

Gender and Voluntary Return: Moroccan Migrant Labor Women as a Case Study

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Abstract— This study aims at analyzing the effects and outcomes of the feminization of Moroccan migration on labor women migrants themselves, their families and the whole community (Micro, Meso, and Macro levels respectively). This study investigates the change that affects the migrant women, especially those of them who migrated to such countries where family reunification is difficult. These changes affect their identity, sense of agency, relationship with their families, and the whole community. The study highlights the return phase of Moroccan women migrants, who have spent some time abroad as labor migrants. To collect and analyze data related to this topic, two research methods are used: quantitative and qualitative, which aim to answer questions related to the topic. Questionnaires, filled by 80 women returnees, are used in order to comprehend the migration journey on three levels (before, while, and after) migration. In addition, interviews were conducted with 40 returnees and used in order to inquire about the reasons and implications of migration and return. Notwithstanding that the findings of both methods were nearly the same. Thus, this study enabled us to analyze the outcomes of migration at different levels micro (on the woman herself), meso (her family), and macro (the whole Moroccan community): the woman; her status in the family and gender roles; and on the fossilization of a culture of migration.

Keywords— Integration, Reintegration, agency and identity, culture of migration, gender roles.

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to bring to the center the debate on the social consequences of the prolonged migration of women in particular, and the dependence on migration in general, for employment and well-being at the individual, at the familial, and the wider societal level. The key argument underlying this study is that the continued and prolonged dependence on migration by the Moroccan people to address unemployment on the one hand, and by Moroccan families, on the other hand, as seemingly an important source to secure employment and a better life, has led to social change, in terms of promoting women's agency and empowerment, the restructuring of households and redefinition of families and gender relations, as well as the rise of a culture of migration.

Such culture is characterized among other things by an increasing dependence on women's migration to work mainly in gender-segregated occupations with low status and low value, subjecting women migrants to vulnerabilities, to abuse and exploitation, and at times, a deskilling for the educated and skilled women taking on such jobs. The culture of migration has bred feminized migration denigrating women's labor but this same labor has sustained the productive and reproductive tasks and roles of families both in the migrants' countries of work and in their own countries.

In order to understand the social changes occurring in Morocco arising from women's migration, the return

phase approach has been used to study migration. Studying return allows us to reflect on the extent migration goals have been achieved or not, the conditions under which return takes place for a migrant woman worker and the macro forces which help explain the circumstances of return and life after return. Specifically, this research raised the following questions:

- What does the return of women migrants demonstrate with regard to migration motivations, goals, and outcomes?
- What are the gendered meanings of the return of women migrants in terms of the effects of migration experience on their positions and roles, and their identity, sense of agency and empowerment?
- What is the impact of the women's migration experience on their families and households?
- What are the gendered outcomes of long-term migration and return of women migrants on Moroccan society as a whole?

A multi-level approach to the study of migration: the micro (migrant woman worker), the meso (the families) and the macro (the society or the country of the migrant woman worker) is essential in understanding the changes and consequences brought about by migration and how one level affects the other. Analysis of the return phase of migration was contextualized within the entire process of migration starting with the decision to migrate, the conditions of work and the place of work in

addition to the migrants' ways of coping, keeping in mind their eventual return to the home country.

As rightly pointed out by the integrative theories of migration, the motivations for migration are often those that respond to the needs of families and households which at the same time also takes account of the individuals' desires and aspirations. In this study, migration was mainly pursued both as an individual and family strategy to overcome poverty, to acquire a regular source of income, not necessarily to earn higher wages as argued by economic theories of migration; to ensure children's education and to build one's own home. Women's migration journeys were also motivated by non-economic factors such as escaping from unhappy marriages or abusive husbands, seeking change from a dreary and harsh rural life, or simply trying out some adventure and excitement in life.

The neo-classical economic theories of migration emphasizing push and pull factors, and economic rationality do not capture specific motivations, circumstances and situations of people who move. For one thing, the majority of the women, the decision to leave their country and work overseas was hardly a voluntary act. To a great extent, their movement was forced by the circumstances of their lives: single parents who had to bear the responsibility for raising and caring for their children and married women with spouses without regular jobs; households with hardly any assets, except for a few of them with small piece of land mainly for subsistence.

The meanings and transformations in the women's lives associated the migration experience with a range of positive experiences: a way out of a difficult life for women working in the informal sector or being unpaid agricultural workers or small landowners; a means of providing some sense of security for women formally employed in the home country but with low wages and without tenure; a change in status from that of unpaid housewife to being a breadwinner coupled with the ability to support not only immediate family but extended family or kin; and an escape from unfaithful and abusive husbands.

Kofman has argued that "it is time migration theories are able to capture the multiple dimensions of women's lives". Much of the literature on women migrants describes their victim status and their identities as dutiful and self-sacrificing daughters and mothers and not much emphasis is given on their ways of surviving and the psycho-social dimensions entailed. In this study, ways of coping and forging multiple identities to sustain the women in their migration journey and eventual

return home were demonstrated by the women migrants themselves: adjusting to new culture and tradition, meeting the heavy demands of their work, specifically domestic work, and coping with the prolonged absence from home and the control and discipline imposed on them by their employers and the society as a whole.

The women too displayed acts of resistance in their day-to-day struggles in Scott's explanation, ranging from covert to overt forms of protest and in extreme cases of violence such as rape and sexual abuse, this was confronted with equal violence. Transforming meanings and identities in their places of work characterize the migration experience of the women migrants. In turn, these new identities such as social service worker, and devoted and efficient worker, sustained the women in their migration journey.

Return is gendered as much as the entire migration process itself is gendered. Motivations for working abroad mainly for economic reasons reflect the family pressure exerted on women particularly on single mothers. Women overseas work provided security of income for most households where husbands had irregular jobs. Women had better job opportunities than their husbands because of the labor market demand for certain types of work like those in-service occupations such as domestic work, nurses or caregivers in which women are considered as more suitable than men. For some women, the experience of violence in their families was a determining factor in leaving and working outside the country.

While in the country of employment, economic goals were paramount for the migrant women but with time, migration goals start to encompass non-economic goals such as the need to sustain autonomy and enhanced status in the migrants' families and communities, thereby, influencing the decision to return home. Returning home was compelled by both the pressure and desire to assume the traditional gendered roles of caring and nurturing the family. Returning home was also forced by social and political forces clearly beyond the control of the migrant women such as restrictive labor policies and civil unrest and conflict.

Return migration is influenced by the interplay of structural, cultural, economic and social factors. According to Ghosh, at the policy level specifically, insufficient attention has been given to the personal circumstances of returnees, their duration of stay in the receiving country and the varying motivations of their return. Some literature on return maintain that at the individual level, most return takes place for personal and social reasons rather than economic or political ones.

From the influence of the above structural limitations, one concludes that the return of the women migrants was largely involuntary when they encountered problems with employment as in non-existent jobs or illegal recruitment, falsified documents, premature termination of contracts, non-payment of wages, and running away from abusive employers.

Outbreak of war or civil unrest has made some women's return forced or involuntary negating in the process the benefits that international labor migration brings. The above findings came into view in the questionnaires and in the life stories of the migrant women workers. Studying return allows us, therefore, to comprehend the particular human consequences of the larger forces impacting on everyday lives and actions of the migrant workers.

In the main literature, return is categorized as either voluntary or forced, but as it was argued, the distinction between the two is blurred, particularly as it applies to migrant women on temporary migration and occupying work categorized as unskilled. Voluntary return of some women migrants in the study was precipitated by such factors as when conditions of work were no longer deemed satisfactory, when their goals for migrating had been achieved, or the psychological need to return after prolonged absence from home.

For some women, illness in the family, problems with husbands and children, sense of guilt for being away for a long period of time and in the process transferring their care-giving role to other members of the family, were compelling reasons for them to return home. The deeply ingrained notion of a devoted and self-sacrificing mother and wife as well as society's expectations that the woman should be at home caring and nurturing, clearly explain the circumstances of this return. Women's reasons for return also reflect men's inability to cope with reversed roles as they are left behind with their families. While the migration of women migrants mainly to provide for their families is clearly a crossing of boundary, a transgression of the traditional norms of femininity and feminine roles, men left behind in this study, were generally not able to cross the boundary of traditional male roles. Hence, the persistence of gender regime and gender order.

Ambivalence figured prominently in the decision of the women migrants to return for good. Existing studies point to ambivalence as caused by the desire to continue to pursue economic goals in keeping with the identity of filial piety, a devoted and self-sacrificing mother, wife or daughter; in contrast to the desire to maintain the sense of independence and personal freedom, and new

personhood as well as the pleasures associated with the country of work. While this research supports these findings, it has brought to the fore a more nuanced understanding of ambivalence in terms of identifying other factors contributing to the ambivalence of return. The status and economic power that stem from being a provider for the family were difficult to give up.

The freedom and autonomy associated with the capacity to earn also made return difficult. The goals set by the women themselves and the needs, demands and expectations of families left behind kept multiplying, making the return more distant, more ambivalent. For one to be able to meet increasing and widening material needs, and considering the level of wages of a domestic worker (which varies from country to country), the migrant woman worker had to work and complete not one or two contracts but several and in the process, became separated from her family for 10, 15 or 20 years.

For women whose relationships with spouses had broken down, returning home was fraught with deep anxieties. But for most of the women, ambivalence was brought about by the apprehension of not being able to sustain their standard of living due to lack of secure income earning opportunities in the home country, lack of adequate savings or lack of productive investments. Remittances from the women migrants who mostly took up domestic work or factory work were mainly utilized for day-to-day expenses of families, for education and for some consumer goods. For women who had spent several years working abroad, savings were invested in constructing new homes, an important symbol of success in their migration journey.

Summing up, the period of return and the ambivalence about return are influenced by economic and psychosocial factors. While economic goals are the predominant goals maintained at the beginning of the migration process, in time the goals are transformed to encompass other motivations and dimensions—the desire to maintain the high status accorded by families and the Moroccan society to a migrant breadwinner, an economic provider; the need to sustain the psychological and financial security that a regular monthly income brings; and the satisfaction of carving other meaningful identities outside that of a domestic worker in a foreign land.

The economic environment in the home country also affects the timing of return. To many women migrants in this study, return has been delayed because of the lack of viable alternatives to overseas migration. Unemployment persists in the home country. Quality basic social services are difficult to access. Education

and health care remain expensive in view of their continuing privatization and commercialization. The recovery and interpretation of women's lives is pivotal to feminist scholarship, to the feminist reconstruction of our understanding of the world. Feminist theory is grounded in women's lives and aims to analyze the role and meaning in those lives in society (The Personal Narratives).

Migration theories are concerned with why people move and where people move and are, therefore, unable to seize the depth and richness of the lives of women migrants. They do not deal with questions like, what happens to families and to societies when people move and more so when women move. This study (through the use of interviews and questionnaires) examined the consequences of return migration on the home and family left behind by the migrant women workers. It also analyzed how migration has affected the women migrants' sense of agency and empowerment and what life after migration meant for the women and their families.

METHODOLOGY

It is argued that only through a subjective strategy (quantitative method), particularly, life stories /account, and questionnaires that one can uncover and completely grasp the dynamics of change, and how migration influences the three levels of analysis (micro, meso, and macro) of migrant women, their families and society. Qualitative studies inspire static reactions. They don't enable one to dig into the implications of experiences. The narratives try to uncover the strategies and experiences of migration from the viewpoint of the migrant women themselves. Accounts are key to personality development. They focus on procedures of progress over one's life course or life cycle. Turning into women's voices and gaining from women's experiences are essential to the feminist understanding of the world. Women's own stories highlight some aspects of gender, for example, the development of a gendered self-identity, the connection amongst individual and society in the creation and propagation of gender norms and also women and men power relationships.

The choice of the topic was affected by both one's own experience as a migrant woman, and the training in the Ministry in charge of Moroccans living abroad. In fact, through this training in the Gender office that one could listen to most of the interviewees' experiences; this fact pushed to work on this issue, and provided with most of the needed data about it, and also enabled to get into closer contact with 40 returnees and sometimes their families, and even visit them in their houses in order to

have a more objective image of their real situation. The choice of participants was done at random with no prior selection.

The use of the semi structured interviews, by making use of both an interview protocol that is guided and structured as well as keeping some space for conversational aspects. The choice of this interview type was based on both the will to stay focused, and avoid empty talk, as well as the concern on keeping some intimacy, and a friendly atmosphere with the interviewees, which will lead to more details about feelings and worries needed in this research.

Knowing that interviews would not target a big number of people, another method was added, questionnaires, filled by 80 women returnees. This method is considered as highly practical, and more accurate, due to the fact that it is far from any subjectivity of the interviewers, who can easily be biased through interviews. The choice of questionnaire was then based on the need to be more objective, in addressing such issue, in addition to targeting a bigger number of people.

One would opt for the mixed questionnaires that used both open ended and close ended questions. This choice was based on the need to give some free space to the respondent to explain exactly what they want, as well as closed questions that would help collect more accurate statistical data. This explains the choice of many types of questions: the leading questions, importance questions, Likert questions, dichotomous questions, and rating scale questions.

RESULTS

At the Micro level

Life after migration varied among the returned migrant women workers: from being lifted out of poverty level to having a slightly better life compared to life before migration. Most of the women had to undertake different types of income- generating activities to sustain their families. A culture of dependence on women working has set in after years of the families' reliance on monthly remittances which in turn has bred complacency and lack of creativity in families. Moreover, the women too had become used to being a breadwinner, if not the primary breadwinner, a carry-over of their role as overseas migrants.

For women with college degrees and wanting to secure government jobs, it proved difficult because of corruption. Other qualified women no longer felt confident to seek jobs for which they were trained

because deskilling had occurred and age had also caught up with them. For other women, life became harder after migration because of the continued financial dependence of their children and grandchildren. To others still, life was the same as before migration in terms of the source of livelihood. No assets were accumulated. No savings were generated. For those women who were able to accumulate some assets, their life style and living standard during migration was no longer sustainable. Fitting back into homes and communities meant for many coping with the psychological insecurity of not having a regular income.

The question that persistently confronts social science scholars is whether women's participation in the labor force and their income earning ability eventually bring independence and social equality with men. Hence, in migration studies, does women's mobility to work, earning income and providing for their family enhance their status and empower them? Studies refer to mixed outcomes based on the influence of various factors which range from marital and family status, class status, legal status, to gender hierarchies in the labor market and access to adequate income.

This research points to the material gains from migration as well as non-material rewards for the migrant women. Women became empowered although they worked under difficult circumstances such as prolonged absence from families, demands and pressures of domestic work, and low status accorded to them by society in countries where they worked. Women attained a high status in their communities and greater respect from spouses and other members of the families and households by being economic providers.

The study contends that several factors had come into play in the process of attaining empowerment by the women migrants. The migration journey itself was difficult physically, socially and psychologically. The women migrants in the life stories were away for long years, from 6 to 23 years and to have been able to overcome the difficulties of their journeys definitely instilled in them a strong sense of confidence, autonomy and self-esteem. Though regarded lowly in the countries where they worked mainly as domestic helpers, the women acquired skills of being efficient, good organizers, able to assert themselves, put forward their views and make decisions on small and important matters.

They developed strong character borne out in their ability and courage to face life's challenges and vicissitudes. In other words, the power within which is a vital element in empowerment that emerged from these

women. The latter challenged gender norms and tilted the balance of power on their side by sending remittances to their children rather than to unfaithful and irresponsible husbands and by ensuring that properties acquired during their migration were in the children's name rather than the husband's. Upon return, they demanded equal sharing in household work though still maintaining the burden of earning income for the family. Marital separation was sought from unfaithful husbands but for other women in a similar situation, it proved difficult mainly because of societal constraints and gendered norms and expectations of women's role to keep a family intact at least in structure.

A key question raised with regards to empowerment is whether this is sustained. Power relationships within the households have been reconfigured. Women played a key role in decision-making. This study shows that it has been sustained based on the interactions and observations (over a period of about 18 months and several years with two migrant women) of the women's confidence, self-esteem and the prodigious effort to create changes in their own lives and in their communities.

Despite the above indicators of empowerment, the study maintains however, that empowerment is still limited, bounded and remains an on-going process for women and for women migrants in particular. Empowerment necessitates transformative social and political action in societal institutions. It also means power in setting discussion, discourse and agenda. Housework, household responsibilities of caring and nurturing need to be recognized by the Moroccan society as men's work and responsibility as well. The study contends that the contribution of women migrant workers should be duly valued and recognized by both sending and receiving countries in the entire migration process by bringing domestic work within the ambit of local employment acts, providing regulation of work, protection of workers and social security and providing opportunities for social mobility.

Valuing and recognizing the contribution of women migrant workers to their families and to the Moroccan Kingdom, in general, would mean the government putting in place structures and resources to assist in the return of migrant women workers and their re-settling in the home country with community support structures in place; creating job opportunities for those who are still able to work and for those who have returned as senior citizens; providing social security benefits. Women migrants would need to make these claims to the Moroccan government not only as a matter of rights but as entitlements. Finally, collective empowerment of

women migrant workers will come about when the structural roots and causes of their migration are addressed adequately and when migration becomes a genuine choice.

At the Meso level

The home that the migrant woman worker returned to has changed in literal and figurative senses. A distinct mark of having a successful migration experience is a house. In the life stories, four women constructed new homes, one purchased a new house, another three made improvements to their existing home while the rest either went back to their original homes or left for another place of abode in the case of those whose marital relationships had deteriorated. The women migrants returned to homes where children had grown into adults and were leading their own lives.

Women returned with the realization that significant phases in the growing up of their children were missed because of their prolonged migration. Women returned to homes where emotional bonding needed to be re-established and psychological distance bridged. Children are often affected physically, mentally, emotionally and materially. As shown in similar studies on children left behind, parents' migration, particularly that of women, affected the emotional development, social relations and school performance of the children.

Migration of women compelled some children to assume adult roles and responsibilities, mainly because of the inadequacy of fathers left behind to take over the mothers' role. It was not necessarily the female child who bore the burden of these roles as normally assumed. Factors such as the children's perceived level of intellect, sense of responsibility, and age structure also influenced the burden carrier. Children and relatives benefited from the earnings of the migrant women.

They went to private schools, participated in extra-curricular activities in school, wore good clothes, and lived in homes equipped with modern amenities and appliances. They learned to be self-reliant and independent.

They valued the hard work of their mother although at the same time they felt emotionally deprived of their mothers' physical presence and comfort. Just as there was ambivalence in the migrant woman's decision to return, there too was ambivalence in the children's reception of their mother's return because to the children, it meant financial insecurity, no longer having enough resources to support their schooling through tertiary level or to maintain the same standard of living they had when the mother was abroad working.

At the Macro level

The study has analyzed how the culture of migration has been ingrained in the Moroccan family and in the government itself and the Moroccan society as a whole. Such a culture has created a dependency by both the families and the government on migration as a vehicle to provide opportunities for employment that generates decent income vital to families' welfare and well-being. The value placed on Migration by Moroccan society is now deeply entrenched. The government promotes and facilitates migration.

The culture of migration has thrived on feminized labor, a labor that is persistently gender-segregated relegating women to work in areas considered extensions of their reproductive roles, and which is undervalued, under paid and inadequately protected. The culture of migration has meant years of absence of Moroccan women from their families. The prolonged absence has led to heavy emotional and psychological costs especially on the children left behind. Husbands left behind have been unable to adequately assume the nurturing and caring roles of migrant wives thus causing tensions, fragmentation and destabilization in the families.

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

King's article on generalizations from the history of return migration contends that the literature on return migration is empirical or descriptive in nature and that theorizing has been made difficult partly due to the different types of return and hence of migration itself. He ends his article with a plea that 'studies of return not be isolated around the return decision or event, but be built around a more holistic and theoretically informed appreciation of the nature of migration and mobility in this globalized era' .

This research focused on gender, migration and social change and the analysis of the return phase of migration was situated within the overall process of migration rendering an integrated and holistic view of the phenomenon. It has examined to what extent dominant theories of migration within which return theories are subsumed are applicable to the migration and return experiences of migrant women workers from Morocco, using mainly a gendered and feminist approach.

This research dwelt on the return phase of temporary labor migration, a type of migration where return is inevitable ('forced' in some sense) because one works on contract, for a stipulated period after which one has to return to her country of origin, the sending country. This study has shown that the term, temporary migration is misleading (women migrants in this study worked

abroad for as long as 15, 20, 23 years). It is a category misused to box and bracket certain groups of migrant workers, groups which perform vital social roles (by being domestic workers and caregivers) and yet are not afforded the conditions of employment that go with living a socially just and humane life mainly due to inherent structural limitations of a temporary type of migration in jobs classified as unskilled.

The empirical findings of this study have contributed in some ways towards a nuanced understanding of the return phase of migration, an under-researched and under-theorized phenomenon—the reasons for return particularly for a temporary migrant woman worker and the forces affecting this return. By adopting a gender framework in this study, It was able to uncover the psycho-social dimensions of return, dimensions which do not emerge in the classical and neo-classical migration theories. The study on return was situated within the larger context of the entire migration process—the decision to migrate, the experience during migration, the decision to return and the situation after the return. Stephen Castles has called for an interdisciplinary approach to view the dynamic whole of the migration process and this I have sought to achieve in this study.

As a research methodology, the life stories powerfully elicited the migrant women's web of feelings, attitudes and values that gave meaning to their migration experience. It allowed the women to reflect on these meanings and to assess for themselves how the migration experience affected their sense of self and well-being and that of their families. The complexity of women's migration and the attendant interplay of political, economic, socio-cultural and psychological factors can only be captured by engaging in a holistic and a multi-level approach of study. This is, therefore, the approach that I have adopted in this research.

An area worthy of future studies includes the return migration of women (and men) and whether they achieved a more egalitarian division of labor, whether close familial relationships developed between parents and children after prolonged periods of separation and to see the end result of the sacrifices of migrant families. The study has addressed these questions and concerns and found that relationships were greatly affected: children felt deprived of the physical and emotional closeness of their mothers; some felt abandoned; and others faced the burden of assuming adult roles.

Some children grew up strong and independent but they greatly missed their mothers on important events in their lives. Migrant mothers felt a strong sense of

achievement for being good providers but they also expressed guilt at being away for a long period of time from their families. Greater sharing of household tasks between men and women has taken place. This study focused on women migrants with skills, but were considered unskilled because their jobs in the receiving country were categorized as unskilled, in the main, domestic work, yet domestic work itself constitutes tasks that require certain skills, physical, emotional, organizational, and others.

Definitely, the women migrants in the study returned home with skills, social skills mainly, new ideas, new ways of doing things, of perceiving relationships, and others. They returned home with developed confidence, self-esteem and assertiveness borne from the challenges of working overseas. They returned home imbued with the consciousness that the prolonged absence of women and men from their families spawns deep and wide-ranging social consequences. The literature on return describes returns of success, of failure, of innovation and categorized as voluntary and forced. This research has shown that such distinctions cannot be neatly applied to the experiences of the women migrant workers.

The circumstances and conditions of their movement and return are much too complex because of the confluence of factors such as changes in their personhood, sense of autonomy, aspirations in life, gender ideologies and regimes, gendered roles and relationships, gendered state policies and macro forces beyond the control of the migrant women. Finally, the third level of analysis, the impact of gendered migration and return on the societal level, has enabled to broaden and deepen the conceptualization of the phenomenon of culture of migration, bringing other elements in the analysis and examining the gendered consequences of the phenomenon. The existing literature describes the phenomenon as placing a material and symbolic value on migration itself, how it has become a norm for society's aspiration for upward mobility and perceiving migration as a rite of passage itself. In the process, the family plays a central role as the generator and reflector of such culture). Social networks also play an important role in perpetuating migration.

This exploration highlights the return of impermanent work migration, a sort of migration where return is unavoidable ('constrained' in some sense) since one works abroad by a time-limited contract, for an agreed upon period after which one needs to come back to her country of origin, the sending country. The investigation has demonstrated that the term "impermanent

migration” is deluding (some migrant women in the field work, worked abroad for 15, 20, 23 years).

From the questionnaires analysis one could deduce that return was due mostly to external factors, and most of returnees were aged between 45 to 55 years old. Most of returnees found that their financial situation weakened after return. Most importantly, female migrants’ financial responsibilities extended after return, and happily there is more sharing of household and caring and nurturing responsibilities with the husband. In addition, returnees had known a huge change in their identity and agency, which made them more self-confident, and assertive. These qualities made their surrounding pay more importance to their opinions, and see them as capable to take decision and control the households. Concerning the culture of migration, we have found that many Moroccan people see migration as an opportunity not to be missed, in order to get out of poverty. Thus, most of the respondents think about migrating again. The findings in fact confirm most of the interviews answers.

The experimental discoveries of this investigation have contributed somehow towards a nuanced comprehension of the return period of migration, an under-examined and undertheorized issue. By using a gender framework in this investigation, it could reveal the psycho-social implications of return, implications that are not considered by the existing theories. Finally, the third level of analysis, the impact of gendered migration and return on the societal level, has enabled to broaden and deepen the conceptualization of the phenomenon of culture of migration, bringing other elements in the analysis and examining the gendered consequences of the phenomenon.

The existing literature describes the phenomenon as placing a material and symbolic value on migration itself, how it has become a norm for society's aspiration for upward mobility and perceiving migration as a rite of passage itself. In the process, the family plays a central role as the generator and reflector of such culture). Social networks also play an important role in perpetuating migration. this study has shown that the state itself, the government from the migrants' country of origin, plays a major role in developing the culture of migration, and at the same time the stigma that follows women migrants in the Middle East in particular, with all the loads of images and stereotypes, make the task of return and even of migration harder and harder. In doing so, distortions and ambivalence in policy-making have taken place mainly due to the competing and at times contradictory demands of promoting overseas migration on the one hand, for its economic benefits, and placing

emphasis on migrants' welfare and protection to reduce social consequences, on the other hand.

There is now a growing number of skilled Moroccan women migrants like those in the information and communications technology sector, visual media experts, and teachers. The situation and condition of these women deserve to be studied on their own and for comparative purposes, with the women occupying unskilled work. There is a need to investigate the situation of professional migrant women occupying skilled work - factors which motivate their migration, barriers they face in accessing work and advancing their career in various types of employment such as health and social sector, information, communications and technology, science. One also has to study the situation of qualified and educated women who take up jobs that render them deskilled particularly for migrating spouses, majority of whom are women. The pre- and post-migration comparisons are essential in looking at migrants' occupational mobility and equal opportunity in the work force.

There are several issues and concerns facing the children who are left behind. What are the long-term socio-psychological impacts of migration, of both men and women? When the children grow up, do they also leave to go abroad? When male spouses are left behind, are they able to cope, to manage gender roles and shifts in gender relations? What are the implications for a society where care givers are grandparents of children left behind by migrant parents?

This examination has tended to investigate these inquiries and concerns and found that connections were significantly influenced: children felt denied of the physical and emotional closeness of their moms; some felt surrendered; and others confronted the weight of accepting grownup parts. A few kids grew up solid and free; however, they significantly missed their mothers on essential occasions in their lives. Migrant moms felt a solid feeling of accomplishment for being great suppliers; however, they additionally communicated blame at being away from their families. More prominent sharing of family tasks amongst men and women has occurred.

LIMITATIONS

The training in the Ministry allowed me to meet just some category of returnees, vulnerable, unskilled, and with little education if not uneducated. This fact is due to many reasons among them, only this category of women who would come and ask for help in the gender office. It is believed that there are other categories of

returnees who are skilled, and highly graduated, and who would not ask for social help from the office; categories who could not be reached. Furthermore, more studies must be done about the migration of males, and about the women who are left behind, both of whom, I think, need to be talked about.

Other limitation that was faced is the scarcity of the gender segregated statistic, mostly all the realized, or in progress studies are concerned with migrants' investment, without taking into consideration that they can be subject to return. Actually, according to HCP (Haut Commissariat au Plan) it is very difficult to assess the number of returnees, because of the lack of statistics in both host and origin countries. although some host countries give some data on the outputs of Moroccan from their territories, yet, none of them precise their destination.

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