

CITY LIVELIHOODS AND VILLAGE LINKAGES:  
RURAL-URBAN MIGRANTS IN TAMATAVE, MADAGASCAR

by

LAURA MARIE TILGHMAN

(Under the Direction of Bram Tucker)

ABSTRACT

Scholars have theorized that even as a greater number of Africans are migrating to cities they will continue to maintain strong ties to rural places of origin as long as urban economies offer minimal security or economic opportunity. In this dissertation I analyze two aspects of rural-urban migration and linkages in northeastern Madagascar. First, I analyze which aspects of contemporary Malagasy life may lead some migrants to change or weaken ties to their home villages and rural family members. Second, I analyze the role that rural linkages play in migrants' urban livelihood strategies. During 12 months I studied the lives of 55 migrants originating from the Vavatenina District and currently living in the city of Tamatave. I used participant observation, structured interviews, livelihood and wellbeing assessments, and ranking exercises to determine migrants' life histories, migration and livelihood strategies, and behaviors and values regarding rural linkages.

First, I found that migrants with weaker rural linkages tended to be male, poor, Protestant, and had a spouse or parent who was from outside the Vavatenina District. I explore the influence of religion on rural-urban linkages in greater depth in a case study, arguing that as Protestant churches coalesce around a common narrative that demonizes select rural activities,

migrants in turn not only abstain from these prohibited activities but in some cases have weaker overall linkages due to conflicts with family, smaller social networks, and ambiguity about future burial location. Second, I found that strong rural linkages were associated with migrants having greater stocks of material and financial capital, but that there was no such impact on social and human capital or food security. I use the 2011 clove harvest as a case study to illustrate the relationship between linkages and livelihoods, arguing that using rural resources as part of an urban livelihood strategy is not possible if migrants have not invested in relationships with rural people. I conclude that poverty alleviation and conservation policies in Madagascar would be more effective if they recognized the relationships between rural and urban people.

INDEX WORDS: Migration; Urbanization; Rural-Urban Linkages; Translocal Ties; Transmigrants; Livelihood Strategies; Remittances; Charismatic-Pentecostal Christianity; Clove (*Syzygium aromaticum*); Africa; Madagascar

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Ho an'ny zanak'i Vavatenina izay nandray anjara tamin'ny fikarohagnanahy:  
mankasitraka, mankateligny.

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Just before the end of my first stint in Madagascar in 2002, I spent my remaining Malagasy francs on an assortment of cassettes in a market in Tamatave, randomly selected for me by the vendor. One was an album by a young woman named Sily, and it contained the theme song for Vavatenina’s homecoming *Jerijery* festival. In 2003 I returned for my senior thesis research, and in a poorly planned near-disaster lost all of my toenails hiking through the Zahamena National Park, ending up unexpectedly in the town of Vavatenina. I am still not sure what to make of these funny coincidences. Whether it was destiny or dumb luck, I am glad that I returned to these two places – Tamatave and Vavatenina – for this dissertation.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Research Problem and Questions

*Limiting the study of urbanization in Africa to such bleak themes as sprawling slums, inadequate social service provision, neglected infrastructure, predatory crime and random violence, personal failures, poverty and ignorance, disease, and self-destructive behavior not only leaves a great deal of room for misunderstandings, misconceptions, and even inadvertent stereotypes about African cities and their residents, but also tends to ignore the resourcefulness, inventiveness, and determination of the countless millions of ordinary people who somehow manage to successfully negotiate the perils of everyday life.*

Martin Murray and Garth Myers – Cities in Contemporary Africa (2006:2-3)

*Don't get bogged down with precise descriptions. Africa is big: fifty-four countries, 900 million people who are too busy starving and dying and warring and emigrating to read your book. The continent is full of deserts, jungles, highlands, savannahs and many other things, but your reader doesn't care about all that, so keep your descriptions romantic and evocative and unparticular ... Broad brushstrokes throughout are good. Avoid having the African characters laugh, or struggle to educate their kids, or just make do in mundane circumstances.*

Binyavanga Wainaina – How to Write about Africa (2005)

I first traveled to Madagascar on a study abroad program devoted to ecology and conservation, exploring the endemic flora and fauna for which this country is famous by meandering through remote villages and protected areas. The end of the program involved attending classes and lectures at university campuses in a few large cities, and I asked an American expat who had spent a lot of time in the capital what to expect. She replied, “Oh, you know, just a typical Third World city. Lots of poor people, garbage and sewage everywhere. It's chaos.”

I must admit, my first impressions of Malagasy cities largely met these grim descriptions. I could not imagine why anyone would want to leave the safety and beauty of their home village

to live there. My journals from these first forays into urban life in Madagascar contain statements that seem to be straight from Binyavanga Wainaina's satirical essay "How to Write about Africa." But as my research interests shifted to migration and urbanization issues and I spent more time in Malagasy cities, I gradually stopped comparing them to the American cities I knew best – Boston, New York, San Francisco – and came to know and appreciate them on their own terms. Rather than viewing the people migrating to live in these cities with pity or bewilderment, I saw them as "ordinary" individuals with extraordinary stories to tell.

This dissertation explores the lives of rural-urban migrants in Tamatave, Madagascar's second most populated city located on the northeast coast. In particular I focus on the linkages that many migrants maintain with their rural places of origin and how these are incorporated into their lives and economic strategies. Connections between city and village, and urban and rural people, have been a predominant theme of scholarship of urbanization and migration in Africa since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century until now (Moore 1994), and some would even argue are one of the distinguishing features that set African cities apart (Gugler 2002:23; O'Connor 1983:272). The task now for researchers is to go beyond description and documentation of these linkages to question-driven analysis. As Trager notes, "The fact of such linkages is now well established. Of greater interest now is the varying forms they take, how they are used by those involved, the ways in which they form part of migration strategies, and how they vary with material and cultural context" (2005:20).

In this dissertation I focus on two overarching questions. First, I analyze what factors might be changing the nature of rural-urban linkages, specifically the frequency that migrants engage in linkage activities (behaviors) as well as how they value and perceive these linkages (attitudes). Second, I examine how migrants' rural-urban linkages affect their livelihood

resources and outcomes. Generally stated, are there certain kinds of migrants who maintain only very weak ties with their home villages, or who have broken ties altogether? And are ties to home villages a help or a hindrance for people trying to make a living in the city?

This dissertation advances theory in migration studies. Anthropologists have played key roles in broadening our understanding of migration from an individual response to macro-economic forces that uproot people and bind them to a new location, to a dynamic process that continues throughout the lifecourse and links home and destination, migrant and non-migrant. Now that scholars have convincingly shown that migration does not necessarily sever an individual from his or her home, the work that remains is to flesh out how this differs between individuals and societies, how this influences migration strategies, and how this varies in form and function. My dissertation also has applications beyond academia, generating insights that will be useful for policy makers. Information about migration and urbanization trends will be invaluable as African countries try to plan for the transition to having a majority of their populations living in cities in the coming decades. Furthermore, concrete information about how city and village are linked will be a powerful antidote to current development and conservation policies in Madagascar that often treat these areas as unconnected.

## **1.2 Overview of the Study**

### **1.2.1 Research Design and Site Selection**

While the study was as a whole multi-sited in that it collected data in both the rural and urban locales, as a researcher I spent the majority of my time and efforts in the city of Tamatave. I rented an apartment in an area of the city where the migrant population of interest made up a large proportion of the population. I visited the Vavatenina District at different points throughout the study, usually staying for about a week at a time. During periods of rural data collection I

stayed in the homes of local families who were not directly involved in the study as I felt it was important that migrants not feel like I was “spying” on them during my rural visits.

Throughout the study I employed a primary research assistant, Fidelys Raharimandimby, who himself was an amateur ethnographer with a keen eye for detail and proficiency in English and French from his years working as a tour guide and interpreter for local development organizations. Although I had taken Malagasy language courses I relied on his assistance to help bridge language gaps in the early phase of my research. Later as my proficiency improved, I continued to rely on his assistance, often dividing tasks so that more data collection or processing could be done at one time.

The rhythm of urban life dictated my research schedule and methods. Participants usually were not as amenable to my presence at mid-day or in the evenings when family members came together to eat and relax. Urban participants’ lives were less visible and more constrained by time than in rural areas, which necessitated more structured and scheduled data collection. Nevertheless, I still aimed to conduct an urban ethnography by being as much as an active participant-observer as possible, and spending over two years gathering data. This study made use of mixed methods in order to fully capture the phenomenon of rural-urban migration and linkages in contemporary Madagascar.

The rural and urban fieldsites of this study (the Vavatenina District and the city of Tamatave, respectively, see Figure 1.1) were selected for theoretical and practical reasons. The United Nations has estimated that the bulk of African urban growth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will take place in smaller secondary cities like Tamatave rather than “mega-cities” and national capitals (UN-Habitat 2010; see also Cohen 2006). The Vavatenina District is within the area of the country from which many of Tamatave’s residents trace their origins (Tilghman 2009).

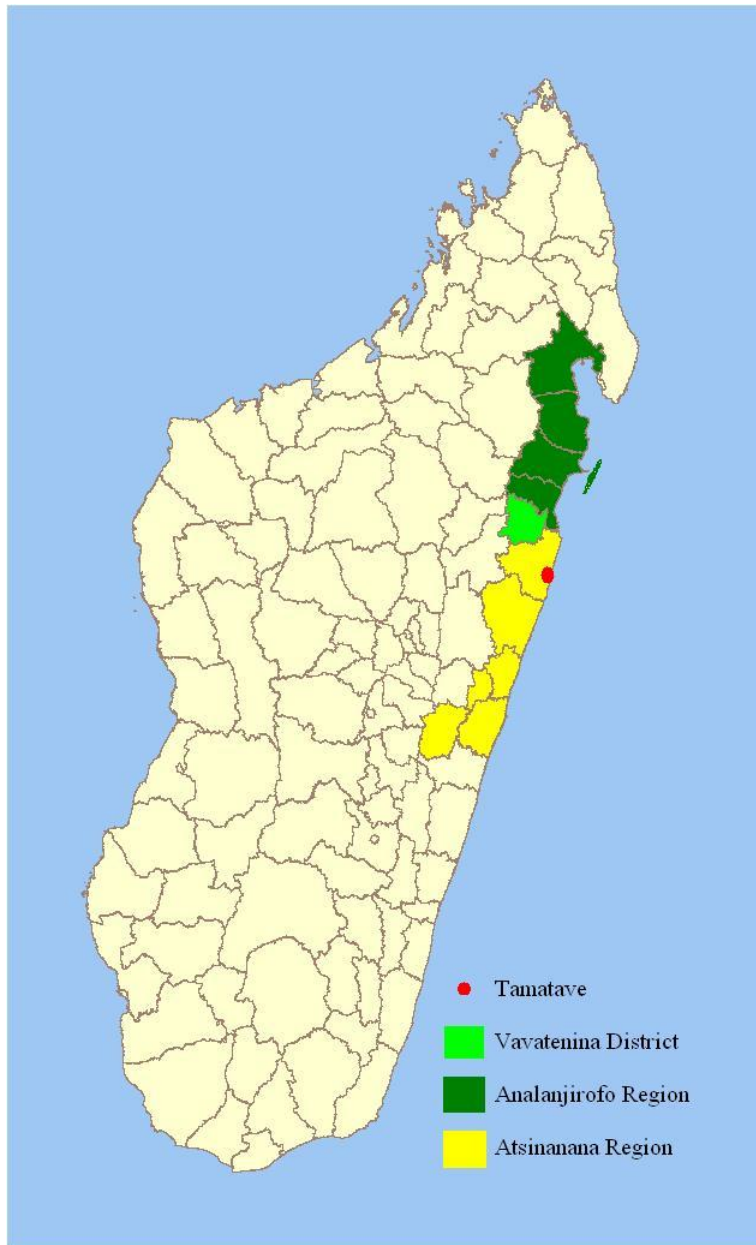


Figure 1.1 Madagascar's 111 Districts, with research fieldsites highlighted

Travel and communication between these two locations requires an intermediate level of time, money, and effort, which not only created sufficient naturally-arising diversity of migrant linkages to study but also facilitated travel between these two locations for myself as a researcher. I felt a gravitation to work in these areas due to my experience conducting research in

northeastern Madagascar on different occasions since 2003 (Neimark and Tilghman 2014; Tilghman 2004, 2009). These experiences gave me a familiarity with the “lay of the land” (local language, customs, institutions, and so on) thereby facilitating the project.

### **1.2.2 The Rural Research Site: Vavatenina District, migrant origin**

The Vavatenina District is part of the Analanjirifo Region in the northeast of Madagascar (see Figure 1.1). The Vavatenina District is composed of ten *communes* (a geographic-administrative unit roughly equivalent to a county in the United States, see Figure 1.2), which are themselves composed of villages and towns of various sizes that are collectively referred to as *fokontany*. To confuse matters somewhat, the name Vavatenina can refer to the district as a whole, one of the ten communes within that district, and a large town that serves as the capital of the district. For clarity, Vavatenina refers to the district as a whole unless otherwise noted in this dissertation.

The ten communes that together make up the Vavatenina District differ from each other in terms of their accessibility and population (see Table 1.1). The communes of Miarinarivo, Sahatavy, and Ambodimangavalo are together the most isolated and least densely populated, and the western areas of the latter two actually form part of the Zahamena National Park which is within Madagascar’s system of protected areas. On the other end of the spectrum, the commune of Vavatenina is easily accessible by private minivan (*taxi brousse*) and has the highest population density of the entire district.



Figure 1.2 The Rural Fieldsite: the Vavatenina District and its ten communes

Table 1.1 Population and Accessibility of the ten communes in the Vavatenina District

Commune	Population (2010 est.)	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Pop. Density (people/km <sup>2</sup> )	Access Type <sup>1</sup>	Access Time <sup>2</sup>
Ambatoharanana	21983	145	152	Foot	6-7
Ambodimangavalo	12569	150	84	Foot	12-15
Ambohibe	22522	270	83	Truck	5
Ampasimazava	18120	90	201	Foot	5
Andasibe	27042	733	37	Foot	7
Anjahambe	16950	155	109	Truck	5
Maromitety	22501	449	50	Minivan	3
Miarinarivo	33769	675	50	Foot	7-9
Sahatavy	18092	338	53	Foot	8-10
Vavatenina	54710	160	342	Minivan	3

<sup>1</sup> The primary means of transportation used by inhabitants.

<sup>2</sup> The number of hours it takes to travel to the nearest city, using the primary means of transportation. Ranges indicate travel times differ between the dry and wet seasons.

(CSA-Mamilango 2010; ILO 2001)



Between 85% and 95% of the population in the Vavatenina District gain their living from agricultural activities (ILO 2001). The two easternmost communes, Ampasimazava and Maromitety, are situated within the vast Iazafo Plain, a lowlying and moist area that is ideal for wet rice agriculture (*vary horaka*) (Kalo 1983). West of the Iazafo Plain the terrain becomes much more mountainous. Hilltops are covered with a mosaic of forest, mixed agroforestry plots of cloves, coffee, bananas, and other fruit trees, or swidden plots for dry rice (*vary jinja*), manioc, corn and other annual crops. In the valleys between the hills and mountains in the western area of the Vavatenina District are small patches of land used for wet rice agriculture, and meandering streams and rivers. As lowlying land appropriate for wet rice agriculture is placed on a premium in the west of the district, villages are often built into hillsides there.

### **1.2.3 The Urban Research Site: Tamatave, migrant destination,**

The city of Tamatave (Figure 1.3) is the entirety of one district, located in the Atsinanana Region. The city of Tamatave is divided into 138 *parcelles* (the urban equivalent of a *fokontany*). The oldest section of the city abuts the port and contains remnants of cement buildings and a grid layout from the colonial era. The newest parts of the city form an outer ring around this older section, and are characterized by meandering dirt paths (*lalam-pasika*) and a greater abundance of small wood and thatch houses. Migrants from different areas of the country tend to cluster geographically when they move to the city, and the highest concentration of migrants from the Analanjirofo region live in northern neighborhoods. The city's name was officially returned to an earlier appellation, *Toamasina*, after the country's independence in 1960. I continue to use the name Tamatave following the lead of most residents. The city is sometimes also referred to by the slang term *Tamaga* in popular songs and in the conversations of its adolescent residents.

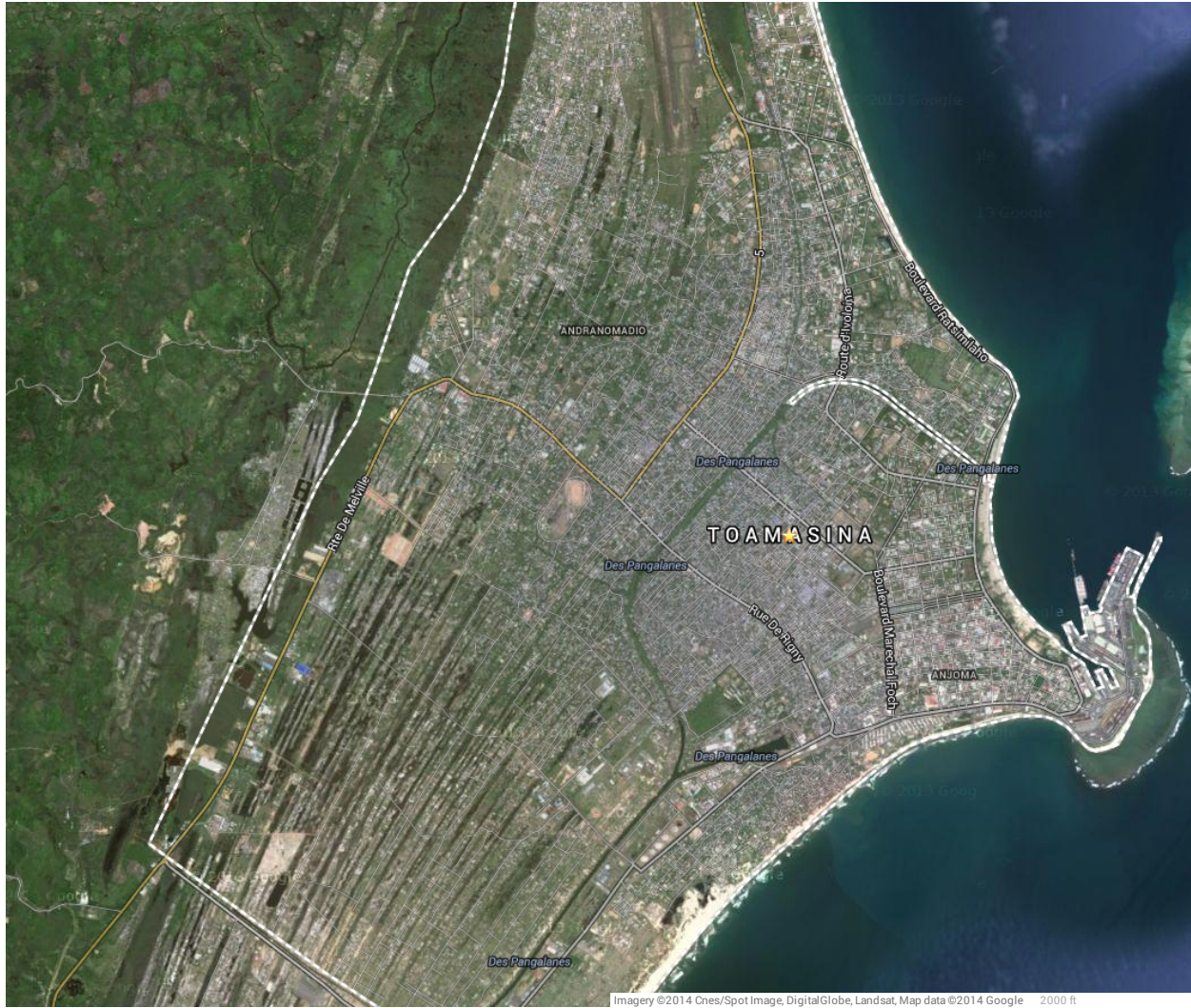


Figure 1.3 The Urban Fieldsite: the city of Tamatave

Tamatave is Madagascar's second most populous city, with official estimates placing the population around 250,000 and the population density of 833 inhabitants per square kilometer (INSTAT n.d.). Unofficially city administrators estimate that the population could be much higher, at upwards of one million people. The discrepancy is due to the lack of a recent census, and residential records that based on my experience are out of date, error prone, and tend to leave out short-term or cyclical migrants. Furthermore, while officially Tamatave covers just 300 square kilometers, in reality the borders of the city are constantly expanding due to population growth and building in its outskirts, and larger urban population estimates may reflect this more

expansive delimitation. The majority of Tamatave's residents earn their living in the manufacturing and service sectors (ILO 2001), the latter of which is in large part based in the informal economy.

#### **1.2.4 Research Methods**

Data collection was composed of three major components. (Additional details of research methods, including interview and survey questions, are included in Appendix A.)

First, I conducted background research on migration and urbanization in northeastern Madagascar to make up for the lack of reliable data on the topic. During three months (June-August 2009) I administered a survey to 90 migrants originating from any region of the country who lived in Tamatave. This first survey used opportunistic sampling in different city neighborhoods and was conducted with the help of three Malagasy research assistants. Once I determined that I wanted to focus my research on migrants from the Vavatenina District, I spent an additional three months (March-May 2011) designing and administering a survey to 635 of these migrants with the help of 15 Malagasy research assistants who were members of a club for local university students from the Vavatenina District (*Association des Jeunes Universitaires de Vavatenina*). This second survey used cluster sampling, in which 28 of the city's 138 total *parcelles* (the smallest geographic-administrative unit) were randomly selected, and then all migrants with origins in the Vavatenina District living therein were surveyed. This allowed a representative sample of Vavatenina-Tamatave migrants to be generated in the absence of a list of all city residents.

Second, I used a variety of methods over 12 months (August 2011-July 2012) to study in greater depth the lives of a sub-sample of migrants. I used purposive sampling to identify 65 men and women who had participated in the large city-wide survey and were of diverse age, religious

background, and economic status; due to attrition only 55 individuals actually participated in the entire 12 month study period. These migrants were concentrated to a few neighborhoods to facilitate regular data collection. The data collection methods included: 1) semi-structured interviews to record migration histories and personal attributes; 2) linkage behavior surveys to record linkage behaviors, repeated every two weeks for a total of 22 iterations; 3) a linkage attitude ranking exercise, to record perceptions of the importance of different kinds of linkages; 4) livelihood assessments using constructs and inventories to evaluate financial, material, social, and human capital resources and food security outcomes, repeated twice in different seasons. I was a participant-observer when possible, spending unstructured time with migrants as they went about mundane activities or accompanying them at important events like funerals, rituals, and celebrations. I also traveled to the Vavatenina District to interview 25 relatives of these 55 migrants, conducting semi-structured interviews about migration and linkage behaviors and attitudes and family dynamics.

Third, I conducted semi-structured interviews with experts on various topics to provide contextual detail to the study. I determined some topics ahead of time based on debates in the literature, and others arose organically during the research process as I learned more of what mattered to my research participants. These interviews were conducted in the language of choice of the participant (French or Malagasy). The participants and general topics of these semi-structured interviews are summarized in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2 Summary of semi-structured interviews

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Interview Topics</b>
Government authorities	Tamatave	77	- Historical and contemporary demographic trends - Description of city's infrastructure, security concerns, development needs, and economic activities
Government authorities	Vavatenina	9	- Historical and contemporary demographic trends - Description of district's infrastructure, security concerns, development needs, and economic activities
Traditional authorities and elders	Vavatenina	7	- Historical and contemporary demographic trends - Settlement history for particular villages or families
Church leaders	Tamatave	13	- History and organization of the church - Description of the church's members and activities - Attitudes and teachings regarding migrant behaviors that link them to their places of origin
Migrant association presidents	Tamatave	5	- History and organization of the association - Description of the association's members and activities
Cultural experts	Tamatave, Vavatenina	4	- Description of Betsimisaraka customs and beliefs, particularly at key events (birth, marriage, death) and for ancestral rituals

### 1.3 Overview of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I present the theoretical framework from which the major research questions of the study are drawn. I begin by tracing the history of anthropological studies of migration, showing that although this process was long overlooked by researchers, they have provided a unique approach that gives greater weight to culture than many other social science disciplines. Next I survey the literature on migrant ties to home, which flourished in the 1990s due to interest in transnational migration. I also show that many of the same themes of transnational migration apply to internal migration. Lastly, I review research on the relationship between migration and wellbeing and livelihoods.

In Chapter 3, I provide ethnographic and historical background to the study. I begin by describing the natural and social history of Madagascar as a whole, and then describe the origins of the Betsimisaraka ethnic group in the northeast of the island. I explain how relationships of mutual dependency – between ancestors and their descendants, and between communities of kin

and unrelated individuals – are central to the worldview and social organization of Betsimisaraka people. Migrants are still expected to be involved in these two mutually dependent relationships after moving away from their natal villages. Next I explain historical and contemporary demographic trends in the country, as well as some of the difficulties of accurate data. Finally, I present an overview of the migrant population that is the focus of this study – people who were born in the rural Vavatenina District and currently reside in the city of Tamatave.

Research results are presented in two pairs of articles, with each pair addressing one of the primary research questions.

In Chapter 4, I use stepwise regression modeling to analyze what factors best predict the variability of migrants' linkages to the Vavatenina District, specifically the frequency that migrants engage in linkage activities (behaviors) as well as how they value and perceive these linkages (attitudes). I examine different factors, including individual traits of migrants, as well as characteristics of their families and migration experiences. I show that migrants with "weaker" linkages are men, poor, Protestant, and have a spouse or parent with origins outside the Vavatenina District. I argue that while there is a strong cultural norm in northeastern Madagascar that migrants will maintain strong ties to their villages of origin, there is variability between migrants in how well they conform to this norm that is explained by cultural forces and economic means.

In Chapter 5, I explore the dynamic between religion and linkages, one factor that quantitative analysis found to be a good predictor of weaker migrant linkages to the place of origin. I find that church leaders in Tamatave have coalesced around two competing narratives of death, creating a structure in which Catholic churches see some types of migrant linkages (e.g. burial in the rural family tomb and participation in rural ancestral rituals) as in line with Christian

beliefs, while Protestant churches see these same activities as morally questionable or potential Satanic. Migrants to some degree exert agency in the face of the structure of these religious teachings, but Protestants show weaker linkage behavior overall by engaging in fewer activities that are expressly prohibited by church leaders as well as activities that have no overt religious significance. I argue that the religious affiliation of migrants influences their rural linkages by either changing family dynamics due to conflict after conversion or modifying their social networks.

In Chapter 6, I use stepwise regression modeling to analyze how migrants' rural-urban linkages affect their livelihood resources and outcomes. I first investigate to what degree migrants' resources have a rural basis, and find that for the most part only a small proportion of migrants have financial and material capital originating in the rural area. I then examine whether migrants with "stronger" linkages (as exhibited by higher frequencies for linkage behavior or higher rankings for linkage attitudes) predicts having more financial, material, social, or human capital, or better food security. I show that while migrants who had done more rural-tied social activities or who had given food or money to rural people had more financial and material capital, but that linkage strength did not predict social or human capital, or food security, as well. I explain these findings by examining transaction costs and norms of reciprocity.

In Chapter 7, I use the 2011 clove harvest as a lens through which to explore in greater detail when and how rural resources affect migrants' urban livelihood strategies and outcomes. Many migrants claimed to have access to clove trees, a common export crop grown in their place of origin, the rural Vavatenina District. I show that in 2011 the yield and price for cloves (*Syzygium aromaticum*) was unusually high, but migrants experienced differential success in

benefiting from this commodity boom. I explain these findings by discussing the importance of continuous investments in social relationships with rural kin for migrants.

Chapter 8 concludes the dissertation by synthesizing major findings and their theoretical and applied significance. I also discuss limitations of the study and possibilities for future research.

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## CHAPTER 2

### THEORETICAL BACKGROUND:

#### THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF MIGRATION, LINKAGES, AND LIVELIHOODS

##### **2.1 Migration in Anthropology: methodological and theoretical approaches**

This review focuses mainly on the work of cultural anthropologists and other social scientists like human geographers or sociologists who take similar methodological and theoretical approaches. Space does not permit a comprehensive review of migration across the four fields of anthropology; those interested in perspectives from biological anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and anthropological archaeology may find reviews elsewhere (Anthony 1990; Cabana and Clark 2011). For those seeking information on how other social science disciplines approach the study of human migration such as economics, demography, geography, sociology and political sciences, I defer to Brettell and Hollifield's excellent edited volume (2008).

American anthropologists largely ignored migration during the early years of the discipline in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Researchers were more concerned with describing "pure" cultures before they had been contaminated by modern influences, and even if migration was occurring in areas where ethnographers worked, they neglected to study this process or thoroughly consider how it might impact the aspects of society that they were interested in. For example, Margaret Mead's work on gender roles documented in the book *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935) makes no consideration of the fact that up to half of the adult Chambri men were migrant laborers and absent from their villages of origin at the time of the

study (Gewertz and Errington 1991, cited in Brettell 2003:ix). Surely this fact would have been important to Mead's conclusion that Chambri women were dominant and managerial while men were less responsible and more emotionally dependent (Library of Congress 2001).

Beginning in the 1930s and 1940s, ethnographers began to follow their rural village informants into cities, resulting in the development of two new subfields: urban anthropology and anthropology of migration (Brettell 2003:ix; Foster and Kemper 2009:5). Many American anthropologists initially focused on rural-urban migration in Latin America (e.g. Redfield 1947), while their British counterparts under the auspices of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute studied the same phenomenon in Africa (e.g. Cohen 2004[1969]; Epstein 1958; Gluckman 1960; Mayer 1971[1961]; Mitchel 1956; Wilson and Wilson 1968). These earlier anthropological studies of migration tended to focus on marginal communities of rural-urban migrants in developing countries (Prato and Pardo 2013:83).

As anthropological research on migration (and urbanization) developed, scholars expanded their interests to include international migrants and Western societies, and began to account for more of the structural forces influencing migration. This development of the sub-discipline is evident from the titles and topics of summary articles published in the journal *Annual Review of Anthropology* (c.f. Gmelch 1980; Graves and Graves 1974; Kearney 1986, 1995). It is also noticeable just in the changing name of the American professional organization that is the home of most anthropologists who study migration. The Society for Urban Anthropology was founded in 1979, and then changed to The Society for Urban, National and Transnational/Global Anthropology in the following decade (Prato and Pardo 2013:86).

Many scholars reflecting on the history of migration studies in anthropology view the 1980s as a key turning point. This period was marked by debates about the subjects and methods

of the discipline as a whole, as well as growing awareness of globalization (Appadurai 1990; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Rodman 1992). In light of the challenges these debates posed to the historical focus within anthropology on studying discrete societies or cultures, the migration process and the way it created individuals with hybrid cultural identities became a much more interesting subject of research (Watkins 2002). Thus by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, migration had changed from a peripheral interest of a small number of anthropologists to a major object of study in the discipline as a whole

Even as anthropological scholarship on migration has flourished and diversified in recent decades, it still has a unique approach compared to other social sciences (Brettell 2008). Despite the rise of multi-sited and mixed methods research, most anthropologists continue to value long-term and in-depth ethnographies that take seriously the perspectives of the people they study. Anthropologists tend to take a meso-level of analysis, studying individuals as embedded members of households and communities to show the human dimension of large-scale processes (Cohen and Sirkeci 2011).

Finally and most importantly, anthropology offers a nuanced understanding of culture (as well as ethnicity and identity) due to the discipline's long history of engaging with these concepts. Culture is understood by anthropologists to be socially-constructed and flexible, not a static independent variable. Many anthropologists argue for the importance of cultural, symbolic, and ideational aspects of migration (e.g. Cliggett 2000; Osella and Osella 2000). As Bruce Whitehouse states eloquently,

Anthropologists cannot ... afford to ignore material factors in their analysis. Indeed, *we must study the conjuncture of the material and the ideational*. Many of us suspect that ideational motivations alone do not entice people to leave home. It is when they are coupled with economic incentives that they are most likely to become operative, to turn migration from a vague desire to a concrete intention to a reality (Whitehouse 2013:21, emphasis added).

Anthropologists do not deny that economics factor into the migration process. Rather, they argue that we should create a synthesis in which greater weight should be given to socio-cultural causes of migration alongside economic factors. Some migration scholars have formalized these concerns with culture by developing the concept of “culture(s) of migration.” I will quote at length from the different scholars who use this concept to show how they differ.

One of the earliest uses of the “culture of migration” term comes from sociologist Douglas Massey and his colleagues, who explain,

As migration grows in prevalence within a community, it changes values and cultural perceptions in ways that increase the probability of future migration. Among the migrants themselves, experience in an advanced industrial economy changes tastes and motivations ... Once someone has migrated, therefore, he or she is very likely to migrate again, and the odds of taking an additional trip rise with the number of trips already taken (Massey, 1986). At the community level, migration becomes deeply ingrained into the repertoire of people’s behaviors, and values associated with migration become part of the community’s values” (Massey et al 1993:452-453).

For Massey a “culture of migration” is when initial migration creates conditions to encourage additional migration, and is one of many factors in “cumulative causation” of migration as a whole.

Anthropologist Jeffrey Cohen takes a different approach, arguing that the concept of a “culture of migration” is useful for explaining initial migration, too. He first developed the concept in his ethnography of international migration between Oaxaca and the United States (2004), and then further developed the concept with his colleague Ibrahim Sirkeci (2010). They explain,

All migrations are culturally framed and socially defined by the migrants and non-migrants and the conflicts and contests they are involved in and that they perceive. In other words, there is a cultural framework, or a culture of migration, that helps migrants define their mobility in relation to their household, home community, and world. A culture of migration relates to the strengths and weaknesses of the individual migrants themselves as well as the strengths and weaknesses of their homes, families, and sending and receiving communities, the sending and receiving nations, and the global patterns of social and economic life (2011:10-11).

For Cohen, economic, social, political, and cultural structural forces lead people to seek security through mobility, creating “cultures of migration.” They are unique in drawing attention to security which they define loosely to include safety from economic or physical risk, and thereby bridging studies of “forced” and “voluntary” migration which are often theorized separately.

Taking a slightly different approach, German anthropologists Hans Hahn and Georg Klute (2007) argue that,

Migration should be regarded as a complex societal phenomenon, a structured process that at the same time is embedded in interpretations and valuations ... We suggest using the term “cultures of migration” as an open concept, orienting our research towards the meanings of migration for migrants themselves. We further assume that migratory processes contribute to the emergence of dynamic cultures, which are contextualized in the societies of origin as well as in the host societies. These “cultures of migration” are propelled and modeled through ongoing and often conflicting negotiations, which take place among migrants, and between them and other social actors they deal with (Hahn and Klute 2007:16).

For Hahn and Klute, “cultures of migration” are complexes of cultural representations, established by discourses among migrants themselves, and between migrants and non-migrants.

## **2.2 Migrant Linkages to Place of Origin**

One common theme of anthropological studies of migration is an emphasis on the places from where migrants originate, and the linkages that migrants maintain with those places after

leaving. Perhaps this arises from the fact that anthropologists first became interested in migration by following rural informants into cities. Perhaps it is a disciplinary legacy of anthropology's interest in culture, which has historically been conceived as rooted in particular places and often is still presented so despite efforts to "deterritorialize" this concept. Whatever the reason, migrant linkages to the place alternately called 'home', 'place of origin', 'natal village', or 'sending community' have been and continue to be of great interest to anthropologists. In the 1960s and 1970s this interest was expressed in studies that explored how sending communities adapted to the absence of migrants after their departure (Graves and Graves 1974), followed by a great deal of research on return migration in the 1980s that explored the consequences of migrants moving back to their places of origin after an extended absence (Brettell 2003:47; Gmelch 1980; Rhoades 1978). By the 1990s, anthropology's concern with migrant linkages coalesced around transnationalism, a diffuse concept that continues to dominate how social scientists talk about migration to this day.

As it was originally presented, transnational migration is "the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Glick Schiller et al 1995:48). Unlike immigrants who are simply people who migrate across national boundaries, transmigrants "are immigrants whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders and whose public identities are configured in relation to more than one nation-state" (Glick Schiller et al 1995:48).

Transnationalism has since found a great following outside of anthropology. Geographers, sociologists, and political scientists all find transnationalism useful for understanding contemporary migration issues, while changing the concept slightly to suit their

disciplinary foundations (Blunt 2007; Kearney 1995; Kivisto 2001; Levitt 2003; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007; Morawska 2003; Vertovec 1999, 2009). As Vertovec explains, “in recent years transnationalism has become one of the fundamental ways of understanding contemporary migrant practices across the full range of social sciences ... Surprisingly, even policy makers have gradually adopted the term and perspective too” (Vertovec 2009:13). While scholars working on international migration between the Caribbean or Latin America and the United States were the initial adopters of the concept, it has now found purchase in many other migration contexts around the globe.<sup>1</sup>

As research on migration has become increasingly dominated by transnational theory, attention to internal migration (rural-urban and other variations within one country’s borders) seems to have diminished in favor of international migration (King et al 2008). This is true to some degree in Africa, even though international migration is less significant compared to internal migration in terms the sheer numbers of people involved (Potts 2010:253-254). A group of scholars recently lamented for migration studies as a whole, “Internal migration has faded into the backcloth and surely needs to be rehabilitated, for both its *quantitative* and *theoretical* importance” (King et al 2008:19, emphasis added). The quantitative importance of studying internal migration refers to the fact that arguably greater numbers of people migrate within country borders rather than across. The theoretical importance of studying internal migration refers to the fact that these processes offer insights and opportunities to advance migration theory as a whole. For example, comparative studies could help bridge the gulf between internal and international migration research and help determine if the experiences of trans-local, trans-

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<sup>1</sup> Besides the application of the concept of transnationalism to migration, there is also a large body of work that looks at transnationalism more generally or applies it to other processes where migration may or may not be involved. These include studies of social movements, religious movements, non-governmental organizations, business networks and so on. (See Vertovec 2009:27-52).

region, and trans-nation migrants differ and why (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007:146; Vertovec 2009:17). Another approach to advance migration theory is “theoretical transfer or fusion” (King et al 2008), or applying questions, concepts, or frameworks developed for the study of one type of migration to the other.

But what of the dominant theory in anthropological studies, transnationalism? Some scholars are pessimistic that this can illuminate internal migration processes (e.g. King et al 2008:19). This perspective views migrant linkages which span national borders as an anomaly worthy of exploration but migrant linkages within a country as to be expected. However, I would argue as others have (e.g. Greiner 2010; Trager 2005:20) that there are strong parallels between rural-urban migrants’ linkages and transnational migrants’ linkages, and scholarship on the two topics should not move forward in isolation from each other. And we should not forget that early publications created lexical wiggle room by writing about *transmigrants* and not just *transnational* migrants.

These debates are particularly salient for research on migration in Africa, where migrant linkages to place of origin have been a primary concern of scholars since the 1940s (Moore 1994; Schumaker 2001). Scholars have described Africans as living in a “dual system” (Gugler 1991:399), having “one foot in each world” (O’Connor 1983:272), or “straddling” a rural/urban divide (Bayart 1993:12), characterizations which echo descriptions of migrants from the transnational migration literature. And mirroring debates in transnational migration research, scholars of African rural-urban migration and linkages argue whether migrants maintain ties and forge hybrid identities as a response to contemporary economic duress created by globalization and neoliberalism (Frayne 2010; Gugler 1971, 1991, 2002; Ouwor 2010; Potts 2010; Tacoli



2002) or due to longstanding cultural orientations and values (Andersson 2001; Englund 2001; Smith 2008).

So what exactly do scholars mean by migrant linkages? Stated simply, they are the social and material links and networks that connect migrants to their places of origin. Remittances, the one-way monetary transfers that migrants send to people in sending communities, are the form of migrant linkages that have received the most attention in scholarly and popular writing (Cohen 2005). Scholarship has also shown that material transfers can also flow in the other direction, with people in places of origin sending money and material items to migrants within (Frayne 2005) and across (Mazzucato 2009) national borders. But migrant linkages to their places of origin include much more than these material exchanges. Other scholars explore a variety of discrete behaviors beyond remittances that link migrants to their place of origin that are social, political, or economic in nature, including activities located both in the destination and the homeland (Gugler 2002; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Smith 2008; Trager 1998). Some have attempted to enlarge the definition of remittances to include “social remittances,” or the exchange between migrants and sending communities of ideas, skills, and social obligations (Levitt 1998). Scholars have also studied more ephemeral aspects of migrant linkages, such as identities and social spaces (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Wiles 2008).

### **2.3 Livelihoods and the Impacts of Migration**

The sustainable livelihoods framework has been adopted by both applied and academic scholars as a holistic way to capture how people act in order to achieve greater wellbeing (c.f. de Haan et al. 2002; Ellis 2000; McGregor 2007; Moser 1998). Ellis (2000) proposes a common definition of livelihood strategies as dynamic responses to the combination of assets available and the mediating processes that facilitate or restrict access to them. *Assets*, or capitals as they

are also called, are not only financial but also physical, natural, social and cultural (Bourdieu 2001; Coleman 1988; Hofferth and Iceland 1998; Siisiainen 2003 for descriptions of social and cultural capital in particular). This scholarship draws inspiration from earlier work on *vulnerability* that emphasizes the structural socio-political aspects of disasters and crises (Oliver-Smith 1996; Watts and Bohle 1993), and *capability* that emphasizes individuals' assets and capacity to react to shocks and live a life that they have reason to desire (Robeyns 2005; Sen 1983, 1999).

A primary concern of scholars and policy makers is assessing the impact of migration on development (Geiger and Pécoud 2013; Piper 2008). Migration is often presented as a threat or strain on economic development in popular media and policy circles, with stories of migration's impacts on places of origin focusing on the "brain drain," and its impacts on destination locales focusing on competition for jobs and wage depression (Bakewell 2008). Academic writing on this topic has swung back and forth through the years, taking on a negative tone as scholars from the 1970s to the 1990s viewed migration within neo-Marxist frameworks like dependency theory and world systems theory (de Haas 2010). Beginning in the 1990s, anthropologists and other social scientists studying the migration-development nexus began to view migration in a more positive light. Around this time transnationalism theory and the sustainable livelihoods framework changed negative assumptions about the migration-development nexus (de Haas 2010:248).

Researchers working within the livelihoods framework look at the nexus of migration and development at the scale of the household or individual migrants, rather than whole countries or regions. These scholars see migration as a livelihood strategy that households may take to increase their access to assets and mediate risk (Bryceson 2002; de Haan 1999; Ellis 2003;

Tacoli 2002; Waddington 2003). For these scholars working within the livelihoods framework, migration is seen as both normal and inevitable, and thus policy recommendations that emerge from this research stresses the need for governments to strengthen the positive impacts of migration rather than to control or discourage migrant flows.

The sustainable livelihoods framework has been critiqued on a number of accounts, including its inattention to global and long-term processes, as well as power and politics (Bebbington 1999; Scoones 2009). Regarding its application to migration, de Haas explains,

Micro-empirical evidence highlighting the often positive role of migration and remittances in households' livelihoods is often inaccurately taken as evidence that migration does stimulate development in more general terms and on the macro-level. However, to argue from "migration and remittances durably improve households' living standards" to "migration stimulates national development" is to commit a classical ecological fallacy by transferring inferences made on a micro-level scale of analysis to a macro-level scale of analysis" (de Haas 2010:255).

Scholars who use the livelihoods framework to gather empirical evidence of the positive relationship between mobility and human and economic development at the household level should not overreach in applying these findings to larger scales.

Despite these issues, the livelihoods framework still provides migration scholars interested in analyzing the impacts of this process on migrants as well as sending and receiving communities with an important analytical toolbox and a holistic understanding of wellbeing. Many studies that try to quantify the impact of the migration process tend to focus on remittances, which are more easily measured than other aspects of migrant linkages. A major debate is whether or not remittances alleviate or exacerbate inequality in migrants' sending communities, and whether people receiving remittances use the money for household maintenance, to invest in new income-generating activities, or for pure conspicuous consumption

(Azam and Gubert 2006; de la Briere 2002; Grigolini 2005; Koenig 2005; Page and Plaza 2005). Scholars using the sustainable livelihoods framework contribute to these debates by arguing that uses of remittances that may seem to be consumption can in fact form part of livelihood strategies. For example, Ellis (2003) notes that in developing countries, using remittances to buy a refrigerator or build a house can actually be a livelihood investment, since a refrigerator can generate income if it is used to cool drinks for sale, and houses often double as business locations. Anthropologists have made interesting contributions to these debates, reminding scholars that even monetary exchanges have important social, cultural, and symbolic meanings and uses (Cohen 2005; Lim 2009).

Because of the dominance of economic explanations of migration, an implicit assumption of much scholarship is that mobility only occurs if it is economically beneficial for individual migrants (e.g. to access higher-paying jobs). Contemporary rural-urban migration in many African countries poses a conundrum for scholars, as cities no longer offer guarantees of a better life following neoliberal reforms and economic crises in the 1980s and 1990s (White et al 2008). Scholars using the sustainable livelihoods framework and other more nuanced approaches have offered important insights into why migration and urbanization are still occurring in Africa, albeit in some countries at lower rates, despite the lack of economic development. First, they are able to show how migration to cities with poor job opportunities and few safety nets is still “rational” as part of a household strategy to spread risk and diversify sources of cash and food (Bryceson 2002; Tacoli 2002). Second, research in a wide variety of countries, including Botswana (Krüger 1998; Lesetedi 2003), Kenya (Owuor 2004, 2010), Namibia (Frayne 2005, 2010; Greiner 2010), South Africa (Smit 1998), and Zimbabwe (Potts 1997, 2010), shows that in the neoliberal era rural resources subsidize urban residence by providing access to cheap food,

and rural villages act as a safety net by providing an option to return to the village in times of duress or in old age.

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## CHAPTER 3

### ETHNOGRAPHIC AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### **3.1 Madagascar in the World**

Madagascar is the world's fourth largest island at 587,000 square kilometers, roughly the size of the state of Texas. Some have termed it the eighth continent due to its size as well as its biological and cultural uniqueness and importance (Tyson 2000).

Madagascar started out as a bit of land nestled between the African and Indian continents as part of the larger united Gondwana landmass. As these continental plates shifted and moved over millions of years, Madagascar became more and more isolated. By 85 million years ago, Madagascar was completely surrounded by water and isolated from all landmasses (Ali and Krause 2011; Ganzhorn et al 2014). Beyond this point in time, Madagascar's flora and fauna evolved in isolation, and this factor combined with both climatic gradients and physical barriers led to the evolution of high rates of endemism. Over a decade ago the island was estimated to have 9,704 species of endemic plants and 771 species of endemic vertebrates, representing 3.2% and 2.8% of the globe's total numbers of plants and vertebrates, respectively (Myers et al 2000); with time and additional research this number has surely increased.



Figure 3.1 Indian Ocean region (Google Maps)

The Indian Ocean is the center of movement and exchange – human, climatic, environmental – between Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Madagascar is located strategically in the midst of this activity (Figure 3.1). It is not surprising then that the people who live there today have mixtures of linguistic, genetic, and cultural traits that reflect shared origins in these regions. Scholars long downplayed the importance of Africa in the cultural history of the island in favor of its Asian influences, reflecting Victorian sensibilities about race and cultural evolution as well as tensions between different ethnic groups (Berg 1980; Kent 1970). More recent scholarship has analyzed who settled the island using biological and archaeological evidence, which point to shared Asian and African origins (c.f. Allibert 2008; Beaujard 2011; Blench 2007, 2008; Cox et al 2012; Hurles et al 2005; Razafindrazaka et al 2010; Tofanelli et al 2009; for recent reviews see Dewar and Richard 2012).

The influence of Africa and Asia in contemporary Malagasy people is also evidenced by cultural and linguistic data. First and foremost, the Malagasy language is classified as Austronesian and most closely resembles Barito languages spoken on the Indonesian island of Borneo; the language contains other elements, including Arabic, Bantu and Swahili and more recent influences from French and English (Allibert 2009:8-9; Randrianja and Ellis 2004:2-29). Elements that point to Asian (and more specifically Austronesian) origins of Malagasy people include the practice of double burial, the use of outrigger canoes, and the ritual importance of maternal uncles (Allibert 2008; Dahl 1999), although it must be noted that these are characteristic of only some areas of the island. Cultural anthropologists have also argued that the emphasis on achieved status and kinship in Madagascar, rather than ascribed and fixed at birth, reflects Asian roots (Southall 1986:417). African influence is seen mainly in the widespread importance given to cattle, and the spiritual importance of royal relics of hair, bones, and teeth in some areas of the island (Dahl 1999; Kent 1968).

Given its location in the midst of trade routes between Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, it is surprising that humans arrived so late to the island of Madagascar. The earliest evidence of humans dates to just 2300 BC (Dewar et al. 2013). Evidence of initial human presence on the island includes animal bones with cut-marks indicating hunting or processing (MacPhee and Burney 1991; Perez 2005), changes in pollen composition and charcoal particles reflecting anthropogenic landscape changes (Burney 1997; Burney et al 2004), and disruptions in fossil dung fungus *Sporomiella* spore levels, an indicator of megafaunal biomass (Burney et al 2003). These findings contradict previous assessments that humans arrived 2000 to 1500 years ago, and in turn have forced scholars to reexamine theories that human arrival resulted in rapid environmental change and megafauna extinctions. “The view that Madagascar’s history can be

sharply divided by the arrival of humans between an undisturbed Eden and anthropogenic chaos is no longer tenable” (Dewar et al 2013:5). These findings not only are important for understanding Madagascar’s ecological past, but also might inform contemporary debates about environmental crisis and biodiversity loss in the country.

While the details of when people first arrived in Madagascar are still debated, the settlement of the island is less contentious but still marked by a paucity of archaeological evidence. Coastal areas were settled first throughout the first millennium, followed by migration to inland regions by the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century (Dewar and Wright 1993). The period between 1350 and 1600 was characterized by more dense and hierarchical settlements including the first Malagasy chiefdoms, as evidenced by the presence of elaborate local craft goods, imported goods, differentiated burials, and reports of European visitors to these areas (Dewar and Wright 1993). Between 1600 and 1800 larger and more centralized polities emerged in different regions of the island, including the Sakalava in the west coast, the Merina in the central highlands, the Bara in the southwest, the Antemoro in the southeast, and the Betsimisaraka in the northeast (Dewar and Wright 1993; Kent 1970; Randrianja and Ellis 2004). (The Betsimisaraka will be discussed more in the following section.) These polities are often called kingdoms but might be more accurately described as complex chiefdoms given their size and influence. Their rise coincided with increased European influence and trade in commodities and slaves, in part to support French colonies in nearby Île Bourbon and Île de France (present-day Reunion and Mauritius<sup>2</sup>, respectively).

Rather than diminishing European-Malagasy ties, the end of the slave trade in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was the genesis of a strong alliance between the Merina of the central highlands and the British. In 1817 Radama I, the Merina ruler, signed a treaty with the British that compensated

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<sup>2</sup> Mauritius later became a British colony in 1810 as a result of the Napoleonic Wars.

for the loss of the slave-trading income and goods with diplomatic, military, and educational support (Randrianja and Ellis 2004:123). Campbell argues that the Merina state should be seen as a secondary empire that exploited Madagascar's natural and human resources to build an economic and military challenge to a British or French take-over. Campbell also argues that this ironically led to the weakening of the Merina state: unpaid *fanampoana* (forced labor) and taxation policies caused resentment and rebellion in subjugated Malagasy populations, and these combined with natural disasters (cyclones, locust plagues, etc.) to cause disease, depopulation, and ethnic tensions. By the end of the 19th century, the Merina state had become weak enough to lose to a small French military force; in 1885 Madagascar was declared a French protectorate, and in 1896 it became a French colony.

The French colonial era in Madagascar (1895-1960) had three major distinguishing traits. First, the French colony in Madagascar was mainly focused on producing cash crops and extracting raw materials, the profits of which benefited French-owned companies (Allen 1995; Jarosz 1993). Second, the French presence was met with continued Malagasy resistance<sup>3</sup>, both outright revolts and passive opposition to French rules, taxation, and *corvée* (forced labor) (Randrianja and Ellis 2004). Third, the French government officially tried to reduce the power of the Merina ethnic group in favor of a more balanced and decentralized country. However, the *politique des races* (tribal policy) generally failed to even out pre-existing advantages of certain ethnic groups over others, and the Merina were most able to benefit from new developments, schools, and jobs in the colonial administration. This inequality persists today (Allen 1995).

Madagascar gained independence from France in 1960, and the 54 years since have been marked by recurrent political crises and economic decline. Since independence Madagascar has

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<sup>3</sup> Dates of major rebellions included the Menalamba revolt, 1895-1904; the thwarted Vy Vato Sakelina insurgency, 1914; and a widescale rebellion following World War II in which 11,000 to 100,000 people died from fighting or starvation, 1947-1948 (Allen and Covell 2005; Randrianja and Ellis 2004).

not had a single democratic transition of power (Rabemananoro 2012), and major political crises have occurred in 1972, 1992, 2002, and 2009. In the 1970s Madagascar briefly experimented with state-sponsored socialism, including nationalization of many sectors of the economy and (Allen 1995:79-100). Paradoxically, attempts at self-sufficiency actually forced the country to become a net importer of the national staple, rice, for the first time. The socialist era also was characterized by *malgachisation* of the educational system, such that instruction was in the Malagasy language rather than French, and courses emphasized Malagasy history and culture (Sharp 2002). But as with the economy, these educational reforms are now largely seen to have backfired by making students less competitive in a globalizing world (Dahl 2011). Recent decades have seen the country court the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and foreign investment, yet poverty persists. Madagascar's Human Development Index value for 2012 is 0.483 – in the low human development category – positioning the country at 151 out of 187 countries and territories (UNDP 2013).

### **3.2 Northeastern Madagascar and the origins of Betsimisaraka ethnicity**

The northeastern region of Madagascar is characterized by a hot and humid climate that receives a great deal of rainfall (up to 3350 millimeters per year) as well as seasonal tropical storms. Along the coast are sandy beaches interrupted by estuaries and lagoons, and further inland to the west the terrain becomes mountainous (Randrianja and Ellis 2009). By the 1600s people were living in small independent settlements in this area, likely concentrated in coastal areas; it is possible settlement began earlier, but the paucity of archaeological data makes this difficult to determine. At around the same time the Merina and Sakalava polities gained power by trading slaves, rice, cattle, and other goods with French, British, and Arab traders; some of the slaves were captives from conflicts on the east coast. The independent groups of people living in

the northeast of the island tried their best to stake their claim in the lucrative slave trade, demanding taxes when dealings between foreign traders and the Merina occurred in their territory, or working on commission from the French to run their own slave-trading caravans (Larson 2000).

At the beginning of the 1700s, the son of a high-ranking Malagasy woman and an English pirate forged an alliance between the various clans and chiefdoms in the northeast of the coast that had been competing against each other for prominence in the slave trade. The federation was named *Betsimisaraka*, which translates as “the many inseparable” (Ellis 2007). The federation itself was short lived, dissolving around 1750 when the founder died. But this ethnic category was resuscitated and codified when the island became a French colony in 1895 under General Governor Gallieni’s policy of *la politique des races* to aid in indirect colonial rule, in which fluid political groupings and livelihood-based identities were essentialized as *tribus* (tribes) with discrete customs and territories (Cole 2001).

Today, the Betsimisaraka ethnicity is still used as a way to speak of people living in northeastern Madagascar between the Masoala Peninsula to the north and the Mananjary River to the south. Francophone and Anglophone ethnographic research has explored various aspects of Betsimisaraka life, including spirit possession, ancestral ritual, natural resource conservation, perception of the environment, Christian conversion, death and the afterlife, and slave descent (Althabe 1969; Brown 2004; Cole 2001, 2010; Emoff 2002; Fanony 1975; Keller 2005; Mangalaza 1998; Nielszen 2012; Osterhoudt 2010; Raharimandimby 2001; Rahatoka 1985; Sodikoff 2012). To make this broad identity more manageable, some scholars have followed local convention by subdividing the ethnicity into *Betsimisaraka Avaratra* (northern Betsimisaraka), *Betsimisaraka Atsimo* (southern Betsimisaraka) (Cole 2001:39; Emoff 2002:13;



Neilssen 2012:40). In contemporary Madagascar people classified as Betsimisaraka may refer to themselves as such, but depending on the circumstance may also identify themselves using other designations such as descendants of a particular person, as migrants from a shared town, commune or district, or as a *côtier* (a “coastal person” rather than someone from the central highlands).

For ethnic identity in Madagascar as a whole, scholars observe the existence of pan-Malagasy themes and a common language (Southall 1986), in tension with cultural variation between and within ethnic categories. Middleton notes, “Madagascar poses problems for the scholar: of acknowledging what is held in common while not obscuring the very real differences that exist” (1999:6). This tension is echoed at a smaller scale within the Betsimisaraka ethnicity. On the one hand, the ethnic category is an artifice of history, and there are differences in custom and dialect within the Betsimisaraka region. On the other hand, both Betsimisaraka people and their ethnographers speak of shared core characteristics, such as cultivation methods, house and dress styles, and customs and beliefs (Nielsen 2012:40).

In the remainder of this section I will focus on one aspect of Betsimisaraka culture that has particular salience for the study of rural-urban migration and linkages: social relations of mutual dependency which have the capacity to benefit or harm participants. This ambiguous reciprocity is found in the relationship between ancestors and their descendants, as well as the relationship between (living) kin and community members, each of which I will address in turn.

### ***Razagna (ancestors)***

Ancestors are important for peoples’ daily and ritual lives in northeastern Madagascar and throughout the island as a whole. The importance of ancestors in Madagascar is also a reminder of the island inhabitants’ shared African and Asian roots (see Chambert-Loir and Reid

2002; Couderc and Sillander 2012; Fortes 1965; Kopytoff 1971; Olupona 2001). Cole and Middleton state that ancestors “figure in *every* ethnography written on the island” (2001:2, emphasis added). Dahl characterizes ancestors as central to the Malagasy worldview, as “the organizer of the conceptual system” and “that which governs the application of the culture’s conceptualizations of the people’s relationship to reality” (1999:25). Ancestors are people who have died but continue to influence the affairs of the living after their burial in communal family tombs (*fasan-drazagna* or “ancestral tomb” generally, as well as *tragno-magnara* or “cold house”). People who died very young or who were extremely ostracized from society as adults due to anti-social behavior (e.g. sorcery, serious crimes) do not become ancestors (Mangalaza 1998).

The relationship between ancestors and their descendants is characterized by mutual dependency. Sodikoff’s observations for northern Betsimisaraka eloquently characterize the relationship between the living and the dead by saying, “As living people did things for dead ancestors – work the land, offer crops and meat, tend to tombs, respect customs and taboos – ancestors also worked for their living descendants, overseeing the fertility of wombs and rice fields” (Sodikoff 2012:152).

However, both living and dead participants in this relationship have the capacity to help or harm each other. The positive and negative potential of ancestor-descendant relationships is described for southern Betsimisaraka,

Ancestors may be capricious and cruel, demanding things of their descendants which their descendants can barely provide; ancestral wrath is the recognised ultimate cause of most illness ... Yet, for all their power, ancestors also have to rely on the living in order to obtain their demands. This is a risky business, for living people are notoriously self-involved, and thus likely to forget, and neglect, the dead (Cole and Middleton 2001:14).

The tension in Betsimisaraka conceptualizations of ancestors as providers of blessing and fertility, or sources of curses and illness, echoes characterizations of the ambivalence that other Malagasy ethnic groups have towards ancestors in different areas of the island (for a review see Middleton 1999). But despite the inherent danger in this relationship for both ancestors and their descendants, it is essential. “The exchange is kept going, however, because ultimately *each party cannot exist without the other*. Without ancestors people lose their social identity. Without descendants to constitute them in rituals, ancestors would not exist (Cole and Middleton 2001:14, emphasis added). As other scholars have noted, to live without ties to ancestors is to be un-free – a slave – or to be lost (Evers 2002; Graeber 2007).

### ***Havagna (kin)***

The Malagasy term *fiHAVANAGNA* is used to describe the underlying nature of relationships between related *havagna* (kin) and unrelated community members, but is translated by foreigners in divergent ways. For some it is akin to social capital, a “form of solidarity” and a “system of mutual aid” (Sirven 2006:1493). For others it is a “system of rules and norms” regarding “interpersonal relationships, rules of social conduct, and risk strategy” (Sandron 2008:507). Other scholars characterize *fiHAVANAGNA* as a form of “horizontal solidarity” that acts as a village leveling mechanism, in contrast to hierarchical relations and obligations (Dahl 1999:85).

More comprehensive descriptions of *fiHAVANAGNA* are found in ethnographies written by Malagasy scholars.<sup>4</sup> Whereas foreign scholars see *fiHAVANAGNA* only in egalitarian relationships, Malagasy scholars see it as the basis for *all* social relationships between living people including hierarchical relationships (e.g. elders and juniors, parents and children). Mangalaza notes, “An essential value of the Betsimisaraka, *fiHAVANAGNA* is present in all domains of life and regulates

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<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that the concept of *fiHAVANAGNA* features much more prominently in Malagasy ethnographers’ descriptions of their own culture than those written by foreigners.

all social relations” (1998:35, my own translation). He goes on to say that the concept is a way to harmonize society in the face of differences between individuals. Babity goes further, declaring that *fiavanagna* requires *fifankatiavagna* (mutual affection) and *fifagnajagna* (mutual respect), and is the organizing principle of Betsimisaraka society (1994:3-5). He gives many examples of Betsimisaraka *fomba* (customs) that express *fiavanagna*, including various types of communal agricultural labor especially for wet rice, or visits and material exchanges between people (1994), but he also sees it as the underlying principle of various events in the life cycle from birth, circumcision, marriage, and death (2010).

In many ways, the characterization of the social relationship between ancestors and descendants mirrors the social relationships between kin and unrelated people who live and work together in a community. Just as ancestors can make unnecessarily difficult demands on their descendants, so too can one’s kin and neighbors make onerous and obligatory mandates to share resources. Just as the ancestors are a potential source of harm if their demands are not met, so too can the living harm each other through sorcery, poisoning, or violence if they are overcome with jealousy or ill will. As one ethnographer of northern Betsimisaraka notes, “The tension between balancing self-gain and community well-being is an important motif in Malagasy proverbs, norms, and relationships” (Osterhoudt 2010:289). But most importantly, just as with ancestors the relationship between kin and non-relatives in the same community is seen as essential for the identity, wellbeing, and social reproduction of each party.

### **Migrant relationships with *havagna* and *razagna***

When Betsimisaraka people migrate away from their home village to live and work in a large city like Tamatave, they become a *vahiny* (stranger, guest) with no ancestral ties to their current residence. Yet migrants are still conceived to be *tompon-tany* (literally “master of the

land” or a native resident) in their place of origin even while absent. As a result, ideally migrants maintain their social relationships with both the living and the dead in their home village.

Migrants are still held to the obligations that those social relationships entail: to honor and respect one’s ancestors by following *fady* (taboos), participating in *tsaboraha* (ancestral rituals), and being buried with them at death in the *fasan-drazagna* (ancestral tomb); to *mamangy* (to visit), *mandray vahiny* (to receive and host guests), *magnampy* (to help) by sharing resources, and *mandray anjara* (literally “to accept one’s responsibility or share”) towards village events and needs, all of which are ways to honor and respect one’s kin and community members. Some migrants continue to maintain these social relationships with ancestors and kin in their rural places of origin, while other migrants do not. Indeed, searching for commonalities amongst migrants with weak rural linkages is a main objective of my research. However, I disagree that this is the case for all, or even most migrants, in contrast to Cole’s suggestion that rural-urban migration in northeastern Madagascar leads to a “disembedding” from rural ancestors and Betsimisaraka lifeways (Cole 2010:59).

### **3.3 Demographic Trends in Madagascar**

Historical demographic migration trends in Madagascar are difficult to determine, as scholars and colonial administrators continued to view the country as divided into discrete tribes, each with its own territory. Deschamps (1959) in a large volume devoted to exploring migration trends up until the colonial era, defined “migrants” as people of an ethnic identity not considered native to the particular region they inhabit. Thus, his calculations of internal migration exclude any migrants moving within their own ethnic group’s territory, as evidenced by maps of emigration and immigration within the country (Figure 3.2). These colonial definitions of migration are problematic because they rely on territorialized conceptions of ethnicity that much

anthropological research in the country has shown to be inaccurate (Astuti 1995; Lambek and Walsh 1997; Yount et al. 2001), and in practical terms excludes migrations that span short distances.

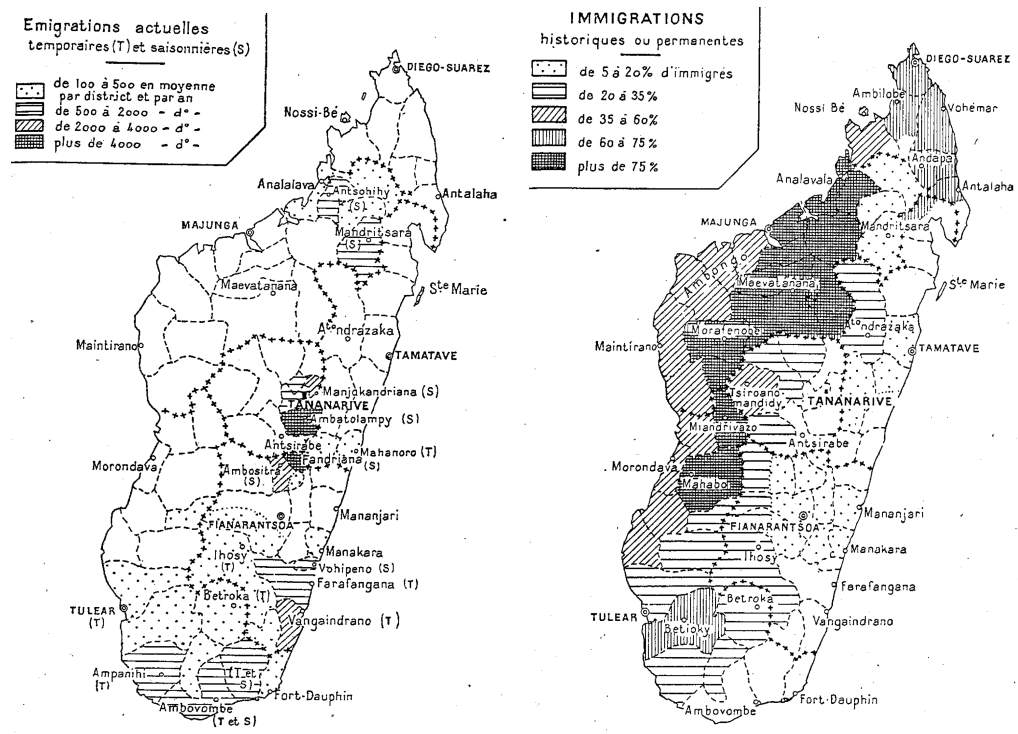


Figure 3.2 Colonial depictions of internal migration in Madagascar (Deschamps 1959:255, 259)

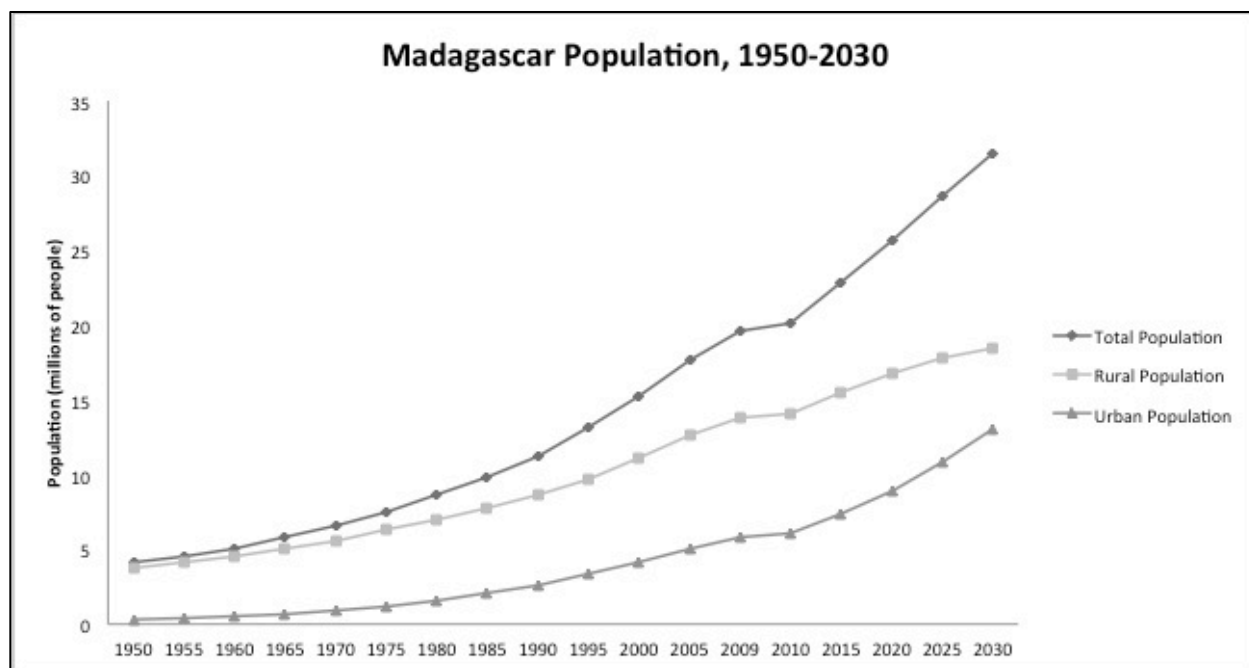


Figure 3.3 Madagascar Population Growth Trends (UN Population Division)

A clear understanding of Madagascar's contemporary demographic trends is just as difficult to establish due to the lack of reliable and up-to-date data. Only two censuses have been conducted since independence, in 1975 and 1993 (Briet 2006); a third was planned for 2009 but was cancelled due to political instability after a *coup d'etat* and the resulting retreat of international and bilateral development organizations (McDonald 2013). The census data that does exist probably underestimates internal migration; while ethnic-based definitions have been abandoned, people were only classified as migrants in the 1975 and 1993 censuses if they had moved permanently between geographic-administrative level of district or higher, thus excluding short-distance and short-term or cyclical migrants (INSTAT 1975:21, 1997:22). The United Nations and other organizations therefore must rely on estimates to calculate demographic data, including population growth rates. Calculations of Madagascar's population should be taken with a grain of salt (Figure 3.3), although they seem to indicate that the country will become more urban in the coming decades.

### 3.4 Rural-Urban migration and linkages in northeastern Madagascar

In northeastern Madagascar, as is the case elsewhere in Madagascar (see Freeman et al 2010), finding the right words to talk about migration and migrants can be difficult. Technically the most accurate word is *mifindra monina* (to change or move where one lives), but this is not always in common usage. Other verbs that are more often used in conversations and popular songs include *mandeha mitady* (to go seeking/searching), or related versions that apply this specifically to economic or labor migration include *mitady ravin-ahitra* (literally “to seek grass leaves”) or *mitady vôla* (to seek money). The term *zanak-ampielezana* (literally “scattered children”) is often used to refer to migrants with shared family or geographical origins, and many of the migrant associations in Tamatave use this term or a simplification in their names (e.g. *Fikambanana Zanak’i X* or Association of Children from X). Despite these many options for talking about migration and migrants, in explaining my studies to others in northeastern Madagascar I would often use a short narrative description rather than a single term for clarity and precision. Often after this description Malagasy people would have an “ah-ha” moment and ask if I studied *exode rurale*, (“rural exodus” in French) which attests to how rural-urban migration is sometimes negatively portrayed by policy makers in the country. I never used the term *vahiny*, which in this context would be translated as “stranger” or “newcomer” and be seen as undesirable.

Migration is pervasive in northeastern Madagascar. Betsimisaraka people have throughout history migrated to seek livelihood opportunities, but do not have mobile livelihoods *per se* as do other ethnic groups like the Vezo who migrate along the western coast to collect marine products (Astuti 1995), or like the Tsimihety cattle pastoralists in the far north (Wilson 1992). Nor is migration seen as an essential rite of passage, as has been described in Senegal



(Lambert 2002), Malaysia (Soda and Seman 2011), and Indonesia (Elmhirst 2007) among other places. Rather, people view migration as one of a variety of normal responses to life circumstances and individual ambitions. Migrating and mobility more generally is viewed positively, as the proverb *Mandehandeha mahita raha, mipetraka an-dragno mahita jôfo* (Traveling one sees things, staying at home one sees dust) attests.

Once migrants move away from their place of origin, they can still maintain linkages to their home villages and rural kin in a variety of ways (see Appendix B for more detailed descriptions). These include 1) communicating long distance with rural people via cellphone, letter, or verbal messages; 2) socializing with fellow migrants in the city informally or through the structure of migrant associations; 3) socializing with rural kin and non-relatives, either through simple visits or to attend specific events (celebrations, funerals, and ancestral rituals); 4) exchanging money and food with rural kin and non-relatives, either brought when visiting or sent over long distances; 5) accessing or owning rural resources to grow food and earn money in the present or as investments for possible return to the village.

### **3.5 The Vavatenina-Tamatave Migrant Population**

Baseline data about migrants in the city of Tamatave as a whole, as well as the particular migrant population of interest to me, was not available at the time I conducted my dissertation. Therefore, I administered my own survey of migrants who originated in the Vavatenina District and had migrated to the city of Tamatave at the start of my study. I will summarize the survey findings here to give background to rural-urban migration in northeastern Madagascar, as I believe these findings are applicable to the area generally since most of Tamatave's migrants originate in nearby rural areas of the Atsinanana and Analanjirofo Regions (Tilghman 2009).

Table 3.1 Composition of the Vavatenina-Tamatave migrant population in key variables

Personal Variable	Women (%)	Men (%)	Entire Sample (%)
<i>Age</i>			
25 and younger	36	31	34
26-35	25	27	26
36-45	17	17	17
46-55	14	13	13
55 and older	8	13	10
<i>Education Level</i>			
None	2	3	2
Primary School	37	19	31
Middle School	41	29	37
High School	15	33	21
University	4	16	8
<i>Religious Affiliation</i>			
Catholic	65	62	64
Historical Protestant	25	24	24
Millenarian and Pentecostal	5	8	6
No affiliation	5	5	5
<i>Housing Quality</i>			
Low (bamboo or ravinala palm)	23	17	21
Medium (wood or metal)	53	46	53
High (cement)	24	29	26
<i>Commune of Origin within rural Vavatenina District</i>			
Ambatoharanana	7	4	6
Ambodimangavalo	0.5	1	1
Ambohibe	15	16	15
Ampasimazava	4	1	3
Andasibe	5	4	5
Anjahambe	16	19	17
Maromitety	6	9	7
Miarinarivo	2	4	3
Sahatavy	5	4	5
Vavatenina	37	33	36
<i>Main Reason Migrated to Tamatave</i>			
To earn money or look for work	42	48	43
To accompany family member	25	7	19
To access education	23	39	28
Other	10	6	10

Table 3.2 Summary of migration experiences of Vavatenina-Tamatave migrants

Migration Experiences	Women			Men			Entire Sample		
	Median	Min	Max	Median	Min	Max	Median	Min	Max
Age left Vavatenina (years)	18	1	79	18	1	40	18	1	79
Migration events (#)	1	1	11	1	1	18	1	1	18
Locations lived (#)	2	2	8	2	2	11	2	2	11
Proportion life Vavatenina (%)	63	3	99	58	1	99	61	1	99
Time lived Vavatenina (years)	18	1	79	19	1	40	18	1	79
Proportion life Tamatave (%)	32	1	96	32	2	97	32	1	97
Time lived Tamatave (years)	9	1	54	11	1	57	10	1	57

Table 3.3 Key indicators of linkages to migrants' place of origin

Linkage Indicators	Women (%)	Men (%)	Entire Sample (%)
Mother from Vavatenina	92	87	91
Father from Vavatenina	85	86	85
Spouse from Vavatenina	22	27	23
Majority of family currently lives in Vavatenina	86	85	86
Desire to return to Vavatenina in future	41	39	40
Desire to be buried in Vavatenina	85	80	83
Member of migrant association(s)	35	42	37
<i>In past year did following linkage activity at least once:</i>			
Visited family in rural area	72	76	73
Attended rural ancestral ritual	32	37	34
Attended rural funeral	34	39	36
Hosted family visiting city	85	83	84
Remitted money or food to rural area	62	55	60
Received food or money from rural area	81	84	82

In total I surveyed 635 Vavatenina-Tamatave migrants, of which 202 (32%) were men and 428 (68%) were women. (The gender of five individuals was unclear from the survey and these individuals were excluded from summary statistics by gender.) In general men and women were very similar regarding the composition of the population for key variables (see Table 3.1), but some differences should be noted. As a whole a greater proportion of the men had attended middle and high school or university, were affiliated with a Millenarian or Pentecostal Protestant religion, and lived in better quality housing. We can say that the population as a whole for both genders is overall young, strongly identifies as Catholic, and overwhelmingly comes from three communes in the Vavatenina District (Ambohibe, Anjahambe, and Vavatenina). Most migrants said that they had moved to Tamatave for economic reasons, although educational opportunities and accompanying family members were also draws. (Regarding this latter point, more men had migrated to seek employment or educational opportunities, and more women had migrated to join or accompany family members.)

The migration experiences were similar for men and women (see Table 3.2). The most common migration trajectory was to leave the Vavatenina District at age 18 and move directly to Tamatave. When they participated in the survey most migrants had spent about one-third of their life in the city and two-thirds of their life in their rural place of origin.

Migrants remained tied to their place of origin in a number of different ways (see Table 3.3). Most migrants had parents who both originated in the Vavatenina District, but less than one-quarter of them had married someone from there. While less than half desired to return to live in the rural area at some point in the future, 83% said that they wanted to be buried there. The majority of migrants had returned to the rural area to visit family and had also hosted rural visitors in their home in the city in the year previous to the study. Similarly, most migrants had exchanged food or money with rural individuals in the previous year. Less common types of linkages included being a member of a migrant association, and returning to the rural area to attend a funeral or ancestral ritual.

### **3.6 Implications for the dissertation**

In this chapter I have outlined the historical and ethnographic context of this dissertation. The first indication of humans in Madagascar dates to about 4000 years ago, and biological and cultural evidence suggests that contemporary Malagasy people have shared origins in Africa and Asia. The Betsimisaraka ethnicity first emerged as a political federation in the 1700s during the era of slave trading, and was later codified by the French colonial government as a descriptor for people living in the northeastern region of the country. Nevertheless, people here share similar histories and customs, the most important of which for this study is the important role of mutually dependent relationships between ancestors and descendants, and communities of kin and unrelated people. These relationships shape migrants' relationships with their place of origin,

as evidenced by the high rate of Vavatenina-Tamatave migrants who continue to visit rural family members, host rural family members when they travel to the city, and exchange food and money with rural people.

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CHAPTER 4

‘IT IS GOOD TO LEAVE, IT IS GOOD TO RETURN’:  
EXPLAINING VARIABILITY OF RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES IN NORTHEASTERN  
MADAGASCAR<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Tilghman, Laura M. To be submitted to *Population, Space and Place*.

## **Abstract**

The linkages that migrants maintain with their places of origin is a central concern of anthropologists who study both internal and international migration. Scholars have recently called for more systematic analysis of the variability of these linkages, rather than assuming all migrants maintain strong connections. This article presents a quantitative analysis of linkage variability for rural-urban migrants in northeastern Madagascar, focusing on current residents of the city of Tamatave who trace their origins to the rural Vavatenina District. I use stepwise regression modeling to analyze what factors best predict the variability of migrants' linkages to their places of origin, specifically the frequency that migrants engage in linkage activities (behaviors) as well as how they value and perceive these linkages (attitudes). I examine different factors, including individual traits of migrants, as well as characteristics of their families and migration experiences. I show that migrants with "weaker" linkages are men, poor, Protestant, and have a spouse or parent with origins outside the Vavatenina District.

#### 4.1 Introduction

When I conducted interviews in the city of Tamatave on the topic of rural-urban migration, sometimes people would repeat a proverb to me at the end of our conversation to wish me luck in my research: *Aombilahy mazava lôha: tsara mandeha, tsara mierigny* (The white-headed bull: it is good to leave, it is good to return).<sup>6</sup> That they should have chosen this particular saying is apt because it alludes to migrants' linkages to home, the nature of which was the major theme of my research. This proverb is used as a *tso-drano* (benediction) to wish others well in their endeavors, often when they are leaving to travel or to reside in a new place. It encapsulates a Malagasy cultural ideal in which migration (or mobility more generally) does not mean severing linkages to one's place of origin or the people living there. This proverb reflects a cultural norm that even as one leaves – to seek fortune, education, love, or adventure – it is expected that one will also return.

The emphasis on the places from where migrants originate – and the linkages that migrants maintain with those places after leaving – is a common theme of anthropological studies of migration. Perhaps this arises from the fact that anthropologists first became interested in migration by following rural informants into cities (Brettell 2003:ix; Foster and Kemper 2009:5). Perhaps it is a disciplinary legacy of anthropology's interest in culture, which has historically been conceived as rooted in particular places and often is still presented so despite efforts to "deterritorialize" this concept (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). Whatever the reason, migrant linkages to the place alternately called "home," "place of origin," "natal village," or "sending community" have been and continue to be of great interest to anthropologists. In the 1960s and 1970s this interest was expressed in studies that explored how sending communities

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<sup>6</sup> The proverb is in common usage in contemporary northeastern Madagascar, as evidenced by its use in a 2009 pop song "Tsodrano" by the Tamatave-based musical group Mika sy Davis.

adapted to the absence of migrants after their departure (Graves and Graves 1974), followed by a great deal of research on return migration in the 1980s that explored the consequences of migrants moving back to their places of origin after an extended absence (Brettell 2003:47; Gmelch 1980; Rhoades 1978).

In the 1990s these interests coalesced around the study of transnational migration, defined as “the process by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Glick Schiller et al 1995:43). Transnational theory has since gained traction in many other social science disciplines that have found its ideas useful for understanding contemporary trends and processes (Blunt 2007; Horevitz 2009; Kearney 1995; Kivisto 2001; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007; Morawska 2003; Vertovec 1999, 2009).

As research on migration has become increasingly dominated by transnational theory, attention to internal migration has diminished in favor of international migration (King et al 2009). Yet in some areas of the world, including much of sub-Saharan Africa, international migration rates are much lower than rates of rural-urban and other forms of internal migration (Potts 2010). Perhaps this explains why there is a large body of work on African rural-urban (i.e. trans-local) linkages that shares many of the ideas of transnationalism albeit using a different vocabulary (e.g. Andersson 2001; Baker 2006; Frayne 2005; Geschiere and Gugler 1998; Gugler 1971, 1991, 2002; Lambert 2002; Lesetedi 2003; Potts 2010; Tacoli 2002; Trager 1998).

These two bodies of scholarship on migrant linkages – trans-national or trans-local – share a central argument that migrants often maintain ties to home while forging new ties in their destination. Yet not all migrants at a particular moment in time engage in the same types of linkages to places of origin, nor do so with equal frequency or fervor. In a recent review, Trager

(2005) argues that it is exactly this kind of variation, however, that has not been fully addressed by scholarship. As she argued, “The fact of such linkages is well established. Of greater interest now is the varying forms they take, how they are used by those involved, the ways in which they form part of migration strategies, and how they vary with material and cultural context” (2005:20). These sentiments echo Levitt’s earlier declaration that, “Single case studies do not tell us how widespread transnational practices are or how they vary among groups” (2001:210). Trager also calls on researchers to not ignore the *absence* of migrant ties to home, saying “Obviously not all migrants maintain such ties; it is also interesting to examine those situations where people break their connections” (2005:39).

Perhaps the one area where scholars have made great progress in recent decades analyzing the variability of migrant linkages to home is in the study of remittances. Remittances are the transfers of money from a migrant to family, friends, and organizations in their place of origin, and can be easily quantified and delineated regarding amount of money, number of transactions, location of and relationship between sender and receiver. Analysis of remittances has advanced in part because there are competing theories which have generated clear hypotheses to test (Page and Plaza 2005), such as whether or not migrants remit out of altruism, self-interest, or some intermediate of the two (Carling 2008; Luke and Singh 2009), whether remittances are best characterized as investments or insurance for migrants (de la Briere 2002; Niimi et al 2009), or whether or not remittances exacerbate inequality in receiving communities (Azam and Gubert 2006; Koenig 2005).

Yet remittances are just one of a myriad ways that ties between migrants and their places of origin take shape in how people act and think. Migrant linkages to places of origin are

expressed in many different *behaviors*: exchanges of things other than money, like food or knowledge (Cohen 2005; Levitt 1998); linkages that flow in the other direction from the place of origin to the migrant (Mazzucato 2009), and behaviors other than exchanges such as returning home to visit, earn money, or grow food, or owning land or housing in the place of origin (Andersson 2001; Smith 2008). Migrant linkages to places of origin are also expressed as *attitudes* of the value and importance that migrants perceive these linkages to have (Lim 2009; Peter 2010).

While researchers are cognizant that migrant linkages can be expressed in a diversity of behaviors and attitudes, there has been much less effort to systematically analyze how they vary between and within migrant populations as has been done for remittances. A recent promising study from Kenya that analyzed how migrant linkages varied based on a variety of factors including gender, age, ethnicity, and religious affiliation chose to focus on different aspect of migrant linkages: the number of visits that the migrant had made to the home village over a 12-month period (Mberu et al 2013). The task remains for researchers to find ways to apply quantitative analyses to explaining variability of migrant linkages as a whole, rather than single indicator variables like the frequency of remitting money or visiting relatives.

My main goal in this article is to analyze the factors that account for variability in migrant linkage behaviors and attitudes in northeastern Madagascar. Using regression modeling that is contextualized with qualitative data analysis from 18 months of ethnographic fieldwork in the city of Tamatave, I show that migrants have weaker linkages to home if they are male, of low socio-economic status, belong to a Protestant religious denomination, or have a spouse or parent who originates from another area of the country. I argue that these findings point to an

underlying cultural norm that values strong ties to places of origin, which in the contemporary era migrants sometimes have diminished capacity or desire to follow.

#### 4.2 Rural-urban migration and linkages in northeastern Madagascar

The research took place in the island nation of Madagascar, a country where the estimated urban growth rate is about 4.99% and currently about a third of the population lives in cities (UNPD 2014), parameters that make it somewhat “typical” for Africa. However, unlike migration processes in the mainland, Malagasy migrants rarely travel internationally due to the lack of land borders and the high costs of air travel.

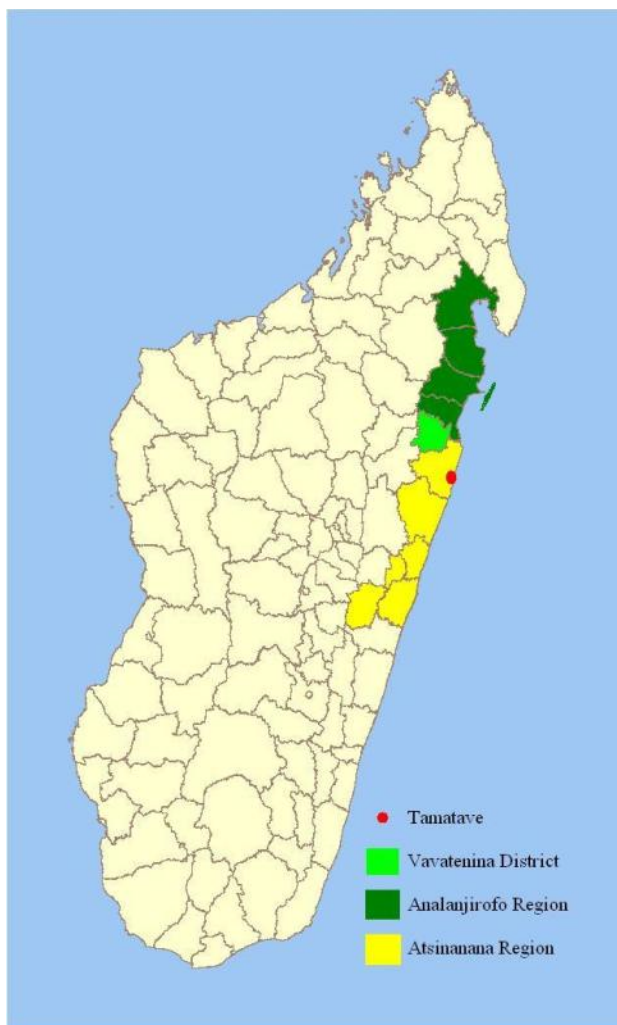


Figure 4.1 Map of Madagascar with urban and rural fieldsites

Tamatave<sup>7</sup> (see Figure 4.1) is home of the country's largest port, and is the second most populated city after the capital with between 250,000 to 1 million residents (INSTAT n.d.). Preliminary research in 2009 found that many of Tamatave's residents are first- and second-generation migrants, the majority of whom are from the Atsinanana and Analanjirofo Regions directly north and south of the city. Rather than studying Tamatave's diverse migrant population in its entirety, I chose to focus on a sub-sample of people with shared origins in a smaller and more focused rural area, so that research subjects would have similar cultural backgrounds and multi-sited data collection would be feasible. The migrants that were the focus of the study originated from the rural Vavatenina District. Located about 130 kilometers northwest of the city, the Vavatenina District is composed of over 120 villages and towns of various size scattered over 3100 square kilometers (District de Vavatenina, n.d.). Travel between the two locations requires at minimum a four-hour minibus ride, and may entail up to an additional day of walking for more isolated villages.

The people living in the northeast of Madagascar where the research took place are considered Betsimisaraka, an ethnic group with shared history and similar customs and beliefs despite internal variation (Cole 2001; Emoff 2002; Neilssen 2012). One aspect of Betsimisaraka culture has particular salience for the study of rural-urban linkages: social relations of mutual dependency which have the capacity to benefit or harm participants. This ambiguous reciprocity is found in the relationship between ancestors and their descendants, as well as the relationship between (living) kin and community members.

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<sup>7</sup> The city's current official name is Toamasina, but I follow most city residents who continue to refer to the city by the name it was called during French colonial times.



Ancestors are people who have died but continue to influence the affairs of the living after their burial in communal family tombs (*fasan-drazagna* or “ancestral tomb” generally, as well as *tragno-magnara* or “cold house”)<sup>8</sup> (Mangalaza 1998). Ancestors and descendants are mutually dependent upon one another, as Sodikoff describes eloquently: “As living people did things for dead ancestors – work the land, offer crops and meat, tend to tombs, respect customs and taboos – ancestors also worked for their living descendants, overseeing the fertility of wombs and rice fields” (Sodikoff 2012:152). Yet both ancestors and descendants have the capacity to harm one another, and indeed infertility, sickness, and misfortune are often traced back to ancestral wrath as their ultimate cause (Cole 2001). But despite the inherent danger in this relationship for both ancestors and their descendants, it is essential. “The exchange is kept going, however, because ultimately *each party cannot exist without the other*. Without ancestors people lose their social identity. Without descendants to constitute them in rituals, ancestors would not exist (Cole and Middleton 2001:14, emphasis added). As other scholars have noted, to live without ties to ancestors is to be un-free – a slave – or to be lost (Evers 2002; Graeber 2007).

The Malagasy term *fihavanagna* is used to describe the underlying nature of relationships between related *havagna* (kin) and unrelated community members. *Fihavanagna* has been translated by foreigners in divergent ways, from something akin to social capital (Sirven 2006), a “system of rules and norms” regarding “interpersonal relationships, rules of social conduct, and risk strategy” (Sandron 2008:507), or a form of “horizontal solidarity” that acts as a village leveling mechanism (Dahl 1999:85). More comprehensive descriptions of *fihavanagna* are found

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<sup>8</sup> Ancestors are important throughout Madagascar (Cole and Middleton 2001), and also serve as a reminder of the island inhabitants’ shared African and Asian roots (see Chambert-Loir and Reid 2002; Couderc and Sillander 2012; Fortes 1965; Kopytoff 1971; Olupona 2001).

in ethnographies written by Malagasy scholars,<sup>9</sup> who see it as the basis for *all* social relationships between living people (Babity 1994, 2010; Mangalaza 1998). In many ways, the characterization of the social relationship between ancestors and descendants mirrors the social relationships between kin and unrelated people who live and work together in a community. Just as ancestors can make unnecessarily difficult demands on their descendants, so too can one's kin and neighbors make onerous and obligatory mandates to share resources. Just as the ancestors are a potential source of harm if their demands are not met, so too can the living harm each other through sorcery, poisoning, or violence if they are overcome with jealousy or ill will. As one ethnographer of northern Betsimisaraka notes, "The tension between balancing self-gain and community well-being is an important motif in Malagasy proverbs, norms, and relationships" (Osterhoudt 2010:289). But most importantly, just as with ancestors the relationship between kin and non-relatives in the same community is seen as essential for the identity, wellbeing, and social reproduction of each party.

When Betsimisaraka people migrate away from their home village to live and work in a large city like Tamatave, ideally they continue to maintain their social relationships with both the living and the dead in their home village. Migrants are still held to the obligations that those social relationships entail: to honor and respect one's ancestors by following *fady* (taboos), participating in *tsaboraha* (ancestral rituals), and being buried with them at death in the *fasandrazagna* (ancestral tomb); to *mamangy* (to visit), *mandray vahiny* (to receive and host guests), *magnampy* (to help) by sharing resources, and *mandray anjara* (literally "to accept one's responsibility or share") towards village events and needs, all of which are ways to honor and respect one's kin and community members. Some migrants continue to maintain these social

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<sup>9</sup> It is interesting to note that the concept of fihavanana features much more prominently in Malagasy ethnographers' descriptions of their own culture than those written by foreigners.

relationships with ancestors and kin in their rural places of origin, while other migrants do not. Indeed, searching for commonalities amongst migrants with weak or strong rural linkages is a main objective of my research.

### **4.3 Methods**

#### **4.3.1 Sampling**

I used purposive sampling (Bernard 2006:145) to select migrants who were willing to participate in 12 months of data collection from August 2011 to July 2012. These migrants were initially identified during a city-wide survey conducted from March to May 2011. The resulting sample included 55 men and women of diverse age, socio-economic status, employment type, religious affiliation, and migration experiences.

#### **4.3.2 Data Collection**

To evaluate migrants' *linkage behavior*, I conducted a structured interview twice a month for 12 months, in which myself or a research assistant asked migrants to recall all instances since the last interview in which they had performed six kinds of activities: 1) traveling outside the city, 2) hosting guests at one's home, 3) attending special events in the city, 4) communicating by phone or letter to people, 5) exchanging money, food, or materials with other people, and 6) contributing financially or materially to an event. Migrants were also asked to provide additional details, such as location of the activity or person, amount or description of money, food, and materials, and relationships to people. The questions asked about all extra-household linkages regardless of location, because in pre-testing we found that questions specific to linkages with the Vavatenina District caused anxiety for migrants who were ashamed to have weak ties to their place of origin. However, the linkage activities of interest for the research were only those associated with the Vavatenina District, and these were easily isolated in data processing.

To evaluate migrants' *linkage attitudes*, I conducted a structured interview at the end of the 12 months. I first asked migrants to rate the importance of 16 different kinds of rural-urban linkages on a 3-point likert scale and then to explain their answers. After rating each linkage type individually, they were then asked to choose which type of linkage was 1) the most important, 2) the least important, 3) the most difficult, and 4) the most enjoyable. To aid with these questions I used small cards displaying a drawing labeled in Malagasy to represent each linkage type. When possible, these exercises were then followed by less structured conversations to further elicit migrant perceptions of rural-urban linkages.

Each migrant was formally interviewed at the beginning and end of the 12 months regarding their life history and migration experiences, and ties to their rural place of origin and how these had changed over time. I also visited the Vavatenina District at different points throughout the year, interviewing migrants' family members and other unrelated people about migration and rural-urban linkages. Additional qualitative data on these topics was gathered through participant observation in daily life and special events of the sample (e.g. marriages, funerals, ancestral rituals), for which fieldnotes were taken.

#### **4.3.3 Data Analysis**

I transcribed all interviews and fieldnotes and imported them into the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA 10. I analyzed transcriptions using a grounded theory approach in which I looked for themes in narratives, focusing on repetitions, similarities and differences (Bernard and Ryan 2010:265-286).

Migrant linkage behaviors were calculated as the total frequency of activities that they reported doing over the 12 months that were connected with the Vavatenina District. For the purposes of analysis, a higher frequency of linkage behaviors was theorized to indicate stronger

ties to home. Combining behaviors (social activities plus material exchanges) allowed me to create a single variable for the purposes of analysis, but may have limitations in that it combines actions that are very different (e.g. a return visit to the rural place of origin is combined with the remittance of a basket of food) and does not take into consideration the intensity of each activity (e.g. a return visit lasting 10 days is counted equally as one lasting just a single day).

Migrant linkage attitudes were calculated as the sum total of the 16 likert-scale questions regarding the importance of different types of linkages. For the purposes of analysis, a higher total score was theorized to indicate stronger ties to home. As with the quantification of linkage behaviors, the way in which linkage attitudes were calculated could have limitations. For example, while migrants were prompted to answer these questions from their own personal perspective, it may be that some individuals' responses were influenced by what they thought should be the correct answer based on cultural norms. There is also the inherent danger of reducing complex emotional and intellectual processes into multiple-choice questions.

I analyzed the influence of a variety of factors on migrant linkage behavior and attitudes through stepwise general linear regression, using minimum Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) as the selection criteria for inclusion in the model. Each stepwise regression determined the combination of independent variables (personal traits of migrants and their families, and aspects of their migration experiences, summarized in Table 4.2) that best predicted a single dependent variable (linkage behavior or attitudes, summarized in Table 4.1). I also analyzed the internal consistency of the linkage attitude metric, which was found to be reliable (16 items,  $\alpha = 0.70$ ).

Table 4.1 Dependent variables used in stepwise general linear regression analyses.

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Mean, (Range)</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>	<b>Description</b>
Linkage Behavior	# activities reported	26.15 (2-54)	14.03	The total frequency of linkage activities over 12 months
Linkage Attitude	Likert-scale construct	25.18 (15-32)	4.09	The sum of 16 likert scale ratings regarding the importance of linkages

Table 4.2 Independent variables used in stepwise general linear regression analyses

Variable	Type: Nominal, Continuous,	Description (Distribution in Sample)
<i>Individual Traits</i>		
Gender	N	- Male (42%) - Female (58%)
Age	C	# years old at end of study in 2012 (Mean = 41 years, Std Dev = 13.26, Min = 19, Max = 73)
Education	C	# years of formal schooling (Mean = 10 years, Std Dev = 5.05, Min = 0, Max = 24)
House Material	N	- Reside in marginal bamboo/palm house (13%) - Reside in improved wood or cement house (87%)
Religion	N	- Catholic (67%) - Protestant (33%)
<i>Family Traits</i>		
Spouse <sup>10</sup> origin	N	- Unmarried or Spouse from outside Vavatenina District (67%) - Spouse also from the Vavatenina District (33%)
Parent origin	N	- Only one parent from the Vavatenina District (13%) - Both parents from the Vavatenina District (87%)
Family residence	C	# of parents and siblings now residing in Vavatenina District (Mean = 4 people, Std Dev = 2.74, Min = 0, Max = 11)
<i>Migration Experiences</i>		
Primary reason to migrate	N	- To seek work or economic opportunity (31%) - To accompany a family member or spouse (24%) - To attend school (27%) - Other (18%)
Age first migrate	C	# years old when first moved from place of origin (Mean = 15 years, Std Dev = 6.49, Min = 3, Max = 31)
% life in origin	C	Percent of total age spent as resident in Vavatenina District (Mean = 49%, Std Dev = 20.48, Min = 11%, Max = 93%)

#### 4.4 Results

The results of two different stepwise regressions that evaluated which variables – personal traits, family traits, and migration experiences – would best predict migrants’ linkage behavior and attitudes are summarized in Tables 4.3 and 4.4, respectively.

<sup>10</sup> Spouses refer to formal marriage arrangements (civil or religious weddings) as well as informal marriages. I deferred to individuals’ own assessments of their relationships regarding whether they were married (manambady) or single (mitovo).

Table 4.3 Stepwise general linear regression model predicting Linkage Behavior

Predictor	Parameter Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	Partial RSq	p value
Intercept	21.19	2.41	8.81	--	<0.0001
Gender - <i>male</i>	-3.32	1.54	-2.16	0.01	0.036
House Material - <i>marginal</i>	-7.11	2.28	-3.13	0.12	0.003
Religion - <i>Protestant</i>	-3.59	1.70	-2.11	0.16	0.040
Spouse Origin - <i>different</i>	-6.17	1.65	-3.75	0.25	0.001

Model fit:  $Rsq = 0.45$ , Adjusted  $RSq = 0.40$ ,  $F(4,50) = 10.12$  ( $p < 0.001$ ).

Nearly half, or 45%, of the variation in migrants' linkage behavior was explained by a combination of their gender, house material, religion, and the place of origin of their spouse. Migrants who had lower frequencies of linkage behavior were more likely to be male, Protestant, live in marginal housing, or married to someone who originated from outside the Vavatenina District.

Table 4.4 Stepwise general linear regression model predicting Linkage Attitudes

Predictor	Parameter Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	Partial RSq	p value
Intercept	24.24	0.82	29.63	--	<.0001
Spouse Origin - <i>different</i>	-1.08	0.55	-1.96	0.09	0.056
Parents Origin - <i>different</i>	-1.76	0.78	-2.26	0.11	0.028

Model fit:  $Rsq = 0.17$ , Adjusted  $RSq = 0.14$ ,  $F(2,52) = 5.25$  ( $p = 0.008$ ).

Nearly one-fifth, or 17%, of the variation in migrants' linkage attitudes was explained by the place of origin of their spouse and parents. Migrants who viewed linkages as less important had a spouse or one parent whose origins were outside the Vavatenina District.

It is interesting to note that the stepwise regression analyses consistently found personal and family traits to be significant predictors of migrants' linkage behaviors and attitudes, in contrast to migration experiences. The main reason an individual chooses to move to the city, the age at which they do so, the number of times they have moved over their lifetime, or the proportion of their life spent as a rural resident, are not very good predictors of the ways

migrants think about and engage in linkages. Some personal and family traits were also not selected, including age, educational level, and number of relatives currently living in the rural area.

#### **4.5 Discussion: Explaining variation in migrants' linkage behaviors and attitudes**

The factors that were selected through regression analysis as the best predictors of linkage attitudes (higher likert-scale ratings of the importance of various linkage activities) included the origins of their spouse and parents. The factors that were selected as the best predictors of linkage behavior (higher frequency of linkage activities of varying type that the migrant had done over a 12-month period) included migrants' gender, house type, religion, and the origin of their spouse. I examine each of these factors in turn.

##### **Gender**

Stepwise regression modeling selecting gender as an important predictor of migrant linkage behavior. It is difficult to generalize about the role of gender on home ties of migrants, but in reviewing the literature Vertovec (2009:64-66) argues that gender roles and status in both the sending and receiving communities are key factors: gender roles shape what is possible for men and women to do, and status refers to their possibilities for autonomy and power – or lack thereof. Reviewing numerous studies, Vertovec argues that often women are less motivated to maintain home ties because they can access more equal gender roles and achieve higher status through migration. Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo (2005), in a study that explores transnational home ties of Latin American migrants to the United States, argue that men maintain stronger linkages as a reaction to negative experiences of incorporation into the host society, in effect reclaiming some of their status and power that is lost while living as a racial minority immigrant. Ethnographic data on gender roles in this region and elsewhere in Madagascar generate similar



expectations that male migrants would be more motivated to maintain rural linkages. Malagasy men generally enjoy more overt positions of power in rural areas, and hold important rural roles as traditional authorities and ritual leaders that are not available to women and create obligations towards their rural kin and rural ancestors (Cole 2001; Gezon 2002). Additionally, Cole (2004; 2005) has shown that women who move to the city experience a widening of economic opportunities and somewhat more bargaining power in their relationships with men, which one might think would motivate them to focus on cementing ties to the city rather than maintaining ties to rural people and places where they have less power.

Despite these predictions, regression modeling found that men engaged in fewer activities linking them to their homes than women. Local explanations focus less on gender roles and status and more on the gendered emotional connections between parents and children. When asked to compare the home ties of their relatives who had migrated away from the Vavatenina District, rural people almost always said that women had stronger rural ties to home. One migrant compared the linkages maintained by her siblings and reflected,

Women visit their parents more compared to men ... The reason for that is they [men] don't unconditionally love [*literally* "fused at the heart with"] their parents, but women really desire to see their mom and dad more. For our family, it is more or less the women who are close to our parents.<sup>11</sup>

Her sentiments were echoed by a different migrants' rural relative in another area of the Vavatenina District,

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<sup>11</sup> Ny viavy izany matetika mamangy ray amandreny kokoa toy izay ny lalahy ... Mahatonga izany zareo tsy dia miraiki-po loatra tamin'ny ray amandreninjareo loatra fô ilay viavy izany tegna manampagniriana bebe kokoa te ahita papa sy mama. Raha aminay atô aloha saiky saiky viavy mifikitra bebe kokoa amin'ny ray amandreny. (Rural relative, Vavatenina, 2012-04-18)

Women really have frequent ties with the village. [What do women do when they return home?] They visit people. Women are more easily homesick, thinking about their ancestral land.<sup>12</sup>

The local explanation for gender differences in migrants' home ties often revolve around the idea that women are more emotional than men. Rural people describe women as having stronger bonds to their parents and being more susceptible to feelings of homesickness and nostalgia.

Details of gender roles in this area of the world offer some additional clues to help interpret the regression results. First, in contrast to mainland Africa studies (cf Gugler 2002), Betsimisaraka women can inherit land and rural resources from their parents just like men, which may motivate them to maintain ties as a way to stake claims in inherited rural resources. Furthermore, when they have children women often take part in customs (*magnampatana*) that cement their ties to their mothers, either by returning home for an extended stay or being cared for in their urban home by their rural mother. I would argue that the gender differences in migrants' ties to home seen in northeastern Madagascar may also reflect different expectations of men and women who have migrated to the city from their rural relatives. Men are expected to be independent of their parents, while this is less true for women.

### **House Material**

Migrants living in marginal houses made of bamboo or palm fiber engage in fewer behaviors that linked them to their rural place of origin, compared to migrants living in higher quality housing made of wood or cement. Residence in a marginal house is a sign of extreme economic vulnerability, as these single room homes are the cheapest to rent, most at risk to damage and loss by theft or fire, and are the least prestigious. These findings support the idea of

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<sup>12</sup> Viavy tegna maheky mifandray antanagna. [Ino izany ataon'ny viavy mandeha antanindrazana?] Mamangy. Ny viavy mora jerijery, mahatsiarotsiaro tanindrazana. (Rural relative, Anjahambe, 2012-05-09)

“resource-dependent transnationalism” introduced by Itzigsohn and Giorguli-Saucedo (2005), in which migrants are thought to only engage in home ties once basic household expenses in the destination country are taken care of, leaving excess resources to be diverted elsewhere. Many linkage activities entail immediate financial costs to the migrant, which no matter how small or occasional may be out of reach of the most economically disadvantaged. Additionally, while some linkages may be financially beneficial to migrants (e.g. receiving exchanges in which rural people send them food or money), to receive such help migrants must often engage in other costly linkages to maintain the reciprocal relationships that are the basis of linkages. (I discuss the transaction costs of maintaining linkages and expectations of reciprocity between migrant and rural kin more in more detail in Chapter 6.)

Extremely economically vulnerable migrants also feel shame about their failure to succeed in the city, which may further lessen motivations to maintain strong ties to their rural family members. A common Malagasy proverb states that *Aomby mahia tsy lelafin' ny namany* (“a thin cow is not licked by its friends”), and perhaps we can see the reduced linkage behavior of poor migrants as a sort of self-imposed exile in the face of this sentiment.

These results also reflect altered expectations on the part of rural relatives of proper migrant behavior in the face of economic hardship. When migrants move to a city like Tamatave, they have more opportunities to earn cash than their rural relatives and friends but also must adjust to paying high prices for goods and services that would be free or inexpensive in the countryside like water, housing, rice and produce. Indeed, while the capitalist market economy is not absent in rural areas, its all-encompassing prevalence in daily life of the city was one thing that migrants often remarked upon as a major difference between the two places. Rural relatives of migrants are often aware of the economic difficulties of city life, and in interviews some

talked of altering their expectations of what proper linkage behavior they could expect. For example, if faced with a choice between a migrant using limited financial resources to pay for transportation to return home to participate in an ancestral ritual, or staying home and sending those resources to the family to help with ritual expenses, they would prefer the latter. Malagasy anthropologist Eugene Mangalaza (personal communication, 2012-05-21) explains this as the “spatial division of labor” between rural and urban members of an extended family. Rural relatives lack cash but live in the ancestral land and know how to act and speak in the proper ways for a ritual; urban relatives lack proximity and ritual knowledge but have access to cash and important items like stereo equipment or manufactured alcohol. Each contributes from their respective advantage towards ensuring that the ritual is a success for the benefit of the entire extended family.

### **Religion**

Migrant religious affiliation was a good predictor of linkage behavior, with Protestants<sup>13</sup> engaging in fewer activities than Catholics. There is a great deal of scholarship on how religion shapes migrant relationships with their places of origin (Brettell 2008; Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Levitt 2003; Levitt and Jaworsky 2007), as well as comparative studies demonstrating that differences in religious affiliation are associated with differences in the forms and frequencies of ties that migrants maintain with their place of origin (e.g. Kelly and Solomon 2009; Mberu et al 2013; Roman and Goschin 2011; van Santem 1998). Overall, these studies argue that migrant religious affiliation can decrease ties to home when social relationships with fellow members of a faith group and investments into church activities, replace social relationships with rural kin

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<sup>13</sup> Protestantism encompasses both historical churches like Anglican, Lutheran and Congregationalist, as well as newer millenarian and Pentecostal churches from abroad or founded locally.

and economic obligations in the village, or when religious doctrine prohibits activities that are based in the home area.

In northeastern Madagascar, all Protestant churches prohibit their members from participating in rural ancestral rituals, either attending in person or contributing financially or materially towards the costs from afar. Protestant leaders also encourage church members to rethink the necessity of burial in rural family tombs, due to the great expense as well as the possibility that one may be the object of ancestral rituals after death due to the communal nature of burial. Interviews with Protestant migrants reveal that they take church prohibitions seriously, particularly for ancestral rituals. One convert to the *Fiangonana Jesosy Kristy eto Madagasikara* (FJKM), a reformed Protestant church with roots to some of the earliest missionary efforts in the early 1800s, told me,

I don't participate anymore [in ancestral rituals]. I gave myself to Jesus, and I am with Jesus until the end. (2011-07-29)<sup>14</sup>

Tension between Christianity and ancestral customs has a long history in Madagascar, but seems to have become much more vocal and strict in recent decades with the rise of Pentecostal and charismatic faiths. There are now many Pentecostal congregations in Tamatave, and a migrant member of the *Rhema* church told me,

Since our, how do you say it? Since we starting following our religion, it [participating in ancestral rituals] is not important ... For these kinds of events, I do not participate with money or with help. (2012-07-28)<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> [Mbola mandray andraikitry na raharaha ara-drazagna ve ianao amin'ny maha FJKM anao sa?] Efa tsy matrika intsony. Nanolotena amin'ny Jesosy de efa amin'ny Jesosy. Jusk'amin'ny farany. (1158BG 2011-07-29)

<sup>15</sup> Non. Depuis notre, comment ca? Depuis qu'on suit notre religion, c'est pas important ... Dans ces genres d'événement, je ne participe pas de l'argent ou de l'aide. (1161N 2012-07-28)

When asked directly how their religion influenced their rural linkages, both Protestants and Catholics only cited positive impacts. Often, they would say that their religion facilitated ties to their place of origin, because they would contribute in rural church activities or donate to rural church fundraisers. While Protestants admitted that they were not able to attend certain events or contribute money or materials to un-Christian activities, they themselves did not think that this negatively influenced their overall ties to home. (I discuss the influence of religion on migrant linkages in depth in Chapter 5.)

### **Family Origins**

Place of origin of a migrant's spouse or parents was an important predictor of linkages to home. Migrants who were unmarried or married to someone from outside the rural place of origin had weaker rural linkages – behavior *and* attitude – compared to migrants who had a spouse with shared origins in the Vavatenina District. Migrants with one parent who originated from outside the rural place of origin viewed linkages to home as less important than migrants for whom both their parents came from the Vavatenina District.

The migration literature frequently cites the importance of family in motivating migrants to maintain ties to home. Some of this literature focuses on how migration creates families and households that are transnational or translocal, with members living in different places while attempting to maintain their relationships and roles (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002). Much of the African rural-urban linkages literature focuses on multi-local families, often migrant men whose wives and children live in the rural area to oversee rural resources (agricultural land, cattle, housing) and reduce expenses (e.g. Gugler 2002; Owuor 2010; but see Greiner 2012 for a critique of the concept of multi-local households). Multi-local or translocal households of this nature are rare in northeastern Madagascar, and no individuals involved in the study had a spouse

living in the rural sending community. Instead, nuclear families often lived together in the city and migrants maintained ties to other family members in the rural area – grown parents, siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles, grandparents – as well as unrelated friends and acquaintances.<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that stepwise regression analyses did not select the number of parents and siblings currently living in the rural area as a good predictor of migrants’ linkage behaviors or attitudes.

One of the main ways in which family origins influence migrants is through establishing identity and allegiance. As Vertovec explains succinctly, “through socialization within the family, individuals acquire and put to use some of their basic orientations, dispositions, and social practices” (2009:63). In Madagascar, one’s identity is established through parents and their origins, more so than where one is born and lives as a child. This point was driven home for me early in my research, when a sampling protocol for the large survey that I conducted at the beginning of my study created confusion amongst potential research participants. I sought migrants from Vavatenina, who I defined as individuals who were born in the Vavatenina District and had spent at least part of their childhoods there. But on multiple occasions, people who met these criteria would refuse to participate in the survey because they were “not really from Vavatenina” (*tsy tena avy Vavatenina*). I found through follow-up questions that these individuals all had parents who had migrated to Vavatenina temporarily for work. But children of mixed-origin marriages represent an interesting intermediary case, wherein their identity is

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<sup>16</sup> Multilocal households as they exist in northeastern Madagascar more often include parents and children who live in different locations rather than couples; children are often fostered by urban relatives to attend urban schools, or to work as domestic servants or shop assistants. Because this study focused on adult migrants, it did not include foster children. The study sample did include two older students whose parents lived in the Vavatenina District while they finished highschool or technical training in the city of Tamatave. However, these individuals are best thought of as autonomous from their rural households, due to their ages (18 and 20) and their personal situations (one was supported by a sister who also lived in the city, another was engaged to be married and supported by her fiancé).

split between the two different places of origin of their parents. Betsimisaraka custom allows decent to be reckoned bilaterally from both parents, which means that individuals belong to both maternal and paternal families during their life, and have liberty to choose with which family they will be buried. Thus, having one parent from outside the Vavatenina District makes the answer to basic questions such as “*Where are you from?*” and “*Where will you be buried?*” less clear and tied to a single place.

When an individual has a spouse, it doesn't necessarily influence how they view their own identity but it can alter their allegiance to their place of origin in similar ways as parental origins. Although couples have the liberty to decide which family they will most associate with, in practice most women “follow their spouse” (*magnarabady*) in terms of where they take up residence, and sometimes where they decide to be buried. Some migrants were conscious of the important role that their spouse played in their ties to home. In one interview, I asked an elderly man of high socio-economic status why he had maintained such strong ties to his home throughout the years, while others in a similar position viewed such ties as a burden and sought ways to extricate themselves from rural demands on their time and money. He explained,

It depends on the couple, if the wife understands that you come from the countryside, if the husband understands that his wife comes from the countryside, and that it is not good to break the relationships with the people in the natal village. We always need them [rural relatives]. They are there [in the village], they are the guardians of our cultural heritage, our inheritance.<sup>17</sup>

Beyond identity and affiliation, the place of origin of one's parents or spouse also has financial implications. The costs of maintaining ties to home increases when one has relatives in multiple “home” locations, either maternal and paternal extended families for children of mixed-

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<sup>17</sup> Ca dépend du couple, si la femme comprend qui tu viens de la brousse, le mari comprend que sa femme vien de la brousse, les relations avec les gens des pays, des villages nataux, c'est pas bon d'être coupé. On a toujours besoin d'eux. Eux la bas, c'est eux les gardiens du patrimoine, de l'heritage. (1161M 2012-07-23)



origin marriages, or the two extended families of a mixed-origin couple. Conversely, expenses can be consolidated if these various family members live in the same village or even different villages in the same rural district. For example, migrants often reported traveling to the Vavatenina District for an event in one family like a funeral or ancestral ritual, but visiting people or receiving messages or gifts from another family group living in the same area. Migrant couples with shared origins in the Vavatenina District also frequently stood in for their spouse in the rural area, such as supervising rural agricultural work or attending a family event, while a spouse from a different area would find it difficult to be accepted by rural people in this way.

#### **4.6 Conclusion: the ideal migrant confronts changing capacities and norms**

During my travels in the rural Vavatenina District I often heard about one man in particular who exemplified the qualities of an ideal migrant. Born in the large town of Ambohibe, he became extremely rich through a number of entrepreneurial activities after moving to Tamatave. But most importantly, he used his wealth to reinforce his ties to his home town: building one of the few private cement homes there, improving the ancestral tombs for a group of families sharing the same space as his, hosting a large ancestral ritual whose munificence is still admired, and using his vehicles to transport sick townspeople to regional hospitals. While not everyone could be expected to act in such a way, it was a cultural norm or ideal towards which they could strive. Such stories told admiringly of ideal migrants, or proverbs that extol the virtues of returning home, point to a shared Malagasy ideal that values both mobility *and* connection.

In the rural-urban linkage literature, scholars also have sought to explain the persistence of migrants' ties to home, which in contemporary Africa is often attributed to economic crises following neoliberal restructuring policies that have made rural and urban areas more dependent

upon one another for security (Potts 1997; Tacoli 2002). In a review of research throughout the African continent, Potts (2010) notes that linkages are influenced by both economic needs and socio-cultural factors. She declares that the emphasis of either factor in explaining variability of migrant ties to home is often based on academic disciplinary boundaries,

Not surprisingly, studies by anthropologists of these phenomena frequently stress the significance of culture, kinship, and networks while those by economists or geographers often find more explanatory power in income and economic livelihood factors (Potts 2010:188)

In claiming that there is a strong cultural basis driving Malagasy rural-urban linkages, I am not trying to reproduce these disciplinary boundaries. Rather, I would argue that such declarations create a false dichotomy between economic and cultural factors. Here I draw inspiration from recent work in anthropology and geography in developing the concept of “cultures of migration.” This model argues that, “migrants are social actors making decisions about their futures that are framed by traditional beliefs, cultural expectations, and social practices” (Cohen and Sirkeci 2011:14). Migrants are embedded in particular social, political, and economic contexts, but their decision to migrate to live and work elsewhere – or not to migrate – is made within a cultural framework of “interpretations and valuations” that shapes how they react to these contexts (Hahn and Klute 2007:16).

Just as the decision to migrate or not in a given context is culturally framed, so too is the decision to maintain or break linkages to the place of origin after moving away. This cultural framework may set different expectations based on gender or socio-economic status, as the weaker ties of men and migrants who live in marginal housing attest. The variability observed in Vavatenina-Tamatave migrant linkage behaviors and attitudes also reminds us that cultural norms that value strong ties to home interact with conflicting interpretations and valuations. This

is most clearly the case for Protestant migrants whose church leaders tell them to abstain from important customs that traditionally have bound migrants to rural places in death and the afterlife.

What can this study say for the future of rural-urban migration and linkages in northeastern Madagascar? The factors identified through regression analyses as predictors of weak linkages are not novel. Protestant churches have existed in northeastern Madagascar since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are growing in popularity due to new Pentecostal faith groups. Economic instability and poverty seem to be entrenched, as the country as a whole jolts between cyclical political crises. As migration becomes more widespread and feminized, it seems like marriages between people from different places of origin will only become more common. Yet rather than leading to migrants breaking ties to home outright, we might expect the cultural norm of mobility and connection to adapt to these and other factors. Perhaps some types of linkages will be emphasized while others become less common. Perhaps new technologies – cellphone banking and money transfers, the increased accessibility of the internet – will allow migrants to maintain ties through new means.

What can this study contribute towards the study of migration and linkage theory beyond the specific context of northeastern Madagascar? First, I demonstrate that migrant linkages to home as a whole, and not just one particular behavior in the form of remittances, can be measured and analyzed quantitatively. Second, I advocate for a disentangling of primary and proximate causes of migrant linkages, of which the latter seem to receive the bulk of scholars' attentions. In studies of African rural-urban linkages, much has been made of the role of economic decline and neoliberal reforms for explaining current ties between cities and villages. Instead I argue that cultural norms and values frame how people react to such circumstances. The

variability among migrants regarding their linkage behaviors and attitudes is due to both their capacity to live up to cultural ideals and the influence of competing norms.

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## CHAPTER 5

THE DEAD ARE DEAD/ANCESTORS NEVER DIE:  
MIGRANTS AND FRICTIONS SURROUNDING FUNERARY CUSTOMS AND  
ANCESTRAL RITUALS IN NORTHEASTERN MADAGASCAR<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Tilghman, Laura M. To be submitted to *Journal of Religion in Africa*.



**Abstract**

Scholarship points to the role that religion plays in shaping migrant relationships with their places of origin. I explore the dynamic between religion and linkages in northeastern Madagascar, focusing on migrants currently living in the city of Tamatave who trace their origins to the rural Vavatenina District. I find that church leaders in Tamatave have coalesced around two competing narratives of death, creating a structure in which Catholic churches see some types of migrant linkages (e.g. burial in the rural family tomb and participation in rural ancestral rituals) as in line with Christian beliefs, while Protestant churches see these same activities as morally questionable or potential Satanic. Migrants to some degree exert agency in the face of the structure of these religious teachings. However, there are limits to migrant agency, and Protestants show weaker linkage behavior overall, even doing fewer behaviors that have no overt religious significance. I offer two explanations for this finding. First, migrants who convert to Protestant faiths after arrival in the city often experience friction with rural family members who have not converted, and these family tensions lessen motivations to maintain strong ties. Second, Protestant migrants have smaller and more urban-based social networks than Catholics because they abstain from ceremonies that involve extended kin.

## 5.1 Introduction

In July 2012, Madagascar was gripped with fear and anxiety. The reason? It was feared that *bolo*, a cookie stuffed with flavored filling and covered with a layer of chocolate, was being imprinted with satanic faces and then sold to corrupt unsuspecting consumers. The story was worthy of serious coverage by national news outlets, no doubt fueled by news at the same time that satanic clubs had been discovered in large towns in the country's central highlands (Samsoudine 2012). The cookie fears were so real and widespread that the manufacturer had to mount a public relations campaign to assure consumers that its cookies were safe. In interviews with major media outlets, JB explained that the cookies were made with baking molds of different innocuous facial expressions, and that they had been in use for decades without causing any problems for consumers, satanic or otherwise (Gazette 2012).

The Bolo cookie scare, which took place at the end of two years of research in Madagascar, seemed to epitomize for me the changes that I had witnessed on the island since my first research visit a decade earlier in 2002. During this time, Pentecostal faith groups have gained popularity, and more importantly, these groups are changing the public discourse for converts and non-converts alike. In the rest of this article I will discuss how the contemporary religious landscape in northeastern Madagascar has influenced my primary research focus: the ways that migrants interact with their rural family members.

In the growing city of Tamatave on Madagascar's coast, I found that Catholic migrants engaged in more behaviors that linked them to their natal villages than mainstream and Pentecostal Protestant migrants. This trend includes behaviors that have been cast as morally questionable by some religious groups, such as burial practices and ancestral rituals. However the impact of migrants' religious affiliation is also felt in behaviors that have no overt religious

significance such as visiting rural family members, hosting rural visitors, attending migrant association events, and exchanging food. I argue that there are two main reasons that religion influences migrants' ties with their homelands. First, migrants who convert to Protestant faiths after arrival in the city often experience friction with rural family members who have not converted, and these family tensions lessen motivations to maintain strong ties. Second, Protestant migrants have smaller and more urban-based social networks than Catholics because they abstain from ceremonies that involve extended kin.

## **5.2 Literature Review: Religion, Migrants, and Ties to Home**

While migration is often presented as a rational response to geographic differences in wages and other economic opportunities, scholarship in anthropology and elsewhere has sought to show that many other social, cultural, and political factors are also important. Among these erstwhile neglected factors is religion, which drives mobility in a variety of ways across the globe. Religion can encourage migration as members of a particular religious group move to be closer to religious communities and leaders, or as converts adopt a particular lifestyle that has been deemed desirable in religious terms. For example, Lambert (2002) shows how the spread of Islam in Senegal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was linked to urbanization there, as Muslim leaders engaged converts in a regional ceremonial system while also encouraging them to take part in the peanut export economy. Religion is also a major factor driving types of migration that are sometimes excluded from migration studies, either because the movement is extremely constrained or of short duration. This includes forced migration (e.g. refugees escaping religious persecution) and general mobility (e.g. pilgrims and religious tourists) (Cohen and Sirkeci 2011:3-7).

Scholarship points to the role that religion plays in shaping migrant relationships with their places of origin (Brettell 2008; Cadge and Ecklund 2007; Levitt 2003; Levitt and Jaworsky

2007). Much of the recent work in this vein focuses on transnational migrants, for whom religion is a way to “incorporate into the new society and stay connected to their homelands” even as these places are separated by national borders (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007:141). Perhaps because of their transnational theoretical orientation, studies tend to emphasize religion’s positive role in facilitating migrants’ ties to sending communities or how religion is a means through which these ties can be expressed, rather than how religion impedes migrants’ ties. It should be noted that although much of the scholarly work on the intersection between migration, religion, and ties to home focuses on international migrants, their findings also apply to internal migrants (Greiner 2010).

Many studies of religion and migration tend to focus on a single religious faith or congregation. Yet as Cadge and Ecklund argue, “comparisons between people from the same country who participate in *different* religious traditions would show how immigrants are shaped by those traditions” (2007:370, emphasis added). Some interesting comparative studies already illustrate that differences in religious affiliation are associated with differences in the ties that migrants maintain with their place of origin. For example, a large survey of documented migrants in the United States found that Protestants tended to send more remittances than Catholics, who in turn remitted more often than Muslims and other non-Christians (Kelly and Solomon 2009). In a study of elderly rural-urban migrants in Kenya, Muslim migrants tend to visit rural family members much less than Christians (Mberu et al 2013). Van Santem (1998) argues that the relationship that Cameroonian urbanites have with their home villages differs along religious lines, as Muslims are restricted from some ritual activity and tend to marry people from outside the community of origin compared to non-Muslim Mafa migrants. Non-religious or atheistic international Romanian migrants were found to have higher incomes and

greater income growth in their new homes in western Europe, but to remit less money back to families in Romania, when compared to Protestants and Catholics (Roman and Goschin 2011). Further research is needed to explore in greater depth the mechanisms whereby religion affects migrants' relationships with sending communities or countries, rather than simply describing differences in migrant behavior along religious lines.

### **5.3 Ethnographic Background: Betsimisaraka ethnicity and customs**

Few details of the early socio-cultural history of northeastern Madagascar are known, aside from the fact that some long-term occupation of the region began by the 8<sup>th</sup> century, and small settlements were more common in the centuries following (Dewar and Wright 1993). By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, political groups were consolidating power and expanding territory in other regions of Madagascar, notably the Merina in the central highlands and the Sakalava in the northwest coast, in part driven by trade with Europeans and Arabs in goods and slaves (Randrianja and Ellis 2009). Merina trade with Europeans in the nearby Mascarene islands (present day Réunion and Mauritius) passed through the northeast coast, and local people tried to benefit from the trade through alliance or taxation (Cole 2010; Larson 2000). Around 1715 a confederation was formed to more effectively stake northeastern claims in this trade, led by the son of an English skipper-turned-pirate and Malagasy woman from the locally prestigious Zafindramisoa lineage (Ellis 2007). This leader was known as Ratsimilaho, and the confederation he formed was called *Betsimisaraka*, or literally, “the many inseparable.” While the confederation dissolved following Ratsimilaho’s death sometime after 1750, when the island was colonized by the French (1895-1960) administrators codified this and other political formations as discrete and territorialized *tribus* (tribes) (Cole 2001). In contemporary

northeastern Madagascar, Betsimisaraka is still used as an ethnonym for the people of this region, who share similar customs, beliefs, language, and livelihoods.

Ancestors are important for peoples' daily and ritual lives in northeastern Madagascar and throughout the island as a whole.<sup>19</sup> Cole and Middleton state that ancestors “figure in *every* ethnography written on the island” (2001:2, emphasis added). Ancestors are people who have died but continue to influence the affairs of the living after their burial in communal family tombs (*fasan-drazagna* or “ancestral tomb” generally, as well as *tragno-magnara* or “cold house”; Mangalaza 1998).

The relationship between ancestors and their descendants is characterized by mutual dependency. “As living people did things for dead ancestors – work the land, offer crops and meat, tend to tombs, respect customs and taboos – ancestors also worked for their living descendants, overseeing the fertility of wombs and rice fields” (Sodikoff 2012:152). However, the reciprocal nature of this relationship is tinged with ambiguity, as both living and dead have the capacity to help or harm each other. The positive and negative potential of ancestor-descendant relationships is described for Betsimisaraka,

Ancestors may be capricious and cruel, demanding things of their descendants which their descendants can barely provide; ancestral wrath is the recognised ultimate cause of most illness ... Yet, for all their power, ancestors also have to rely on the living in order to obtain their demands. This is a risky business, for living people are notoriously self-involved, and thus likely to forget, and neglect, the dead (Cole and Middleton 2001:14).

The tension in Betsimisaraka conceptualizations of ancestors as providers of blessing and fertility, or sources of curses and illness, echoes characterizations of the ambivalence that other Malagasy ethnic groups have towards ancestors in different areas of the island (for a review see

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<sup>19</sup> The importance of ancestors in Madagascar is also a reminder of the island inhabitants' shared African and Asian roots (see Chambert-Loir and Reid 2002; Couderc and Sillander 2012; Fortes 1965; Kopytoff 1971; Olupona 2001).

Middleton 1999). But despite the inherent danger in this relationship for both ancestors and their descendants, it is essential. “The exchange is kept going, however, because ultimately *each party cannot exist without the other*. Without ancestors people lose their social identity. Without descendants to constitute them in rituals, ancestors would not exist (Cole and Middleton 2001:14, emphasis added). As other scholars have noted, to live without ties to ancestors in Madagascar is to be un-free – a slave – or to be lost (Evers 2002; Graeber 2007).

When Betsimisaraka people move from their natal villages to a city, they not only experience a change of locality but profound changes in lifestyle and livelihood. This is not to say that northeastern villages are insular refuges immune from the reach of the market economy, Christian missionaries, and other forces of modernization. But when migrants move to northeastern cities they are more likely to interact with and live near non-relatives, engage more fully in the cash economy, and be exposed to a greater number of Christian denominations. They also move to an area where everyone is considered to be *vahiny* (stranger or newcomer) with no ancestral ties to their current residence. Yet migrants are still conceived to be *tompon-tany* (literally “master of the land” or a native resident) in their place of origin even while absent. As a result, ideally migrants maintain their social relationships with both the living and the dead in their home village. Migrants are still held to the obligations that those social relationships entail: to honor and respect one’s ancestors by following *fady* (taboos), participating in *tsaboraha* (ancestral rituals), and being buried with them at death in the *fasan-drazagna* (ancestral tomb).

Some migrants continue to maintain ties to their rural places of origin, and view their ancestors as continuing to play an important role in their daily life. Other migrants have very weak ties to their places of origin and see ancestors as superfluous to their new life in the city. Indeed, searching for commonalities amongst migrants with weak rural linkages is a main

objective of my research. However, I disagree that this is the case for all, or even most migrants, in contrast to Cole's suggestion that rural-urban migration in northeastern Madagascar leads to a "disembedding" from rural ancestors and Betsimisaraka lifeways (Cole 2010:59).

#### **5.4 A brief history of Christianity in northeastern Madagascar**

The history of Christianity in Madagascar is often told in terms of how leaders of the Merina kingdom in the central highlands interacted with missionaries during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, focusing on their extreme policy shifts: King Radama I welcomed missionaries wholeheartedly, driven by strategic interests of modernization and education; his successor Queen Ranaivalona I banned Christianity out of fears of foreign influence, killing both European missionaries and Malagasy converts; and under later leaders led by Prime Minister Rainilaiarivony the pendulum swung to welcome back missionaries. But what of Christianity in other areas of the country?

Unlike the tumultuous history of highland Madagascar, in northeastern Madagascar Christianity seems to have met with less overt hostility and conflict. On the other hand, missionary activity in this region was haphazard and slower to make inroads in converting the local Betsimisaraka population during the 19<sup>th</sup> century compared to the central highlands. Once Madagascar became a colony of France in 1895, Christianity grew under the stable if slightly disinterested French government. Its growth reflected historic alliances such that Catholicism became the major denomination of northeastern Madagascar while the central highlands remained predominantly Protestant (Cole 2010:62; Rahamefy-Ramarolahy 1997:56-63). Madagascar gained independence from France in 1960, and the decades that followed ushered in important changes in the country that have helped to alter the religious landscape of northeastern Madagascar.



Catholicism in Madagascar underwent major changes beginning in the 1960s. The Second Vatican Council began in Rome in 1962, and one of its eventual legacies was that the Catholic Church adopted a more positive stance towards enculturation. In Madagascar this meant that Catholic masses started to incorporate Malagasy language and cultural idioms as a way to reach out to the faithful. It also meant that beginning in the 1970s, the church softened its message regarding Malagasy traditions (RL Roman Catholic, 2011-06-16). In northeastern Madagascar, this meant that Betsimisaraka Catholics were no longer forbidden outright from participating in traditional funerary customs and ancestral rituals.

At the same time that Catholicism was beginning to become more welcoming of Malagasy ancestral tradition, other churches started to emerge that were more hostile. This began when Madagascar's laws were amended in 1962 to make it easier for foreign missionaries to work in the country and for new churches to form (Boutter 2007:94). Pentecostal churches began taking root in the country, first through the mission work of foreigners and later through the initiative of Malagasy people. Pentecostalism is estimated to be fastest growing segment of Christianity in Africa and around the world (Lugo et al 2006), and despite great diversity in beliefs and practices has shared commonalities such as a focus on gifts of the Holy Spirit (e.g. speaking in tongues, miraculous healing), the "born again" conversion experience, and a dualistic worldview that divides the divine from the devil (Droogers 2001). Regarding the latter, in Madagascar and other African countries, traditional beliefs and practices are often cast as satanic by Pentecostals.

The proliferation of Pentecostal churches in Madagascar in the latter 20<sup>th</sup> century was sometimes the result of church schisms over doctrine or practice (Blanchy et al 2006). Others have hypothesized that the proliferation of new Pentecostal denominations was encouraged by

President Ratsiraka during the 1970s and 1980s as a way to counter the force of mainstream churches in a divide-and-conquer strategy (Boutter 2007:103), or is a result of the country's recurrent political crises (Rahamefy-Ramarolahy 1997).

Pentecostal and other new churches initially took hold in the capital Antananarivo, but quickly spread to other large cities and rural areas. Tamatave, the largest city in northeastern Madagascar and second largest in Madagascar, saw the highest rate of adherence to new Pentecostal and Evangelical churches of all major cities in the country (INSTAT 2001, cited in Cole 2010:63). In Tamatave these included churches that were part of large international missions based in the foreign countries like the United States, France, and Nigeria (e.g. Winner's Chapel, Assembly of God, Rhema), as well as churches that had been founded in Madagascar by foreigners and locals (e.g. *Fiangonana Pentekotista Jesosy Mamonjy* or Pentecostal Jesus Saves Church, *Ara-Pilazantsara* or According to the Good News, *Vahao ny Oloko* or Save My People, *Apokalipsy* or Apocolypse, *Eglise Evangélique Shine* or Shine Evangelical Church, and *Fiangonana Fifohazana Mpianatry ny Tompo* or Disciples of the Lord Revival Church).

### **5.5 Study site, data collection and analysis methods**

This ethnographic case study is part of a larger research project that seeks to understand rural-urban migration and linkages in northeastern Madagascar. I focused on migrants with shared origins in the rural Vavatenina District who now live in the city of Tamatave. Tamatave is home to the country's largest port and is the second most populated city after the capital (INSTAT n.d.), while the Vavatenina District is composed of over 120 villages and towns of various size scattered over 3100 square kilometers (District de Vavatenina, n.d.). These two sites are separated by a distance of about 100 kilometers, and travel between them requires a voyage of four hours by private minivan (*taxi brousse*) costing 10,000 Malagasy Ariary (equivalent to 5

USD at the time of study). The furthest villages in the district require up to a days travel on foot over narrow and mountainous footpaths.

I determined migrant behavior and perceptions regarding religious activities and rural linkages through 12 months of intensive and regular study of a sample of 55 rural-urban migrants. I studied their lives through interviews, surveys administered twice a month to record their behavior, and participant-observation in their daily life as well as special activities such as church events, rural rituals, and funerals.

I interviewed 15 religious leaders in Tamatave regarding their church's history, organizational structure, doctrine, and stances regarding traditional Malagasy rites and beliefs. I also collected or noted locally produced religious media (e.g. pamphlets, television and radio advertisements, posters, prayer guides) and observed religious services. I interviewed local experts in both the urban and rural study sites to determine Betsimisaraka customs and beliefs regarding death and the afterlife, which supplemented published material on the topic. These experts included seven traditional authorities and elders, and four Malagasy ethnographers. I also participated in ritual events in both urban and rural settings.

I transcribed all interviews and fieldnotes and imported them into the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA 10. I analyzed transcriptions using a grounded theory approach in which I looked for themes in narratives, focusing on repetitions, similarities and differences (Bernard and Ryan 2003, 2010:265-286). My analysis was informed from quantitative analysis of these same data, which used stepwise regression modeling to determine the influence of personal traits and migration dynamics on migrants' linkage behaviors and attitudes (discussed in Chapter 4). My goal in applying different analysis techniques to the same data was both to

explain statistical results based on the ethnographic context, as well as to search for processes and themes that might not have shown up as statistically significant but nevertheless important.

### **5.6 Embracing or Rejecting Betsimisaraka Tradition: A view from church leaders in Tamatave**

When I conducted research in Tamatave from 2010 to 2012, in addition to the four historical Christian denominations (Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and Reformed Protestant), there were foreign millenarian churches (e.g. 7<sup>th</sup> Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witness, and Mormon), and an ever-growing diversity of foreign- and Malagasy-based Pentecostal churches.

Christianity as a whole is not new to this area of the world, nor are conflicts that have arisen over its relationship with traditional Malagasy beliefs. What does seem new about the contemporary religious landscape in northeastern Madagascar is that while in the past *all* Christian churches were critical of *fomban-drazagna* (ancestral traditional) but generally lax in enforcing prohibitions, in the present moment this criticism has become more vocal and strict for some Christians, just as it has diminished for others. In my qualitative analysis of interviews with church leaders from various Christian denominations I found two different themes regarding their views of rural burials and rituals. On the one hand, despite very real differences in theology, local history, and practice, Protestant churches as a whole exhibited a similar orientation that discounted these rural practices and the traditional Betsimisaraka conception of the ancestors upon which they were based. On the other hand, the Catholic Church leaders exhibited a welcoming attitude of rural practices and had integrated ancestors into their spiritual worldview.

### 5.6.1 The Dead Are Dead: Protestant leaders' perspectives

Protestant leaders from historical, millenarian, and Pentecostal churches in Tamatave have coalesced around a common narrative that Betsimisaraka beliefs and practices regarding death and the afterlife “do not follow the bible” (*tsy manakara lay baiboly*). These churches are adamantly against their members participating in any way in ancestral rituals that require invocations to the ancestors. For all these churches, the Betsimisaraka belief that people upon their death become ancestors who are not-quite-dead and continue to influence and communicate with the living is simply wrong. Rather, they argue that the dead are just that: dead. In my interviews with Protestant church leaders, the phrase *rehefa maty de maty* (the dead are dead), was often repeated to make this point.

The *Fiangonana Jesoa Kristy eto Madagasikara* (FJKM, “Jesus Christ Church of Madagascar”) is a mainstream reformed Protestant church. It is also one of the oldest Protestant denominations in Madagascar, with roots in the the earliest missionary groups to arrive in the island in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (e.g. London Missionary Society in 1818, Friends Foreign Missionary Association in 1867, and the French Protestant Mission in 1897). It has widespread reach throughout the island, and several of its churches are found in different areas of Tamatave. The pastor of the FJKM in Tamatave’s Tanambao V neighborhood told me,

From the moment ancestors intervene in a custom, we don’t encourage [our members to participate]. To ask for a blessing from the ancestors is simply not authorized in our church. (RL FJKM, 2011-06-01)

I had heard that FJKM was more lenient regarding rural burial and ritual practices compared to other Protestant denominations, but the pastor emphatically denied that this was the case. In fact, he told me, his church had much to learn from Pentecostals, and he

had recently petitioned his superiors to be allowed to adopt some of their tactics to attract followers.

Madagascar is home to various millenarian faiths including Seventh Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witness, and Mormon churches. Malagasy people often characterize these churches by their strict food prohibitions and codes of conduct, which in Madagascar cover ancestral customs.

If a person dies, then he is dead. There is nothing like a spirit floating around ... "He [Adam] was formed from dust, and the breath of life made him alive, and human beings were created."<sup>20</sup> If that breath of life leaves then he returns to the one who gave it to him. And the person is dead. Anything else besides that is the word of Satan. From the beginning he [Satan] said, "you will not die."<sup>21</sup> Satan made the idea that there is a soul that is not dead, and that the living and the dead can communicate ... This doesn't exist. Anything else is satanic. (RL Fiagonana Advantista, 2011-06-01)

In interviews church leaders emphasized that they did not command church members to abstain from rural burials or ancestral rituals, but instead helped them read and interpret the bible correctly so that they could realize these types of activities were un-Christian.

There are a wide and ever-expanding variety of Pentecostal denominations in Tamatave. These include so-called "Health and Wealth" churches that emphasize the material benefits of following the religion in this life. One example is the Shine Evangelical Church, founded in 2004 in Antananarivo by a Malagasy couple and now found throughout the island with upwards of 7000 members. It has a slick and modern air, from its English-language name to the shiny prayer booklets and study guides it sells to members using sophisticated graphics and marketing. I lived about a block from one of its congregations in Tamatave, and could often hear the fervent witnessing, praying,

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<sup>20</sup> Paraphrase of Genesis 2:7 – "Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

<sup>21</sup> Paraphrase of Genesis 3:4 – "'You will not certainly die,' the serpent said to the woman."

and singing of its members as it was broadcast over loudspeaker. The pastor of that church told me about their views of ancestors,

It is forbidden in the bible according to the verse, “Jesus said ‘let the dead bury the dead, and the living remain with the living.’”<sup>22</sup> The reason is simple. The dead [should] bury the dead, and the people who were evangelizing [should not] waste time there. Because the dead can do nothing, but the living need to be cared for. The word is simple. Dead angels can do nothing for you. But living people can help you. Jesus Christ is the living God, but Satan is the [false] imitator. (RL Eglise Evanglique Shine, 2011-06-09)

There are also many Pentecostal churches that do not fit the “Health and Wealth” categorization in Tamatave and are more characterized by a conservative spiritual orientation. For example, the Pentecostal Church of Madagascar, segregated congregants by gender, told women to cover their head while in prayer, and encouraged all members to act simply and piously at church and at home. But despite these differences, they shared a similar orientation towards rural burial and ritual practices.

It is strictly forbidden. Anything to do with corpses is not at all permitted before God. Right after someone is buried, then he is there [in heaven]. “Why so the living search for something from the dead? But the dead should care for the dead.”<sup>23</sup> Jesus Christ was resurrected after he died. That is what prevents us, because if someone dies then He [Jesus] will care for him. Once someone is buried, then we are not allowed to handle [literally, tickle or touch with the hands] him anymore. We don’t do *famadihana*<sup>24</sup>, we don’t do *tsaboraha* ... All those invocations [*joro*] we cannot do, like when a zebu is killed. (RL Fiangonana Pentekosta eto Madagasikara, 2011-06-21)

The preceding extracts of interviews with church leaders show that they are united by a common orientation towards rural practices and beliefs related to ancestors, but also illustrate

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<sup>22</sup> Paraphrase of Matthew 8:22

<sup>23</sup> Paraphrase of Matthew 8:22

<sup>24</sup> *Famadihana* is a custom in the central highlands in which corpses are removed from the tomb to be feted and wrapped in new cloth before being returned to the tomb. It is similar in some ways to the Betsimisaraka *tsaboraha*.

that there is some variability in the particular ways each leader justifies or explains his position. Historic and millenarian church leaders often refer to a verse from Deuteronomy in the Old Testament that prohibits communicating with the dead, and puts it in the same category as idol worship, witchcraft, and spirit mediumship.<sup>25</sup> Pentecostal churches more often cited a verse from Matthew in the New Testament in which Jesus tells his followers to let the dead take care of the dead.<sup>26</sup> Millenarian and Pentecostal church leaders went further than leaders of historical Protestant churches in associating ancestral ritual and invocation with Satan. Protestant leaders also view funerary customs as potentially problematic, not as much because of the mourning and burial customs themselves but the consequences of communal burial in the ancestral tomb. If a Protestant is buried communally with non-Protestant family members, the danger in church leaders' view is that one's corpse can become unwillingly involved in ancestral rituals by one's family after death.

### **5.6.2 Ancestors Never Die: Catholic leaders' perspectives**

The Catholic Church dominates the religious landscape in Tamatave, with many neighborhood churches throughout the city and a large majority of the population who consider themselves members. Catholic church leaders in Tamatave generally see themselves as enlightened traditionalists who encourage the faithful to be good Christians and preserve Malagasy culture. From the Catholic perspective, *razagna tsy mba maty* (ancestors never die), and they have capacity to bless and harm the living by acting as intermediaries between the living and God.

Catholic church leaders refer pejoratively to non-Catholic churches as *sectes*, or cults.

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<sup>25</sup> Deuteronomy 18:10-12 – “Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD; because of these same detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you.”

<sup>26</sup> Matthew 8:22 – “But Jesus told him, ‘Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.’”



In their view, Protestants prohibit participation in customs out of a misunderstanding of Betsimisaraka cosmology, specifically beliefs and practices about ancestors, while blindly adopting a form of Christianity that is similarly erroneous. For example, while Protestants characterize ancestral customs as a form of *fanompoana* (worship or service) to the ancestors, Catholics know instead that they are a means to show *fanajana* (respect) to them. And while Protestants view invocations as people praying *to* the ancestors, Catholics counter that they pray *through* the ancestors to God.

The ancestors intervene, intercede for the living. People who do that [abstain from ancestral customs] do not understand traditional customs or religion. They are not in contradiction, and it is better to find a compromise between them. Otherwise, you know the proverb, “at church on Sunday, stealing a chicken on Monday.” People are afraid to forget their ancestors, and so we must integrate. (RL Roman Catholic Church, 2011-07-02)

Catholic church leaders also emphasized that unlike Protestants, they did not issue orders or prohibitions on their parishioners, but rather encouraged them to act wisely according to their faith.

There is no categorical opposition that says, “you should not go there [to participate in a traditional ceremony].” It is you who must take your life in your hands, and decide if it is permitted for you in regards to your apostolic commitment. That is the orientation of the [Catholic] Church on [Betsimisaraka] practices and customs. (RL Roman Catholic Church, 2011-06-16)

Rather than casting all traditional beliefs and customs of the ancestors as satanic or un-Christian, Catholic church leaders focus instead on small aspects of the ceremonies that people can modify or avoid, such as excessive consumption of alcohol or spending more money than one can afford.

### **5.7 Negotiating conflicting expectations: migrant agency in the face of church prohibitions**

Migrants who move from their home villages in the Vavatenina District to live, study, and work in the city of Tamatave feel pressure to maintain ties their rural family members. Many

of those rural family members continue to believe in the centrality of ancestors to their daily life, and so they expect urban kin to continue participating in ancestral rituals. They also expect that family members who live in the city will one day return to the village, either to live out their retirement or to be buried in the family tomb when they become an ancestor themselves. Yet migrants who are members of Tamatave's Protestant churches – traditional, millenarian, and Pentecostal – receive competing messages about these practices. They are told by church leaders that ancestral rituals do not follow the bible, and burial in the family tomb is morally dangerous. Below I present sketches of three people to show the variety of ways in which migrants navigate the contemporary religious landscape in northeastern Madagascar.

### **5.7.1 Toandro, a lifelong and proud Catholic**

An elderly man in his seventies, Toandro first came to Tamatave at the end of the colonial era to study, as there were no schools beyond primary level in the rural Vavatenina District at the time. He continued his studies in the capital city Antananarivo, and then served many years as a civil servant working in the government's agricultural extension service. He decided to retire in Tamatave, in part because he owned land and a house, but also out of fears of sorcery if he returned to his rural village of origin. Yet he maintained regular contact with his extended family there, especially his last living sibling, a younger brother in his sixties. Toandro also supplemented his retirement pension with income earned from selling cloves, coffee, and lychees grown in his home village on land that he inherited from his parents. Towards the end of my research, he invited me to accompany him to his home village to participate in an ancestral ritual hosted by his niece. Despite health problems that had kept him nearly housebound in the prior months, he endured the long voyage by car and foot to be there. I had worried that his

health might suffer, but he assured me that the trip would actually help him, saying, “Can’t you see? I am at peace here in my home village.”

For Toandro, there was no conflict between being a devout Catholic and continuing to follow ancestral tradition. He grew up in the Church and attends services every Sunday. As he put it:

Ancestral customs must be respected. *What makes them something that needs to be respected? One’s ancestors are the people who raised you, who made you great. But when they returned to become ancestors, they must be respected for giving [you] life. They are the representatives of God. (M, 2012-07-17)*

Later in our conversation I asked him choose which kinds of rural linkages were the most important, the least important, and the most difficult. Toandro responded:

Linkages having to do with ancestors are important, because they [ancestors] are big people who cared for me when I was still small. They educated me, then I found work and now I am retired. If they had not educated me, my life would be very plain. Ancestors give blessings. But ancestral rituals are difficult. *Tsaboraha* is very difficult, even though it is an ancestral custom. It costs a lot of money! It uses lots of money. My share of the *difi-toby* [a type of ancestral ritual] was 300,000 francs in money, 34 cups of rice, and 8 liters of sugarcane alcohol. And that was just my share alone! Those who do not have money are not able to complete this [ritual]. *If I understand correctly, for you linkages having to do with ancestors are the most important but also the most difficult? Yes, that’s it. For the Betsimisaraka, ancestral things are very strong. If they are not done, the family is broken. (M, 2012-07-17)*

### **5.7.2 Marc, a devoted convert to Pentecostalism**

Hailing from a large village in the rural District, Marc has made a name for himself in the city of Tamatave. Amongst the migrants I knew, he was an elite by many measures. He had a high position in a company that paid him a large monthly salary. He owned a house that he rented out for extra income, and was in the process of building an even larger and more grandiose construction just for him and his wife, as their children were grown and living

elsewhere. He owned many things that were out of reach of the average Tamatave resident, like cars, motor-scooters, a refrigerator, and a computer. Yet Marc revealed that his life had not always been so fortunate:

I don't know how to explain it to you, but it is the grace of God. And I thank Him very much, because I saw life over there [without God], too. I drank alcohol. We had nothing, life was rotten. *So, you changed for the better?* Oh yes. God helps me very much. I have changed. (M, 2011-07-26)

Marc attributed all of his success, and his ability to overcome bad behavior like drinking alcohol and cheating on his wife, to his conversion to Pentecostalism. About 10 years previously, he was introduced to the RHEMA church through his wife, and then became a devout member of the congregation. Signs of the centrality of their Pentecostal faith were everywhere in their house, from framed portraits of Jesus and photos of church events, to biblical verses written in chalk on the walls. In interviews, he often gave witness to the changes in his life made possible by his faith in Jesus. And when the topic of ancestral rituals was brought up, he was unequivocal:

We have stopped doing the *tsaboraha*. Next Saturday, my cousin will do a *mamokatra* [type of ancestral ritual] to rebury the dead, change the burial cloth... It is a large family party, but I can't attend because I have already made my choice to follow the evangels and that [*tsaboraha*] is taboo. If you want help from God, you must not attend. And for that reason, I don't do it anymore. It is forbidden. For those kinds of events, I [also] do not contribute financially or help in any way. (M 2011-07-26)

Before Marc became a member of the RHEMA church he had been Catholic. His conversion to a Pentecostal faith that prohibited participation in ancestral rituals caused considerable friction with his family:

At that time [when I first converted], it was war because I followed the RHEMA religion. But I tried to tell them there [in the village] that they shouldn't be angry with me, we are still family, just let me do it because it is

my choice ... Now, they understand because they see many things have changed in my life, my situation, my family, my children. (M 2011-07-26)

Marc always made sure to follow stories of family conflict with assurances that relations had improved with time. But my visits to his village of origin and interviews with his rural family members revealed that tensions were still present.

### **5.7.3 Maman'i Linda, a conflicted Seventh Day Adventist**

While leaders of Tamatave's Protestant churches say that ancestral rituals do not follow the bible, members of these churches do not always share the same perspective. Or, more accurately, they try to ascribe to two very different and competing perspectives: the Protestant, in which the dead are dead, and so rituals to honor ancestors are nonsensical at best and satanic at worst, and the traditional Betsimisaraka, in which the ancestors never die but continue to influence the lives of the living and deserve rituals to seek their blessing. One such migrant who tried to balance these competing claims was Maman'i Linda.

A woman in her late 20s, she lived with her common-law husband and their toddler Linda. (As is common practice in northeastern Madagascar, women and men are known by the names of their children as Mother- or Father-of-So-And-So.) Maman'i Linda first came to Tamatave to live with an older sister after her parents separated when she was 10 years old. Her mother had raised her Catholic, but her older sister had converted to the Seventh Day Adventist church and so Maman'i Linda followed suit when she began to live with her. As a young couple with irregular income – she earned money washing clothes and sewing, he was a low-wage hotel guard who fixed stereo equipment on the side – Maman'i Linda and her husband often struggled to get by. They ate simple meals of boiled greens for long stretches of time, and often had to rely on small loans to pay for food, utilities, and rent.

Maman'i Linda showed personal ambivalence towards ancestral customs. As an Adventist, she was aware that these were forbidden, but as a migrant with continued ties to her parents, siblings, and extended family in her home village, she could not fully abandon them:

Since I pray it is not important for me to attend ancestral rituals. I send my share [of the ritual expenses] to them [in the village], but I don't go there in person. (M, 2012-07-20)

After one visit to her village of origin during the clove harvest, she told me that she had taken advantage of her stay in the village to receive a blessing (*tsodrano*) from a family elder. Receiving family blessings used to be common practice before an individual left their home village for the first time. While Maman'i Linda has now lived in Tamatave for over a decade, she only recently really felt sure that she would settle in the city after establishing her own household, and receiving a family blessing was an important part of legitimizing that process. Yet such blessings invoke the ancestors, and thus are still contrary to Adventist teachings although less dangerous than participating in an ancestral ritual.

### **5.8 Unexpected Frictions: Protestant migrants' weaker linkages to home**

The contemporary religious landscape in northeastern Tamatave is characterized by structural rigidity within church leadership and individual agency amongst church members. Religious leaders have coalesced around two different narratives in relation to traditional Betsimisaraka beliefs and practices. For Protestant leaders, the dead are dead and any belief to the contrary does not follow the bible. For Catholic leaders, the ancestors never die and act as intermediaries between the faithful and God. Yet migrants who have settled in the city of Tamatave and attend the variety of churches there do not accept these two messages in their entirety. While some people more fully live up to the ideals of belief and behavior advocated by

church leaders, other people try to find creative ways in which they can be good (Protestant) Christians while not fully abandoning their ancestors.

Migrant stories reveal some agency in their approach to frictions between their Protestant Christian and traditional Betsimisaraka beliefs and practices. Nevertheless, there remain differences regarding their ties to the rural place of origin as a whole compared to Catholic migrants. Stepwise regression analyses (discussed in detail in Chapter 4) show that Protestants engage in fewer linkage behaviors as a whole than Catholics. These trends are also visible when linkage behaviors are examined individually (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Comparison of Median Migrant Linkage Variables for Catholics and Protestants (Wilcoxon Rank Sums Test)

<b>Rural Linkage Behavior</b>	<b>Catholics (N=37)</b> Median(IQR) <sup>1</sup>	<b>Protestants (N=18)</b> Median(IQR)	<b>ChiSq</b> <b>(DF=1)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Return visit to rural area	3(4)	1.5(2.75)	2.86	0.091
- # days spent visiting rural area	17(27)	9.5(15.5)	3.45	0.063
Host rural visitors	8(6)	5(5.75)	2.03	0.154
- # days visitors stayed	38(54)	25(24)	1.56	0.212
Attend migrant association event	2(3)	0(1)	3.92	0.048*
<i>All Social Linkages</i>	11(8)	9(7.5)	3.10	0.078
Lend money	0(1)	0(0)	4.22	0.040*
Give money	1(2)	0(1.75)	2.23	0.136
Contribute financially in rural event	5(3)	4(1.75)	15.04	<0.001*
- total of contributions (MGA) <sup>2</sup>	60,000(92,000)	15,000(26,000)	8.35	0.004*
Give food/materials	2(3)	0(2)	1.32	0.251
<i>All Give-Exchange Linkages</i>	9(7)	7(3)	12.35	<0.001*
Borrow money	0(0)	0(0)	2.39	0.122
Receive money	0(0)	0(0)	0.14	0.706
Receive food/materials	5(5)	4(3)	5.90	0.015*
<i>All Receive-Exchange Linkages</i>	6(6)	3.5(3.75)	4.91	0.027*
<i>All Linkage Behaviors</i>	31(20)	20(9.25)	8.09	0.004*

<sup>1</sup> IQR = Interquartile Range

<sup>2</sup> MGA (*Malagasy Ariary*) is the Malagasy currency, and at the time of research 2,000 MGA was roughly equivalent to \$1 USD

For any type of behavior, Catholics engaged in it more frequently over a 12-month period than Protestants. Analysis shows that the median behaviors for several types of linkage behaviors are significantly different between Catholics and Protestants, including attending migrant association events, lending money, contributing financially towards rural events, and receiving food or materials. The question then remains: Why is religious affiliation a significant predictor of migrant linkage behaviors that are not overtly religious in nature, and despite migrant agency in the face of religious rules?

The answer lies in part in the conflict that arises from conversion. When migrants move to the city and adopt a different religion than their rural family, this often results in family frictions. Migrants in Tamatave often said that their conversion resulted in family conflict, mirroring findings in other areas of the world (Gross 2012; Smilde 2007). Migrants said that their family eventually accepted their new faith, but my observations show that tensions can remain for a long time after conversion. In interviews with rural family members, I found that they still expressed anxiety and criticism of the new faith of their kin many years after migrants' conversion. These tensions surely influence the ways that migrants think about and interact with their home villages in the rural Vavatenina District.

But family conflict as a result of migrant conversion is not an adequate explanation alone for the trends we see in migrants' rural linkages. This is because these trends hold for Protestants *as a whole*, which include people who converted after migrating to Tamatave as well as people who were raised Protestant in their villages before migrating and whose rural families are also members of Protestant churches. I propose that there are two other important factors at work.

First, when Protestant migrants are ambiguous about traditional Betsimisaraka funerary customs, they become less motivated to invest in relationships with rural people who act as



caretakers of these ancestral tombs. Other scholars have argued that migrants' rural exchanges are a safety strategy to ensure that one will be welcomed when they return to the village in old age or due to economic difficulty (Cliggett 2005), and these arguments can be extended to include return after death. However, Protestant migrants worry that their bodies will become the object of rural ancestral rituals if they are buried in communal family tombs, and may desire a less dangerous burial in Christian cemeteries in Tamatave or the rural area.

Second, when Protestant migrants abstain from participating in rural ancestral rituals, their social networks become smaller and more focused on immediate family and urban acquaintances. Betsimisaraka funerary customs and ancestral rituals are important moments when the large extended family comes together. These two kinds of events thus are opportunities to learn about one's place within the wider kin network and to cement ties with distant relatives. Both funerals and ancestral rituals take place over a series of days, and moments of intense focus by all attendees (such as invocations and prayers) punctuate long periods of relative inactivity in which people socialize together. In fact, my most common emotional state at both of these ceremonies was one of boredom, especially if I had few people with whom to chat during long "down times." By abstaining from these ceremonies, Protestant migrants in essence have fewer opportunities and less time to interact with their wider kin network including rural individuals. Giving or receiving food, materials, or money with these unfamiliar kin – people with whom one does not have strong feelings of shared love or mutual relationship – would thus be challenging for Protestant migrants.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

In this paper, I have sought to describe the contemporary religious landscape in northeastern Madagascar. In the past 50 years Pentecostalism has taken root and become

increasingly popular for Malagasy people (Cole 2012; Keller 2005). The growth of Malagasy Pentecostalism has acted as a catalyst for changes in the ways non-Pentecostal churches see their place in the world. Other Protestant denominations seem to seek to imitate the fervor of Pentecostals and their hard line against Betsimisaraka traditional beliefs and practices, while Catholics have softened their stance to allow for possibilities of syncretism and enculturation. As a result, I argue that Tamatave's religious leaders have developed two competing claims about Betsimisaraka traditional beliefs and practices, in which Catholics argue that ancestors help the living speak to God and Protestants counter that ancestors are really foils of Satan. These two competing Christian visions lead to different prescriptions for behavior regarding burial and ancestral rituals. Migrants in turn may accept in the teachings of church leaders in their entirety, or seek to ascribe to multiple yet conflicting visions of the world.

Conversion to Protestantism (of which Pentecostal faiths make up an increasing proportion) explain in part why migrant religious affiliation influences their rural linkages, including social visits and events and food exchanges. When migrants convert this often causes friction with their non-convert rural family and may decrease the desire of migrants to exchange and interact with them.

Yet conversion of individual migrants alone cannot explain the general trend that Protestant migrants have weaker overall linkages to their places of origin. For one, migrants exhibit some creative agency in how they react to church teachings. More importantly though, these trends hold for migrants who attend all kinds of Protestant churches – historical, millenarian, and Pentecostal – and for migrants who are not converts but instead identified as Protestant before their migration to the city. I have argued that this is because Protestant migrants as a whole are less motivated to invest in social relationships with rural people due to uncertainty

about burial in the rural family tomb, and because they have fewer opportunities to cement ties with extended rural kin because they do not attend ancestral rituals.

These findings have significance beyond the island of Madagascar to the African region and beyond. A great deal of recent scholarship has examined the rise in Pentecostal and Charismatic strains of Christianity around the world, and its tendency to create “ruptures” in societies and to encourage converts to “break” with traditional beliefs and behaviors (e.g. Maxwell 1998; Meyer 1998; Ono 2012; Robbins 2004). Engelke concludes a recent article in this vein by noting “these dynamics are confined neither to charismatic forms of Christianity nor to Africa ... there is much to be gained in understanding Pentecostalism by looking past it” (2010:196). In this article I have shown that one possible way forward is to consider religious friction and social change in their entirety rather than confined to particular faith groups or individuals.

### 5.10 Notes

For the ease of readers, I have used “gn” in place of the phonetic symbol ŋ for Betsimisaraka words. Interviews are cited by the date on which they took place and the following designations: RL for religious leader (followed by the church name), M for migrant. All migrant names are pseudonyms. Biblical quotations use the New International Version.

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CHAPTER 6  
WHO NEEDS THE VILLAGE?  
RURAL LINKAGES AND URBAN LIVELIHOODS IN NORTHEASTERN  
MADAGASCAR<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Tilghman, Laura M. To be submitted to *Africa*.

**Abstract**

Scholars have argued that African city residents have fortified their linkages to rural areas as a survival strategy in the face of urban decline following neoliberal restructuring and economic crises. I examine the ways in which rural resources factor into livelihood strategies of rural-urban migrants in northeastern Madagascar. I first investigate to what degree migrants' resources have a rural basis, and find that for the most part only a small proportion of migrants have financial and material capital originating in the rural area. I then use stepwise regression modeling to examine whether migrants with "stronger" linkages (as exhibited by higher frequencies for linkage behavior or higher rankings for linkage attitudes) predicts having more resources (financial, material, social, or human capital), or better wellbeing (food security). I show that while migrants who had done more rural-tied social activities or who had given food or money to rural people had more financial and material capital, linkage strength did not predict other aspects of their livelihoods such as social or human capital, or food security. I explain these findings by examining transaction costs and norms of reciprocity.



## 6.1 Introduction

Throughout the African continent, villages remain materially and symbolically central even as a greater proportion of the population lives in cities. Scholars seeking to explain urban residents' continued ties to rural people and places have argued that in Africa this is a pragmatic economic strategy (Potts 1997; Tacoli 2002). African cities are characterized by poor infrastructure and uncertain economic opportunities; people living there literally *need the village* because it provides additional resources, income-generating opportunities, residence options, and security. Research in a wide variety of countries, including Botswana (Krüger 1998; Lesetedi 2003), Kenya (Owuor 2004, 2010), Namibia (Frayne 2005, 2010; Greiner 2010), South Africa (Smit 1998), and Zimbabwe (Potts 1997, 2010), shows that in the neoliberal era rural resources subsidize urban residence.

The strong interconnection between village and city has been well researched in Africa (Trager 2005), and has been a longstanding theme of research on migration and urbanization in the continent from the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century until now (Moore 1994; Schumaker 2001). Africans have been described as living in a “dual system” (Gugler 1991:399), having “one foot in both worlds” (O'Connor 1983:272), or “straddling” a rural/urban divide (Bayart 1993:12), diverse terms which share a common view that the village has been central to city residents' lives. More recent research echoes these themes, and as Greiner (2010) notes, “the rural home remains the center of gravity” for many contemporary Africans. Researchers exploring contemporary rural-urban linkages in Africa are thus not seeking to explain a new phenomenon, but rather to offer new explanations for its predominance in the present-day context. The explanation most often offered is that “it is vital economic considerations that currently dominate” poor urban residents' rural links, rather than other factors such as cultural ideals or social status (Potts 1997:462).

Researchers have taken different approaches to showing that urban residents have strong ties to their rural places of origin. Most focus on present behavior, noting that city residents continue to own rural resources (e.g. land, cattle), engage in exchanges with rural people (e.g. sending and receiving money, food, materials), and/or visit the rural area for a variety of reasons (e.g. socialize with family, grow crops for consumption). Some studies also focus on anticipated future behavior, noting that city residents often express a desire to return to the village in old age when they “retire” from the urban labor force, or in death when they will be buried in rural tombs. Different types of rural linkages of a more social, cultural, or political nature (e.g. participation in rural events and rituals, participation in urban-based migrant associations, hosting rural visitors when they come to the city, or communicating with family and friends by telephone or other means) are noted but often left out of analyses, despite a large body of work showing that they are important forms of linkages (Andersson 2001; Levitt 1998; Smith 2008).

Although researchers would no doubt recognize that urban residents’ ties to rural areas are not identical in form or quantity, few have factored this fact into their analyses. Are there thresholds – number of cattle owned, number of return visits in a given year, amounts of money remitted, amounts of rural food consumed – which would help to label certain urban residents as having “strong” linkages? Or is the simple existence of these ties important, at any level? Research analyses could be improved by creating a clearer and more holistic metric. To do so, I argue that we should focus not on the simple existence of a subset of linkages, but rather the overall behavior and perceptions of migrants regarding linkages. One could thus determine the strength of migrants’ rural ties by measuring both the frequency of linkage activities that migrants engage in, and the attitudes that migrants have regarding the overall importance of these linkages.

Researchers have also taken different approaches to measuring the pragmatic importance of rural linkages for urban residents. Some studies base their claims on the subjective interpretations of migrants themselves, asking migrants about the importance or necessity of certain rural linkages for their survival (e.g. Potts 2010). Other studies have tried to measure the impact more directly, such as by calculating the savings an urban household can expect to see by consuming rural foods sent by family members or grown themselves on rural land, rather than buying them in the city (e.g. Owuor 2010; Frayne 2005).

Sustainable livelihoods frameworks that have been developed to conceptualize poverty and wealth holistically can offer useful conceptual tools for better understanding the practical significance of linkages for urban residents (c.f. de Haan et al. 2002; Ellis 2000; McGregor 2007; Moser 1998) These frameworks share a common view that people need a diversity of resources need to make a living, which have been characterized as forms of financial, material, natural, social, and human capital. They also recognize that structural mediating factors influence whether or not individuals can access these resources. The success of individuals' livelihood strategies is measured holistically as reduced vulnerability and greater wellbeing, rather than more limited metrics like increased monetary income.

The approaches taken thus far to investigate the relationship between rural ties and urban livelihoods can be improved by refining the definition of key concepts and analyzing the relationship between them more systematically. I present results of a study that aim to begin this process, focusing on rural-urban linkages in northeastern Madagascar of migrants who have settled in the city of Tamatave and trace their origins to the rural Vavatenina District. This study was driven by two main questions. First, what kinds of livelihoods resources continue to have a large basis in the rural area for migrants living in the city? Second, do migrants with strong

linkages, as evidenced by their behavior and attitudes, have access to more livelihoods resources, and/or do these migrants also experience better livelihoods outcomes?

My findings show that 1) many migrants do continue to draw resources from their rural homeland, particularly from agricultural land, cash crop trees, cattle, and social networks from which migrants draw social support and rural skills; 2) while linkage strength is a good predictor of having access to some resources (financial and material capital), it is not as good at predicting access to other resources (human and social capital) or overall wellbeing (indicated by being food secure); 3) migrants' linkage behavior seems to have more influence on livelihoods than linkage attitudes. I explain these findings by focusing on transaction costs and norms of reciprocity, all of which influence the potential of rural linkages to positively affect livelihoods.

## 6.2 Ethnographic Background

The research took place in the island nation of Madagascar, focusing on migrants originating from the rural Vavatenina District who had settled in the city of Tamatave<sup>28</sup> (see Figure 6.1). Tamatave is home of the country's largest port, and is the second most populated city after the capital with between 250,000 to 1 million residents (INSTAT n.d.). The District of Vavatenina, located about 100 kilometers northwest of the city, is composed of over 120 villages and towns of various size scattered over 3100 square kilometers (District de Vavatenina, n.d.).

People living in the wider northeastern region of Madagascar which encompasses the urban and rural fieldsite are often labeled as belonging to the Betsimisaraka ethnicity. Originally a short-lived political federation created in the early 1700s to unite small independent communities in the region so that they might profit from the slave trade, this ethnic category was codified under French colonial rule and the *politique des races* (Cole 2001; Ellis 2007;

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<sup>28</sup> The city's current official name is *Toamasina*, but I follow most city residents who continue to refer to the city by the name it was called during French colonial times.

Randrianja and Ellis 2009). While this ethnic category has less salience today, people of this region still share common cultural practices and a dialect of Malagasy. Echoing themes throughout Africa and elsewhere in Madagascar, an important aspect of the Betsimisaraka worldview for this study holds that ancestors (*razagna*) are extremely important and continue to influence the lives of their descendents. Following this, ties to rural ancestral land (*tanindrazagna*) and participation in rural ancestral customs (*fombandrazagna*) have immense power, for rural residents as well as rural-urban migrants (Althabe 1969; Babity 1994, 2010; Cole 2001, 2010; Fanony 1975; Mangalaza 1998; Raharimandimby 2001; Rahatoka 1985).

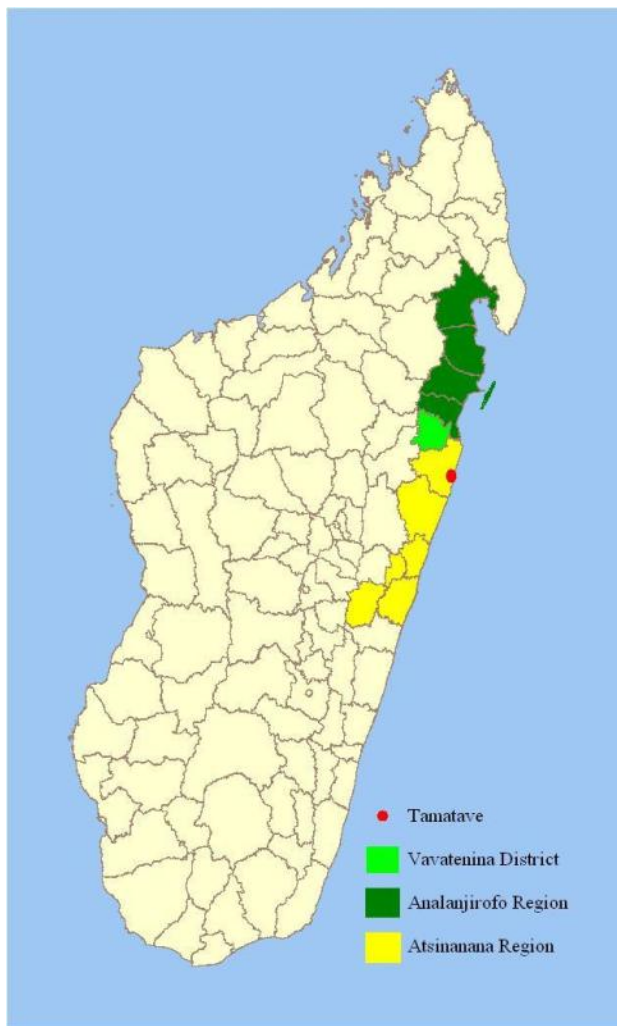


Figure 6.1 Map of Madagascar with urban and rural fieldsites

Madagascar's human development index score in 2012 was 0.483 – in the low human development category – positioning the country at 151 out of 187 countries and territories (UNDP 2013). Currently about a third of the population lives in cities, and its estimated urban growth rate is about 3.5%, (UNPD 2014), parameters that make it somewhat “typical” for Africa. However, unlike migration processes in the mainland, Malagasy migrants rarely travel internationally due to the lack of land borders and the high costs of airfare to the African continent (Black et al. 2006).

A clear understanding of demographic trends in the country is difficult to establish due to lack of reliable and up-to-date data, particularly since the last census was conducted in 1993 (McDonald 2013). It is also challenging to understanding rates and characteristics of migration because “migrants” have historically been defined as people of an ethnic identity not considered native to the particular region they inhabit (e.g. Deschamps 1959). This definition relies on territorialized bounded conceptions of ethnicity that much anthropological research in the country has shown to be inaccurate (Astuti 1995; Lambek and Walsh 1997; Yount et al. 2001). Ethnic territories continue to be used in current descriptions of migration in Madagascar, skewing current estimates of migration rates in the country. The migrants of this study, for example, might not be classified as such by the Malagasy government since they belong to the Betsimisaraka ethnic group whose “territory” encompasses both the rural and urban fieldsites.

## **6.3 Methods**

### **6.3.1 Sample Selection**

I conducted an initial survey from March to May 2011 to gather baseline data about the Vavatenina migrant population in Tamatave. Migrants were exhaustively sampled from 28 randomly selected *parcelle*, the smallest administrative unit of the city of which there are 138 in

total. I then selected a cluster of neighborhoods in Tamatave where a high number and diversity of migrants originating from Vavatenina lived. I used purposive sampling (Bernard 2006:145) to select 60 migrants who had been surveyed were willing to participate in an additional 12 months of data collection from August 2011 to July 2012. The resulting sample included individuals of diverse age, socio-economic status, employment type, and religious background, traits that I hypothesized would influence rural linkage behavior and attitudes. Over the course of 12 months 5 of the 60 individuals were lost to attrition. I present analysis of the data from the remaining 55 migrants for whom I have complete information.

### **6.3.2 Data Collection**

To evaluate migrants' linkage behavior, I conducted a structured interview twice a month for 12 months, in which myself or a research assistant asked migrants to recall all instances since the last interview in which they had performed six kinds of activities: 1) traveling outside the city, 2) hosting guests at one's home, 3) attending special events in the city, 4) communicating by phone or letter to people, 5) exchanging money, food, or materials with other people, and 6) contributing financially or materially to an event. Migrants were also asked to provide additional details, such as location of the activity or person, amount or description of money, food, and materials, and relationships to people. The questions asked about all extra-household linkages, not just those in Vavatenina. This is because in pre-testing we found that questions specific to linkages with Vavatenina District caused anxiety for migrants who were ashamed to have weak ties to their place of origin. Collecting data on all extra-household linkages also contextualized linkages to the rural place of origin within a larger system of social and material relationships with people from any location. However, the linkage activities of interest for the research were

only those associated with the Vavatenina District, and these were easily isolated in data processing.

To evaluate migrants' linkage attitudes, I conducted a structured interview at the end of the 12 months. I first asked migrants to rate the importance of 16 different kinds of rural-urban linkages on a 3-point likert scale and then to explain their answers. After rating each linkage type individually, they were then asked to choose which type of linkage was 1) the most important, 2) the least important, 3) the most difficult, and 4) the most enjoyable. To aid with these questions I used small cards displaying a drawing labeled in Malagasy to represent each linkage type. When possible, these exercises were then followed by less structured conversations to further elicit migrant attitudes and perceptions of rural-urban linkages.

To evaluate migrants' resources and wellbeing, I used a livelihoods survey that had been validated for rural southwestern Madagascar (Tucker et al. 2011), which I then modified to fit an urban location and account for differences in ethnicity and language dialect. I administered the livelihoods survey twice during the 12 months, coinciding with times considered locally to be either periods of abundance (December 2011) or hardship (March 2012). The assessment consisted of five constructs and inventories:

1) Financial Capital: The survey asked migrants to report their household's expenses, income, savings, and loans for the month preceding the survey. Accompanying information was also elicited, such as whether expenses or income were for activities based in Tamatave, Vavatenina, or elsewhere.

2) Material Capital: The survey asked migrants to report a variety of material items to which their household had access through both sole individual ownership (usually for purchased items) and shared ownership with family members (usually for inherited items). The types of



material items included land, houses, cash crop trees, animals, and household goods. Migrants were also asked to provide the location of the item as Tamatave, Vavatenina, or elsewhere.

3) Social Capital: The survey asked migrants to rate on a 3-point likert scale the ease with which they could get social support from people outside their household for 11 different tasks and situations. The test items had good internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.78$  and  $0.79$  for December 2011 and March 2012 respectively).

4) Human Capital: The survey asked migrants about skills and traits that are important for accessing urban jobs and services: having an official birth certificate, being registered as a resident in their neighborhood, having proficiency in French, computer use, or automobile driving, health, and formal schooling.

5) Food Security: The survey asked migrants to rate the frequency that they had worried about food or experienced inadequate food supplies in the preceding 3 months, using a series of 3-point likert scale questions. The questions were adapted from the USDA Food Security Questionnaire (USDA 2000), which has been shown to be amenable to modification for other cultural settings (Perez-Escamilla et al. 2004). The test items had excellent internal consistency ( $\alpha = 0.91$  for both December 2011 and March 2012, 12 items).

I used participant observation and additional interviews to gather qualitative data about migration, linkages, and livelihoods to give context and meaning to the quantitative data. Although the urban context makes participant observation in the traditional sense difficult (Foster and Kemper 2009), the sample design of locating participants in bordering neighborhoods made the task somewhat easier. When possible I took part in normal daily activities of the 55 migrants, as well as special events like funerals and ancestral rituals. I also

made several trips to the Vavatenina District to interview rural people, including local authorities and relatives of the migrants.

### **6.3.3 Data Analysis**

Qualitative analyses were performed using MAXQDA, and quantitative analyses were performed using Excel, SAS, and JMP. Summary analysis showed little difference in responses for the livelihoods survey between the two times it was administered, and thus migrants' responses were averaged. Variables using likert scale data were analyzed for internal consistency and all were found reliable, with Chronbach's alpha values of 0.70, 0.78, and 0.90 for linkage attitudes, social capital, and food security respectively.

To determine what proportion of migrants' resource portfolios resulted from rural linkages, I used location information for material capital resources, and material and monetary exchanges, to calculate what proportions of these were based in the rural Vavatenina District. The data from social and human capital was not amenable to similar numeric calculations, so I analyzed qualitative data from interviews and fieldnotes to make more general statements.

I analyzed the influence of linkages on livelihoods through stepwise multiple linear regression, using minimum Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) as the selection criteria for inclusion in the model. The four independent variables were different aspects of linkage strength. Each stepwise regression determined the combination of these four independent variables that best predicted a single dependent variable from the livelihoods survey. The variables used in the regressions are summarized in Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

While I had collected data representing multiple facets of material and financial capital, I decided to represent these using indicator variables for the regression analyses. For material capital, it was difficult to combine variables because they were all measured in different units

that were incommensurable. I chose numbers of land plots and household goods because these represented different aspects of material wealth: land can be located in both rural and urban areas, accessed through purchase or inheritance, and may be shared with others or the sole property of the migrant, while household goods are exclusively located in the urban area and provided a snapshot of more recent and individual consumption behavior. Similarly, much of the data regarding migrants' income, savings, and loans was incomplete due to people not wishing to share the information or having difficulty recalling or calculating these values. I chose as an indicator variable the daily amount of money a household budgets daily for *rô* (food to accompany rice), because everyone reported this data and ethnographic observations indicated it was a good indicator for financial wealth.

Table 6.1 Independent variables capturing different aspects of migrants' linkage strength.

<b>Variable (Indicator)</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Mean, Range</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>	<b>Description</b>
Social Linkage Behavior	# activities reported	12.15 (1-32)	6.89	The total number of instances that the migrant engaged in 3 social linkage activities over 12 months: 1) returning to Vavatenina for any reason; 2) hosting visitors from Vavatenina in the migrant's urban home; 3) participating in activities of Vavatenina migrant associations
Giving Linkage Behavior	# activities reported	7.78 (0-20)	5.50	The total number of instances that the migrant engaged in giving exchange activities over 12 months with people in Vavatenina: 1) loaning or giving money; 2) giving food or money; 3) contributing money, food, or materials to events
Receiving Linkage Behavior	# activities reported	6.22 (0-20)	4.81	The total number of instances that the migrant engaged in receiving exchange activities over 12 months with people in Vavatenina: 1) borrowing or receiving money; 2) receiving food or money
Linkage Attitude	Likert-scale construct	25.18 (15-32)	4.09	The sum of 16 likert scale ratings regarding the importance of different kinds of linkages with Vavatenina

*Note:* For linkage strength independent variables, Vavatenina refers to any location in the entire Vavatenina District.

Table 6.2 Dependent Variables used in stepwise multiple linear regression

Market Budget (Financial capital)	FMG currency <sup>29</sup>	565181.82 (0-2 million)	421346.18	The amount of money the migrant's household budgeted per month to buy food from the market ( <i>volambazary</i> , literally "market money") to accompany the staple of rice at meals.
Land (Material capital)	# lots	4.01 (0-11)	3.00	The total number of lots of land to which the migrant had access, either through sole ownership or shared access with family members. Includes both agricultural and residential land.
Household Goods (Material capital)	# items	6.45 (2-11)	2.40	The number of 11 household items that the migrant's household owned. Does not include items if they are broken or otherwise not useable.
Social Support (Social capital)	Likert-scale construct	77% (43-100%)	15%	The sum of 11 likert scale ratings regarding the ease with which the migrant could receive forms of social assistance and support from individuals outside their household. Expressed as percent of maximum possible score of 22.
Years Schooling (Human capital)	Years	9.78 (0-24)	5.05	The number of years of formal schooling that the migrant had completed.
Food Security (Wellbeing outcome)	Likert-scale construct	88% (27-100%)	18%	The sum of 12 likert scale ratings regarding the frequency that the migrant experienced anxiety about food and hunger. Converted so that higher scores indicate greater security, and expressed as a percent of maximum possible score of 24.

## 6.4 Results

### 6.4.1 Do migrants' livelihoods resources have a strong rural basis?

During the 12 months of the study 22 of the 55 migrants (40%) received income from Vavatenina at least once, from activities that were seasonal (e.g. selling processed cloves) or regular (e.g. renting a house on a monthly basis). But the range of income varied widely, from 100,000 to 60,000,000 FMG (approximately \$10 to \$6000). Thus it seems that rural income-

<sup>29</sup> Although Madagascar changed its official currency to MGA (*Malagasy Ariary*) in recent years, many people there continue to calculate using the old currency, FMG (*Francs Malgache*). The conversion rate is 5 FMG to 1 MGA.

generating activities were a major contributor to migrants' incomes in only a small minority of cases.

Rural linkages also factored into financial capital indirectly by reducing urban food expenditures for some migrants. Rice makes up a substantial part of migrants' daily household expenses, since it is the staple food in northeastern Madagascar. The different ways in which rural linkages influenced migrants' rice consumption are presented in Table 6.3. Rural linkages allowed migrants to spend less money on rice by growing their own for consumption on rural land (11%), renting one's rural land to sharecroppers and in turn receiving a portion of the harvest (13%), or receiving rice gifts from rural family members (24%). The magnitude of the effect that these activities have on urban expenditures varies, providing households with anywhere from one to twelve months supply of rice. It should also be noted that a majority of the sample (56%) received and consumed no rice at all from the rural Vavatenina District during the study.

Table 6.3 The role of rural linkages for migrant rice consumption and expenditures

<b>Rice Activity</b>	<b>Supply Range (months)</b>	<b>Frequency of sample (%)</b>
Grow rice for subsistence	6 – 12	11
Rent rice-land to sharecroppers and receive portion of harvest	1 – 12	13
Receive rice gifts from rural family	.25 – 12	24
None of the above	n/a	56

*Note: Two migrants both grew rice and rented rice-land to sharecroppers*

Focusing on the exchanges that migrants participated in over the course of the study also provides another way to understand the rural basis of their financial capital. Here we examine instances in which migrants received money, food, or materials from other individuals, all of which affect financial capital directly or indirectly. Table 6.4 shows the mean frequency of different types of exchanges, and what mean percentage of these exchanges were with people in the rural Vavatenina District. Note that during the 12 months of the study only a small

percentage of migrants' received monetary gifts ("reverse remittances") or loans from people in the Vavatenina District, 14% and 13% respectively. A much higher percentage of exchanges (51%) in which migrants received food or materials were with rural people from the Vavatenina District. But much of these gifts of food or materials that migrants received from people in the Vavatenina District were in the form of *voandalana* (literally "fruits of the road", which are gifts brought by rural visitors, or given to migrants at the end of a visit to the rural area). Voandalana can include gifts of handicrafts, seasonal crops, or animals, and are extremely important culturally, but often have minimal financial impact because they vary in quantity and are often shared with others. (Giving exchanges in which migrants gave or lent money, or gave food or materials, will be discussed later).

Table 6.4 The role of rural linkages in exchange activities

<b>Rural Linkage Exchange Activities</b>	<b>Mean Frequency (all locations)</b>	<b>Mean % of exchanges with Vavatenina</b>
<i>Receiving Exchanges</i>		
Receive Money	2.5	14
Receive Food/Materials	11.3	51
Borrow Money	3.3	13
<i>Giving Exchanges</i>		
Give Money	4.3	38
Give Food/Materials	7.6	30
Lend Money	4.1	11
Contribute to event (money, food, materials)	12.5	43

The rural basis of migrants' material resources is summarized in Table 6.5, which shows the percentage of the study sample that had access to different material resource types in any location, and for those individuals what percentage of their total resource base is located in the rural Vavatenina District. First, we see that access to some resource types is less frequent regardless of the location, such as cattle and coffee trees. Second, we see that some material resources have a clear basis in the rural Vavatenina District: rice and other agricultural land, cash

crop trees for cloves, coffee, and lychees, and cattle. Note that other material resource types, such as residential land and housing, and poultry, are relatively common but rarely located in the rural Vavatenina District.

Table 6.5 The role of rural linkages for migrant material capital resources

<b>Material Capital Resource</b>	<b>% sample with access (all locations)</b>	<b>Average % of resource based in Vavatenina</b>
Rice land	55	91
Other agricultural land	75	91
Residential land	71	15
Houses	64	14
Clove trees	69	95
Coffee trees	33	94
Lychee trees	58	81
Zebu cattle	13	86
Poultry	45	1

Migrants' social capital resources included relationships with people in both the rural and urban areas, but the kinds of support that each could offer to migrants differed in general ways. For short-term situations that arise unexpectedly and must be resolved quickly, migrants were more likely to rely on other city residents (e.g. borrowing some money to cover daily food expenses at the market or paying a utility bill, getting someone to watch children for a few hours, borrowing a bucket or shovel). Migrants relied on social support from rural individuals in situations where either the response was less short-term and time sensitive (e.g. providing long-term childcare for migrants' children who were sent to live with rural relatives, or providing assistance with agricultural activities for migrants who grew rice and other crops in the rural area), or where assistance could be provided without great financial burden to the rural person (e.g. talking about a personal problem, or offering moral support and encouragement).

Migrants' human capital resources had both urban and rural bases. Rural-acquired skills, including basketry, crop cultivation, and animal husbandry, helped some migrants earn income or reduce expenses. But access to education and health resources was a major driver for

migration from the rural Vavatenina District to Tamatave. The skills and qualifications that allowed access to more prestigious and high-paying jobs (e.g. formal education, knowledge of how to speak French or use a computer) were often obtained by migrants in the urban area. Additionally, being in good health was facilitated by access to urban health clinics and pharmacies.

#### 6.4.2 Do migrants with stronger rural linkages have more resources or greater wellbeing?

The results of six separate stepwise regressions that evaluated which aspects of linkage strength would best predict livelihood resources and outcomes are summarized in Tables 6.6 through 6.11 below.

Table 6.6 Stepwise multiple linear regression model predicting market budget

Predictor	Parameter Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	p-value	Partial RSq
Intercept	151677.12	95620.62	1.59	0.119	--
Social Linkage Behavior	25187.77	8019.314	3.14	0.003	0.28
Giving Linkage Behavior	34651.48	10090.88	3.43	0.001	0.36
Receiving Linkage Behavior	-26062.88	10974.73	-2.37	0.021	0.42

Model fit: RSq = 0.42, adjusted RSq = 0.39;  $F(3,51) = 12.48$  ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 6.7 Stepwise multiple linear regression model predicting land lots

Predictor	Parameter Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	p-value	Partial RSq
Intercept	1.17	0.70	1.67	0.100	--
Social Linkage Behavior	0.23	0.05	4.66	<.001	0.29

Model fit: RSq = 0.29, adjusted RSq = 0.28;  $F(1,53) = 21.67$  ( $p < .001$ ).

Table 6.8 Stepwise multiple linear regression model predicting household goods

Predictor	Parameter Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	p-value	Partial RSq
Intercept	4.363	0.61	7.10	<.001	--
Social Linkage Behavior	0.10	0.05	2.07	0.044	0.18
Giving Linkage Behavior	0.11	0.06	1.68	0.098	0.23

Model fit: RSq = 0.23, adjusted RSq = 0.20;  $F(2,52) = 7.59$  ( $p = 0.001$ ).



Table 6.9: Stepwise multiple linear regression model predicting social support

Predictor	Parameter Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	p-value	Partial RSq
Intercept	70.47	3.94	17.90	<.001	--
Social Linkage Behavior	0.56	0.28	1.99	0.051	0.070

Model fit: RSq = 0.07, adjusted RSq = 0.05; F(1,53) = 3.98 (p = 0.051).

Table 6.10: Stepwise multiple linear regression model predicting years of formal education

Predictor	Parameter Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	p-value	Partial RSq
Intercept	8.24	1.17	7.03	<.001	--
Giving Linkage Behavior	0.20	0.12	1.61	0.11	0.03

Model fit: RSq = 0.05, adjusted RSq = 0.03; F(1,53) = 2.60 (p = 0.11).

Table 6.11: Stepwise multiple linear regression model predicting food security

Predictor	Parameter Estimate	Std Error	t Ratio	p-value	Partial RSq
Intercept	81.30	4.02	20.22	<.001	--
Giving Linkage Behavior	0.87	0.42	2.05	0.046	0.07

Model fit: RSq = 0.07, adjusted RSq = 0.06; F(1,53) = 1.57 (p = 0.046).

The six resulting models are summarized below in Table 6.12, with one model per row. The adjusted R-Square and p values for each model is listed in addition to the independent variables that were selected as the best predictors. As the frequency of engaging in social linkage behavior with people from the rural Vavatenina District increases, so does market budget, number of land lots and household goods, and ease of social support. As the frequency of engaging in exchanges with people from the rural Vavatenina District in which the migrant was on the giving-end increases, so does market budget, number of household goods, years of formal schooling, and food security. As the frequency of engaging in exchanges with people from the rural Vavatenina District in which the migrant was on the receiving-end increases, the market budget decreases.

Table 6.12: Summary of 6 regression models predicting livelihood resources and outcomes

<b>Dependent Variable</b>	<b>Livelihood concept</b>	<b>Independent variables selected for inclusion in the regression model</b>	<b>RSq</b>	<b>p value</b>
Market Budget	Financial capital	+ Social Frequency + Give Frequency - Receive Frequency	0.42	<0.001
Land	Material capital	+ Social Frequency	0.29	<0.001
Household goods	Material capital	+ Social Frequency + Give Frequency	0.23	0.001
Social support	Social capital	+ Social Frequency	0.07	0.051
Formal schooling	Human capital	+ Give Frequency	0.05	0.113
Food security	Wellbeing	+ Give Frequency	0.07	0.002

A few aspects of the regression models should be noted. First, some aspects of linkage strength were more predictive of livelihood resources and outcomes than others, with frequency of social and giving-exchanges more often selected for inclusion in the regression models than receiving exchanges or linkage perception. Second, the regression models had varying degrees of explanatory power. The models predicting market budget and land lots were quite good at explaining variation in those dependent variables (42% and 29% respectively), while the model predicting household goods was less so (23%). Three other models had almost no explanatory power. Only 7% of the variation in social support and food security could be explained by those models. Similarly, only 5% of the variation of years of formal schooling could be explained by the model, nor was the model statistically significant.

## 6.5 Discussion

Scholarship throughout Africa has suggested that migrants and other city residents depend on ties to rural areas to get by in cities where jobs are scarce and support infrastructure is lacking. I would argue that the results from this study in northeastern Madagascar suggest that the relationship between rural linkages and urban livelihoods may be more complicated than suggested by previous studies.

By analyzing the proportion of migrants' resources that are based in the rural Vavatenina District and contextualizing how these fit into overall resource access, we can see that resources based in the rural area do not necessarily make up the majority of migrants' total resource stocks. Land and cattle are most often the focus of other scholarship on linkages and livelihoods in Africa, and the results show that these material resources clearly have a rural basis in northeastern Madagascar with some caveats. First, a majority of migrants have access to both agricultural *and residential* land, but only the former is most often located in the migrants' rural place of origin. Second, only a small minority of migrants have access to cattle in any location, and thus while these cattle are overwhelmingly located in the Vavatenina District it would be disingenuous to argue that these are important for livelihoods of most migrants. Furthermore, other types of material resources to which a majority of migrants have access, including residential land, housing, and poultry, are often located in the city of Tamatave or other locations outside the rural place of origin. Financial, social, and human capital are not as easy to pin to a fixed physical location as material capital, but migrants' access to these resources also shows that rural resources are important but not necessarily central for most migrants. Yes, migrants use skills acquired in rural areas, receive support from rural people, and receive money, food, and materials from their own rural activities or as gifts from rural people. But migrants also access health and education resources in the city, receive support from urban residents, and get money and food from urban people and activities. Thus, contextualized within migrants' *overall* resource access, it is less clear if rural-based forms of financial, social, and human capital resources represent a majority of migrants' holdings.

By determining how much of the variation in migrants' livelihoods can be predicted by the strength of their rural ties, we can see that social and giving exchange behaviors are most

often better predictors of resources and wellbeing than receiving exchange behavior and linkage attitudes. Yet these two behaviors do not appear on the surface to have an obvious direct benefit to migrants unlike receiving linkages in which migrants receive gifts or loans of money, food, and materials. Furthermore, participating in social events and giving or lending food, money, and materials entail some financial costs for the migrant, yet nevertheless are associated with greater access to resources and better wellbeing outcomes. Second, analyses showed that social and giving exchange behaviors are better at explaining variation in financial and material capital than social and human capital or wellbeing outcomes. Why doesn't linkage strength influence access to all resources, or influence wellbeing very strongly? In the rest of my discussion I will focus on two forces that may explain these regression results: transaction costs and norms of reciprocity, both of which are necessary to translate potential resource sources in the rural area into use for livelihood strategies.

### **6.5.1 Transaction costs: money, time, and accessibility**

By maintaining ties with their home villages, migrants have the possibility of accessing rural resources in addition to urban resources. On the surface, it would seem that migrants with stronger ties to rural places would thus have larger resource pools to draw from, and would be better off as a result. Yet holistic livelihoods frameworks also remind us that individuals do not actually put all of the resources in their portfolio to use, either by their own choice or due to structural constraints. Regarding the latter, Ellis (2000:37) states, "the translation of a set of assets into a livelihood strategy composed of a portfolio of income earning activities is mediated by a great number of contextual social, economic, and policy considerations." A major mediating factor that influences whether or not a migrant will actually use a potential rural resource as part of their livelihood strategy is transaction cost. Migrants must decide if the value

the rural resource provides outweighs the money, time and effort that they will expend accessing and maintaining that resource.

Financial transaction costs have an obvious impact on whether migrants access material capital resources like agricultural land. Irrigated rice land represents a great potential, as migrants can use it to grow rice themselves or through sharecroppers, and thus reduce a major and regular household expense. One-quarter of the sample study had access to one plot of rice land, and another quarter had access to two or more plots, most often inherited from family and located in the migrant's village of origin. Yet about a quarter of the migrant sample had land to grow rice, but for a variety of reasons, did not. Why is the potential of this material capital resource not fully realized? The answer is, in part, the money it would cost migrants to cultivate rice in a village located 100 kilometers away from their home in the city.

While a majority of migrants already have access to irrigated rice land, to use this land to produce rice entails financial costs. If the migrant chooses to do the labor himself, he will regularly spend money on transportation to travel back and forth over the approximately 5-month growing season. If the migrant chooses instead to hire laborers, this entails other expenses, such as wages or food to feed them on workdays. As one male migrant explained:

For me, growing rice isn't important. A long time ago I did it. But I compared my expenses of buying white rice at the store and when I grew it myself, and I saw that it wasn't worth it [to grow rice].<sup>30</sup>

Another male migrant, an elderly retired civil servant with access to many plots of agricultural land, echoed these sentiments when he explained,

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Migrant 1433AV, 20 July 2012. The original French transcript: Il y a longtemps je l'ai fait. Mais j'ai toujours fait la comparaison entre les dépenses par le vary fotsy que j'achète a la boutique et quand je cultive moi-même, et j'ai vu c'était pas intéressant.

Growing rice is too expensive. When I worked in Fenerive [a small city near the Vavatenina District], I grew rice and didn't have to buy any rice the whole year. But since I arrived here [in Tamatave], I haven't done it anymore. Because the travel back and forth wastes a lot of money, and [if you don't travel, rural] people won't do the work how it is supposed to be done. So for me, it's better to buy rice than to grow it. Growing rice has no importance to me now.<sup>31</sup>

The few migrants who realized the potential of their access to rice land fell into two groups. First were migrant couples where both wife and husband came from the same rural area. Perhaps migrant couples were able to cut down on costs since they could enlist both their social networks to assist with agricultural tasks. These couples also had particularly large land holdings, and the economy of scale may have allowed them to recoup some costs. Second were migrants who rented their rice land to sharecroppers who took on all the costs and risks in return for half of the rice harvest.

Costs of maintaining and using resources were most noticeable in migrants' decisions about whether or not to use rice land, but applied to all other rural resources to some degree as well. Cattle must be guarded and should ideally be vaccinated. Houses require periodic upkeep. Clove, coffee, and lychee trees need to be pruned and weeded. Land should be cleared and put into use to protect against competing tenure claims. Even social assistance from rural family and friends costs something to access, even it is just the cost of a telephone call. All of these financial costs are weighed against the potential benefits of using the resource when migrants decide whether or not to include them in their livelihood strategies.

Transaction costs also factor into the time needed to access rural resources to meet migrants' needs in the city. Even the most accessible villages in the Vavatenina District are

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<sup>31</sup> Interview with Migrant 1433AW, 17 July 2012. The original Malagasy transcript: Be depense loatra lay fambolenam-bary. Zay tamy zaho mbola niasa ta Fenerive, nambohy vary zaho, tsy hary nivity vary isan-taona. Fa izahay ko fa tonga teto [Tamatave], tsy navita intsony zaho. Satria lay mivezivezy ihany mandany be, ary lay olo raha vao tsy eo anao, tsy manao araky lay fomba tokony ho izy. Ka amiko, aleo mividy vary tozay mamboly vary ... Tsisy dikany amiko izao.

separated by a four hour vehicle ride; other villages make take as long as 2 days on foot to reach. Rural resources that may make up a migrant's portfolio may be unfeasible to actually put to use if they are needed for day-to-day living or at short notice.

A good example of the role time plays in migrants' urban livelihood strategies can be found in the common practice of small exchanges of food and money. In the city of Tamatave, neighbors and friends often share food, especially cooked snacks that can be made from cheap ingredients like manioc, breadfruit, or taro. People also commonly lend each other small amounts of cash, often under 10,000 FMG (approximately \$1), which is used towards small daily purchases at the market and repaid the same day or very soon after. Such exchanges of food and money are an example of social capital being put to use to positively impact financial capital. For some migrants at the high end of the socio-economic spectrum these small exchanges may not be critical to their wellbeing but rather done for pleasure or to follow custom. But for other migrants with low socio-economic status, such exchanges can serve a critical function of easing daily food and money shortages or irregularities. This is illustrated by my observations of a poor female migrant:

Two of her four children are now in public schools, and one of her clothes washing clients had recently given her school materials for them. Another client had given her clothes, both adult and children. She had exchanged money and food with neighbors, and also said she is frequently given cooked food by her clients in addition to her salary. She also frequently takes out loans from a brother and an aunt who also live in Tamatave, in addition to her neighbors and relatives of her husband who live in the same yard. The frequency with which this occurs makes it hard for her to estimate in any given time period how often or how much she has been loaned or given...<sup>32</sup>

It should be obvious, though, that while some migrants may have strong relationships with rural individuals who would be willing to exchange small amounts of food and money, to

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<sup>32</sup> Fieldnotes excerpt, 10 October 2011, observations of migrant 1433P

actually make use of this social capital resource would be impractical due to the time it would take. In an interview with the same poor female migrant described above, I asked her about her ties with her rural relatives and she made it clear that while she relied on assistance from others to survive, she could not depend on help from her rural family as she did with family and acquaintances in the city:

I am self-employed and I must find food, [I have] lots of children, and no money. *How often do your rural family members help you by sending food?* Just sometimes, and they just help a little bit. When there is someone travelling from there, then they ask them to bring a little food [to me]. *Would you say that you depend on your rural family members?* Yes. I depend on them, even though help [from them] rarely comes.<sup>33</sup>

Migrants like the woman above could potentially draw on both rural and urban people for assistance. For daily and immediate needs migrants tended to rely on the help of urban people, be they family, fellow migrants, neighbors, friends, fellow church members, and so on. Rural assistance was less forthcoming because of distance between the two locales and the resulting time delay between need and fulfillment.

Accessibility is another aspect of transaction costs that mediates migrant's abilities to put potential rural resources into use as part of their livelihood strategies. Within the Vavatenina District, villages and towns located along traveled roads can be accessed relatively quickly by *taxi brousse*, private minivans that transport people and goods from Tamatave. However, many other villages and towns are located off these main roads and require travel on foot, bicycle, or motorcycle. Resources of all types located in these more inaccessible villages may require too much effort on the part of migrants to access to make it worthwhile.

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<sup>33</sup> Interview with Migrant 1433P, 19 July 2012. The original Malagasy transcript: *Zaho magnan-tegna de ny sakafo tsy maintsy tadiavana, zaza maro, vola tsisy. Mety impiry zare magnampy anao? Tsindraindraiky ary kely ihany no ampianjare. Isaky misy no avy akagny, de mbo mampitondra sakafo kely. Zare koa mbo sahirana ... Ary, miankina amin'ny havanaré mipetraka any ambanivolo ve anaré aty antanambe sa tsia? Eny, miankina aminjare agny zaho fa sengy mahalagna tonga ny fagnampiana.*



Agricultural land provides a clear example of how accessibility issues can hamper migrants' abilities to use a potential resource. One migrant, whose home village can only be reached on foot after a day's travel involving many river crossings, steep hills, and a sometimes slippery dirt path, explained how distance and difficult access influenced her decision to use irrigated rice land that she had inherited from her parents:

We have rice land there [near the rural home village] and we should have already grown rice there ... the work I might be able to do, but it's the way to transport it to us [in the city that is difficult]. I would really love to have my own rice here, and then use it for our food. But it's really difficult to get the rice here ... The rice land is really far, really out in the countryside. The rice might be productive, but when the rice is ready to be harvested, I wouldn't know how to get it here, I wouldn't be able to bring it here.<sup>34</sup>

Although migrants may have strong ties to these more inaccessible villages, actually making use of the rural resources located there may be impractical.

### **6.5.2 Norms of reciprocity: giving to receive**

In northeastern Madagascar there are strong ideals of mutual aid (*fihavanana*) particularly amongst kin, as well as good community relations (*fiaramonina*) amongst larger groups of unrelated individuals (Babity 2010; Cole 2001; Keller 2005). These norms of behavior influence the interactions between urban and rural people, including migrants and the people living in their villages of origin. Speaking of the same phenomenon in Zambia, Cliggett explains:

... If a migrant wants to maintain his good standing with his family and community in the village, he must somehow maintain his connection to rural origins. Face-to-face exchange accomplishes this demonstration of loyalty – both in the form of gift exchange, which reinforces mutual recognition, but also the gift of physical presence and personal time (2005:40-41).

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Migrant 1433AE, 18 July 2012. The original Malagasy transcript: Misy taninay akagny de tokony efa toroka ny asa amin'ny lay izy nefa... Raha ohatra iasako izy de mety ho vitako ihany, fa fomba fahatongavako aninay... Lay tegna tiako lay vary mihitsy tonga aminay, tonga aty, de ataonay sakafo ohatra. Nefa izy, sarotra be mihitsy ny mahatonga ny vary aty ... Lavitra be toerana iasana, ambanivolo be ... Mety ho vokatra lay vary ... Fa raha vao masaka vary igny, de tsy haiko fomba fanaovana ananjy, tsy tongako aty.

If migrants want to access rural resources and use them as part of livelihood strategies, they must to some degree remain an active member of the rural community where these resources are located and engage in norms of reciprocity with the people still living there.

The results from this study also highlight the importance of following norms of reciprocity for migrants. Take for example exchanges in which migrants give or receive money, food, and materials with other people. Table 6.4 showed that migrants who *receive* food and material gifts often were given these by rural people in the Vavatenina District; this was less so for “reverse remittances” or loans of money. The table also shows that when migrants *give* money, food or materials to others, or *contribute* money or materials towards an event, around one-third of these exchanges are with people in their place of origin. The importance of following norms of reciprocity may also explain why social and giving exchange behaviors were the aspects of rural linkage strength most often selected for inclusion in models to predict livelihood resources and outcomes by stepwise regressions.

The importance of following norms of reciprocity for migrants’ abilities to access and use resources is most evident in cases where migrants have broken these norms and paid the consequences in restricted resource access. Rural people may usurp resources for themselves during the migrant’s absence if they do not think that the migrant merits access. Several elderly migrants in the study had lived for a long time in the city and discussed this as a real or potential danger. For example, one couple in the study tried to access inherited rice land without success after a long period of neglecting their rural ties. The husband had previously held a steady job as a civil servant, and the family had been able to buy a cement house in a nice neighborhood of the city. Their fortunes took a sudden turn for the worse when the husband lost his job due to privatization. By the time I met the couple, their cement house in a coveted neighborhood had

fallen into disrepair and their household showed signs of food insecurity. During the livelihoods assessment I found out that both husband and wife had inherited rice lands from their parents. Yet upon further investigation, they revealed that while they had full rights to these parcels of land, or a share of the rice grown on it, they rarely were able to access either. During a particularly lean time in the study, the husband out of desperation paid for a *taxi brousse* ticket to claim his due of rice in person, perhaps hoping that his presence would guilt his siblings into sharing with him. He was wrong, and returned home empty handed. While the situation was difficult for them to discuss, I sensed that they were only recently showing an interest in their rural resources to make up for a change in their urban incomes, and had not put much effort into maintaining their rural linkages until recently.

Norms of reciprocity require investments of time, effort, and money on the part of migrants. Some of the financial impacts of migrants' social linkage behaviors are summarized in Table 6.13.

Table 6.13 Financial impacts of social linkage behavior

Social Activity	Examples	Financial impacts (- negative, + positive)
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cellphone conversation or message</li> <li>Verbal messages via intermediary</li> </ul>	- Cellphone and airtime costs
Attend migrant association events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings</li> <li>Annual <i>Bonne Année</i> gatherings</li> <li>Fundraisers to support development projects in the place of origin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yearly membership dues and tickets to attend events</li> <li>- Fundraising to assist fellow association members or do development projects in rural place of origin</li> <li>+ Receive financial assistance from fellow association members (medical or funeral costs)</li> </ul>
Short-term rural visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Host rural visitors at migrant's home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional food and utility costs during visit duration</li> <li>- Help pay for visitor's return transportation</li> <li>- Help visitor buy gifts to bring back to rural family</li> <li>+ Visitor may bring gifts of food and materials (<i>voandalana</i>) in addition to provisions (<i>vatsy</i>)</li> </ul>
Rural household members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural kin or other people who live in one's home on a longterm basis (e.g. students, elderly)</li> </ul>	- Additional food, utility, and incidental costs for extra household member (school supplies, medicines, clothing, etc) unless support sent from rural area
Visit rural family and friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return to the rural region of origin to socialize with family and friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cost of return transportation</li> <li>- Cost of gifts for rural family members</li> <li>+ Often receive gifts (rice, seasonal produce, smallstock) upon departure from rural people</li> </ul>
Attend rural festivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return to the rural region of origin to attend a "joyous" event, e.g. independence day, Christmas, New Years, Jerijery Festival, baptism, 1<sup>st</sup> communion, engagement, marriage, etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cost of return transportation</li> <li>+ Often receive gifts (rice, seasonal produce, smallstock) upon departure from rural people</li> </ul>
Attend rural funerals/burials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return to the rural region of origin to attend events after a death, most often the family wake followed by burial</li> <li>Attend wake for a fellow migrant in the city before transport</li> <li>Accompany body during transport from city to village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cost of return transportation</li> <li>- Customary funeral monetary gift (<i>fidranomaso</i>)</li> <li>- Contribution to funeral costs if deceased is a family member</li> </ul>
Attend rural ancestral rituals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Return to the rural region of origin to attend ancestral rituals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cost of return transportation</li> <li>- Customary monetary gift (<i>soronafo</i>)</li> <li>+ Portion of meat in exchange for monetary gift</li> </ul>

Detailing these financial costs of engaging in social linkage behaviors reminds us that norms of reciprocity have the potential to eat into migrants' financial resources. This is not to deny that migrants who engage in the different social linkage behaviors listed in Table 6.13 also benefit from doing so. For example, they may be given gifts of food from rural individuals when they return to the Vavatenina District, and migrants who are active members of migrant associations can receive support if they or a family member fall ill or die. It would be hard to measure the very real benefits that migrants receive from staying in touch with rural family and friends. But the financial costs of returning to the home village, hosting rural visitors, being an active member of migrant associations, and even just communicating with rural people by phone, may influence the relationship between migrants' rural linkages and urban livelihoods. Some migrants who do not have the financial resources or desire to fully live up to norms of reciprocity may find themselves lacking access to rural resources. Other migrants who do follow these norms may find that it requires investments in money as well as time and effort, which may dampen the potential positive effects of strong rural linkages on their wellbeing.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

In this study I examined rural linkages and urban livelihoods of migrants in northeastern Madagascar. I conclude that rural resources were not centrally important to most migrants, and that migrants with strong ties to rural areas tended to have access to more material and financial capital but did not necessarily have access to more human and social capital or experience greater overall wellbeing.

Some of the disparity between my conclusions and studies elsewhere may be due to differences in sampling, location, and analysis. Other studies tend to focus on poor neighborhoods of cities, whereas I sampled from economically diverse neighborhoods and thus

included more middle and upper class people. Madagascar, though politically tied to eastern and southern Africa, may nevertheless be structurally different from mainland countries because it is an island and has both African and Asian cultural influences. This study includes more types of linkages and livelihood resources than others, and systematically and quantitatively investigated the relationship between them.

Yet if these factors alone cannot alone explain the differences in my conclusions and those of other researchers, what does? My study evaluated the impact of linkages on livelihoods in the present moment, and it may very well be the case that the real impact of strong rural linkages is seen later in migrants' lives. Perhaps, as others have argued, maintaining linkages should be viewed more as a long-term investment (Cliggett 2003) or a long-term coping mechanism for environmental and economic uncertainty (Greiner 2010). My study and others like it have framed the continued importance of rural ties as a rational economic choice. As I have argued elsewhere (Chapter 2), perhaps we would better understand linkages as being primarily driven by symbolic ideals and norms, expanding the concept of "cultures of migration" (Cohen 2004; Cohen and Sirkeci 2011; Hahn and Klute 2007) to explain why migrants are driven to maintain linkages to home.

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CHAPTER 7

THE ROLE OF RURAL CASH CROPS IN URBAN MIGRANT LIVELIHOODS:  
A CASE STUDY OF THE 2011 CLOVE HARVEST IN NORTHEASTERN  
MADAGASCAR<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Tilghman, Laura M. To be submitted to *Culture, Agriculture, Food, and Environment*.

**Abstract**

Scholars have argued that ties to rural areas have become increasingly important for urban Africans, who live in cities characterized by high un- or under-employment and few official support or safety nets. I use the 2011 clove harvest as a lens through which to explore in greater detail when and how rural resources affect urban livelihood strategies and outcomes in northeastern Madagascar, focusing on migrants who currently reside in the city of Tamatave and have origins in the rural Vavatenina District. Many of these migrants claimed to have access to clove trees, a common export crop grown in their place of origin, the rural Vavatenina District. I show that in 2011 the yield and price for cloves (*Syzygium aromaticum*) was unusually high, but migrants experienced differential success in benefiting from this commodity boom. I explain these findings by discussing the importance of continuous investments in social relationships with rural kin for migrants.

## 7.1 Introduction

Many scholars argue that rural linkages have become an essential component of African urban livelihood strategies in the contemporary era (Potts 2010; Tacoli 2002). Africans who live in today's cities face economic uncertainty due to high rates of under- and unemployment, and cannot rely on support or assistance from the government or other entities. In response, many urban Africans have fortified their links to rural areas as strategy to weather uncertainty and reduce vulnerability now and in the future

One way that rural linkages factor into urban livelihood strategies is creating a safety net by maintaining an avenue for return migration in old age or economic duress. Cliggett (2003, 2005), studying this phenomenon in Zambia, explores the motivations behind the common practice of urban migrants remitting material gifts that are too small and infrequent to provide any substantial or regular support to rural family members, but whose value is nevertheless a substantial drain on meager urban incomes. She argues that,

A migrant who struggles for security in town benefits from 'gift-remitting' to his family at home. In effect, he invests in social relations which may offer security in the future when he may decide to return to the village – a kind of 'retirement portfolio' in an African context ... Rather than offerings of support for daily life, gift-remittances represent a gesture of recognition that will keep pathways for return to the village open, and allow a returned migrant to take up residence and farming alongside his kin. Without maintaining even this symbolic relationship with the village, a migrant risks losing his option to return, should life in town become undesirable. (2005:44-45).

Cliggett's findings echo those of Ferguson (1999), who studied de-urbanization and return migration of retired miners in Zambia after the fall of copper prices there in the 1980s. Both argue that return migration, and the use of rural areas as a safety net for urban migrants, cannot be assumed. Rather, relationships with rural people must be continuously cultivated and

regenerated over time in order for the potential of return migration to act as a safety net to be realized.

Many studies have documented how urban migrants use rural linkages in the short-term to reduce expenses by receiving food or monetary gifts (“reverse remittances”) from rural family members, and to augment incomes by taking part in rural income-generating or agricultural activities (Bah 2006; Frayne 2005; Greiner 2010; Gugler 1991; Lesetedi 2003; Owuor 2010). Many of these studies document high rates of ownership of rural resources (e.g. land, housing, and livestock) by people living in cities as proof of the strength of rural-urban linkages in Africa. The assumption, implied but not stated outright, is that migrants who own rural resources can use them now or in the future as part of their livelihood strategies; however, few scholars measure whether or not migrants who claim ownership of rural resources are actually able to realize the potential of these resources. In this article, I will argue that as with return migration, the use of rural resources to reduce urban expenditures or increase income cannot be assumed and depends upon the social relationships between city and village residents.

This article presents findings from 18 months of ethnographic research on rural-urban linkages in northeastern Madagascar. I will focus on the clove harvest at the end of 2011, a spectacular moment in which high yields and prices created a market boom for this agricultural commodity. Many urban migrants claimed to have access to cloves from inheriting, planting, or buying trees, but not all of these individuals were successful in actually accessing the clove crop or the income generated from its sale during the 2011 season. Exploring the winners and losers in this rural commodity boom reveals the importance of investing in social relationships with rural family and friends for urban migrants hoping to cash in on its unexpected abundance and value.

## **7.2 From the Moluccas to Madagascar: How an Indonesian spice became central to the Malagasy economy**

The clove tree (*Syzygium aromaticum*, *jirofo* in Malagasy from the French *girofle*) is an aromatic evergreen in the myrtle family (CTHT 2013). It originates from five small islands in Indonesia: Ternate, Tidore, Moti, Makian, and Bacan (Donkin 2003). These islands form part of an archipelago named the Moluccas (or alternatively the Maluku Islands). The clove spice is the unopened flower bud from the tree, picked just before it ripens and then dried in the sun.

The international trade and consumption of cloves has a long history beginning over 2000 years ago, and some believe it is the earliest traded spice (Brierley 1994). The spice from wild trees was processed by local islanders and sold to traders, who then passed it through a chain of middlemen before it was consumed in far flung kingdoms in China, India, Egypt, and Rome. By the 700s, cloves had reached Europe and were valued for uses in food, perfume, and medicine. The spice was so valuable that Europeans were motivated to find a sea route to the Spice Islands, as the Moluccas were known, so that they would no longer depend on overland Arab traders. Ferdinand Magellan's first and ill-fated circumnavigation of the globe (1519-1522) was an attempt to find a westerly route to the Spice Islands for Spain (Bergreen 2003). By the 1500s, the Portuguese established a trade monopoly, only to be replaced by the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*) a century later (Brierly 1994:18).

Due to Madagascar's strategic location in the Indian Ocean, it played an important role in trade between Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and beyond, as a stopping off point for ships to refuel on fresh water and food as well as take shelter from storms or enemy ships (Larson 2000; Randrianja and Ellis 2009). It is likely that some of these ships carried dried cloves on their journey from the Moluccas east to Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Portuguese navigators

who landed in Madagascar in 1506 found piles of dried cloves on the beach, although they could find no other trace of clove trees or spice after 3 more months of exploration (Ranoarisoa 2012).

Clove seedlings began to be smuggled out of the Moluccas as other countries sought to break the Dutch spice monopoly by cultivating trees in other tropical areas. It was not until the late 1700s that people actually attempted to grow cloves in Madagascar. At the time, the main island of Madagascar was made up of independent kingdoms and chiefdoms who supplied slaves, food, and other goods to the French colonies of Isle de France and Ile Bourbon (present day Mauritius and La Réunion, respectively) (Larson 2000). The small island of Ile Sainte Marie (located just 8 kilometers to the east of the main island of Madagascar) was under French control at the time. Ranoarisoa (2012) documents at least four different occasions in which cloves were introduced to Ile Sainte Marie by French companies or enterprising individuals, who began to export dried clove buds on small scale in 1845.

The clove sector in Madagascar changed fundamentally under French colonial rule (1896-1960), and in a little over 60 years the few nascent plantations on Sainte Marie developed into a major component of the entire country's economy. The first military governor under French colonial power, General Gallieni, instated taxes to finance the colony's activities and "instil a new type of social and personal discipline" (Randrianja and Ellis 2009:159) on Malagasy people. However, because the vast majority of the population at that time were rural subsistence farmers only marginally involved in the cash economy, many Malagasy were forced to pay taxes in kind with labor. Men between the age of 16 and 60 were required to work for the state for a specified period of time, which could be as much as three months per year.

One of the ways in which labor was put to use was in clove, vanilla, and coffee<sup>36</sup> plantations owned by French citizens or companies (Demangel 2011; Ranoarisoa 2012). As Randrianja and Ellis (2009) explain, of the 900,000 hectares of land given to settlers at the beginning of the colonial era, 550,000 hectares were given to just six French companies, who invested little in their concessions and mainly used them to inflate their share-price on the Paris stock exchange. The remaining 350,000 hectares were distributed amongst 2000 individuals, often settlers from nearby Réunion, as citizens in the metropole were discouraged by Madagascar's bad reputation and distance. These French settlers were often poor and lacked the capital to invest in machinery or other farm inputs, but nevertheless had the advantage of unpaid labor. Malagasy laborers on these colonial clove plantations smuggled clove seedlings and began cultivating trees themselves on a smaller scale in their villages. While these Malagasy-owned plantations were small on their own, put together they soon dwarfed the amount of French-owned land devoted to the same crop. For example, in 1918, colonial European clove plantations covered 228 hectares, while Malagasy owned plantations totaled 1220 hectares (Ranoarisoa 2012:9). Plantations of both types became a dominant feature of the landscape in Ile Sainte Marie, Soanierana Ivongo, Fenoarivo Atsinanana, Mananara, Maroantsetra, and Vavatenina, areas that now make up the present-day Analanjirofo Region, whose name translates literally as "Clove Forest."

Since independence in 1960, clove production and exportation has continued to grow (see Figure 7.1) and the commodity is now central to the economy of Madagascar as a whole. Madagascar's clove exports increased from just 3,688 tons in 1957 to annual averages near 10,000 tons at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Demangel 2011).

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<sup>36</sup> Coffee was the predominant cash crop south of this area, near Vatomandry and Mahanoro, explained in depth by Cole (2001).



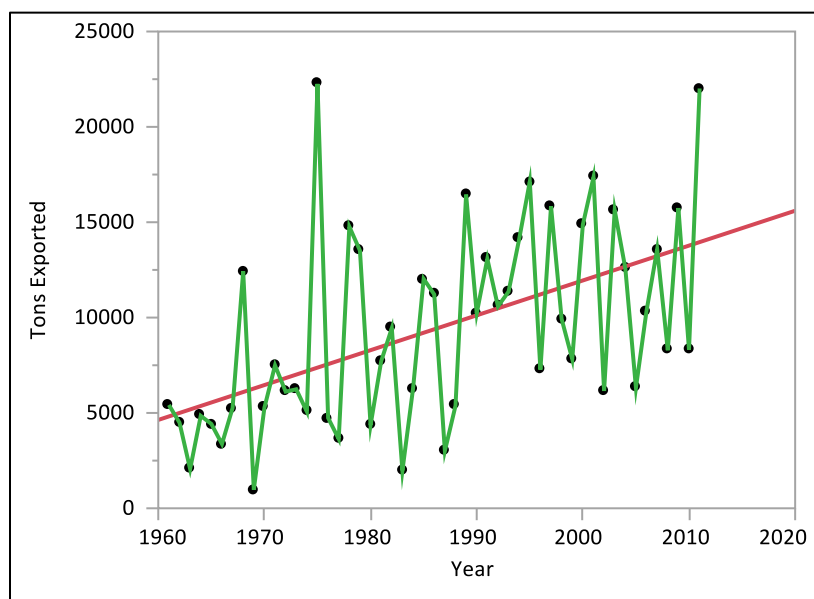


Figure 7.1 Madagascar clove exports, 1961-2011 (FAOSTAT 2014)

As Figure 7.1 illustrates, Madagascar's clove crop can vary quite drastically from year to year, either in terms of quantity produced and exported. This also leads to annual variations in revenue generated by the clove trade in Madagascar. Regarding the latter, cloves were in the top five export commodities in the early 1990s, second to coffee from 1996-1998, first from 1999-2001, second to vanilla from 2002-2008, and again the first from 2009-2011 (FAO-STAT 2014).

The variability in production and revenue is due to a variety of factors, including:

- 1) Natural fluctuations in yield, with production peaks every 3-4 years for individual trees;
- 2) Fluctuating prices for cloves on the world market, which can in turn influence how trees are cared for and/or whether aging trees are replaced with seedlings;
- 3) Over-pruning to make clove oil (*Eugenol*) via distillation if it is more profitable than harvesting clove buds in a given time period, which damages trees and diminishes yield;
- 4) Climate variability, including periodic cyclones that can easily uproot shallow-rooted clove trees, especially if trees have not been pruned to reduce height and vulnerability to wind damage. (MAEP 2011)

Currently, Madagascar is the world's top exporter of cloves and second highest producer after Indonesia (FAO-STAT 2014), supplying roughly 20% of world demand (NewsMada 2013).

Cloves are one of the top earning exports of the country, alongside other cash crops established through colonialism like vanilla and coffee, as well as more recent commodities like minerals and marine products.

### **7.3 The role of cloves in northeastern Madagascar's cultural landscape**

In northeastern Madagascar, clove trees can be owned by individuals or family groups. Tree ownership does not necessarily coincide with ownership of the land on which the clove tree is found although these often go hand in hand. Access to clove trees can be gained in several ways. The most common way in which cloves are acquired is through inheritance of a stand of clove trees which were planted by previous generations, often one's parents or grandparents. Inheritors, usually a group of siblings, may share access to the entire stand of trees together or may each individually own a subsample of trees. Some individuals in the present day acquired access to clove trees by purchasing a lot of land upon which a mature clove plantation already exists, or by planting clove seedlings on empty land that they had inherited or purchased. Sometimes clove trees are also "rented" to individuals in the community, who either pay a fee or share a portion of the clove harvest with the tree's owner.

Rather than being viewed as an introduced foreign agricultural commodity, Malagasy people see clove agriculture as a part of their own ancestral tradition. Clove buds are cultivated and processed with tools and techniques that have changed little since the 1800s (Demangel 2011), making use of simple tools (e.g. bamboo ladders, machetes, woven fiber mats and threshers), separating buds from stems by hand and drying them in the sun. Most cloves are still grown by small farmers who resell the dried buds to intermediary traders who operate in rural areas; these traders in turn resell the cloves they "collect" to a small number of exporters based

in the city of Tamatave. Even clove trees themselves are often relics from the past as many were planted by past generations in the early 1900s.

Cloves have become an important part of the cultural landscape in northeastern Madagascar. The clove harvest takes place at the end of the year and is intimately tied to year-end celebrations that take advantage of the influx of cash that it brings: the Jerijery culture and music festival in the large town of Vavatenina, the Catholic *Fête des Morts* in which deceased are remembered and their tombs cleaned, and family gatherings to celebrate *Bonne Année* (New Year) by feasting on duck, turkey, or goose and offering cash gifts to parents and elderly family members out of respect. Cloves are also the subject of important rural rituals, including the *joro voly* in which small sacrifices are made to spirits residing in clove plantations to ensure a good harvest, and the *zara sandry* in which larger sacrifices are made to the ancestors to recognize their efforts of cultivating and maintaining cloves that younger generations have inherited and benefited from.

While cloves have become embedded in the lives of people in northeastern Madagascar, they are not always viewed as having an exclusively positive role in society. A common saying *matoy jirofo, masaka lavany* (literally, “ripe cloves, ripe vanilla”) is used to describe someone who is unsociable and snobbish, implying that sudden monetary wealth gained from selling cloves and vanilla can change people for the worse. Cloves are morally ambiguous because they are a cash rather than subsistence crop, and thus are tied to the volatile export market rather than local consumption and social reproduction. Because cloves are grown to earn cash rather than to feed people, they have the potential to disrupt social relations by creating wealth disparity, jealousy, and individualism. This points to a general ambivalence of Malagasy people towards

money since their integration into the market economy under colonialism (Babity 1994:37-40; but see Bloch 1989). Many proverbs illustrate this sentiment, including:

- *Aleo very tsikalankalam-bola toy izay very tsikalankalam-pihavanagna*  
(It is better to lose money than to lose family)
  - *Tsy gny varotra gny taloha fo gny fihavanagna*  
(It is not commercialism that is the priority but family)
  - *Gny fitiavam-bola volom-bodin'gny mosavy*  
(The love of money is the tail of witchcraft)
- (Babity 1994:37)

#### **7.4 Situating the study: rural Vavatenina and urban Tamatave**

This ethnographic case study is part of a larger research project that seeks to understand rural-urban migration and linkages in northeastern Madagascar. Madagascar's estimated 4.99% urban growth rate is largely driven by rural-urban migration, and about one third of the population now lives in cities (UNPD 2014). However, these statistics should be read with caution. Understanding historical and contemporary demographic trends for Madagascar is difficult due to the lack of reliable data, a problem common to many African countries (Jerven 2013; Potts 2010), and because "migrants" have often been defined in Madagascar as people of an ethnic identity not considered native to the particular region they inhabit (e.g. Deschamps 1959). This definition relies on territorialized bounded conceptions of ethnicity that much anthropological research in the country has shown to be inaccurate (Astuti 1995; Lambek and Walsh 1997; Yount et al. 2001).

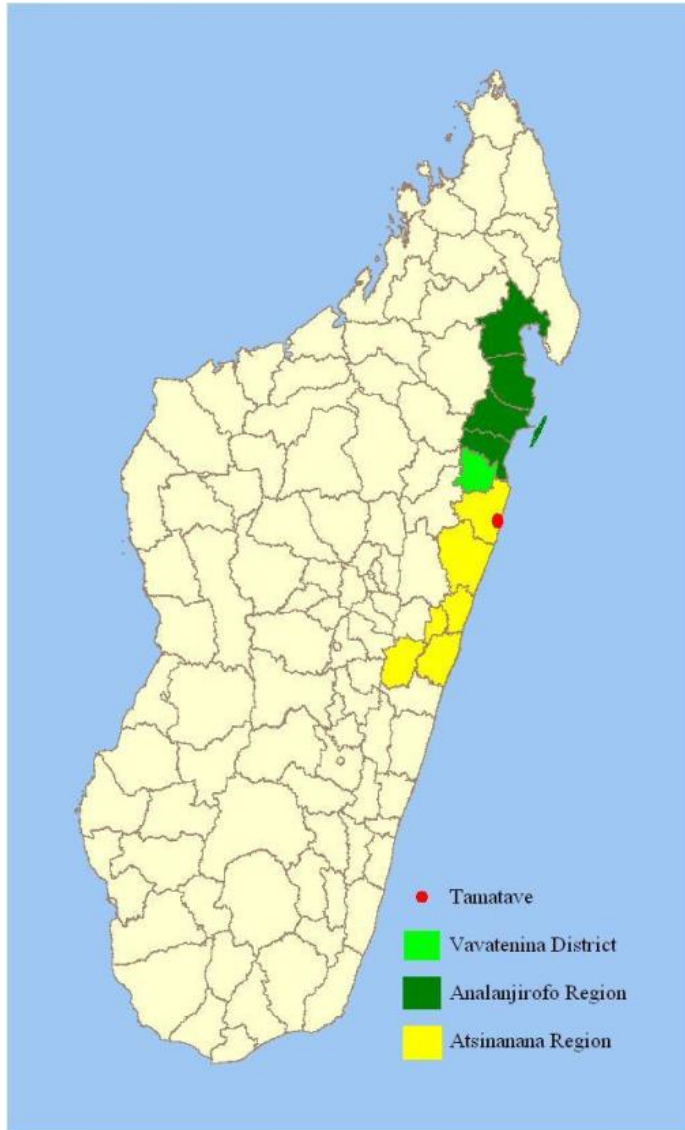


Figure 7.2 Research locations in Madagascar

The city of Tamatave (Figure 7.2) is located in the Atsinanana region of Madagascar. It is the second most populated city after the capital Antananarivo. Official government figures estimate the population of Tamatave just over 250,000 people (INSTAT n.d.), but many administrators in informal conversations with me estimated that the current figure could be much higher, approaching 1 million people. This discrepancy is likely due to the fact that many people are not registered as residents, and/or live in outlying areas that are technically outside the official municipal limits but for all intensive purposes urban in nature and part of the city. First

and second generation rural-urban migrants make up a large part of the city's population, most from the Atsinanana and Analanjirofo regions. Preparatory research for this study in 2009 showed that in some neighborhoods of the city, upwards of 80% of the residents were first-generation migrants (Tilghman 2009).

Tamatave is home to the country's largest port, through which roughly 80% of the goods imported and exported from the country are handled (World Bank 2011). Most of the 30 or so clove exporters in the country are based out of Tamatave due to its proximity to the port (Demangel 2011). Their cavernous cement warehouses are scattered throughout the city where commodities are sorted for quality and then packaged for wholesale, indistinguishable and non-descript save for the pungent odor of cloves, vanilla, or lychee fruit, depending on the season.

The Vavatenina District is located in the Analanjirofo region of Madagascar. It is composed of over 120 villages and towns of various sizes (District de Vavatenina, n.d.). A large town also named Vavatenina is the district's administrative center, and is located about 130 kilometers to the northeast of Tamatave requiring a voyage of four hours by private minivan (*taxi brousse*) costing 10,000 Malagasy Ariary (equivalent to 5 USD at the time of study). The furthest villages in the district require up to two additional days of travel on foot over narrow and mountainous footpaths. Approximately 250,000 people live throughout the district, mainly small-scale farmers as well as some civil servants and merchants (CSA-Mamilango 2010).

Approximately 97.95 square kilometers within the district were devoted to the cultivation of cloves in 2001 (MAEP 2003), representing less than 5% of the district's surface area of 3100

square kilometers.<sup>37</sup> Despite the small amount of land devoted to cloves, they play a major role in the local economy particularly in years where yield and/or market value are high.

### **7.5 Data collection and analysis**

This ethnographic case study focuses on the lives of 55 migrants who were born in the Vavatenina District and now reside in the city of Tamatave. Initially, 600 migrants were surveyed (March-May 2011) to gather baseline demographic trends for the Vavatenina-Tamatave migrant population. Then, a subsample of migrants from the survey participants were identified that lived in close proximity (to facilitate the logistics of the study) and were of diverse socio-economic and religious backgrounds. 55 of these migrants agreed to participate in 12 months of intensive and regular study (August 2011-July 2012). I studied their lives through various methods: life history interviews to understand their motivations for migrating; surveys administered twice a month to record their linkage behavior; a livelihood survey to record their economic strategies and wellbeing, including potential and realized access to clove trees; a ranking exercise to elicit their views on the value of rural linkages; and participant-observation in their daily life as well as special activities to contextualize and verify data gathered through more structured methods.

I transcribed all interviews and fieldnotes and imported them into the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA 10. I analyzed transcriptions using a grounded theory approach in which I looked for themes in narratives, focusing on repetitions, similarities and differences (Bernard and Ryan 2003, 2010:265-286). My analysis was informed from quantitative analysis of these same data, which used stepwise linear regression modeling to determine the influence of personal traits and migration dynamics on migrants' linkage behaviors and attitudes (Chapter 4).

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<sup>37</sup> Clove cultivation for the Analajirofo Region as a whole is similar, taking up about 581.7 km<sup>2</sup> or about 3% of the total surface area of 22,382 km<sup>2</sup> (MAEP 2003). Cloves are grown in other regions of Madagascar, but the Analajirofo Region is the greatest supplier.

My goal in applying different analysis techniques to the same data was both to explain statistical results based on the ethnographic context, as well as to search for processes and themes that might not have shown up as statistically significant but nevertheless important.

## 7.6 The 2011 Clove Boom

While the country is used to ebbs and flows in the clove trade, the 2011 season was a particularly good year for anyone involved, from small-scale farmers to large international exporters. In 2011, Madagascar exported 22,014 tons of cloves, generating approximately \$172.6 million dollars of revenue.<sup>38</sup> The only other time that the country's clove exports have surpassed 20,000 tons was in 1975 (see Figure 7.1).

The 2011 clove boom can be attributed to a variety of factors that were largely beyond anyone's control in the country. First, the yield of the clove harvest was exceptionally high by most people's standards, driven by favorable climatic conditions. Second, the price for which farmers could sell their cloves was also exceptionally high, due to increased worldwide demand and late harvests in other clove-producing countries. While a kilogram of cloves had sold for as little as 1,000 MGA (0.50 USD) in recent years, the price for which Malagasy producers could sell their dried cloves during the 2011-2012 season was anywhere from 9,000 to 25,000 MGA (4.5 to 12.5 USD).

The clove harvest in the Vavatenina District and elsewhere in the Analanjirofo region comes at a busy time for rural farmers. Cloves ripen at the same time as lychee (*Litchi chinensis*, or *letsy* in Malagasy), another important cash crop for the export market, and the secondary harvest of irrigated rice for the area. Farmers must decide which of these crops to invest most of their energy in, and in 2011 this was an easy choice. When I visited the Vavatenina District on

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<sup>38</sup> In 2011, the other major exports as measured by quantity were sugar and beans, with 20,215 and 18,915 tons respectively. In 2011, the other major exports as measured in total value were essential oils and vanilla, generating \$41.6 million and \$38.9 million respectively (FAO-STAT 2014).



different occasions during this time, villages buzzed with people doing clove work: picking from tree branches perched on bamboo ladders, separating buds from twigs and leaves with a quick twist of their wrist and fingers, shooing away chickens from walking over cloves as they dried in the sun, carrying fragrant bags of dried cloves on heads or shoulders to sell. Most small general stores had hand-written chalk signs advertising the daily going rate for cloves by the kilo or by the *kapoaka* (empty 354mL sweetened-condensed milk can).

Cloves were not only abundant in 2011, but also much more valuable than in recent memory, which fueled a frenzy of consumption unheard of in the area. Rural people who often struggle to generate cash through their livelihood activities all of a sudden had bundles to spend. Rural markets were bustling at all times, not just weekly market days. Festivals, dance parties (*jiro mena*), and other entertainment venues sprung up to take advantage of the disposable income. And it was not just adult men and women who had access to cash. Children who picked and dried their own share of cloves from family trees, in the wee hours before school or during weekends, were allowed to use their earnings how they wished.

Conversations in the Vavatenina District during and after the clove harvest often revolved around trading fantastic stories of other's fortunes: A woman who earned 6.4 million MGA (3200 USD) in one sale and couldn't fit all the bills in her purse. A lady who interrupted a clove buyer counting out her enormous profit by saying "*Aoka eky!*" ("Enough already!"). Men feeding beer to dogs. Clove pickers buying tinned sardines and crackers for their meals instead of cooking rice. Rural families handing out blankets like party favors to anyone who visited their home. Country bumpkins buying stereos, and televisions and then complaining that the items were broken, when in fact they had no source of electricity in their isolated village to power their new purchases. These stories are reminiscent of the "daring consumption" that Walsh (2003)

documents during a sapphire boom in the far north of the country, and indeed a few people in Vavatenina also defined the money earned through cloves as *vola mafana* (hot money) because it was earned with such little effort and thus should be spent similarly. But these stories were more urban legend than the norm. In my travels through the rural district, I observed many people using clove profits to make more sensible purchases: household goods like dishes and mattresses for daily use, tin roof sheets, wooden planks, or cement to improve their house. As one clove trader in the town of Anjahambe remarked to me, “People here are happy, and it makes me happy too. Normally life here is so hard, and people suffer. But with cloves, life has become a little easier”<sup>39</sup> (Fieldnotes, 2012-03-06).

There cannot be a boom without a bust, and the 2011 clove season was no exception. The price of cloves started higher than normal, around 5,000 MGA per kilo, as the first dried clove buds were brought to traders in late October 2011. The price of cloves increased steadily throughout the harvest season in November, and continued to rise even after most cloves had been picked and processed (dried in the sun, sorted to separate buds from less-valued stems) in December and January, peaking at around 20,000 to 25,000 MGA per kilo. A bust followed this boom when prices fell to around 15,000 MGA per kilo, leaving some small entrepreneurs and large exporters alike stranded with large quantities of cloves that were now worth less on the market than they had paid for them. Some people opted to sell at a loss or with small profit, while others decided to hold on to their stocks in the hope that the price would once again rise.

### **7.7 The role of cloves in urban migrants’ livelihood strategies**

My interest in the 2011 clove harvest is not to explore the cyclical boom-bust nature of commodity crops, but to use this phenomenon as a lens through which to explore the relationship

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<sup>39</sup> The original Malagasy transcript: *Olo amin’izao faly, ravoravo, de zaho koa faly. Normalement fiainana ambanivolo sarotra ary le olo mijaly. Fa nohon’ny jirofo, ny fiainana akatokato karaha maivamaivagna.*

between migrants' rural linkages and urban livelihoods. When I conducted a livelihood assessment with the 55 migrants involved in my study, many people listed assets that were located in their rural place of origin as part of their portfolios (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1 The role of rural linkages in migrants' material resources

<b>Material Capital Resource</b>	<b>% sample with access (all locations)</b>	<b>Average % of resource based in Vavatenina</b>
Rice land	55	91
Other agricultural land	75	91
Residential land	71	15
Houses	64	14
Clove trees	75	95
Coffee trees	33	94
Lychee trees	58	81
Zebu cattle	13	86
Poultry	45	1

Many people who have moved to the city continue to have access to agricultural land, cash crop trees, and cattle that are located in the Vavatenina District. Clove trees are one type of rural resource to which migrants continue to claim access, with 75% of the sample having access to trees and 95% of those trees located in the Vavatenina district. Overall, migrants had access to a median of 38 trees per person, with a range from as little as 4 trees to large plantations of approximately 500 trees.

When word spread about the clove boom towards the end of 2011, many migrants living in Tamatave who had ties to clove-growing regions like the Vavatenina District tried to stake their claim to a share of the valuable harvest. I visited the 55 migrants in this study every two weeks to conduct a survey, and between the months of October 2011 and January 2012 many more people than usual were not to be found at home. Neighbors or family members often simply said to me "*Lasa nisango-jirofo ê!*" (Gone picking cloves!) to explain peoples' absence. When people did return after weeks or months, I heard their stories of what they had done in

Vavatenina. I learned that migrants faced mixed success in actually accessing cloves to which they had previously claimed to have access (see Table 7.2).

Table 7.2: The Potential and Realized value of clove trees for rural-urban migrants in 2011

	Number of individuals	% of study sample (N=55)
<b>Potential Clove Resource</b>		
No access to clove trees	14	25
Access to clove trees	41	75
- inheritance	28	51
- cultivation	12	22
- purchase land/trees	7	13
<b>2011 Clove Activity</b>		
Relinquish all cloves to rural relatives	20	36
Income from clove sales	20	36
Income from clove trading	6	11
Income from rural activity during harvest	3	5

*Note: These figures only refer to clove trees located in the Vavatenina District, the rural place of origin for migrants. Some migrants may fit into multiple categories.*

Although 41 migrants (75% of the study sample) claimed to own or otherwise have some access to clove trees, only 20 of those people actually got income from selling cloves from the 2011 harvest (36% of the entire sample, and 49% of the subsample who had claimed to have access to clove trees). The 2011 clove harvest and the income from its sale were claimed in their entirety by rural relatives of 20 migrants.<sup>40</sup> In the following sections I will explore the differential success of migrants in accessing potential clove resources during the 2011 season.

### 7.7.1 A Piece of the Pie: migrants who sold cloves for profit in 2011

Selling cloves was by far the most common and the most profitable way migrants in the study earned income from rural linkages to their place of origin. (Some migrants also earned income from renting rural housing, but this was not seen as a good investment and generated little money.) A small number of very fortunate migrants earned 1 million MGA (\$500 at the

<sup>40</sup> One migrant had access to three year old trees which were too young to produce any clove buds in 2011.

time of the study) or more from the 2011 clove season. Most migrants earned more modest sums, but this money was still a welcome addition to urban incomes. Overall, there were two different livelihood strategies that migrants used to get a slice of the pie.

First, a small number of migrants had invested heavily in creating large clove plantations that saw extremely high returns in 2011. The five migrants who had adopted this livelihood strategy were all highly dependent on income from cloves, which equaled or surpassed the income they earned in the city. These people had created large clove plantations that were a combination of inherited groves augmented by trees that they had cultivated themselves. These large plantations were guaranteed to produce money no matter how yields or prices varied due to their size, but required investments to expand the number of trees, prune and weed around trees to maximize yields, and hire laborers to pick clove buds.

François was one of the migrants who depended on his large clove plantation to support him, his wife, their three teenaged children, and several additional nieces and nephews who have been sent to live with them from rural family members. He had migrated throughout the country in search of educational opportunities, first for himself during his youth and later for his own children. He had lived in Tamatave to attend highschool, and returned again in his 40s so that his children could attend private schools in the city. François and his wife ran a small *epi-bar* (general store with bar) in their neighborhood, but its shelves were often bare and its customers few. I was always mystified how this small shop managed to support such a large household and pay all private school fees for their biological and foster children. I finally understand after the 2011 clove season that the shop was just a source of petty cash, and that the household really depended on income from rural cash crops. Although François was reticent to say exactly how much he had earned, a rough estimate based on a minimum 2 kilograms dried cloves per tree

(Ranoarisoa 2012:34) sold at 15,000 MGA per kilo would have netted him approximately 15 million MGA (\$7,500 USD at the time of the study), a substantial amount even after accounting for investment and maintenance costs.

Second, a greater number of migrants did not create livelihood strategies dependent on clove income, but were still able to access this resource in 2011. Fifteen migrants maintained access to a small number of trees that were inherited from family members or that they had planted or purchased themselves, and the sale of their harvest provided supplemental income to their urban jobs. In contrast to large plantations, these migrants invested little effort or money in tree upkeep, and seemed to view any money earned from them as a pleasant but undependable bonus.

Anaïs was one of the migrants in this second group. She grew up in a small village down the road from the large town of Vavatenina. At the age of 26 she migrated to Tamatave to attend a vocational school to become a seamstress, and stayed on as she put it because she “had just gotten used to city life” (*lasa tamagna eto antanambe*). When she was 32 her father died, and she returned to her village to help her mother and 8 of her 9 siblings who still lived there. She returned to Tamatave after two years and has been there ever since. But Anaïs still maintains a very close relationship with her elderly mother and siblings, returning without fail every year to celebrate New Year with the family and visiting at other times as needed or desired. When the 2011 clove boom began, she returned to help her family harvest cloves from the family trees and was able to share in the income earned from their sale. She told me that in years past her share of the family’s clove harvest wasn’t that much, but in 2011 it provided her with a much larger sum that she decided to use to invest in a new income-generating activity to supplement the small irregular sums she got from sewing orders. She bought a refrigerator and freezer, and used them

to cool juices and yogurts and freeze popsicles out of her home, which she then resold to small food stands or walking sellers who hawk cold treats in the winding paths of the city. It was too early for her to tell if the investment was going to be profitable, but she was optimistic and energized when I last saw her at the end of the study.

### **7.7.2 A Pie in the Face? Migrants who did not receive clove income in 2011**

Of the 41 individuals who claimed to have access to clove trees in their livelihoods assessments, the rural relatives of 20 people – about half – received all the income from the 2011 clove harvest. Migrants initially described this situation in terms which deflected focus away from their own role in the situation vague terms, saying that their relatives had “received” (*nahazo*) the clove crop for that year.

When I dug a little deeper, I found that most of these 20 migrants more or less willingly “gave” (*nagnamia*) their cloves to rural relatives, as a way to support them financially. One woman explained to me that she had an agreement with her four siblings who still lived in her rural village of origin: she would let them claim exclusive access to the family land and cash crops like cloves even though she technically deserved a share because it had been passed down to them all from their deceased parents. But she was willing to give up clove income, with the understanding that her siblings would not expect her to remit money to help them finance the upkeep of the family tomb and the small regular rituals they conducted throughout the year. Most of the other migrants explained the agreement in simple moral terms, saying that they could not think of trying to claim a share of the harvest in the face of such stark economic differences between rural and urban lives. While life in the city is difficult, rural people “really suffer” (*teгна mijaly*). For the most part the livelihoods strategies of these migrants were independent of

rural income sources, as they had steady urban income from salaried work or successful businesses.

A smaller number of migrants – about five people from what I could tell – had not reached such final agreements with their rural relatives over who had legitimate claims to rural resources. These migrants still felt that they were entitled to the clove harvest, but in the 2011 season were unsuccessful in negotiating with their rural relatives to realize the potential of this resource for their own livelihood strategy. Some migrants were ashamed of being rebuffed and described the situation to me in ways that deflected attention away from family tensions when they returned to Tamatave after an unsuccessful visit home during the clove season. “Our clove trees didn’t have much yield this year,” some said, a remote possibility given the record-breaking harvest. “I arrived too late and they had already picked everything,” was another excuse, although in reality their rural relatives still could have given them a share of the profits if they felt the migrant’s claims were legitimate.

Jacques, an older man in his 70s, was more open with me about his unsuccessful attempts to claim the clove harvest in 2011. He grew up in a settlement too small to be included in the official list of villages in the district, and had moved a lot throughout his life for school and work. He eventually found himself employed as a civil servant in Tamatave, which allowed him to purchase a cement house in a government-subsidized development in a nice section of the city. But his life took a drastic change for the worse when the sector where he worked was privatized in the early 2000s. He went from being the family’s primary breadwinner to its *persona non grata*, unable to find a job and reliant on the small amount of money his wife earned selling dried goods at the market. When the 2011 clove boom began, he traveled back to his home village and a grove of clove trees that he had inherited from his father. (This in itself was remarkable, as



only a few months earlier he had told me how afraid he was to return to his village because of the danger of witchcraft or poisoning.) He returned soon after empty-handed, the rural relatives still living in his home village having claimed his inherited clove trees for themselves and unwilling to cede it to him now that he had suddenly decided to take an interest in it after all these years. When I left him at the end of the study, he was hatching a plan to plant clove seedlings on another plot of land to avoid conflict with his rural family members while still managing to incorporate a rural source of income into his urban livelihood strategy.

## **7.8 Discussion**

The stories of François and Anaïs show that migrants have different levels of dependence on income from a rural cash crop like cloves. Despite their different strategies, both share a common orientation to their rural place of origin, maintaining close social ties with their rural family members while living in the city. In this way they are typical of the 20 migrants who earned income from selling cloves in 2011. Of all the 55 migrants involved in the study, this group of 20 migrants included many of the people who made frequent return visits to socialize or take part in important rural events. They also included most of the migrants in the study who fostered rural people, either children of relatives who came to attend school or related and unrelated teenagers who received free room and board while working in migrant businesses.

Jacques, like Anaïs, had an urban livelihood strategy that was not dependent on cloves, but still counted a small number of clove trees as part of the rural resources that he owned. The main factor separating Jacques from Anaïs in actually realizing the potential of this resource was their different orientations to their place of origin and rural family members. Jacques and the other “unsuccessful” migrants in the 2011 clove boom all had weak social linkages with their home villages, in contrast to Anaïs and other “successful” migrants whose bonds were much

stronger. Jacques and others like him rarely visited their rural relatives or contributed financially or materially toward events there. As a result, when they attempted to stake a claim on the clove harvest, either traveling there during the season or communicating their desire with rural relatives by phone or letter, they were rejected and their relatives “received” all the profits from the 2011 clove boom.

One factor to explain the differential success of migrants in the 2011 clove boom is their means of access to resources like cloves. Of the 41 migrants who listed cloves as one of their rural resources, about two-thirds of these had access to inherited trees that were passed down to them from a parent or other family member (Table 7.2). Inheritance always involves some negotiation, particularly if several people have been willed a resource to share amongst themselves. But more generally, access of property from all avenues – including purchase – is often very flexible and subject to negotiation in Madagascar. Malagasy property rights are a combination of customary and formal laws (Widman 2014), and even someone with a formal title or deed of ownership can be subject to competing claims or legal fights. In such a context the support of others is crucial, and explains in part why migrants who invest in maintaining social relationships with their rural relatives were more successful in having their rights to clove trees recognized.

One might wonder why migrants like Jacques continue to claim ownership of rural resources that they are unlikely to be able to use. The same could be asked of migrants who willingly give their clove harvest to rural relatives as a moral duty or financial arrangement. I would argue that we should view urban migrants’ claims of rural material resources like land, housing, and livestock as indicative of their desires and claims about what is the “norm” for migrant linkage behavior. By listing ownership of a resource like a clove tree, they are

expressing their wish that they will be able to use this resource now or in some undefined future time period. The fact that stable middleclass migrants who give clove harvests to rural relatives continue to describe trees as their property might mean that they would like to leave open the possibility of accessing that resource in the future. Whether or not they have maintained strong social ties to rural relatives will determine in part their success in doing so.

## 7.9 Conclusion

This article investigates the role of that rural linkages play in African urban migrants' livelihood strategies through the lens of the 2011 clove harvest in northeastern Madagascar. Many studies elsewhere in Africa have suggested that urban people maintain ties to rural areas so that they can access resources there to subsidize their residence in the city now, or to provide a safety net if they decide to return to the village in the future. The stories of the migrants in this study demonstrate both that maintaining rural linkages with one's family and hometown can be economically beneficial for migrants, and that migrants must make regular investments in social relationships with rural kin to access these benefits. Like a clove tree, a rural linkage must be cultivated and cared for to stay alive and healthy. A clove tree thrives on good soil, water, sunshine, calm winds, and modest pruning and weeding; rural linkages thrive on regular communication and social interactions between people.

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## CHAPTER 8

### CONCLUSION

#### 8.1 Review of Research Questions and Answers

*You take delight not in a city's seven or seventy wonders,  
but in the answer it gives to a question of yours.*  
Italo Calvino – Invisible Cities (1972:44)

In this dissertation I have sought answers to two overarching questions in the city of Tamatave, Madagascar, and in the stories told by its migrant residents with origins in the rural Vavatenina District.

The first question asked in this dissertation is what factors lead to variation in migrants' linkages to their rural places of origin? This demands an answer to a more basic question, which is how we as researchers interested in this phenomenon can measure linkages in a way so as to allow for comparison and analysis. While many scholars since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century have argued that rural-urban linkages are particularly strong in Africa, do we define a migrant with “strong” or “weak” linkages to place of origin?

In Chapter 2, I used stepwise regressions to answer this first question quantitatively. To measure linkage “strength,” I looked at how migrant linkages were expressed as behaviors and attitudes. I measured migrant linkage behaviors in a structured interview conducted every two weeks for 12 months, which could then be summed to create total frequencies for behaviors including social activities and exchanges of money and food. I measured migrant linkage attitudes through a ranking exercise in which they were asked to rank the importance of 16 different types of linkages on a 3-point likert scale, which could then be summed to create a single

attitude score. I created two best-fit models that showed which combination of variables combined best accounted for the variation in migrants' linkage behaviors and attitudes. The resulting best fit model predicting migrant attitudes showed that migrants who had one parent or a spouse with origins outside the rural Vavatenina District viewed linkages as less important. The best fit model predicting migrant behaviors showed that migrants who had a spouse with origins outside the Vavatenina District, or were male, Protestant, or lived in a marginal house, had done fewer linkage activities over a 12 month period.

In Chapter 3 I explored in greater depth the relationship between religion and migrant linkages. While Christianity is not new to Madagascar, in the past few decades churches have split into two competing camps largely defined by how they view death and the afterlife, and related rural customs such as ancestral rituals and burial in family tombs. Catholic church leaders see themselves as enlightened traditionalists for whom these rural customs are easily incorporated into a good Christian life. In sharp contrast, leaders from historical, Millenarian, and Pentecostal Protestant churches view these rural customs as morally ambiguous and possibly Satanic. Church members show some agency in the face of these tensions, and some Protestant migrants in this study did not follow church prohibitions to the letter and continued participating in rural funerals and ancestral rituals. Yet there are limits to migrant agency, since Protestants overall engaged in fewer linkage behaviors of almost all kinds – social activities and material exchanges. I argue that the weaker linkages to place of origin for Protestant migrants is explained by family frictions due to conversion, and their smaller and more urban social networks.

The second question asked in this dissertation is how do migrants' rural-urban linkages affect their livelihood resources and outcomes? Many scholars have argued that residents of African cities maintain strong linkages to villages for their current wellbeing and future security,

and that these linkages have become increasingly vital in the contemporary era of economic stagnation. As in the previous research question, this begs researchers to clearly define what a “strong” linkage is. The question also benefits from a holistic understanding of the resources people need to survive and thrive beyond just money, and the factors that make utilizing those resources easier or more difficult.

In Chapter 4 I answered this second research question quantitatively. I began by analyzing to what degree migrants’ resource stocks were based in the rural area. I showed that certain types of rural resources like land and cash crop trees are commonly owned by migrants, and that migrants also receive assistance for rural people for important but non-urgent needs. I also showed that many migrants received reverse remittances of food from the rural area, but that these food exchanges are not likely key for survival but expressions of social relationships. I then used regression modeling to examine whether migrants who had “stronger” linkages to their place of origin (as exhibited by higher frequencies of social, giving exchange, and receiving exchange behaviors and higher ranking scores of attitudes) would have more livelihood resources (financial, material, social, and human capital) and/or have greater wellbeing outcomes (food security). I found that migrants who had engaged in social and giving-exchange behaviors were more likely to have higher financial and material capital, but that it was difficult to predict migrants’ social and human capital or food security based on their linkage strength.

In Chapter 5 I answered the second research question in a qualitative case study of the 2011 clove harvest. This time encompassed a commodity boom when clove yields and prices were unusually high. While many migrants listed clove trees as a resource to which they had shared access or owned individually, I found that not all were not able to realize the potential of this resource. Some migrants had strong social relationships with their rural kin which facilitated



access to shared family tree groves in the 2011 harvest, while migrants who had let their rural relationships wane were unsuccessful in negotiating access in 2011.

## **8.2 Significance of the Research Findings**

Anthropologists have played key roles in broadening our understanding of migration from an individual response to macro-economic forces that uproot people and bind them to a new location, to a dynamic process that continues throughout the lifecourse and links home and destination, migrant and non-migrant (Brettell 2008; Prato and Pardo 2013; Watkins 2002). The ties that migrants continue to maintain with their place of origin long after moving away are of great interest to scholars studying both international and internal migration (c.f. Glick Schiller et al 1995; Potts 2010; Vertovec 2009). Whether examining trans-national or trans-local linkages, questions remain as to what drives this phenomenon, how it is exhibited around the world, and how it influences livelihood strategies and outcomes (Trager 2005).

A central tension of research on migrant linkages to home is whether researchers give economic or socio-cultural factors primacy. More often than not, the former have come to dominate explanations for why migrants maintain trans-local and trans-national linkages throughout the world. When Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Blanc-Szanton introduced the concept of transmigration in the early 1990s, they argued that it was related to changes wrought by globalization, including difficulties for immigrants to assimilate into host societies due to racism, and easier and cheaper transportation and communication across national borders (1995). Vertovec echoes these arguments, devoting many pages to the influence of cheap telephone calls alone (2009). In the rural-urban linkage literature, scholars also have sought to explain the persistence of migrants' ties to home, which in contemporary Africa is often

attributed to economic crises following neoliberal restructuring policies that have made rural and urban areas more dependent upon one another for security (Potts 1997; Tacoli 2002).

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued for the importance of culture in shaping the ways migrants behave and think regarding their place of origin. Here I draw inspiration from recent work in anthropology and geography around the concept of “cultures of migration” (Cohen and Sirkeci 2011; Hahn and Klute 2007). This concept argues that while migrants are embedded in particular social, political, and economic contexts, their decision to migrate elsewhere – or to stay put – is made within a cultural framework of values, norms, and expectations that makes certain decisions more likely.

Just as the decision to migrate or not in a given context is culturally framed, so too is the decision to maintain or break linkages to the place of origin after moving away. I argue that the primary causes of migrant linkages to place of origin are cultural models that influence how people think and behave in reaction to conditions of particular places and times. In northeastern Madagascar and elsewhere in the country, mutually dependent relationships between ancestors and descendants, and between communities of living kin and non-relatives, create strong norms for reciprocal behaviors and attitudes; these norms apply equally to migrants, who are expected to continue to fulfill their obligations: to honor and respect one’s ancestors by following taboos, participating in ancestral rituals, and being buried with them at death in the ancestral tomb; and to honor and respect one’s kin and community members by communicating and socializing, and sharing resources with them for individual and community needs.

I also caution against viewing these cultural models as static or inflexible. While it creates a framework through which people view and interpret the world and decide how to react to different circumstances, people may not always have the means to live up to expectations of

what they should do, or may be operating with multiple and sometimes conflicting frameworks. The variability in migrant linkage behavior due to gender, socio-economic status, religious background, and family origins demonstrates this last point. For example, women are not expected to be as independent from their parents as men, nor do they have the opportunity of communicating directly with ancestors. Migrants who ascribe to Protestant faiths – a competing cultural norm, if you will – are held to expectations of behaviors and attitudes that conflict with the “traditional” worldview in which ancestors are central.

The importance of a cultural framework of values, norms, and expectations not only shapes the variability of linkage behaviors and attitudes, but how these relate to livelihood strategies. Many studies have argued that migrants continue to have ties to rural places as a way to diversify livelihood strategies by providing access to rural resources now or in the future (Bryceson 2002; Potts 1997; Tacoli 2002). Most of these studies have focused on rural livestock and land, and to lesser degree reverse remittances of food from rural people, as important for urban migrants’ wellbeing (c.f. Frayne 2005, 2010; Greiner 2010; Kruger 1998; Lesetedi 2003; Owuor 2004, 2010; Smit 1998; Potts 2010). I argue that we cannot assume migrants are always able to realize the potential of rural resources to which they claim access, and that cultural norms and expectations are a key factor. For example, the Malagasy cultural norm of reciprocity between kin must be followed if urban migrants hope to access resources, and may dampen the potential financial benefit of multi-local livelihood strategy if resources gained must be funneled back into social relations.

While I have argued that cultural norms and values are the primary drivers of rural-urban linkage behaviors and attitudes, I also recognize that these are inextricably linked to economic factors. This is demonstrated by the weaker ties of socio-economically marginal migrants, and

also *in part* the weaker ties of migrants with a spouse or parent from a different area of the country. It is also demonstrated by the importance of transaction costs for discouraging some migrants to take full advantage of potential rural resources as part of their livelihood strategies.

Another major contribution of this dissertation is methodological. There are many forms that migrants' linkages to home may take: participation in social activities, material exchanges flowing to or from the place of origin, and perceptions or attitudes. Thus far a great deal of advances have been made in analyzing quantitatively one type of migrant linkage, the money they send home that are labeled remittances (Cohen 2005). I would argue that this is because remittances are seen as easily measured, which has facilitated development of a range of testable hypotheses. In this dissertation I have attempted to show that *all* aspects of migrant linkages can be measured, and that this will in turn facilitate more systematic analysis of how they vary and how they affect livelihoods. Rather than relying on recall or guesswork, I visited 55 migrants every two weeks for 12 months to capture a year's worth of linkage behaviors, and also asked migrants in structured interviews to rank the importance of variety of linkage types and thereby capture their linkage attitudes. The same quantitative approaches could then be applied to linkages as a whole as has been seen in studies of remittances. While I am not advocating that all studies of migrant linkages take this approach, I do think that it offers important insights.

This dissertation has also generated information that will be useful beyond academia. Madagascar is often presented as a country of extremes, with high poverty and inequality rates (UNDP 2010), and rates of species endemism and biodiversity loss that have made it a conservation priority (Myers et al 2000; Scales 2014). Yet both development and conservation interventions in this country are most often directed at rural populations, who are seen to make up a bulk of the population, to have worse living conditions (Essama-Nssah 1997), and pose the

greatest direct threat to natural resources (Marcus and Kull 1999). The existence of urban growth and rural-urban linkages point to the shortcomings of such narrowly focused efforts, since a greater number of Malagasy are beginning to live at least part of their lives in cities and rural peoples are rarely as insular and isolated as imagined by policy makers. The research findings thus provide a practical reminder that interventions in villages may have (unintended) impact on cities, and vice versa. Concrete information about how city and village, migrant and non-migrant, are linked will be a powerful antidote to current development and conservation policies in Madagascar that often treat these areas as unconnected.

### **8.3 Limitations of the Study**

A limitation of this dissertation is the way in which linkage behaviors were measured and analyzed. Since I wanted to perform quantitative analysis, I focused more on linkages that could be observed, rather than the more ephemeral aspects of linkages between migrants and their places of origin. Although I collected information about linkage behaviors beyond just frequencies of activities, it was difficult to find a meaningful way to process this detailed data in a way that would have made it amenable to analysis. For every type of behavior I recorded all the people involved, but found it difficult to code their relationships in a way that would be useful for analysis, particularly when numerous people were involved. For every material exchange between a migrant and someone in the rural place of origin, I tried to record amounts and descriptions of what was exchanged, but it was often difficult for migrants to estimate food amounts and some people were hesitant to disclose sums of money. In the end I relied on simple frequencies of behaviors to indicate the strength of migrant linkage to place of origin, rather than additional details that could have provided more information on the intensity of these behaviors. Beyond the loss of detail, this is also a limitation in that I may be grouping behaviors that some scholars would view as incommensurable. In calculating behavior frequency, a remittance of one basket of

processed foods sent from a migrant to the rural area is treated as equivalent to a migrant attending a funeral in the rural area. Obviously these behaviors involve different investments in time and money, and are motivated by somewhat different needs and views. While I felt justified in counting these for analysis purposes as equivalent because they both represent an expression of migrants' linkages to the place of origin, there are some who may disagree with this approach.

#### **8.4 Future Directions**

There are many factors that I did not analyze thoroughly that merit additional attention because of the role that they likely have in shaping if and how migrants maintain ties to their home villages. Towards the end of the study I became aware of the fact that several villages in the Vavatenina District continue to be physically and socially divided between descendents of nobles (*zazavao*) and descendents of slaves (*zazakoro*). In some villages in the Ambohibe and Anjahambe communes, this is because over 9 generations ago Merina noblemen fleeing conflict or seeking economic opportunity outside of the central highlands settled there with slaves; in other areas of the district it is not as clear where the slave and noble division originates. Regardless, it became clear that slave or noble ancestry shaped who migrated out of these villages and why, and also their motivations for breaking or maintaining ties to these villages. While I suspect that many slave descendents find life in a cosmopolitan city liberating and are less motivated to maintain ties to the rural place where their status will remain marginal, further research on this sensitive subject is needed.

Technological advances, particularly in the spread of internet access and cellphone coverage, will likely change the ways in which migrants can express their linkages to their place of origin. Nearly every migrant in the study had a cellphone, and more areas of the Vavatenina District were becoming covered by cellular service, which allowed for easier long-distance

communication than letters or messages through intermediaries. Cellphone banking was just coming into greater use in Madagascar during my research, but for the most part the migrants in the study continued to exchange cash with someone themselves. As these technologies develop and become more accessible throughout urban and rural areas of developing countries like Madagascar, it will be interesting to see how they affect migrant linkages to place of origin.

This study focused on first-generation migrants originating from Vavatenina and currently residing in Tamatave. Studies that compare the lives of these migrants to others – migrants with origins in Vavatenina who moved to other Malagasy cities or internationally, or who are second and third generation – could help to tease out if and how these different contexts lead to differences in linkages to place of origin and the migration experience more generally.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH METHODS: GOALS, PARTICIPANTS, AND QUESTIONS

This appendix serves to provide greater detail of the various research methodologies used in the dissertation. The major goals and participants for each methodology are explained, and then data elicitation methods are presented translated to English and in the original Malagasy (Betsimisaraka dialect).

### **1. Survey of Vavatenina-Tamatave Migrants (March-May 2011)**

**Goal:** To gather baseline data about the Vavatenina-Tamatave migrant population, regarding personal characteristics, migration histories of all places they have lived and why they migrated, and linkages to the rural place of origin.

**Participants:** Migrants who were born and lived at least part of their childhood in the Vavatenina District, and currently reside in the city of Tamatave. (N=635)

#### **Questions:**

##### I. Migration History

1. Where were you born? What year were you born? Where did you grow up?  
*Takaiza anao teraka? Teraka tamy taona firy anao? Taiza nahatombo anao?*
2. Where did you live after that? From when to when?  
*Takaiza anao mipetraka tafaran'izegny? Tamin'ny oviagna hatramy oviagna?*
3. What was the special reason that you moved there? And what did you do there? (Repeat)  
*Ino antony manokana nifindra nandeha tagny? Ary, ino raha nataonao takagny? (Avereno...)*

##### II. Family

1. Are you single, married, or separated? Where does your spouse come from? Where does your spouse live now? (If dead): Where is your spouse buried?  
*Mitovo sa manambady sa nisara-bady anao? Avy aiza vadinao? Akaiza izy mipetraka izao? (Raha efa maty): Aiza izy nalevina?*
2. Do you have children? How many children do you have? Where were your children born? Where do your children live now?  
*Manan-janaka anao? Firy isan-janakanao? Takaiza zanakanao teraka? Akaiza zare mipetraka izao?*
3. Where does your mom come from? Where does your mom live now? (If dead): Where is she buried?  
*Avy aiza mamanao? Akaiza mipetraka mamanao izao? (Raha efa maty): Akaiza izy nalevina?*
4. Where does your dad come from? Where does your mom live now? (If dead): Where is he buried?  
*Avy aiza papanao? Akaiza mipetraka papanao izao? (Raha efa maty): Akaiza izy nalevina?*
5. How many siblings do you have? Where do they all live?  
*Firy mianadahy anareo? Aiza aby zare mipetraka izao?*
6. Where is the majority of your family?  
*Aiza maromaro fianakavianao?*

##### III. Household

1. Do you rent or own your house?  
*Magnôfa sa tompon-trano anao?*
2. How many people live in this house? What is their relationship to you?  
*Firy anareo trano iraiky? Inonao aby? (fifandraisana)*

3. Who amongst these people have lived in the Vavatenina district?

*Izovy amin-jare jiaby efa nipetraka tagny faritra Vavatenina?*

#### IV. Personal Information

1. What is the highest level of school that you attended?

*Kilasy faha firy anao niala nianatra?*

2. What is your primary occupation? What secondary economic activities do you do?

(If married): What is your spouse's primary occupation? What secondary economic activities does your spouse do?

*Inona ny asa fivelomanao? Inona koa asa fanampiny ataonao?*

*(Raha manambady): Inona ny asan'ny vadinao? Inona koa asa fanampiny ataon'ny vadinao?*

3. What is your religion? (Literally: Where do you pray?)

*Akaiza anao mivavaka?*

4. Do you want to return to live in Vavatenina in the future? Why?

*Manana heritreritra ve anao iverina ipetraka a' Vavatenina? Ino antony?*

5. Where would you like to be buried?

*Akaiza tianao atoriana raha tapitra ny fandalovana eto an-tany? Ino antony?*

6. Are you a member of any migrant home town associations?

*Anaty fikambanana zanakampielezana ve anao?*

7. We would like to know about the relationship between you and Vavatenina during last year (2010). Last year did you...

a. visit family in Vavatenina?

b. attend a *tsaboraha* [ancestral ceremony] in Vavatenina?

c. attend a wedding in Vavatenina?

d. attend a burial or funeral in Vavatenina?

e. attend a circumcision ceremony in Vavatenina?

f. send money or gifts to Vavatenina?

g. make a phonecall or send a letter to Vavatenina?

h. receive any gifts from Vavatenina?

i. host guests from Vavatenina?

j. take care of paperwork in Vavatenina?

k. buy land in Vavatenina?

l. do any business activities in Vavatenina?

*Zao indreky zegny izahay agnotany anao raha nataonao tamin'ny taona lasa (2010) izay misy ifandraisana amin'ny maha ava Vavatenina anao. Tamin'ny taona lasa ve anao...*

*a. namangy fianakaviana ta Vavatenina?*

*b. namonjy tsaboraha ta Vavatenina?*

*c. namonjy fanambadiana ta Vavatenina?*

*d. namonjy fahavoazana ta Vavatenina?*

*e. namonjy fanapahan-jaza ta Vavatenina?*

*f. nandefa vola na ankerankera ta Vavatenina?*

*g. nitelephone na nandefa taratasy ta Vavatenina?*

*h. nahazo voandalana avy ta Vavatenina?*

*i. nandray vahiny avy Vavatenina?*

*j. nikarakara taratasy ta Vavatenina?*

*k. nividy tany ta Vavatenina?*

*l. nagnano vadibaroetra na biznesy ta Vavatenina?*

## 2. Semi-Structured Interviews about Migration, Livelihoods, Religion, and Linkages (July 2011)

**Goal:** I selected a smaller number of migrants who had participated in the large city-wide survey for more intensive study. As part of this selection process I conducted semi-structured interviews to gather additional details to follow up on the information already collected through the survey. To make these interviews run smoothly and ensure some uniformity, potential questions were translated from English to Malagasy by myself and my primary research assistant. We would then choose amongst these preformulated questions to conduct the interview, adding new questions or making modifications as needed.

**Participants:** Focal sample of 55 migrants who lived in neighboring areas of the city

### Questions:

#### Rural-urban migration

1. Why did you leave Vavatenina?

*Ino antony tegna nialanao ta Vavatenina?*

2. Was it your choice to move, or was it dependent on someone or something else?

*Safidinao manokana ve nifindra mipetraka teto Tamatave, sa nisy antony hafa (oh: asa, nanarabady, safidin'ny ray aman-dreny, sns.)?*

3. Why were you born in one location but grew up in another location?

*Inona nahatonganao tombo ta \_\_\_\_\_ nefa ianao teraka ta \_\_\_\_\_?*

4. Why did you choose to come first to Tamatave? Why did you choose Tamatave?

*Inona nahatonganao nisafidy an'i Tamatave fa tsy toerankafa?*

5. Why have you stayed (since first arriving) in Tamatave?

*Inona no tegna antony nitazona anao hipetraka eto Tamatave? (obligation)*

6. What are the negative / positive aspects of living in a city like Tamatave?

*Araka ny heritreritranao, ino ny lafiratsiny / ny lafitsarany mipetraka antanambe karaha ataony Tamatave?*

7. What are negative & positive aspects of living in the countryside, like where you grew up?

*Araka ny heritreritranao, ino lafiratsiny / lafitsarany mipetraka ambanivolo karaha \_\_\_\_\_?*

8. How is Tamatave different than your expectations? How is it the same?

*Nifanaraka tamin'ny nieritreretanao azy tamin'ny vohalohany ve ny fahitanao an'i Tamatave rehefa tonga teto ianao?*

9. How did you meet your spouse?

*Ahoana no nitraofanao tamin'ny vadinao?*

#### Livelihood Activities

10. How did you find your current job?

*Ahoana ny fomba nahitanao io asanao izao io?*

11. How long have you worked at your current job?

*Nanomboka oviana ianao nanao io asanao io?*

12. What jobs did you do before then?

*Inona ny asa nataonao talohan'io?*

13. Do you now, or have you in the past, done any additional activities to earn money or support yourself and/or your family?

*Misy asa ve ataonao na nataonao taloha hofampidirambola fanampiny na koa zavatra manampy eo amin'ny fivelomana (oh: mamboly, miompy, sns.)?*

14. If you need help (re: food, money, other), who do you contact first? (Neighbor in T/ve, friends in T/ve, other migrants in T/ve, family in place of origin, etc.)

*Kô misy raha ilanao vonjy na fanampiana ara-bola na ara-tsakafo, izovy olo itodihanao vohalohany? (Mpifanolo-bodirindrina, namana akaiky, olona fiaviandraiky, havana eto Tamatave, havana any ambanivolo, sns)*

15. Who brings money to the household budget? Who is the primary income earner? Who else helps regarding money for this household?

*Iza avy ireo olona mampidi-bola amin'ity tokan-trano ity? Iza ny tompon-antoka amin'ny fampidiram-bola ato amin'ity tokan-trano ity? Iza koa ny olona manampy anareo ara-bola amin'ny fivelomana?*

16. How do linkages with your place of origin make it easier to get by living in the city of Tamatave? How do they make it more difficult?

*Amin'ny lafiny inona ny fifandraisanao amin'ny tany fiavianao no miteraka tombotsoa na fahamevanana eo amin'ny fiainanao? Inona ny maha-sarotra azy?*

17. How does your job/economic status help you maintain ties with place of origin?

*Amin'ny lafiny ino ny asanao / fari-piainanao manampy anao ifandray bebekoka amin'ny tanindrazana fiavianao?*

18. How does your job/economic status hinder your ties with place of origin?

*Amin'ny lafiny ino ny asanao/fari-piainanao manakana anao ifandray amin'ny tanindrazana fiavianao?*

### Religion

19. How long have you been \_\_\_\_\_?

*Nanomboko oviana anao nivavaka tamin'ny \_\_\_\_\_?*

20. Did you attend a different kind of church (denomination) before? Why did you change?

*Efa nisy fiangonana hafa ve nivavahanao talohany \_\_\_\_\_? Inona ny antony nagnovanao finoana?*

21. How often do you go to church services?

*Impiry mandeha aleglizy anao anatiny taon-draiky?*

22. What impact does your religion have on your relationship with your place of origin?

*Misy akony amin'ny fifandraisanao amin'ny tany fiavianao ve ny finoanao?*

### Rural-Urban Linkages

23. Where do you consider to be your ancestral homeland? Why?

*Aiza no heverinao ho tena tanindrazanao? Nahoana?*

24. With whom do you primarily maintain relationships from your place of origin? (Parents, siblings, children, aunts/uncles, cousins, grandparents, friends, co-workers, associations, etc)

*Iza ny olona tena ifandraisanao bebe kokoa any an-tanindrazanao? Inona ny antony?*

25. Since first arriving in Tamatave, how has your relationship with place of origin changed?

*Nanomboka anao tonga teto Tamatave, inona ny fihovana nisy tamin'ny fifandraisanao amin'ny tanindrazana fiavianao?*

26. Are there any relationships or ties to rural family or friends that have changed or broken since your arrival in Tamatave? Why? Do you have plans to re-establish them in the future?

*Nisy fihovana ve na fahatapahana ny fifandraisana amin'ny ny tanindrazana fiavianao noho ny fipetrahanao teto Tamatave? Inona ny antony? Manampikasana ve ianao hamerina indray ny fifandraisana amin'ny tanindrazana niaviana amin'ny manaraka?*

27. If for some reason your family no longer lived in your place of origin, would you still maintain a relationship with the place where you come from?

*Raha misy zegny ny fifindramonina ataony havanao izay mipetraka ta Vavatenina taloha, mety mampiova ny fifandraisanao amin'ny tanindrazanao ve izany sa tsia?*

28. What are all the reasons a migrant might go back to Vavatenina? (List) Which are most obligatory to do?

*Ino daholo ny antony mety mampandeha na misariky olo mipetraka Tamatave andalo na ierigny a Vavatenina? Ary ino ilay farany matomboko?*

29. What are all the things that a migrant might receive from Vavatenina? (List)

*Ino daholo zegny karazan-draha mety alefanolo avy ambanivolo (Vavatenina) amin'ny olo mipetraka an-tanambe (Tamatave)?*

30. What are all the things that a migrant might send back to Vavatenina? (List)

*Ino daholo zegny karazan-draha mety alefanolo avy Tamatave amin'ny olo mipetraka ambanivolo (Vavatenina)?*

### 3. Linkage Behavior Survey (August 2011 – July 2012)

**Goal:** To record an accurate record of migrants' linkage behavior over 12 months. This survey was administered a total of 22 times over one year, approximately twice a month. Note that the survey is worded very openly so that it does not refer exclusively to behaviors linking migrants to the Vavatenina District. This is because in pre-testing we found that questions specific to linkages with Vavatenina District caused anxiety for migrants who were ashamed to have weak ties to their place of origin. Collecting data on all extra-household linkages also contextualized linkages to the rural place of origin within a larger system of social and material relationships with people from any location.

**Participants:** Focal sample of 55 migrants who lived in neighboring areas of the city

#### Questions:

##### 1. Travel outside Tamatave (*Fivoahana ivelany Tamatave*)

Have you traveled outside Tamatave since we last saw each other?

*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianao nivoaka tivelan'i Tamatave faraky zahay nandalo?*

a) Where? What was your primary purpose? What other things did you do while away? For how many days were you away?

*Taiza? Ino ny anton-dianao tagny? Nisy raha hafa koa ve nataonao tagny tamin'ny fandalaovanao? Naharitry firy andro anao tagny?*

b) (If attended ancestral event): What sort of event? Who held the event? Did you participate financially? How much?

*(Raha namonjy raharaha): Makasika ino? Izôvy ny tompon-draharaha? Nandray anjara ara-bola? Azo fantarina ve hoatrinona?*

c) Did you bring gifts with you? For whom and what/how much?

*Nitondra voandalana ho an'ny olona takagny ve ianao? Ino raha nindosinao tamin-jaré? Nisy firy? Tamin-jôvy daholo?*

d) Did you bring back gifts to Tamatave? For whom and what/how much? Were they given to you or did you buy them yourself?

*Nitondra voandalana ve ianao nody? Inona daholo? Nisy firy? Nividinao ve sa nomen-olo anao? Avy tamin-jôvy?*

##### 2. Invitations or Summons (*Fagnasana na Toro*)

Since our last meeting, have you received an invitation or an ancestral-custom summons?

*Nisy fagnasana ve na toro hazonao faraky zahay nandalo?*

a) What kind of event? Who is hosting the event? Where? When?

*- Makasika ino? Izôvy ny tompon-draharaha? Aiza? Oviana?*

b) (If already past): Did you go? Why? Did you participate monetarily? How much if so?

*(Raha efa vita): Voavonjinao ve sa tsia? Ino ny antony? Nandray anjara ara-bola? Azo fantarina ve hoatrinona?*

c) (If future): Will you go? Why? Will you participate monetarily? How much if so?

*(Raha mbola ho avy): Ho any ve ianao? Ino ny antony? Handray anjara ara-bola? Azo fantarina ve hoatrinona?*

##### 3. Guests (*Vahiny*)

Since our last meeting, have you hosted any visitors?

*Nandray vahiny ve ianao tato amin'nareo faraky zahay nandalo?*



a) Who (relationship)? Where are they from? How long did they stay? What was the purpose of their trip?

*Inonaré? Olo mipetraka akaiza? Firy andro nidôkoanjaré taminaré? Ino ny anton-dia-jaré?*

#### 4. Migrant Associations (Fikambanana Zanak-ampielezana)

Since our last meeting, have you attended an event of a migrant association?

*Namonjy raharaham-pikambanana zanakampihelozana ve ianao faraky zahay nandalo?*

a) Association for which place of origin? What was the event?

*Ino ny anaran'ny fikambanana? (Raha tsy mahay anarana, anaran'ny tany fihaviana) Ino ny raha nikarakarain'i fikambananaré?*

#### 5. Communication (Serasera / Fifandraisana)

Since our last meeting, have you ...

... talked on the phone? Where was the person you talked to?

... sent a letter? To where and who?

... received a letter? From where and who?

... sent a verbal message? To where and who?

... received a verbal message? From where and who?

*Faraky zahay nandalo...*

*... nifampiresaka tan-telephone ve ianao? (Raha eny) Olo mipetraka aiza daholo?*

*... nisy taratasy nalefanao ve? (Raha eny) Nalefa taiza daholo?*

*... nisy taratasy voarainao ve? Avy taiza daholo?*

*... nisy hafatra am-bava nalefanao ve? Nalefa taiza daholo?*

*... nisy hafatra am-bava voarainao ve? Avy taiza daholo?*

#### 6. Money exchanges (Vola)

Since our last meeting, have you...

... given someone money, either someone living here or outside Tamatave?

... loaned someone money, either someone living here or outside Tamatave?

... participated monetarily in an event here or outside Tamatave?

... received money from someone living here or outside Tamatave?

... borrowed money from someone living here or outside Tamatave?

*Faraky zahay nandalo, efa nisy fotoagnany ve ianao ...*

*... nampindram-bola olo, na mipetraka aketo na mipetraka ivelan'i Tamatavy?*

*... nagnamia vola olo, na mipetraka aketo na mipetraka ivelan'i Tamatavy?*

*... nandray anjara ara-bola tamin-draharaha ara-drazana na ara-pinoana na ara-piaramonina teto Tamatavy na tantany hafa?*

*... nisambo-bola tamin'olo mipetraka aketo na ivelan'i Tamatavy?*

*... nahazo vola avy tamin'olo mipetraka aketo na ivelan'i Tamatavy?*

a) Who? Where do they live? How much money? Why?

*Inonaré? Akaiza izy mipetraka? Ino ny antony? Azo fantarina ve hoatrinona?*

#### 7. Food Exchanges (Raha manjary hoanigny)

Since our last meeting, have you ...

... given food to someone living here or outside Tamatave?

... received food from someone living here or outside Tamatave?

Faraky zahay nandalo, efa nisy fotoagnany ve ianao ...

... nahazo raha manjary hoanigny avy tamin'olo mipetraka aketo na ivelan'i Tamatavy?

... nagnamia raha manjary hoanigny olo mipetraka aketo na ivelan'i Tamatavy?

a) What? From/To whom (relationship)? Where does he/she live? How much? Will you eat or sell it?

*Ino na ino daholo? Misy firy? Namiagna izovy / avy taminjovy? Akaiza izy mipetraka?*

#### 8. Material Goods Exchanges (Fitaovagna na Kojakoja)

Since our last meeting, have you ...

... given material goods to someone living here or outside Tamatave?

... received material goods from someone living here or outside Tamatave?

*Faraky zahay nandalo, efa nisy fotoagnany ve ianao ...*

*... nagnamia fitaovagna na kojakoja olo mipetraka aketo na ivelan'i Tamatavy?*

*... nahazo fitaovagna na kojakoja avy tamin'olo mipetraka aketo na ivelan'i Tamatavy?*

a) What? From/To whom (relationship)? Where does he/she live? How much? Will you eat or sell it?

*Ino na ino daholo? Misy firy? Namiagna izovy / avy taminjovy? Akaiza izy mipetraka?*

#### 9. Other (Hafa)

Since our last meeting, have you done anything related to Vavatenina that was not included in our questions?

*Tamin'ny indroy herinandro lasana igny, nisy raha hafa koa ve nataonao ka misy ifandraisana amin'ny Vavatenina nefa tsy voanontaninay?*

#### 4. Linkage Attitude Interview (July 2012)

**Goal:** To evaluate migrants' linkage attitudes, I conducted a structured interview at the end of the 12 months that asked migrants to rate the importance of variance types of linkage activities. To aid with these questions I used small cards displaying a drawing labeled in Malagasy to represent each linkage type. Unlike the linkage behavior survey, this interview focused exclusively on linkages to the Vavatenina District.

**Participants:** Focal sample of 55 migrants who lived in neighboring areas of the city

#### Questions:

##### Ranking Exercise

Preamble: There are many forms of linkages between migrants and their home villages and rural families, and we have discussed these for the past 12 months. Here are some cards, and each one has one kind of linkage.

*Maro ny endri-pifandraisana nifampiresahantsika izay nandritran'ny 12 volana. Ka miangavy anareo izaho iniany mbo handinidiniky miaraka aminahy mahakasika ny lanjanireo fifandraisana ireo.*

(For each 16 linkage type) For you in general, is this very important, sometimes important, or not important? Why?

*Aminao manokana, manan-danja sa tsy manan-danja sa antonintoniny \_\_\_\_? Ino ny antony?*

1. Communication  
*Serasera*
2. Migrant association activities  
*Fikambanana Zanak-ampielezana*
3. Relationships with fellow migrants  
*Mifandray amin'ny mpiray-fihaviagna*
4. Hosting guests at your house when they visit the city  
*Mandray vahiny na fianakaviana avy ambanivolo*
5. Helping rural people financially  
*Manampy zareo ambanivolo ara-bola*
6. Helping rural people with food or materials  
*Manampy zareo ambanivolo ara-tsakafo*
7. Receiving financial help from rural people  
*Mahazo vola avy ambanivolo*
8. Receiving food or goods from rural people  
*Mahazo sakafo na vokatra avy ambanivolo*
9. Going to the rural area to visit family  
*Mandeha mamangy fianakaviana ambanivolo*
10. Attending rural ancestral rituals or ancestor-related events  
*Mamonjy raharaha ara-drazana ambanivolo*
11. Attending rural festive events  
*Mamonjy fety ambanivolo*
12. Attending rural funerals  
*Mamonjy fahavoazana ambanivolo*
13. Participating (financially or materially) in rural events

*Mandray anjara amin'ny raha atao ambanivolo*

14. Growing rice in the rural area

*Mamboly vary ambanivolo*

15. Having a rural source of income

*Manana fidiram-bola avy ambanivolo*

16. Having land or a house in the rural area

*Manana tany na trano ambanivolo*

#### Additional Questions

17. Of all these 16 types of linkages, which one is the most...

... important

... necessary

... unnecessary (can be left/skipped)

... difficult

... pleasing

*Raha ampitahainy izy karazam-pifandraisana jiaby ireto, misafidiana izay aminao farany ...*

... manan-danja

... ilaina

... azo ariana na avela

... sarotra

... mahafaly

18. Does your rural family depend on you in the city? Do you in the city depend on rural family?

*Araka ny heritreritranao, miankina aminaré mipetraka antanambe ve ny havanaré any ambanivolo sa tsia? Ary, miankina amin'ny havanaré mipetraka any ambanivolo ve anaré aty antanambe sa tsia?*

19. What are advantages and disadvantages to having relatives living in the rural area? What are the disadvantages to having relatives who live in the rural area?

*Ino lafitsarany managna havagna mipetraka ambanivolo? Ino ny lafiratsiny managna havagna mipetraka ambanivolo?*

Cards used in the ranking exercise for linkage attitudes (shown smaller than actual size):



## 5. Livelihood Assessment (December 2011 and March 2012)

**Goal:** To evaluate migrants' resources and wellbeing, I used a livelihoods survey that had been validated for rural southwestern Madagascar (Tucker et al. 2010; Tucker 2012) which I then modified to fit an urban location and account for differences in ethnicity and language dialect. I administered the livelihoods survey twice during the 12 months, coinciding with times considered locally to be either periods of abundance (December 2011) or hardship (March 2012).

**Participants:** Focal sample of 55 migrants who lived in neighboring areas of the city

### Questions:

#### Financial Capital

1. How much did your household spend during the previous month on the following items: rice, food to accompany rice, laundry (soap or laundress), cooking fuel, electricity, water, rent, salaries for employees (domestic help, work employees, guards), transportation within Tamatave, phone communication, leisure activities?

*Tamin'ny volagna Okotobra, hoatrino vola laninare tamin'ny: vary, rô (volam-bazary), sasalamba, kitaigny na taimbakona na charbon na gaz, jiro, rano, hôfan-trano, karaman'ny mpiasa, transport, credit telephone, fialamboly?*

2. How much did you spend for the school year starting October 2011 on entry fees, monthly tuition, scholarly materials (notebooks, pens, uniforms, bags, etc.)?

*Hoatrino ny droitnjaza jiaby nifenaré tamin'ny fidirana take igny? Hoatrino ecolage zaza jiaby isambolana? Hoatrino vola laninaré tamin'ny fitaovam-pianarana nampidirana mpianatra tamin'ny fidirana take igny (cahier, blouse, cartable, stylo, sns)?*

3. How much did you spend during the previous three months on the following categories: healthcare, house maintenance and repair, household goods, agricultural expenses, religious expenses (church dues or events), ancestral expenses (rituals, tomb construction or maintenance), other?

*Tamin'ny telo volagna lasagna, hoatrino vola laninare tamin'ny: fitsaboana, fikarakaragna tragno, fitaovan-tokantragno, asa tany, adidy am-piangonana, adidy ara-drazagna, hafa?*

4. For all individuals in the household who generate income: What are all the income-generating activities done in the previous month? How much money was earned last month from all of these together? What is the timing that money is received (regular salary, piece work, etc.)?

*Ino daholo raha nampidi-bola tamin'ny tokantranonare tamin'ny volagna lasa? Hoatrino vola nampidirinao tamin'ny volagna lasa? Isaky ino mandray vola?*

5. Are there any other sources of money for the household for the previous month? (e.g. pension, scholarship, assistance from person, rent, income from sale of agricultural goods)

*Ino koa karazan-draha hafa mampidi-bola amin'ny tokantranonaré akato? (Ohatra: pension, bourse, fagnampiagna avy amin'olo, hofan-trano, volam-bokatra, vola hofan-tany, anjara volam-bokatra, anjara vola hofan-tany, sns.*

6. Do you have any savings? With whom or what institution? (institution, informal moneyholder or friend/family, personal/at home) How much?

*Anaré ve mikajy (mitahiry) vola? Aiza daholo ny toerana amitrahanao volanao? Amin'olo sa amin'OTIV sa amin' banque? Hoatrino volanaré mikajy any \_\_\_?*

7. Do you have any outstanding/active loans? Do you owe any money? Where did you borrow (institution (bank or microcredit), informal moneylender, relative or friend)? How much did you borrow? (amount =capital)? What are the terms of the loan (time; interest rate and fees)?  
*Anaré ve anagnan-olo na anagnany banky vola (trosa) mbola tokony hifegny? Aminjovy na aiza? Hoatrino vola nindraminaré? Mitombo ve ny vola ifenaré amin'ny fagniregnagna ananjy sa tsy miova? Hoatrino?*

### Material Capital

1. Do you rent, own, or have another arrangement for your house? How many rooms are there in this house? What is your water source?

*Magnôfa sa tompon-trano anaré akato sa olo mipetraka foagna? Firy efi-trano? Aiza anaré mala-drano: Pompy tany andakoro, Pompy Be, sa Rano JIRAMA andragno?*

2. Do you own the following items? (chair, table, bed/mattress, shelves for clothes, mosquito net, living room set, sewing machine, refrigerator, freezer, iron, telephone, radio, television, computer, dvd/cd player, computer, photo camera, video camera, bicycle, motorscooter, car/truck, generator) Of all the items you said that you owned, are there any that are broken? Do you own any household items that are located outside of Tamatave? What? Where?

*Misy liste entagna ireto andeha vakinay aminao ka anjaranao mivolagna raha misy aminaré trano iraiiky akato (sezy, latabatra, fandriagna sy matela, armoire, lay (moustiquaire), sezy salon, lamasina (machine à coudre), frigidaire, congelateur, fera, telephone, radio, tele, lecteur VCD, ordinateur, appareil photo, camera, bisikilety, moto, voiture, camion, groupe électrogène). Mety misy amin'ireo fitaovana anananaré ireo ve maratra na tsy mandeha intsony? Misy fitaovana hafa ve anananaré ivelany Tamatave?*

3. Do you own any of the following animals? If yes, how many and where are they located? (cattle, pig, goat, sheep, chicken, goose, duck, turkey, pigeon)

*Manana \_\_\_\_\_ ve ianaré trano iraiiky? (Aomby, lambo, bengy, ondry, akoho, gisa, drakidraky, dokitra, kolokoloka, pigeon). Firy? Aiza?*

4. Do you own any land by yourself? Does your spouse own any land by him/herself? Do you have shared access to any land with other people? Does your spouse have access to any land with other people? For any plot of land: Where is it located? What is its principle use? If agricultural, who works the land and who receives the harvest? What is the size of this plot? How was it acquired?

*Manana tany ve ianaré roa mivady? Manana tany ve ianao aninao manôkagna? Manana tany ve ianao itambaranao aminolonkafa? Manana tany ve vadinao itambarany amin'olonkafa? Aiza? Tanin'ino? (Tanimbary, Tanimboly, Tany atao hipetrahana, Hafa) Raha tanimbary na tanimboly: Izovy miasa ananjy? Izovy tompon'ny vokatra? Firy metre carré na firy hectare? Tany nividina, sa lova, sa nindramina, sa nangatahina tany fanjakana?*

5. Do you own any houses? Where? What material is it made of? How was it acquired? What is its principle use?

*Manana trano antoerankafa ve ianaré trano iraiiky? Aiza? Tragno gasy sa tragno fafagna sa tragno vato? Mihofa sa fitobiagna sa ipetrahan-olo? Nividinaré sa namboaranaré sa lovanaré?*

6. Do you have sole or shared access to any cash crop trees (lychee, coffee, clove)? How many trees? Where are they located? How were they acquired? Who receives the harvest?

*Manana \_\_\_\_\_ ve ianaré trano iraiiky (iana / ianaré roa mivady)? (foto-jirofo, foto-detsy, foto-kafe) Aiza daholo? Firy? Nividina sa lovana sa nofaina? Izovy tompon'ny vokatra?*

### Social Capital

In life, we often need different kinds of help from people. There are some kinds of help that we will read to you, and you should answer how easily it would be to get this kind of help: impossible, difficult, or easy. For your answer, this should be help from a person outside your household who offers the help. For you, would it be impossible, difficult, or easy to find someone outside your household to:

*Amin'ny fiainana, matetika isika mila karazam-panampiana isankarazany. Misy karazam-panampiana vitsivisty ireto ho vakinay aminaré, de anjaranao mamaly na tsy possible, na sarotra, na mora ny ahitagna olo afaka azahoana izegny fanampiana izegny. Marihina eto fa olo tsy trano iraiky aminao no ilana vonjy eto. Aminao tsy possible, sa sarotra, sa mora ny itadiavanao olo afaka...*

1. ... Watch over your house if you had something to do for a couple hours? *Miambin-trano na mitan-jaza izikoa misy raha atao tapakandro?*
2. ... Watch over your house if you had to leave for a week? *Mikarakara trano izikoa misy tany imboagna herinandro araiky?*
3. ... Help feed you for one day? *Magnampy anao izikoa tsisy hanigny hoanigny andro araiky?*
4. ... Help feed you for one week? *Magnampy anao izikoa tsisy hanigny hoanigny herinandro araiky?*
5. ... Lend you money (25,000 FMG)? *Mampindrana anao vola 25 mille francs?*
6. ... Lend you money (150,000 FMG)? *Mampindrana anao vola 150 mille francs?*
7. ... Lend you a small item (washtub, machete, broom)? *Mampindrana anao raha madinidinika, hoatra: cuvette, angady, famaky?*
8. ... Lend you or let you use a large item (electric generator, car, zebu)? *Mampindrana anao raha matombotomboko, hoatra: tomobily, tragno, aomby?*
9. ... Care for you if you were sick? *Mikarakara anao izikoa anao marary?*
10. ... Care for you one day in the future when you will be old? *Mikarakara anao indraiky andro anao ko antitra?*
11. ... Discuss with you when you pass through a difficult period in life? *Ifampiresahanao raha sendra mandalo fotoan-tsarotra?*
12. ... Encourage and support you when you have a problem? *Mankahery anao izikoa misy olagna?*

### Human Capital

1. What are the names of all individuals that currently live in this household, including people who are temporarily living in the city, non-relatives, and other peoples' children that you are raising or helping attend school? For each person, note male or female; age; relationship to migrant; status (student, looking for work, working, housewife, retired, other); education (current level or final level)

*Maniry izegny izahay mbo te-hahafantatra, izovy daholo anaré miara-mipetraka? Anaty izegny na ny olo tsy havanaré fô na olo miasa na olo mandalo na olo tariminaré. Voalohany, izovy anarana anaré jiaby miara-mipetraka? Isaky olo: Lelahy sa viavy izy? Firy taona izy? Inonao izy? Mianatra izy, sa miasa, sa mbola mitady asa, sa mikarakara tokantrano, sa misotro ronono? Raha miasa): Inona ny asany? Kilasy faha-firy izy niala nianatra na kilasy faha-firy izy amin'izao?*



2. Do you have a birth certificate? *Manana copie ve ianao?*
3. Do you have a national identity card? *Manana kara-panondro ve ianao?*
4. Are you registered as a resident of this neighborhood (fokontany)? *Misoratra amin'ny fokontany ve ianao?*
5. Do you have a driver's license? *Manana permit ve ianao?*
6. What is your French language ability on a scale of 1-3? *Aiza ho aiza ny fahaizanao teny frantsay?*
7. What is computer skills ability on a scale of 1-3? *Mahay informatique ve ianao?*
8. During the past six months, were you ever so sick that you couldn't work? *Tamin'ny enim-bologna lasa, nisy fotoagna ve ianao narary mafy ka tsy afaka niasa?*

### Food Security

In the past three months, how often did the following occur in your household (never, sometimes, often):

*Tanatin'ny telo volagna lasana igny ... (tsy hary, tsindraikindraiky, matetika)*

1. Were you ever scared that you would run out of food before getting money to buy more?  
*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianao natahotra ho lany sakafo talohan'ny hahazo vola hividiana?*
2. Were you ever unable to vary the food accompanying rice due to lack of money?  
*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianareo tsy afaka nanovanova rô nohon'ny tsy fahampin'ny vola?*
3. Did you ever have to eat rice without any accompanying food due to lack of money?  
*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianareo nihinana vary mienta (vary tsisy rô) nohon'ny tsy fahampin'ny vola?*
4. Did you ever have to eat starchy foods before lunch or dinner to reduce the amount of rice you used due to lack of money?  
*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianareo nihinana hanimbiraoka mba natao nampiaigny foto-tsakafo antoandro na hariva nohon'ny tsy fahampin'ny vola?*
5. Did you ever have to replace rice with something else due to lack of money?  
*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianareo nanolo vary tamin'ny sakafo hafa nohon'ny tsy fahampin'ny vola?*
6. Did you ever have to beg food from someone due to lack of money (literally “borrow rice”)?  
*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianareo voatery nihindrambary tamin'olo nohon'ny tsy fahampin'ny vola?*
7. Did you ever run out of food due to lack of money?  
*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianareo tsy nisy sakafo hoanigny tan-dragny talohan'ny ahafahana hividy?*
8. Did you ever reduce the size of your meals due to lack of money (literally “fill only half the intestine”)?  
*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianareo voatery nihinana sakafo tapa-kibo nohon'ny tsy fahampin'ny vola?*
9. Did you ever skip meals due to lack of money?  
*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianareo voatery tsy nisakafo mandraigna na antoandro na hariva, nohon'ny tsy fahampin'ny vola?*
10. Did you ever not eat for an entire day due to lack of money?  
*Nisy andro iraiky ve tsy nihinananaré hanigny nohon'ny tsy fahampin'ny vola?*
11. Were you ever hungry but there was nothing to eat due to lack of money?  
*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianareo tihinagna nefa tsisy raha hoanigny nohon'ny tsy fahampin'ny vola?*
12. Were you ever weak due to lack of food?  
*Nisy fotoagnany ve ianareo nahatsapa nalemilemy nohon'ny tsy fahampin'ny sakafo?*

## 6. Semi-Structured Interviews with Migrants' Rural Relatives and Local Authorities in the Vavatenina District (March-May 2012)

**Goals:** To understand historical and contemporary migration and demographic trends for the Vavatenina District, and for relatives to understand their expectations of and relationships with relatives who had moved to Tamatave. To make these interviews run smoothly and ensure some uniformity, potential questions were translated from English to Malagasy by myself and my primary research assistant. We would then choose amongst these preformulated questions to conduct the interview, adding new questions or making modifications as needed.

**Participants:** 25 relatives, 10 government authorities (*maire de commune, president de fokontany*), 11 traditional authorities (*tangalamena*)

### Questions:

#### Rural Village History and Lifeways

1. Tell us about the history of this village.  
*Mba hazonao tantaregny fohifohy aminay ve tantaran'ity tanana ity?*
2. How did this village get its name?  
*Mba fantatrao ve ny nihavian'ny anarana hoe: \_\_\_\_\_?*
3. 3. What changes do you see in the village since you were little until now?  
*Ino fihovana hitanao tamin'ity tanagna ity manomboko anao mbola hely zisiky izao?*
4. 4. What things do you see that have changed in this village compared to before?  
*Ino raha hitanao nihova tamin'ity tanagna ity ko ampitahaigny tamin'izy taloha?*
5. 5. Who founded this village?  
*Izovy olo vohalohany namorogno mipetraka teto?*
6. 6. What are the main activities you do throughout the year?  
*Ino daholo ny asa ataonao mandritriny taogno?*
1. What are positive/negative aspects of living in the countryside, like \_\_\_\_?  
*Araka ny heritreritranao, ino lafitsarany/lafiratsiny mipetraka ambanivolo karaha \_\_\_\_\_?*
2. What are the positive/ negative aspects of living in a city like Tamatave?  
*Araka ny heritreritranao, ino lafitsarany/lafiratsiny mipetraka antanambe karaha Tamatave?*
3. There are many differences between life in the city and the countryside. You have maybe heard or seen life in the city. Are you personally a) satisfied / b) proud to live here in the countryside?  
*Maromaro ny fahasamihafana mampiavaka ny antanambe sy ny ambanivolo. Mety efa avy regninao na avy no hitanao maso. Aminao manôkana, a) afa-pô / b) mirehareha ve ianao mipetraka ambanivolo?*

#### Migration

1. Why do people move from this village to go live somewhere else?)  
*Ino ny antony mahatonga olo amy faritra misy anareo ato miala aketo ke mandeha mipetraka antany hafa?*
2. What pushes / compels people from here to leave and live in the city?  
*Ino manosiky / manery olo aminaré aketo hiala hipetraka aketo ke mandeha hipetraka antanambe?*
3. What pulls people to the city of Tamatave?

*Ino mahasarika / mahasintona olo aminare aketo andeha hipetraka Tamatave?*

4. Why do some people who move to the city never come back?  
*Ino ny antony mahatonga olo nandeha nipetraka antanambe ary tsy nierigny nipetraka ambanivolo eky?*
5. Why are some reasons that people who move to the city might return to live once again in the countryside?  
*Ino ny antony mahatonga olo sasany nandeha nipetraka antanambe nefa tapakevitry nody nipetraka ambanivolo ndraikiny?*
6. Many people leave but many people stay here. For you personally, why did you decide to stay here rather than moving somewhere else?  
*Maro ny mandeha, ary maro koa ny midoko antanana: aminao manôkana, ino ny antony nahatonga anao mbola aketo fa tsy niheritreritry nifindra antany hafa?*
7. There are many people originating from her who have gone to seek their fortune elsewhere. Does this migration have an impact on the village here?  
*Maromaro ny zanakam-pihelezana avy eto aminaré mitady ravinahitra antoerankafa. Misy akony ve izengy amin'ny tanagnanareo aketo?*
8. Is there an impact on your life having family living in the city?  
*Misy akony /fiantraikany amin'ny fiainanao ve ny fanananao havana mipetraka antanambe?*
9. What changes do you see in your family members who migrated to the city?  
*Ino ny fihovana nisy hitanao tamin'ny havanao izay nifindra nipetraka antanambe?*

#### Rural-Urban Linkages

1. Why do some people who emigrate from this village maintain linkages with this place?  
*Ino ny antony mahatonga olo sasantsasany avy aty amin'ny faritra aty mbola manana fifandraisana eto foagna hatram'izao?*
2. Can rural people survive without links to the city?  
*Araka ny heritreritranao, miankina amin'ny olona mipetraka antanambe ve ny fiainan'ny mponina eto amin'ity tanagna ity sa tsia?*
3. Can urban people survive without links to the rural area?  
*Araka ny heritreritranao, miankina amin'ny olona mipetraka aty ambanivolo ve ny fiainan'ny mponina any antanambe sa tsia?*
4. What are advantages and disadvantages to having relatives living in a city?)  
*Ino lafitsarany /lafiratsiny managna havagna mipetraka antanambe?*
5. What problems do you see happening in the linkage with family living in the city who still keep in touch with you?  
*Ino ny olana hitanao mitranga amin'ny fifandraisana amin'ny havana mipetraka antanambe izay mbola mifandray am-po aminareo?*
6. There are many kinds activities done here, and many ways that people who live in the city can participate.
  - a. Which kinds of activities should migrants attend in person?
  - b. Which kinds of ancestral activities is it ok for migrants to just send money or goods?  
*Maro raharaha atao aketo ambanivolonaré aketo. Ary maromaro koa ny endrika azo andraisan'ny olo mipetraka antanambe anjara amin'izany.*
    - a. *Ino karazan-draharaha atao aminaré aketo ka tsy maintsy tokony ho vonjen'ny havana mipetraka lavitra?*

- b. Ino karazan-draharaha atao aminaré aketo ka manjary liferigny ny tsy fahatongavan'ny havana mipetraka lavitra fô vola foagna alefany na fitaovana?*
7. How often should a migrant visit his or her rural family members over the course of a year  
*Aminao manôkana, tokony impiry mamangy anatin'ny taon-draiky ny havanao ankaiky anao mipetraka lavitry?*
  8. How often should a migrant call over the course of a month?  
*Aminao manôkana, tokony impiry mitelephone anatin'ny volan-draiky ny havanao ankaiky anao mipetraka Tamatave?*
  9. Should migrants who are capable send money / food / material items? If yes, how often should they send?  
*Aminao manôkana, tokony handefa vola /sakafo / fitaovana ho anareo ve ny havanareo izay mba manankatao sa tsia? Raha eny, tokony isaky ny fotoana karakory?*
  10. How often should a rural family send food to a migrant in the city?  
*Tokony impiry magnondefa ankerankera na hanimboroka amin'ny havanareo antanambe ianareo anatin'ny taon-draiky?*

APPENDIX B

RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES IN NORTHEASTERN MADAGASCAR:  
TYPES, SEASONALITY, AND DESCRIPTIONS

Linkage Activity	Seasonality	Description and Glossary of terms
Communicate		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Via cellphone, verbal messages, written letters</li> <li>- Not all areas of the Vavatenina District have regular cellphone reception, although this increases yearly</li> <li>- Relying on intermediaries to pass on verbal or written messages can be difficult for villages with smaller populations, or for migrants with small social networks</li> </ul>
Attend migrant association events	Higher frequency January-June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Associations are usually for people who can trace their origins to a common village, <i>commune</i>, or <i>district</i>. Associations for individuals descended from a common ancestor are less common</li> <li>- Events include general meetings, annual New Year celebrations, or fundraisers to support rural development projects.</li> <li>- Members must pay an annual fee which acts as social insurance in case someone experiences a calamity (death, illness). Events like New Year celebrations also cost entrance fees.</li> </ul>
Socialize with fellow migrants		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Because fellow migrants share a common history and place of origin, some say that they are like family members, more easily trusted and obliged to help</li> <li>- Some migrants seem to socialize almost exclusively with extended family and fellow migrants, while other migrants have more diverse urban social networks</li> </ul>
Host rural visitors short-term	Higher frequency around major holidays or harvest times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rural people may travel to the city for purely social reasons (to visit, attend family events, spend vacation).</li> <li>- Rural people also travel to the city to access services and infrastructure there (health facilities, government offices)</li> </ul>
Foster rural people long-term		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The majority of long-term foster situations are where migrants host students, often children of rural relatives, who attend better-quality schools in the city</li> <li>- Some long-term fostering refers to migrants hosting elderly relatives on a permanent or rotating basis</li> <li>- Low wage or unremunerated rural laborers who live at migrant homes and work as domestic servants or shop assistants</li> </ul>
Visit rural family and friends	Higher frequency during school vacations (Dec-Jan, June-Augt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The general consensus from most migrants and rural relatives was that a migrant should try to return home to visit his or her family at least once a year, but in reality a small subsection of migrants had not been home for much longer periods of time, either by choice or necessity</li> </ul>

Attend rural celebrations		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Return to the rural region of origin to attend a “joyous” event (e.g Independence Day (June 26), All Saints Day and Jerijery music and cultural festival (end November), New Year celebrations (January), and life-stage events like marriages</li> <li>- While such events were a pleasure to attend, most migrants and rural relatives agreed that they were not obligatory and therefore more easily discarded if money or time were lacking</li> <li>- For some celebrations it is traditional to give small sums of money called <i>tsodrano</i> (blessing) generally. Money given to a new mother is called <i>ro-patsa</i> (after a post-partum food mothers often eat).</li> </ul>
Attend rural funerals/burials	No advance notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most migrants and rural relatives agreed that returning for rural funerary activities was one of the most obligatory linkages, particularly for the death of a close family member.</li> <li>- Other related activities include attending the wake for a fellow migrant in the city before transport, or accompanying a body during transport from the city to the rural home</li> <li>- Migrants for the most part still desire to be buried in family tombs located in rural areas, even if they die elsewhere. Often the costs of transporting the body back to the rural place of origin is shared by the family, fellow migrants living in the city, and sometimes the migrant association for that rural locale.</li> <li>- Money is traditionally given to the family of the deceased to help with the costs of the wake and burial, called <i>fidranomaso</i></li> </ul>
Attend rural ancestral rituals	Higher frequency June-September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are many different kinds of <i>tsaboraha</i> (ancestral rituals) in the Vavatenina area, but they share in common the goal of honoring ancestors.</li> <li>- While they may take months of preparation, the main activities take place over 2-3 days.</li> <li>- Rituals may be modified to make them more amenable to Christians who object to certain customs</li> <li>- Migrants with large social networks or of higher status tend to receive more invitations for <i>tsaboraha</i>, which they feel obligated to contribute towards even if they cannot physically attend</li> <li>- Attendees contribute money to the hosts of the ritual called <i>soronafo</i>, for which they receive a portion of the sacrificed cattle’s meat in proportion to the amount of money (more money = more meat).</li> </ul>

Help with costs of rural event	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some rural relatives said that it was preferable for a migrant to stay in the city and just send money or materials for ancestral rituals, especially if finances were constrained and the migrant would not be able to both attend and contribute towards costs.</li> <li>- Besides money, migrants were often asked to contribute materials that were less expensive to buy in the city like jerrycans, cookware, cloth, flowers.</li> <li>- This money may be called <i>fagnampiagna</i> (assistance) or <i>fandraisan-anjara</i> (contribution). The latter is usually</li> </ul>
Give money	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Give or loan money to rural individuals.</li> <li>- Migrants may send money long-distance (via intermediaries or through cellphone banking), give money when visiting the rural area, or give money to rural people visiting the city</li> </ul>
Give food/materials	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Migrants may send food or materials long-distance via intermediaries, bring when visiting the rural area, or give to rural people visiting the city.</li> <li>- Food gifts brought to the rural area by urban migrants while visitin, are called <i>voandalana</i> (literally “fruits of the road). If an urban migrant also brings food to help with rural household meals during their stay these are provisions and called <i>vatsy</i>.</li> <li>- The most common food and materials that migrants give to rural people include: oil, sugar, salt, sweetened condensed milk, soap, sweets, bread</li> <li>- Other less common food and materials include dried beans, vegetables grown in Madagascar’s central highlands, clothing, school supplies</li> </ul>
Receive money	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Example of “reverse remittances”</li> <li>- Monetary gifts and loans from rural people to urban migrants, sent as cash through intermediaries, or electronically using cellphone banking</li> <li>- Rare except for migrant students who were supported by rural parents or other family members</li> </ul>
Receive food/materials	Variable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Example of “reverse remittances”</li> <li>- If brought in person by a rural visitor as a gift to the urban migrant called <i>voandalana</i> (literally “fruits of the road”); if brought by a rural visitor as provisions for their stay in the city called <i>vatsy</i></li> <li>- The most common food and materials that rural people give to migrants include: rice, starches and tubers (<i>hanimbiraoka</i>), seasonal fruits</li> <li>- Gifts of domesticated birds (chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys) are common before major holidays</li> </ul>



Rural-income generating activities	<p>Harvests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cloves = Oct-Dec</li> <li>- Lychee = Nov</li> <li>- Coffee = June</li> </ul> <p>Markets:</p> <p>Larger in Nov-Dec and June (around rice harvests and holidays)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some migrants have access to cash crops trees that produce lychees, cloves, and coffee, either through inheritance, purchase, or cultivation. They may share access with other family members, or have sole ownership</li> <li>- Some migrants give cash crop yields to their rural family members as a sort of replacement for remittances</li> <li>- Some migrants also earn money by trading commodities (used clothing, manufactured housewares, etc) in rural markets</li> </ul>
Rural agricultural and pastoral activities	<p>Irrigated rice seasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aug to Dec/Jan</li> <li>- Jan to May/June</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grow wet rice or rent land to share-croppers who will give the urban migrant a proportion of the harvest. To a lesser degree migrants also grow other crops (manioc and corn) or raise cattle and chickens</li> <li>- Some migrants give rice and other crop yields to their rural family members as a sort of replacement for remittances</li> </ul>
Rural land/home ownership		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some migrants have access to land and housing through inheritance, purchase, or their own construction.</li> <li>- Migrants may let rural people use their land or housing for free, or rent these for extra income.</li> <li>- More elite migrants also felt it was important to have a house of one's own to stay in while visiting the rural area. Others felt these were important assets that would be most useful in retirement, allowing migrants to return to live in the village where the cost of living is less</li> </ul>