

## ABSTRACT

### **A Study on Gender Relations and the Migration Decisions of St. Lucian Women**

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Focusing on twenty St. Lucian migrant women residing either in St. Lucia or New York, this study seeks to show how household-based gender relations impact on these women's decisions to migrate and circulate through gendered processes within the households themselves both in home and host countries.

During the past twenty years, there have been three major developments in the migration field. This study combines the transnational and gendered approaches in order to achieve synchronization of these major developments to reach a more complete theory of migration. The gendered approach within a transnational frame is most useful because more than any other model, it recognizes that men and women experience migration differently, it incorporates the social networks concept and it combines structure and agency to achieve a more complete understanding of migration decisions.

Although a sample of twenty women may seem small, it must be noted that the study, which is a phenomenological one, is characterized by extensive and prolonged engagement with these women in order to understand their lived experiences. Through a series of in depth interviews, it aims to understand the deep meaning attached to these women's experiences. The qualitative method and analysis which are employed, reveal the existence of a relationship between gender relations and migration decisions of the women.

Conclusions are therefore drawn from these lived experiences. However, the study does not claim to make inferences as is done with quantitative research. It aims rather to examine and understand these lived experiences within the context of gender relations and migration decisions and make recommendations for further research.

**Key words:** phenomenological study, gendered approach, transnational migration, circulation, migration decisions, twenty women, St. Lucia.