Adolescent Migration in Rural Africa as a Challenge to Gender and Intergenerational Relationships: Evidence from Mali

Labor migration has become common for adolescents in many African populations, where it is a key event in the transition into adulthood for both genders. This article examines the experiences of, expectations of, and perceptions about adolescent migration from different perspectives, taking into account their gender and generation. It is based on qualitative data, collected from a rural population in Mali, where labor migration is experienced by most adolescents (70–90 percent). Despite a convergence of migratory practices between genders, the subjective experience and the social construction around youth migration appear to be in contrast for girls and boys. Male migration is part of family economics, and adolescent boys use migration to strengthen their family status. Female migration is a personal project and includes strong expectations about learning and obtaining life skills. Social judgment of female migration is negative, but new lines of solidarity are emerging between female generations.

Keywords: migration; adolescence; transition to adulthood; gender; family; Africa; Mali

Labor migration during adolescence is widespread in rural sub-Saharan Africa, especially in West African populations with low school enrollment. After having affected men for decades, labor migration has developed

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among adolescent girls in many populations, to the extent that it is now a part of the transition into adulthood for both genders. These migrations are usually temporary, as most adolescent return home before marriage. In rural areas where the practice has been documented, for instance among the Sereer and the Joola from Senegal (Delaunay 1994; Lambert 1999, 2007; Linares 2003; Enel, Pison, and Lefebvre 1994; Delaunay and Enel 2009), most of the adolescents, girls and boys, have experienced urban labor migration. This is also the case in Southeast Mali, among the Bwa ethnic group, which we focus on in this article (Lesclingand 2004, 2011; Hertrich and Lesclingand 2012). Among the cohorts born in the early 1980s, about 80 percent have experienced at least one labor migration during their youth, mainly before age 20 (Figure 1). The pattern is similar between females and males, though adolescent girls begin to move at earlier ages than do boys.

If labor migration is now a common standard for adolescents of both genders, does it mean that migration has the same meaning and is experienced in the same way by men and women? Is labor migration constitutive of a new “youth culture,” providing to both genders a similar experience outside their village? Are they considered and managed by the families in the same way?

NOTE: This article has been translated from French by Catriona Dutreuilh and Krystyna Horko. The results presented in this article are based on data from the SLAM project (Suivi longitudinal au Mali), under the scientific responsibility of Véronique Hertrich (INED, Paris, France), http://slam.site.ined.fr.
To address these issues, we approach migration from the perspective of different actors, taking into account their gender and generation. Expectations and perceptions on migration, reported by adolescent girls and boys and by adult women and men, are combined to describe the social construction of youth migration and to question the underlying challenges to gender and intergenerational relationships.

Adolescent Migration in the Context of Southeast Mali

Context

The population that we studied is part of the Bwa of southeast Mali. The population lives off family based agricultural production, mostly food crops. Reproductive behavior has not yet changed and fertility remains high, at about eight children per woman and nine children per man. Migration is common, but mainly within Mali or to neighboring countries. There is no culture of migration to Europe.

The Bwa are known for their independent spirit (Capron 1973, 1988), specifically their resistance to French colonialism and to Islam and more generally their long-standing reluctance to join national integration structures (Diarra 2007). However, in the past 20 years changes have taken place. In Mali, the 1990s were marked by the arrival of democracy (1991) and a policy of multisector decentralization (1993) (Bocquier and Diarra 1999; Keïta and Konaté 2003). At the local level, the decade brought involvement in political projects and development programs. In particular, there was greater investment in schooling, with the establishment of community schools that villagers managed and financed. Nearly half of the children currently attend school, while very few did so in the past.

The family organization is based on patrilineal lineage (political and exogamic units) and domestic groups (economic units). Domestic groups are often large and complex. The village community plays an important role in socialization and social control, by means of numerous collective activities (such as one day per week set aside for leisure and drinking, family and ritual ceremonies, and sessions of farm labor) and close relations between neighbors. It also ensures a high level of socioeconomic homogeneity in the village and shapes the pattern of social change. New behaviors (e.g., stopping the practice of female genital mutilation or relaxing matrimonial procedures) are difficult to institute, but once introduced, they spread rapidly.

Youth migration: A mass phenomenon

The Bwa are sedentary people and strongly attached to their villages. Yet migration has always existed on a large scale for women, who generally settle in their husband's village after marriage (virilocality). Migration also exists among children (especially for fostering) or for whole families, for instance when a new village is established. Among the older cohorts, young people
already traveled quite frequently (among people born before 1950, about 40 percent to 50 percent experienced migration before age 20) (Table 1). Youth migration substantially increased in the subsequent cohorts, mainly as a result of labor migration.

Two phases of migration can be distinguished (see Table 1). The first phase, starting in the mid-1960s (cohort 1950–59) concerned mainly men. The second phase began in the late 1980s (cohort 1970–74) and concerned women. In both cases, the practice expanded rapidly until it affected most of the members of the cohort. While labor migration remained a male-specific behavior for 20 years, it is now common among both genders. During the last decade, girls have even been catching up with boys. While labor migration had been slowing down among male adolescent, it continued to increase for adolescent girls. Seventy percent of males and 90 percent of girls experienced a labor migration before age 20 among the cohorts born in 1985–89. Migration has reshaped the course and the territory of adolescence. While the village was formerly the regular and exclusive focus of life, the young cohorts now have a living space that often extends beyond their ethnic area (Table 1). Among the younger cohorts, three out of four adolescent boys and nearly all adolescent girls had lived for a time outside their ethnic area before age 20.

### TABLE 1

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**SOURCE:** Life event history survey, SLAM.

**NOTE:** Individuals who were interviewed as residents during survey rounds (1987–89, 1994–95, 1999–2000, 2004–05 or 2009–10). Migration is defined as a move for at least three months. All migrations occurring up to the end of the year of the 19th birthday are included.
The Data

Our data are based on the longitudinal project, Suivi longitudinal au Mali (SLAM), implemented in the late 1980s and updated every five years on a local scale in seven villages (4,300 inhabitants in 2009) (Hertrich 1996). The observation system includes approaches, methods, and concepts borrowed from the fields of population studies, anthropology, and sociology. The study combined various operations, both quantitative (e.g., censuses, follow-up survey, and life event history survey) and qualitative (e.g., genealogies, focus group interviews, and individual interviews). This article mainly focuses on the qualitative data. Quantitative data are used here only to provide background indicators (for detailed quantitative results on adolescent migration, see Hertrich and Lesclingand 2012; Lesclingand 2004, 2011).

Qualitative data consist of individual interviews about the experiences of gender and intergenerational relations during various stages of life. They were conducted in January through February 2002 by the two authors in two villages. The interviews were semistructured and covered four large periods of life (childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age). Their aim was to capture the environment and interindividual relationships and to record people’s own views and feelings concerning events and intergenerational relationships experienced since childhood. A total of sixty-five individual interviews were conducted with men and women belonging to three cohort groups (born before 1950, 1951–70, and 1971–83). The interviews were not focused on adolescent migration, but that issue was almost always discussed in the interviews because most people are concerned with migration because they themselves or their children have experienced it, and no one is indifferent to the topic—everyone has an opinion. In addition, in 2001 we conducted ten group interviews that focused on young girls’ migration. Our repeated presence in the field over a period of some 25 years has enabled us to carry out informal observations and exchanges that contribute to our questioning and interpretation of results.

Individual Expectations: Convergences and Differences between Genders

From the way women and men report their experience of mobility during youth, it is possible to identify some guidelines that structure their expectations and their discourses. Some of these guidelines are common to both genders, while others are gender-specific.

City and money: A basic attraction shared by rural adolescents

*Discovering city life.* In this population with extremely modest living conditions, where school enrollment has long been negligible and migration to Europe virtually nonexistent, the city represents modernity and a way of life free of the
constraints operating in the countryside. Respondents described the differences between their urban and the rural lives first and foremost in terms of material living conditions (especially food), working conditions, and access to money.

Regular meals and richer food. The quality, quantity, and diversity of the meals are one of the recognized positive aspects of city life. Whereas in the villages people have, at best, two meals per day, which consist of millet, food in the towns is more diversified as well as richer (both rice and meat), and people often eat three meals a day. “You could eat well; the food was different from what we had in the village,” remembers Patama² (male, born in 1964). That the recently returned young migrants are often plumper than their village friends is perceived as proof of better living conditions in the city.

Access to money. The village economy is based on food production. Access to money is limited and depends on the sale of cereals or small crafts. People are not paid for the work they do in their household. To earn money, however modest the amount, is a novel and exciting situation for young people: “What I really liked a lot in the town was that if you are there you have money; when you work you earn money” (Mimanu, male, born in 1976). “When you earn money, work’s no longer difficult” (Mutien, male, born in 1980).

Easier work. Having easier working conditions in the city than in the villages is one aspect that women stressed: “In the village, we grind the millet by hand, we crush it, we draw water, and we go to the bush to fetch wood, whereas in Bamako there are mills” (Dabuhan, female, born in 1973). This contrasts with the picture that NGOs give concerning the harsh working conditions of maids in the cities. It is possible that young people tone down the negative aspects to conform to the rosier version of the situation that prevails in the villages.

Generally speaking, the city is described as a world where everything is easier and more abundant. This myth is self-sustained since bad experiences are often concealed due to individual’s strong desire to return to the village as someone who has succeeded, and to take part in the promotion of a new youth culture constructed around their “urban adventure.” The setbacks and difficulties of migration are usually expressed in the form of parody,³ for instance as stories about youthful naivety, which ultimately serve to further enhance the idea of the successful migrant.

The attraction of “adventure” is also mentioned in accounts: “When you’re young, [that’s] a time when you want to find out about the world” (Hiromi, male, born in 1973). However, this is referred to less frequently than the material living conditions, while leisure expectations (going out, partying, going to the cinema) are hardly mentioned at all, doubtless because that aspect of urban culture remains largely inaccessible to young people from the villages.

Earning money. Having access to new sources of revenue and returning to the village with cash are the objectives of migration. The amounts of money that
circulate in the villages are very modest. For instance, a sum of 50,000 CFA ($99) seems vast and increases young migrants’ prestige. However, in a society where hoarding money is perceived negatively, keeping their money for their own personal enrichment may be counterproductive. Often a large share of the profits of migration is spent before returning to the village. Young girls spend almost all their earnings on clothes and kitchen utensils to bring back to the village, and set aside only what money they need for their transportation and possibly a small sum for little presents such as tobacco for their parents. Young men who leave to work for Fulani cattle-breeders and who are paid in heads of cattle also do not return with much cash, while the young men returning from the city frequently buy personal goods such as clothes and radios but keep most of the money they bring back for their fathers.

**Being part of the new culture of youth: A challenge for both genders**

Part of the interest in migrating lies in the fact that it enhances the youths’ status in the village: “When I returned I found that I was smarter than those who had stayed behind. People look at you differently, the children come up and greet you and the girls look at people who have returned from their migration in a different way” (Tini, male, born in 1975). “In their eyes I was different from the other girls, because I spoke Bambara and I brought many things back with me” (Brigitte, female, born in 1981).

Taking part in a collective practice is an important component of the migratory experience. As youth mobility has spread, going to the city has become commonplace. Peer influence works on two levels: returnees’ accounts heighten the desire for new discoveries among those who stayed behind, while the desire to conform also encourages people to migrate. It is about finding out what is going on in the city as well as participating in youth culture, for which one of the main pillars is now the migratory episode: “I had heard a lot about Bamako and I wanted to go and see it” (Agnès, female, born in 1980). “I wanted to get to know Bamako because it’s not good for young people not to know the city” (Jules, male, born in 1978). “Every time those young people return from there [Bamako], they’ve got something to say. I was curious to go and find out about it too [the city]” (Paulette, female, born in 1981).

The fact that migration is now commonplace has led to a distinction between migrants and nonmigrants that some perceive as a source of exclusion. Those men and women who, unlike their peers, did not have the opportunity to migrate, consider something to be missing from their lives. Jeanne (female, born in 1979) never went to the city because her father was against it, and she is still affected by that: “It marked me and still hurts to this day.” For Yisouara (female, born in 1981), an early marriage upset her plans to migrate: “I married too early, earlier than all my friends. That put [an end] to my plan to migrate to the city. I could have gone to the city like my friends and learnt more, but I was no longer free.” Fune (female, born in 1966) was held back in the village by her mother, and she
stressed over the loss of material acquisitions: “What I mostly regret is not having had the time to work in Bamako and get kitchen utensils before marrying.”

Finally, migration appears now to be a key event in the transition to adulthood. In general, both men and women refer to the migration experience when describing the transition from childhood to youth. For the older generations, key events in the transition were usually the physical transformations and the ability to do hard labor. Now, these criteria are rarely mentioned and are being replaced by the first labor migration experience: “It was when I came back from the Fulani people for the first time that I felt that I was a young man” (Anatole, male, born in 1956). “When I was with the Fulani, I was doing work that I didn’t think I could do myself, so when I got back I could do all the young people’s work! I found that my friends behaved like young men, so that’s when I knew that I was like them. So we’d go off to talk in the village, whereas before I didn’t even go to the village” (Nicolas, male, born in 1966). “It was when I left my village to go to work that I understood that I had become a young woman” (Agnès, female, born in 1980).

Learning: An especially strong expectation for young women

In the existing literature, the educational value of labor migration is often underestimated. Adolescent labor migration is usually considered in opposition to schooling, because the former often causes one to drop out of school. However, in this setting, where the opportunity for formal education was rare until recently, labor migration is presented as a means to gain knowledge and skills. Young girls, especially, note this for several reasons.

*Learning the national language* almost invariably emerged from the interviews as an essential aspect of the time spent in the city. The Bwa language is only spoken in a limited geographic area, and therefore, it is a de facto obstacle to travel and exchange for most individuals who are socialized in the village and have had no schooling. Learning Bambara (the national language), therefore, is an important key to future life and a source of independence for mobility. A young woman in conflict with her husband could, for instance, decide to go off to the city without having to depend on an intermediary (usually male) to assist her. But language acquisition is also valued within the village itself as a means of taking part in exchanges with outsiders, such as with visitors but also with agents in local development projects. Angèle (female, born in 1950), who lived in the city with her husband, believes she gained valuable experience there that helps her to relate to others: “That way of talking to people helped me. If I’m in a situation where there aren’t just Bwa people, even if there are some Bambara, I can talk to them too. Some people worry [because they don’t know our language] but I can talk to them.” More generally, the young women talk about their migration as a factor in their intellectual development and opening up to the world: “When I got back to the village, I felt a bit different, I was at least a bit more sophisticated than those who had stayed here. And then I had seen things that they hadn’t. . . . These days, if you can’t converse in Bambara, you’re a bit backwards” (Kusseni, male, born in 1976).
Last, the apprenticeship aspect of migration was expressed in two practical ways in respondents' accounts. They discussed the acquisition of “know-how” in domestic matters, notably cooking (e.g., new recipes, the use of spices, etc.), and the acquisition of interpersonal skills, especially concerning attention to personal appearance: “When I got back I felt that I had changed, I was cleaner, people spoke about me and the boys courted me” (Agnès, female, born in 1980). “I was cleaner. . . . I had gained weight and I took care of myself better than the other girls” (Sawa, female, born in 1951). “We couldn’t be the same [as those who stayed in the village]. I had learnt to cook dishes that the others didn’t know. And then I had seen things that the others had not” (Mandu, female, born in 1982).

Mentions of such learning appeared less in the men’s accounts. This may be because of the greater importance that men give to the economic contribution (cattle, financial contribution, etc.) of migration, but it is also perhaps because what men learn is more commonplace among men (e.g., linguistic skills) or less valuable in the village (e.g., gardening or masonry).

Contributing to the family economy and strengthening one’s position in the family structure: A requirement for men

The tie between male adolescent migration and their household economy is very strong and is evident in their decision to migrate, their destination, and the benefits of migration. Since the 1970s, labor migration among young men has been strongly dominated by migration to Fulani areas. Young boys leave to work as herdsmen for Fulani cattle-breeders for several months and are paid in heads of cattle. This type of migration makes it possible for families to acquire oxen at no monetary expense and provides young men with their first migratory experience. This type of migration is absent from the female experience. Girls move to the cities (mainly Bamako, the capital), work as domestic servants for families, and use their wage to constitute their trousseau (clothes and utensils accumulated by women before their marriage). In contrast, the urban destination is a second step in male migration; usually they first move to another rural area. Migration is almost always reported as an individual decision among both genders (Lesclingand 2004, 2011; Hertrich and Lesclingand 2012). However, more girls (one-third) than boys (one-tenth) leave without consent of the family head.

The strong objective of contributing to the family economy is clear in males’ interviews. Sometimes the initiative to migrate is taken by the family head himself. For example, Patama (male, born in 1964), who migrated to live with the Fulani at the age of 15, recounted, “It was my father who decided I should leave and I was pleased about it. I felt I’d be able to obtain something for my family and I did, because I brought back an ox.”

Even when the father expresses some reticence, the migratory project is usually considered in regard to the family’s economy. That was the case for Justin (male, born in 1967), who migrated several times to Fulani areas and to the city. For his first migration to the Fulani, “the decision to emigrate was mine. I returned with two oxen that I gave my father”; and later “when I returned from
Niono, I had 75,000 francs. I gave 50,000 to my father and kept the rest.” Migration has become a way for men to express their allegiance to their families and try to consolidate their position in the family space. Each individual seeks to contribute to the family economy (notably with cattle) in a way that enhances his sense of responsibility.

Damien (male, born in 1961) remembers that he was “in a hurry to go because he had friends who had already left.” Michel (male, born in 1973) says, “We saw other young people come back with their oxen after living with the Fulani people, and that’s what made us go, too.” On the other hand, Mimanu (male, born in 1975) regrets that his father, who already had enough cattle, did not ask him to go. He says, “I regret not going to the Fulani even now . . . because I think that now the other oxen have gone . . . at least if I had gone, those oxen would have stayed.”

Migration opens up the possibility of different individual contributions to the household economy that did not exist when shared farm work was the only source of income. A competitive spirit and a sense of pride impel men to migrate and to bring back as much as their brothers and friends. Moreover, when they return, they are consulted about how to use the money or if they should sell the cattle they have brought back, thus involving them in household decisions.

The Adults’ View of Youth Migration: Gender-Specific Perceptions

While statistical data show a certain similarity in the migratory practices of young people of both genders, at least in terms of frequency and timing, the population at large sees it quite differently. Migration by men and women is perceived as two distinct phenomena, the former viewed positively and the latter negatively.

Men’s mobility versus women’s mobility: A different social judgment

The distinction between men’s mobility and that of women is not specific to the population we studied. It can be found implicitly in the reports of development NGOs that stress the vulnerability of young girls and their risk of being abused or exploited; this concern is not expressed for young boys. A negative perception of young girls’ migration has been observed in most of the populations where migration has been studied. In some cases, this negative perception has resulted in quite striking repressive measures (Lambert 1999, 2007; Grosz-Ngâté 2000; Foucher 2005; Kassogue 2008). For instance, Kassogue (2008) notes that in several Dogon villages in Mali, “coercive committees” have been set up explicitly to prevent females from migrating by imposing material sanctions such as fines not only on the parties concerned but on their families for failing to hold them back, and even by imposing social sanctions (marginalization in the village) against families that were unable to bring the girls back quickly.
The Bwa rarely use repression as a means of social regulation, but they do view the rise of migration by women with resignation; it is something to be deplored but impossible to prevent. The personal accounts describe a very different social judgment for men’s and women’s migrations, partly as a result of the way the migrations occur, but also due to the different positions that men and women hold in society. Men are seen as the pillars of the family and social organization, and their migratory practice is, therefore, perceived as being in service to this collective structure. Conversely, because of the practice of virilocality, women leave their families when they marry and tend to be perceived as nonpermanent family members by their own relatives and as outsiders by their in-laws. Their move to the cities simply reinforces the stereotype of the uncontrollable female figure. “When those girls return, they bring nothing for their families. It’s different with a boy. A boy may buy clothes, but he always thinks about his family” (focus group, men). Speaking about his son’s wife, Philippe (male, born in 1946) says, “I knew that it wouldn’t work out with Sophie. She’s a girl who stayed too long in the city. . . . The girls didn’t go off like that before. Now nearly all of them go, and when they return to marry, they no longer respect their in-laws.”

Control over women’s sexuality and marriage is a key issue in the social judgment applied to women’s mobility. The elders believe that adolescent migration opens the door to premarital sex and premarital pregnancies, both of which are strongly condemned. The elders are also afraid that the girls will get married in the cities without their control. While they were rare until the 1990s, children born out of wedlock and marriages in the cities have increased. However, they are probably less frequent than is locally believed to be the case; nevertheless, the perception is that the young girls’ sexuality is out of control and that their family’s plans for them are pointless. The moral pressure to be in line with the family is still strong enough to produce psychological stress among adolescents who do not get the blessing of their parents to migrate. Jean Noël (male, born in 1947) explains his daughter’s illness as follows: “When she left, I told her that she shouldn’t marry over there. But she met a man there and hid the fact that she moved in with him. But in the meantime she fell ill and she thought that perhaps it was because she didn’t respect her parents’ wishes. . . . The people in the village knew about it [her marriage] but we [her parents] weren’t informed. . . . She came back quickly and told us that she had found a husband. . . . After that she got better.”

Fathers and daughters: From refusal to resignation

When we look at what the men say about their own daughters’ migration, their viewpoints are less extreme. Fathers are frequently opposed to their daughters’
first migration, at least in public, but when faced with a fait accompli, they change their position and adopt a more tolerant attitude. Even though a young girl’s move is never broached in the same way as that of a son, the father recognizes that he cannot deprive his child of an experience that is now shared by almost all young people. The fathers’ major concerns are about their daughters’ sexual and conjugal lives, with fathers fearing above all that their daughters will return pregnant or enter a union in the city without consulting them. Lomu (male, born in 1937) is still worried about his two daughters in Bamako, even though he claims to have given his consent for their departure: “It’s not good to let them go because when they are over there I can’t control them. They do what they want. . . . They claimed to be going to get clothes and kitchen utensils, and since I’ve got no money to buy that sort of thing, I let them go.” Damien (male, born in 1961) is also waiting for news of his daughter who went off to Bamako two years ago with his consent: “It’s a sign of the times . . . if you’ve got a daughter and she sees other girls going off, if she wants to go, too, you [must] let her go.”

Mothers and daughters: A new line of solidarity around migration projects?

Mothers do not openly oppose the dominant discourse condemning the migration of young girls; they do adopt a more understanding view when they discuss their own daughters. Sianwa (female, born in 1949) says that she encouraged her youngest daughters to migrate, whereas she had been against the eldest daughter’s departure: “I thought I was doing the right thing by forbidding her to go to the city, especially since in those days the young girls didn’t go there in the same way they do now. I didn’t want her to be the first to go.” In material terms, we see mothers helping their daughters financially, especially with money for transport. In emotional and psychological terms, mothers are frequently their daughters’ accomplices and help them to carry out their plans, quite often without their husbands knowing. Rosalie (female, born in 1940) has several daughters who migrated. She gave them her blessing and even encouraged them to leave by paying the cost of their transportation: “Their friends were buying things and if I couldn’t buy the same things for them, I had to let them go.” As one focus group put it, “If the family head refuses every time, the daughter will go and tell her mother, usually in tears. So if you’ve got the means, you’ll let her go. And later, when the family head comes to ask you about it, you say that you didn’t know.”

Mothers also recognize the opportunities offered by the migratory experience and do not want to deprive their daughters of something they themselves would have wished to do. Anne-Marie (female, born in 1946) says that she would have enjoyed going to the city when her own family situation worsened after her father’s death: “The young girls didn’t go to the city in my time, we didn’t even know where it was, so I didn’t even think of it. But if it were now, I’d go very far away.” After consulting her husband, she paid for her daughter’s transportation. Generally speaking, she thinks it is a good thing that the girls had obtained this freedom of movement: “Nothing can hold them back now, even the parents who
refuse to give them permission.” Sianwa (female, born in 1949) believes that migration makes adolescence easier for young girls than it was in her time: “I wanted to see the city but at the time young girls hadn’t yet started to go off to town. So I couldn’t go off and leave my mother, even if I’d known that the journey would enable me to earn enough to cover my needs.”

Conclusion

At first glance, the rise in labor migration among adolescent girls may appear similar to the trend observed 15 years earlier among young men. However, the two phenomena are quite different. Young men’s labor mobility developed in line with a family logic and is perceived positively. Conversely, the labor migration of adolescent girls developed independently of family projects and caters to more personal projects. These qualitative data show that the expectations are very different for both genders. Adolescent boys use migration to strengthen their family status, while adolescent girls express strong expectations in terms of learning.

The consequences of young girls’ migration for gender relationships in later adulthood are difficult to estimate at this point. Migrant girls get married later than do nonmigrant girls, but the characteristics of their marriage and marriage processes are not significantly different (Hertrich and Lesclingand 2012). One obvious effect of migration is that adolescents gain social status when they return to their villages. It is also possible that the migratory experience gives them skills to manage their conjugal lives. Female migrants now have similar experiences in the city to young men, which can help to forge ties between spouses. Moreover, going to the city is an alternative adolescents can use if they face problems in their family lives. The migratory experience increases self-esteem and opens up a range of possibilities for their adult lives.

Notes

2. Names of respondents have been changed to maintain anonymity.
3. It was, for instance, a subject that the villagers often selected for the theatrical representations that we organized as part of our efforts to communicate our research findings to local populations (Hertrich et al. 2011).

References


