



저작자표시-비영리-변경금지 2.0 대한민국

이용자는 아래의 조건을 따르는 경우에 한하여 자유롭게

- 이 저작물을 복제, 배포, 전송, 전시, 공연 및 방송할 수 있습니다.

다음과 같은 조건을 따라야 합니다:



저작자표시. 귀하는 원저작자를 표시하여야 합니다.



비영리. 귀하는 이 저작물을 영리 목적으로 이용할 수 없습니다.



변경금지. 귀하는 이 저작물을 개작, 변형 또는 가공할 수 없습니다.

- 귀하는, 이 저작물의 재이용이나 배포의 경우, 이 저작물에 적용된 이용허락조건을 명확하게 나타내어야 합니다.
- 저작권자로부터 별도의 허가를 받으면 이러한 조건들은 적용되지 않습니다.

저작권법에 따른 이용자의 권리는 위의 내용에 의하여 영향을 받지 않습니다.

이것은 [이용허락규약\(Legal Code\)](#)을 이해하기 쉽게 요약한 것입니다.

[Disclaimer](#)

**Master's Thesis of International Studies**

**Return Migration, Social Status and  
Gender Roles.**

**A Qualitative Study of Female Return migrants in  
Wakiso, Uganda.**

반환 마이그레이션, 사회 상태 및 성 역할.  
우간다 와키소에서 여성 귀환 이민자에 대한 질적  
연구.

**August 2022**

**Graduate School of International Studies  
Seoul National University  
International Cooperation Major**

**Simon Ndizeye**

**Return Migration, Social Status and  
Gender Roles**  
**A Qualitative Study of Female Return migrants in  
Wakiso, Uganda.**

**Advisor: Professor Eun Ki-Soo**

**Submitting a master's thesis of  
International Studies**

**August 2022**

**Graduate School of International Studies  
Seoul National University  
International Cooperation Major**

**Simon Ndizeye**

**Confirming the master's thesis written by  
Simon Ndizeye**

**August 2022**

Chair	<b>Prof. Kim, Chong-Sup</b>
Vice-Chair	<b>Prof. Oh, Yoon Ah</b>
Examiner	<b>Prof. Eun, Ki-Soo</b>

## **Abstract**

This study used data collected from return migrants in Wakiso district, Uganda who had worked in the middle east. The aim was to examine the influence of return migration on the gender roles and social status of female return migrants. Results indicated that there are a number of factors that determine whether a returnee's gender roles and social status would be changed by the migration experience. The findings showed that return migration reinforced traditional gender stereotypes and as such has no substantial on gender roles while for social status, return migration improved the social status of female return migrants. In fact, 58.3% of the female respondents said that their social status had improved.

**Keywords:** Return Migration, Gender roles, Social Status

**Student Number:** 2020-26175

# Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1. Background .....	1
1.1.1 Legal and Policy Framework .....	3
1.2. Problem statement .....	4
1.3. Purpose of the Study .....	5
1.4. Objectives of the study .....	5
1.5. Research questions .....	6
1.6. Conceptual Framework.....	7
1.7. Significance of the study .....	8
1.8. Justification of the Study .....	8
1.9. Limitations of the study .....	9
1.10. Operational Definitions .....	9
<b>Chapter 2. Literature Review .....</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1. Theoretical Framework.....	11
2.1.1 Neoclassical Economics (NE).....	11
2.1.2 New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) .....	11
2.1.3 The Structural Approach to Return Migration .....	12
2.1.4 Transnationalism .....	13
2.1.5 Social Network Theory .....	14
2.2. Resource Mobilization and Returnee’s Preparedness.....	15
2.3. Gender in Migration .....	16
2.3.1 Gender Roles.....	17
2.3.2 Change in social status .....	18
<b>Chapter 3. Methodology .....</b>	<b>20</b>
3.1. Introduction .....	20
3.2. Research design .....	20
3.3. Target population .....	20
3.4. Sampling.....	21
3.5. Data collection methods .....	21
3.5.1 Instruments used for data collection.....	22
3.6. Data analysis.....	22
3.6.1 Issue focused analysis .....	23
3.6.2 Deductive analysis .....	23
<b>Chapter 4. Analysis and Findings .....</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1. Theoretical analysis .....	24
4.1.1 Rewards of human capital .....	24
4.1.2 Contextual factors in the home country.....	26
4.1.3 Attributes and networks acquired abroad .....	28
4.2. Gender roles in return migration .....	28
4.2.1 Perception towards finances .....	29
4.2.2 Employment agencies .....	30
4.2.3 Training and Skills .....	31
4.3. Social Status .....	33

4.3.1 Economic and Social conditions .....	33
4.3.2 Returnee's perceptions of his or her adjustment .....	34
<b>Chapter 5. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>36</b>
5.1. Introduction .....	36
5.2. Summary of the research .....	36
5.3. Interpretation of the findings .....	37
5.4. Implication of the findings.....	43
5.5. Recommendation for further research.....	43
5.6. Policy Recommendations .....	44
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Abstract in Korean.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>51</b>

# List of Figures

<b>Figure 1: Conceptual Framework.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Figure 2: Return Preparation [Cassarino 2004] .....</b>	<b>16</b>

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1. Background

Temporary migration by women who leave their family members behind for employment in the international job market is increasing in contemporary Uganda (Kakande, 2015). In this context, this research will investigate the effect of return migration on the social status and gender roles of female return migrants in Wakiso District in Uganda.

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa. It's bordered by Tanzania and Rwanda in the South; Kenya in the East, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west, and South Sudan in the North. It is part of the East African Community, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the African Union. According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, the population is 43,155,347<sup>①</sup> of which 77% are persons under the age of 30. According to the world Bank, Uganda's GDP per capital in 2020 was 817.04USD<sup>②</sup>.

Wakiso district is a found in the central region of Uganda. It encircles Kampala district in which the capital city also called Kampala is found. It is bordered by Nakaseke and Luweero Districts in the North; Kalangala District in the South; Mukono District to the East and Mpigi and Mityana Districts in the South and Northwest respectively. Wakiso is the most populated district in Uganda with 1,997,418 people.<sup>③</sup> Administratively, the district is made up of 17 sub counties, 135 parishes and 1945 villages. Having a large population and its proximity to Kampala

---

<sup>①</sup> Information accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2021 from <https://www.ubos.org/>

<sup>②</sup> [https://datacommons.org/place/country/UGA?utm\\_medium=explore&mprop=amount&popt=EconomicActivity&cpv=activitySource%2CGrossDomesticProduction&hl=en#](https://datacommons.org/place/country/UGA?utm_medium=explore&mprop=amount&popt=EconomicActivity&cpv=activitySource%2CGrossDomesticProduction&hl=en#)

<sup>③</sup> Uganda National Census Report 2014, pg 9. Table 2.2



district where most of the Labour recruitment companies are situated, Wakiso district offers an ideal environment for my study.

According to the Employment diagnostic Report 2017, about 400,000 Ugandans join the job market every year to compete for approximately 52,000 available formal jobs each year. Unfortunately, the situation is worse for women who suffer higher unemployment, occupational segregation, and a gender pay gap. In contrast, there is a high demand for migrant workers in the middle east. (Atong, Mayah, & Odigie, 2018) To take advantage of the opportunities, Uganda signed bilateral agreements with some Middle Eastern Countries to send labour migrants there. Private companies have been licenced by the Government of Uganda to connect people to job opportunities abroad.

By May 2018, over 70,000 Ugandans had left to work in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. (Namakula, 2018). Emphasizing how quick labour migration has grown in Uganda, in June 2021, it was reported that 25,605 women and 2,628 men left for various jobs in the Middle East in a period of 5 months between December 2020 and April 2021<sup>④</sup>. As the number of migrant workers to the middle east has grown, this has also contributed to job creation within Uganda in the now 216 private recruitment companies.<sup>⑤</sup> In line with global trends, most women migrating to work have taken up domestic work jobs. An interesting global statistic is that 73.4 per cent (or around 8.5 million) of all migrant domestic workers are women. (ILO, 2015).

---

<sup>④</sup> New Vision Newspaper Article, titled “A shortage of women for courtship in Baganda due to rural-urban migration and labour export is alarming the residents and breaking families written by Francis Kagolo”. Published on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at <https://www.newvision.co.ug/article/details/105409>

<sup>⑤</sup> Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, List of Licenced companies [as at 10<sup>th</sup> August 2021]

In terms of remuneration, according to the Uganda Association for Employment Recruitment Agencies (UAERA), salaries paid range from US\$225 to US\$500 (*in addition to the accommodation and meals provided*) for domestic workers in Saudi Arabia (Nattabi, Mbowa, Guloba, & Kasirye, 2020). These salaries are better than those of skilled workers employed in Uganda's public service. For example; As of 2020-2021, the monthly salary of a nursing, theatre, lab, and dental assistant is Ushs313,832 (approximately US\$85); and the highest paid primary school teacher earns Ushs980,122 (approximately US\$264). This may provide an explanation for why women are opting to be domestic workers in the Middle East.

Migrant remittance inflows to Uganda have been consistently increasing from 2005 when the employment regulations were passed until 2020. In 2017, US\$1.182 billion was received in Uganda as remittances that went through formal channels. This amounted to 4.3 per cent of GDP in 2017<sup>⑥</sup>. Remittances are now double the income from Uganda's main export, Coffee. In 2018, remittances from the Middle East were US\$ 309.2 million (23% of total remittances of US\$ 1.3 billion). This was an increase from US\$ 100 million in 2015. It is not a coincidence that the growth in remittances coincides with the increase of labour migration to the Middle East Region. (Nattabi, Mbowa, Guloba, & Kasirye, 2020)

### **1.1.1 Legal and Policy Framework**

Uganda has legal and policy frameworks in place to address migration. Internationally it has ratified the international convention on the Protection of the

---

<sup>⑥</sup> <https://www.knomad.org/data/remittances?tid%5B255%5D=255> Accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their families, the ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, the Convention relating to the status of refugees, the Convention relating to stateless Persons. It is important to highlight that these conventions are only part of the larger International Human Rights mechanisms most of which Uganda is a signatory.

National laws include; the Citizenship and Immigration Control Act which allows for dual citizenship, the Prevention of trafficking in Persons Act, and the Employment Act which promotes equal opportunities for migrant workers and members of their families who legally reside in Uganda. For Ugandans abroad, the Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad) Regulations and the guidelines on Recruitment and Placement of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad, 2015 apply. Remittances in Uganda are under the Foreign Exchange Act, Foreign Exchange (Forex Bureau and Remittance) Regulations, and the Mobile money guidelines. In this case, also, other laws on the protection, promotion, and respect of Human rights are applicable.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

In 2005, the government of Uganda passed statutory Instrument No. 62 of 2005 titled, “The Employment (Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad) Regulations, 2005. This Statutory Instrument was in response at the time to job opportunities available to Ugandans in Iraq and Afghanistan. With regulations, migration for work became commonplace. At first, it was mostly men who migrated but later on opportunities for women as domestic workers in other Middle Eastern countries started increasing. In 2016 however, the government was forced to ban the

migration of domestic workers to Saudi Arabia and Jordan due to abuse that was faced by Ugandan women while in those countries.<sup>⑦</sup> This ban was lifted in 2017 due to pressure from Ugandan women who claimed that they had no alternative for employment<sup>⑧</sup>. The Ugandan government to counter the abuse signed bilateral labour management agreements with Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. Migration to work in the middle east is growing in Uganda and at the moment, the biggest number of people leaving are women between the age of 24 and 35 years leaving for domestic work in the middle east.<sup>⑨</sup> Many of these women return within two years and some renew their contracts and thereafter remigrate.

This kind of employment seeming to be the way out for many women in Uganda raises the question of whether their return has an impact on their gender roles and social status. The effects of return migration need to be considered, as more and more Ugandan women are engaging in labour migration.

### **1.3. Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of return migration on gender roles and the social status of female return migrants in Uganda

### **1.4. Objectives of the study**

1. To examine the change in the gender roles of women returning from employment in the middle east

---

<sup>⑦</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/1/23/uganda-bans-housemaids-from-working-in-saudi-arabia>

<sup>⑧</sup> <https://globalpressjournal.com/africa/uganda/uganda-lifts-ban-working-jordan-saudi-arabia-concerns-continue/>

<sup>⑨</sup> <https://www.independent.co.ug/domestic-work-500-ugandan-girls-fly-to-middle-east-daily/>

2. To assess the change in the social status of women returning from employment in the middle east.

## **1.5. Research questions**

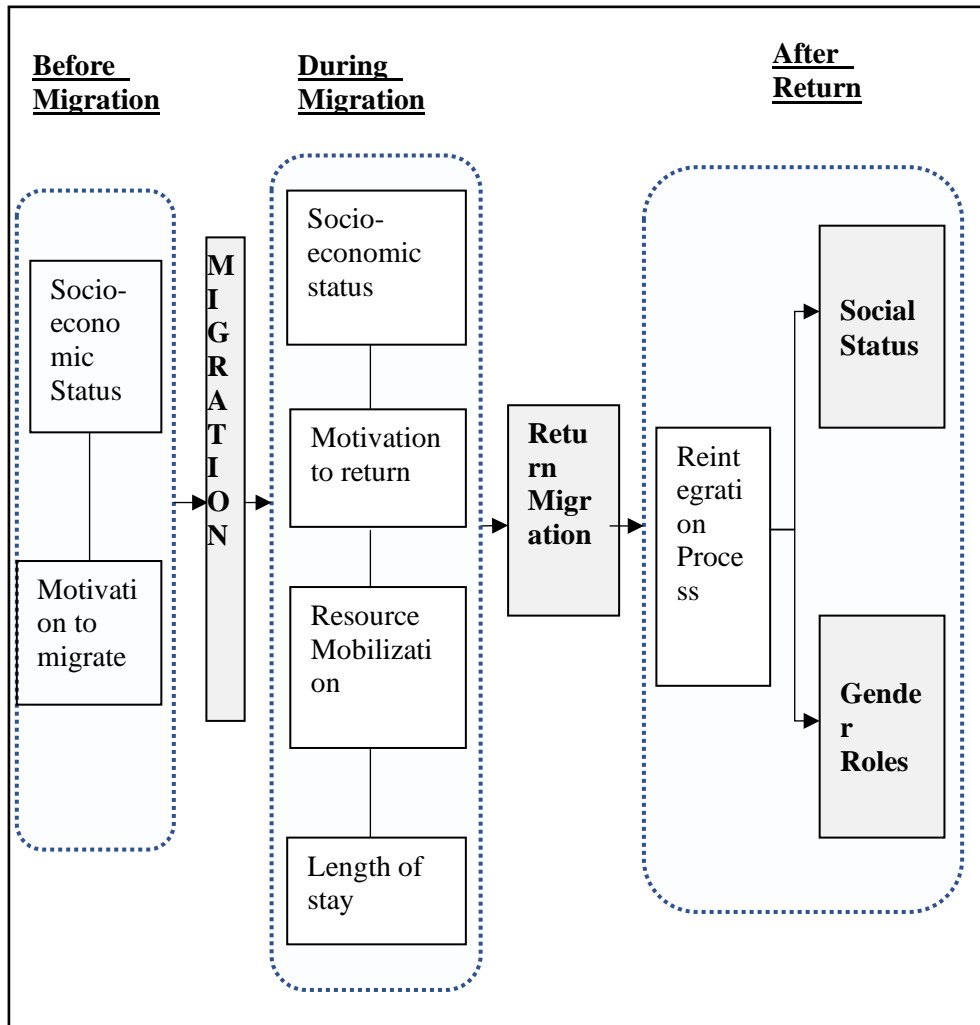
Given the above-mentioned objectives, this study presents answers to the following research questions.

*RQ1 Does return migration affect a female return migrant's gender roles?* This question considered the subjectivity of gender roles. An individual's perception of gender roles plays a role in how they interact with society. Female migrants having the migration experience, one would assume that it influenced their gender roles in society.

*RQ2. Does return migration affect a female return migrant's social status?* Answering this question would shed light on the role return migration could play in changing the social status of a female migrant. The question took into consideration the different variables that came into play when looking at return migration and thereafter how it influenced social status.

## 1.6. Conceptual framework

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework



The conceptual framework above highlights migration experience from before migration all the way to after return. It shows the myriad of factors that play a part in the decisions a migrant makes. A migrant's decisions include; whether they should migrate, what to do while abroad, when to return and how to readapt on return. These factors are important to understand as they, later on, influence whether return migration affects gender roles and social status.

In the reintegration process, the returnee has to decide on how they will re-adapt to the context of their home countries. This is in reference to the roles they have in society. Will they choose to conform to the norms in their countries or they will continue with their newfound norms?

The conceptual framework was used to understand how return migration affects gender roles and social status.

### **1.7. Significance of the Study**

The study helps in bridging the knowledge gap between return migration, gender roles and social status of female migrants. It provides stakeholders in labour migration and gender with an opportunity to identify the effect or role return migration has or can play in addressing gender issues and improving the social status of women. The findings of the study can contribute to policy makers' design of support programs and initiatives for women returning from employment abroad. In addition, this study contributes to academia as it utilizes theoretical frameworks on return migration to assess its effect on gender roles and social status.

### **1.8. Justification of the study**

There have been many more studies on the impact international migration has on receiving countries as compared to the effect on sending countries. The studies on local effects have in many instances looked at the causes and the consequences on the national economy of the sending country. (Maharjan, Bauer, & Knerr, 2012). Less attention has been given to return migration's impact on gender roles and the social status of female return migrants. This study focuses on this as it highlights the experiences of female return migrants in Uganda.

## **1.9. Limitations**

The first limitation was the lack of a database on return migrants in Uganda. On return, no consolidated records are kept concerning the lives of the returnees. This meant that correlation of returnees' experiences on a larger scale wasn't possible.

The Second limitation was the limited time for data collection. In order to find returnees to participate in the study used a snowball sampling method. This method was used because there is no single place one can find returnees and records with contact their contact information was not available. Depending on referrals meant that time was needed to get a larger sample. This thus limited the overall sample size of the study.

The third limitation was the data collection method. Initially, telephone interviews were used to contact respondents, however, this wasn't effective as some respondents were not willing to share information on a phone call. This led to the online questionnaires using the google form platform. Though more respondents filled the form, the opportunity to ask to follow up questions was limited. Also, the possibility of having misunderstood the questions cannot be ruled out.

The fourth limitation was limited financial resources. There were costs in making telephone calls from South Korea to Uganda to carry out interviews and also to follow up on some of the respondents. During the study, some potential respondents refused to offer further information as they wanted an incentive to participate.

## **1.10. Operational Definitions**

**Return Migration** is when the migrant, after some time in the place of



destination returns to their place of origin to settle there again. (Parnwell, 1993)

**Return migrant/ returnee:** refers to a person returning to their country of citizenship after having been an international migrant (whether short-term or long-term) in another country and is intending to stay in their own country for at least a year.

**Gender** refers to the social construction roles attributed to the sex of an individual.

**Gender roles** refer to the roles or behaviour learned by a person as appropriate to their gender, determined by the prevailing social-cultural norms.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1. Theoretical Framework**

Scholarly approaches to return migration can be found as far back as the 1960s. However, it is until the 1980s that the scientific debate took place on return migration and its impact on Origin countries. (Cassarino, 2004) In looking at return migration, some theories include it as a subcomponent of their analytical approaches. Despite their differences in the respective analytical frameworks, the theories present valuable insights to understanding return migration.

#### **2.1.1 Neoclassical Economics (NE)**

Neoclassical economics views return migration as a result of failure in terms of the rewards of human capital. This infers that those who succeed in the receiving countries stay there while those who fail return. That the returnee is an unsuccessful migrant who, unable to maximize their opportunity abroad, returned home.

This approach asserts that international migration is based on the wage differentials between receiving and sending areas. (Cassarino, 2004) The labour migrant's goal is not only to maximize their earnings but also their duration of stay abroad. This means that if successful, the return migrant would achieve permanent settlement and later their family would join them abroad. With this conceptualization, return can only be motivated by the failure of the migration experience.

#### **2.1.2 New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM)**

NELM views return migration as the result of a calculated strategy. The migrant has a target/ goal, he or she achieves that target and returns home. The view here is that the migrant gets higher incomes abroad and accumulates savings. They may also

remit part of their income to their household. Remittances diversify the resources of a household. Return migration here is strongly influenced by attachments to the home country that are social (spouse or children abroad) and economic (remitting money abroad). (Constant & Massey, 2002).

In assessing NE theory and NELM side by side, Constant and Massey found that remitting migrants conformed more closely to predictions from the NELM while non-remitting migrants behaved in ways more consistent with NE theory. This shows that return migrants are a heterogeneous group. Those who migrate to maximize their lifetime earnings (fall under NE theory) and those who leave temporarily to overcome market deficiencies at home (falling under NELM theory). On the face of it, NELM seems to describe my target population. Return migrants who travelled to the middle east to work and later on returned to Uganda.

Cassarino (2004) takes the discussion even further to highlight the contextual factors at home. While neoclassical economics and NELM try to explain when and why the decision to return takes place, they don't take into consideration where the migrants return. The structural approach does this as it highlights the social and contextual issues of return migration.

### **2.1.3 The Structural Approach to Return Migration**

The structural approach takes us away from the individual experience of a migrant to the social and institutional factors in countries of origin as the determinant of whether the return migrants can be change agents or not. This approach contends that the expectations of returnees are readjusted to local realities due to the strength of traditional vested interests in origin countries. The approach also asserts that if readjustment doesn't take place, the returnee may re-emigrate.

The structural approach to return migration is essential to show how influential contextual factors may be on the returnees' capacity to innovate and to appear as actors of change. (Cassarino, 2004) Despite attaining skills and financial resources, local power relations, values and traditions play a part in the returnees' ability to invest their experiences in their countries of origin.

This approach therefore in contrast to neoclassical economists and NELM theoretical frameworks focuses on the extent to which the return migrants may or may not have an impact on their societies once they return. The analytical framework here looks at two variables; Time and Space.

*Time* pertains to the length of the stay abroad and the change that occurred before and after migration. For *space*, the structural view is that the area of settlement (ie; rural or urban) determines the reintegration process of the returnees and reshapes their expectations.

*Reintegration* itself can also be seen to affect the returnee's ability to cause change. To be reaccepted, a returnee has to adapt to the changed cultural and behavioural patterns of his community of origin (role theory). This can also be viewed differently as compartmentalization theory stresses the fact that persons can be part of the system to which they belong and still apply differentiated sets of norms and patterns of behaviour according to the group in which they have to perform. (Dumon, 1986).

#### **2.1.4 Transnationalism**

Transnationalism focuses on understanding the strong social and economic links between migrants' host and origin countries. The view here is that return migration is not the end of the migration cycle. Transnationalism allows for cross-

border linkages between the returnees and their migrant communities abroad. The returnee belongs to a *globally dispersed ethnic group* (i.e; a diaspora consciousness). Return migration happens when resources (financial or informational) have been gathered and conditions are viewed as favourable. Returnees in this case are therefore successful in adapting themselves to their home environment by taking advantage of the attributes they acquired abroad. However, they may be faced with social pressures or feel marginalized by their society, while trying to negotiate their places in society without denying their specificities. (Cassarino, 2004)

In short, transnationalism is focused on the double or hybrid identities of migrants and their cross-border mobility.

### **2.1.5 Social Network Theory**

In this theory, returnees are seen as bearers of tangible and intangible resources. Similar to the transnational approach, social network theory also views returnees as migrants who keep strong linkages to their former places of settlement abroad. However, unlike transnationalism, the linkages aren't the direct outcome of the commonality of attributes. (diasporas)

Social structures are a way to increase access to resources and information thus securing the effective initiatives of return migrants. In social network theory, analysis of cross-border linkages is done with no pre-established categorical attribute. Network membership is not taken for granted as the networks are selectively organized and membership requires a voluntary act from the actors themselves and the consent of other members. Cross border social and economic networks can be seen as a "social entity" that exists as a collectively shared subjective awareness.

In short, this theory suggests that pre-existing resources (social and financial)

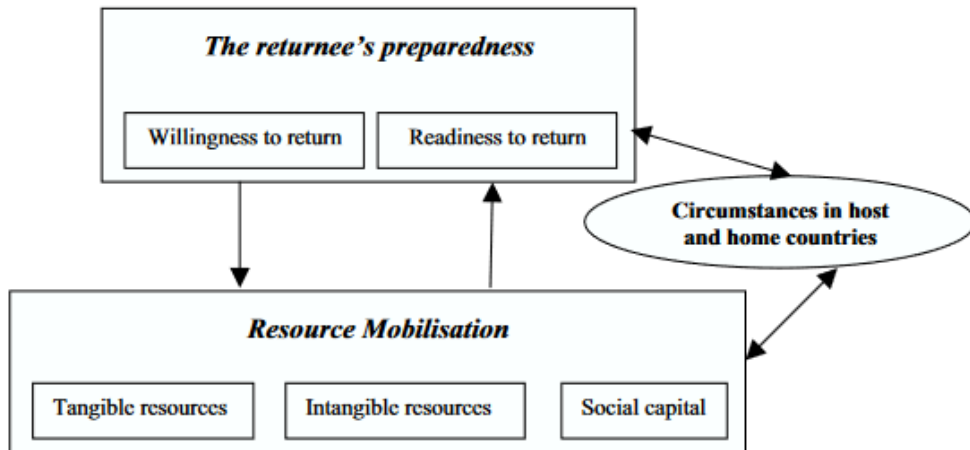
and the involvement of the returnees in cross-border social networks are important to the success of returnees' initiatives and projects following their return. Social network theory allows for a broader framework of analysis than transnationalism as it goes beyond the commonality of attributes (diaspora) and also highlights the commonality of interests (wider social networks).

## **2.2. Resource Mobilization and Returnee's Preparedness**

It can be argued that the propensity of migrants to become actors of change and development at home depends on the extent to which they have provided for the preparation of their return. (Cassarino, 2004). There are various degrees of return preparation that differ in terms of resource mobilization and preparedness.

Resource mobilization is in line with the social network theory and pertains to tangible (Financial capital) and intangible (contacts, relationships, skills, acquaintances) resources mobilized abroad during the migration. (Social capital) It also includes the resources they had before leaving their country of origin. To understand preparedness, the willingness to return and the readiness to return are important factors.

**Figure 2 Return Preparation [Cassarino 2004]**



With resource mobilization and returnee’s preparedness identified, Cassarino developed a framework of analysis that is useful in assessing the different variables and their impact on reintegration and the potential for development at home.

In line with Cassarino’s conceptual framework, I developed my conceptual framework showing the broader picture of how return migration leads to changes in social status and gender roles.

### **2.3. Gender in Migration**

The astonishingly high number of women migrating is a new global trend. In the past it was mainly men who went to countries far away: women came as followers. In the last twenty years, however, this has changed so much that today, half of all migrants are women. (Gunduz, 2013). Migration is now seen as a successful development and growth policy for sending countries. It addresses unemployment rates while bringing in remittances. Female migrants are praised as economic heroes who are sacrificing themselves for their families and Nations (Kaska, 2005-2006). It is also important to note that the receiving countries also gain

from the low-priced work of migrants. The pay is low in terms of the standards of the receiving country but high when viewed from the sending country. In the case of Uganda, the salary of a domestic worker in the middle east is more than 10 times that of a domestic worker in Uganda. As a result, “many young Ugandan women to escape unemployment and poverty at home have taken up domestic work in the Middle East.”<sup>⑩</sup>

### **2.3.1 Gender roles**

The relation between migration and gender roles was highlighted by (Tuccio & Wahba, 2018) when they found that traditional gender norms were more common in families with a returnee family member than those with no migration experience. The explanation for this was that returnees from conservative Arab countries transferred the conservative norms from those countries.

(Torosyan, Gerber, & Gonalons-pons, 2018) found that both the absence as a result of migration and the migration experience itself had effects on gender differences in leisure and housework. Despite the effects being complex and contradictory at times. Migration by males intensified gender differences in the sending household and the opposite was true when female migration occurs.

Female migrants tend to remit more of their income to their families than males. This has been observed in both international and internal migrants. In fact, (Collinson, Tollman, Kathleen, Samuel, & Garenne, 2006) note that in South Africa, migrant men are less likely (25%) than migrant women to remit.

---

<sup>⑩</sup> Ugandan domestic workers stuck between poverty wages at home and extreme exploitation abroad. Article in the “Equal Times”. <https://www.equaltimes.org/ugandan-domestic-workers-stuck?lang=en> Accessed on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2021



(De Haas, 2007) highlights the independent behaviour of migrating women however, he also notes that they still retain the gendered division for housework. He notes that migration plays a significant role in determining gender roles in Turkish households.

## **2.4. Change in Social Status**

Social status is a person's standing or importance in relation to other people within a society. A returnee's social status is influenced by his or her ability to readapt into society. To understand this further I refer to the structural approach to return migration and the social network theory.

The structural approach to return migration highlights the importance of contextual factors in the ability of a returnee to be an agent of change. The returnee's social status depends on his/her ability to re-integrate into society. The time away could have brought about some changes which through the re-integration process could positively or negatively influence one's social status.

(Gmelch, 1980) highlights two perspectives when looking at readaptation. The first examines the economic and social conditions of the returnee. Some of these are; savings, employment status, housing, personal relationships and participation in community organizations. Whether or not the returnee satisfies these criteria may determine whether adaptation is successful or not. The second perspective focuses on the returnee's perceptions of his or her adjustment.

(Gmelch, 1980) notes that many migrants aren't prepared for the return and in some cases do not realize how much they or their communities have changed during their absence. Returnees coming from highly urban, industrialized countries to less

developed countries could struggle as they may no longer share the same beliefs underlying their traditional culture. There is a possibility that the returnee no longer shares the interests of relatives and former friends.

On the other hand, the social network theory highlights the new relationships the returnees developed abroad. Unlike the Transnational approach which focuses on the diaspora as a community of its own. The social network theory highlights social and economic networks developed during the migration experience. These networks can prove essential to a returnee as they provide him or her with a new community with whom he or she shares interests.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1. Introduction**

This chapter covers various segments aimed at explaining the research design, the sample size and area and the methods of data collection and analysis.

### **3.2. Research Design**

This study took a qualitative research approach. This approach is helpful when exploring and understanding meanings to individuals or groups ascribed to an issue (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative research looks to answer questions by collecting evidence that is applicable beyond the current boundaries of the study.

In this study, the researcher used an exploratory qualitative research design to acquire data and understand return migration and its effects on the gender roles and social status of female return migrants. (Engel & Schutt, 2013) say that in exploratory qualitative research, unstructured information is collected to explore a new topic or concern. This approach ensured the collection of in-depth data regarding how migration and return influenced gender roles and social status in Uganda.

### **3.3. Target population**

The study constituted a total of 17 respondents from Wakiso district, Uganda. The researcher interviewed 12 female and 2 male returnees who had worked in the middle east. 3 Key stakeholders from Labour recruitment companies were also interviewed.

### **3.4. Sampling**

In the scope of (Atkinson & Flint, 2001), return migrants can be seen as a hard-to-reach population. This kind of population is difficult to find and, in some cases, may have an unusual or stigmatized condition. As returnees are spread out, identifying and locating them could be difficult. When they return to Uganda, the government doesn't keep a specific record of them and their location. Therefore, snowball sampling was the favourable method as it is based on referrals from respondents. As an entry point, I used labour recruitment companies. After interviewing an official from a company, I requested that they put me in contact with a returnee. This method was not as successful as I expected as the recruitment companies were suspicious that any 'bad' information given by the returnees could tarnish their company. I noticed this as they refused to allow me direct contact with the returnees rather, they invited the returnees to their office and asked them to fill the questionnaire from there. To counter this, I requested my friends and acquaintances and by sharing the link to the online questionnaire widely, I received some more responses from returnees.

What I encountered was foretold by (Atkinson & Flint, 2001) as they referred to the need for "trust" to initiate contact. It takes time to develop trust and as such, I utilised people who already trusted me to use their connections to get me the responses.

### **3.5. Data collection methods**

The research utilised semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and key stakeholder interviews. The questionnaire was delivered through an online form which the respondents filled and submitted.

### **3.5.1 Instruments used for Data Collection**

At the start of the interviews, an interview guide was used to guide semi-structured interviews with the key stakeholders. An online questionnaire was then sent to returnees. The questionnaire was made up of 4 sections with the first part covering demographics as the 5<sup>th</sup> section. The questions on demographics included; name, gender, level of education, number of dependents, marital status and place of residence before and after return from migration.

The second section included questions surrounding the period before migration. These were meant to give an understanding of the reasons why they migrated and how they got the job opportunity that led them to migrate.

The third section covered the time during migration. It sought to highlight whether or not the time abroad was profitable for the respondent. Therefore, the questions surrounded what the respondent was able to achieve while abroad.

The fourth section covered the period after their return. This part looked at what the respondent has done since they returned from the migration experience. Whether or not there have been any changes. This section also highlights whether the returnee readapted to being back home with ease.

### **3.6. Data analysis**

The analysis that was done employed issue-focused analysis and deductive analysis. On receipt of the data, issue-focused analysis was employed to identify the major issues that were common in the data sets. Thereafter deductive analysis was employed to look at the relation and/or effect that return migration had on gender roles and social status.

### **3.6.1 Issue focused analysis**

In line with (Weiss, 1994), the analysis used issue-focused description moving from discussion of issues within one area to discussion within another with each being logically connected to the others. The theories highlighted in the literature review proved essential in doing the analysis and overall giving understanding to the complexities surrounding return migration.

### **3.6.2 Deductive analysis**

Deductive analysis was used to understand the effect return migration has on gender roles and social status. As the issue focused analysis has utilised the theories to give clarity to the situation surrounding return migration, deductive analysis was used to paint the remaining part of the picture and that is how all the parts fit together.

## Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings

### 4.1. Theoretical analysis

#### 4.1.1 Rewards of human capital

Neoclassical Economics (NE) and the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) as theoretical frameworks both focus on the failure or success of one's targets abroad as determinants for an individual becoming an agent of change. NE views return migration as a result of failure to attain the rewards of human capital while NELM views return as the result of a calculated strategy. These theories are applicable to my target population which was migrants who travelled to the middle east to work and after returned.

With a focus on NE and NELM, I can assess focus on whether or not failure is a viable explanation for the return of my respondents. The theory in looking at failure looks at the rewards for human capital. My respondents each travelled to the middle east with the intent to accumulate rewards for the human capital they were to invest in the time abroad. To assess this, I look at three aspects; completion of the contractual period (*the time the returnee intended to stay in the middle east*), accumulated savings, investments made and the view of the respondents whether they achieved their goals.

Out of the fourteen respondents I had, six of them did not complete the full period they had initially intended to stay abroad. Five respondents had travelled to the middle east with a specific contractual period (work contract) to fulfil before return while one did not have a time limit on his stay rather, he wanted to grow his coffee business in Qatar. The respondents had diverse reasons for not staying abroad

as long as they had initially intended. Two respondents had been mistreated by their employers and they decided to leave. For one of these, the employer had also denied her payment for the work she had done. One respondent had a medical complication and had to return home. For another respondent, her employer died and she had to return. For the respondent with the coffee business, he faced challenges at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and was forced to return to Uganda.

Two of the fourteen respondents did not accumulate savings while in the Middle East. For investment, five of the fourteen did not make any investments while abroad. On whether they had achieved their goals, only three of the fourteen expressed having achieved their goals. This means that despite some of the respondents having completed their intended period abroad, accumulated savings and investments, they still felt that they had not achieved their goals.

In assessing the findings using the two theories, it is important to note their assertion that because returnees come back as failures, they are unable to be agents of change and the opposite is true for those who succeed. For my respondents, only two can be considered as having totally failed (failed in all three aspects) while one succeeded in all aspects. Following this reasoning, the expectation is that the return of the two who failed did not affect their social status and gender roles while the opposite is true for the one respondent who 'succeeded'.

When asked about the changes which occurred on return to their communities, the respondents' experiences correlate with the assertion of the theories. The respondent who 'succeeded' said that her social status and views on gender roles changed positively. She said that she had started a business of her own in which she employs fellow ladies and this has improved her social status. She also mentioned



that in terms of her view towards gender roles, she learned that “*girls can do what a man can do*”. Her successful return is a possible explanation for the change. In the case of the two respondents who ‘failed’, they expressed that there was no change in their social status and gender roles on return. They said that they said that they were now looked down on in their community. One said, “*I’m seen as a failure.*” While the other said, “*People in my community undermine me.*”

Assessing the rewards for one’s human capital in terms of incomes and accumulated savings received during one’s time abroad is essential in understanding return migration’s effect on gender roles and social status. The receipt of these increases the likelihood of a returnee to be an agent of change in his society.

#### **4.1.2 Contextual factors in the home country**

The structural approach puts focus on social and institutional factors in the countries of origin as factors that can influence a return migrant’s ability to be a change agent. Local power relations, values and traditions play a part in the returnees’ ability to invest their experiences in their countries of origin. This approach highlights time (*pertains to the length of the stay abroad and the change that occurred before and after migration*), space (*that the area of settlement (ie; rural or urban) on return*) and reintegration as aspects that can affect a returnee’s impact on their societies.

Time in this approach pertains to the length of the stay abroad and the change that occurred before and after migration. The average time abroad for my respondents is 1.8 years. The longest time abroad being 4 years and the shortest being less than a year. To view the aspect of time, I will focus on 4 respondents who spent the longest time abroad. The three respondents who spent 3 years abroad and one

who spent 4 years abroad. Interesting to note is that all four respondents did not change their residences on return.

In terms of reintegration, this approach asserts that to be reaccepted, the returnee may adapt to the behavioural patterns at home or just compartmentalize. That is apply differentiated norms depending on the group they are in.

In the case of the four respondents, two said that they were able to employ people in their community and also teach others what they had learned from their experience abroad. The other two respondents were unable to have any impact on their community. The reasons for their inability were however different. One respondent on return focused on developing household. Specifically, buying land and providing for his wife and children. The other respondent said that on his return, people in the community expected so much from him in terms of finances that in the end, he was unable to effect any change. One of the respondents made an interesting comment on the effect the factors in Uganda have had on him. He said, *“My first return back home, I thought I had enough savings, literally it should have been enough in a favourable environment. Not the case with my country.”* This statement clearly shows that contextual factors in the country of origin play a role.

From viewing the four respondents who spent the longest time abroad, I can conclude that reintegration affects a migrant’s ability to be a change agent in their community. Of the four respondents highlighted, three had experienced a positive change in their views towards gender roles while one had no change. A similar comment from those who experienced positive change was that they now believed that a woman can support herself financially without the need for a man.

### **4.1.3 Attributes and networks acquired abroad**

Transnationalism and Social Network theory both view returnees as migrants who keep strong linkages to their former places of settlement abroad. The only difference between the two is that social network theory goes beyond transnationalism as it also highlights the commonality of interests (wider social networks) not only the commonality of attributes (diaspora). These social networks are essential as they consist of a community through which gender roles and one's social status can be defined. If the connections are carried on by the returnees, these could directly affect one's social status or even allow for the returnee to adopt the views learned abroad to their settings back home.

In line with these theories, I sought to understand whether the returnees I interviewed made new contacts while abroad and whether these contacts/connections have had any effect on their lives in Uganda. 78.6% (11 out of 14) of the respondents said that they made new contacts while in the middle East. Of the 11, only 9 stayed in contact with the people they met and of those only 5 said that they got any sort of help from those contacts from the time they returned.

These statistics suggest that despite a large majority of returnees having made new contacts, these did not amount to anything tangible as they were of no help to the returnees. This suggests in this case that the influence of these connections on the returnee's social status or gender roles may have been negligible.

### **4.2. Gender roles in return migration**

Traditional gender roles pre-determine a woman or man's role in society. Men are seen as the breadwinners while women stay home and do most of the care work.

In the case of return migration, we need to first recognize that many of the women who migrate have in one way or another been placed in a position to deviate from traditional gender roles. That is, many do not have male figures to provide for them and are forced to be the providers (financially) for their households. All the female respondents highlighted the need to earn an income as having been their main motivation to migrate. This said, we now need to assess whether their travel to the middle east had any effect on their status back home taking into consideration their initial goal to break from society's view of them (women) as dependents.

#### **4.2.1 Perception towards finances**

A female respondent when asked whether she had experienced any change in her perception towards gender roles said, *“Yes, now I know as a woman and mother, I can take care of everyone in the absence of my husband.”* This clearly shows that she believes that she can play the role which is played by her spouse. In her case, on return, she started a business and runs it as her primary source of income. Many of the respondents highlighted how accumulating finances abroad has helped them, pay school fees for their children and take care of their families on return. Another female respondent when asked about gender roles said enthusiastically, *“Yes, I learned that a girl can do all that a man can do.”* Another responded that her opinion is now respected.

Migration for work and return is viewed by women and men in Uganda as a way to break free of limitations in society. As more of Ugandan society is exposed to urban ways of living, many women and men feel the need to do more or live a different life from that of their parents. This entails breaking free from traditional gender roles. The easiest way for one to break free from society's limitations is

through financial independence. It is therefore not surprising that all the respondents looked at work abroad as the answer to their aspirations.

With such aspirations, it is unfortunate that 78.9% (11 out of 14) of the respondents did not achieve the goals that led them to migrate. As a result of this failure, some respondents said that they are now looked down on by their families. Many of them either returned to work in the same places they worked before they migrated while others are still unemployed. The investment in travelling abroad for work had not paid off and as such, they were in a worse position than they were before. This however was not the case for one female respondent who said that despite her failure to achieve her goals abroad “she is more respected by her family because she pursued that opportunity”. In this case, she had the support of her family which helped her see the experience as one to learn from.

It can be said that migration for work and return has allowed returnees to break traditional gender stereotypes through financial independence. However as more returnees fail to achieve these goals, there is a danger for return migration to reinforce the traditional gender roles as women returnees are unable to be agents of change.

#### **4.2.2 Employment agencies**

91.7% (11 out of 12) of the female respondents I interviewed worked as housemaids in the Middle East. These were the females who used an employment agency to get a job abroad. The one female respondent who didn't work as a housemaid (*She worked as a teacher*) did not go through an employment agency to get a job in the middle east. At first glance, one may assume that the reason could be their education qualifications. However, that is not the case. 7 of the 11 women who

worked as housemaids in the middle east had tertiary level education which was similar to the female respondent who was a teacher in the middle east.

In my interviews with officials from the 3 employment agencies, I noticed a similarity when asked about the jobs available for women. The first job mentioned by all of them was “housemaid” (domestic worker). They said that there was a high demand for housemaids in the middle east. This statement is backed up by the Uganda government website which lists the jobs available. Currently, there are 9,375 jobs available for domestic workers compared to less than 2000 jobs in other job categories.<sup>⑩</sup> It is important to note that domestic worker jobs can only be applied for by women.

I should mention that employment agencies are the safest and cheaper way in Uganda to get a job in the middle east. There have been cases where when people tried to seek jobs themselves, they ended up sold by human traffickers. In terms of cost, many employment agencies offer to pay all the expenses needed to travel abroad (for taking up the domestic work jobs). This is favourable for those who don't have the money to invest in their travel abroad.

Domestic work as the reasonably accessible job to female migrants reinforces traditional gender roles.

### **4.2.3 Training and Skills**

Female migrant workers undergo training before travel in centres authorized by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. This training is meant to prepare them for the work they are going to do abroad. According to Staffing

---

<sup>⑩</sup> Data accessed on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 from <https://eemis.mglsd.go.ug/jobs>

international Limited, *“They are equipped with cooking skills, laundry skills, babysitting skills and other skills depending on the type of work they are going to do.”* This training on the face of it is good as the migrant workers need to be prepared for the experience abroad. However, this training may further reinforce stereotypes if the training is not delivered in a balanced way.

In terms of skills, 78.6% (11 out of 14) of the respondents learned new skills during their time in the middle east. These skills were mainly communication skills and one respondent reported having learned how to start a business. Another respondent who was a housemaid before leaving for the middle east said that she got on the job experience which allowed her to return and do her job better.

Despite the training and skills obtained, one respondent when asked about the challenge she faced on return said that she did not know what to invest in with the income she had saved from her experience abroad. When asked what she has been doing as work since she returned, she said “nothing”. She lacks skills in managing and investing her money. This is an example of a person with the finances to change her life but with no training or skill on how to do it.

### **4.3. Social Status**

The ability for a returnee to readapt into society influences their social status. The time away could have brought about some changes which through the re-integration process could positively or negatively influence the returnee’s social status. Gmelch, (1980) highlights two perspectives when assessing readaptation. These are; the economic and social conditions of the returnee and the returnee’s perceptions of his or her adjustment.

### 4.3.1 Economic and Social Conditions

Gmelch, (1980) in highlighting the economic and social conditions of the returnee refers to savings, employment status, housing, personal relationships and participation in community organizations.

85.7% (12 out of 14) of the respondents said that they had accumulated savings during their time in the middle east. 64.3% (9 out of 14) made investments in Uganda while they were in the middle east. When the respondents were asked how their return had impacted their position in society, 10 out of the 12 who accumulated savings said that they had a better position in their society. One responded said, *“My community members now believe that someone can go abroad and find a good job.”* When she returned, she had savings and as such, in her opinion, travelling abroad and working is an option for those who are seeking good jobs.

In terms of employment status, there was little to no improvement. 2 out of the 14 respondents started businesses. 3 respondents were unable to get employment when they returned and the rest of the respondents either returned to their previous work or took up a similar job. It seems that, despite having accumulated savings and having some investments, returnees experience abroad did not improve their employment status. The exception here could be the 2 respondents who started businesses of their own.

For housing, 57.1% (8 out of 14) of respondents returned to the same residence they lived before they migrated. Only 42.9% (6 out of 14) changed residence. The issue of housing needs further probing as one of the respondents mentioned that *“I bought a piece of land in my first year, getting a title is heading to 3 years now. I have no morale to develop it without a title at hand.* This shows that there may be



other factors other than return migration that are hindering changing of residence.

When looking at personal relationships, many of the respondents said that people around them were supportive of them and were congratulatory towards them when they returned. For other respondents, however, they reported being seen as ‘failures’ by their families. The main reason for it was that the families expected to receive gifts and to have a better financial status with the return of the respondent. When that didn’t happen, the result was the breaking of the relationships. It is important to highlight that travel abroad is usually supported (financially and emotionally) by families including spouses. The reason and hope being, that they are investing in the “families” future. With such a responsibility put on the migrant, it isn’t surprising that 78.6% (11 out of 14) of the respondents said that they did not achieve all their goals while abroad.

Looking at participation in community organizations, it is important to note that only 42.9% (6 out of 14) of the respondents didn’t return to the same residences they were before they migrated. This means that their participation in some community organizations was broken. It is however important to note that their experience abroad could have allowed them to make connections that would allow them to belong to those communities. 64.3% (9 out of 14) of respondents stayed in contact with people they met while abroad. However, I should note that only 35.7% (5 out of 14) reported having received help from the contacts they made abroad. These connections constitute a community that could play a role in the social status of returnees.

#### **4.3.2 Returnee’s perceptions of his or her adjustment**

Gmelch, (1980) notes that many migrants aren’t prepared for the return and in

some cases do not realize how much they or their communities have changed during their absence. The average duration of the time abroad for the returnees interviewed was 1.8 years. The longest having spent 4 years away. They did not raise any issue surrounding how their communities have changed, however as expected, they missed out on family celebrations and other ceremonies which occurred during their time abroad. However, this was not an issue in terms of the returnees' perception of their adjustment.

What was clear was the disappointment of the returnees who were unable to accumulate savings and investments. One respondent said, "*People perceive me wrongly/ negatively because they thought by going abroad to work I could be well off but I'm not*". Another said, "*They undermine me*" in reference to their position in society. However, one respondent who wasn't able to even complete a year abroad because of a medical complication interestingly said, "*I'm more respected now.*" She said this about the change in her social status since her return.

57.1% (8 out of 14) of the respondents said that their social status in the community had improved while the remaining 42.9% (6 out of 14) said that their social status had either not changed at all or it had deteriorated.

A returnee's perception of his or her adjustment is important as it can also determine whether the returnee feels a sense of belonging to their community or not. This perception can as a result affect their actual standing in society.

# **Chapter 5: Conclusion**

## **5.1. Introduction**

This is the chapter concluding the study. In it I present an explicit summary of the research, interpret and then discuss the findings. I also present the implications of this research and recommendations for further research in the area.

## **5.2. Summary of the Research.**

This study aimed at exploring the effect of return migration on gender roles and social status. This arose out of an observation of the increase in the numbers of women taking up labour migration in Uganda. High unemployment rates and other individual and societal pressures push women to opt for migration as a way to improve their well-being.

On taking a further look at the area, I found that there were few studies particularly on the effects of return migration on gender roles and social status. Specifically in Uganda, I did not find any study addressing the issue. Important to note, however, I built upon theories on return migration and other informative studies that I found on topics like gender and migration.

The literature review explored theoretical frameworks and other literature surrounding return migration. This allowed for a fuller picture of what return migration entails. Understanding the different aspects that come into play. Starting from a person's decision to migrate till their return. The literature provided an enlightening view of how gender roles and social status could be influenced by return migration. However, the literature was diverse in its conclusions depending on the context and area of focus.

Some of the theories discussed were; Neoclassical Economics which viewed return migrants as only deciding to return because they failed to achieve success abroad. The understanding is that if they were successful, they wouldn't return. This view is countered by the New Economics of Labour Migration which sees return migration as a calculated strategy. The migrant has received the rewards of their capital and as such returns to their home country. The returnee now in their home country, the structural approach allows us to consider how influential contextual factors may be on their capacity to be an agent of change. The transnational and social network theories go on to highlight the importance and part played by the linkages and networks developed by the returnee while abroad.

The review of these different aspects showed that return migration and its ability to affect gender roles and social status should be viewed broadly to get a clearer picture of the aspects involved.

### **5.3. Interpretation of the findings.**

This study was meant to examine and assess the effect of return migration on gender roles and the social status of female return migrants in Uganda. In line with this, two research questions emerged. *Does return migration affect a female return migrant's gender roles? &, Does return migration affect a female return migrant's social status?* To answer these questions, I explored the meanings the theoretical frameworks gave the data I collected from the respondents.

First, Neoclassical Economics (NE) and New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) highlighted the importance of attaining the rewards of human capital while abroad. To assess this, I identified three aspects to look at. These are; completion of

the contractual period (*the time the returnee intended to stay in the middle east*), accumulated savings, investments made and the view of the respondents whether they achieved their goals. For completion of the intended time abroad, I found that only 57.1% of the respondents were able to stay in the middle east for the full period they had intended. For savings and investments, 85.7% were able to accumulate some savings while only 64.3% were able to invest while they were abroad. Interestingly, however, only 21.4% of the respondents achieved all the goals for which they migrated. If a return migrant is unable to ensure success in these aspects, this means that their return may not have any effect on gender roles or even their social status. It is clear that many of the returnees probably come back home disappointed as the Neoclassical theory asserts. Despite the clear failure to achieve their goals and stay abroad for their full intended time, it is positive that some returnees are still able to make some savings and investments. This shows that they have an intention to improve their status by accumulating finances which is in line with the New Economics of Labour Migration perspective. From this analysis, however, return migration is unlikely to cause a substantial change in gender roles and/or social status.

Second, the structural approach highlighted factors in the countries of origin as affecting a returnee's ability to be an agent of change. To analyse from this perspective, I focused on three aspects; Time abroad, space in terms of area of settlement on return and reintegration (*whether the returnee has influenced their community*). The average time abroad for my respondents was 1.8 years. With this average, I selected the four respondents (*3 having spent 3 years abroad and 1 who*

*spent 4 years abroad*) to allow me further analyse the impact of the factors in the country of origin on return. Looking at Space (*area of settlement*), I realised that all of the four respondents stayed in the same residence on return as they were before they travelled. For reintegration, however, their results were not the same. Two respondents said that they were able to influence their communities and were now respected in their societies while the other two respondents were not able to do this. This was the case as the community expected more than they could give and one of the respondents also mentioned that despite having savings “*the environment at home was not favourable to allow him to make any change.*” With these facts, it is clear that social and institutional factors have as seen from the respondents only a 50% possibility of supporting one to be an agent of change despite having accumulated finances to support the change. I however need to highlight that there is a need to further investigate one’s “social capital” as this can prove decisive in this instance.

Third is transnationalism and social network theory both highlighting the importance of strong linkages and connections made while abroad. These connections are a catalyst to influencing gender roles and social status. 78.6% of my respondents reported having made new contacts abroad, 64.2% stayed in contact with the people they met abroad but only 35.7% reported having received help of any kind from these contacts since their return. Connections made abroad are limited in their effect after one’s return. This brings to light the quality rather than the quantity of contacts. Whether the returnee was able to connect with people who

would be helpful to them. Looking at my respondents, one is only 35.7% likely to be successful in being an agent of change through their networks.

*Does return migration affect a female return migrant's gender roles?* A woman in Uganda is unemployed, the only accessible choice for a relatively well-paying job is advertised by an employment agency. Housemaids are needed in the middle east. It is not what she dreamt of when she went to school but it's an opportunity to change her life. She engages the employment agency which starts her process to go to the middle east. She is trained in cooking, doing laundry, babysitting and all other “housekeeping” skills. On travelling to the middle east, because of the Kafala system, she is unable to seek alternative employment so she perseveres to complete her time abroad. Hopefully, she completes her contract returning with some savings. Family and society place demands on her and with her lack of skills and advice in making good investments, she returns to her former state, should she travel again or should she accept her situation.

I have used the story above to paint a picture of how return migration in Uganda. On the face of it, it is an effective way to empower women to address stereotypical gender roles. However, this isn't the case. From the time of travel, the odds are against the female migrant as everything seems to push her into the stereotypical gender roles. Getting a job as a housemaid doesn't need any prior experience or educational background. She already does the work in her home so why not do it for pay abroad. The system seems to predispose a female migrant to fit into the traditional gender roles. In my analysis, I did not observe any attempt by the structures and systems to pave a way out for the female migrant and as such the

returnee. So, *does return migration affect a female return migrant's gender roles?* According to the findings in this study, return migration reinforces gender stereotypes on gender roles.

*Does return migration affect a female return migrant's social status?* Re-integration plays an integral role in whether a migrants' return affects their social status. (Gmelch, 1980) gives incite to this when he highlights two perspectives when assessing readaptation. These, he notes, are; economic and social conditions of the returnee and the perceptions of his or her adjustment.

For economic and social conditions, the variables are savings, employment status, housing, personal relationships and participation in community organizations. Most of my respondents accumulated savings during their time abroad. The percentage of those who made actual investments is however less. Important to note, the 2 male respondents I had both savings and investments. For employment status, only 2 out of 12 female returnees started businesses, the others returned to their former jobs or jobs with similar standing. For housing despite 42.9% of the respondents having changed residence, there is a need for further probing to understand the motivation for the decision. That said, only one male respondent mentioned having bought a plot of land although he complained of being unable to develop it due to a delay in administrative procedures in getting a land title. For personal relationships, it was clear from the respondents that their families were expecting to receive gifts and financial support from the returnees and if this did not happen, they were seen as failures and thus poor personal relationships. For participation in community organizations, it is important to note that this is



dependent on the social capital the returnee has. Having been away for a while, a way to get it is by supporting the organizations financially and as such provide a way to be accepted. This is of course dependent on the returnee's savings and investments. From the perspective of the economic and social conditions, it is clear that male returnees have the advantage.

Looking at the returnee's perception of adjustment, it was clear that the availability of financial resources eases the adjustment. A female respondent said that "*People perceive me wrongly/negatively because they thought by going abroad to work, I could be well off but I'm not*". In addition, the achievement of one's goals plays a part in one's perception. That said, support structures are also important factors in one's perception of adjustment. One female respondent said that despite her failure to achieve her goals, her family still supported and respected her.

To the question, *does return migration affect a female return migrant's social status?* 58.3% of the female respondents said that their social status had improved. Specifically, the comments ranged from, "*I'm more respected.*" To "*I always have a say now*". It is however important to note that many of the respondents related their social status to their financial status and as such may not have considered many of the factors mentioned in the discussion. All in all, return migration according to the findings of this study has a positive effect on the social status of female return migrants.

## **5.4. Implications of the findings.**

The findings of this study are informative for policy development. With the findings in this study, policy direction can be developed on how to address gender issues that are seen in return migration.

The findings of this study are important in highlighting how the systems which are meant to support and empower women are instead reinforcing gender inequality. All stakeholders in labour migration need to recognise the issues discussed in this study in order to address them

This study provides an opportunity for labour migration to be viewed beyond the scope of just the employment aspect. Labour migration and return is an opportunity for transnational and social networks to be created to support the further development of the country.

## **5.5. Recommendation for further research.**

There is need for further research on reintegration. As female return migrants settle in their communities, they are left alone to face societal pressures and systems which may force them to either readapt and return to their state before migration or they may compartmentalize their interactions. The better reaction would be that they become agents of change. These aspects however need to be studied further in Uganda's context to understand how they come into play and interact with the female return migrant.

Though this study was carried out during the covid 19 pandemic, the effects of covid 19 were not considered as a variable. Analysing the effect covid 19 has had on return migration or even on the gains returnees had made would be essential.

## **5.6. Policy Recommendations.**

Potential labour migrants should be given detailed information on what to expect during and after their migration experience. 85.7% of the respondents in this study said that they did not achieve all their goals. Most of them may have had unrealistic goals due to a lack of clear information on labour migration.

As many migrants are failing to complete their full contractual time abroad, an insurance policy should be developed to allow these migrants to have a backup in case they have to return home early.

There is a need for training in financial literacy for migrants. Specifically, training in saving, investment and entrepreneurship. One female respondent said that when she returned, she faced a challenge in finding where to invest her savings.

A program should be established to provide reintegration support to returnees. The program could; provide information; advice (legal and/or otherwise); develop a platform for returnees to socialize and support each other; connect returnees to opportunities that can utilize their newly acquired skills. More and more interventions can be developed as challenges and situations affecting returnees evolve.

A publicly accessible database needs to be created for labour migration in Uganda. This includes information of the numbers of people travelling abroad for

work, the frequency of the travel, their experiences abroad and what happens after they return. This will provide a platform for research and better evidence-based policy formulation around Labour externalization.

## References

- Atkinson, R., & Flint, J. (2001). Accessing Hidden and Hard-to-Reach Populations: Snowball Research Strategies. *Sociology Research Update*(33).
- Atong, K., Mayah, E., & Odigie, A. (2018). *Africa Labour Migration to the GCC States: The case of Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda*. African Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation [ITUC-Africa].
- Cassarino, J.-P. (2004). Theorising Return Migration: The Conceptual Approach to Return Migrants Revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies, UNESCO*, 253-279.
- Collinson, M., Tollman, S., Kathleen, K., Samuel, C., & Garenne, M. (2006). Highly Prevalent Circular Migration: Households, Mobility and Economic Status in Rural South Africa. (M. Tienda, S. Findlay, S. Tollman, & E. Preston-Whyte, Eds.) *African Migration in Comparative Perspective*, 194-216.
- Constant, A., & Massey, D. S. (2002, September). Return Migration by German Guestworkers: Neoclassical versus New Economic Theories. *International Migration*, 40 (4), 3-166.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, Washington DC: Sage Publications Inc.
- De Haas, H. (2007, November 15). Turning the Tide? Why Development Will Not Stop Migration. *Development and Change*, 38(5), 819-841. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2007.00435.x>
- Dumon, W. (1986, March). Problems Faces by Migrations and their Family Members, Particularly Second Generation Migrants Returning to and Reintegrating into their Countries of Origin. *International Migration*, 24(1), 113-128.
- Engel, R. J., & Schutt, R. K. (2013). *The practice of research in Social Work* (3rd ed.). Sage Publication Inc.
- Gmelch, G. (1980). Return Migration. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 9, 135-159. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2155732>.
- Gunduz, Z. Y. (2013, December). The Feminization of Migration: Care and the New Emotional Imperialism. *Monthly review ProQuest Central Korea*, 32.
- ILO. (2015). *ILO global estimates on migrant workers. Results and Methodology. Special Focus on migrant domestic workers*. Geneva: Labour Migration Branch; Conditions of Work and Equality Department; Department of statistics.
- Kakande, Y. (2015). Retrieved October 22, 2021, from [www.migrant-rights.org](http://www.migrant-rights.org): <https://www.migrant-rights.org/2015/09/a-ugandan-runaway-maid-who-died-in-a-dubai-prison/#ugandan-runaway-maid-who-died-in-a-13>

- Kaska, S. (2005–2006). *The new international migration and migrant women in Turkey: The Case of Moldovan Domestic Workers*. Istanbul: MiReKoc Research Projects. Retrieved from [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiFqfWNxM7zAhUNBKYKHaZTBjIQFnoECAIQAQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fportal.ku.edu.tr%2F~mirekoc%2Freports%2F2005\\_2006\\_selmin\\_kaska.pdf&usg=AOvVaw0FGs3Zn31qI4CdMomIJKHr](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiFqfWNxM7zAhUNBKYKHaZTBjIQFnoECAIQAQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fportal.ku.edu.tr%2F~mirekoc%2Freports%2F2005_2006_selmin_kaska.pdf&usg=AOvVaw0FGs3Zn31qI4CdMomIJKHr)
- KNOMAD. (n.d.). *KNOMAD*. Retrieved November 24, 2021, from <https://www.knomad.org/data/remittances?tid%5B255%5D=255>
- Maharjan, A., Bauer, S., & Knerr, B. (2012, July 23). International Migration, Remittances and Subsistence Farming: Evidence from Nepal. *International migration*, *51*(1), e249–e263. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2435.2012.00767.x>
- Namakula, H. (2018). *Ensuring Safety in Search of Opportunity: Policy Options for Confronting Unsafe Labour Migrations among Ugandan Youth*. Center for Development Alternatives; Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.
- Parnwell, M. (1993). *Population movements and the third world*. London: Routledge. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203136300>
- Torosyan, K., Gerber, T. P., & Gonalons-pons, P. (2018, July 19). Migration, Household Tasks, and Gender: Evidence from the Republic of Georgia. *International Migration Review*, *50*(2), 445–474. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/imre.12147>
- Tuccio, M., & Wahba, J. (2018). Return migration and the transfer of gender norms: Evidence from the Middle East. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, *46*(4), 1006–1029.
- Weiss, R. S. (1994). *Learning from strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press.

## Appendix

The study constituted a total of 17 respondents from Wakiso district, Uganda. The researcher interviewed 12 female and 2 male returnees who had worked in the middle east. 3 Key stakeholders from Labour recruitment companies were also interviewed. The interview focused on the first-time experience and return.

The demographic characteristics for the 12 female and 2 male returnees were: Age, 71.4% were between 26-35 years while the rest (28.6%) were between 18-25 years; Marital Status, 78.6% were single while 21.4% were married; Number of dependents, all respondents said that they had between 1 and 4 dependents; Level of Education, 71.4% had tertiary education, 21.4% had secondary school level education and 7.1% had primary school level education.

On their status before migration: They had varying jobs these ranged from waitressing to social worker; 64.3% migrated to Saudi Arabia, 21.4% to the United Arab Emirates and 14.3% to Qatar; The goal for migration ranged from earning a greater living to just simply getting employment; 71.4% used an employment agency, 28.6% did not; They all travelled to the middle east between 2015 and 2021.

During migration: 78.6% were domestic workers while only 21.4% did other work (teaching, coffee related business and a bellhop); 78.6% reported having learned new skills while abroad; 85.7% accumulated savings while in the middle east; 64.3% were able to make investments while still in the middle East; 78.6% made new contacts and connections while in the Middle East; 78.6% reported having achieved their migration goals; only 35.7% completed their full employment contract abroad.

After return: 21.4% are unemployed while the rest returned to either the same

jobs they had before migration or similar paying jobs; 71.4% reported that the skills they got while in the middle east helped them; the skills included communication and social skills; 64.3% maintained contact with the people they met while abroad; 64.3% reported that the contacts they got abroad were not helpful to them; on their position in society, the responses were varied from, *“I’m seen as a failure”* to *“my position in society has improved”*; 57.1% of the respondents faced challenges in their communities on return; 57.1% reported a positive change in their social status since they returned; 57.1% said that there was a change in their views towards gender roles however, the degree of change was different and in some cases dependent on finances; 78.6% reported change in their relationship with their families; on whether there was any change in views towards marriage, it was 50-50; 57.1% of the respondents returned to the same residences they lived before migration.



## Abstract

이 연구는 중동에서 일했던 우간다 와키소 지구의 귀환 이민자들로부터 수집된 데이터를 사용했습니다. 여성 복귀 이민자의 성 역할과 사회적 지위에 대한 복귀 이주의 영향을 조사하는 것이 목표였다. 결과에 따르면 이주 경험에 따라 귀국자의 성 역할과 사회적 지위가 변경될지 여부를 결정하는 여러 가지 요인이 있습니다. 조사 결과에 따르면 복귀 이민은 전통적인 성 고정관념을 강화했으며, 사회적 지위를 위해 복귀 이민은 여성 복귀 이민자의 사회적 지위를 향상시켰습니다. 실제로 여성 응답자의 58.3%가 사회적 지위가 향상되었다고 답했습니다.

## **Acknowledgements**

This master's thesis has been made possible by advice and guidance received in the course of my studies at Seoul National University. I have been fortunate to study under experienced and knowledgeable professors who have through their classes opened my mind to what has led to this research.

First and foremost, I recognise and I'm thankful to my thesis advisor Prof. Eun Ki-Soo. Your guidance on how I should approach my research helped me put in order what had earlier just been a set of ideas. Your advice on the use of theories to explore my views and those of my respondents allowed for structure to my thoughts.

I'm also thankful to the DCPD program team who have tirelessly sent reminders about deadlines and have been available where I had administrative questions and/or issues. Thank you for your time and effort.

I also thank my family in Uganda for the psychological support. Specifically, I thank my wife Mrs Margaret Ndizeye who has been patient and caring despite my being away.

Finally, I thank my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who is my strength and greatest encouragement.

My appreciation is more than words can express. Thank you all!