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The American University in Cairo  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HUSS)

**Ethnography on the Return of Professional Egyptian Female Migrants from the Gulf  
Cooperation Council**

A Thesis Submitted to  
The Department of Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology and Egyptology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
The degree of Master of Arts

By Nerida I. Mackey

(Under the supervision of Dr. Nazek Nosseir)  
February/2016

## **Dedication**

*In loving memory of both my parents; to my mother, Socorro, a female migrant who challenged all odds to achieve her dream of a better life, and my inspiration for this research. And to my father, Harvey, who lovingly and generously supported our family through all our endeavours. Thank you. You are both greatly loved and remembered.*

## **Acknowledgements**

First and foremost, to the women of this study, I would like to thank them for their openness and willing contributions to this research. This research could not have been possible without them. Since they are a scarce population, it was difficult finding them. It was like searching for needle in a haystack, but once I found one the snowball technique took effect.

Secondly, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my advisor Dr. Nazek Nosseir for her continuous support of this research. Her guidance inspired me to continue when I felt like giving up. Besides my advisor, I would like to thank Dr. Ayman Zohry, for his expert knowledge on migration and his insightful and provoking clarifications.

Thirdly, I would also like to thank Dr. Hakem Al-Rustom for his kindness and generosity in assisting me with the final submission of this research from abroad.

Finally, to all the wonderful Egyptian people. I will forever cherish my time spent in Egypt. Thank you for the life changing experience.

**ABSTRACT**

The American University in Cairo

Nerida I. Mackey

Ethnography on the Return of Professional Egyptian Female Migrants from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

Supervised by: Dr. Nazek Nosseir

International labor migration is one of Egypt's economic development strategies, averaging an estimated twenty-two billion dollars in remittances in recent years, according to Egypt Daily News (Al-Aees, 2015). Although the participation of Egyptians in international migration for the purpose of work has mainly been dominated by men, there is a substantial handful of Egyptian women who independently participate in these migration flows. The Feminization of migration is still an unexplored and relatively new phenomenon in Egypt. Much of the discourse on Egyptian international labor migration has focused on men. Research on the effects of the women left behind by migrant men has been documented, but little recognition has been given to the women who return from having worked abroad. In this paper I examine the return of professional Egyptian women who temporarily worked in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the familial and social interpersonal relationships upon their return. By using narratives collected through structured interviews from 11 returned Egyptian women migrants who worked in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and existing literature, this paper explores the relationship between stated subjectivities given by participants and the inherent details tied to their socio-economic profile. First, an exploratory factor analysis is carried out in order to reduce elements in obtaining a clear classification of the determinant of migration, return typologies and motivations, economic remittance behavior, and finally how existing cultural embeddedness before departure influence the social remittances upon return. This thesis aims to incorporate the culture and female variable to the discourse of international labor migration.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

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This thesis intends to contribute to the feminine discourse of international migration with an emphasis on the return of Egyptian skilled/ professional female labor migrants.

International labor migration is a phenomenon that has increased with overpopulation of developing countries, ease of international movement, and the continuing disparity of wealth between developed and developing or poor countries. International labor migration is usually beneficial for both participants; the migrant earns a standard of living that otherwise would not be possible in his/her country of origin, and the employer receives labor at a cost that would be otherwise expensive from the local labor force. As stated at the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) which was held in 1994 in Egypt, “orderly international migration can have positive impacts on both the countries of origin and the countries of destination; Migration also has the potential of facilitating the transfer of skills, technology and contributing to cultural diversity” (UN, 1996, p. 1).

Despite the benefits, international labor migrations can also present problems. A flourishing sex trade exists in which migrants, including children, become trapped. Working conditions are often dangerous. Living conditions can be deplorable. Workers in host countries can be shut out of the labor market, and labor-exporting countries can lose skilled workers who are needed at home. Returning workers may be rejected and find it difficult to re-enter their own societies. The various negative effects of international labor migration have been studied extensively, and the research continues.

Most research generally focuses on the labor migration of male workers, both skilled and unskilled, with females as tied migrants. Those studies that cover female labor migration usually



focus on the “pink collar”<sup>1</sup> or the working class female labor migrant. This leaves a dearth of information regarding the “white collar” or skilled/professional labor migration of women. In my interest area, skilled/ professional Egyptian female migration, research is noticeably lacking. The deficiency of information is “part of a general lack of recognition and interest by academics and policy makers in skilled female migrants” (Kofman & Raghuram, *Skilled female labour migration*, 2009, p. 3). Equally, historical context has contributed to this deficiency. Traditionally, history has documented the sphere of men in public spaces in work, business, religious, and political association (Pedraza, 1991). By and large, women remained in the private sphere. It was not until women began to leave the home and entered the labor market, participated in strikes, joined labor unions, worked for suffrage that their actions become public and available to traditional research methodologies (cf Weinberg, *in press*; Pedraza, 1991, p. 305).

Research regarding the migration of Egyptians females has been scarce. A study showed that the mainstream of Egyptian female migrants, “migrate either to accompany their spouses, to get married to an Egyptian living abroad, or to travel for family reasons” (Sika, 2011, p. 2). Consequently, only a small percentage migrates for economic reasons.

In general, the Middle East and North African (MENA) countries have lower levels of women’s labor force involvement than other counties with comparable income levels (Roudi-Fahimi and Moghadam, 2003). According to a report from the World Bank on Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), women remained a largely untapped

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<sup>1</sup> “Pink-collar” refers to any field that’s been dominated by women historically. Louise Kapp Howe perhaps played the biggest role in defining what the term “pink collar” meant. In her 1977 book “*Pink Collar Workers*” she described pink-collar jobs as the lowest-rung occupations of last resort, in which women were relegated to jobs that offered little opportunity for advancement and very closely resembled their household chores (Tenery, 2012).

resource in the region; they make up half of the region's population and, in some countries, as much as "sixty-three percent of university students" (IDLO, 2007, p. 1). Today, they represent only a little over twenty-five percent of the labor force (WorldBank, *Opening Doors*, 2013, p. 41).

The MENA's economic and social structure, in which traditional gender roles are enforced, plays a significant role in low levels of participation of women outside the home. Gender norms in the region are a reflection of a patriarchal society in which women's main sphere of power is within the home (Moghadam 2004), "whereas men are the breadwinners and decision makers in the political and economic spheres" (Offenhauer 2005; WorldBank, *Opening Doors*, 2013, p. 13). Nevertheless, as these women become more educated and opportunities arise, they gain awareness of their rights and become more politically active, challenging the status quo and demanding equality within the family and society and gradually shifting the balance demographics of their country (Moghadam, *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*, 2003). In addition, with current international pressure to reform, MENA countries are encountering economic change that is constructing a movement for women to become more involved outside the home. Moreover, as the region's cost of living rises, families are increasingly forced to diversify their labor resource and depend on the additional income that a female family member can contribute.

### **1.1. Background:**

My interest in this topic evolved as I explored the culture of migration<sup>2</sup> within the Egyptian milieu. While living in Egypt, I observed that a significant percentage of Egyptian

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<sup>2</sup> The phrase "culture of migration" directs attention to the history and socio-cultural dimensions of the sending community. It describes a situation where migration becomes deeply ingrained into the repertoire of people's

families are separated with one or more family members participating in international labor migration as an outcome of income disparities at home.

Public economic factors fuel the international migration of Egyptians. With its population nearing 89.4 million at home, as of August 2014 (CAPMAS, 2014; SIS, 2014; Ahramonline, Egypt's Population Grows by over 3.5 million Since 2014: CAPMAS, 2015) and unemployment at 13.3 % (CAPMAS, 2014; Ahramonline, Egypt's Unemployment Slows in Q2/2014 to 13.3pct, 2014), and as many as 16 million Egyptians living and working outside their country in order to provide for their families (CAPMAS, 2014; SIS, 2014). As a result, international labor migration is a cornerstone of the Egyptian economy.

International labor migration generally refers to the cross-border movement from one country to another for the main purpose of employment (I.O.M). Comprised within this framework is a broad arrangement of migrant typologies that aim to outline the various groups of players with a diverse set of agendas and objectives that are categorized as “migrants”; consequently, no universally accepted definition of migrant exists at the international level (Balderrama, 2013). In many developing countries, international labor migration mainly functions as an economic strategy, as technology and knowledge transfer, business and trade networks, and remittances gained abroad by returning migrants contribute to a country’s economic growth.

Egypt’s slow growth in industries and services has not generated jobs fast enough to absorb its increasing working population. At the same time, the prospect of better wages and career opportunities have compelled many Egyptians to seek their fortune in wealthier and

---

behavior, and values associated with migration become part of the community’s values” (Massey et al. 1993; 452-53)

advanced industrialized countries. In addition, increasing this outward migration is the migration into Egypt of people from even poorer Middle Eastern and African countries, including Sudan, Iraq, Somalia, Eritrea, and Syrians ( (Di Bartolomeo, Fakhoury, & Perrin, 2010)

Contracted skilled migration from Egypt is not a new occurrence. The exportation of skilled Egyptian workers dates back to the sponsorship of school teachers to Iraq in the 1930s, a platform which spread to additional countries after the 1952 revolution (Messiha, 1983; Sell, 1988, p. 89). Then, around 1960, active migration was stimulated for individuals pursuing to study overseas. At the same time, a concern with the “brain drain” produced a policy reversal in 1969 (Sell, 1988). Shortly after, coinciding with U.S. President Harry Truman’s global development strategies for the underdeveloped nations, Egyptian policy creators recognized the role migration played in alleviating redundancy for its increasingly populous country, from then on a financial development approach to migration has been its basis (Saleh, 1983; Sell, 1988).

With enlarged oil revenues, aggressive development plans, and social projects in the GCC the movement of Egyptians to the region increased. As the oil producing countries began to flourish, a demand for both skilled and semi-skilled laborers was created. In addition, the GCC’s low population levels, laws that prohibited women from fully participating in the labor force, and the disinclination of nationals to work in the private sector (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005) fostered the need for labor migrants.

Due to the large number of Egyptian workers relocating to the GCC nations, political and economic actions were made to facilitate the limitations imposed on international labor migration. For example, under the 1971 Constitution:

Permanent and temporary migration was authorized under Article 52 of the 1971 Constitution, eliminating every barrier to emigration. Article 52 stated that "all

Egyptians were granted the right to emigrate and to return home". During the same year, the government issued Law 73, which gave the public sector and government employees the right to return to their jobs within one year of the date of resignation. The time frame was then extended to two years and other legal impediments were removed. At this time, the phenomenon of temporary migration started and large numbers of migrants began to flow towards the Arab Gulf Countries (Zohry & Harrell-Bond, *Contemporary Egyptian Migration*, 2003, p. 26).

From that point forward, migration continues on being a top necessity. It not only solves unemployment issues, it likewise provides remittances that help repair payment deficits and finance private activities. Furthermore, migration supplies Arab nations with necessary work and mitigates pressure in Egypt brought about by political and financial limitations (Zohry & Harrell-Bond, *Contemporary Egyptian Migration*, 2003).

Egypt is somewhat unique among Middle Eastern developing countries. Despite its high percentage of poverty, it has an excellent university system. Regardless of Egypt's male-dominated, Islamic traditional structure, Egyptian women are not discouraged from seeking a university education. Yet, in spite of the supply of human capital, Egypt does not have the industry or wealth to fully and effectively employ its skilled and educated graduates. Therefore, there is a surplus of skilled workers. Although the percentage of females with advanced education remains below average, the outcome for these women who wish to apply their skills and education lucratively is similar to Egyptian men; professional Egyptian females must leave Egypt to find suitable work.

Egypt's structural economic forces lead many workers, both skilled and low skilled, to seek work outside of the country. As services and technological innovations dominate the international market, the demand for skilled workers will continue to be on the rise and skilled women will play a significant role in the supply.

In the Middle Eastern countries, as in other developing countries, education has become a key strategy for reducing poverty (Roudi-Fahimi and Moghadam, 2003). Women are attaining higher levels of education than ever before and increasingly engaging in skilled wage labor within the national economy, they are also becoming more inclined to join the international labor force where women from developing and underdeveloped countries have been active in large numbers since at least the 1960s. Some will migrate permanently, while some will take temporary contracted labor in the GCC. My interest is in the latter group.

The primary focus of this paper is to examine how far temporary migration effects the gender position of professional Egyptian female migrant and the impact on Egyptian social structure when these women return to Egypt after living and working temporarily out of their country

### **1.1.1. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Characteristics:**

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a political and economic union of six Middle Eastern countries encompassing Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.

Labor migration to the Gulf region began with the excavation of oil in the late 1930s; however, it was during the oil flourishing period of 1973 until 1982, that the quantity of labor migrants to the region quickly increased. There were a couple of reasons for the huge

importation of labor migrants to the Gulf region at the time. The subsequent 1973 oil boom led to an extraordinary scale of advance projects commanded by the GCC countries. Due to the GCC scarce national workforce that lacked the required skills to execute these project at that time (Winckler, Labor Migration to the GCC States: Patterns, Scales and Policies, 2010), as a consequence, an enormously rapid surge in the demand for foreign workers was needed. While the instant strategy for the labor force scarcity was hiring foreign workers, the longer-term strategy was the implementation of a pro-natalist policy alongside a large scale investment in education and vocational training in order to supply the necessary workers from the local population (Winckler, Labor Migration to the GCC States: Patterns, Scales and Policies, 2010).

Prior to the oil boom, the migration and labor policies of these oil-producing kingdoms had sustained a liberal non-selective migration scheme until the late 1970s (Winckler, The Immigration Policy of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, 1997). Towards the close of the 1970s, and gradually after 1982, the migration policies of the GCC states shifted in a contrasting direction. Concluding the 'oil decade'(1973-82), the ruling classes began initiating stricter protocols over the entry of foreign laborers.

In spite of the need for imported labor, it should not have been assumed that the Gulf royal families would have considered resolving the workforce scarcity through mass naturalization of foreign labor (Winckler, Labor Migration to the GCC States: Patterns, Scales and Policies, 2010). The presence of foreigners raises some problems:

“First, the foreign workers, Arab or non-Arab, have a different, usually more liberal life-style. Conservative elements among religious teachers fear that their example may lead to desertion of “the old ways”. Second, to the extent that Arab immigrants come from a more radical background they could serve as a catalyst for possible opposition to the

current regimes. This danger has been reduced to some extent by the replacement of Arab workers in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait with Asians since 1991. Many of GCC leaderships believe foreigners cannot be trusted fully, especially in a crisis. This attitude is rooted in the essential tribal nature of the GCC states society, where family is primary and foreigners, although treated quite hospitably, are not made part of the family” (Alasfoor, 2007, p. 201).

Although traditionally, Arabs like to uniquely separate themselves from other Arabs, the people of GCC use the phrase or term, the Arab peoples of the Gulf or “Gulfians” (Khalijeem in Arabic) (Alasfoor, 2007). The Arab peoples of the Gulf share the same cultural structure in religious association, linguistic practices, historical facts, future objectives, life-style, or even tribal makeup (Alasfoor, 2007). “That is to say, the Gulf society has always been a religious and conservative one when compared with other parts of the Arab world” (Alasfoor, 2007, p. 215).

As a result of cultural and political difference, a scheme of quotas, visa, and work licenses requirements are some of the actions to limit the quantity of foreign workers and achieve a demographic balance in these countries. In addition, deprivation of nationality or property purchase, unequal access to private and public sector jobs, as well as, social services are denied. Under these procedures, foreign workers have come to constitute a commercial underclass. Unlike in other industrial countries, labor migration to the GCC states seldom leads to permanent settlement or naturalization; despite the amount of time a worker has been living and working in these states. Therefore, labor migration to the GCC is considered temporary.

## **1.2. Research Question:**

This thesis aims to examine the social changes brought about by temporary migration from the return of professional Egyptian female migrants from the GCC. I focus on temporary



migration because it comprises a significant proportion of global capital and migration flows due to closed door policies in industrial countries as well as many of the GCC states (Massey, Closed-Door Policy, 2003). I focus on returned migrants as they are the ones who play a significant role in the political, economic, and social transformation in their countries of origin. I focus on professional migrants because with current globalization movements, the emigration of highly skilled persons from developing countries has significantly increased. However, the main focus is on female migrants because their experiences differ from male migrants. While significant literature exists detailing the experiences of migrants and their contribution to their countries of origin, much less has been written on the experiences and contributions of skilled and temporary returned female migrants, especially from Egypt.

The thesis will address the following research questions: Does the return of skilled female labor migrants influence the power arrangements within the family? Are gender roles affected upon return? Do the skills and experience gained abroad allow return female migrants more gender equality in the Egyptian labor market?

The feminist view of gender as a "social construction" has raised questions that have driven much of the discourse in the study of women and labor migration in the past decade (Boyd & Grieco, 2003). One overarching question relates to the system of patriarchy, or the levels of power, authority, and control that men use to rule over women. How does patriarchy, which gives men privileged rights to the resources available in society, influence women's ability to migrate (Boyd & Grieco, 2003)? Another question, one that this thesis aims to answer, focuses on the interpersonal relationships between men and women. How is patriarchy modernized after migration (Boyd & Grieco, 2003)? Others ask if the migration of either men or women stimulate the power arrangements and decision making between men and women. While

research continues to resolve these questions, according to Raghuram (2000), “Skilled migrant women may be better able than unskilled women to utilize their privileged position within labor market hierarchies to mute gender hierarchies, particularly when there are global shortages within these labor markets. However, the extent to which this re-negotiation actually occurs, and its manner, is still uncertain” (Raghuram, 2000, p. 451)

### **1.2.1. Hypothesis**

An ethnographic approach was taken to conduct this research; as a result no hypothesis was initiated. A feature for ethnographic methodology is that it doesn't propose a theory prior to the investigation (Wiersma 1986, Gay and Airasian 1992, Tuckman 1999; Nurani, 2008)). The primary goal of the ethnographic methods may be to give a suitable comprehensive account of the situation being observed (Nurani, 2008). This narrative then develops the basis of the construal of the phenomena (Nurani, 2008). The lack of the “hypothesis at the initial stage of research helps the researchers avoid any ideas aroused from the hypothesis that could influence accuracy of the interpretation” (Nurani, 2008, p. 2).

### **1.2.2. Methodology:**

This is an ethnographic study comprised of grounded theory and explanatory research. This study focuses on return of Egyptian professional female migrants from the GCC. The migration of Egyptians to Arab countries is known as “temporary Egyptian migration”, basically because Egyptians, as well as other cultural group, who are working in Arab countries do not gain any rights irrespective of their time of stay in these kingdoms (Zohry, Egyptian Irregular Migration to Europe, 2006). Since they are not eligible to any benefits associated to nationality rights, they almost always return to their motherlands (Zohry, Egypt’s Place in the Euro-

Mediterranean Migration System, 2010). The migration of Egyptians to Arab GCC countries is usually managed by a set of regulations, certified migration brokers, and many other conditions (Zohry, Egypt's Place in the Euro-Mediterranean Migration System, 2010, p. 25).

The study population used in the study was gathered through the snowball technique, which was followed by new word-of-mouth leads and opportunities from the contacts already established. In this research, I utilize structured face-to-face interviews with open-ended questionnaires which were conducted in the English language as most of the women with whom I spoke have a strong command of the language.

My study populations consisted of 11 returning professional Egyptian female migrants from diverse backgrounds. As stated earlier, "migrants" comprise of a diverse range of players with a variety of agendas (Balderrama, 2013). At the time of their migration the participants were either married, single or widow. They are from different age groups, ranging from early 20s to late 60s. In addition, they had all acquired a university degree, which was the basis for their participation in the international labor market. The focus of this research is on professional laborers, with an emphasis on women, who hold a university degree. Individuals in this social class, "often seek to maximize return on their investment in education and training by moving in search of the highest pay and/or most rewarding employment" (Iredale, 2001, p. 8). The following describes a brief profile of the women participants. Their identities have been changed to protect their privacy.

### **1.3. Characteristics of Case Study Population:**

**Yasmine:** A 22 years old female at the time of her migration. The youngest of four daughters, she acquired her B.A. in Liberal Arts from Cairo University. After graduating from high school she was granted a Ford Fellowship where she studied in the United States for approximately a

year. Thereafter, she worked as a flight attendant for an Arab Airline and lived in Dubai for a period of four years.

**Basma:** A 27 years old at the time of her migration. She worked in Dubai for a period of two years. She was also unmarried at the time of her migration. At the time of this interview, she was completing her MBA. She is now a quality manager for an IT company in Egypt.

**Nancy:** A Ph. D. holder in education. She was the oldest of the labor migrants from this pool of women. She was 60 years old at the time of her labor migration. As a professor in Home Economics, she worked in Oman as a lecturer for a total of four years. Married at the time, she and her husband decided on her labor migration to add to their retirement income.

**Shereen:** A doctor of clinical pathology. She worked in Saudi Arabia for two years. Although she married after her return, she was in her early thirties and unmarried at the time of her migration.

**Rehab:** A cardiologist. She is the second oldest of her four siblings and the oldest of the females. She worked in Kuwait for a period of 2 years while in her early 30s. She was unmarried at the time of her migration. Since her return she has gotten married, completed her PH.D, has a baby girl and was expecting her second child.

**Azza:** A cardiologist. She worked in Saudi Arabia for a period of one year. She was married at the time of migration with three children. Her husband is a police officer.

**Marwa:** A clinical doctor. She worked in Saudi Arabia for a period of one year. She was also married at the time of her migration with three children whom she took with her to Saudi Arabia.

**Aya:** A doctor of radiology. She worked in Saudi Arabia for a total of seven years as a circular migrant. She was widowed upon the start of her migration. She has two adult children.

**Dalia:** A teacher of Islamic studies. She worked in Oman for a period of one year. At the time of her migration, she had recently married and was pregnant, yet she felt it was an opportunity that she could not pass up.

**Amira:** An anaesthesiologist. She is a single woman in her late 30s. She worked in Saudi Arabia for one year. She was in her early thirties at the time of her migration. She is the eldest of her siblings and is unmarried.

**Engy:** A doctor of endocrinology. She also worked in the Saudi for a period of one year. She was in her early thirties at the time of her migration and is unmarried.

As an American female, tapping into a population to which I do not belong, in this case, Arab migrant women, the research undoubtedly presented a challenge for me. Robert Merton (1972), in his work 'Insider/Outsiders' discusses the problems associated with trying to gain the trust and consent of a population that the researcher is not a part of. Given the cultural barriers, and the turbulent political situation, I encountered obstacles in gaining confidence from a couple of my subjects. Some subjects had agreed to participate in the study, but partly due to their suspicious nature of foreigners and the country's lack of freedom of speech, in the end they did not participate. I had hoped that the personal references from current contacts would have enabled me to gain the trust of all the research subjects. In most of my cases it did. Unfortunately, however, in a couple of cases trust building did not take place. In order to minimize exposure and maximize trust and comfort, I conducted the interviews in a place of the interviewee's choosing.

Furthermore, in order to develop a more accurate framework I visited the GCC States of Dubai and Kuwait which I felt it necessary. I wanted to acquire an objective viewpoint of their experience along with their subjective perspective. By understanding their environmental and cultural surroundings and the types of social freedoms they were granted and part took while abroad, and by comparing the social freedoms granted in their country of origin, I felt would enable me to develop a more accurate framework of their migration experience. In order to do this, I established contacts with two skilled Egyptian female labor migrants currently living in the GCC States of Kuwait and United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.) where a large portion of skilled Egyptians migrate for work. Although these are two Arab Muslim countries, I wanted to compare the cultural difference in these countries and the subjective influence on return of Egyptian female migrants.

#### **1.4. Organization of the Study**

This research is divided into seven chapters, the first chapter being the Introduction. In this chapter I discuss the research question and methodologies. In chapter two I present the literature review, and in chapter three the framework. Chapter four discusses the determinants of female migration with an analysis. Chapter five delves into the return of female migrants. Chapter six discusses monetary remittance behaviour; the different behaviour of temporary, skilled and female migrants. Chapter seven focuses on social remittances, including the conclusion I have drawn from my research.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

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The restructuring of globalization and economic schemes in current years have generated three increasing patterns in the trajectory of international migration: the feminization of international labor, the movement from semi-skilled to highly skilled migration, and the bilateral agreements towards temporary movement.

Among these trends, the feminization of the international labor force began partially from the demographic transition,<sup>3</sup> which numerous industrial nations are presently experiencing. The absent participation of a younger labor force in these countries has increased the demand for female labor migrants in the domestic and healthcare services from mainly developing countries.

Secondly, the high demand for skilled mechanical advancements, especially in IT and data innovation, worldwide finance, and biotechnological developments, has expanded the demand for highly skilled specialists around the world but more so to western industrial countries, including the GCC.

Moreover, modern political and social boundaries to entering industrial nations have made temporary migration the entry point for labor relocation. As result, this chapter focuses on the feminization of labor migrants by also addressing the other two trends, and their impact on feminization. This will be analyzed through reviewing the literature to identify the background information and to provide hypothetical support to the theoretical framework and research questions.

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<sup>3</sup> The transition from high birth and death rates to low birth and death rates as a country develops from a pre-industrial to an industrialized economic system.

### **2.1. Feminization of International Migration:**

In recent years, the quantity of female labor migrants has surpassed that of men universally. It used to be that the migrant women, by and large, were considered dependents of male migrants. They were the wives, mothers, or daughters who moved alongside their male breadwinners.

Initially, the flow of women in migration streams began as a family reunification scheme. The economic development of post-World War II commissioned large numbers of male workers from surrounding and far away nations into European industrial countries. However, the recession of the 1970s resulted in the financial slowdown in Europe and in the United States. As a consequence, labor movement into these nations, that had been mainly been dominated by male migrants working labor-intensive occupations on provisional or seasonal basis, were altered (Farris, 2010). Rather than returning to their country of origin, migrants began to bring and settle their families in their host country (Farris, 2010), which boosted the feminization of migration trend.

Due to family reunification, the number of women in migration engagements began to rise. Although women had always been present in migration flows, their numbers amplified starting in the 1970s, as a result of family reunification permits (Farris, 2010). As these women settled down, they began to seek employment which increased the sum of female labor migrants. Nowadays, the international migration of women is progressively fluctuating from a family reunification system to a more economic motivated scheme, in which more and more women migration independently to work abroad (Boyd & Grieco, 2003).

In addition, the rise of women in high income countries entering the labor force, along with demographic changes in fertility rates and life expectancy, including the drop in public



services for child and elderly care, have contributed to the healthcare crisis in many industrial countries and have generated high levels of demand for paid care work, which have been supplied mainly by migrant women from lower-income countries. “To a large extent, the global commoditization of care has been part of the globalization of the labor force; but it has also contributed to the feminization of international migration” (Beneria, Deere, & Kabeer, 2012, p. 3).

Today, female migrants across the world have been breaking social, economic and cultural barriers. They include, wives and daughters of male migrants, as well as, independent female laborers migrating in their own capacity as domestic workers, health providers, teachers, and in other professions.

The increasing participation of independent women in the international labor force is said to have its roots in the feminization of labor. The feminization of labor refers to the growing incorporation of females into the workforce as an outcome of global economic reforms and globalization processes<sup>4</sup> (Hossfeld, 2009). It is characterized by an informal working culture, such as irregular or low pay, menial labor, lack of benefits, and poor working conditions (Standing, 1999). Similarly, the increase of female labor migrants, or “the feminization of labor migration” (Lan, 2006), is defined as women migrants moving beyond occupying the role of companions to their male counterparts, to becoming breadwinners in their own right (Bastia, 2007; Pessar & Mahler, 2006; Balderrama, 2013, p. 9). It is also characterized by exploitive working conditions. It focuses on traditional female-specific work, such as domestic helpers,

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<sup>4</sup> The four basic aspects of globalization are; trade and transactions, capital and investments movements, migration and movement of people, and the dissemination of knowledge.

nurses, and entertainers. Both, the feminization of labor and the feminization of labor migration are the result of globalization processes (Labadie-Jackson, 2008).

Based on the literature, several factors apart from the demographic transition have critically impacted the feminization of labor migration. I examine the effects of skilled and temporary migration and the consequences of female labor migration. In addition, the movement of the feminization labor migration happening from developing countries to industrial countries is used as a typical example to further explain and translate the impact from those factors on the feminization of migration of Egyptian women.

### **2.1.1. Structural Adjustments and the Impact on the Feminization of International Migration:**

Much of the discourse on female international migration points to the negative impact that globalization has had on developing countries and, in particular, on women. Trade, capital flows, and technological advances that characterized economic globalization have prompted new economic strategies and production schemes such as skill requirements, labor market regulations, education policy and employment with vital ramifications for national cutbacks (Moghadam, 1999).

These new frameworks are directed by neoliberal conventions which use “Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs).”<sup>5</sup> These policies are designed to adjust public budgets and augment competitiveness through trade and price liberalization. This in turn shrinks the public-sector wage bill and endorses the development of the private sector, privatization of social services, foreign investment, and the production of goods and service industries for trade purposes

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<sup>5</sup> Structural adjustment programs are policies implemented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in developing countries. They provide conditions for receiving loans and obtaining lower interests rates.

(Moghadam, 1999; Ramirez et al, 2005; Omelaniuk, n.d.). The feminist narratives on economic development have been exceptionally critical, opposing Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) with carrying out its ambitions on the spines of the impoverished people, especially underprivileged women (Moghadam, 1999; Sassan, 2000). “Women have had to assume extra productive and reproductive activities in order to survive the austerities of adjustment and stabilization policies, including higher prices, and to compensate for the withdrawal or reduction of government subsidies of food and services,” (Moghadam, 1999, p. 370).

Decreasing labor expenditures is a distinguishing feature of Structural Adjustment Programs. One technique to maintain expenses from rising is through what Standing (1999) calls “flexible forms of labor.” He evaluates that due to global competition and the pressure to keep unit cost down, companies replace men's labor, viewed as regular, unionized, and stable with female labor, viewed as irregular, low-paid, and insecure (Standing, 1999, p585). This has remained possible due to guidelines that endorse labor deregulation and the application of “flexible forms of labor” (Standing, 1999; Simeen, 2003), which is categorized by franchising, subcontracting, part-time and temporary work, and self and home employment (Simeen, 2003) with no healthcare or retirement benefits. Globally, the restructuring of the world economy has incorporated more women than men mainly since women are inclined to engage more frequently in part time, casual, flexible, or informal labor activities as a result of their unpaid domestic labor responsibilities within household (Mutari & Figart, 2003; Simeen, 2003).

### **2.1.2. Structural Adjustments in Egypt:**

In the mid-1970s then President Anwar Sadat launched the task of destabilizing former president Gamel Abdel Nasser's social and economic scheme constructed the previous decade. In the decade between the 1970s and 1980s, the state began to reduce its involvement in the

economy and society, and started to operate as a private entrepreneur in its own sector (Hatem, Privatization and the Demise of State Feminism in Egypt, 1994). As result, the state narrowed its employment of women (in particular women in the skilled sector working class and professional middle class women who were the main beneficiaries of the state sector), the hospitable working conditions (especially good salaries and day-care services) that had been provided for them, and finally, the provision of important social services, such as education and healthcare have been either undermined or left stagnant (Hatem, 1994, p48).

The move toward SAPs brought together an unlikely alliance. The State and the IMF and World Bank, along with conservative Islamic groups, allied as a force to be reckoned with. In alliance with Islamic groups, a conservative ideology was drafted. The 1970s conservative ideology prospered in adding new social pressures calculated to inspire employed women to return to the home (Hatem, 1994). Supported by the State, the Islamist groups highlighted motherhood as a women's principal task. They encouraged a significant amount of women to pull out from the workforce by implementing policies that facilitated them taking unpaid time off or working part-time in order to nurture their children (Hatem, 1994). In this backdrop, outside influences by means of the IMF and the World Bank which sought to constrict the state sector as part of the privatization effort, led to unprecedented levels of unemployment among women.

Furthermore, job creation in the private sector has been too restricted to absorb the large and growing number of women jobseekers. Employers in the private sector often perceive women as costlier and as less productive than men (WorldBank, Opening Doors, 2013, p. 4). Likewise, women have concerns about their reputations and safety in private sector jobs.

In summary, atypically, SAP negatively affected Egyptian women's employment opportunities in both the private and public sectors. Worldwide, observational studies have

demonstrated an increase in female participation in the labor market during periods of crisis and SAPs, which has been credited to supply-side-effects, and to pushing women to work outside the home to compensate for falling male incomes, or to demand-side-effects stemming from the occurrence of deregulated, labor-intensive, export-oriented enterprises that support the employment of women (Standing, 1999; Moghadam, 1999). However, this was not the case in Egypt. Due to budget cuts imposed by SAPs, the public sector reduced employment opportunities for females where many women received benefits such as childcare and maternity leave (Hatem, 1994).

In general, SAPs have been a key factor in the proliferation of women in the domestic and international labor force. Moghadam (1999) contends that by engaging women for low-cost labor and unbalancing declining family budgets in developing countries due to the shift of the male breadwinner have not only enlarged the reserve of job-seeking women in the domestic labor force, but additionally in the international labor force. While in Egypt, the conservative ideology and discrimination of women in both the private and public sector due to SAPs similarly pushes women to seek work outside of Egypt.

Besides structural adjustment, the second factor with impact on feminization is skilled migration as reviewed in the next section.

## **2.2. Skilled Migration and the Feminization of International Migration:**

Since the early 1990s, skilled migration has been on the rise (Vertovec, 2002). Increased competition and labor shortages in information and communication technology have increased the demand for highly trained professionals in industrial nations and has resulted in a significant rise in professional labor migration over the past decades (Taran & Geronimi, 2002, p. 5). At the same time, the experience that highly skilled migrants gain abroad is considered a 'brain gain' and

source of development when they return to their country of origin. Returning migrants stimulate the economy in their country of origin as they bring with them social, cultural and economic capital gained abroad. They often bring back technological and administrative expertise, which some use to become involved in entrepreneurial activities. (Skeldon, 2008).

While there is no formal description of what comprises highly skilled migration, various literatures include a range of definitions. Accordingly, highly skilled laborers can be defined as “anyone who holds a University Degree or extensive or equivalent experience in a given field” (Iredale, 2001: 8, see also Salt, 1997: 5; Cerna, 2009). In addition, there is a distinction between skilled and highly skilled specialist. The Organization for Economic Development (OECD SOPEMI, 1997:21) includes highly skilled specialist as independent executives, senior managers, specialized technicians or tradespersons, investors, business persons, and sub-contract workers (Iredale, 2001, p.8), while skilled workeres are catagorized as nurses and teachers (Kofman, Raghuram, 2009). Other factors may include amount of experience and salary earnings. Jolly and Reeves (2005) adds that “skilled women migrants have globally been inclined to go into what can be broadly classified as the welfare and social professions, traditionally female jobs” (10). Ironically, most skilled females fall under the category of skilled workers as oppose to highly skilled workers which is mainly dominated by males. This is mainly due to the continual segregation in the education system and the division of labor. As a result, it has as significant effect on women’s opportunities in the international labor market.

For industrial nations, the international labor movement of professional migrants is positively beneficial to the supply of human capital in the receiving economy. Professional workers transport with them expertise encompassing; specialized skills, training and experience that are not easily replaced in the short term. They frequently fill insistent labor shortages in the

job market that continues even in times of crisis, and have effect on nations' long-term financial development (Cerna, 2009). In addition, research indicates that for the developing countries, the movement of skilled migrants accelerates returns to education as it proliferates the motivations of the local citizen to procure human capital in hope of one day migrating themselves (Cerna, 2009). A positive advantage occurs when the rise in the amount of people that obtain higher education more than counterweighs the amount of skilled people that migrate. Simultaneously, it alleviates unemployment densities through remittance, money sent back from employment; and helps the sending country in accruing foreign capitals and in balancing its GDP.

Moreover, a reason for the recruitment of highly skilled migrants is that they are better informed about their rights, and thus are less easily exploited than low skilled migrants. Due to the educational, linguistic and cultural capital that they often possess, high skilled migrants are also better positioned to easily integrate into the mainstream of the host society (OECD, 2002). This in effect can lower the risk of law-breaking such as trafficking and the informal sector in the host country, which are often a result of low skilled migration (OECD, 2002).

Sassan's (2000) "feminization of survival"<sup>6</sup> contrasts in concept from the contemporary labor movement of professional women. In the feminization of survival, female migrants are mainly under skilled labors, concentrated in the private sector as domestic workers or caregivers, working in places where labor is unregulated; therefore these women migrants are less aware of

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<sup>6</sup> Sakia (2000) adds that the growing unemployment of men associated with SAP has added to the pressure on women to secure family survival. She terms the globalization impact of structural adjustments as "counter-geographies" in light of the fact that it is progressively backs of women that these forms of making a living, earning a profit, and securing government revenues are realized (506). In addition, she calls the labor movement of women the "feminization of survival,"<sup>6</sup> as they have become a source of livelihood, profit making, and accrual of foreign currency. Families, communities and administrations are supported on their profits for survival (Sassan, 2000).

their human rights and are more easily exploited. On the other hand, professional women migrants work in both the public and private sector; they are academicians, doctors or health providers. Highly skilled female migrants generally work in large corporations where labor is regulated and therefore less likely to be exploited. The contemporary labor movements of professional women are independent professional female migrants who are well educated, aware of their human rights and hold economic bargaining power. They are knowledgeable and capable players in the international labor force.

In recent years, a more selective process of migration has been taking place, one that favors skilled labor over low skilled labor. This in turn has generated international debate as policies aimed at attracting the skilled and deterring the low skilled has resulted in economic and social consequences. In the current literature of skilled migration, there are two opposing viewpoints, the advocates and the contenders of skilled migration, both of which are reviewed as follows.

### **2.2.1. Contenders of Skilled Migration (Brain Drain):**

In recent decades, the international labor movement of professional persons from developing countries to developed countries has been a fiercely debated topic that has been termed ‘brain drain.’ The term, “brain drain,” first emerged in a report published in the 1960s by the Royal Society of London (Royal Society, 1963; (Avveduto, Brandi, & Todisco, n.d.). It refers to the departure of scientist, engineers, doctors and financial professionals; and also pointed at the loss of British professionals to the United States. Thus, the first emigration of highly skilled professionals was predominantly a North to North phenomenon States (Avveduto, Brandi, & Todisco, n.d.)

In the past two decades, however, these migration flows have mainly shifted from South to North; therefore, most common conclusions nowadays are that most highly skilled professionals



originate from the countries of the South, and that their removal by the North is harmful to the development of the Southern countries. It has been disputed that migration can either be the outcome of development (or oftentimes of the lack of it) as much as the cause for it (Raghuram, 2009; Balderrama M. I., 2013). These two views have fueled the migration on development debate during the last five decades (De Hass, Migration and Development: A Theoretical Perspective<sup>1</sup>, 2010), as migration “advocates” and migration “contenders” have taken turns throughout the years in levelling their views towards the drafting of policies that reflect these opposing ideologies (Balderrama M. I., 2013, p. 15).

The contenders of the brain drain claim that the relocation of human capital results in slower growth in the home country by depriving developing countries from human capital needed for development (Fan and Stark, 2007; Kapur, 2003; Cekanavičius and Kasnauskiene, 2006; Lowell and Findlay, 2002; Lowell and Gerova, 2004; Taylor, 2006; Mehrez & Hamdy, 2010). Garcia Pires (N.D) views that the brain drain is detrimental to poor countries through a set of three negative exteriors; the reduced productivity of those left behind, higher costs of public goods, and loss of the investment made in human capital formation (Garcia Pires, N.D). Therefore, the brain drain creates a range of costly externalities on developing countries.

### **2.2.2. The Brain Drain and Feminization of International Migration:**

The brain drain quantity of professional migrant women from developing countries has significant impact on the sending country. Docquier et al (2009) analyzed that the emigration of skilled female workers is most detrimental to developing economies. He argues that women, by nature and gender orientations, are considered to hold more human assets than men. This is because women are considered nurturers by character and the carriers and transmitters of culture and knowledge due to their household responsibilities.

Women, play a key role in health and education sectors that are critical for national development. In addition, sufficient studies demonstrate that women's education is surely associated with investments in children's education; and therefore has significant effects on the human capital of future generations (World Bank 2007). Moreover, links between women's migration and human capital accumulation are particularly critical for developing countries, since women's level of schooling is usually considered a fundamental ingredient for economic growth. Also due to the fact that women in developing countries still face unequal access to tertiary education and highly skilled jobs. Many studies report that women's human capital, particularly in developing countries, is an even rarer resource than men's (Docquier, Lowell, & Marfouk, 2009). Therefore, the emigration of educated women is likely to generate higher relative losses of human capital than the emigration of skilled males (Docquier, Lowell, & Marfouk, 2009).

To put into prospective, while the labor of movement of skilled women on a temporary basis has an impact on the economy. Temporary skilled migrant women return to their country of origin with skills, financial and social capital gained from abroad. The permanent migration of skilled professional women offers little or no returns to the economy.

### **2.2.3. Advocates of International Skilled Migration and the Brain Waste:**

Adding to the argument is that unemployment and low wages in developing countries push some professionals to settle and accept jobs for which they are over qualified resulting in brain waste. Oommen (1989) opposes by pointing out that "What would the highly skilled of developing countries be doing if they do not chose to migrate? If these professionals were just to join the considerable number of unemployed in the country, it will be a greater drain on the country's resources since they are virtually unproductive, and they have to be fed" (Cohen & Oommen, 1996, p. 412). As most developing countries lack industries and services, many highly skilled

professionals are found working in the informal sector as a way to make a livelihood; therefore, unproductively using their education leading to a brain waste.

A feature of the selective nature of labor migration is education. It is usually easier for university graduates than for the less educated to find work abroad; therefore Adiseshiah (1972) argues although education in impoverish countries is means to propel development, yet to many of these countries, education is not the road to development but the road to migration (39). Sheldon (2007) adds that developed countries also emigrate highly skilled professionals through Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and therefore balances the brain drain through skills and expertise that jump start developing economies.

Other counter arguments suggest that developing countries are amplifying the problem of the migration of the highly skilled. Cohen and Oommen (1996) suggest that there is actually less migration of skilled professionals at any point of time; that due to the many broader restrictions, there are fewer flows of professional migrants abroad. Therefore, there is not much of a negative impact on their economies considering that they cannot employ all the skilled manpower that they generate through their educational institutions.

The 'brain drain' concern can equally be constructive and destructive. As Frandrich (2006) examines, a skill scarcity can be created through individuals who migrate which may possibly deny the population of vital skills. However, this skill scarcity can clear up career opportunities for others, thus decreasing the stress on the labor market, assuming that migrants were employed before migrating. If the labor migrants were not working prior to migrating, then this would also lessen the pressure on labor market demands.

The two opposite viewpoints of contenders and advocates of skilled migration, or say “brain drain” and “brain waste”, are not conflicting to each other but describing the same migration phenomenon from two different viewpoints to explain the current feminization in labor migration, which offer in depth understanding that both situations require attention when attempting a to find a solution and solve an issue.

### **Egypt and the Brain Drain:**

Egypt has the largest tertiary education in the Middle East (Johnson, 2010). The rate of immigration of Egyptians with tertiary education is higher than that of lower or under skilled workers in the country (Docquier and Marfouk, 2004; Mehrez & Hamdy, 2010). As consequence, Egypt is one of the developing countries struck by brain drain. According to the World Economic Forum (2015), which compares 144 countries, Global Competitiveness is based on three indexes; basic requirements, efficiency enhancers, and innovations and sophisticated factors (Schwab, 2015). Egypt’s overall rank stood at 119. The index measures various aspects of the Egyptian economy, yet under the innovation and sophisticated factors, which includes business sophistication, Egypt ranked 113/144 this could also be used as an indicator to measure a deficiency of skilled workers in Egypt.

As part of Nasser’s socialist strategy, Egypt guaranteed jobs to all holders of intermediate diplomas and college degrees. However, since 1978, the state began defaulting on its assurance to hire all holders of higher education. In what was claimed as an effort to reduce surplus labor in the public sector, the state began reducing the pace of hiring new graduates (Hatem, 1994).

Egyptians have been migrating for career opportunities abroad for quite some time; however, with the rise of privatization and a surplus of workers from the public sector, their

numbers increased. Higher levels of human capital in developing countries such as Egypt usually mean higher levels of unemployment and in particular for women. These conditions will only make the “brain drain” worse and further give add to the feminization of labor migration.

At the same time, a solution to the “brain drain” is the “brain gain”. Since labor migration to the GCC is temporary, Egyptian are expected to return and when they do, they usually return with much more human capital due to experienced gained. Therefore, with regards to Egypt, the issue of temporary migration and the brain drain in the short term appears to be a brain gain in the long term through return migration.

Besides the two factors reviewed above, the third factor that has an impact on feminization is temporary migration or return as reviewed in the next section.

### **2.3. Temporary / Return Migration:**

In general, labor migration is almost always considered to be a temporary condition. Workers go abroad in order to achieve their desired financial means; and once they have achieved their goals, they return to their country of origin. The return migration of the skilled and highly skilled has been viewed as a “brain gain”. Returned skilled migrants are said to come back with acquired skills, incite innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as create linkage between source and host country (IOM, 2008).

Temporary migration is an economic strategy presented as a necessity to fill labor shortages (Cerna, 2009). It can be defined as either contracted labor or return migration (Dustmann, 1999) since temporary migrants have to return.

Temporary migration is not a new economic scheme; it is a post WWII trade approach. The guest worker system in Europe after WWII brought workers from various part of the world to

help rebuild the war torn economy. For example, the Bacadero system in the 1960s brought workers from Latin America to the United States as seasonal workers to assist in agricultural production. Nowadays, due to large inflows of labor migrant from developing countries into industrial countries, strict regulations for labor migrants have been enacted (Martin, 2011) and bilateral agreements mainly regulate most temporary migration.

Similar to the brain drain debate, there is also much debate regarding the new restrictions on temporary labor migration. As with most aspects of migration, temporary migration has its costs and benefits. Due to the short term of contracted labor, the proponents of temporary migration characterize the movement as a “triple win solution” (Government of Mauritius & European Commission 2008; Newland, Agunias et al. 2008; Wickramasekara, 2012):

- Win for destination countries: Meeting labor market needs in destination countries without permanent settlement; minimizing irregular migration.
- Win for origin countries: opening legal avenues for migration for citizens; promoting development in home countries through a steady flow of remittances, return of skills and enterprise creation; mitigating the brain drain.
- Win for migrant worker: legal opportunity for migration, protecting the rights of migrants, especially women, remittances for family and gaining skills (Wickramasekara, 2012; ILO, 2010, p2).

On the other hand, opponents of temporary migration contemplate that the restricted period impedes with the migrant’s overall benefits. Christian Dustmann (1999) argues that if migrations are temporary, and if human capital requirements in origin and receiving country differ, the incentive to invest in host country specific human capital will depend on the expected length of

time that a migrant remains in the receiving country labor market (Dustmann, Temporary Migration and Economic Assimilation, 2000). In a study conducted by the Canadian Council for Refugee Studies (2010), it claims that resorting to temporary permits creates a class of vulnerable and disposable workers; and their rights are not fully protected making them vulnerable to exploitation. Without a permanent status, they cannot integrate into society and contribute to their full potential benefit (CCR, 2010). Temporary workers are in most cases ineligible for settlement services and cannot bring family members with them. Having a temporary status means a delayed or very limited settlement process.

Temporary migration has increasingly been conceptualized as positive for the economic growth of origin countries, whereby return migrants are often credited as a key and pioneering role in the investment and commercial development of their country (Agunias 2006; de Haas 2005; Ghosh 2006; de Haas & Fokkema, 2011). Theories of return migration hypothesize that if migration is temporary, the decision to relocate will not solely be based on immediate and future profits in the destination, but also on the expected future returns in the home country (Zaiceva & Zimmermann, 2013), as migrants bring back financial, human and social capital.

These arguments, however, do not influence the beneficial understanding of temporary migration, but offer evidence that temporary migrants have less benefits to stay but return to their home countries.

#### **2.4. The Role of Egyptian Women in the Feminization of International Migration:**

The migration of Egyptians to Arab countries is considered temporary migration. According to Dr. Zohry (2003), Egypt is now experiencing what is called “the permanence of temporary migration” (Farrag 1999: 55; Zohry, Egypt’s Place in the Euro-Mediterranean Migration System, 2010, p. 3); or what he likes to call “the culture of temporary migration”(3).

This is due to the fact that those who migrate to Arab countries do not gain any rights despite the length of stay in these countries.

The proportion of female labor migrants varies considerably by region (United Nations 2006; Martin 2007; Stecklov, Carletto, Azzari, & Davis, 2008). In general, studies show that women in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region constitute the lowest in the domestic labor force (Moghadam, *Gender and Globalization: Female Labor and Women's Mobilization*, 1999) and the most minimal female migrants contrasted with other female migrants on the globe (Morrison et al, 2007; Sika, 2011). To the extent that temporary migration is concerned, Egyptian females do not embody a significant number but just a few thousands (CAPMAS, 2010; Sika, 2011).

Currently, the region is experiencing an economic and political transformation due to the Arab Spring. The revolutionary movement has created an unprecedented window of opportunity for change. Yet women in the region continue to encounter significant restriction on freedom of movement, access to opportunities and the ability to exercise choice (WorldBank, *Opening Doors*, 2013). These constraints are posed by the legal and regulatory framework and conservative social norms.

The role of the state in implementing and executing female labor movements likewise shifts from government to government with a few states being more protective of their female migrants (Oishi, 2005). For example, in a few nations, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, the state is cautious about issuing visas to females. Much of the time, the issuing of a travel permit is subject to the approval of either the companion or the father of the female involved (Pessar, 2006; Sika, 2011).



According to Sika (2011), these boundaries also exist in Egypt. The Egyptian government distributes passports to women with the objective of family reunification in the cases in which one or more family member work abroad. On the other hand, the administration is stricter in terms of single females with low status professions who aspire to migrate and attain an employment permit abroad. As an example, in 2008, the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Migration was temperately open to allotting work permits to women who pursued going to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to fill in as beauticians or domestic staff. However, as a concern of societal and media reports relating to the maltreatment of under skilled women in these host nations, the administration applied tighter controls. By 2010, the legislature had totally banned the issuance of work licenses to average workers of Egyptian women looking for occupation in the GCC (Masrawy, 2010; Sika, 2011). In this regard, the nation's patriarchal system functions as the guardian of female workers.

Despite the fact that the independent migration of working class Egyptian women is socially unacceptable, the migration of single women with a university education is approved (Sika, 2011). In such cases, the Egyptian government sets no obliged measures. It concedes and supports the movement of professional women, as it means to make a reputation for the nation on the quality of its migrants in both male and female (Sika, 2011).

In summary, among the above three factors of structure adjustments, skilled migration, and temporary, or return, migration it seems that structural adjustments and skilled migration (educational gains) have the biggest impact on feminization of migration in Egypt. The negative effects of SAPs on Nasser's state feminism, pushed many women out of the labor market and into the informal sector. However, for those women who have higher levels of education, the selective nature of labor migration has allowed them to utilize their skills in the international

labor market. Regardless of conservative norms backed by political hindrances and social dispositions, Egyptian middle-class women are changing their financial and social position in Egyptian society. As the level of education and unemployment rises for women, more professional single females are considering working overseas. They have advanced education and labor market aptitudes that permit them physical mobility and capacity to compete in the worldwide labor market. In spite of the fact that, they constitute a minority of the populace and temporary working status, Egyptian professional females are present in migration streams thereby adding to the economic and social prosperity of their nation upon their return.

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## Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework:

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The study of labor migration has generated a great deal of multi-disciplinary theoretical and empirical literature. The macro and micro impacts have been analysed through various methodologies through the sciences. Yet, no grand theory can adequately explain the multifaceted process of migration; many sets of theories have been formulated, often in isolation from one another, and in other cases they are segmented by disciplinary boundaries (Massey, 1993).

An interest in contemporary theory, more so than in classical theory, is the role of women in international migration (and in particular the gender magnitudes of migration). Contrary to the past, women are no longer just following their husbands they are migrating in their own capacity. This trend has added to the global migration discourse. The inclusion of masculinities and femininities topographies has become essential to migration theory, particularly in light of the feminization of migration. Therefore, the labor migration of women should no longer be examined along the same outline that has generally focused on young male migrants reacting to livelihood strategies (Morokvasic 1984: 899, (Lutz, 2008). Gender orientation and hierarchies influence decision making, in the case of migration it effects “who migrates and why, how the choice is made, what influence it has on migrants themselves, and what consequences it has on sending areas as well as on receiving areas” (Jolly & Reeves, 2005, p. 1).

In one of the earliest reports of female migration and labor migration, Earnest Ravenstein’s (1885) “Laws of Migration”, examined that both women and men migrate for the same reasons as wage differentials and a higher standard of living. Both, of which “arise from the desire inherent in most men to ‘better’ themselves in material respects” (Ravenstein 1885, 286; Arango, 2000, p. 284). But what stands out about Raveinstein work is that unlike today’s literature on migration, which lumps the experiences of both men in women as one, Raveinstein recognizes that there are

differences in their experiences. In the first analysis of gender migration, Ravenstein observed that women were more migratory as compared to men but within short distances. Analogous to contemporary migration, female labor migrants at that time also largely filled domestic employment positions with a small portion filling manufacturing or industrial jobs. Yet, at present, female migration flows have proven to be inconsistent with Ravenstein's observation, as women are now surpassing men on the global migration scale. Ravenstein's analysis, however, is partial to the onset of the industrial revolution when migration was basically rural to urban. In addition, much of the world was underdeveloped and migrants worked labor intensive jobs. The influx of females in international labor migration takes place in another time, after the Second World War, with a different set of economic, political and social implications. Despite data that is limited in scope, since it pertains to specific time and space and for which many of today's critics have argued at his finding (cf Alexander, 2010), nevertheless, Ravenstein recognizes gender differentials and sets a baseline for the importance in understanding the feminization of labor migration.

Before continuing the discussion on the participation and role of females in the contemporary labor migration, it is necessary to clarify the concepts of gender and female migrants.

### **3.1. Concept of Gender:**

To begin with, when referring to the labor migration of women, I would like to clarify my usage of 'female / women' as opposed to the use of 'gender migration'. Therefore, for this research, I will use the terms 'female or women' when referring to the labor migration of the 'fairer sex' (Ivanhoe, Sir Walter Scott, 1771-18-32). Generally, most literature on gender migration uses the word "gender" as synonymous to women. Considering the neglect of women within past migration studies, Tyner (1999) supports this bias as understandable, and maybe even justified.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasised that gender refers to both men and women and the relation between them.

The works of feminist scholars have shown us that concepts of femininity and masculinity are cultural constructs that refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women created through our families and society. It is important to understand the concepts of femininity and masculinity because when applied to social analysis; it reveals how subordination is socially constructed and in particular for women. Although, it is not biologically predetermined nor is it fixed forever (UNESCO, 2010), by which the subordination can be changed or ended. This change however is not easy to create.

In addition, the representation of female labor migrants as dependent, docile and low skilled is part of the mechanism of the modern day mode of production. Contemporary theorist such as Edward Said (1978) and Spivak (1988), have drawn attention to the modern day practice of representation, institutionalized by colonial powers, that perpetuates the logic of subordination; “within the structural domination characterized by the international division of labor all forms of division of labor must necessarily come from the privileged position or of power for example, a comparative privileged position accorded by educational opportunity, citizenship, class, race, and geographical location” (Spivak, 1988, p. 84). The current literature on female labor migration focuses on the impact of the 1980s neoliberal policies on globalization and the absorption of low skilled female labor. Since then, women have advanced in education, and are not only occupying pink collar jobs but positioning themselves in professional careers. An updated positive ideological representation of women in the international labor force is needed.

### 3.1.1. Institutions/ Structures and Gender:

Moreover, gender orientations are institutionalized through the family, education, the labor market, legislation, governance and politics and cultural traditions also known as social institutions that govern individual's behavior (Martin P. , 2004). Sociologists suggests that social institutions are a system of behavioral and relationship patterns that are closely interlinked and lasting, and operate across an entire society (Ball, 2001, p. 215). They order and structure the behavior of individuals by means of socialization. Institutions regulate the behavior of individuals in central areas of society (i.e. family, school, work, political association, religion and media): According to Weber, social institutions are;

- a) family and relationship networks carry out social reproduction and socialization; b) institutions in the realm of education and training ensure the transmission and cultivation of knowledge, abilities and specialized skills; c) institutions in the labour-market and economy provide for the production and distribution of goods and services; d) institutions in the realm of law, governance and politics provide for the maintenance of the social order; e) while cultural, media and religious institutions further the development of contexts of meaning, value orientations and symbolic codes (Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, 1978, p. 58).

To better understand the relationship between gender constructions, it is essential to make the distinctions between social institutions and social structures. The association between the two is also often used interchangeably. While they have similar features, (i.e. established rules conventions, norms, values and customs) they are considerably different.

In defining institutions and structure, Giddens (1979), in his "Structuration" theory, states that structures are the "rules and resources, organized as properties of social systems" (Giddens,

1979: 66; Wolfel, 2002, p. 12). Systems are "reproduced relations between actors or collectivities, organized as regular social practices" (ibid; Wolfel, 2002, p. 12). In other words, institutions refer to the associations among individual and groups of actors. Each of these groups utilizes the structure of society differently.

Drawing from the works of various scholars, Fleetwood (2006) analytically contrasts institutions and structures in that:

“An institution is a system of established rules, conventions, norms, values and customs that become embodied or internalized within agents as habits or habitus, via a process of habituation rooted in the nervous system, to assist in rendering (relatively) predictable, the intentions and actions of agents who draw upon, reproduce or transform these phenomena, whilst simultaneously reproducing and transforming themselves and who may, via a process of reconstitutive downward causation, have their intentions and actions transformed” (Fleetwood, 2008, p. 15).

On the other hand, “A social structure is a latticework of internal relations between entities that may enable and constrain (but cannot transform) the intentions and actions of agents who draw upon, reproduce and/or transform these relations” (Fleetwood, 2008, p. 21).

Similarly, Giddens (1984) analyses structure as, "rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems. To Giddens', structure exists only in memory traces, the organic basis of human knowledgeability, and as instantiated in action” (Giddens, 1984: 377; Wolfel, 2002, p11 ).

For Giddens (1979) and Fleetwood (2008), institutions and social structures are different because only the former can cause social change. Accordingly, these frameworks imply that

structure is both influenced by and influences social change, in other words, to Giddens' (1979) it is "recursive" or what Fleetwood (2008) terms "reconstitutive downward causation".

Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention that structures exist only instantaneously. Since structure is involved in social change, its existence as a tangible (measurable) entity can only be temporary (Wolfel, 2002). In other words, structure never is static, it is always being modified. Therefore, gender is not fixed nor stagnates.

### **3.1.2. Agents and Agency:**

In Giddens' (1979) "Structuration", the individual plays an important role in the process of social change. An agent is an individual or a collective group. Agency is an actor's or group's ability to make purposeful choices (Samman & Santos, 2009, p. 3). However, agency is strongly determined by people's resources. The term agency is what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important (Sen, 1999 p. 203; Samman & Santos, 2009, p. 4). Agency is intrinsically profuse. It can be applied at different spheres, domains and levels:

"Spheres refer to societal structures in which people are embedded, which can give rise to, shape, and or constrain the exercise of agency. These are typically the state, in which a person is a civic actor; the market, in which the person is an economic actor; and society –in which the person is a social actor (Alsop, Bertelsen and Holland, 2006, p. 19). These broad spheres contain several sub-spheres. For example, society includes the household and community sphere. The domains (or dimensions) refer to the multiple areas of life in which a person may exercise agency, such as making expenditures, practicing a religion, getting (or not) education and health, deciding whether to participate in the labour market and in which type of job, and freedom of mobility. Further, individuals may become agents as individuals and/or part of a collective, and may exercise this agency at different



levels (e.g., micro (household), meso (community), macro (state or country, etc.)”

(Samman & Santos, 2009, p. 6).

In order to understand agency, it is crucial to recognize the resources available to agents. Giddens (1984) defines resources as “the media whereby transformative capacity is employed as power in the routine course of social action; but they are at the same time structural elements of social systems as systems, reconstituted through their utilization in social interaction” (Giddens, 1984: 92; Wolfel, 2002). In other words, resources are advantages that certain agents have that can influence societal change. Resources are tangible elements such as:

“Personal assets (i.e. land, housing, livestock, savings) and capabilities of all types: human (i.e. good health and education), social (i.e. social belonging, a sense of identity, leadership relations) and psychological (i.e. self-esteem, self-confidence, the ability to imagine and aspire to a better future), and by people’s collective assets and capabilities, such as voice, organization, representation and identity” (Samman & Santos, 2009, p. 3).

According to “Structuration”, as a group uses a resource, it changes society and, in the same process, changes the resources that can be used in the future because society adapts to the use of the resource.

Through established institutions and structures, it can easily be seen how gender roles determine the agency available to women for international migration. Therefore, a female examination to labor migration is needed, one that centers on the individual and institutional systems that analyses gender roles and duties, access to and control over resources, decision-makings, as well as, migration opportunities and decisions (UN, 2001). Halfacree (1995) stresses “the need for analysis of the institutional structures which sustain the apparent sex-role structure” in a gender perspective on migration (Wolfel, 2002, p. 2).

### **3.2. The Empowerment of Women through International Migration:**

The concepts of the empowerment and the equality of women are both playing a critical role in the feminization of migration, and they are both important theories in this study. Utilizing the resources that are available to women allows them agency and therefore empowerment and equality.

Initially, the idea of empowering women began in early 1970s against the backdrop of development schemes. Attention was drawn to the unequal power relations that blocked women's capacity to participate in, and help to influence, development processes of their country (Kabeer, Women's economic empowerment and inclusive growth: labour markets and enterprise development, 2012). Therefore, a focus on the education and employment of women became priority resources of empowerment.

Power is an important element in Giddens' (1979) "Structuration" theory because power is available to all agents; all they need to understand is what their power source is and how to utilize it. In other words, power is directly related to the resources available to the agent and their proper application.

Feminists scholars have define empowerment as a process of change, under which an individual previously denied choice, or disempowered, gains the ability to make choices regarding strategic life decisions or decisions that affect their everyday life (Kabeer, Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurements of Women's Empowerment, 1999). Empowerment can be realized through education, health, and income resources.

The concept of women's empowerment generally encompassed an economic dimension. By definition, "life choices" most often refer to financial opportunities. The World Bank first defined 'Economic empowerment as making markets work for women (at the policy level) and

empowering women to compete in markets (at the agency level)' (WorldBank, Gender Equality as Smart Economics: A World Bank Group Gender Action Plan (Fiscal years 2007–10), 2006, p. 4). However, empowerment encompasses more than economic dimensions, it also involves social and political factors as Kabeer (1999) further adds that the process of empowerment can entail change at different levels:

Change can occur at the level of the individual, in their inner sense of self or in their access to material resources; it can occur in relationships within the family and household; or it can reflect alteration in position in the wider hierarchies of the economy and state. (Kabeer, *The Conditions and Consequences of Choice: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment*, 1999, p. 11).

An extension of economic empowerment is international migration. In his opening remarks at the 46<sup>th</sup> session of the UN's Commission for Population and Development (CPD) on April of 2013, Babatunde Osotimehin's<sup>7</sup> stated, "Building a life in a new country can foster greater independence and self-confidence, and create opportunities for the empowerment of women" (UN Commission Opens Session Focusing on Migrants' Rights, 2013). In addition, despite migration vulnerabilities, Martin et al (2006) states that

"Migration is also an empowering experience for many women. In the process of international migration, women often move away from traditional, patriarchal authority to situations in which they can exercise greater autonomy over their own lives. When women from traditional societies migrate to advanced industrial societies, they become familiar with new norms regarding women's rights and opportunities. If they take outside

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<sup>7</sup> the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA),

employment, they may have access to financial resources that had never before compensated their labor. Importantly, however, it is not only the role of women that may change dramatically through international migration. Men's roles change as well. Men often must adjust to their wives' and daughters' new participation in the labor market, and with the greater economic autonomy that accompanies wage earning" (Martin, Martin, & Weil, *Managing Migration: The Promise of Cooperation*, 2006, p. 20).

### **3.3. The Equality of Women through International Migration:**

Besides female empowerment, equality is another conceptual theory considered important in feminization of migration. International migration is a powerful symbol for global inequality. Workers leave their country of origin for higher wages, better labor market opportunities, or desired lifestyles. Each year millions of workers and their families relocate across borders and overseas seeking to equalize what they see as a wealth disparity between their own position and that of other people in other richer countries. Migration is seen as the result of socio-spatial<sup>8</sup> inequalities systematically reproduced within international and domestic economies. Saskia Sassen (2000) in an article "The global city: strategic site/new frontier" elicits dialogue to the current conditions of disparity in societies worldwide. The fact that migration is selective means that migrants come from the most privileged groups of society, from better-off socio-economic backgrounds who have more opportunity to migrate. These imbalanced power structures within society that go unopposed collaborate to guarantee that migration augments inequality.

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<sup>8</sup> Macroeconomic processes produce socio-spatial inequalities and constrain the life chances of individuals as members of specific social classes in particular places (Goss & Lindquist, 1995).

Conversely, migration influences gender relations, either embedding inequalities and traditional roles, or challenging and changing them. This occurs when women migrate and men migrants leave their spouses behind. Studies have shown that women left behind by male migrants' gain greater autonomy and decision making authority as new head of households (Yabiku, Agadjanian, & Sevoyan, 2010). Similarly, female migrants also gain the same privileges, and more, as remitters of income. Women, as the receivers and distributors of remittances, can gain empowerment and equality as they contribute to the decisions of allocating remittances within the household. (Fandrich, 2006).

As the 2012 World Development Reports argues, "Gender equality is smart economics" and has an effect on development (WorldBank, Opening Doors, 2013, p. 2). Allowing women and men to have equal access to education, financial opportunities, and resources has the possibility to increase productivity

Research has shown that labor and all forms of migration can advance women's equality and empowerment through opportunities it opens for greater independence, self-confidence and status (Ibrahim, 2006). In addition, gender equality benefits the wellbeing of forthcoming generations. As an example, better-quality education and work opportunities for women have been shown to increase women's bargaining power, ensuing larger investment in children's health and education (WorldBank, Opening Doors, 2013, p. 3). Furthermore, financial transfers and investments, and newly acquired skills of returned female migrants can contribute to poverty reduction and gender equality.

### **3.4. Empowerment and Equality and the Case of Egyptian Female Migrants:**

Despite Nassar's socialist scheme, that empowered Egyptian women with free education, and public sector opportunities, "these investments in human development have not yet translated into commensurately higher rates of female participation in economic and political

life” (WorldBank, *Opening Doors*, 2013, p. 3). Institutional frameworks, and the incentives and opportunities engendered by economic structure, such as SAPs, are part of the reason for the low levels of female participation in politics and the economy (WorldBank, *Opening Doors*, 2013).

The concept of empowerment takes on a different meaning in Middle Eastern countries. The meaning of female empowerment is a sensitive expression in the Middle East and in some underdeveloped countries where patriarchy frameworks continue to dominate. Female empowerment in the M.E. has a connotation of individualism and self-reliance, ideas which are contrary to its culture of collectiveness and cooperation. Its connotation is perceived as challenging the power structure which subordinates women and marginalizes other social groups. The individualistic approach to empowerment is a Western context based on entrepreneurial capitalism and market forces (Young, 1993).

With regards to the labor migration of Egyptian women, the empowerment and equality of these women cannot be fully explained within economic frameworks, as most of these concepts are gender neutral. The empowerment of Egyptian women and their ability to compete in the national and international labor market is mainly ascribed to their social position in society.

The equality of Egyptian women can be better understood within the institution of the family and their position. In Egyptian culture, decision making is attributed to one's position within the family (Ashante, 2002). Usually the eldest daughter is allotted some decision making authority. Yet with strong patriarchal structures in place, where men are the dominant force in all aspects of family life, and the physical movement of women is limited, their decision to migrate is, to an extent, hindered. This lack of female agency within patriarchal cultures would explain why much of the female migration of Arab women and much of existing literature on

female migration in general has associated them as dependent or tied migrants (Kanaiaupuni 2000: p.1315; Stecklov, Carletto, Azzari, & Davis, 2008).

Statistically, females in the M.E. are the lowest group participating in international labor migration due to traditional gender roles and ideological views (Moghadam, *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*, 2003). With regard to Egyptian culture, the suggestion has been made that in common with many other Middle Eastern societies, the concept of empowerment may not necessarily be valued and sought as a social good, because interdependence rather than independence often results in support, status, and power.

In summary, the labor migration of women is a controversial debate. Supporter view the labor migration of females as empowering women, while opponents view it as an exploitation of females due to the economic weakening position of the sending country. In the formers view, the economic empowerment of women is important in order to attain sustainable economic development and social equality as it has been proven that gender inequality holds back a country's economic efficiency. For women of the Middle East and Egypt in particular, the concept of empowerment and equality hold social and political implication due to its Islamic traditions and patriarchal framework. Western ideologies of self-reliance and autonomy contrast with the Middle East's interdependence culture. Nevertheless, in spite of their low numbers, Egyptian women are present in migration flows and are included in the feminization of migration. Despite of the fact that women across the globe make up more than half of the world's migrants, relatively few studies have established a theoretical framework to adequately deal with the effects that international migration has on women (Osotimehin, 2013; Balderrama, 2013, p. 13) in general, and less so on women from a semi conservative Middle East country, let alone by their return to the country of origin. For this reason, this research has chosen to focus

on the feminization of returned professional Egyptian women and the subjective changes within the families upon their return.





## Chapter Four: Determinants of International Feminization

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A case study with theoretical background data and data analysis in female migration is described in this chapter. Firstly, it is necessary to address the determinants for female migration. The macro economic factors that push Egyptian females into international labor migration are examined, along with the influence of micro elements including education levels, social position and family attitudes on the decision. Secondly, a case study of the data and data analysis conducted is described. Finally, a summary of the case study is given at the end of this chapter.

### 4.1. Push Factors and Female Migration:

The decision to migrate and the feasibility for women to migrate, consists of numerous factors. These incorporate both systemic and macro elements, for example, the condition of the national economy, and individual or micro variables<sup>9</sup> (Boyd & Grieco, 2003).

At the macro level, population density, high unemployment rates, and discrimination in the labor market are considered push factors for female labor migration (Stecklov, Carletto, Azzari, & Davis, 2008). Developing countries face problem of overpopulation moreso than developed countries. This may be due to traditional economic systems. Egypt continues to be partly an agrarian society with most of the economy being labor intensive over captial intensive. Due to underdevelopment, more than half of the population live under the poverty level. Families faced with poverty give birth to large families to make up for the infant mortality and to add more hands to the family labor force. As the result, the Egyptian population continues to steadily climb, and reach over 87 million in 2015 (Ahramonline, Egypt's Population Grows by

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<sup>9</sup> (I.e. gender relations and hierarchies; status and roles; and cultural and political structures of the country of origin).

over 3.5 million Since 2014: CAPMAS, 2015). This has created a detrimental situation where there is an abundance of working age people, but not enough jobs to employ them all.

Population density leads to high unemployment rates and becomes a push factor in labor migration. In a country where 97 percent of the land is dessert and 3 percent arable, most Egyptians are concentrated along the Nile River leading to population density in some areas over others. Due to the excess of workers, the high unemployment rate is a common factor in Egyptian labor migration for both men and women alike, especially among intermediate and high skilled migrants (Hassan & Sassanpupr, 2008; Sika, 2011). For highly skilled Egyptian women in particular, the unemployment rate is twice as high as that of men (Assad, 2009; Sika, 2011). Currently the female unemployment rate stands at 25 percent compared to the male rate of 9.7 percent (Ahram, 2014).

Many cultures transitioning from agrarian to technological economies retain social attitudes that work well in an agrarian system, but become discriminatory in a technological system particularly for women. Much of Egyptian female unemployment stems from traditional view that men are the breadwinners and women's place is in the home raising the children. Women seeking employment are seen as breaking social taboos. As a result, many highly skilled Egyptian women are discriminated against the formal, male-dominated labor market. This discrimination against females in the local labor market motivates highly accomplished women to seek employment in the international labor market and subsequently migrate to more egalitarian labor markets (Stecklov, Carletto, Azzari, & Davis, 2008) where they will be treated as equal to their professional male colleagues. Therefore, gender disparity can be a leading factor to migration when women have economic, political and social expectations that cannot be realized in their home country.

Furthermore, population density not only leads to an oversupply of workers, but it is also a reason for lower wages. In the neoclassical theory, labor migration is stimulated by returns to labor across markets. The most fundamental model initially designed to clarify migration in the course of economic development is the works of Hicks (1932), Lewis (1954) and Harris and Todaro (1970), which highlight that migration results from actual wage differentials across markets or countries evolving from assorted degrees of labor market rigidity (Kurekova, 2010, p. 3). In references to this model, migration is compelled by geographical differences in labor supply and demand and the resulting gaps in wages between labor-intensive versus capital-intensive countries (Arranjo, 2000).

Several factors determine the individual participation of women in labor migration, which are dependent on gender structure, education, income, and social networks all of which are significant in their access to migration resources in countries of origin and destination (Boyd & Grieco, 2003). These determining factors are discussed as follows.

#### **4.2. Egyptian Gender Structures and Migration:**

In a traditional patriarchal society, men are generally the forerunners in labor migration while women are typically dependents or tied migrants (Stecklov, Carletto, Azzari, & Davis, 2008). Research reveals that women living in patriarchal societies have lower rates of migration than their male counterparts (Morrison & Schiff, 2008).

In Egypt, a resilient patriarchal society, the majority of female migrants are dependent migrants usually accompanying a male family member who works in the GCC. The quantity of independent female labor migrants remains low due to family and community pressure not to migrate (EFT, 2007; Sika, 2011, p. 2). Traditional gender roles dictate that men are the protectors of, and providers for, the household. Women are the child bearers and caretakers.

Irrelevant of a large social income gap within Egyptian society, and traditional gender roles differing according to social class, in both classes families continue to be male dominated-adhering to a robust patriarchal system. For example, when a man cannot find work, he seeks work outside the country (Sika, 2011, p2). But this is not the case for women. When women cannot find work, the majority does not seek employment outside of the country. Women in this situation, especially young women, will usually get married instead of searching for a job overseas (Sika, 2011).

Gender relations and hierarchies within the household context, influences the migration of women for it is usually within the domestic sphere that female subordination to male power are negotiated (Boyd & Grieco, 2003). The family both outlines and ascribes the roles of females, which govern their subjective motivation and incentive to migrate, and controls the supply of resources and information that can support, discourage, or prevent migration (Boyd & Grieco, 2003).

Unlike neoclassical theory, which states that migration is a spontaneous individual act (Arango, 2000), the migration of Egyptian women is rarely a spontaneous individual act, due to the risky nature of migration and the code of honor that women must maintain in Middle Eastern and in Egyptian society in particular. In Middle Eastern culture, an unmarried woman remains at home until she is married. The head of the household provides for her until the day of her wedding. Her travels are usually accompanied by a male family member. Therefore, family approval and support is an influencing factor for single Egyptian women in their decision to migrate.

The labor migration of Egyptian women, but most in particular of married women, is better understood under the New Economic concept of Labor Migration (NELM). The New

Economics of Labor Migration states that the decision to migrate is related to family or the household's desire to maximize income and minimize threats. At the household level, migration can be treated as part of the household strategy of economic divergence wherein a member of the household is encouraged to migrate so as to send money back home. For married Egyptian women NELM theory plays a significant role in their incentive to migration. Fundamentally, the aim of parents is to enhance their children's life opportunities. For middle class Egyptian families who can afford the cost of migration, NELM is an economic strategy undertaken to achieve such an aim. The decision to migrate is negotiated between partners, and the decision for a wife to migrate must be sanctioned by their male counterpart. Therefore, the patriarchal Egyptian social context is important to understanding why females refrain from migrating on a large scale (Sika, 2011, p. 2).

#### **4.3. Education Factors and Egyptian Female Migration:**

Human capital is a selective factor in migration decisions as the skilled achievement is directly related to the prospect of securing a job with higher income levels at the place of destination (Haug , 2008). In a multitude of ways, education plays a role in empowering the migration of women. Statistics reveal that educated women have a lower birth-rates compared to less educated women, which leads to their having more freedom of movement outside the home because they are not as restricted by pregnancy and child rearing (Richter & Taylor, 2006). This freedom of movement opens a host of career opportunities in the local and international labor market. It also allows social mobility; therefore raising their financial creditability and resource allotment. Studies also reveal that, for women, the attainment of a higher education increases the probabilities that they will migrate (Kanaiaupuni, 1999).

A study Kanaiaupuni (1999) conducted in Mexico found that international migration selected positively on female education. The education selectivity of migration depends upon the economic returns from schooling at migrant destinations relative to the origin (Stecklov, Carletto, Azzari, & Davis, 2008). In addition, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) suggests that women with higher levels of education often feel constrained by social norms and a lack of employment opportunities in their origin country, and international migration provides new employment as well as social opportunities.

For Egyptian women, education plays a key role in labor migration. As of 1971, the Egyptian constitution emphasized the right of Egyptians to free education at all levels including university, regardless of gender, religious belief, socio-economic status and geographical location (Hatem, 1994). In addition, education laws passed in 1981 and revised in 1988 governed the implementation of these constitutional rights (Ahmed, 2013) resulting in a handful of Egyptian women from diverse economic backgrounds having the capacity to compete in the international labor market. According to a quantitative study on Egyptian female migrants, Nassar (2011) demonstrates that female migrants are inclined to be better educated than their male colleagues, “Egyptian female migrants are slightly younger and have a superior or university-level education compared to men”, of which only a quarter have a university education (16). Virtually all Egyptian female migrants hold a secondary degree or higher schooling.

Despite higher levels of women’s education attainment and advanced methods of contraception that allow for family planning and allot women more freedom of movement, traditional gender roles prove difficult to amend. The independent migration of Egyptian females continues to be socially unacceptable, which makes international migration formally

challenging for women. Although, studies point that in time traditions gradually become bendable and women are gradually incorporated into the migration process, which allows them to be increasingly independent agents of their own migration (Kanaiaupuni,2000; Cerrutti and Massey, 2001; Stecklov, Carletto, Azzari, & Davis, 2008), nevertheless, this may be more difficult to accomplish in a traditional Islamic and patriarchal society such as Egypt.

#### **4.4. Socio-Economic Status Factors and Egyptian Female Migration:**

The socio-economic class of Egyptian women is also a determinant in their ability to migrate. Migration costs have been widely studied as an important determinant in who migrates and who does not, and some studies suggest that migration costs differ between men and women (Richter & Taylor, 2006). In spite of feasible methods and affordable rates of transportation, migration continues to be a benefit that only a certain socio economic class of individuals can afford. Included in the costs is not only transportation but also room and board among other expenses. Usually, the lower strata of society pool their resources from the community to send away labor migrants, but this is generally for a male member of the community, considered the breadwinner, as opposed to a female member, and thus the man is provided with the resources to migrate. In traditional patriarchal societies, the family is responsible for taking care of the female until she is given away at marriage. Thus labor migration of females is seen as a shameful act on the part of the family, and allocating resources from the community to send a female migrant is looked down upon. As the result, the social class of Egyptian female labor migrants is generally restricted to the middle and upper class strata, and highly skilled females must usually get migration funding from their families instead of the community.

#### **4.5. Social Networks and Gender Roles in Egyptian Female Migration:**

Social networks play important roles in female migration then in male migration, and more so for Egyptian female migrants. Migrant networks are a predominant determinant in the

migration of females. Massey (1990) defines migrant networks as a set of interpersonal relationships that link current or returned migrants with relatives, friends, or fellow countrymen at home. Migration networks can provide a wealth of information. They can be helpful in finding job opportunities, affordable housing, and even financial assistance upon arrival. In addition, they can lessen the cultural shocks when migrants find it difficult to assimilate to the host country's language or culture (Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003). In this way, they can manage to reduce economic costs and emotional cost.

The organizing and growth of migrant networks provides knowledge and support often needed in making decisions to migrate. Migration networks can originate at the grassroots level or it can be a top down approach. At the grassroots level, family and friends usually have connections with migrants who have returned or to migrants who are working at desired destinations. At the top level it is organized through private employment agencies or through Bilateral Agreements (BLAs), where private agencies or governments facilitate the contract agreements and conditions. (Rhacel Salazar Parreñas 2001; Beneria, Deere, & Kabeer, 2012).

Labor migration is itself a risky undertaking for both genders and a much more precarious endeavour for women; therefore, social networks play a crucial role in the female decision to migrate. Women's biological characteristics make them more vulnerable to various sorts of dangers involved in the migration process. Research has shown "that where migration is fraught with higher risks, as is the case with international migration compared to internal mobility, and networks of assistance become more salient since they serve to diminish the uncertainty associated with migrating" (Davis, Stickle and Winters 2002; Toma & Vause, Gender differences in the role of migrant networks in Congolese and Senegalese international migration, 2001). Former research on Central American migration confirmed that women are



presumed to, and do, encounter greater risks when migrating to the United States (Cerrito and Massey 2001; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Lindstrom 1997; Mahler 1999; Menjivar 2000; Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003, p. 291). Therefore, having grounded networks of migrants, and knowledge and information about the risks and threats of the trip, are more important for women than for men. Overall, migration networks are an important influence on potential female migrants mainly because the costs, risks, and benefits of migration fluctuate according to gender.

Research studies reveal that the international migration of Egyptians is mainly facilitated through networks consisting of family and friends to whom a potential migrant belongs, both at home and in the receiving country, “More than half of all migrants had a network (family, relatives or friends) in the country of destination prior to departure from Egypt” (Fandrich, 2006, p. 11). Due to prevailing views about women’s vulnerability and norms of family honor, especially in the Middle East, women in certain regions can move only if there is a close relative with whom to travel or with whom to live (Lindstrom 1997; Curran & Rivero-Fuentes, 2003).

#### **4.6. A Case Study of the Characteristics of Egyptian Female Migrants:**

Based on the information from the literature review and the theory background described in this chapter, to study the characteristics of female migrants in Egypt, several conditions need to be considered, such as education levels, income status, social position, and family attitudes. Accordingly, eleven women chosen in this project came from diverse social positions. At the time of their migration they were either married, single or widow. They were from different age groups ranging from early 20s to late 60s. They were daughters, wives or mothers. Some came from high income families and others from middle income families. However, there was one

thing they held in common, they all had acquired a university degree, which was the basis for their participation in the international labor market. The research data are shown as follows:

### *Case Study Data Analysis*

When asked if the decision to migrate for work abroad was solely their decision, the responses were as follows.

As Amira, a doctor of anaesthesiology, said;

“At first my parents did not agree. They did not like the idea of me being a single female and living in a foreign country alone. But after some time I managed to convince them. It is not in our society to go against our parents’ wishes. If my parents had said no, I would not have gone through with the migration, despite the fact that I am my own person and take care of myself financially.”

Ines similarly shared: “After my parents agreed, they were still afraid for me to travel alone, but this is due to the culture and religious issues.”

Yasmine and Basma both shared that culturally that it is unacceptable for Egyptian single women to work abroad as it is thought to bring a negative social stigma to the family. Yasmine explained;

“It is socially acceptable if a single Egyptian female travels abroad for education. This is seen as a status symbol. However, it is not socially acceptable for single Egyptian women to work abroad. This makes the family seem as if they are going through financial struggles and that they are unable to take care of their daughter financially. This is seen as shameful.”

Yasmine also shared that when she first moved to Dubai for work, although her parents were very supportive of her decision, they could not reveal that she was abroad for work to their extended family. It was kept quiet for the first year. It wasn't until she started to show her success by investing in stocks and property that they revealed her reasons for living in Dubai. In this respect, Basma added that part of the reason that she decided to work abroad was to escape the pressure to get married. In patriarchal societies, women are pressured into securing a marriage rather than securing a career.

In regards to the single women in this study, although most said it was mainly their own decision to migrate, most agreed that it would not have been possible without the endorsement of their father or the head of the household. Basma stated that her parents supported her decision by financially assisting her until she received her first pay check for that she was able to financially support herself thereafter.

Nancy, Azza, Marwa and Dalia were all married at the time of their migration. Their reason for migration was to supplement family income by doubling their wages for a year's work. The decision was made jointly with their spouses. Both Azza and Marwa were able to take their children with them. Their husbands stayed behind due to their employment responsibilities. Dalia was pregnant at the time of her employment in Oman. She also gave birth in Oman. All three stayed for a period of one year and expressed that while it was difficult to work abroad, because of their family being separated, it was an opportunity that they could not pass up. They felt this would lift them to a higher economic standing and provide better education and healthcare for their children. On the other hand, Nancy stayed for a period of four years. She and her husband did not have children, but felt it was an opportunity to gain career experience and more income to supplement their retirement.

When asked if they utilized migrant networks for their migration experience, the responses were as follows;

For Aya, a migration network played a key role in her migration experience. After the death of her husband, she realized that although her husband had left her with sufficient resources to support her and the family for some time, she felt that she needed to add more to these resources for her children and future grandchildren. She opted to work abroad. She began to ask friends if they had close friends or relatives that worked in the GCC that could give her job leads and suggest places to live. Once she turned job leads into employment offers, she asked contacts living in the receiving country to inquire with other employees about their employment satisfaction and the company's reputation. After she had gotten all the information she needed to feel secure, she accepted the offer.

As for Rehab, her brother worked in Kuwait at the hospital where she eventually became employed at. He informed her of the career opportunities and higher income that she could gain if she worked in Kuwait. He facilitated and secured her employment before her arrival. However, once in Kuwait, she said she rarely made contact with other Egyptians, she preferred meeting and networking with expats from other countries to internationally diversify her social network.

Nancy and Shereen both got their jobs through friends who knew of positions available in the destination country. Nancy expressed that she trusted the opinion of Egyptian migrants and felt that they would advise her honestly.

Amira, Engy, Marwa, and Dalia secured their jobs through bilateral agreements between their home employers and the employers in the destination country. Their integration into the

host country was made smooth. For Marwa and Dalia, living arrangements had been secured prior to relocation. Although the employment had been made easier through the bilateral agreement, Engy took it one step further. She stated, “I asked my Egyptian colleagues who had worked there before about everything related to the company including the money and treatment of the workers, and even the degree of freedom I would have.” Amira relied on the Egyptian diaspora for more than just job search assistance. She said, “I relied on them very much. They were like family, and they helped me find housing and adjust to Saudi society”.

With the exception of Yasmine and Basma, who independently secured their job positions (Yasmine responded to a newspaper advertisement, and Basma applied through the company website); the rest of the women secured their employment positions through social networks.

On the other hand, Azza secured her employment in Saudi Arabia through a private agency for which she had to pay a fee. She said the hospital where she worked at employed a lot of Egyptians, and so she felt that she had never really left Egypt. By which she meant that the network of Egyptian employed at the hospital gave her a sense of security.

In general, relationships between close family members are characterized by higher degrees of trust, stronger norms of reciprocity; and are expected to convey more reliable information (Toma & Vause, Gender differences in the role of migrant networks in Congolese and Senegalese international migration, 2001). As Lindstrom (1991) argues that close family members have a “shield and control function” that is important in women’s migration that is not found in men’s migration. Close relatives can be trusted more than friends or extended kin to protect the woman and to provide her reliable information, and the necessary attention and

support (Toma, *Ties that bind? Networks and Gender in International Migration The Case of Senegal*, 2012).

It can be empirically observed that most women tend to migrate when they have at least a close relative abroad ready to supervise their trip such as the case with some of the women in this study.

On the other hand, non-familial ties that connect people belonging to different social circles may give greater access to a wider array of information, which can potentially open up a larger range of opportunities at destination countries (Toma, *Ties that bind? Networks and Gender in International Migration The Case of Senegal*, 2012), such as the case for Amira, Engy, Marwa and Dahlia, who secured their employment through formal agencies. In this respect, empirical evidence has not been consistent with some studies finding that ties among household members are more instrumental than non-familial ties in facilitating migration (Cerrutti and Massey 2001, Kanaiaupuni 2000, Espinoza and Massey 1999, Massey and Espinoza 1997 (Toma & Vause, *Gender differences in the role of migrant networks in Congolese and Senegalese international migration*, 2001)), while others studies have found no significant difference between close family and community ties (Davis and Winters, 2001; Garip, 2008 (Toma & Vause, *Gender differences in the role of migrant networks in Congolese and Senegalese international migration*, 2001)).

Regarding education, when asked the research population in this study that how important it was for woman to have advanced education, their responses are as follows;  
Basma: “It is very important so that she can have a better life. It will add value to her life.”  
Rehab: “It is very important so she can make better money and have a better life.”

Aya: “It is very important. Anything can happen.” She is referring to the death of her husband. After her husband’s death, she had to be the breadwinner to take care of her children.

Amira: “It is somewhat important, this is because, for Egyptian women, the husband usually takes care of them financially, but if she has to work, then she can have a career.”

Marwa: “It is very important in Egypt. It gives women more self-confidence and freedom and she is able to make more decision on her own.”

Dalia: “Islam requires that everyone should pursue education.”

Engy: “It is very important so that this can help her to be financially independent.”

In Egypt, women usually become housewives and less actively pursue careers. When asked how important it was for women to have a career, their responses are as follows.

Rehab: “It was very important for me so not to feel that I am not forced to stay in a marriage relationship because I need financial support; but to stay in a marriage because I want to stay.

My career allowed me to enjoy my singlehood and travel around the world. I was ready to settle down when I felt the time had come. I didn’t have the pressure to marry.”

Basma: “It is important; however, in our culture a women does not need to work, her family or husband can pay for her living, but she needs to secure herself. Work will make her feel financially secured, not her husband. Nowadays depending on a man is not secured. A woman needs her own career to be more secure and independent.”

Marwa: “It is very important; it gives women a peace about themselves. They don’t have to stay at home all the time and they can spend their money the way they please; rather than if she is supported only by her husband she cannot always spend the money the way she pleases.”

Yasmine: “On a personal level, the sense of personal achievement is very fulfilling. A career also improves self-confidence and self-esteem and encourages women to stand up for their

rights. Having an independent cash flow makes the future look better and decreases the reliability on family and spouse and gives a woman more decision-making.”

Nancy: “Careers gives women a different view of the world. It enlarges their perception.”

By working alongside men, the relationships between Egyptian men and women are changing; women now exhibit greater self-confidence and independence. However, not all members of Egyptian society approve this changing status of women. There remains a group who believe that these social changes occurring in the social context of women have created social problems such as young people waiting longer to get married, instability in marriages and more family disputes leading to more divorce. These social attitudes interfere in the economic empowerment of women. Although Egyptian women are reshaping their positions in the private and public sphere, to date, there continues to be significant gender segregation which fuels discrimination in the workplace and in education, and can hinder the mobility of women and the development process of their country.

#### **4.7. Summary**

While economics, social class, gender, migration networks and family approval are important factors that play a role in the capability and decision of women to migrate independently, the main determinant for the independent labor migration of Egyptian women appears to be education. Education empowers them to negotiate their salaries and working conditions in the receiving country. It also empowers them to negotiate with their families regarding their decision to migrate. Although cultural and religious norms have some opposing influence on their agency to migrate alone, their achievement of a high level of education represents a status symbol for the family within Egyptian society (Choucri, The New Migration



in the Middle East: A Problem for Whom?, 1977). As the result, they gain the trust and respect of their families, which enables them to migrate unaccompanied.

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## Chapter Five: Return Migration and Re-integration:

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This chapter focuses on the discussion of return of Egyptian female migrants based on the research data obtained from the case study in Chapter four and existing literature. In the literature review I discussed the theories of temporary migration as a basis to return migration. In this chapter, as a continuum to the literature review on temporary migration, I discuss some of the well-known theories of return migration with a gender analysis of the research data. This section, aims to answer the following research question through discussing the concept of structural approach, return typologies, situational factors, and determinants of return migration: Did foreign work experience give female migrants more bargaining power within the Egyptian labor market?

The United Nations Statistics Division for collecting data on international migration (UNSD) defines returning migrants as “persons returning to their country of citizenship after having been international migrants (whether short term or long-term) in another country and who are intending to stay in their own country for at least a year” (Jolivet, Xenog, & Dumont, 2012, p. 2), or simply a person who returns to their country of origin to resettle.

Since labor migration to the GCC is contracted and temporary, “The majority of Egyptian labor migrants are expected to return home eventually” (Zohry, *Egyptian Irregular Migration To Europe*, 2006, p. 3) not only because Egyptians prefer their own soil, but mainly due to the fact that a high percentage of Egyptian labor migrants are absorbed in the GCC on a provisional status. At the same time, Egyptians have the right to emigrate and return home as stipulated by law in Article 52. From a cultural perspective, it has been empirically observed that “Egyptians have the reputation of preferring their own soil. Few ever leave except to study or travel; and they always return .... Egyptians do not emigrate” (Cleland, 1936:36, 52; Zohry, *The*

Development Impact of Internal Migration: Findings from Egypt, 2009, p. 9). The next section gives conceptual definition of return migration with further details.

### **5.1. Conceptualizing the Return Migration of Women:**

The decision to return is not merely a personal choice. The return of female migrants is interconnected to structural frameworks that have social implications, including policy interventions that hold significant gender magnitudes (Black, R. et al., 2004; N.A., Caritas International, 2009). Structural aspects, like the situation in the host and home country, contain gender effects such as the following:

Access to and demand in the labour market for women, as well as the degree of emancipation and the position of women in society in general are but two effects regarding their return. - On the personal level individual attributes such as age, gender and family circumstances as well as social relations form the individual return decision, whereby social relations are again strongly determined by gender. - Policy interventions such as incentives and disincentives for instance can be gender biased in their design by not contemplating the role of women in their home societies and offering male-oriented reintegration assistance (N.A., The Female Face of Migration, 2012, p. 14).

According to Kofman and Rughuram (2009) female labor migration is largely seen as a social issue not an economic one ( p. 3), mainly because women face economic discrimination and unequal access to resources more than men. Equally, given the social and economic independence that women gain from migration it would appear that most women would be reluctant to return. The determinants for skilled female returned migrants is unclear, but can be correlated to the initial process of migration originating in the household.

## **5.2. Structural Approach to Return Migration:**

In recent years, the study of return migration has been analyzed under various theoretical approaches mainly as a success or failure endeavour. Fundamental neoclassical theories consider international migration a permanent situation for those seeking better opportunities abroad. Under these academic theories, return migration is seen as a failure. Whereas contemporary theories, such as the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM), views international migration as a temporary phenomenon in which migrants are expected to return (Katz and Stark 1986; Stark and Bloom 1985; Stark and Taylor 1989). It therefore, views return migration as a success rather than a failure.

Though both theories emphasize the economic framework; yet, neither theory touches on the social dimensions, in particular the subjectivities of the return female labor migrant to their home country. As Cerrutti and Massey (2001) note in their discourse of both the neoclassical economics and NELM frameworks, “In neither case are women assigned much agency, either as autonomous decision makers or as independent participants in household bargaining” (p.188).

It can be presumed that return migration is compelled by the same incentives as emigration decisions (Haug , 2008). “The migration decision takes places only when the subjectivity expected net utility of migration exceeds the expected net utility of staying at the place of origin” (Haug , 2008, p. 590).

Plans of a homecoming, whether actual or envisioned, encourage migrant returnees’ prospects in countries of origin (Rogers 1984; Callea 1986; Richmond 1984; Cassarino J. P., 2004). Borrowing from Cassarino’s (2004) structural framework, return appears to be guided by the career possibilities that migrants anticipate to find in their home country, and also by the career experience already gained in their respective host countries (Cassarino J. P., 2004, p. 259).

With this in mind, situational and structural factors have a positive approach on the return decision. Therefore, the decision to return cannot be planned properly unless migrants (Gmelch, 1980; Cassarino J. P., 2004) rationalize these situational factors.

### **5.2.1 Return Typologies:**

It is estimated that twenty to fifty percent of migrants return home after a five year stay, and mainly it is the highly skilled who return (Wahba, 2015, p. 2). In a noteworthy study, conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) the question of return migration was the focus of various hypothetical explanations and empirical assessments that succeeded in typifying and ascertaining the primary explanations of return. They differentiate fundamentally among four categories of effects, founded respectively, which can be used as structural framework of return migration:

- “i) Failure to integrate into the host country
- ii) Individuals’ preferences for their home country
- iii) Achievement of a savings objective
- iv) The opening of employment opportunities in the home country thanks to experience acquired abroad” (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008, p. 163)

I elaborated on OECD’s typologies of return migration within the context of Egyptian migration in order to lay some groundwork on the return of Egyptian female migrants in the next content.

**Failure to integrate into the host country:** The majority of the women in this study said that, due to the high number of Egyptians working abroad, they were able to integrate easily. Amira stated that “working in Saudi was like working in Egypt, there were so many Egyptian doctors

and nurses” where she felt right at home. Basma also commented that Egyptians were ubiquitous in Dubai. She said that “they are all over the place, at the market, the gym and at work.” According to Dr. Shereen, she stated that “older people from the host GCC countries still remember Egypt’s help in the development of their countries in the early 1920s, before the discovery of oil, and that they are very grateful to Egyptians for the contribution in their initial developments.”

There may be some cultural differences among Arab states. But due to close proximity, along with a shared language and religion, Egyptians are able to integrate quite easily into GCC societies. At the same time, Egypt has a history of migration to the GCC. Egyptian labor migration to the region dates back to the 1930s with Egypt’s provision of schoolteachers to Iraq. Migration further spread to neighboring Arab countries after the discovery of oil and the 1952 revolution (Sell, 1988; Zohry, *The Place of Egypt in the regional migration system as a receiving country*, 2003). Thus, the inability to integrate into the host country plays little significance in the return of Egyptian female migrants.

**Individual preferences for their home country:** This indeed plays a significant role in return migration of female Egyptians. As stated above, “Egyptians prefer their soil.” Although many Egyptian migrants view the migration to the GCC states as the gateway to immigrating into Western Countries, for those Egyptians who have a choice between GCC and Western States and who chose GCC States, they in essence prefer their own soil. This is because Egyptians who migrate to the GCC are aware of their temporary status in that at some point they are expected to return. Therefore, they prefer their home country rather than migrating to Western countries where their migration can lead to permanent residence. Some scholars suggest that the temporary migration strategy of the NELM approach can also play a role in return migration, as

attachment to their home country compels them to return (Cassarino J. P., 2004). This may be due to the fact that family is left behind or simply because they have a preference to their own soil.

For example, Yasmine, a single female living and working in Dubai for four years, came to a fork in the road. She realized that if she had continued living in Dubai her life would have taken shape in a different way than she wanted. As a flight attendant, she travelled to many western countries and had opportunities to relocate to one of these wealthier and more liberal nations, but she preferred to establish her future in Egypt. She wanted to get married and raise a family in her home country, Egypt.

Similarly, Aya, who lived in KSA for a total of seven years, said that the reason of her return was because she missed her “beloved Egypt.” She also said that one of the main purposes for working abroad was to accumulate enough income and investments so that her children would not have to leave their home country and work abroad. She says, “I have invested in property, a farm, so that my children and grandchildren can grow produce if they so desire, so that they can live off their land and not have to leave their land.”

**Experience achievement of a savings objective:** The third types of return migrant identified by OECD are those present in Egyptian return migrants. According to neoclassical theory, the main reason for most migration is wage differentials. As an example, in 1983, “During the period of four to five years that the seconded Egyptian school teacher normally spends in Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, he will receive an amount of money that far exceeds all his prospective earnings in Egypt during the whole of his working life “(Messiha, 1980: 61-63; Ayubi, 1983, p. 439). Although this research was conducted in 1983, when wages were much lower, the recent minimum wage in today’s law, Egyptian teachers make an average of 1,200 L.E. a month

(AbdelAzim, 2014) which is still below ideal levels. Before the minimum wage law that passed last year on September, public sector teachers were making an average of 400 - 700 L.E. monthly (AbdelAzim, 2014). Today, wage differential continue to be the primary motive for international migration of Egyptian's highly skilled.

Most of the participants in this research were satisfied that their achieved savings objective coincided with the duration of time spent abroad. Yasmine and Rehab both stated that one of the reasons for their return was that they had achieved their savings objective. The ways in which their incomes were invested are discussed in the following chapter on monetary remittances.

It is important to note that for three of the women in this study, the motivation to migrate was not only wage differentials, but also a deeply personal faith objective. For Shereen, Marwa and Dalia, a primary reason for working in KSA was to perform the pilgrimage, a religious ritual commanded by Islam. Before Shereen signed her contract, she specifically stated to her employers that she would sign on for only two years, which would fulfil the Islamic command. Although Marwa and Dalia were on a one-year contract, they stated that one of the reasons they applied for work in KSA, besides the wage differential, was also to fulfil the Islamic command to perform a pilgrimage. At the same time, the political and social structure of the country, such as the lack of freedom for women working in KSA, played a significant role in their reasons not to re-sign.

**Opening of employment opportunities:** The last type of return migrants identified by OECD are those who take advantage of “the opening of employment opportunities in the home country thanks to experience acquired abroad,” which are highly represented among Egyptian female return migrants. Very rarely do migrants return to developing countries if the economic



conditions have not improved (ILO, 2010, p. 52). Due to bilateral and contracted work, temporary migrants are destined to return whether conditions have changed or not. Although economic conditions may not have improved in the home country, an important factor for return is that employment opportunities often improve for return migrants. This was the case for Rehab who upon return for a short stay due to her father's death was offered a position at a teaching hospital. This opportunity prompted her to stay in Egypt rather than continue living in Kuwait. Aya, due to constitutional mandate<sup>10</sup>, was able to resume her position at the governmental hospital where she worked at before migrating to the GCC. She stated that "more opportunities were available to her". She could operate advanced technology that had not yet reached Egypt gave her an advantage over other employees and made her in demand in her specialization. To further explore other factors with impact on return migration, situational factors related to return migration is discussed in the next section, and how their work experiences benefited their careers upon return is further discussed in Chapter six.

### **5.3. Situational Factors and Return Migration:**

"Intentions" or "motivations" to return are influenced by external or situational factors rather than subjective qualities (Cassarino J. P., 2004). By relating the "reality" of the home economy and society with the expectations of the returnee reintegration is analyzed (Cassarino J.-P. , 2004). If situational factors are indicative, then Gmelch (1980) views migrants as being "ill prepared for their return" (143). Gmelch's (1980) quote refers to the difficulty that migrants face when gathering the information needed to secure their return. He suggest that it is difficult for return migrants to fully gain awareness of the social, economic and political changes that

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<sup>10</sup> Law 73, which gave the public sector and government employees the right to return to their jobs within one year of the date of resignation. The time frame was then extended to two years and other legal impediments were removed.

have taken place in their home countries during their time abroad.. He states, “They do not realize how much they or their communities have changed during their absence” (Glmech, 1980, p. 143).

Migrants returning to their home countries, especially those who have lived in highly urban, industrialized nations, may no longer share many of “the basic beliefs that underlie their traditional culture” (Glmech, 1980, p. 143). An example of this was Yasmine who commented that she lost a fraction of her friends because she had developed a broader view of different cultures and their values and norms. Both she and her friends found it difficult to understand each other and this created distance in their relationships. Basma also commented that many of her friends view her viewpoints as eccentric and not in tune with Egypt’s conservative culture. She said it was because she had developed close interactions with people of different cultures and beliefs that she learned to be more tolerant of other perspectives.

Upon the question of “What culture shocks did you encounter upon return?,” most of them answered that they had returned to the same society of over population, congested traffic, high unemployment, inflation, and conservative relations between men and women. Basma replied by expressing how shocked she was to return and find that Egyptians were buying into the consumerism and brand name culture, “I not only saw more people being concerned with what they were wearing, but with what brand name they wore.” This may be partly due to globalization, but also the influence of return migrates who bring back with them social and cultural impacts. However, with the exception of Aya who spent 7 years abroad, most of the migrants did not spend more than two or four years abroad. The time spent was not enough to ascertain huge changes in their society upon return.

Within the social context, “some migrants encountered envy and suspicion among their less prosperous neighbors (Glmech, 1980, p. 143)”. In addition, “believing that all migrants are wealthy, locals sometimes take advantage of migrants by expecting higher payment for services and overcharging for goods (Glmech, 1980, p. 143)”. As Shereen expressed, “Some Egyptians started to treat me as if I were a very rich person, and asked me to give them money or gifts.”

Further, “returning migrants may in some cases find that they are resented or even rejected by non-migrants, either because they constitute competition for jobs or because they are seen as a privileged group (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008, p. 201)”. At the workplace, Shereen also mentioned that her co-workers were suspicious of her expertise, “At work they found it difficult to accept my experience abroad and would not let me implement the new skills that I learned at KSA.

Many returnees are unhappy with the "way things are done at home “ (Glmech, 1980, p. 143). A typical complaint concerns the lack of efficiency and punctuality. In contrast to the fast pace of the urban, industrial host societies, everything happens slowly at home. It seems to take forever to get things done. Clerks and cashiers move at a slower pace. Plumbers, electricians, and other repairmen will fail to arrive at the appointed time, or do not come at all. Rehab and Amira stressed that the work ethic was far more efficient in the GCC States. Amira stated that “the work system is less organized and more chaotic in Egypt. Here, you have to constantly be behind staff to make sure they are completing their duties.” Rehab stated that “the system in Kuwait was more specialized and efficient. In Kuwait the doctors and nurses carry out certain duties, but in Egypt, the doctor sometimes has to carry out both his and the nurses’ duties.”

Finally, the acquired higher standards of training and skills could be problematic. “Highly specialized education or work skills have less chance of being useful in the home

society due to the limited technology and relatively lacking of economic specialization in the developing regions (Glmech, 1980, p. 152)". Rahba mentioned that "many machines that are outdated or thrown out in KSA are still being used in Egypt. Some Egyptian companies buy these unwanted machines and repair them to bring back and use in their facilities." This, in essence, could lead to brain waste, as new skills learned abroad are not applied due to outdated technology. Besides the above influence factors, some determinants may determine when the return happens, as discussed in the next section.

#### **5.4. Determinants of Return Female Migrants:**

Though migration is comprised of a surplus of male workers over females, the percentage of returnees is the highest amongst females (Wang & Fan, 2006). In a study conducted by Wang and Fan (2006), they examined the success and failure of return migration from urban to rural in China, and indicated that women are considerably more likely than men to return. At the same time, the research shows that more single persons migrate than married persons while the proportion of married persons is the highest among returnees signifying that getting or being married is an important factor to return migration. Dalia, Azza, and Marwa stated that they returned after only one year because they did not like the family being separated. They felt that longer time abroad would have made serious complications to the family and the marriage. Azza shared that she "felt unhappy with the family being separated." Rehab, Basma and Yasmine, single at the time of their migration, stayed longer than the married women, but returned mainly due to family reasons. Basma and Engy both stated that apart from situational factors they became homesick and missed their family, friends and community. However, due to the social pressure for single females to marry, all three women married in Egypt within a year of their return. In the same respect, female returnees who are most likely to have children of school age such as the case with Azza, and Marwa did not want to extend their contracts for the sake of

keeping the family together. Therefore, family demand is correlated with return migration, and family factors affect women and married persons in particular.

#### **5.4.1. Foreign Experience Yielding Higher Opportunities at Home:**

The return of skilled migrants is said to be the “brain gain” of the “brain drain.” Skilled migrants are said to return with a multitude of benefits to the home country. First, migrants bring back with them the technological skills and work experience that they acquire abroad. Second, they may come back with financial capital in the form of savings accumulated during their staying abroad, which they may invest in various ways including starting a business-monetary remittance behaviors and the specific social capital obtained from their migration experience are further discussed in chapter five. However, for there to be a significant brain gain, the outcomes that return migration may produce in home countries is indicative to two variables: time and space. Time relates to the length of stay abroad and to the adjustment that ensues before and after migration with position to the standing of returnees and to their origin societies (Cassarino J.-P. , 2004). The period of stay abroad requires adjustments in order to permit migrants to gain and diversify their skills in the probability of capitalizing them when return arises (Dustmann 2001; Cassarino J.-P. , 2004).

“If [the duration of stay abroad] is very short, say less than a year or two, the migrant will have gained too little experience to be of any use in promoting modernization back home. If the period of absence is very long, returnees may be so alienated from their origin society, or they may be so old, that again the influence exerted will be small. Somewhere in between, an optimum length of absence might be found whereby the absence is sufficiently long to have influenced the migrant and allowed him to absorb certain experiences and values, and yet sufficiently short that he still has time and energy upon

return to utilize his newly acquired skills and attitudes” (King 1986, 19; Cassarino J.-P. , 2004, p. 259).

Having been exposed to advanced technology, such as information and management skills, along with an effective work ethic, return migrants help to transfer and circulate the knowledge that they obtained abroad. For many migrants, return allows them to capitalize on the skills that they have acquired abroad by landing a more highly skilled job than they could have hoped for had they stayed at home (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008). To answer one of the research questions, “Does the return gives the female migrants more opportunity in the job market”? Let us consider the females in this study and the career opportunities upon their return. This was especially true for Yasmine, who, as an airline attendant, returned and was offered various career opportunities that she had no experience in. Employers valued her communication skills, exposure to different cultures, and effective work ethics gained abroad. Aya and Rehab also mentioned that their exposure to different technological machinery gave them an advantage as they had the knowledge to operate these machines. Shereen has used the experience and skills that she acquired in the GCC to publish articles and a book on clinical pathology.

However, others said that their career opportunities did not expand much in Egypt either because of their short stays, or Egypt’s lack of economic and industrial growth, or because of less career opportunities offered to women locally. Basma stated that “employers in Egypt have an impression that due to our experience working in the GCC we will expect a higher salary, and this sometimes makes them not want to hire us.” Yet most of them felt that their experience was valuable and that it can open doors for them to re-migrate if they so desire. Amira said, “Now that I have experience working abroad, it will be easier to migrate again, as I understand the system. Also employers will see this and want to hire me over first-time migrants.”

In parallel to return migrants from non-migrants in the origin country, research reveals that return migrants usually have higher standards of education (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008). This is mainly due to the initial selection of migration and that of return migration, but it also statistically shows that migrants attain skills and experience while working abroad (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008). In addition, a study conducted in Egypt in 2007 concluded that nineteen percent of returning migrants had a university education, versus nine point seven percent of non-migrants (Wahba, 2007b; Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008, p. 197).

### **5.5. Conclusion:**

Return migration is of significantly importance because returnees can become agents of change upon returning to their country of origin to bring back with them not only financial capital, but also skills, knowledge and innovation from abroad, all valuable assets to the development of their home country. In temporary migration, for which private and public agencies facilitate the contracted labor of both skilled and low skilled migrants for an interim of time, returned migration can positively contribute to the home country. However, the amount of positive contribution a returned migrant can make to development in his or her home country is correlated to the amount of time spent abroad. The longer the individual stays abroad the more experience and skills they gain. They usually save higher proportions of their earnings and use their savings to establish businesses that employ family or other relatives, and draw on resources in their kin network. Returned migrants can deliver cost-effective development and protect themselves from corruption better than aid agencies or foreign investors (Nicholson, n.d).

So, with regards to the women in this study, most of them viewed their work experience abroad as positive. Most of them had achieved their desired objectives either financially or a boost to their career development. Therefore, in the case of temporary female migrants when

these women return to Egypt, they mostly reported fairly good socio-economic conditions with more career opportunities in comparison to the women left behind; and in some cases as well as their male counterparts, as supported by other research reports (Bilsborrow and Schoorl, 2006; Sika, 2011).

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## **Chapter Six: Monetary Remittances and Temporary Migration:**

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In studying the motivations for labor migration, Ravenstein (1888/1889) concluded that “but none of these currents<sup>11</sup> can compare in volume with that which arises from the desire inherent in most men to “better” themselves in material respects” (Ravenstein 1888/1889, 286; Arranjo, 2000, p. 284), which emphasizes that economic incentives are major motivations behind the decision to migrate. In this chapter, I discussed remittances behaviors regarding gender, the highly skilled and temporary migrants based on the research data from chapter four and the literature. This chapter attempts to answer the following research questions through discussion of the concepts of remittance incentives and remittance behaviours, and the determinants of remittances: How different do women remit in contrast to men? Do highly skilled remit more than low skilled in female migrants?

### **6.1. Remittance Incentives:**

In recent years, remittances have drawn the attention of policymakers as a major development resource (Niimi & Reilly, 2008). Remittances, money sent by workers who have relocated domestically to urban areas or internationally to developed countries, represent a fundamental component of income strategies utilized by households in developing nations (de la Briere et al. 2002; Niimi & Reilly, 2008).

At the macro level, remittances have the potential to reduce poverty in underdeveloped countries. Through foreign exchange currency, they can pay off balance of payments from other countries, incite development through private investment and entrepreneurship projects, and assist in balancing income distribution (Penson, 2007). As the effect, “remittances can improve

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<sup>11</sup>Ravenstein was referring to the political situation in England at the time; “bad or oppressive laws, heavy taxation, an unattractive climate, uncongenial social surroundings and even compulsions all produced and are still producing currents of migration” (Arranjo, 2000).

source countries' international credit ratings and be used to raise external funds by securitizing future flows" (Penson, 2007, p. 1).

At the micro level, remittances help to alleviate household poverty. They help with improving the life chances for migrant's families with respects to healthcare and education; in this aspect raising their human capital advancement (de Haas H. , 2007). As return migrants, they have the ability to raise the household's economic status from income gained from abroad (de Haas H. , 2007).

Besides remittance incentives, remittance behavior is another concept worth discussion in further exploration of return migration.

## **6.2. Conceptualizing Remittance Behavior:**

Three main classifications fall under the theories of remittances; pure altruism, tempered altruism, and enlightened self-interest and pure self-interest, according to Lucas and Stark (1985). I employ pure altruism, and tempered altruism fit to fit this study and are discussed in this section.

**Pure altruism:** For Lucas and Stark (1985), the key motivation for migrants sending remittances to the home country is due to altruism that is either conditional or unconditional. Conditional remittances are those motivated by self-interest. These are funds that are sent home due to motives that include investments of capital, for procurement of goods or assets, to safeguard one's inheritance, or to uphold social standing within society and return with acquired social capital (Brown 1997; de la Cruz 1995; Hoddinott1992; Poirine 1997; Blue, 2004).

On the other hand, unconditional altruism is remittances that migrants enjoy sending home because they care about their household's welfare and consumption needs (Lucas & Stark,

1985). Migrants care about shocks, risk and household income conditions, and accordingly send remittances (Lucas and Stark, 1985). However, some have contended that it is mainly the permanent migrants that send money back for altruistic purposes, as oppose to temporary migrants who are highly expected to remit for investment and future consumption (Glytsos, 2002; Chandar, Moulton, & Ricketts, 2009).

**Tempered altruism:** Migrants and the family members left behind equally gain from migration through a type of inherent contract (Lucas and Stark, 1985; Hagen-Zanker and Siegel, 2007; Nepal, Remittances and Livelihood Stradegies: A Case Study in Eastern Nepal, 2013). In most situations, migrants send remittances to meet the household's basic necessities; this is generally the case when migration is used as a survival scheme (Lucas and Stark, 1985). After a consistent supply of household basic necessities, surplus remittances are consumed to a higher level. This can include investments on land, house construction, or business enterprises that are utilized to raise the household's income and social status (Nepal, Remittances and Livelihood Stradegies: A Case Study in Eastern Nepal, 2013). However, this also contingent on the necessity of the receiving households to diversity their earnings (Nepal, Remittances and Livelihood Stradegies: A Case Study in Eastern Nepal, 2013). Multiple determinants have impact on remittance behaviors; they are discussed in the next section.

### **6.3. Determinants of Remittances:**

Studies have shown that migrants' remitting behavior or motivation is influenced by various aspects including, but not limited to, gender, age, education, marital status, temporary or permanent migration and position in the family, as well as opportunities in the destination country (IOM, Gender, Migration and Remittances, 2010, p. 1). For the purpose of this research,

I focused on the discussion of remittance behaviors based on gender, temporary, and skilled migration, as well as Egyptian specific behaviors in this section.

### **6.3.1. Gender Remittance Behavior:**

The decision to migrate, the choices of jobs, the social networks utilized or the individual migrant's inclusion into the labor market at the destination country are only a few features that are influenced by gender differences (Taborga, 2009). Similarly, the earned income that is remitted or sent back, as well as the regularity of these remittances, or the effects of remittances on the development of the country of origin are likewise influenced by gender (Taborga, 2009).

Several investigations have examined how the migrant's gender influences the amount of remittance sent and the method in which they are spent. At the global level, female migrants send approximately the same amount of remittances as male migrants (IOM, Gender, Migration and Remittances, 2010). Past research proposes that women are more inclined to send higher shares of their earnings, even though they normally make less than men (INSTRAW, 2010; Lucas and Stark 1985; UNPFA and IOM 2006; Holst, Schrooten, & Schafer, 2011). Up to now, scarce studies have come to indicate that women remit more commonly than men (Lucas and Stark 1985; UNPFA and IOM 2006; Holst, Schrooten, & Schafer, 2011). One significant discovery is that there are variations in remittance behaviors between male and female migrants; for instance, "men seem to remit mostly to their wives while female migrants often send remittances to the extended family and persons caring for their children" (Amaia Pérez Orozco and Denise Paiewonsky 2007; Amaia Pérez Orozco, Denise Paiewonsky, and Mar García Domínguez 2008; Holst, Schrooten, & Schafer, 2011, p. 6).

In additions, research has found that social obligations to remit contrast by gender as well (de la Briere, Sadoulet, de Janvry, and Lambert 2002; de la Cruz 1995; Osaki 1999; Blue, 2004).

Women are highly expected to send remittances in response to altruistic motivations. The gender traditional roles of men as the family breadwinners and women's reproductive nature, taking responsibility for the care of family members, particularly the sick and elderly, may fuel the pattern of sending as well as motivations to send back earned income (Penson, 2007). As an effect of their devotion and social commitment to the household and their care for family members, an innate feature of the feminine role, women are assumed to develop lengthier durable and deeper links with their relatives, specifically in regards to children, wherever they may be located (Taborga, 2009). And thus, female migrants usually send more money regularly and for longer periods of time (IOM et al., 2007; IOM, *Gender, Migration and Remittances*, 2010, p. 1).

Moreover, the investments of male and female migrants differentiate. The inference evolving from existing literature is that female migrants, through remittances, provide economic protection for the household left behind and have a tendency to prefer invest on children's education and health (see Dwyer and Bruce 1988; García 1991; Guyer 1997; Katz 1992; Kennedy 1991; Thomas 1990, 1994; Thomas and Chen 1994; Guzmán, Morrison, & Sjöblom, 2007). In this manner, investments in future human capital can lead to more gender equality (Chen, 2004). Subsequently, an increased in education has a tendency to encourage more migration of women and in turn cultivate greater education of females (UNESCAP, 2003a (Omelaniuk, n.d.), as oppose to men, who prefer to investment in housing and other tangible assets (Guzmán, Morrison, & Sjöblom, 2007).

### **6.3.2. Temporary vs. Permanent Migration Remittances Behavior:**

There are multiple theories regarding remittance behaviors pertaining to temporary and permanent migration. As described in neoclassical theory, wage differential is a prerequisite to

migrate; while in the NELM theory, remittances or money sent, is the necessary requirement to migrate (Massey et al., 1993; Nepal, Remittances and Livelihood Strategies: A case study in Eastern Nepal, 2012). Neoclassical theory interprets migration as a person's self-interest to migrate due to higher income. While NELM theory, reasons migration as a household's tactic to generate income as a whole whereby remittances sent back are an altruistic response to family obligation. According to NELM, remittances have a positive impact on the economy of the households.

Through temporary or permanent migration, the household distributes its labor resources to oppose the risk of scarce income. This risk is presumed by situations set in the formal insurance markets, public programs, and by the opportunities for the household to attain a loan (Massey et al. 1993; Jennissen, 2007). Therefore income through labor migration is a net of financial security for the household when the domestic market is insecure. Labor migrants supply income coverage to household members in home country through the route of remittances. Therefore, remittances are considered a family duty and the fundamental objective for migrating (Nepal, Remittances and Livelihood Strategies: A case study in Eastern Nepal, 2012).

As stated above, NELM reasons the return of migrants as profitable. Labor migration, according to NELM, is a temporary situation in which migrants toil abroad in anticipation of acquiring desired profits. In general, migration is either "temporary" or "permanent." In temporary migration, individual workers are a source of income, with the objective of accruing profits and reserves to be consumed later in the home country, so as to improve the entire household's standard of living (Glytsos, 1997). On the other hand, permanent migration essentially concentrates on the relocation of the household, and focuses their effort in acquiring a

better life for themselves in the host country (Glytsos, 1997), remittance to extended family may be sent back but the probability lessens.

Research indicates that temporary migrants are highly probable to remit money, as are those who leave their marriage partner residing in the country of origin (Russell, 1986, 1992; Stahl, 1982; Carling, 2005; (IOM, A Study on Remittances and Investment Opportunities for Egyptian Migrants, 2010). According to Dustmann and Mestres (2008), one of the reasons may be that;

“Migrants with temporary migration plans have commitments towards family members other than the spouse and children, compared with migrants with permanent intentions. This could be either because a larger fraction of their extended family is still living abroad, their extended family is larger, or because the temporary nature of their intended migration induces a larger response to expectations and commitments to family and kinship, in order to build social respect for the period after return (p. 17).”

Dustmann and Mestres (2008) also propose that those with short-term aims elect to save money to consume in the home country rather than the host country, in that way they profit from purchasing power differentials in their home economy (Dustmann & Mestres, Remittance and Temporary Migration, 2008). Since foreign currency usually has more value in underdeveloped and developing countries, returning migrants can buy more from income earned abroad. Moreover, in the case of temporary migration, remittances may engender business ventures upon return and relieve credit limitations that individuals might encounter in the home country (Collier, Piracha, & Randazzo, 2011).

### **6.3.3. Skilled VS. Under Skilled Remittance Behavior:**

In predictable remittance behaviour, conflicting outcomes show, that migrant-sending households are less likely to receive remittances from skilled or professional migrants. According to World Bank, the counter aspect of the brain drain is fairly balanced by internal remittances from migrants (Fiani, 2007). There is categorically inadequate proof that remittances have a tendency to proliferate with the level of expertise (Johnson and Whitelaw 1974; Rempel and Lobfell 1978; Fiani, 2007). It is projected that, since skilled migrants earn more, they are expected to remit more. Though, according to Fiani (2007), there are several unclear questions with this aspect of literature. Evidence from Rodriguez and Horton (1994), on case studies in the Philippines, for example, demonstrates that migrant's education levels have no bearing on the sum of remittances sent back (Fiani, 2007). He examined that expert workers typically originate from better-off and highly educated households and consequently have less of a motivation to remit (Fiani, 2007). In addition, they could extend their time abroad, either because they are keener to reunite with relatives in the host country or because they encounter fewer limitations in doing so (Fiani, 2007). Dustmann and Mestres (2008) further add that "the better educated may also be less affected by social pressure to remit" (p. 16), since most come from well to do families they do not have the same pressure to assist in alleviating the family's economic conditions.

### **6.4. Remittances of Egyptian Migrants:**

Remittances' is one of Egypt's four economic sectors of the economy; the other three are petroleum, the Suez Canal, and tourism. As Choucri (1977) stated in early days of Egyptian migration to the GCC States that, "The new migration in the Middle East is dominated by the movement of the Egyptians to other Arab countries motivated largely by economic incentives" (p. 423). This statement still holds true today as the Egyptian economy continues to struggle.



Remittances from Egyptian abroad continue to contribute significantly to the country's developing economy. According to the Central Bank of Egypt, remittances from Egyptians working abroad rose to a historic high in 2014 to \$22 billion (Ahramonline, 2015). In 1983, Ayoub then stated that "Remittances now outweigh in importance income accruing from the Suez Canal, petroleum sales, cotton exports, and tourist activities" (Ayubi, 1983, p. 446). In recent years, the political and economic instability due to the 2011 revolution has caused subsequent labor strikes, factory closures, and disruptions in the stock market that have greatly contributed to the increase in debt and economic inflation.

In 2008, remittances represented 5.3 percent of the gross domestic product and nearly up to 40 per cent of the income of Egyptian households (Jureidini, Bartunkova, Ghoneim, & Ilahi, 2010). Despite, the global financial crisis, which resulted in negative growth of remittance flows for many African countries (Mohapatra & Ratha, 2011), in 2009, Egypt ranked the seventh-biggest remittance receiving country in the world with an estimated remittance inflow of USD 7.8 billion (IOM 2010a; Bacchi, 2014, p. 4). And, in spite of the revolution and its implications on the political economy, remittances for the fiscal year 2012/2013 broke records standing at \$20 billion, climbing up to 6<sup>th</sup> in biggest remittance receiving country (Carnemark, 2013). In 2014, remittances to Egypt were up to 22.2 percent (Ahramonline, 2015). According to Zeinab Hashem, head of the treasury department at the country's biggest bank, National Bank of Egypt (NBE), Egypt estimated \$22 billion for 2014/2015 (Ahramonline, June 2015), and continues to break record highs. It is noteworthy to mention that a large portion of these remittances come from migrants in the GCC state, where \$4.3 billion worth of funds was reflected in the third quarter of 2014 (Ahramonline, 2015). The volume of remittances comes as a surprise to many Egyptians and different attempts have been made to analyse the remittances received in this time

of chaos in Egypt and other Arab countries (Abdelfattah, 2011). The impact of the revolutions in the Middle East on the volume of remittances to Egypt may be unclear, but it can likely be attributed to the unconditional altruism theory.

Macro-level analysis prior to the revolution revealed that “the migrants' remittances to Egypt increased with lower levels of income and higher inflation in the home country” (El-Sakka and McNabb; 1999; Blue, 2004, p. 65). A rise in the cost of living in the migrant’s home country, usually associated with the fall in real income, and subsequent reduced purchasing power of migrants' families, increases migrants' predisposition to send remittances (Blue, 2004). El-Sakka and McNabb (1999) maintain that inflation has a positive connection to the amount of remittance inflows because migrants remit more in reaction to increased prices in home country in order to uphold the consumption habits of families back home (Mohapatra & Ratha, 2011). However, the views on domestic inflation are mixed. Researchers argue that high inflation is a sign of economic instability and may discourage remittances (Mohapatra & Ratha, 2011) from migrants abroad.

Whereas remittances sent home to mitigate economic shock are generally altruistic in nature, structural factors, such as the feasibility to remit through formal channels, which are beyond the migrant's control, can also influence their remitting behavior. The inclination of migrants to send money back is also contingent on the economic and savings policies in the host and home countries, exchange rates and risk factors, and the availability and efficiency of transfer facilities (Taylor, 1999). A large portion of remittance goes unaccounted as many remit through unofficial channels (such as sending money with other migrants on their return). Efforts were also made to encourage Egyptians abroad to send money back to Egypt through official channels. During the 2011 revolt (and in times of crisis), the “Bank Misr in the United Arab

Emirates offered free of charge transfer of money to encourage remittances to Egypt so as to help the Egyptian economy” (Abdelfattah, 2011, p. 8).

According to the data obtained from the study framework in chapter four, the remittance behaviors of Egyptian female migrants are due to their personal characteristics and are as follows:

As one of the common remittance investments, education and healthcare are among the main items that migrant females invest in general and also hold true for more than half of the women in this study. As shown in the case study, Amira mentioned that she used her remittances to invest in the education and healthcare of her siblings. She sent money home on a quarterly basis to her brother to put in the bank. She funded her brother’s wedding. She also allowed the family to make bilateral decisions on how the money was spent. On the other hand, Marwa, rarely sent remittances back because her children accompanied her while abroad. However, both her and her husband made bilateral decisions on how the money was spent. It was mainly spent on education and healthcare for the children (private tutoring, sports and language course) and family consumer goods (new stove, refrigerator and other household appliances). Nancy did not send money home; she did not have children of her own. However, she invested in her brother’s children’s education by paying for their tuition at very affluent private institutions and lending money to family members as needed. Engy and Basma rarely sent money to their families, upon return they invested to extend their education in Egypt. Engy continued with her doctors’ degree and Basma with her M.B.A. degree.

In addition, while it is a characteristic of male migrant to mainly invest in consumer goods and property, female migrants also invest in such commodities. In the case study, Rehab, Yasmine, Azza, Aya, Nancy and Amira invested in property, consumer goods (i.e. cars,

computer and clothing as well as travelling). Yasmine bought a chalet in Alexandria that she frequents during the summer, Amira invested in flat in an affluent neighborhood in Cairo, Dalia bought a three bedroom home, Nancy also bought a beach home in Alexandria, and Rehab and Aya invested on agricultural land. Aya sent remittances monthly; she sent almost all her income since most of her living accommodations were paid for; and she invested in farmland in order to raise animals, produce and plants.

Some of them invested in business and entrepreneur endeavours. In taking advantage of the purchasing power of their country; Marwa stated that she invested in Gold. While, Marwa stated that she invested to expand her family's pharmaceutical business.

Furthermore, leisure activities such as entertainment, travels, and social gatherings are also part and parcel of how money is spent from labor migrants. Basma mentioned that she didn't feel obligated to send money back to her family because they already owned a home, so she freely spent most of her money in Dubai, "The high cost of living made it difficult to save money and the lifestyle in Dubai also made it difficult, there is so much to do, so many leisure attractions." Engy and Rehab both used some of their earnings for travel to both domestic and international destinations, for instance, Rehab went to Germany for a month.

Overall, the characteristics of remittance behaviors in Egyptian female migrants were that they invested in an array of human capital and consumer goods such as; education and healthcare, home appliances and property, business endeavours', travel and leisure activities.

## **6.5. Conclusion:**

This chapter discussed the monetary remittance behaviors of temporary, gender, and skilled migration, with a focus on temporary Egyptian female migrant's remittance behaviour.

To answer the research questions: Do highly skilled remit more than under-skilled migrants? How does temporary migration affect remittance behavior? The answers are: the tendency of remittance behaviors in Egyptian female migrants were that education and healthcare investments are their main investments as general studies conclude. Since, the sampling frame in this study come from middle to upper economic classes, there is no comparison showing that highly skilled migrants remit more than under-skilled migrants. Remittance motivations in this study are mainly influenced by family obligations where married women remit or save more than single females. The married women in this study mainly invested in their children's health and education life chances, with some investing in property and consumer goods. On the other hand, most of the single females in this study invested their earnings on furthering their education, travel and other personal investments, with a couple either investing in the family business or on their sibling's personal growth. In regards to temporary remittance behaviour, those who worked abroad longer remitted and saved more than those who worked two years or less.

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## Chapter Seven: Return Migrants and their Impact on Social Structure

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Most of studies on labor migration mainly focus on the economic growth of developing countries. Research largely overlooks the social transformations that occur due to social interactions between migrants and non-migrants. To recognize labor migration as an entirely economic gain is an incomplete analysis, it is nearly impossible to separate the “The social and cultural dimensions of migration from... its economic dimensions” (De Hass, The social and cultural impact of international migration on Moroccan sending communities: a review, 2006, p. 4). Apart from income remittances, which has the capacity to alter migrant’s and their family’s economic and social lives, migrants also transfers skills and social attitudes gained from abroad that transforms their society on a variety of levels.

In her studies on migration, “The Transnational Villagers”, Levitt (2001) coined the term ‘social remittances’ to focus on the social aspect of migration rather than economic facet. She defines social remittances as, “ideas and behaviors that migrants export back to their sending countries” (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011, p. 146). According to Levitt (2001), social remittances transfers transpire when returning migrants visit or resettle in their communities of origin, or when non-migrants visit them in receiving countries, as well as through common interactions of letters, videos, email, and phone calls.

Accordingly, this chapter aims to emphasize how ideas and practices are designed in societies through culture and how migration can redesign these ideas and practices through the hypothesis of returning migrants. I summarize the relationship between culture and migration, and the effect of social transmittals. The focus of this paper is on the role of migration and social transmittals and the evolving family negotiations in Egyptian society. In order to highlight the

impact of migration and social transfers in the case of Egyptian families, this chapter attempts to answer the following research questions; how does the return of Egyptian female migrants affect their position within the family? Are they given a more authoritative role? This is first done by considering the relationship between culture, social structure and agency, then by examining Egyptian social structure, and finally discussing social remittances from return migrants and its effect on the social structure of the society.

### **7.1 Cultural Concepts:**

Culture and society are intricately intertwined. Societies are theoretically universal communities of social groups, which reside in a definable area and interact in a particular manner in order to share a common culture (OpenStax, 2013). Culture includes a set of traditions, values, beliefs, norms and symbols that are outlined and legitimized as feelings, thoughts, and behaviors of a group of people (Schwartz, 2009, p. 1). Portes (2008) adds that culture also includes a shared language ( p. 6). Shwartz (2009) highlights, that value emphasizes the shared conceptions in a community of “what is good and desirable in the culture” (2). Cultural values confirm the social arrangement of individual and group beliefs, actions, and goals. Primarily associated to learned behavior, culture is not nature but nurtured. It is passed from one generation to another. Culture is thus distinguishable and particular, as one society differs from another in terms of space and time contexts. Formal institutions and rules, customs, and day-to-day practices express the prevailing cultural value emphases in societies (Schwartz, 2009, p. 2).

Culture is shaped through a set of negotiations. These negotiations are based on issues or problems in regulating human activity (cf. Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961; Schwartz, 2009). Eventually, these negotiations become rooted information and are implemented through institutions, beliefs, and practices of the society. The unique traditions and practices of societies

are the features that distinguish cultures from one another, as well as, the ways in which societies respond to basic issues or problems.

In his prose, “A Theory of Cultural Value Orientations: Explication and Applications”, Schwartz (2006), distinguished between embedded versus autonomous cultures. In embedded cultures, people are perceived as individuals tightly united. They find meaning in life through the identification with the group, partaking in a shared life style, and make efforts to reach mutual aims. Embedded cultures preserve the state of affairs and apply restrictive actions that might disturb the group`s cohesion or the traditional social order. Its central principles include social order, respect for customs, security, conformity, and knowledge. In contrast, in autonomous cultures, people behaves as autonomous and bounded entities that cultivate and express their own preferences, feelings, ideas, and abilities, in order to find meaning in their own uniqueness.

Likewise, the concept of autonomy is twofold; it is divided into two parts, the intellectual and the affective (Schwartz, A Theory of Cultural Value Orientations: Explication and Applications, 2006). Intellectual autonomy urges people to seek after their own thoughts and scholarly direction unconventionally. Examples of imperative values in such societies incorporate broadmindedness, interest, and creativity. Affective autonomy urges people to seek after affectively constructive experience for themselves. Vital qualities incorporate pleasure, energizing life, and fluctuated life

As cultures can either be strongly or weakly embedded, some scholars strongly argue against embedded cultures in saying that culture is “a collectively held set of attributes, which is dynamic and changing over time” (cf Dahl, 2001; 9; Petho, 2005, p. 2).



From this framework, the cultural groups of North Africa and the Muslim Middle East are particularly high in embeddedness and fall short of affective and intellectual autonomy. (Schwartz, *A Theory of Cultural Value Orientations: Explication and Applications*, 2006, p. 160). Their culture emphasizes significance in life through collective social relations, ensuring group solidarity and maintaining traditional order, as opposed to developing individual autonomy such as in industrial societies.

In order to fully understand culture, we must also consider social structure. According to Schwartz (2006) “Culture joins with social structure... in complex reciprocal relations that influence every aspect of how we live (139)”. Portes (2008) adds that, “while culture is the realm of values, cognitive frameworks and accumulated knowledge; social structure is the realm of interest, individual and groups backed by different levels of Hierarchy” (p. 6).

## **7.2 Social Structure and Agency:**

Social structure emerges when a group of people assembles and interacts. Blau (1976) considers social structure as a framework consisting of “A set of parameters or criteria of social distinction such as age, sex, race, completed by socio-economic status, represented by social position and social relations” (Bernardi, Gonzales, & Requena, 2006, p. 164), essentially an arrangement of various aspects in human interactions.

A central issue in social theory is the relationship between social structure and agency (Clark, 2008; Shahidi, 2015). Giddens’ (1979) Structuration theory is "an approach to social theory concerned with the intersection between knowledgeable and capable social agents and the wider social systems and structures in which they are implicated" (Gregory, 1994: 600; Wolfel, 2002, p. 1).

To Giddens' (1979) understanding the relationship between the society and the individual is dialectic but essential, he calls this relationship the "duality of structure." The Duality of Structure relates to the *fundamentally recursive character of social life, and expresses the mutual dependence of structure and agency* (Giddens, 1979: 69 italics in original; Wolfel, 2002, p. 13). Structure is jointly the medium and the outcome of the reproduction of practices" (Cohen, 1989: 42; Wolfel, 2002, p. 14). In other words, as an agent brings about social change, the rules that the individual used are also changed in the process. Therefore, it is of significance to understand on how both structure and agency work together to change society, also as mentioned in chapter three, agency is connected to an individual's resources. The amount of resources an agent can utilize has an impact on the amount of change an agent can bring about.

Another aspect of Structuration theory is that the agent is cognizant of her actions, intentions and motives behind them. According to Giddens, all actions are "intentional or purposeful" (Giddens, 1979: 56; Wolfel, 2002, p. 7). Although Giddens put emphasis on the individual as a human negotiator, he places the individual as part of the progression of making history, rather than the "maker of history" (Cohen, 1989: 47; Wolfel, 2002, p. 9). Giddens sees them as part of a process of modern transformation; therefore, structure and human action (agency) are central to realizing gender consequences and why they are equal or unequal.

It should be recognized that migrant women exhibit considerable "knowledgeable and capable" agency. Through their migration projects they are active initiators of change. At the macro-level, women have the capacity to endorse the migration of others; not only do they embark on income-generating undertakings, but they also sustain association networks that provide assistance for potential female migrants in order to facilitate a successful migration experience (Salaff, 1997; United Nations, 2006, p. 18). At the micro-level, migrant women are

sources of financial transfers that may be used to develop the well-being of their family members and/or nurture economic growth; they thus act as resources for change as providers and protectors of family ties at home and at receiving countries (Chant and Radcliff, 1992; Tacoli, 1999).

In the following section, I will discuss two of the social institutions in Egypt along with Egyptian women and their agency within these institutions.

### **7.2.1. The Egyptian Family and Social Structure:**

The Patriarchy system is the basis for the family structure in Egyptian society. It is based on Islamic religion, morality and traditions of the society that are embedded in children`s conduct at a very primal age (Ashante, 2002). Therefore, patriarchy and Islam have a pivotal role in defining Egypt women`s social position within the society.

Under the Egyptian family arrangement, responsibility is reliant on gender and age (Ashante, 2002). Under Islamic tradition, the head of the household is the father who is accountable for providing the resources necessary for the family`s wellbeing; as consequence, males undertake their authoritarian roles in their relations with women. (Mensch, Ibrahim, Lee, & Omaima, 2003). This authoritarian role is replicated through the control of fertility decision, the segregation of gender roles, as well as the creation of emotional distance from their wives and children (Davis and Davis 1989; Kandiyoti 1994; Mensch, Ibrahim, Lee, & Omaima, 2003, p8). Accordingly, women are commonly expected to be compliant to men, as stipulated by social norms linked to the roles within the family. Mothers are in charge for daily care of children, but decision-making such as education, healthcare, and marriage are made by fathers (Black, 2014). Compared with men, women display more warmth and emotions (Rugh 1997; Mensch, Ibrahim, Lee, & El-Gibaly, 2003).

Sons and daughters are assigned duties according to age (Ashante, 2002). Sons are trained to be guardians of their sisters. They are supposed to assist the father inside and outside the home. The son's role is to be supportive. Sons are also expected to take care of both parents in older age (Black, 2014). On the other hand, daughters are assumed the role of emotional supporters to the family (Ashante, 2002). They learn to take care of the men in the family and to be good homemakers. Mothers and daughters are accountable for cooking, cleaning and serving the household (Black, 2014).

***Family values:***

While the West upholds independence and autonomy as strong individualist cultural values, the collective way of social life in Arab social arrangement is identified by relatives assuming a central role in forming the values and self-conceptions of young individuals (Mensch, Ibrahim, Lee, & El-Gibaly, 2003).

“Young people typically live at home until they are married and remain dependent on older family members for financial and emotional support as young adults. In Egypt, the important task of adolescent socialization is learning how to mobilize social networks, rather than how to become autonomous as a means of achieving personal goals” (Mensch, Ibrahim, Lee, & Omaila, 2003, p. 10).

It is very uncommon for Egyptian children leave their parent's home and establishes independence before getting married. This typically occurs if the child goes overseas to study or work to save money before getting married; as some of the women in this study did. As stated earlier, values and actions differ dramatically from one culture to another. Most literature concerning women's independence has a strong viewpoint usually assuming that the aim of all adult women globally is to obtain greater individuality; however, this is not the case in Arab

culture. Applying a concept such as individuality to non-Western societies, specifically in Egypt, the fundamental factor that may be identified is the skill to mobilize or sway one's social relationships successfully rather than the ability to act independently (Mensch, Ibrahim, Lee, & El-Gibaly, 2003, p10). Social capital in Egypt is very important as most social relationships function under "Wusta."<sup>12</sup>

The independence of single people in Egypt, as defined by western ideology, is culturally viewed as dishonorable and disrespectful to the family. As Basma stated "Why should I live alone in a country where my parents live while I am single, that would be awkward." In addition she said that "In our tradition, family comes first before career." Adding to this, Amira said that "For a woman to have a career is somewhat important but it cannot be more important than the family. In Egyptian culture you must be connected to the family first. Also, if a woman does not have a career, she will still be taken care of by her family".

### **7.2.2. The Religion Variable:**

Largely, religions have a patriarchal view of the relationship between the genders (Darvishpour, 2003). Gender roles in Egypt originate much of their legitimacy from the Qur'an (Moghadam, 2003). Accordingly, the prescribed role of women in Islamic theology and law is as follows:

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<sup>12</sup> It is commonly understood that Egyptian society functions relatively on nepotism; "to get a job, get promoted, receive quality health care or other services, or avoid legal penalties, one usually needs a wusta, or connection, to an important person" (AL Masry, Basiony, & Elkamel, 2014). Connections are deeply embedded in the Egyptian system; those without them are often hapless (AL Masry, Basiony, & Elkamel, 2014).

Women are perceived as wives and mothers, and gender segregation is customary, and sometimes legally required. Whereas economic provision is the responsibility of men, women must marry and reproduce to earn status. Men, unlike women, have the unilateral right of divorce; a woman can work and travel only with the written permission of her male guardian; family honor and good reputation, or the negative consequence of shame, rest most heavily upon the conduct of women. Through the Shari'a, Islam dictates the legal and institutional safeguards of honor, thereby justifying and reinforcing the segregation of society according to sex (Moghadam, 2003, p. 4).

Although, Islam itself does not decree the absolute segregation of men and women, the separation of the genders has come to be interpreted that women may not have interactions with non-family members nor go out in public without a proper male relative escort (Al Mannai 2010; Black, 2014). This has often been argued to be a major hindrance for women's (Moghadam, 2003) in entering the workforce and more so the international labor force. Although a modern generation of Egyptian women have voluntarily adopted Islamic lifestyle and supported the rise of political Islam, they are judicious to recognize the oppression of women originates not in the religion itself, but in the methods that social institutions have used to interpret it.

### **7.2.3. Egyptian women and Agency:**

The wide economic disparity between the have and have nots plays a crucial role in women's agency. Egypt is a divided society known in the underdeveloped and developing world as "elite versus street" (Sherbiny 2005; Black R. , 2014). In Egypt, the industrialist wage economy dominates the formal urban economy; however, the urban slums depend on the informal economy through their social networks while provincial Egypt remains preindustrial (Hafez 2011). The financial underprivileged societies are widely scattered across the country

while the financially privileged ones are concentrated in a few gated communities outside Cairo and Alexandria.

Gender determines women's proper roles in Egypt, but these roles vary in women of different social classes. While some Egyptian women remain restricted to traditional private roles of daughter, wife, and mother, others have ventured into the public sphere as professional working women and as citizen activists (De Koning 2009, Dawoud 2012; Black R. , 2014).

The social class status of women determines legitimate roles. Financially advanced Egyptian women have a wide range of resources available to them. They are Western-taught, well-educated in Arabic and English, and hold high status occupations in transnational enterprises, the military, parliament, and / or government (Ghonim 2012; Black R. , 2014). They find themselves able to vote, work in transnational companies, teach in colleges and take an interest as national activists (De Koning 2009; Black, 2014). On the other hand, financially underprivileged Egyptian women have a scant amount of resources available to them. They are not permitted to vote, hold authority positions, or work for pay (Oh 2010; Black R. , 2014). They more often than not work for extended periods of time as family owned subsistence activities or in the informal sector.

Financially privileged Egyptian women are not held to the same gender norms as the financially underprivileged women. These women utilize their public roles through paid work in different ways. For example, they are able to cut out a space in public social life whereas financially underprivileged women are confined to associating among female relatives. They have the financial backing to support their social activities (Al-Mannai 2010; Black R. , 2014). Also, most of these women have Western educated parents with more democratic and egalitarian

gender views and values than financially underprivileged women.

Like values are embodied in norms, power differentials give rise to social classes, and large amounts of accumulation or lack of resources can lead to various life opportunities that have an impact on the amount of agency an agent can exhibit (Portes, 2008). Therefore, the social and economic resources of financially advantaged Egyptian women provides them the means that allow them the capacity to create social change.

### **7.3. Social Remittance and Return Migrants:**

The social remittance behaviors of return migrants and its impact on social structure are discussed in combination with data result analysis obtained from the case study and the literature information.

In her work on transnational communities, Levitte (2011) analyzes the transfer of social remittances caused by migration. Basically, social remittances are transportable through recognizable pathways. Migrants and non-migrants can identify how they learned of a particular idea or practice and why they decided to adopt it. Secondly, social remittances are diffused methodically and purposefully. A social transfer ensues when migrants communicate directly to a family member and friends regarding various viewpoints on politics or economics and encouraging them to pursue reforms. Thirdly, social remittances are generally transferred among individuals who are familiar with each other or who are associated by mutual social relations. An acquainted person who they know and towards whom they have established trust transports these new ideas and values. Since many non-migrants are enthusiastic to emulate the consumption patterns they perceive through the mass media, they are more open to the new political and religious styles introduced by migrants.



However, as we have evaluated, social change involves the interaction between institutions, structures, agents and resources; therefore, social transfers are more complex than generally considered. From a migration perspective Sakka et al. (1999) suggests that migration literature offers two main explanations for social changes in gender role norms and behavior relating to migration: The increased participation of migrant women in the labor force of the host country, and the acculturation process (Sakka, Dikaiou, & Kiosseoglou, 1999), which are then carried and transferred upon return.

According to sociological research, role modifications in migrant households are the outcome of employment of women outside the house (Sakka, Dikaiou, & Kiosseoglou, 1999). Several studies have found that through employment, women gain financial independence and therefore decision-making power within the household (Kabeer, 2012). Similarly, women who migrate are more empowered than those who are not able to migrate (Sika, 2011). For example, studies reveal that when a woman's wage and her remittances are greater than her male counterpart, she is able to influence and negotiate household decision to make more than the non-migrant (Pessar, 2006; Hirsch, 2003; Pribilisky, 2004; Sika, 2011). Thus, in a migrant family, there is a tendency for change in the role of women to take on a non-traditional direction (Kosack, 1976; Munscher, 1984). However, Portes (2008) argues that power of migration for effective change either in sending or receiving regions and countries depends on three main factors: a) the numbers involved; b) the duration of the movement; and c) its class composition (p14). In regards to the second factor, circular flows of short duration tend to produce less solid change than permanent movements.

To Schwartz (2006), cultural change is slow. Cultural norms are moderately stable. A few specialists contend that components of culture persist over hundreds of years (e.g., Kohn &

Schooler, 1983; Putnam, 1993; Schwartz, 2006). Yet, since culture is a set of negotiations, at some point in time, these cultural orientations are gradually renegotiated. Exogenous elements such as; societal adjustments to epidemics, technological advances and increasing wealth contrasting with other cultures prompts negotiations in cultural values (Schwartz, 2006, p139).

Giddens (1979) underscores in his social theory that time and spaces are essential impacts on the structure of society. The history and geography of a region are critical to realizing social change as they are strong powers on the range of agency available to actors. The history and geography dynamics that occur in a particular region are necessary to understanding political, social, and economic changes (Wolfel, 2002). “The increased scale and diversity of international labor migration thus results from and is an index of the massive expansion of time-space distance of social activity in the contemporary era” (Giddens, 1984a:37; Goss & Lindquist, 1995, p. 335), in other words, the distinctive environment of regions and their unique approaches to social structure would evolve diverse motives and patterns of migration. Therefore, each county and each epoch challenge social transformation in a unique way.

Current feminist theory has emphasized the role of women as active agents in shaping and negotiating their self-identities (de Lauretis, 1987; Christou, 2006). “Through their life experiences and the various discourses that they intersect with, female identities are formed and reproduced” (Christou, 2006, p91). According to Giddens, “all social actors, no matter how lowly, have some degree of penetration of the social forms which oppress them” (Giddens, 1984: 72). Therefore, all agents have some control in influencing the structure of their society.

To answer the research questions: **How does the return of Egyptian female migrants affect their position within the family? Are they given a more decision making role?**

The traditional patriarchal principles that define Egyptian society can strongly be correlated to migration systems. The fact that only men have historically been permitted to migrate alone is a solid indication of a male governed society, or what Hondagneu-Sotelo (1992) terms “family stage migration”:

“In family stage migration, patriarchal gender relations are embedded in normative practices and expectations that allow men and deny women the authority and the resources necessary to migrate independently. Men are expected to serve as good financial providers for their family, which they attempt to do through labor migration; patriarchal authority allows them to act autonomously in planning and carrying out migration. Married women must accept their husband’s migration decisions, remain chaste and stay behind to care for the children and the daily operation of the domestic sphere (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992, p. 394)”.

Boyle et al (1998), conclude that women do not deliberately propagate the system of patriarchy, but when women accept to the economic migration decision of the man, over women’s economic advancements, they are inadvertently supporting this traditional (patriarchal) framework (Wolfel, 2002).

Customarily, Egyptian male migrants leave their wives and daughters behind with their extended family who protect their honor. Remittances, the money sent back to provide for the entire family, have been interpreted as the price that the male migrant pays for his indirect control over the family (De Mas, 1990; De Hass, *The social and cultural impact of international migration on Moroccan sending communities: a review*, 2006). Along these parameters, men have the ability to relocate without compromising their family’s integrity.

Past studies, relating to Egyptian labor movement, has demonstrated that the relocation of men for the purpose of work encourages equality and the empowerment of women within the household unit (Sika, 2011). These studies demonstrated that in the absence of their spouses, and with the income remittance sent by their spouse, females achieve more decision making capacity, and begin to make vital economic family decisions relating to the education of their children, welfare and maintenance of the family.

Despite more control that left behind migrant wives have over the utilization of family income and welfare, this increase in power is fundamentally temporary. Male migrants by and large reclaim their positions as patriarchs as soon as they return. In most cases, for Egyptian men who relocate to more conservative host nations (i.e. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) in terms of gender roles, they generally return with less progressive attitudes towards women and have a significant impact on the family dynamics (Elbadawy and Rousdy, 2009; De Hass, 2006; Sika, 2011, p4). Thus the new gender roles that females acquired by the movement of male are for the most part not assumed out of free choice, but rather a de facto increase in the need for the spouse left behind to make important decisions related to the welfare and maintenance of the household by force of the situation. Therefore it should not be considered paralleled with emancipation in the ability to make independent and conscious choices against prevailing norms on gender roles (De Hass, 2006; Hossfeld, 2009)

Nevertheless, studies have shown that migration indeed leads to women's emancipation (Dedeolgu, 2014). Contrary to this view, but within the same perspective is Porte's (2008) viewpoint, that emancipation is impossible because migrant women have a minority status due to class composition and quantity (Berg-Eldering, 1986; Defigou and Koufakou, 1993; Sakka & Dikiaou, Task sharing and sex role attitudes in Greek Returnees: A combination of cross-

sectional and longitude data, 2001). Although this is a general viewpoint, it can be particularly applicable to the women of the Middle East who have some of the lowest labor force participation rates worldwide and more so in international migration. Additionally, other studies have shown that female returnees often report the loss of gender gains made in metropolitan societies upon return (Condon, 2005; Caritas, 2012). This can take on the form of being more dependent on the male family members and / or women being less likely to work due to traditional societal roles and constraints with more time spent domestic work, child care and other household responsibilities (Caritas, 2012).

Lack of emancipation indicated by return migration data shows that women, upon return, adopt old patterns of behavior (Abadan-Unat, 1977; Moussourou, 1993). Factors contributing to this regression are; lack of employment, type of migrant family and social norms and attitudes in the home country concerning women's employment (Caritas, 2012). A concern expressed by female returnees was the need to conform to local gender norms, especially those connected with female respectability (Phillip and Potter, 2005; N.A., *The Female Face of Migration*, 2012). Temporary migration might prompt personal development and empowerment of women in the short run; but upon their return, and to the extent to which returned female migrants have, an independent life in relation to their families is ambiguous (N.A., *The Female Face of Migration*, 2012).

This lack of agency would clarify why a large part of the past research on migration has centered women as "secondary" migrants (Kanaiaupuni, 1999, p. 7). However, firsthand data from Mexico, and in addition other countries with unbending patriarchal structures, suggest that women, at some juncture chase after autonomous migration schemes. Thus, implicating that at some stage of the migration process, cultural restrictions against female migration are interpreted

into a “culture of migration” (Kandel and Massey 2002; Stecklov, Carletto, Azzari, & Davis, 2008)

Finally, economic decision making within Egyptian culture is generally centered on the position one holds in the family (Ashante, 2002). Males usually have decision-making authority; female’s position takes the second place. In the case of siblings, if the oldest offspring is a daughter, and if she contributes to the family’s economy, then she is likely to have economic decision-making within the family unit.

#### **7.4. Case Analysis of Social Transfers in Egypt:**

The following analysis concerns the women in the study and in regards to gender roles, attitudes and social change upon their return: Basma stated that upon return she fell back to the same role she had when she left, as the youngest daughter in subordination to her parents. She mentioned that the reason that she liked living in Dubai was because she did not have the same social pressures of being single as she did in Egypt. She said “living in Egypt single women is pressured to marry before a certain age.” Upon return she felt the same pressure and shortly after her return she was married. Another interesting aspect about Basma is that she is a veiled Muslim woman. She said that although in Dubai she had a lot of freedom to sway from her moral principles, she remained veiled and did not stray away from her conservative values.

On the other hand, Yasmine, the flight attendant, lived a more liberal life while in Dubai. She had a large social group and was very involved in social gatherings and activities in Dubai. She mentioned that upon her return, she went back to live at her parents’ home and she too fell back in to her role of youngest daughter. Despite all the freedom she had in Dubai, she now needed to give an account of her whereabouts. An intriguing aspect of Yasmine is that she returned to settle down in Egypt. She wanted to marry an Egyptian man and establish her future

in Egypt. She realized that had she not returned to Egypt when she did, her life would have taken to different direction. At the same time, due to Egypt's conservative values, she mentioned that it was difficult to find a husband once they learned that she had lived in Dubai. Most suitable men viewed her experience in Dubai as having a promiscuous life. She mentioned that it had been so difficult that in some occasions her father stepped in support of her work abroad. He took it upon himself to have all criticism directed at him. He would tell these eligible bachelors that as head of the household he took full responsibility for her living in Dubai, because it was him who had consented and allowed her to work and live abroad independently. He said if he did not trust his daughter to be a self-respecting women he would have never given her his consent. Eventually Yasmine found a husband whom she says, similar to her father, supports and is proud of her independent achievements abroad.

The married women in this study returned to their assigned gender roles within the family upon return; for example, being responsible for the children, household duties, and caring for extended family members in particular the elderly, while, their husbands resumed their role as head of the household. For Amira and Rehab being the oldest female sibling, decision responsibility within the home rested on their shoulders by default; however, their economic contributions allowed them more decision-making. For example, Amira had a decision making in both her brother's wedding and in the choice of his wife, since she funded his wedding. Rehab took over the family economic decision matters after the death of her father and in the absence of her brother who continued to work in the GCC. She said that "being the oldest female in the family I always had a sense of authority or decision making, and more so after my father's death."

### 7.5 Summary:

Conclusively, social remittances are part and parcel of labor migration. Migration can assist in the economic social mobility of migrants, which in turn changes consumption habits and adapt a new way of life. However social change is more complex. Women's lives are mediated through complex interactions of institutions: family, legislation, courts (both secular and shari'a) and religion.

Through their international migration experience, most of the women in this study gained a more progressive view of their society; nevertheless, Egypt's embedded traditional values define their familial roles upon return. With regards to the women in this study, most have resumed their existing roles within the family structure of Egypt; they fell back into their respective roles as wives or daughters prior to leaving Egypt.

Despite their subordinate role within the family, Egyptian women are agents of social change. Although as female migrants they constitute a minority, yet they are knowledgeable and capable agents. The women of this study use their education and economic social position as resources to create "structuration" on their society through labor migration.

As returned skilled female migrants, women enhance the already existing networks of migration. Giddens' (1979), theory of "Structuration" can be used to constructively add to the model of returned migration using the female experience. His theory states that, both the medium and the outcome of the practices, constitutes social systems (Giddens & Dallmayr, Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory, 1982). In other words, even though structures determine what people do, people shape structures. Giddens argues that structures are enabling, and thus give the 'knowledgeable' agent the capability to work in creative or formative way to transform these



structures Giddens “Structuration” theory can be applied in terms of returned female migrants in relation to the value they have accumulated upon return which can help to transform the dominant structures in their countries of origin. As return migrants, they bring back finances, skills and expertise gained from abroad that actively and intentionally contribute to the development of their household and their country at large which leads to social change.

### **Analysis**

In my overall analysis, I concluded that Egyptians female migrant, like most Egyptian, have an affinity to their land and to their culture. They desire social and political change in regards to women’s equality in the public sphere. They enjoy the freedom of movement and agency that having a career allowed them. However, in regard to family structure, half concluded that family was more important than education and career, since in Egyptian culture women get married and are financially taken care of by their spouse. Similarly, the married women in this survey did not equally share in the financial responsibilities. According to them, it is the man’s responsibility to provide for his wife and family, this is due to inheritance laws where property is handed down to males rather than females. The men were mainly responsible for the living expenses while the women spend their earnings as they see fit, mainly in the education and healthcare of their children. Overall, Egyptian women remain embedded in conservative and traditional values within the household. Their time spent abroad did not change their position within the family. Their ascribed roles and duties as wives, mothers and daughters were reinstated. If they had decision making authority prior to their migration, they regained that authority especially if they contributed to the household expenses.

As professional labor migrants they intentionally challenge the existing public social structure. Although their low numbers in the international market hardly make a noticeable

impact, nevertheless, as return migrants they bring back finances, skills and expertise gained from abroad that actively and intentionally contribute to the development of their household and their country at large which leads to social change and can lead to greater gender equality.

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