitute systems of domination for migrant women. However, despite the hurdles that have been observed in both sections (of the literature review), the latter section has illustrated that when women move to other contexts than their own, there tends to be a shift in their roles something that elevates their original status. This as we have seen, is mainly attained by such women joining the labor force which may not have been the case in their home countries.

CHAPTER FOUR: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I have utilized four theories to explain the social construction of gender roles and to show how individuals can escape this social construction. Thus social role and social learning theories have been used to explicate the ideology behind gender role development, maintenance as well as its reproduction within societies. On the other hand, empowerment and classical resources theories have been utilized to understand the routes that individuals may go through to change/challenge their predetermined/conceived gender roles; and thus shift their personal status and positions.

4.1 Social Learning Theory
The leading proponent of Social Learning Theory is Albert Bandura (1977). This theory explains how gender roles are developed in our daily lives especially at childhood depending on the context. The theory focuses on three major concepts: observational learning, imitation, and modeling (Ormrod, 1999). As such, the Social Learning Theory explains that behavior is acquired in two ways; both through 're-enforcements and modeling' (Golombok and Fivush 1994, p.76). In the absence of reinforcements, social learning also occurs through observing and imitating others. Consequently, gender role behaviors are acquired through the same processes as all other behaviors (Bandura 1977, cited in Golombok and Fivush1994, p.76).
 By applying these concepts the theory emphasizes how different institutions like marriage, family, society and media shape our images about gender roles. For example, my kindergarten daughter has a lyric that she is been taught by her teachers and she keeps on singing it when we are at home; it goes: *"mummy is cooking; daddy is driving; what a good family!* I always remind her on several occasions that I'm not in the kitchen, but she has never changed her attitude because she has been told so. Thus, the theory spells out the interplay between cognitive, affective, biological, and socio structural aspects as key influences in the process of gender role development (Miller, 2011). According to Miller (2011):

"Infants and toddlers learn to differentiate between males and females according to their associated appearance and activities. Childhood provides numerous opportunities to observe gendered behavior because children tend to seek out same-sex playmates and, even when both sexes are available, to imitate same-gender models more than other gender models. They see people and behaviors repeatedly labeled according to gender and observe that only certain behaviors are sanctioned for each gender and that opportunities are heavily organized by gender" (Miller 2011, p.249-250).

This theory can thus be critical in understanding why women always assume a subordinate/inferior position to men just because they have always seen their mothers or other female role models taking on such roles. And besides, such models play a major role - by reinforcing those that model their behavior; for instance, girls may be reinforced by imitating their mothers' behavior and the same goes for boys. However, this theory may be challenged

by the changing gender role for both men and women: for example fathers assuming roles that were previously a domain of women such as, caring for children, preparing meals, etcetera. Moreover, one may ask what then will happen to children with the advent of new family structures like, single headed and/or one parent households in which one parent takes on all the obligations.

4.2 Social Role Theory

The social role theory assumes that people occupy positions in social structures - associated with roles that may either be ascribed or attained (Payne, 1997). The theory explains that the societal division of labor produces diffuse gender roles for different genders and therefore confers broad expectations on men and women (Diekman and Schneider, 2010). This kind of construction means that men and women engage in different household tasks to demonstrate and reaffirm their gendered selves as expected of them by others. Alternatively, Foucault (1992) discussed the social distribution of roles in relation to nature, stating that: "*gods directly prepared the woman's nature for indoor works and the man for works of the open air. Thus, the natural oppositeness of man and woman and the specificity of their aptitudes are indissociably tied to the good order; and inversely, order demands them as obligations*" (Foucault 1992, p.158-159). For example, society has traditionally set the hierarchy that by virtue of being a man, you are supposed to be a bread winner while the woman is expected to be a home maker (Moser, 1999). To alter this division- that is, going from one activity to the other, is to be in contempt of the 'nomos'; as it is at the same time, to go against nature and to abandon one's place (Foucault 1992, p.159).

Accordingly, people's behavior is observed as predictable and thus influenced - depending on the context where they are, social position held, and the prevailing situation (Hindin, 2007). For instance, it is usual that even when women have full day working schedules, they have to do the familial chores like cooking for the family; cleaning the laundry; when they get home - reason being that, they are the wives, mothers, and etcetera. Thus, as long as they are at home, and they are the women, home should be neat. To this therefore, Payne (1997) suggests that how we see our role affects how well we manage change. For example, a woman with traditional assumptions of institutional gender roles - for example a proper role of mother or father, may find it hard to adjust to taking on an exchanged role of say - becoming the major breadwinner even when exposed to a different context. Accordingly, such challenging scenarios may result in all sorts of role complications. For instance, role complementarily exists when roles, behavior and expectations all fit together well with the expectations of surrounding people; role conflict exists when one role is incompatible with another role; inter role conflict may occur when different roles held by one person are incompatible; and role ambiguity may arise when people are uncertain about what a role entails (Payne, 1997).

This theory whereas may justify the existence of gender division of roles in society it does not provide techniques for behavior change. The theory may therefore convince individuals in particular positions that it is ideal to pursue certain roles without question. As a matter of fact, the theory makes people to be comfortable in their 'worlds of roles'; something that can be jeopardizing for those that occupy weak positions (as usually women) in society. Thus, the theory lacks the emancipation aspects that may help women to escape the social pressure that

is normally obligated to them as carers, and/or mothers. Such gaps can perhaps be filled by the Empowerment theory.

4.3 Empowerment theory

Empowerment refers to a:

"… *process whereby persons who belong to a stigmatized social category through their lives can be assisted to develop and increase skills in the exercise of interpersonal influence and the performance of valued roles"(*Solomon, 1976 Cited in Dalrymple and Burke 2006, p.106).

This process serves to counteract the oppressions that shape and inform the lives of those who do not have access, or have limited access, to power structures of society (Dalrymple and Burke 2006) thereby, helping those groups to gain power of decision and action over their own lives (Payne, 2005). Empowerment theory is fundamental to gender equality as it gives way for re-visiting discriminatory practices (that may be embedded in social norms and structures) that block access to legitimate forms of power and resources. This may result into effective social change in society. Thus, it must be seen as both a process and a goal/an end. As such Dalrymple and Burke (2006) have argued that individuals who make connections between their personal condition and the society in which they live begin to make changes within themselves, within their families and community, and wider social structures. Moreover, such an awareness of the connection between their personal condition and society in which they live, means that they can evaluate their position and engage in a process of self-discovery; that can enable them to name their oppression. Accordingly, this experience can as well awaken capabilities in them, and thus, address the causes of that oppression (Dalrymple and Burke 2006). Thus empowerment may be understood as a transformational activity (Adams, 2003). For instance, an individual can be transformed from a state of being weak and/or powerless into another state of being courageous, confident and/or powerful.

Dalrymple and Burke (2006) have devised a model to analyze the process of empowerment. The model works at three different levels: Feelings, Ideas, and Actions. See figure 4.1 below for a diagrammatical depiction of the empowerment theory at all the levels.

The level of *Feeling,* serves as the focal point for empowerment because it's at such a level that an individual's personal experiences are made explicit; and thus an individual goes through what Hill Colins (1990 cited in Darlympe and Burke 2006 p.117) would call "*self-couscous struggle*". Working on feelings basically requires that individuals mediate upon their experiences or pasts that have made them to be in such weak positions. Such experiences may for instance be personal characteristics like being a woman, disabled, and/or ethnic origin or these can be factors beyond an individual' control like poverty, culture, context, etcetera. This means that beginning on the process of change necessitates one to first of all - locate oneself (Darlympe and Burke 2006).

The level of *Ideas* concentrates on the self-worth of the powerless groups which may according to Darlympe and Burke (2006) lead to self-knowledge, self-actualization and self-definition. This kind of gained personal power comes with a new language. Darlympe and

Burke (2006) affirm that this new language may express power by using words such as: *"I want to make my own choices; I know my rights; I'm in control"* among others (Darlympe and Burke 2006, p.118).

Finally, the level of *Actions* entail seeking changes in the individual agency as well as social welfare for the powerless groups, or involves change in the wider social structures (like family, institutions and policies). Darlympe and Burke (2006) however express the fear that people may feel doubt about their actions and thus may have the desire to return to a difficult but familiar situation. They however, present a counter augment stating that such feelings are inevitable, as there are parts of the process of growing stronger. The sufficient option when such a scenario occurs is appropriate support for the newly empowered individuals, so that they do not return to the former state of thus the process of empowerment should be continuous powerlessness (Rees, 1991 cited in Darlympe and Burke 2006 p. 120).

Figure 4.1 The process of empowerment
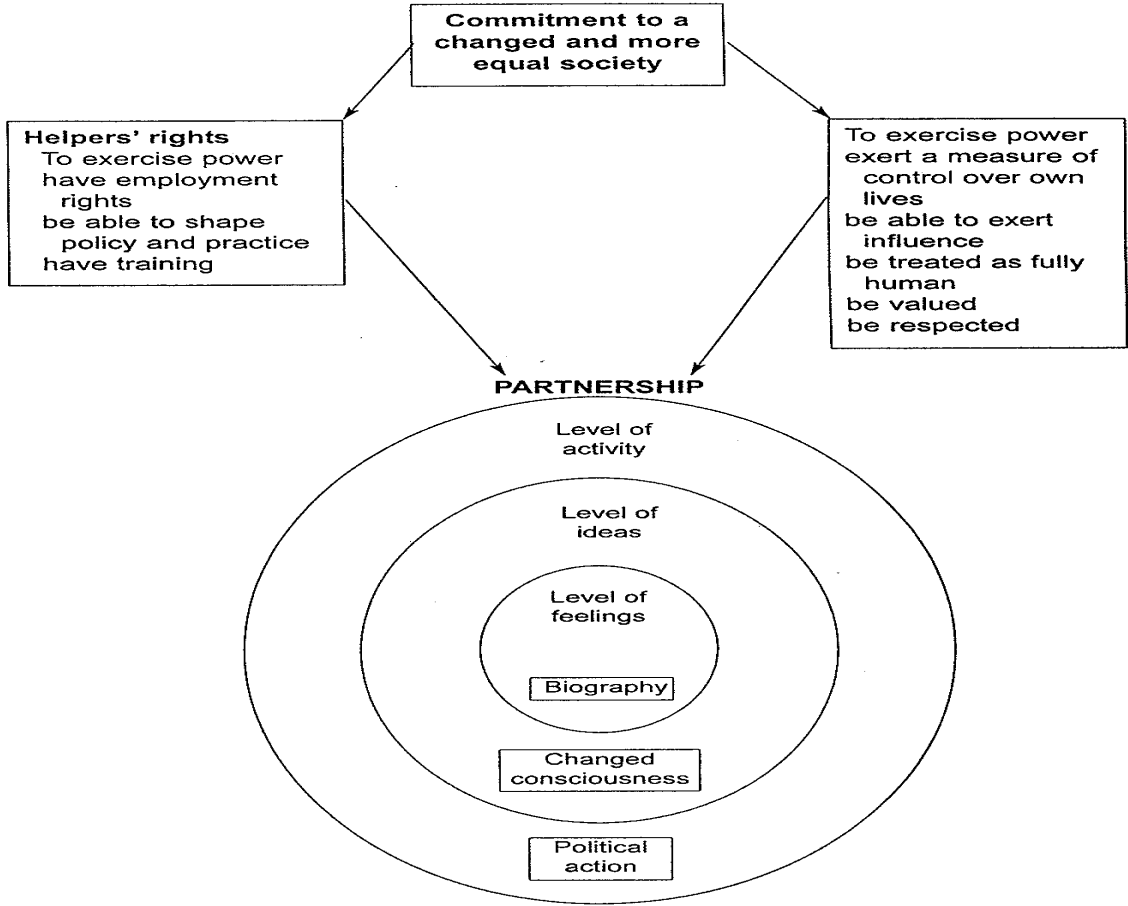
Source: Darlympe and Burke (2006, p.119, figure 5.1)

This level is so critical for social workers or practitioners who may be working with such clients. The impact of the division of the gender roles can be a powerful predictor of individual choices of both women and men; whereas it can also have implications for such individuals at the wider societal/macro levels. For instance, depending on who is carrying what burdens of roles, those that feel powerless may lose self-esteem, be so demoralized whereas at the interpersonal level; people may lose competency; yet at the structural level that may mean denial of rights.

This obligates social workers to work at all levels (feelings, ideas and actions) because change occurring at one level essentially affects change at other levels. Social workers' actions can be useful in terms of: facilitating individuals to change personal attitude (for instance by involving the affected individuals in critical dialogue); raising general consciousness about the situation at hand (through for instance having groups of people talking about their situation and/or provision of information and training to the affected persons); and as well as advocacy/lobby for such groups at the higher levels of authority (like talking to politicians about the situation of the affected groups). However, for empowerment to be sufficient, it has to challenge injustice, inequality and oppression -by enabling vulnerable groups to have access to resources, as well as building their capacities so that they use those resources in an effective way (Dalrymple and Burke 2006).This further means that without relative resources, empowerment as a process may be jeopardized.

4.4 Classic Resources Theory
Classic recourse theory is one of the theories that explain the gender division of roles with in households. The theory tries to draw a connection between resources and the actions of individuals especially those living together like partners. These resources can range from material resources like economic resources/finances, to immaterial for example literacy. Classic resource theories propose that relative resources are a key determinant of how household labor is divided (for example, Ferree, 1991 cited in Mannino and Deutsch 2007, p.310). According to Mannino and Deutsch (2007) this approach suggests that a spouse's external resources, such as income, education, and occupational status, confer power on the individual. Thus, the spouse with the greater resources also has the greater decision-making power to put his/her wishes into practice (e.g., Coltrane, 2000; Johnson & Huston, 1998; Presser, 1994 cited in Mannino and Deutsch, 2007). Such wishes can for example be in terms of consumption expenditure decisions or other life course choices. The theory further articulates that the same decision making power that an individual earns as a result of strategic access to resources, is used to reduce his/her own share of domestic labor. Thus, the greater a spouses' share of relative resources, the smaller his/her share of housework and childcare (Mannino and Deutsch, 2007).

This theory is useful in understanding why women may take on the roles such as cooking, cleaning, caring; that is, mainly menial work because in most cases it is usual for women not to have access to external recourses. This is especially true in developing countries where women tend to lack access to economic resources and public resources like property such as land. The same goes for children since they are always depending on adults, so just like

women, children also have to participate in doing household tasks like washing dishes, cleaning, and etcetera. Thus, the men who usually tend to have access to resources like income through paid employment outside the home mainly have less if any to do with household tasks. However, the theory elaborates that the cycle turns round for men when the wife is the one with access to resources like economical and educational. Scott (1996) states that when the wife's relative income is higher, husbands tend to do more house work. Wives, who earn more of the household income, and those with more education, are more able to bargain effectively for greater participation from husbands, especially when their husbands work fewer hours (Scott, 1996).

The Classical Resources Theory is important because it takes into account the fact that the division of labor is normally-actively negotiated between spouses on a continual and daily basis and not necessary static as perhaps assumed by the Social Role theory. This clearly demonstrates an existence of dynamic role structures within households (that is, roles may shift according to their schedules). This is an important aspect because it addresses the apparent shifts and/or changes in the gendered division of labor especially in developed countries like Sweden. However, in my opinion the theory tends to ignore gender - as a determinant of who does what in the family and only considers outside resources as the main drivers of household politics; which may sometimes not be the case.

This chapter has introduced theories that explain the development of gender roles as well as how those roles are maintained (Social learning and Social role theories). The other bunch of theories (Empowerment and Resource theories), have been argued in the sense of how vulnerable groups can escape the conventional gender norms that sometimes may be oppressive to them. All these theories have been connected to each other which imply that none of the theories can stand alone in explaining the development, politics and shifts in gender roles in the contemporary world.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

5.1 Behind the study - Beginnings

This work is a culmination of a two years Masters study at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden and presents empirical material collected, analyzed and presented, between January to May, 2012. The focus of this paper is on the impact of gender roles on a group of African women's status and position within their families as well as on women's participation in the Swedish society. Meanwhile, the contextual gender roles of women have been well trodden in the background chapter of this report. The thought for researching on the subject of equality caught my attention as soon as I set my foot in Sweden - not necessary that it was new to my ears; after all even the course (social work and human rights) of which this thesis is a part of, has been premised on the fundamentals of equality; the motivation however came from the extent of its actuality and reality in the different areas such as welfare, gender etcetera in Sweden. In due course, I have also been meditating upon the position and status of women back home (in Uganda) in both their families and the society at large. Besides, I grew up with abstract images about the caliber/potential and conduct of women who return from abroad/Diaspora (like Europe or US). These women in my society are always constructed as empowered (my concept to substitute the local meanings), and perceived as strong women in their families and society. Precisely, they are held with strong honor, esteem and prestige in society and they usually command high respect within their families. Tentatively, during my entire stay in Sweden- I have been exposed to distorted and mixed images of African women who live here in Gothenburg. In between this critical reflection about previous images and the actual experience, I started on the journey to mine the lived experiences of African women in Gothenburg - of which is the product of this report.

I considered Gothenburg not only because of my familiarity with the environment, but also because of its heterogeneous nature in terms of harboring different migrants from across the globe. Moreover being one of the most segregated cities of Europe, it was a little easier to anticipate where to locate respondents within the time scope of the study. Thus most respondents were accessed in the areas known for emigrant residents - especially Bergsjön and Hjällbo/Angered. Others were located at one of the international Pentecostal churches here in Gothenburg known for mass gathering of Africans. Adopting a feminist social work perspective, the study entirely focuses on women and it therefore targets social work with migrants especially working from a feminist perspective. Feminist Social work practice takes gendered inequality and its elimination as the starting point for working with women, whether as individuals, in groups or within organizations and thus seeks to promote women's wellbeing as women define it (Dominelli 2002a, cited in Trevithick 2009, p.281)

5.2 Design

The study was entirely qualitative, of a cross sectional nature, and conducted on a case by case basis.

5.2.1 Qualitative research

This study sought to investigate the 'researched' in their lived everyday world (Kvale, 2009). The main focus was on following 'cause and effect' relationships - which would later be used to derive meanings or rather 'measure their social world' (Gilbert 2008, p.35). Thus there was no intention for deriving or measuring numerical variables. As such, the respondents specifically described what they experienced, felt as well as their actions in relation to the topic. This design was necessary for eliciting new and unexpected responses which added value to the study.

5.2.2 Cross sectional study

The interviews were conducted within a period of three weeks which means that the intervals between them were only a matter of days yet even a few of them were held on the same day - with just a few hours after the other. The cross sectional design was preferable majorly because of time and resource constraints. Besides, the researcher was interested in investigating the current situation of the respondents other than in drawing inferences and or generalizations based on trends.

5.2.3 The case study

The sample comprised of two major respondent categories: primary respondents (African women) and, secondary (Social workers). In order to derive a 'woman centered perspective' (Trevithick 2009, p.281), only female respondents were considered to take part in the study. The woman centered perspective examines that "because men lack the experience of being a woman, they can develop a 'gender perspective' but not a 'woman-centered perspective'" (Hamner and Statham 1999, cited in Trevithick 2009, p.281). As such, a woman centered perspective can attempt to define - and to redefine - women's roles and responsibilities and how oppression and disadvantage impact on women as service users, carers and practitioners (Trevithick, 2009). The African women in this research come from Sub-Sahara Africa since (as argued in the background chapter) these were thought of having similar history and uniformities in gender conceptions and dissemination. After all, despite coming from different countries (find detailed accounts in results section) no attempt has been made to compare differences in their views based on the country of origin; the concern has been on women's uniform gender attributes and basically on common experiences of womanhood. Besides, a feminist Social work analysis looks out for commonalities that women share as women and incorporates them into '*visible parts of our practice*'(Hamner and Statham 1999 cited in Trevithick 2009, p.281).

The respondents were interviewed as individuals in order to obtain as much detail as possible. There was only one exceptional interview where women chose to be interviewed in a group of three other than on an individual basis. They preferred this at the request of one of the women who was not comfortable with expressing herself in English. She therefore needed someone to translate for her the questions from English to Swedish and vice versa. Although having a group interview was unintended by the researcher it eventually turned out productive as it created a context where women could on one hand discuss the questions as well as on the

other hand, listening to one another's views. Moreover through interacting, disagreements, consensus making and group dynamics, women developed a range of views of which some had not been anticipated by the researcher. However, all this was made on the course of probe topics (Gilbert, 2008).

5.2.4 Criteria for selecting African women in the study
Apart from being from Sub Saharan Africa, the age at which a respondent came to Sweden was another matter of concern. It was a necessity for a woman to have moved as old enough, to be able to distinguish between the genders roles in their home countries and thus be able to tell their actual role in another context. Basically, the respondents were between 18-45 years old because these were considered to be both productive and reproductive. Furthermore, inclusion in the sample was contingent on either marital grounds or parental responsibility (having little children below 18 years); considering that gender roles usually seem more visible with these groups of women (Esping-Andersen, 2009). Accordingly, this criterion produced two subcategories of respondents: married women with children and single mothers. Besides, women who have at least spent two or more years in Sweden were the only ones considered - as these were thought to have familiarized with the system, or be aware of the available opportunities and possibilities to improve/change their status/ role.

The **secondary category** of respondents comprised of Social workers who currently work in the segregated areas. Two of them work at the 'Familjehuset' (Family house) Hjällbo and one works with 'Socialkontoret' (Social office) Angered. These were considered because of the expectation that - they meet and interact with migrant women in their daily practice. As speculated, they provided a professional approach to the study as they substantiated the primary interviews with a critical perspective of how they view women's conduct and progress. Noteworthy is that one social worker participated in two interviews - one in the group with the African women; and another with another social worker with whom they work. But due to similarity in perspectives, she mainly appears in the results as an African woman and not as social worker. Therefore in total ten women were interviewed on eight interview occasions (See 6.1 where the women are described).

5.3 Procedure for accessing respondents

First I obtained an introduction letter from the University of Gothenburg that set forth the purpose of the research project. With this evidence, it was time to think of how to get respondents. The search started off with talking to some of the African women I usually met at church. Though I had been a regular churchgoer, I did not usually mix with adult African women especially due to my student status, implying that my mates were students as well. Moreover even though we have a common cause for gathering (that is - worshipping God); socializing mostly depends on country of origin, thus the few women that I had been in contact with mainly come from Uganda. Therefore, in order to obtain a diverse sample I made inquiries through mates. This was useful in knowing which women came from where. After introducing myself to these women and the purpose of the intended project, women provided me with their mobile contacts that I later used to contact them and set the interview appointments.

The social workers in the report were got as references from my study supervisor who also got them through fellow teaching staff. She provided me with contacts of social workers whom I contacted and expressed my request to have them as participants. Some did not reply at all, one replied after emailing her twice and it was only one of them who replied with a lot of enthusiasm for the study. This particular one was very useful in making arrangements for one other social worker with whom she was interviewed and for the other two women who participated as a group. As such she contacted the two women, provided the room where the interview took place, and coffee!

5.4 Interview contexts
Precisely, some interviews with women took place at church after the Sunday services, or when they had come to church to do some activities (like singing) while others took place in the women's homes. Interviews with Social workers (including the group interview with women) strictly took place at Social workers' offices.

5.5 Practical Challenges
Most of the women that I interviewed have busy schedules which made them to be inconsistent with the appointments we made. For example on the actual dates and only a few minutes to interviews, some women would call and cancel the appointments. Although this negatively affected the anticipated sample size, it was solved by communicating to the women - the deadline upon which postponements would be taken. Thus, those that postponed almost forever, were dropped, and the researcher substituted them with others; luckily enough, the researcher had made many contacts and was not only relying on a few. Besides, other women chose the wee hours after they had completed their routine chores meaning that the researcher had to adjust her own programmes to fit within theirs. Being flexible with time also worked for social workers as they chose lunch hours and/or convenient hours which some appreciated as they did not ask for time off from duty from their immediate supervisors.

5.6 Multimethod
The study is predicated on the review of existing literature, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and expert observations.

5.6.1 Documentary analysis
The research project was preceded with a review of earlier studies and literature on the subject. The university (Gothenburg) library served as a primary source for my literature search on the subject. This was concurrently done with search from other sources like the internet, databases and official web addresses. Despite the substantial existence of literature on gender as subject, the ones that have been reproduced in this thesis were cross examined and assessed on the scale of authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Gilbert, 2008). Critical attention was paid on the source of the document, author, study subjects, context, and purpose of the document. Thus priority was given to documents that have either studied African women in Sweden; migrant women in Sweden and those that have looked at the situation of migrant women (African and non-African) in other contexts (not Sweden) from a gender perspective. This report also entails some broad episteme on the subject under scrutiny (gender and gender roles) especially in the introductory and background chapters.

Documentary review was relevant because a cross-sectional study like this one and/or mere interaction with the respondents would not have produced all the relevant views that were unraveled from documents.

5.6.2 Semi-structured interviews

A total of eight explorative interviews with ten women were made. These were selected using non probability sampling techniques as seen in the procedure. Interviews were sufficient for the study, not only because of their phenomenological[10] nature, but also for ensuring a high response rate. Two different interview guides were made for both categories of respondents (see appendix). The procedure for conducting the interviews was that respondents chose a convenient place and time of where to be interviewed. Shortly before interviewing, respondents were given a few minutes to read through the questions which helped to ease the stress and pressure about being interviewed. Thus, respondents were comfortable to express their views. All Interviews were conducted in English aided by non-standardized interview guides. The non-standardized format was sufficient for eliciting discursive and interactive ideas on the topic. In addition, the duration for all interviews varied between thirty minutes to one hour. All interviews were recorded on a voice recorder (on the permission of respondents) - mainly because they were in a non-standardized format (with open ended questions) - of which failure to record would jeopardize the quality of the material. Besides, recording suited the busy schedules of my respondents as it was less time consuming. Whereas for the researcher, recording made it possible to focus and notice the non-verbal communication from the respondents since observation was also part of the methods. Epistemological and ethical issues that may pertain to the quality of interview research are well trodden in Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). They express the concern that interviews tend to be too person dependent, as there are usually flexible; context sensitive; as well as dependant on the personal inter relationship of the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, p.170). For example, there is or could be a problem with interviews in the way that the researcher have preconceptions about the person that is interviewed and that you think they will answer in a special way; so you may not fully listen to what they tell you. This also necessitates that the interviews be taped so that you may listen after. Perhaps also the person that is being interviewed may have preconceptions of what you (researcher) want them to answer and/or what will be the "right" answer. To avoid these situations it is good to create a good atmosphere – so they are comfortable and trust you. Thus like I stated at the beginning of the section, reading the questions in advance helped to create this kind of atmosphere.

5.6.3 Observations
In addition, observations were made to supplement what was said by respondents. These were possible first, because the researcher attended the same church where some respondents also gather. The other observational avenue occasionally surfaced as respondents were given the freedom of choosing a place from where to be interviewed. Incidentally some respondents chose the comfort of their homes and thus welcomed the researcher therein. Observations

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[10] A term that points to an interest in understanding social phenomenon from the actors' own perspectives and describing the world as experienced by subjects, with the assumption that the important reality is what people perceive it to be (Kvale 2009, p.26)

filled in the gap which the researcher bore in mind about sharing household 'secrets' to strangers. Gilbert (2009, p.261) cautions us about the tendency for research subjects to lie or elaborate on the 'true' situation in order to enhance their esteem and/or cover up discreditable actions for different motives. Thus being a fellow African, the researcher was well versed about the popular norm/value attached to family information as being deemed out of bounds for strangers. Therefore, observing women within their home environment ensured correspondence between verbal and the actual behavior/conduct of women. And just like any other benefit, there was some cost attached to this opportunity - as the researcher incurred some extra cost in terms of transport to respondents' homes as well as buying simple gifts[11] to take to their homes.

5.7 Data processing and management

Data was transcribed by the researcher in a verbatim manner so as to make allowance for all its possible use during the analysis stage. Moreover, transcription was done upon completing each interview - in order to avoid losing the quality of what was said. This was sufficient because any unclear material from recording was replaced by memory (Gilbert, 2008). Besides, transcribing word by word enabled the researcher to become familiar with the data which also eased the work of developing themes. Then data was post coded into four main themes and sub themes using both deductive and inductive methods (the main themes include: women's roles; factors that account for such roles; impact of gender roles on the status and position of women within their families; and lastly impact of gender roles on women's participation in the Swedish society). The same procedure was adopted for the analysis as further comparable themes were developed to aid the activity with reference to the research questions. The themes for analysis include: the gendered division of roles in African households; engendering women's roles; gender roles and women's status within their families; and women's roles and participation in the Swedish society. Having reduced the data to analyzable capacity it was easier for it to be compared with existing theory and earlier scholarship all of which combined led to the analysis chapter. Final discussions are drawn from a review of the findings where as gaps for further research develop in accordance with the consequences of the empirical material that I present.

5.8 Ethical considerations

The purpose of the study and risks associated were verbally communicated to the respondents and thus participation was voluntary. As already mentioned, Interviewees read through the questions shortly before the actual interviews after which they were still given a chance to withdraw from the study if they so intended. Respondents were ensured of confidentiality for both interview material and anonymity - a standard that has been maintained. However in lieu of Kvale (2009) procedural advise about concealing information without substantially changing its meaning, all respondents have been given fiction names whereas all personal details revealed (like nationalities, marital status) have been restricted to those of particular importance in ensuring objectivity to the respondents (clarity and respect for their views).

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[11] Note that gifts did not affect the quality of the interviews as it's a common practice in Sweden to carry presents if someone invites you to their house for the first time.

5.9 Validity, reliability and generalization

Validity is ascertained by checking, questioning and theorizing through the entire research project in order to enhance credibility, plausibility and trustworthiness of findings (Kvale, 2009). In congruence with that, questions of how, why and who - constituted the data collection phase. Besides, the analysis was theoretically grounded from interview material, earlier research and theories. This procedure has been useful to circumvent all bias and prejudices. Finally, in developing codes and themes, primary respondents were categorized according to marital status to avoid mix up of ideas. Besides, the three social workers interviewed, have been given numbers (one up to three) to distinguish them from the women.

'*Reliability pertains to the constituency and trustworthiness of research findings*' (Kvale 2009, p.245). Interviews were conducted in such an in-depth manner that brought out the value laden implications of the responses. This was possible by paying great attention to what was said, posing follow up questions whenever necessary and seeking clarity/verification as much as possible. Moreover leading questions were largely avoided except when these were deliberately applied to seek verifications (Kvale, 2009). Besides other than leading questions; paraphrasing was more applied for it sought clarity rather than influencing respondents into giving specific answers.

Generalization

Despite the view that every situation may be unique with its intrinsic structure and logic, an alternative view suggests that through our experience with one situation or person, we may anticipate new instances, form expectations of what will happen in similar situations or with similar persons (Kvale 2009, p.261). Accordingly, we may ask not whether interview findings can be generalized globally, but whether the knowledge produced in a specific interview situation may be transferred to other relevant situations. The analytical form[12] of generalization suits this study as it puts particular emphasis on differences and similarities pertaining to situations at hand other than referring to the sample and/or mode of analysis. Thus, aware of the problems of generalizing from case studies and or small sample sizes, the results of this report can be generalized but within contextual limits; therefore any claims to generalizing these findings and/or taking them as being representative of all African women living in Sweden would have a flimsy base. Never the less the findings may perhaps be generalized to African women with similar characteristics as the ones interviewed, that is, who are both married and having children; as well as African single mothers (having children); living in Gothenburg. Findings may however be limited to: married and single African women without children; African women who maybe having lower education levels than the women in this study; as well as African women who may be having full time jobs and/or working longer hours than their spouses.

5.10 Discussion of methods

As we have seen from the beginning of this chapter, it is clear that the study entirely adopted qualitative methods. However, as we are aware that no one research design is without weaknesses (Gilbert, 2008); it is difficult to discern how results would be if the study had

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[12] See Kvale (2009 p.261) for the different forms of generalizations

attempted to take Quantitative design. The implication would be to use surveys that would reach more women than those that were accessed by the current research. With a large sample, it would have been possible to draw associations for example between women married to Swedes and non Swedish husbands, or having women with different ethnic and educational backgrounds. Then it would be possible for one to draw inferences and showing representativeness of the results. However doing all these would require more time than the one ascribed for this study and perhaps more resources. This does not mean that the applied methods were inappropriate for the current study-quite the opposite. Renowned authors caution us to be wary about the practical issues such as 'getting access to the sample, the costs of doing research and the time that would be involved in the project before selecting a research design' (Gilbert 2008, p.37). The qualitative study design/methods favored my intention for investigating factors that engender roles (reasons for gendered division of roles) and the effect of gender roles; as well as eliciting detail that would not have been possible to get from for instance self-administered questionnaires posted to women. Face to face Interviews were so engaging and interactive and thus yielded much detailed and informative data that perhaps would not have been obtained from quantitative methods. Besides, the applied methods were considered after a critical thinking exercise aimed at answering the research questions stated in the introductory chapter of the report (Gilbert, 2008).

CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS

6.1 Participant profiles

Before presenting the findings, it is useful to make short directories of the respondents so that it is easier to follow up on what was said and by whom. Majority of the women were interviewed individually and only three women were interviewed in a group. Some women are single whereas others are married and all names here have been altered.

African Women interviewed individually

Easter comes from Congo, moved to Sweden in 1997 to get married to her husband who is Swedish and now they have three children (one girl and two boys). She had a bachelor's degree in Management before moving to Sweden and has done language courses here. Her main work is preparing meals at a certain Christian school and taking care of the kids who stay at school for after school activities.

Uniya is originally from Nigeria, moved to Sweden in 2004 to pursue her masters in international business. She is now married to a Swedish husband with whom they have one child (boy) of one year and four months. She has a cleaning company in which she also works.

Harriet is originally from Ghana. She got married to her Swedish husband from Ghana and thus moved to Sweden in 2008 for family reunion. She has one child (boy) who goes to day care. She has a Masters in international relations from Vienna, Austria and currently pursuing her PhD. She works as a Sales representative.

Alpha comes from Cameroon, came to Sweden in 2004 to pursue her Masters in International migration, moved to Denmark to pursue another masters and then moved back to Sweden in 2008. She is now pursuing another Masters in Strategic Human Resource management resource at Gothenburg University and at the moment receives student grant from the state. In addition, she is married to a spouse from Cameroon as well; with whom they have two children (a boy of 3years and a girl of five months).

Stella comes from Kenya. She became a single mother when she was moving to Sweden to pursue her Masters in commerce and business administration. This is because when her husband leant of her study plans in Europe, he decided to divorce her. Apparently, she takes care of her two daughters (one thirteen and another of nine years). She recently managed to secure job with the Youth, after several years of working as a cleaner.

Women interviewed in the group

Mercy comes from Uganda; she is married to a spouse from Ivory Coast. She is a mother of two children - one girl who is ten years and a boy of five. She was interviewed in a group with African Women although she as well served as an interpreter for Dina who could not speak English but Swedish only. She has a degree in Economics.

Dina is Somalian; she is a single mother of six children (three boys and three girls). She is now pursuing a course in nursing. She did not mention a particular job but receives state grant as a single mother.

Imelda also comes from Somalia. She is a single mother of four children. She came to Sweden in 1995 and started afresh with studies after failing to complete her linguistic course in Somalia. She is now a social worker with Familjehuset (Family House). Imelda was interviewed twice - first in the group with the two African women and after she participated in another interview with another Swedish Social worker (SW2). And in this interview she was just a social worker (SW1). However, there were no differences in her perspectives so she mostly appears in the results as just an African woman.

Social Worker two is Swedish (SW2) and she has been working in Hjällbo since 1986. She works with Social Worker one (SW1). Has a great experience of working with migrant women.

Social worker three (SW3) is also African just like Social worker one (SW1) and has worked in Angered since 2006. She meets and interacts with migrant women.

6.2 Findings

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.192) states that the interviewer does not merely collect statements like gathering small stones on a beach but rather his/her questions lead up to what aspects of a topic the subject will address, and thus the interviewer's active listening and following up on the answers co-determines the course of the conversation. Apparently this section attempts to answer the research objectives and research questions of my topic. For simplicity of understanding, the data has been coded into open codes[13] resulting into a set of themes and sub themes. The main themes include: Women's roles; Factors that account for such roles; Impact of the roles on the status and position of women within their families; and lastly, Impact of roles on women's participation in the Swedish society.

6.3 Women's roles

6.3.1 Care

One of the most cross cutting finding among all African women interviewed - regarding their role in their families was - that of caring. In view of this women described themselves as

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[13] This refers to the initial classification and labeling of concepts in a qualitative data analysis. In open coding, the codes are suggested by the researchers´ examination and questioning of the data. (Babbie, 2010, p 401)

mothers and wives. All these descriptions emerged as women were detailing their major roles within their families. As such, one respondent inferred;

"Of course… when I say I'm mother, you have a child that is a human being and has a heart of his own and he is still very young and I'm the one mending that heart and trying to mould it in the way I think it will be best for him."(Uniya)

This statement from this woman indicates a pivotal role she plays in her son's life especially at his tender age. This was not different for Harriet who had a similar stand point when I requested her to specify what she meant with her preceding statement of her role as being a mother; as such she examined;

"I mean you are there for your child when ever, however! The child comes first of course. For example Joseph (name changed) sometimes gets sick sometimes and you have to skip work and go and pick him up so he could stay home. You also make sure you cook food for him because at least it's good to have food ready for him when he comes home from day care. Makes sure that he baths. It's good to have routine for a child during the day, for the child." (Harriet).

Thus by this, one is inclined to believe that being a mother means making sacrifices in order to be there for your loved ones.

In the same positive spirit of motherhood and caring, the same response was presented from an interview with SW3 as she presented her perspective of what women should do. As such she said;

"…most of the things I think is what people have researched on (laughs), you know, a woman tend to be more what can I say, caring, should make sure that, you know, to protect the family, she becomes - a woman becomes all most the root of the family, the nuclear family and the larger family at large."(SW3)

Her perception went beyond that of the women as she mentioned something to do with women being the protectors and roots of their families. However, much as the aforementioned social worker rationalizes her affirmation to be grounded in research, (and also like the preceding interviewees) creates an adorable impression about caring; Easter's statement exhibited a different perspective about caring. As such when I probed about her wifely role; she chaotically stated:

"Like I said from the beginning my husband is more African than - I mean more Congolese than me, he says to me 'Easter I feel you are losing that African thing'. When I tell him my husband 'help me' he says that 'Easter men in Africa are not in the kitchen'. So sometimes its - becomes a subject of discussion. Because I tell him 'ok now we are - are not in Africa and we are in Sweden and I cannot do everything by myself' but since I came, I came with this Idea, you know the husband should sit and I do everything because I didn't allow my husband to go to the kitchen, I didn't allow him to do dishes, I didn't allow him to/… / I was like this is

my job because I'm a woman, a wife but with time I came to know that I really didn't need to do that - it's all my fault, because he took it like that; that food - Easter will cook, kitchen its Easter yeah." (Easter).

 Easter's perspective differed from that of the other women because much as caring for loved ones may seem to be a positive activity, sometimes women feel helpless when it turns out to be a burden for them. In short, some women knowingly or unknowingly tend to set caring trends within their homes, which their family members also maintain. In the long run such commitments become unbearable burdens for women yet they cannot reverse them.

6.3.2 Nurturance

This role is related to caring but differs in the context that it has to do with instilling morals and values into the young ones. This was more or less inferred to in almost all the interviews with the African women. This is considered as one of the women's role simply because of the gravity attached to African morals, as well as women's characterization of the home as a nurturance haven distinct from the vagaries of the public world. Despite that most of the married respondents have Swedish partners, they still look up to their African culture and therefore prefer their children to take after them. Besides, others inferred African morals to Christian morals and thus concluded that such Afro-Christian morals are best for their children. As such when I asked Uniya about raising her children, she expressed preference for the African way. So I implored why; which made her to acknowledge;

"... why I say I will pick the African way because in Africa we teach the children the basics and everything about life from the inside, inside the home. You understand! Every good manners and every good morals and everything starts from the house before they come out, you understand. But why I say I want the African way because the African way benefits more because they learn a lot and when they come out, then they know to face the outside world. So I don't like the European way because they say the child has to learn on himself, how will I entrust a child to /.../ I cannot entrust morals with a child because he is a child and me I'm an adult because the things I see when I sit down, if he climbs in the table he will not see." (Uniya).

In the same spirit of moral guardianship, Alpha said this when I asked her to explain why she wanted to raise her children the African way; she implored:

 "I mean they should be respectful, they should do what's good for the child and what's not good for them, God fearing, they should know what's not good and a good. Meanwhile here they allow the child to decide for themselves while in Africa we decide for the children. So I want them to grow the African way, and making them to pick out the best out of every culture."(Alpha)

Meanwhile, much as Alpha celebrates her Africanism, she is also open about the Swedish culture. Thus, the fact that these African women prefer to instruct their children in the African way, clearly shows how these mothers must as well take on the responsibility so that they achieve their dream. Though celebrated by the African mothers, the African way of raising

children meant some critic from social worker 2 (SW2). This erupted after social worker 1 (SW1) had mentioned how she gives parenting courses to women. As such, I asked about the content and purpose of these courses; which triggered SW2 to set a scene for the causes of youth crime in migrant settlements. She examined;

"...Because the mother raised the child to the step and not outside the step. Now when the school stops at 3:00 and then he goes to the city and take things and then he comes back and pick his small sister and go home and 'say oh mother I love you' - And we must learn the Somalian mother that they must teach their children outside the home, not only on inside the house but also outside". (SW2).

This reasoning quashed the values laden in the African way of raising children regarding indoor moral installation; and thus showed the necessity for nurturing children to fit within the entire society and not -only in the household.

6.3.3 Support

One common finding notably among married women was that majority of them described their role as being there to support the other family members. This role relates to the caring role because one can reason that - '*to care is support and vise versa*'. They confided that they give support to their children and their husbands. In view of this, Harriet in continuation of her roles description added;

"/.../ and the wife is also there, when you are there for your husband. Elisha works long hours..." (Harriet)

In the same spirit of rendering support to their loved ones, Alpha said this referring to financial support to her husband;

"Some of the bills I pay, some of the bigger ones he pays. From our African perspective a man is always the head of the household and we have that mentality you are the one to take charge. We the African women, family we can't say its fifty, it depends so/.../ I may put in 70-30. /.../ often it depends on how heavy the bills are if they are heavy for him I pay/.../ in most cases I have to help because we have these families, so I can't leave it to him so we share. If it's too much for him I chip in". (Alpha)

Considering her African perspective women should be provided for by the heads of the family (men), but due to circumstance it is inevitable that she has to hop in and support her spouse. This further implies that she has to be more than a woman because she partakes of a role which she does not believe to be fully womanly /wifely in her view. As such she has to go an extra mile to join her husband in fending for the family economically.

Finally, Uniya hit the nail on the head by analyzing her wifely role as such:

"...so as a wife what I'm to him? I'm his supporter - so I support him in the way I can..." (Uniya)

Interestingly, this supportive role emerged in a different perspective raised by a single mother Stella who lamented;

"...there are more advantages of having a partner than being alone/.../ when I start thinking of that - oh I have to get to work, and then come put the meal on the table and check on their homework and then at the end of the month, there is a bill coming in, there is a bill going out/.../ I feel like a woman getting all the support, then I would feel like I have the support in my family, the children are fed, the children are following up on their studies and their work is going on well as well as mine. Then I would leave the other part of the rent because we contribute together, then think I should not add it on top of my daily role. (Stella)

Her perspective differs from that of the married women because where as she seems interested in a reciprocal supporting relationship perhaps equal and/or active, the other women seemed to adore a passive/parasital one. Indeed, it was not a mistake that her concluding remark conveyed some level of skepticism about the support from a partner;

"...they are moments when I sit and I think, now I think I need a husband in my life who is going to pay for the rent, I don't want to pay rent, I mean there are times, when I really have this mind that I need to turn down and also feel like a woman but then there are those moments when I feel like no - no I would lose control over my children."(Stella)

This is an indication that although she would want the support, she is naive about giving up her power and/or authority in her home which is different for the married women.

6.3.4 Monitoring

A majority of the women described their role as being that of overseeing how things are run in their homes. On this they stressed that without their effort, nothing can be done in their homes. Regarding this Easter said;

"I feel like sometimes If I don't do much then nothing is done, yeah so you are there to remind them to do, so it can not just happen like this, you have to remind them to do; Shauna now it's time do , now it's time to help me. But if I just keep quiet then nothing is done so I feel like in a mortar". (Easter)

In congruence with her, Mercy even made it even more dramatic when she expressed;

" I have to make sure he (meaning husband) gets up on time even though I'm at work I have to call home to check if he is up and to wake up the children/.../ There was a time he had to do his exams; he missed his exams and then he came to me, 'why didn't you wake me up?. I missed my exams'. Yeah it was your exams! /.../ I think I have the main responsibility to make sure for example in the winter when the cloths are wet, I have to call him, 'are the cloths wet? Put them in the machine, have they finished to wash? Make sure you put them to dry'..." (Mercy)

A keen mind upon these confessions can reveal that women are main drivers of their homes; or call it major role models. However the difference is that whereas the first confession

mainly refers to the children, the second one is even stronger as it involves another adult (Mercy's spouse). He listens and takes Mercy's instructions/orders to do whatever has to be done in the family mainly in her absence.

6.4 Factors that account for such roles
6.4.1 Modeling

A large number of my respondents deduced that most of the roles they assume now are a bi-product of the norms imparted in them by their parents as young ones. For instance Harriet deduced;

"You have to help your parents. Because I remember when my dad told us about that. We were there not to just lay back and sleep but we were there to help our mum, so we took responsibly at a very young age." (Harriet)

This indicates that she learnt the norms of working as a result of training from her dad who initiated them into the practice of hard work at a very young age. The same issue of modeling surfaced again in an interview with Easter who claimed;

"I think - it's I mean home. I come from a big family as we did have maids so I didn't work a lot home but I remember that when we had vacation, then my parents said to the maids to not do nothing so we did - so it's when we were home, so we did what our maids did when were yeah away. So I really enjoy it, I like it, I learned it and saw how things were going on. I didn't see my father in the kitchen. I didn't. I mean, I didn't (shaking the head). My father was a pastor for many years. But now he is retired, he is home but I never saw him in the kitchen but I saw my mother in the kitchen and then we girls but not father. So even my brothers, my brothers in law, I didn't see them in the kitchen."(Easter)

In her reflection of a home environment it is evident how her perception of the gender roles differentiation was shaped through observation of the family role models like the mother, father and other close relatives.

6.4.2 The role of Institutions

Institutions for instance schools and some NGOs surfaced as factors behind the definition of women's roles. This finding arose from both the African women's respondents as well as from interviews with social workers. Accordingly it was evident that most of these institutions' practice - either reproduce or maintain the traditional gender roles or in some cases work to challenge it. Regarding maintenance of the gender role, while in the group discussion with the women, Imelda contrasted the Swedish women to African women - condemning the African women of putting so much workload on themselves a statement that intrigued Mercy to defend herself as such:

"It's also because if the children are not at school on time, they don't call him, they call me, so then I have to call home, where are you, he says' we are late call school'."(Mercy).

This exoneration manifests the kind of pressure institutions impose on women which in the process makes such institutions to reproduce the traditional gender role of motherhood. Similarly, social worker 2 (SW2) expressed her dissatisfaction with the kind of gender blindness that operational staff in some of these institutions exhibit. As such when I asked her to shed more light to her mediation role between the immigrant people and Social services, she deplored;

"Because in the beginning my boss - social services, they would say you must meet the father - man and when I meet the man they have nothing to do with the children. They want to sit and talk about the big questions of the world but not the children…" (SW2).

In her opinion, the social services wanted her to meet with fathers because they thought that fathers are the heads of the family and thus decide over issues concerning children. When her opinion is compared with that of Mercy one sees that these institutions can also define which issues should be handled by women and which ones by men. However, unlike in some interviews where the women's responses implicated social structures as inhibitors of conservative gender role norms, in some interviews it was different. Rather in these interviews institutions were applauded for being gender sensitive and hence crucial in enhancing women's roles and status. For instance when Imelda was discussing her single status (in the group interview), she mentioned why she was brave to introduce the divorce to her promiscuous ex-husband. She confessed that this was possible because she could get help (like financial support) from social services. However when I inquired as of whether they had joint custody for their children; Dina chimed in: *"when the African men divorce they usually go back to Africa because they don't want to live here"* and when I asked her the reason for that action she persisted: *"when they move back they think they have more power at home and here things are divided /.../ and they don't want that, so most of them move back."* From this discussion it is clear that the institutions give women a lot of power by assisting with their needs which elevates their role and status within their families and the larger society. Moreover, an interview with social worker 3 (SW3) justified these women's vindications as she confirmed:

"The whole society, you know - government is speaking the same language/.../ And back to the social office here, as I said I work with social benefits which means that if a family applies for a benefit, the social worker have to also to look into - to receive them equally. We are forced to be aware of the gender issue all the time."(SW3)

6.4.3 The Place - Sweden

One other factor that determines women's roles is the state of their being away from home (Africa). This was more inferred to in all interviews with the African women- regardless of their marital status. One participant, Alpha, had this to say when I asked her what she felt about her feminine role in a different context (Sweden); she applauded:

"Actually, I think being a woman here is the best, let me not say best, but it's a plus, because you get a lot of help from your husband/your spouse which is not the same in Africa. But most of those things the law imposes on them like you cannot hit your wife, you cannot beat your

wife, those things our men in Africa do, they beat them, they cheat on you. Some of them marrying two women it's not allowed here. I think it's a plus/.../ the way you look at things. The decisions you can make in your family. Because most often. In Africa women are dormant even though not all. Any way I'm happy being woman in the western Diaspora."(Alpha).

From her speech, she tried to compare her marital life with what she perceives of marriage in her home country. In her tone, Sweden seemed to be the epitome for her stable and happy relationship. As such this is important in terms of defining what she is capable of doing in her family. More so, in a different interview with Easter; she elaborated her experience to show how the place has affected her entitlements in her family. This rose after I asked her if she in any way felt that her roles have been shaped by the context. This is how she started off:

"Yeah in one way I think, I have friends, I have Swedish friends and you see how people live, and you see them in the homes, how things are done, when I talk to my friends they say I did this, and it can a little bit yeah it can help you out, and yeah it can be part of it." (Easter)

In an effort to make her point clearer, she supplemented that affirmation with a narration of a one turning point in her life:

"… Because I remember one day we went, we had one account with my husband and we went to see a lady at the bank and this lady said something to me I will never forget; she said, 'do you have the same account you and your husband?' I said yeah 'who has the card?' I -he has the card but when I need the card I borrow it from him. 'No, no - no you don't do that, so every time when you want to buy something you must ask him?' I said yeah - what's wrong with that? Then she said 'no a lady must have her card, you must have your card and if you want to go out with your friends without inviting your husband, you know - without calling your husband , you know - without borrowing the card, you know'. So I came home I said to my husband and I asked him really why I'm supposed to ask you for the card every time I have to go out and buy something? From that time we did two cards and now I have my card."(Easter).

This was a life changing moment. Indeed this story shows how our social interactions and engagements (also depending on the place) define and shape our roles as well role obligations.

However whereas the view (that being in Sweden is a strong point for women) was supported by some participants as shown in those quotes; it did not pass without being challenged. A counter argument was raised by social worker 3 (SW3). As such, she contested the fact that African women get empowered in Sweden. In her view she analytically stated;

"... already back home they are struggling to find that equality, so to speak. Tradition is one thing; but above the tradition they are also trying to let the society or let the homes see that I'm as just good as you the man, after all, you just work and sleep. I have to take care, you know, make sure that food - you just give the money but how I make sure that the money goes around to buy food, staff and make sure it's enough for the whole week, you don't know how to economize, so I think they didn't need to come to Sweden to have that you know - perspective…"(SW3).

Her line of argument was endorsed by Stella when I asked her to give an account for her source of strength when she had detailed to me the different things she does (including her NGO work):

"I think most of this I did when I was in Kenya only that right now I feel that the whole responsibility is on me although, I mean there is not really much difference I have done this before in Kenya and then continued here, what I could say is the personality that I'm a naturally born person fighting and - and I see how the things are done/.../ It's not about the environment. It's about what needs to be done…"(Stella)

6.5 Impact of the roles on the status and position of women within their families

Findings regarding the impact of gender roles on the status and position of African women within their families revealed two parallel results. The first view was that - as women take on such roles (already noted) within their families, it gives them strength to stand on their own as individuals; that is, become independent. The other view considered the negative impact of roles on women- that is, the stress related impact.

6.5.1 Independence

This was a particular finding mainly with single mothers. Single mothers felt independent since they took on all roles by themselves without the support from men/ husbands. To some participants this state of independence is adorable since they perceived it as a source of freedom for themselves. This is because by being on their own, women derive a sense of self direction. On this, when I asked Stella about how she felt taking on such roles that she had mentioned; she expressed;

"Powerful! In every way economic, social, independence, independent woman, very powerful/…/ I think it's fifty-fifty. I have freedom of independence that at times I feel in myself and say thank you Lord, I'm able to make decisions on my own whether I make wrong decisions I come back to myself and say I did that wrong/…/ I think I find myself in a position between a man and a woman at the same time, both in the middle." (Stella).

The expression here signifies a strength that the respondent feels from deep inside her - as a result of the role she plays in her life as well as her family. Thus, she owns her decisions and has power over herself - something that gives her esteem and lifts her status. This is evidenced in the reaction that she does not want to feel like either of the sexes; perhaps having in mind the weakness and/or strengths related to either sex. This is interesting because in order to solve this internal conflict, she negates her female status and adopts an own self defined status (which is; 'between a man and a woman').

However, this feeling was quashed by Dina who instead expressed distress for her solitude life in Sweden. To her, being a mother in Sweden is too demanding and implies a lot more burden on her with too much responsibility. This gives her too much stress and pressure which would not be the same if she were living in Africa; because then- this responsibility would be a social concern and not merely confined to her as an individual. In relation with her

(Dina) work load, when I asked the group what they felt about their roles, the subject of having too many children erupted in the group which made Dina to complain;

" *…the mum has to do everything, taking care of the kids, laundry, cleaning/…/ when I was staying with my boyfriend, the boyfriend used to help me drop and pick up the kids, with cooking and cleaning. He is the father of the youngest. And I do everything now/…/ Everything is on you as a single woman/…/ you have to look at the time all the time!"(Dina)*

Her complaint gained ground when Imelda contended with her grievances and thus empathized:

"It's just too much. Because if I was in Africa, we have parents, cousins, friends, neighbors; helping you, but here you are alone mother and doing all the things alone, you don't have any help/…/ And it's different in Africa, children help, but here you have to be everything. You have to be a woman with in a career, a good mother with your children, you have to be a good friend, and so it's many things you have to be. So it's easier in Africa," (Imelda).

The contrast in the women's statements reveal that where as some women experience solitude positively as a source of independence and freedom from perhaps partners, the other women do not see this as a strength at all. Such material reveals something about inner strength and capacities of women.

Interestingly, despite their grievances especially regarding the social responsibilities, they unanimously acknowledged the economic support they receive in Sweden as single mothers. In view of this, it was argued that it is easier to be a single mother and manage own responsibilities here in Sweden since women are financially independent. As a consequence, women identified the difference between living in Africa and Sweden. They stated that due to high poverty (feminine) in Africa, it has to be about the man to survive, whereas in Sweden, it is about choice. This can be derived from the statement made by Imelda when she was augmenting Somali women's perceived powerlessness in relation to Somali men, she elaborated;

"Like I said the only time when the husband has power in Africa is when he has the money and the woman has children -not money. She needs him. Here the woman doesn't need him. You will get financial help as a single mother, they do not need him, she would say good bye. And that's good - I think. Even the mother with eight kids can say bye to the man. You can be with the man when you love him not because you need the money/…/ In Africa you need the man, in Sweden you don't need him you can get free education for the children, you can get day care, you can work, you can study and you can be free, and you can do life what you want even if you have children. Your life stops when you become a lone mother with many children in Africa, but here you are not stopped, you can study." (Imelda)

6.5.2 Autonomous decision making

One cross cutting finding among all participant categories (that is, both single mothers and those living with their spouses) regarding the impact of gender roles - is that of involvement in decision making within their families. Majority of the women consented to being able to

make decisions within their families for example, regarding children's welfare and school, family expenditure and consumption and, decisions of where to stay. This was mainly attached to the role of motherhood and or caring. Regarding this role mothers perceived themselves as being more knowledgeable and experienced for what is best for their children as well as their families. Thus this justifies their lead role in decision making in their families. As such Easter prided;

"My husband says that I make almost all the decisions. So sometimes I…yeah that's what he says I don't know if it's true. I feel we talk when he needs something, a project, we talk about it and then we decide, but many times he says it's my will - that have been done in all the decisions, but I feel yeah I feel I make decision" (Easter).

and when I requested her to give me some examples of the decisions she makes; she boldly added: *"… for example when we moved from where we were leaving to another place, it was normally me who wanted to move at that place, my husband didn't want to move he wasn't real in it because it was near his parents so he said 'I really want to grow and if we move near my parents, I see myself very little'. But I really liked the place so we moved. Even today he says it was me who wanted to move. About our kids when for the, the choice of school, eeh… I'm still involved… I think it's - maybe I feel like I know the best for my kids. I feel like I know what's good for them and yeah I feel like that because, yeah I - I really made my children to move from the school they were in, I said that I wanted them to the school they are now, and they didn't like it."(Easter).*

This means that with roles of for instance mothering and/or monitoring, it is inevitable that women get involved in major decision making within their families.

6.6 Impact of gender roles on women's participation in the Swedish society
6.6.1 Limited time to participate in social activities - time for family

Most women confessed to limited participation in social activities like meeting friends; hanging out; etcetera. Noteworthy however is that whereas almost all my respondents agreed to limited participation in social activities, the circumstances regarding their less participation differed. Surprisingly, it was only a handful of women who fully contended with the fact that their gender roles hindered their participation in social activities. For instance when I started the subject about the extent of their participation in other activities (other than domestic roles) in the group interview with the African women Imelda complained:

"But I hate in the morning and Sundays when I have to be home with children because - cooking, helping with homework it's too much. Monday to Friday, I have help from a cousin but weekends I'm alone/…/ Workmates it's easy you can meet at Friday - When the boss organizes something after work. It's difficult for weekend."(Imelda).

Such a tight schedule illuminated in the woman's complaint may further imply that the other activities may not be prioritized or may be given up at all for her familial roles.

In the same complaining spirit, Mercy also whimpered:

"In the weekend when kids have friends' birthday parties, you drop the kids there but you don't have your own time to meet your friends. That the only time, you have you can wake at 7 o'clock and talk to them. It's only the weekend". (Mercy).

Her statement implies that her motherly responsibilities deprive her of her personal time to think of having the other activities. On the same subject, an extreme response emerged from Harriet who explicitly stated:

"No I don't actually do that because I have to pick Joseph at a certain time. When he is done with day care he is so tired. I know they have activities like after work, Friday nights, so I tend not to involve myself in that. And also because I feel I'm too busy and I have a lot to do already so it's not something that I have planned to participate in; but if they have activities like celebrating a birthday party at work during work time I do that but not necessary after four because I'm tired and I know Joseph will be tired. And Elisha works at least sometimes up to seven o'clock."(Harriet).

To her, social time coincides with family time which means that she has to do a cost benefit analysis in order to choose where she should and thus she prefers to be with family. This further means that she can only have social time when it's time to work or when she has help from day care, and more so she has definite type of social activities she attends for example, those organized at work during work time for instance birthday parties but not necessarily hanging out. In all this she becomes the living sacrifice for her family's progress.

Contrastingly, one unintended revelation arose from the women who did not consider their gender roles as a sufficient justification for their limited participation in social activities. These women instead went beyond a mere concentration on gender roles and considered factors beyond their control; for example, lack of an inbuilt friendship network in Sweden, limited social activities available to them, limited integration from the Swedish society; as well as language barrier. As such in an interview with Uniya, when I implored whether she has any social activities she participates in, she examined*:*

"Social activities! Myself? There is nothing much in Sweden, what do I do - social activities; here is no social activities here in Sweden, I don't go to club because I cannot drink, but yeah I go to church and I meet my friends. That's the only social activities that I have/.../ but sometimes I do go for party when I'm invited ,by people that I know and they invite for like their children's birthday, or they are celebrating their birthdays, or someone I know, they are doing their anniversary, so yeah, it's like that and the women's meetings. Those are the activities that I participate in. not much". She proceeded to justify her predicament: *"Yeah just because this is Sweden I didn't grow up here so I did not build my network from the childhood here so I don't have much activities".(Mercy).*

Whereas she can create time for social activities, the circumstances have made her to compromise and resolve that Sweden has no social activities - thus it justifies her non participation - as she lacks knowledge about it. This statement gains ground when contrasted with Easter's who pride in the social network she has created after a long time of missing a

social life. As such she explained why she missed the social life when she had just come to Sweden:

"...I really missed it when I came to Sweden, eh this social thing. You know - it's very cold in Sweden and people are very cold, and/.../ Because of the lack of the language and because of like I said Swedes are very cold people, very difficult to have, its hard to have a relationship with a Swede, I remember I really worked on it because I wanted to meet them. I remember I was calling, inviting people home and all the friends we have now are from me, I mean from my efforts!"(Easter).

Thus unlike Uniya who almost seems like she gave up, Easter managed to frame her own definition of the unknown – others (that is the Swedes) and thus devised strategies of bridging with them and now feels excluded no more.

Noteworthy, was that most women who agreed to taking part in social activities' mainly described their other activities as attending church and meeting church friends and/or attending indoor parties like birthdays. This however does not erode the fact there are a few women who mentioned their activities as being involved in organizational work with the other women; as such this is what Stella said about her social activities;

"I run an NGO and it's for reaching out to women and children and my work is to empower women and children especially young girls in Sweden that after looking around and observing the difference between Sweden and Kenya I realized that our children could be missing out because we parents are thinking that everything is being done in the schools but on the centrally is not everything is done in the schools. And some of us want to keep the children in their square that if they go out they are going to see this and keep them inside. And my desire is to break the young girls free and let them see what the world is in a positive way and this is not to say that they shouldn't be home, but they are home doing the normal house hold chores but also having a feeling of what it is, because Sweden is not our first country we are from Kenya, we are blacks, we work extra hard for everything that we earn and because of that, it's not everything come on a silver spoon, and by that our children should learn to be extremely cautious right from the word go."(Stella).

6.6.2 Participation in public education

Apparently, all of my respondents had at least managed to have another education other than the one they had on coming to Sweden. This finding disapproved my earlier anticipation that gender roles would impinge on their participation in public education. Accordingly, it was not the case because majority of the women had their master's degrees, or had undertaken other courses or at least had participated in language courses. Besides, a few of the women confided that they were undertaking their PhDs or are planning to enroll. When I asked Harriet how she reconciled her familial roles with education, she said;

"...SFI and web designing was before Joseph and I was not working so I needed something to keep me busy. And then with the PhD I began when Joseph was small so it was easy to do

because he would sleep and then read it online. Even today I'm able to do and complete my assignments and reading the material."(Harriet)

This tells lots about how women manage to create time for studies.

Stella appraised;

"I had my bachelor of commerce in business administration and I was working before and yeah, I moved to upgrade to masters degree and probably pursue a PhD which I haven't come to, yeah, it's a going on process." (Stella)

These among other responses reveal that despite their gender roles, women manage to create time for participating in education. From their responses I can deduce that women are able to afford that, because of the help from day care system, online technology and the fact that the environment is conducive for women to participate in education. For example, on this Imelda asserted:

"In Africa you need the man, in Sweden you don't need him; you can get free education for the children, you can get day care, you can work, you can study and you can be free. And you can do life what you want even if you have children." (Imelda)

In congruence, Mercy complemented her on this;

"They lift you up; if you want to go back to study you tell them (referring to day care administrators) I have to be at school early leave the dome open at six o'clock - and they do that, so you can be at school early."(Mercy)

Consequently, revelations from my respondents also showed the fact that going back to school while staying in Sweden is not a choice but a necessity. Most women explained that regardless of your level of education, when you come to Sweden, you have to study something - at least; the language. In an interview with Easter after she had told me that she had completed her education in management before she came to Sweden; I then asked if she started work when she came to Sweden. As such Easter expressed:

"...like everybody when you come to Sweden you start doing the language first, it's like a must, you spend three years doing the language and this is what I did…" (Easter)

 This was not different for Imelda who also recalled;

"When I came in Sweden I had two years linguistic in 1991, and then I had my kids and I stopped schooling. Then I came in Sweden and when I came I started from the beginning because even when you have education from Somalia it doesn't work here. So I went for SFI-the language and adult secondary for adults." (Imelda).

6.6.3 Career/occupational mobility

As anticipated, gender roles affect African's women's upward mobility in terms of professional careers. This is because majority of my respondents revealed that they worked part time in order to afford meeting their familial obligations such as picking up their children

from school/day care; and/or taking care of household tasks. Other women also mentioned of how they have to miss work when their children are sick. When I asked about her work life, Easter said;

"No I don't work full time. From the beginning we decided with my husband that I will not do full time. He did - doing full time. We felt like I was needed home yeah, so he said ok me I take full time and you take half time - part time." (Easter).

Such a revelation is clear that the woman works less hours. Moreover, it was more or less inferred to from all the interviews particularly with the married women that they earned less than their spouses. Thus most of them defined their economic role as being that of complementing their husbands' incomes but not the main income earners for their families.

Apparently, this finding raised another contentious issue. This concerned the fact that though most of my respondents had some level of qualification (on average - masters degree), none of the women worked in the line of their profession. Most women did contract jobs and odd jobs like cleaning. As such, while detailing her career life, Harriet (currently pursuing PhD) said,

"I'm working for a company called Euro land, that - when I work the 75%. It's a sales job… Previously I had odd jobs, part time jobs like translation, interviewing in English and it was more contract jobs and it wasn't something that was not constituent." She continued;

"I did international relations in Vienna, Austria. So I came here hoping to get a job but it wasn't easy. And I was bit discouraged because I thought I could find something really quickly and when that didn't happen I had to change my thinking and decided to enroll in Swedish classes instead." (Harriet).

Uniya had this for an answer when I asked her about her motivation to start a cleaning company;

"I don't know, never had it in mind to start the company but I think it was situation that drove me into it/…/ I came here when I was twenty one, oh twenty nine you understand, time is going because like everybody if you don't plan you fail, so I had planned that after my masters I will get job to support myself and support my family, you understand so I was like ok, it's time now. So what do I do? I started doing some little jobs here and there and I was working with a friend – Sylvia to clean and I was working for some little cleaning companies, I was helping them to clean. So I was like what did I do - I read international business, I read international marketing so I got started from there."(Uniya)

This chapter has shown the roles that women assume within their families as those mainly to do with caring, nurturing, giving support to family members as whereas assuming a watchdog role. The chapter considered the factors accounting for women's roles to be rooted in modeling as well as external factors like social institutions and the place. Finally, the chapter has revealed the impact of such roles on the status and position of women within their

families; as well as larger participation in the Swedish society. These are further developed in the Analysis chapter that follows immediately.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In this chapter, I have transformed and modified the open codes (in the results section) into axial codes[14] in order to be able to discus and critically examine the interviewees' statements in a more worked out structure and proper relations of meanings (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). A critical reader can note that in as much as the results have been presented in their original form (in the preceding chapter), there was also some attempt at deriving meanings out of what was directly said by respondents. In spite of that however, I suppose that it is necessary to have another chapter to give deeper insights beyond what was directly said by respondents. The current chapter therefore draws from respondents' views, in combination with earlier research, theoretical meanings; as well as with the researcher's reflections from the interview situations and materials. Precisely, this section has four broad themes developed in accordance with the study aims: the gendered division of roles in African households; engendering women's roles; gender roles and women's status/position within their families and finally, women's roles and participation in the Swedish society. All these themes still have sub themes drawn from results.

7.1 The gendered division of roles in African households living in Gothenburg

7.1.1 Grateful Slaves - doing gender

Majority of the respondents identified their major roles as being mothers and wives. Thus women mainly dominate in the role of caring for children and adult male spouses; which further implies a specialization in the traditional gender roles. Moreover, by virtue of being mothers, many of the women exhibited a peculiar prioritization for their children's well-being and development than any other tasks. This finding exhibits the characteristics of a 'role- set' that the Social Role Theory postulates. A 'role set' as articulated by the Social Role Theory pertains to the collection of roles which go with a particular social position; thus by occupying that position you automatically gain some or most of those roles (Payne1997,p.160). In respect to this, women are not only willing to take on such tasks but are also grateful for assuming such duties; which gives freedom to their spouses to refrain from such substantive tasks. Though, the Swedish governmental parental leave scheme is basically aimed at having both mothers and fathers to be engaged and involved as active parents in the care and development of their children (Dribe and Stanfors (2009, p. 36); the respondents, considered their partners' work- especially regarding household tasks and child care -as being complementary rather than necessary. A further implication of this is that, care and house hold tasks are more of a routine for women than for men. Interestingly, much as this finding may mirror Gruber's (2002) result about the existence of gender specific division of roles among Couples in Central Europe, the point of contrast lies in the larger sharing of household tasks in households where women have a high level of education. This is because educated women tend to engage in full time work outside the home (Gruber, 2002). In the current

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[14] Axial coding refers to a reanalysis of the results of open coding in the grounded theory method, aimed at identifying the important, general concepts, (Babbie 2010, p.402)

study, although women were highly educated (in most of the cases), the traditional structure of roles remains stronger in their households. Perhaps as explained by Classic Resources Theory, that a spouse's share of housework and childcare reduces as his/her share of relative resources increase; (Mannino and Deutsch, 2007); the overarching argument behind this (concentration on child care) could be that in much as the respondents seemed to be highly educated, they still hold low status jobs -something that can as well affect their bargaining power for larger sharing of roles within their families; thus stagnating in the conventional gender roles of women.

7.1.2 The dual role of women

The respondents (particularly married ones) stated that they provide support to their family members specifically male partners. The kind of support they give manifests in diverse forms. However, of all the different forms of support they mentioned; financial support deserves more attention. This is because, in addition to domestic chores like preparing meals and taking care of children, women have got to find work outside the home to be able to chip in for their spouses especially when the bills are high. This, in desolate would not have been a problem considering the benefits that accrue from women's participation in the labor market. However, the challenge lies in the type of work that women do outside the home (which is mainly manual - for most of the women interviewed) and yet, they have another bunch of menial tasks waiting at home. This means a double work load because much as it is important to earn; or perhaps help with family income, their partners do not have an equivalent work load at home. This duplicates what Sawyer (2002, p.208) described as "working double"- stating that women in Sweden continue to work more than men, as they still have the main responsibility for reproductive work.

Considerably, the Swedish gender equality policy is specific about gender roles. The policy puts it upon men and women to equally share in the distribution of unpaid care and household work; emphasizing that they should take the same responsibility for household work, and have the same opportunities to give and receive care on equal terms (Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality, 2009). Besides (though unintended), it came out that most of the African women I interviewed tended to be married to Swedish men - who would presumably be aware of equality issues – on the account that they have been raised in an environment that in comparison to that of my respondents, is more egalitarian just as Kunovich and Kunovich (2008) suggest. Apparently, one of the reasons that can perhaps account for such scenario is people's attitudes especially regarding culture and roles. Precisely, most women that I interviewed ethicized and feminized their double workloads through racial statements such as; '*I'm an African woman*'. This was more or less inferred to in all most all the interviews - whenever women were asked to express their feelings regarding the roles they assume in their families. Such an observation can perhaps substantiate what Bredström (2005) had earlier on postulated as stereotypical differences between Immigrant men and Swedish men; or those, between Immigrant women and Swedish women. In lieu of that, my argument is on the contrary that, such sexually gendered relations exist in African or partly African households. This argument therefore challenges her conceptions of such sexually gendered behavior as being stereotypes. Apparently, I suppose that denial or covering up is not the best solution -

but rather, action in terms of empowerment, as proposed by Darlympe and Burke (2006). Viewed through the lens of Social Role theory which observes that people's behavior towards gender roles are predictable and thus influenced - depending on the context as well as social position held, women may not conceive this (dual nature of their workload) as oppression; but may instead view their roles as own obligations that they must fulfill (Foucault,1992). This therefore requires educative advice so that women become aware of their conditions; and also because, we may sometimes not be able to define our situations as oppression or injustice until we are informed of such - as so. Thus by facilitating people to learn of the existence of such inequality, they go through a process of self rediscovery that may not only enable them to name their oppression but also enable them to begin addressing the cause of their oppression (Darlympe and Burke 2006, p.113). For example, women may begin to rethink their roles and start questioning their workload. Such a transformation may also stimulate women - not to join the labor market just for getting 'peanuts' that will supplement their spouse's income, but instead as a personal choice and for their own benefit. After all, aren't women as equal beings as men - that they can do different; instead of doing gender or supplementing on what men do? Besides, empowerment has to challenge injustice, inequality and oppression that exists in social structures like families if is to make a difference or be meaningful (Darlympe and Burke, 2006).

7.1.3 Women as motors

One of the cross cutting finding among both single and married women was that they are everything (engines) in their homes. In terms of this role, whereas the single women put emphasis on the economic role (in terms of provision), most married women emphasized the supervisory role (such as supervising their family's expenditure and consumption). For instance for married women, it came as finding that despite their limited earning potential compared with that of their spouses, women take a lead role in apportioning of the family income. This mirrors Foucault's vindication that wives as the mistresses of the households, are key figures in the management of the 'oikos' and, that are therefore essential for the oikos's government (Foucault 1992, p.154)). Contrary to the Resource theories that suggest that a spouse's strategic access to external resources, such as income and occupational status, confer on him/her greater decision-making power to put his/her wishes into practice (Coltrane 2000; Johnson &Huston 1998; Presser 1994 cited in Mannino and Deutsch 2007, p.310); the women in this research earn less compared to their spouses but they dominate decision making concerning how their homes operate. Some married women confessed that they work part time whereas their spouses assume the fulltime work for pay. This clearly implies women's limited command to strategic resources like income. This finding expands Foucault's argument that: *"it's the husband's activity that brings provisions into the house, but it is the wife's management that regulates their expenditure"* (Foucault 1992, p.157). In addition, the fact that women have much power when it comes to home decisions may be justified by the reasoning that they are more in the homes than their spouses or call it, full time home-work for no pay. No doubt, such work and decisions taken require a motor to manage. One can even reason that perhaps the women derive satisfaction from such decisions; which satisfaction may serve as compensation for lost income outside the home.

7.2 Engendering women's roles

Diverse factors emerged to justify the roles African women do within their homes. Among these were modeling, institutional factors and place factors. These have been further developed in the ensuing section.

7.2.1 Socialization

Socialization refers to the life long process of inheriting and disseminating norms, customs and ideologies.[15] Similar to Kunovich and Kunovich (2008) findings, most respondents justified their current roles (within their families) as being values they learnt in childhood through observing and instruction from their parents. As such they mastered and internalized their roles as part of womanhood; which further implies that women view home maker roles (such as child care and/or preparing meals) as being part of their mainstream responsibility. This finding affirms the attestations of the Social Learning Theory which suggest that major learning takes place at childhood through observational learning, imitation, and modeling from major role models in the family. Thus through this process, infants and toddlers see people and behaviors repeatedly labeled according to gender and observe that only certain behaviors are sanctioned for each gender, and that opportunities are heavily organized by gender (Miller, 2011). This aligns with the fact that some respondents reflected on their fathers' behaviors/attitudes in their childhood homes as justification, for the treatment they (women) give to their spouses in their adulthood homes.

One interesting thing about this socialization catchphrase is how it tends to work one sided. Like I argued in the subsequent section, majority of the respondents tended to be married to Swedish men; one can then question if these Swedish partners (married to the women I interviewed) were not socialized in accordance with the norms of equality prevalent in Sweden. Alternatively as we observed from the results, it could be that these men specifically seek out for African women after knowing the differences in respect to responding to the norms of equality. For instance one of the respondents specifically underlined her partner's emphasis of ethnicity in their relationship as relegation to push her further into conventional gender roles: *"Like I said from the beginning my husband is more African than - I mean more Congolese than me, he says to me 'Easter I feel you are losing that African thing'. When I tell him my husband 'help me' he says that 'Easter men in Africa are not in the kitchen'* (Easter Interviewee). Consequently, our focus may have to extend beyond perceiving such attitudes as only being a matter of socialization to also think about the contribution of social class to such attitudes (Kunovich and Kunovich, 2008). Adopting that stance may lead us to conclude that these women (knowingly or unknowingly) end up in relationships and/or with partners that already have high role expectations (for both house work and care) from them. Thus the fact that women respond to these gender roles positively, is not only a matter of socialization but also a manifestation of role complementarity as articulated by the Social Role Theory.

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[15] Wikipedia Free encyclopedia[online] [Accessed on 25th March 2012]

Role complementarity exists when roles, behavior and expectations - all fit together well with the expectations of surrounding people (Payne 1997, p.161).

However, it is uncertain whether women would agree to the fact their conduct or that the treatment they receive from their partners is as 'un healthy' as presented in this discussion. This is because women were not directly asked to rate their gender relationships; although it is inevitable that a discussion on gender roles inevitably has to refer to relations as well.

7.2.2 Social structures

Social structures can be micro and/or macro institutions like the state, social offices, schools, day care centers, and etcetera. specifically - all those institutions that have a grip on people. Many of my respondents deduced some of their roles as partly being influenced from social structures. Consequently, some respondents blamed social institutions like schools for putting too much pressure on them in terms of for example child care. Tentatively, the Social Role theory suggests that: "*societal division of labor produces diffuse gender roles for different genders and therefore confers broad expectations on men and women*" (Diekman and Schneider 2010**,** p.488). Such expectations may lead to production and reproduction of the traditional gender division of tasks that invisibly contribute to women's oppression. In other words one would ask why such organizations do not exert the same pressure to men. For instance some respondents confided that when their children are not in school on time, the school administrations always call them (women/mothers), one would ask why not fathers or just home phone lines. A similar role of social structures in exploiting women was well trodden in the work of Bradely and Healy (2008). They cite feminists (Barrett 1980; Wilson 1977) who described the state[16] as patriarchal - since its security policy was predicated upon a view of the family which saw men as breadwinners and women as dependents something that reinforces the male power and authority in the family (Bradely and Healy 2008, p.61). Similar points of the ideological nature of welfare states in terms of how they reflect existing gender relations as well as contributing to their continual reconstitution, can be found in Darly and Rake (2003, p.40). Darly and Rake (2003) contend that the normative content of social programmes is a powerful force in creating and reinforcing appropriate behaviors for both women and men. They further illustrate that; "*such effects are to be seen in the valorization and affirmation of social roles and the organization of life into a series of phases or stages that centre especially for women around the relationship between roles and behavior relating to family and work*" (Daly and Rake 2003, p.40).) In short, ubiquitous social structures exhibit invisible oppression to women that is normalized by stable institutions such as schools. Besides, research has it that an examination of the gender division of labor usually shows that although both women and men work to maintain themselves and their households, there tends to be differences in the nature of their work and in the ways it is valued (Parpart et al, 2000).

Contrastingly, to some respondents (specifically single women), social institutions - like social services - hold the epitome of their economic livelihood. The single mothers said that they do not need men because their financial needs are met by these institutions. This finding

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[16] Referring to the British state after the war.

is supported by Darlympe and Burke (2006) empowerment model at the level of feelings which mainly stress the need to work with experiences or pasts that make individuals to be in such weak positions. Accordingly, respondents (single women) reflected upon factors like poverty as reasons for their powerlessness in their home countries. This gives the opinion that in Africa; male power derives from economic power; but as women gain access to economic resources (as they do in Sweden), male power disappears. This underscores the argument that the greater a woman's relative earning power is, the more she is likely to be economically autonomous (Esping-Andersen, 2009). However, the main weakness I see with such a state policy to help women - lies in the fact that much as these women are freed from male patriarchy and/or marital slavery - through economic benefits - call it financial independence; the very women still end up in state dependency. In other words, the state serves as their economic god without which these women have no alternative than depreciating back to the same predicaments. It is rather worthwhile to adopt a development strategy that can enhance women's position; or that promotes their ability to participate fully with men as agents of development and change (Parpart et al. 2000, p.143).

7.2.3 The context - Sweden

The place came up as a determinant of women's roles and entitlements. The respondents conceptualized the place in terms of the daily encounters and interactions with the Swedish people as friends and/or workers in different institutions. In addition, the place was also defined as a well structured system with policies and laws developed in accordance with and/or strict adherence to human rights. At this point, respondents contrasted the Swedish systems with those of Africa and thus concluded that such aspects like - strong laws governing social/gender relations are usually ignored back home (in Africa). From their testimonies, it is evident that the Swedish structures have strong influence on women's agency. Some women revealed how their capacities and abilities have been shaped through this interactive exchange with the rest of the Swedish society. As such, communicative exchange/Social interactions create windows of opportunity for people share information about roles, rights, entitlements, laws, policies etcetera. An extreme case among others may be inferred from one of the respondents who changed her idea about sharing the bank card with her spouse. This happened after she had an encounter with a bank officer who challenged her to have a personal bank card. The experience enabled her to go through a process of self-rediscovery, that she immediately went home and confronted her spouse about the issue. This case is a critical example of empowerment at the micro/individual level. At the micro level, empowerment may occur without any change in structural arrangements but rather through a development of a personal feeling of increased power or control (Dalrymple and Burke 2006, p.113). Additionally, Darlympe and Burke (2006,) have demonstrated how empowerment at the level of actions can lead to changes in the individual agency; social welfare for the powerless groups, and/or involves change in the wider social structures (such as the family, institutions and policies). This gives an impression that for instance the existence of gender sensitive structures in place (Sweden) makes it possible and/or conducive for African women to make their ideas comfortable.

Consequently, this finding led to the critical debate of whether African women actually get empowered in Sweden. This question met a lot of critical opposition from some social workers and some African women. As far as they are concerned, the Swedish society only creates a kind of acceptance and thus favors women's emancipation which accordingly may be lacking back home in Africa. However, one may instead contest that by correcting of the inequalities and blighting women's opportunities visa vie those of men, Sweden facilitates greater empowerment and independent agency of women (Sen 1999, p.193). For instance, the woman in the illustrated case may perhaps have started to have an active role compared to the previous one; when she had to always ask for permission from the spouse before spending on anything.

7.3 Gender roles and women's status/position within their families

7.3.1The changing role of women

The findings reveal that majority of the women consented to autonomous decision making within their families for example: regarding children's welfare and school choices; family expenditure and consumption; and decisions of where to stay; among other decisions. Noteworthy is that whereas some women are able to express this level of autonomous decision making within marital relationships; other women, particularly single mothers, highlighted this opportunity to being on their own without spouses - which gives them room to take independent decisions without being answerable to anyone. In support of this, research shows that the traditional family norms usually depreciate as divorce rates and lone parenthoods increase (Giddens 1994, cited in Hatfield 2000, p.66). Interestingly however, is that within this sect of single mothers, some women considered this independence as an opportunity while others (specifically those women with many children) considered it as a tedious undertaking. The independence gained may be interpreted as a change in women's roles in two ways: first; the women that experience independence as a strength demonstrate a changed status and position from that of dependence and subordination to self-determination or liberty. Dependence on others as Sen (2001, p.283) puts it; "*is not only ethically problematic; but it is also practically defeatist in sapping individual initiative and effort; and even self-respect.*" Secondly, for those women that viewed being on their own as too much pressure on them, and yet live to adjust, also demonstrate a scenario of changing roles from perceiving themselves as only/solely responsible for caring for children and/or running the home to another level of responsibility. For these women, this change in roles may for instance entail fending and providing for their families (economically) which may certainly be an alien phenomenon into their lives (Chai 1987 Cited in Brettell 2008, p.127). Besides, Sen (2001, p. 283) argues that *"a division of responsibility that places the burden of looking after a person's interest on another person can lead to loss of many important things in the form of motivation, involvement and self-knowledge that a person herself may be in a unique position to have."* But since these women have no substitutes to assume such roles they have to individually take self-responsibility, which ideally a manifests a change in roles.

7.4 Women's roles and participation in the Swedish society

7.4.1 Sweden - a 'cold' society

Almost all the African women interviewed, agreed to none or limited participation in the social activities. As such, the women's only social activities were attending church where there are fellow African women and/or attending birthday parties of their friends or those of their friend's children. Despite this unanimous revelation, the conditions for their non-participation differed. It was only a few women who fully consented to being entirely limited by their familial roles or factors arising from themselves. Besides, it is not surprising to find out that women are limited by familial roles to take part in social activities; on the account of their daily routines as discussed in the preceding chapter (section on women's roles). Rather, a substantial number of the women considered their non-participation on the account of external factors; ceteris paribus, these can give us food for thought. The factors given included: language barrier; bad weather; and 'coldness' of the Swedish population; among others. This is interesting just as premised in the Empowerment Theory that: *"Individuals who make connections between their personal condition and the society in which they live, begin to make changes within themselves, within their families and community, and wider social structures"* (Dalrymple and Burke 2006, P.113). This finding reveals lots about bridging and bonding among the women. One can be inclined to believe that perhaps these women may be confining themselves into their small networks and do not want to bridge with the whole society – take for instance the women who have not yet learnt the language after several years of living in Sweden. In this respect, women themselves could be responsible for their isolation though not entirely.

Another perspective may be to consider the role of the Swedish society in this exclusion - that is: Is the Swedish society it-self open to accept/integrate these women? Some respondents confessed to having difficulty in making and maintaining relationships with the Swedish people. In comparison, research has shown that migrants may not engage in social life or entertainment because of lack of time (since they are always tired after long working schedule); or because they do not want to spend their hard earned income on such activities; and/or because of the social stigma attached to the type of jobs they do (Gavanas, 2010). All such similar reasons emerged in the interviews with the African women. Possibly, worth giving more attention has to do with the type of jobs that the respondents do. One cannot be wrong to possibly think that African women are 'excerpted[17]' from the Swedish society because of the low status jobs they do. Moreover, such jobs may determine their personal quality and self-value to have networks with the mainstream Swedish society; thus affecting their social lives. The Swedish ministry for integration points out the lack of network to be one of the factors hampering the introduction of newly arrived immigrants in Sweden. According to the ministry, networks and skills development can be realized through mentorship and as such the government of Sweden intended to initiate a three-year mentorship project, where new arrivals would be matched with mentors on the basis of their occupation and education. The project ought to be implemented during the period 2010–2012

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[17] This refers to a situation of not being out thrown out but also neither being considered as a participant in something like an activity, or society. (Shahram 2010, Cited in Gavanas 2010, p.41)

and a sum of SEK 5 million (per a year) was allocated to these activities (Government offices of Sweden, 2009). However, the level to which such activities have been implemented and/or the extent of their effectiveness remains a matter for discussion. Besides, the respondents in this study have stayed in Sweden for quite a long time to be able to familiarize with the system. Despite all that, women still view the Swedish society as 'cold' and thus justifying their non and/or limited involvement/participation in it. Such revelations imply that these women are still outside the mainstream Swedish society although physically inside it. When they will be fully inside it, remains a debatable subject which cannot be answered by this report.

7.4.2 Women's paid work - choice or availability?

Similar to Dorantes and de la Rica (2007)findings, my results exhibit similar characteristics of women mostly predominating in contract jobs like in sales, preparing meals in schools and others in odd jobs like cleaning. In addition, African women that tended to have somewhat better jobs only worked part time instead of full time. Now the question is do women really make it their choice/preference to have these kinds of work schedules or to participate in such low esteem jobs? Besides, we should keep in mind that at least on average, most respondents had some level of qualification despite the fact that none worked in the area of their profession. This further leads to issues of sexuality and racialization. This gendered and racialized nature of women's work schedules is well spelt out in Wrench and Modood (2001 cited in Bradley and Healy 2008, p.80). Wrench and Modood (2001) carried out discrimination tests on the UK labor market survey and found out that people can be rejected into jobs at the first stage of application simply by having an Asian name or coming from a non-white ethnic background. Similarly, Dorantes and de la Rica (2007) also point out discrimination to be the reason behind the slow labor market assimilation of African migrants in Spain; whereas Gavanas (2010) points to the same gender stereotypes as major determinants of labor market options for migrant women and men in Sweden. Accordingly, the working conditions of migrant women may be understood as 'necessity'[18] based being driven by limited options for making a living (Gavanas 2010, p.72). Sweden has in place an integration policy that aims at equal rights, obligations and opportunities for all, regardless of ethnic or cultural background (Government offices of Sweden, 2009).What necessitates attention is the way different stake holders like employers respect or comply with such rules.

This chapter has applied a multi-dimential analysis to explain women's roles, the factors that determine such roles as well as showing a detailed account of the impact of gender roles on women both privately and publicly. The analysis has also attempted to incorporate a wider perspective and has therefore gone beyond a mere concentration on gender roles in understanding African women's lives. It has thus shown how African women manage to make ends meet - both within their families as well as outside. Besides, this chapter has gradually shed light to some of the gaps that need to be revisited to improve the situation of women

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[18] Gavanas (2010, p.72) shows how the conditions of migrant workers in the domestic service sector in Stockholm are neither driven by opportunity but by necessity since none of her respondents showed a preference for the type of work they did.

living in Sweden. Some of the arguments are further developed in the final chapter (eight) of this report.

CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND FURTHER DISCUSIONS

8.1 Summary

The major purpose of this research was to investigate the gender distribution of roles within the African families living in Gothenburg, Sweden; and to explore the impact of such distribution on the status/position of women within their families and participation in the public sphere in Sweden. The African women who were interviewed mainly assume traditional gender roles within their families. These roles include caring for children and adult male spouses, the nurturing of their children (into mainly African values), monitoring the progress of their households; and that of supporting their family members (children and male spouses). The results thus show that even in Sweden women assume a large proportion of non-monetized work (home centered activities) where as men (their partners) focus on work to generate income. Compared to the pace of the society or environment within which they currently dwell, the women's descriptions of their roles did not manifest a pertinent progress towards gender equality and/or equity. Rather than the anticipated substantial change in gender roles, there were just a few discernible improvements/ change in women's roles for instance in connection with the supportive role - women take on the economic roles of supplementing their partners' income or entirely fending for their families as single mothers do. I would rather describe this as good gender relations than gender equality. Accordingly, women face the burden of combining child care and house hold tasks and other work which have been examined as the dual role of women.

The findings regarding the factors that determine women's roles revealed that women assume these roles as a bi-product from socialization, pressure from social institutions, as well as the environment in which they live. As articulated by one of the prominent writers Bourdieu (1989)[19] that habitus - which are the internalized master dispositions lead to particular perceptions and actions that are durable in character and that social structure is deeply ingrained within us; the factors that determine women's roles are deeply grounded in women's occupancy of social positions (such as mothers, wives) that prescribe such roles like caring as motherly obligations. Besides, such structural predispositions/constructions are internalized by women as social responsibilities through Social learning.

As had been anticipated gender roles have an impact on women both within their private and public lives. Privately within their families, depending on the type of the family (lone/couple) - women assume autonomous decision making within their families. This is not however to say that they have equal relations within their families but rather as Therborn (2004, p.116) defines it; "*spousal autonomy under an overarching male superiority*". For single mothers this autonomy is so valuable to them that even a slightest thought of losing it, is reason enough for living as singles forever. This replicates Foucault's idea of power- as not an institution or structure but the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society (Foucault, 1992). Privately still gender roles had a serious impact on women's participation in the social activities and as a result women reported a lack of time to attend to their own individual interests. Besides, a different view arose from the interviews as

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[19] In Houston, S. (2002) Reflecting on Habitus, Field and Capital: Towards a Culturally Sensitive Social Work. *Journal of Social Work* vol 2, p.149

women also blamed their less involvement in social activities to the factors beyond their control such as the poor language skills, limited social networks as well as the closed nature of the Swedish society. Publicly gender roles impinge on women's life courses. However the level and magnitude of the effect differed depending on the activity. Contrary to my anticipation the impact of gender roles on women's educational development was minimal. This is because despite their work schedules women managed to at least obtain some level of education – the language courses at the least. Despite the argument from preceding chapters that going back for studies (in Sweden) is more of a need than a necessity; the fact that women have managed to build their human capital despite their unbalanced schedules deserves some credit. Finally, the impact of gender roles on women's career development is eminent. This is partly due to gender roles of motherhood and care but also due to closed structures in terms of limited employment opportunities available to these women. Thus combining gender inequality and structural inequality is crucial when one seeks to understand women's limited career mobility.

8.2 Conclusions and Further discussions

Practically, knowledge must be translated into action rather than merely remaining in observations; as the effectiveness of our knowledge beliefs is better demonstrated by the effectiveness of our action. This view has been supported in the work of Kvale (2009, p.256). The question is how should my findings be applied to see that these groups of women - who also form part of the Swedish society, become even more comfortable as they live here? It is of no doubt that the subsequent analyses made out of the results are liable for developing relevant actions. Despite that however actions can also be developed from having deeper insights into what was unraveled. Although we should be mindful about the common objection to interview knowledge as being dependent on subjective impressions of the interpreter/reader, the value judgments and approach being reproduced follows from the woman centered perspective adopted in this study. Deriving from feminist social work subjectivity therefore, I find these relevant and important not only in their intrinsic value but also considering how things would change for both the women as well as for the whole society.

8.2.1 Eminent knowledge gap about the Swedish society: call for an empowering social practice

My results indicate a knowledge gap about the Swedish culture on the side of women in two areas: first, regarding the prevailing social activities and second - in nurturing of children. Much as we have seen in the analysis that this is partly blamable on women's roles and other external factors - the major reason lying behind it - is the limited integration of women which makes them miss out on some important information. For example some respondents contested the existence of social activities in Sweden. Similarly about raising children, the respondent's revelations reveal different myths/stereotypes about the Swedish way of raising children. For example, as to why children are not beaten or why children are left to decide on themselves. They considered the Swedish way as moral less; which in my opinion, can be interpreted as information vacuum about the Swedish culture. And because some mothers do

not speak the language it is likely that they are misinformed about the Swedish norms and values by their children who seem to be more integrated in the system - since they play and study with the other Swedish children. The feminist social work perspective adopted in this study implies that areas of women's lives that may have been previously ignored, can be brought into the frame and included as focus of the work to be undertaken (Trevithick, 2009). The work done by some municipalities (like Angered) in facilitating and supporting community based organizations that help women to help themselves and/or aid them to understand the culture here is highly cognizable. Social workers (SW1 and SW2) said that they have a small self-help organization for parents in Hjällbo called - Aktiva Föräldrar i Hjällbo (Active Parents at Hjällbo) through which they (Social workers and women[20]) come together and share information about the Swedish laws, policies, and how these women can access social benefits. They also give parenting classes to women in relation to Swedish norms. However little did they mention about social activities and moreover the extent at which such organizations are spread all over the country or, can easily be accessed by women is disputable. Thus further research into how such initiatives can be developed to empower women at all levels - ideas, feelings and actions is necessary.

8.2.2 Relative resources and empowerment

Distinct from the other studies which have not focused on African women as a group, my findings reveal that African migrant women have skills, power, and inner built strength; and are adaptive as well as adjustable to change. However, to a larger extent (as argued in analysis) women's professional and career mobility is stalled. The different economic benefits women get (for example, social benefits and/or study grants) are highly commendable and enhancing. However, the challenge with some of these measures is that they are developed/ planned from general and a poor/sorry based perspective rather strength based one. This perspective not only stimulates dependence but also quenches women's inner strengths /innovativeness. Besides, much as women may be liberated from their afflictions and/or dependence on their spouses/other parties, the very women are trapped into another form of dependence - that is, on the state benefits. In the same spirit, Parpart et al (2000) challenges the kind of development activities that only focus on women's conditions - that is, aiming at improving their ability to carry out the traditional roles and responsibilities. It is rather worthwhile to adopt a development strategy that can enhance women's position; or that promotes their ability to participate fully with men as agents of development and change (Parpart et al, 2000). Thus, in addition to such initiatives, an adoption of a strength based perspective towards working with migrant women in general and African in particular, would seem more viable. However, we must be wary that working from such a perspective would require a change of attitude from viewing migrants as costs to the system to being seen as assets. Thus, authorities and/or social workers would assess the needs of women from their (women's) perspective rather than assuming women's needs basing on prejudgments that these women are very vulnerable and powerless. In other wards more research is needed in

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[20] The social workers said that this organization is meant for all parents but since they tend to be involved with how to nurture children/parenting (which are mainly stereotyped as womanly fields), men do not show up and if at all, it can be one.

how to build migrant women's capacities so that they are facilitated to become independent and thus stimulate their full participation in the mainstream Swedish society socially, economically and/or politically.

8.2.3 Eminent deskilling in migrant women- Inequality of opportunity

This study expands on earlier studies that show cases of migrants and/or migrant women in low esteem jobs like cleaning, sales; jobs that do not match their qualifications (Sawyer, 2002; Dorantes and de la Rica, 2007; Bradely and Healy, 2008; Gavanas, 2010; Anja and Adrea, 2010). This was mainly exhibited in the kind of work women do - despite their reasonable qualifications (as we have seen in the preceding chapters). From the women's revelations it is clear that gender roles have only a partial effect on women's choices in terms of joining paid employment and /or going back to school; which implies that women are willing and free to pursue anything as long as they so wish. And as we have observed from the analysis, it is not a preference that women prefer to do such jobs but rather a choice that have to be made in order to supplement their partners' income and/or survive. Upon this background therefore, further research is needed to investigate the extent of entry of skilled women migrants (African or non-African) into the Swedish labor market.

The Swedish ministry of employment has the main responsibility for issues concerning integration in the labor market, whereas the Swedish Public Employment Service is supposed to support all unemployed people regardless of background (Government offices of Sweden 12th December 2009). Little is known if the respondents in this study had/ have registered with this board or; whether the board cares about the kind of job one attains in relation to her/his qualifications. Moreover the rate at which employers comply with directives from those offices or perhaps the measures that the ministry of employment adopts in order to see that migrants are treated at the same scale with natives in matters of job allocation are also highly discursive. Besides, most of the respondents have got their education (in different disciplines) from Universities here (in Sweden). I understand the challenge in terms of the language but in my opinion, I it is likely that if the government shows some commitment in terms of equal status and treatment in employment, the language issues will weigh no more as this will be a motivational factor for people to learn the language. Perhaps, this can even substitute the performance based bonus (in terms of financial incentives) (Government offices Sweden, 2009) that was proposed to motivate migrants to learn the Swedish language. Alternatively, politicians could also consider the extent to which foreign education can also be useful in Sweden. This is because some migrants come with education from their respective countries, which means that they only need information about the system other than starting from scratch. In my opinion, graduates from other systems would do just as graduates from the Swedish education system; perhaps this would even open avenues for sharing work experiences in all fields.

I end this report with the words of Social worker 2 (SW2) whose analysis and experience combines the structural and stereotypical processes and their interconnection with the processes of gender construction in the way women live and are perceived to live thus limiting their choices and progress.

"We must listen more at the African women. If the Swedish government want to know more. We don't say come and I will listen to you;- We say oh you poor you African; you have good hair; you must be glad because I give you. We don't see the strong woman, who has power, who wants to work, to do something for example in a political way, we don't!"(SW2).

To fronetically situate the social workers' revolutionary statement above, I deem it fit to refer to the social democratic slogan of the 1920s (driven by Per Albin Hasson - Prime minister 1932-1946) about Sweden being a People's Home (folkhemmet). A good home does not know any privileged or rejected, no darlings, and no step children hence there is equality, caring, cooperation and helpfulness in a good home (Wahlstrom, 2011).[21] This literally requires a breakdown of all the social and economic barriers which now separate the citizens between the privileged and the slighted, the dominant and the dependent and the plunderers and the plundered (Wahlstrom, 2011). When this is achieved, it is possible that both the migrant populations as well as the native Swedish population will be on the same page of gender consciousness and equality; rather than having a sect of the population only reaping from the modern wave of equality.

Well-articulated then the onus is on every one of us, - social workers to analyze through these experiences of inequality and oppression and to work on the processes of conscious rising to challenge both the patriarchal ideology as well as government policy (Trevithick, 2009).

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[21] Lecture material on Human Rights in a Swedish Context, SW2271; Gothenburg University. The instructor referred to the Referral Debate in the second chamber 18 January 1928, in Johnson 2006 ,p.1, Timbro Briefing Paper No.3.

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APPENDIX 1

Interview guide - African women.

Topic: TOPIC: The gender roles of Sub Saharan African women in the Diaspora and how these influence the status and positions of women in both the private and public spheres.(case study of women in Gothenburg, Sweden).

Basic information

Name, age, marital status.

What is your Country of origin (country of birth)?

When did you move to Sweden? Year?

How old where you when you moved to Sweden?

Did you move to Sweden together with your family/partner/friends or did you come alone?

Were you married when you came to Sweden or have you met your partner here?

Does your partner have the same origin (country of birth) as you?

What was your level of education when coming to Sweden and level of education now?

Do you have any children; how old are they?

Are they born in Sweden?

Private sphere

Describe how your normal day looks like.

Do you think there are specific reasons why your normal day looks like this?

What role do you have in the family?

How do you feel by taking on such roles?

Are you involved in making important decisions in your home? Give examples of important decisions.

How often do you get involved in making important decisions in your home (position)?

Apart from your domestic roles, do you have any other activities you engage in? which are those?

Have you been enrolled in any educational courses since you came to Sweden? If yes which ones and did you complete the course?

Do you have paid employment?

For how long have you been working for that employer?

Have you had other employments before? Which?

Are you engaged in activities in connection with your present employment?

Do you in any way feel limited by your familial roles to take part in those/such other activities?

Would you like to make any shifts regarding your roles?

Is there anything you want to add?

APPENDIX 2
Interview Guide - Social Workers.

Background questions:

Name

Education

What sort of employment do you have?

How long have you worked in your profession/as a social worker?

How long have you worked in this area (geographical)?

Have you been working/work with immigrant women?

Do you have any special projects for immigrant women from Africa?

If any, what are/were the aims of the projects?

What are the results of the projects?

From your perspective, what specific behaviors/norms do you link with being a woman?

Do you have specific reasons of why you think in that way?

Do you see them, specific behaviors/norms, connected to women from Africa?

Have you noticed any changing roles (gender) for African women participating in these projects? Or, African women living in Sweden?

How do you think Swedish gender roles influence immigrant women?

Do you think Swedish social policy, for example day care for children, influence the gender roles for immigrant women?

What do you think might be the reasons behind such a gender distribution of roles in African households living in Sweden?

Do you see any link between the gender roles of African women and the participation of these women in the general Swedish society/public activities?

Do you believe that they are differences between what roles African women assume while in Sweden that they might not pursue while in Africa? Give examples.

What do you think are the reasons for assuming different roles while leaving in Sweden?

Do you have something to add?

Thank you for your participation!