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Return Lebanese Migrants and their Post-Return Experience

Tripoli Case Study

By

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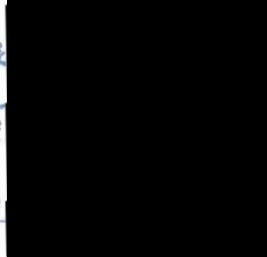
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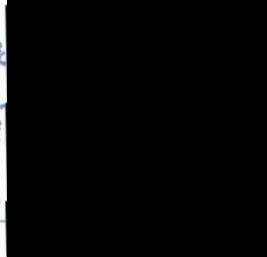
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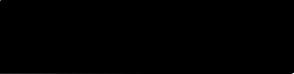


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Dedication Page

To my loving parents and brother

Return Lebanese Migrants and their Post-Return Experience

Tripoli Case Study

Yasmin El Hakim

ABSTRACT

Research on migration studies for decades has been mostly aimed at understanding the collective movement of people. Scholars from interdisciplinary backgrounds arrived at various theories attempting to understand the motives behind their emigration. This thesis aims to examine the post-return experience and the complexities return migrant encounter. It focuses on the identity of Lebanese return migrants, their sense of belonging, their social dimension, and access to legal rights. This study takes North Lebanon as a case study to answer the thesis's basic question: *What is the post-return experience of Lebanese return migrants and their role as agents of change.*

Keywords: Return Migration, Reintegration, Integration, Identity, Belonging, Agency of change

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Chapter One

Introduction

Research on migration studies for decades has been mostly aimed at understanding the collective movement of people. Scholars from interdisciplinary backgrounds arrived at various theories attempting to understand the motives behind their emigration. This includes the process of assimilation, integration in the host country and the impacts on the sending and receiving societies in addition to the contributions made through remittances. Recently, another stage in the migration phase has begun to attract researcher's attention- the return of individuals to their home country and their experience during the reintegration process (Van Houte, 2014).

One of the scholars reflecting this new trend in migration studies is Akram Khater (Khater, 2001) who claims return is the most critical story in the life of the migrant. Migrants returning to their country of origin were considered by researchers to be the end of their migration cycle. Yet new scholars have distinguished it as an ongoing process, a new step in the migration cycle and not merely the process of ‘going home’ or ‘returning to base’ (Kuschminder , 2017; Davids et al., 2009). A return migrant, as any subject of analysis can not be captured singularly by one parameter. Instead, as migration is a complex social process playing out in different historical socio-economic, and cultural context, studying (return) migration requires researchers to incorporate multiple typologies of return migration. Defining the term is therefore not straightforward. Reflecting new interest in return migration, scholars including Ammassari (2012), King (2017), and Davids et al. (2010) have defined and adjust the term. The United Nations defines return migration 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” (Dumont & Spielvogel, 2008). Thus, defining the term is instead a difficult task as there is no typical return migration. Although categorized in various ways, the most commonly used typology of return migration was developed by Cerase (1974). It includes return of failure; return out of conservatism; return with the aim of innovation; return for retirement.

The intentions of migrants' return are as diverse and complex as analysis of their migration as a whole. Their motives for return may stem from the accumulated capital obtained during their time abroad to utilize in the homeland, for family-related issues, from the inability to integrate, or from the inability to secure a job or a permit in the host land. In addition, scholars have awoken to the impact on the country of origin by return migration. Economists, development specialists, and governmental policymakers have all shown interest in examining return migration by including returnees in their programs and policies contributors towards their homeland (Maron & Connell, 2008). The implicit expectations of returnees as agents of change after their return from industrial countries reflected in the literature suggest that migrants are known to have gained skills, capital, and ideas to transfer in the home country. Equally relevant to a research agenda on return migration however are the pressures and assumptions placed on returnees by the state, international organizations, and 'stayees' (local residents) result in migrants experiencing obstacles and difficulties to reintegrate into the community and face tensions which may result in their return to be short term.

With migration causing a period of absence and distance from the country of origin, the issue of a shift in identity surfaces as a topic of inquiry in studying return migration. Returnees may experience a conflict of identity and sense of belonging when returning. This then raises the questions of why returnees struggle with their identity? Why don't they feel at 'home' anymore? What are the identity-related challenges they face during reintegration? Moreover, would their struggles with identity affect their contribution to their home country?

It is also important to consider the level of preparedness and the willingness of their return during this migration phase. Additionally, the success or failure of returnees' reintegration process rests on the assumptions placed on returnees by stayees and the government.

This paper aims to examine the post-return experience and the complexities of return migrant to Lebanon. Lebanon has traditionally been a country of emigration and therefore migration is heavily intertwined with its social, political, and economic history. Therefore, the specificity of the Lebanese migration experience, with all its social, cultural, and political aspect will inform this paper. Thematically, this thesis focuses on identity, sense of belonging, the social dimension, the cultural dimension, and returnees' access to legal rights.

The purpose of this research therefore is to answer the thesis's basic question:

Examining the post-return experience of Lebanese return migrants and their role as agents of change in Tripoli.

Lebanese society has placed little attention on the return of Lebanese migrants; no official data on Lebanese returnees is available, however, it is estimated that during and after the period of the civil war, approximately half a million people returned to Lebanon (Stamm, 2006). The country had experienced various waves of migration since the mid-19th century due to its long history of political, economic, and internal conflicts. This caused its citizens, an estimated 12 million to 15 million migrants accumulatively, to scatter around the globe (Tabar, 2009 Skulte-Ouaiss & Tabar, 2004). Similar to the various reasons for Lebanese emigration, the motives of their return are as diverse. Family, values, academic, or professional opportunities may have influenced their decision-making (Hourani & Sensenig-Dabbous, 2007). Another plausible motive is the notion of home. The memory of their homeland, embedded within the Lebanese migrant, prompted migrants to visit and to commit in rebuilding 'The Lebanon' as it was once before they left (Skulte-Ouaiss & Tabar, 2014).

The focus of the thesis will limit itself to examining first-generation returnees' reintegration process. The study will not include second-generation migrants who joined their parents or third-generation descendants of Lebanese immigrants. Although our research focus is on Tripoli, the thesis will seek a perspective using case studies as references, such as studies done on Morocco, Algeria, Ethiopia, Hong Kong, and Belgium, to fill the gaps in research in the Lebanese case.

The significance of this study is to fill this gap in the current knowledge on return Lebanese migrants and the relationship between their return, reintegration and their contribution to Tripoli, North Lebanon. This study will provide insight by examining various phases of a migrant's life and by reviewing the economic, sociological, cultural and self-identification dimension for their re-embeddedness. The process first starts with the story of migrants' emigration, their life in the country of immigration, and their post-return experience.

The research will map out the following. First, we will present the motives of a migrant's return (whether their return was voluntarily or involuntarily) and returnees' level of preparedness during the pre-return phase. Second, we will explore the post-

return experience of Lebanese returnees by assessing the structural and cultural conditions and the multidimensional approach of how different types of returnees reintegrate. Here, returnees' identity shifts, and sense of belonging will also be discussed in order to understand the various identity profiles. Thirdly, we will present the role of returnees as agents of change social, cultural, economic, and political by examining their reintegration.

Chapter Two

Literature Review and Historical Background

The literature review first introduces what has been researched on the general topic of return migration, reintegration, identity, and belonging. The theories and studies used here are by Cassarino (2008), Gmelch (1980), Ammassari (2012), Kuschminder (2014), King (2000), Cerase (1980), Sussman (2010), and De Haas (2010). Furthermore, the literature review creates a brief historical background of the Lebanese migration and their patterns of return as a backdrop of the thesis. The Lebanese historical overview will attempt to inquire whether there is anything that may help in the study of the return of Lebanese migrants, their reintegration, and the social, cultural, economic, and political influence of returnees. The literature review will define the terms of my research.

2.1 Defining the term: Return Migration

In his 2000 work, King said “...[return migration is] the great unwritten chapter in the history of migration” (King, 2000). Yet, in this age of ever rising migration, this statement no longer rings true. There has been a growth in research on return migrant. However, interpretations vary. Defining the term is crucial. Continuous discourse on the terminology has scholars from diverse disciplinary backgrounds attempting to define and refine the term.

What are individuals who return called? There is no uniformity on the description for those returning to their homeland. Multiple disciplines, typology of return, motives, theoretical view, and returnee approaches constitute the nodes that are taken into account when defining the term. Terms such as re-entry, repatriates, return migrants, or remigrants all have been used at some point to identify people who have returned. In Sussman’s chapter on “Returning home: Culture Transition and Identity Model,” the author elaborates on the meanings of the terms for the purpose of correct usage. Sussman elaborates on the factors that distinguish between someone who emigrates to another country for a fixed period, with the purpose of completing a mission (i.e. a missionary, diplomat, educators, or guest workers called an expatriate or sojourner) on the

one hand, and return migrants or returnees on the other. Returnees and what now commonly refer to as expats, were previously included in an all-encompassing category (when returning home) called “re-entry” then “repatriates” (Sussman, 2010).

The term “return migrants” or “remigrants” was used when describing migrants in respect to their long-term period abroad. Scholars like Gmelch (1980) interprets the term as “the movement of emigrants back to their homeland.” King defined the term as “the process whereby people return to their country after a significant period in the country.” The United Nations specifies the ‘period’ of time for a return migrant as someone who has been away from their home country for at least 12 months (Kuschminder, 2017). The definition stated by the UN and Frank Bovenkerk’s essay includes:

“any person returning to his/her country of origin, in the course of the last ten years, having been an international migrant (whether short-term or long-term) in any country. A return may be permanent or temporary. It may be independently decided by the migrant or forced by unexpected circumstances.”
(Cassarino, 2008)

For this study, the term return migrant or returnee will be used.

Why do migrants return? Return is not the end of the migration cycle insofar as a migrant returns ‘home’ after a period abroad but is in fact another step in the migration process (De Haas, 2010; Cassarino, 2015). The reasons for return vary. The evident reason sojourners or repatriates return home is based on completing their missions during temporary stay in the host country. There are many factors behind return migrants’ decision-making process. Such factors are often centered around the family (looking after their kin or raising their children in their homeland to teach them about the culture), failure to integrate and/or missing home, economic challenges, and more opportunities found back home (Van Houte, 2014). De Haas and Fokkema (2014) observe the variation of theories generate competing hypotheses about determinants of return migration. In Cassarino’s work, he attributes the motive of return to the original reasons of migration. Cassarino discussed them in the context of neoclassical economic theory, New Economic Labor Migration theory (NELM), transnationalism and social network theory.

Seen through the lens of neoclassical economic theory, migration is based on wage differences between host and origin country, thus migration is a result of potential

higher earnings in the immigration countries. By the same token, return migration is associated with the outcome of a failed movement whereby a migrant was unable to maximize his/her earnings including inability to integrate into the immigration country (Cassarino, 2015; De Haas, 2014). NELM theory developed as a response to neoclassical model- it views migration as a family or household strategy to diversify income sources (Castles, 2013). Thus, return migration is a “logical outcome of a calculated strategy” in which migrants have met their goal to achieve savings or higher income (Cassarino, 2015). Transnationalism does not view return as the end of the migration cycle, but a back and forth movement which is maintained, as Alejandro Portes defines, by “regular and sustained social contacts over time across national borders” (Portes et al., 1999). Social Network Theory views return migrants as having accumulated tangible and intangible resources while abroad.

There are various return migration theories which generate the typologies of return migrants. Cassarino (2015) states the need to differentiate between multiple types of returnees. To him, it is imperative to first make a distinction between voluntary and involuntary migration movement; whether the migrant motivation of return was a choice or forced/deported from the host country. The four different types of returnees developed by Francesco Cerase (1974) are the most commonly used. His typology includes: (1) return of failure; (2) return of conservatism; (3) return of innovation; and (4) return of retirement. George Gmelch (1980) and King (Ammassari, 2009 as cited in King, 1983) refined Cerase’s typology by adding two criteria. The first is the length of time a migrant intended to stay abroad. The aim of migrant’s time in the immigration country is typified by a binary choice to either stay permanently or temporarily. The second criteria is the amount of time spent in the home country evaluating their return situation. Examples would be if a migrant returned for a short-term visit to see family or for work, temporary return with the intention to re-emigrate, or permanent return with the intention to remain in the home country (King, 2000).

2.2 Reintegration

“The process of embeddedness, the ability to construct an individual’s own identity is crucial. This gives them a place in society and is at the same time the connection between the self and that society.” (Ruben et al., 2009)

Reintegration is a process that takes time, years, and can sometimes never be achieved (Kuschminder, 2017). King states that there is a lack of understanding on how people

reintegrate. Return migration is not ‘simply fitting back in’ and is not merely the ‘story of what happens next’ (Kuschnminder, 2017). This statement has compelled further research on how returnees reintegrate. Cassarino defines the reintegration process as to include the “participation of returnees in the social, cultural, economic and political life in the country of origin” (Cassarino, 2008). The International Organization for Migration defines reintegration as “the re-inclusion or re-incorporation” of an individual into their country of origin (IOM, 2017). How do returnees reintegrate in their home society? Reintegration is achieved when a returnee can participate in the social, cultural, economic, and political life in the origin country (Kuschnminder, 2017). Returnees are also not homogeneous as a group- rather, individuals reintegrate in different ways. Kuschnminder identifies four type of reintegration strategies- reintegrated, enclave, traditionalist, or vulnerable. Their reintegration is influenced by what Kuschnminder refers to as *the structural and cultural conditions environment and their multidimensional reintegration*.

2.2.1 Reintegration Strategy

The structural and cultural conditions environment

The return environment presupposes government, local population, and the private sector to play a part in facilitating the arrival of returnees. The factors contribute to three categories of migrant reintegration: favorable, adverse, and neutral. For instance, a favorable government would encourage return migration and implement policies to support the reintegration of returnees and their participation. However, an adverse government would discourage the return of migrants and would have no policies to encourage their return, whereas a neutral government would be hesitant towards returnees. Returnees receiving assistance during pre-and post-return in the form of employment assistance, arranging documents, monetary support provided by the state, and/or a private or other organization acting in a similar capacity – all these are factors that facilitate returnees’ arrival.

Multidimensional reintegration

The framework for the assessment of the reintegration of returnees is made up of four dimensions:

1. *Cultural maintenance* - the cultural orientation of returnees in terms of participating in country of origin- or host country-values and norms or embracing both cultures.
2. *Social network*- social relations are significant for returnees to feel accepted back home (Ruben et al, 2009, Kuschminder, 2010). Return migrants either can reintegrate with other returnees like them, with stayees, or maintain cross border relations.
3. *Self-identification* – migration causes shift in identity and sense of belonging among returnees. Returnees either self-identify as transnational or unidirectional.
4. *Access to rights and the labor-market*- rules and regulations pertaining to participation in and access to labor market and government institutions and services. This involves evaluating the livelihood of the migrant concerning work, income, health care, and home, and legal framework of citizenship as provided by the state to its nationals. Returnees who face challenges with employment and business experience when returning may feel discouraged and frustrated which may be cause for their re-emigration.

Kuschminder's multidimensional framework elucidates how returnees reintegrate as either *reintegrated, enclave, traditionalist, or vulnerable* (Kuschminder, 2014, see table below). Returnees who classify as 'reintegrated' or 'enclave' are those who have been living in the destination country for more than five years. During this time, they maintained transnational links with their country of origin and have acquired enough skills and wealth needed to prepare for their return. However, reintegrated and enclave migrants differ in their cultural orientation towards the migration country and country of origin. Enclavist returnees may clash with stayees and value the culture of country of immigration. Those who are 'traditionalist' or 'vulnerable' are returnees who have stayed a shorter time period (three to five years), and in addition have a low or no level of preparedness. Table 1 below shows the Reintegration Strategies as the framework for analyzing how returnees reintegrate across the four dimensions.

Table 1: Reintegration Strategies: Framework for Analysis

Dimensions	Reintegrated	Enclave	Traditional-ist	Vulnerable
Cultural	Value both culture of origin and host	Value the culture of host	Value the culture of origin	Rejection of culture of host & rejection from dominant society in country or origin
Social Network	Locals, returnees and cross border ties	Returnees and cross border ties	Locals	Ties to kin and other vulnerable groups
Self-Identification	Transnational	Transnational	Unidirectional	Unidirectional
Access to rights and labor market	Limited or full access to rights in country of origin	Limited access to rights in country of origin	Full access to key institutions in country of origin	Full access to key institutions in country of origin

2.2.2. Level of Preparedness

The level of preparedness influences re-embeddedness. A migrant's motivation, resource mobilization and length of stay contribute to their return. Cassarino (2015) asserts the importance of transnationalism and social network theory in explaining the reintegration process of a migrant. "To be successfully achieved, return preparation requires time, resources and willingness on the part of the migrant" (Cassarino, 2015). Both of these theories contribute to Cassarino's approach on the preparedness of a migrant. Preparedness refers to a migrant's willingness and readiness to return to its country of origin.

Three levels of preparedness are identified in the pre-return phase. The first level includes the highest level of preparedness. A migrant's length of stay in the immigration country varies from 4 to 15 years. Their time abroad may bring them a status of residency status, property ownership, or nationality. The motivation for their return may consist of their migration objectives realized, positive changes in their home country, and/or the acquired resources (i.e. savings, contacts, knowledge, skills, and education) to mobilize for return to their country of origin. The second level includes a migrant's low level of preparedness. His or her short time abroad, ranging from six months to three years, involves trying to achieve a status in the host country. This may result in

a few savings and limited resources to mobilize. Their return may occur due to unexpected family events interrupting migration and/or failing to meet migration objectives. The third level encompasses no preparedness. Migrants may have stayed less than six months and forced to return home due to the rejection of visa or deportation. The conditions of Cassarino's level of preparedness affects the reintegration process of a return migrant and can impact their potential investment in the home country.

Table 2 below shows the types of migration cycle, based on returnees' motivations for return and their level of preparedness.

Table 2: Level of preparedness and migration cycles

	Type of migration cycle		
	Complete	Incomplete	Interrupted
Return Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To run a business concern in the country of origin Termination of job contract Achieved migration objective Situation in the country of origin improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job precariousness in the destination country Family and personal problems Adverse social and cultural environment/racism/discrimination abroad Migration objectives not achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-renewal of residence permit in the destination country Expulsion Administrative/financial hurdles Loss of job Family pressures War/conflict
	High level of preparedness	Low level of preparedness	No return preparedness

2.2.3 Identity and Sense of Belonging

“The identity of a person and place is always continuously being produced.”

(Maron & Connell, 2008)

According to Ruben, identity should be understood as being a process. It is dynamic, multidimensional, and not fixed to one characteristic or group (Ruben et al., 2009). Exploring individual self-identification is an essential factor during the reintegration process and determines the level of belonging they feel in their home society (Kuschminder, 2017). Migrants often experience a shift in their identity as they attempt to find and create a place in a new social and cultural environment. During this process, individuals may redefine and renegotiate their identity (De Haas et al., 2010 citing Hammond, 1999). At their return, they often develop multiple identities and the ability

to relate to more than one culture. This new form of identity or hybrid identity combines the cultures from the receiving and sending society.

The changes in their identity reflect how returnees connect with, and maintain the feeling of belonging to, the society of the country of origin (Kuschminder , 2017; Ruben et al. 2009). When returning, some returnees may experience ‘culture reverse shock’ and a change in their identity; this is in part due to the formation of their new identity. This hybrid identity leads migrants to carry traits from different worlds and hence, a confusion or a inability to express their identity and feeling of not belonging (Ruben et al., 2009). In Stamm’s (2006) study, many Lebanese returnees were disappointed upon their return as their expectations, and the notion of ‘home,’ were not met.

To understand the changes in a migrant’s identity, the Culture Identity Model (CIM) developed by Sussman (2010) explains the pre- and post- results and their consequence from a psychological perspective. The model refers to three elements migrants undergo during the transitional process that changes their identity.

1. The first is ***identity salience***, individuals in a new cultural and social environment become aware of the difference between their origin and host culture. During the reaffirmation phase, the significance of identity to an individual and the perception of others amount to “thoughts of cultural identity awareness and outsider status which appear to strengthen, at least initially, identification with home culture” (Sussman, 2010).
2. Secondly, immigrants attempt to explore themselves within the new environment they are faced thus trying to adjust to the host country. During the ***sociocultural adaptation*** transition, migrants adapt to new cultures while understanding the difference between their home culture and the host culture to achieve a ‘better fit’ within the new environment. Some are unable to readjust to the host culture while others gradually integrate. The outcome of this adaptation leads migrants to have aspects from different worlds resulting in the inability to express their identity and feeling of not belonging (Ruben et al., 2009).
3. Thirdly, returnees experience ***culture identity change***. The shift occurs during the integration phase in the immigration country. The migrant learns and adopts from the host-country to function in the new environment. With their return,

the shift of their identity becomes problematic as they cannot apply the adopted culture identity towards their home society.

The table below indicates the four types of identity shifts migrants develop during their time in the immigration country. Sussman (2010) explains in her research the various profiles of returnees and the distress that result from the shift in identity. The additive and subtractive identity shifts are associated with the level of adaptation and response towards the new culture in the destination country while the migrant has their own culture. Thus, the identity shift effects their reintegration in the society particularly in their thinking style, decision making, activities, behaviors, and values (Sussman, 2010).

Table 3: Identity Shift table

Identity Shift	Profile	Distress
Subtractive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrant's identity shifts away from home culture 	Emotional: Depression, Anxiety, Displacement Cognitively: Feeling of being different from stayees. Experience isolation, confusion
Additive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Migrant's identity becomes more similar to host country. Two identity formed: Bicultural and Hybrid Identity 	Space: Physical, Personal and Privacy Values: Conflict with stayees
Affirmative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home identity is strengthened in the host country 	No distress, feeling happy and motivated when returned
Intercultural/Global (Hybrid)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World citizen Represents different cultures 	Little distress

Sussman (2010)

Lovell (1998) and Yuval-Davis (2006) define belonging by linking it to the emotional attachment whereby a person feels home and safe in a country (cited by De Haas, 2010). Migrants develop three types of identity orientation towards belonging: unidirectional towards the country of origin, unidirectional towards the country of migration, or transnational bidirectional orientation (transnational way of belonging) (Kuschminder, 2017). De Haas (2010) explains the concept of a ‘transnational way of belonging’ as the social and economic practices migrants maintain. Their transnational involvement facilitates migrants to identify with several places at the same time, a “home away from home” (De Haas, 2001 citing Vertovec 1999: 4-5). The returnees’ economic and social conditions and their perception of the homeland give them a sense

of well-being (Gmelch, 1980). Maron and Connell (2008) refer to returnees as developing a sense of belonging in two ‘worlds,’ their host and home, at the same time. Thus, migrants can identify with several places at the same time, both receiving and sending societies, accumulating a multi-local sense of home or transnational sense of belonging (De Haas, 2010 citing Pedersen, 2003). Returnees who do not maintain ties or visit regularly may have their expectations significantly affected (Ammassari, 2012).

2.3 Agents of Change

‘Return is neither a movement back to normal, nor is it easily a movement forward to change. When migrants return to their country of origin, they do not automatically contribute to development and peace-building. The relationship between migration and development is too complex for easy generalizations’ (Van Houte, M., 2014)

Increased attention has been placed on return migrants to be included in policy debates on the linkage between migration and development (Van Houte, 2014; Åkesson et al., 2015). Migrants returning from industrial countries are expected by stayees and the local government to take the role as agents of change. It is imperative to take into account returnees as being heterogeneous rather than homogenous. With that said, we can come to understand that not all migrants have the ability or have the desire to act as mediators between different cultures. Kuschminder (2014) states:

“Under the right conditions return migrants can have a high potential to be agents of change in their societies of return. It cannot be assumed, however, that all returnees have this potential. This study has demonstrated that there is a direct link between reintegration and the potential of returnees to have impact on their societies of return.”

The assumptions and expectations on asserting the capital gained in the immigration country towards the home country pose several contradictions (Åkesson et al., 2015; Van Houte, 2014). First is *the assumption of skills and capital*. Migrants are expected by the state and stayees to transfer the capital, skills, and links accumulated to help the country of origin. Second is the *assumption for the desire to invest*. Returnees are assumed to have the desire to contribute to the change in their home country and is required as their duty. Third is *the assumption of multi-identity*. Migrants with ties to the host country are expected to be the mediators or brokers and assumed the capital

accumulated is universally applicable. The problem with these assumptions and expectations placed on returnees as agents of change is the sole responsibility placed on returnees without the state's intervention or proper structure to facilitate the transfer of capital for migrants. Also, returnees are seen as members of elites with the means, links, and multi-identity to shift between home and host culture to act as heroes (Van Houte, 2014).

Returnees' willingness to act as agents of change is due to their level of preparedness and under the right conditions. Cassarino's (2008) findings view returnees' level of preparedness as crucial for individuals to contribute to change. With the newly acquired skills and experience, returnees improve the standard living of its country of origin by bringing social and human capital which results in new business opportunities, jobs and other influences that bring positive change (Maron & Connell, 2008). Furthermore, the state needs to understand how returnees reintegrate to help facilitate assistance and programs during their reintegration process. Thus, with the available resources, returnees will be able to share and contribute the skills acquired in receiving society.

2.4 Lebanese Migration overview

The history of Lebanon is composed of waves of migration which has resulted in a substantial amount of people emigrating and scattering across diverse parts of the world (i.e. North and South America, Africa, Europe, and Australia). The Lebanese migrants, ranging from 12 million to 15 million abroad, emigrated with the hopes of finding a better alternative living condition in their adopted country from the chaos and instability found at home (Skulte-Ouaiss, J., & Tabar, P 2004). During their time in the immigration country, Lebanese migrants had the notion of returning someday, thus, leading them to create and preserve ties with their homeland through economic, social, cultural, and political remittances.

Emigrants who returned (with the numbers unknown) after spending time abroad constitute various factors that represent their motives of return. These factors consist of those who succeeded because they reached their goal, those who failed because they were homesick, or those who left due to force (Khatar, 2001; De Bel-Air, 2017). In the study "Return Migrants to Post-War Lebanon," social ties and the networks emigrants

maintain are the motives for their return. Three conditions for Lebanese returnees include: employment, children, religion, and crises as the motives for their return and the level of re-embeddedness (Stamm, 2006).

However, what they once considered to be their ‘home’ had changed after their arrival to the homeland. Khater's (2001) extensive study on the Lebanese return emigrants analyzes the return to the place they left behind and the realization that it was not the same as they have imagined it would be while in the ‘mahjar’ (place of emigration) (Khater, 2001). This shared experience is felt among many returnees whom felt unhappy with their re-emigration and return. The reason Lebanese re-migrated again was because as a result of failing to reintegrate and Lebanese government not have helped in facilitating their return (Stamm, 2006).

2.5 Conclusion

Based on the literature review, research on return migrant’s identity, belonging, and their reintegration has been conducted in countries such as Ethiopia, Tunisia, Mali, Ghana, Morocco, Hong Kong, United States, and Lebanon.

Cassarino analytical examination in his study, “Cross-Regional Information System on the Reintegration of Migrants in their Countries of Origin” project (CRIS), focuses on the factors involved in separate countries which are responsible for returnees’ reintegration. He analyzes the types of migration cycles, the motivation of return, and his or her role in contributing to the development of the country of origin. Cassarino (2014) concludes that migrants whom have completed their migration cycle with a high level of preparedness can reintegrate and are more likely to become agents of change by investing in the home country compared to someone whose migration cycle had been interrupted. Similarly, Stamm's (2006) study on Lebanese returnees concludes the level of return preparation influences returnees’ reintegration process than those who have returned without planning. The high-level of preparedness facilitates the reintegration process of returnees by individuals employing their social capital, personal ties, and skills within the social network.

On the other hand, returnees with a low-level of preparedness rely on their social network for support. Other similar observations have been made by De Haas et al. (2010) on the level of preparation through building and maintaining transnational link with

the home country while being abroad facilitates migrant's reintegration with their return . His research examined Moroccan migrants returning from the Netherlands voluntarily and involuntary. Voluntary returnees who had the agency in their decision-making process had fewer difficulties with reintegration than those migrants pushed to return. According to Ammassari (2008), the financial, social and human capital acquired in the immigration country can prepare the return migrant to make a developmental impact in their home country. Her reintegration framework emphasizes the challenges returnees face which hinder the success of their reintegration by looking at the structural and cultural conditions of the return environment.

Transnational practices play an important role in supporting returnees. It assists them in finding a place back in its origin society and creating a sense of belonging (De Haas, 2010). Returnees' sense of belonging and self-identification are essential when examining their reintegration. "The lack of feeling of belonging hinders the reintegration of a returnee" (Kuschminder, 2017). The Culture Identity Model explains returnee's identity shifts as a consequence of the transition. According to case studies on European, US, and Japanese returnees, the outcome indicates returnees developed a subtractive identity after the cultural transition. Due to their identity shift, they felt alienated once they returned and a loss of sense of belonging. In contrast, Hong Kong remigrants shifted to additive / hybrid identity. They had a combination of both home and immigrant cultures. Returnees also experienced distress with both the identity shift that influences their reintegration and as agents of change.

This research paper seeks to adopt the methodologies used by Cassarino (2008; 2015), Sussman (2010), Kuschminder (2014) De Haas (2010; 2014), and Stamm (2006) by examining Lebanon as a case study to further critical analysis towards the conclusions made in the literature review. Thus, the thesis will examine the motives for Lebanese migrants' return, their self-identification, and sense of belonging to understand their reintegration process in Lebanon. It also seeks to find a correlation between the inter-related dimensions of returnees' reintegration and their role as agents of change in Lebanon. I anticipate that the literature review will be relevant to answer my research question on examining the post-return reintegration of Lebanese return migrants and their role as agents of change.

Chapter Three

Methodological Approach

This section provides the framework and technique for the collection and analysis of the data on return Lebanese migrants using both primary and secondary research. Below I describe in detail the materials and justification for the selected methodological approach.

The secondary research includes a literature review through a narrative approach for the comprehensive assessment of what has been covered on the topic of return migration, reintegration, and development. Additionally, secondary research helps identify other analysis regarding Lebanon to help disclose the gap in the study. I have reviewed journals, reports, books, and edited chapters as a backdrop to get acquainted with concepts, theories, terms and typologies on this topic. Furthermore, this section serves as a platform for the contribution to my research.

I have used a qualitative method approach to collect and analyze data using a comparative design and semi-structured method for interviews. The research aims to collect data on Lebanese returnee life before emigrating, their life in the destination country and their experience as a returnee in Lebanon.

3.1 Research Population

As my research time and scope was limited by the thesis timeline as there are no public data available on return migrants, I was left to develop and conduct my own original research without any references. As return migration is a highly personal issue and touches upon feelings of failure, ambiguous belonging and identity, conflicted motives, and mixed social responses thus, gaining trust from the sample return migration population was crucial to obtain truthful insights in issues shrouded in disappointment and doubt. Therefore, I came to the conclusion that the trust required for high quality participatory field research would only be achieved in an environment where the researcher is a trusted member of the community and operates in a network of trust.

The field research therefore took Tripoli, North Lebanon as a case study. The case study is intended to encourage other researchers to carry on similar research in other parts of Lebanon and to compare the similarities and dissimilarities. This study could

be a starting point for a national research of post-return experience of returnees, their reintegration strategies, and as contribution toward Lebanon.

Although it does contribute to the gap in the current knowledge of return Lebanese migrants and their post-return experience, the study clearly suffers from above mentioned limitations. Since there was no official data on Lebanese returnees, snowball sampling method was used to identify potential interviewees. This type of sampling technique was limited as interviewees referred to people with similar characteristics as them. Moreover, the sample size of the study is too small to be generalized.

3.2 Field Site

As there is no literature or research data on the subject of return migration, there is no way to assume regional or developmental differences that could inform a comparative analysis. Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that regional and developmental differences in return migration exist across Lebanese regions. Therefore, I will now briefly describe the differences and similarities of the Tripoli region as compared to the average national situation which might be a factor in the success of reintegration of returnees. However, these factors cannot be properly understood in the scope of this research. In short I am considering the insights from my interviews as speaking to the phenomenon of Lebanese return migrants; in the absence of other dataset we are not well placed to assume any Tripolitanian nature to our findings.

Tripoli in many ways resembles Lebanon as a whole, as it suffers from being ravaged in a brutal civil war, failed post-war reconstruction, economic decline and continued political strife (UN-Habitat Lebanon (2016) Tripoli City Profile 2016). However, Tripoli also can be understood as an area where all of Lebanon's travails have manifested themselves in more polarized fashion. For example, Tripoli has seen continued violent strife, long after the Lebanese civil war ended. Income disparities have been more pronounced in Tripoli than in any other region. As Lebanon experienced ups and down economically in the post-war period, Tripoli also saw reconstruction, but its overall development continued falling behind the rest of the country (UN-Habitat Lebanon (2016) Tripoli City Profile 2016). Whereas state institutions and a degree of governance were reconstituted after the civil war in Lebanon as whole, again Tripoli fell behind, as Beirut became the focus of national reconstruction. As a result, Tripoli, the second largest city is considered on the periphery of Lebanon's decision-making and

economic development. This post-war development is just the latest installment in a much longer process of decline experienced in Tripoli and the north of Lebanon, vis a vis the rise of Beirut at the center of the Lebanese political economy.

Just as Lebanon's turbulent dynamics created many motives for outward migration in the past decades, there are many motives for return migration. This also applies to the return of Lebanese migrants to Tripoli, even as out-migration reasons and numbers may have been influenced by Tripoli experiencing a deeper economic decline and high levels of violence that persisted into this decade. Moreover, as will examine, drivers of return migration are found in all phases in the migration cycle and therefore, only in a limited sense reflect the specific conditions in (a specific region of) the country of origin.

3.3 Research Design

The structure of the survey is guided by Jean Pierre Cassarino (2008) and the reintegration framework developed by Kuschminder (2017). Cassarino's approach is based on a three-stage closed-ended questionnaire to collect data on return migration. His structure was utilized however, using a semi-structured interview instead. I was guided by Cassarino's survey to analyze his limitation to my study to confirm or disconfirm his methodology. In his research, he did not rely on an in-depth interview, but entirely on close-ended questions. In my case, I have used in-depth questions to gather the perceptions of informant's experience. Moreover, I have added value by using a semi-structured survey to acquire rich and detailed answers from my respondents. I have used my findings to confirm and reinforce the issues mentioned.

Table 4: Cassarino Three-Phase Lifecycle

The table below is divided into three phases, and a detailed of the phases are explained below.

Before Emigrating	Immigration life	Returnee
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life before migration • Reasons for leaving/Decision to migrate • Social & Financial condition before leaving • Education and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of migration/integration experience • Expected stay/ duration in host land • Part of a hometown association • Reason for living in the country of immigration • Duration of stay • Education and Skills acquired • Financial situation • Links with country of origin (social, financial, cultural, political) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision to return/motivation • Return experience • Expected duration of return • Links with former immigration country • Post-return projects • Reintegration experience • Contribution

(Cassarino, 2008)

- Before Emigrating- The first phase includes the backdrop of the migrant's life concerning their financial, education, social, and employment situation before emigrating. It is to understand under what circumstances prompted the decision to migrate.
- Immigrant life- The phase includes the reason behind choosing the country of immigration and their experience in the destination country regarding integration. Moreover, this phase involves whether the migrant maintained links with Lebanon, the type of relationships, and if they were part of any hometown in the immigration country.
- Returnee Experience- The last phase of the survey includes the decision of migrants' return, their reintegration, and their move towards Lebanon. Thus, using the typologies of Cerase (1974) and De Haas et al. (2010) on the motivation for the phase will help describe and differentiate the types of returnees and whether his/her choice of returning was voluntary or involuntary. Furthermore, this section covers the contributions made within the specific context of the location.

3.4 Sampling & Selection criteria

Because there is no data or registered list of return migrants in Lebanon, it is difficult to locate the respondents using standard probability sampling with the absence of a sampling frame. Thus, snowball sampling will be chosen based on relevance of the research topic to select return migrants. I will ask participants for referrals for additional participants for the interview. The collected data from respondents will be, however, unable to be representative and generalizable to the Lebanese returnee population. There are different views on the number of surveys to be conducted in a qualitative method. According to Warren (2002:99), he suggests an appropriate number of informants to include 20 persons. Crouch and McKenzie (2006) propose a sample size of 20 participants better provides a chance to get acquaintance with informants thus increasing the likelihood to gather better data (Bryman, 2015). Therefore, this study's sample includes 20 first-generation return Lebanese migrants from various immigration countries and from different temporal periods (waves) of emigration.

The typologies of return by Cerase (1974) and De Haas et al. (2010) inspire the selection of participants which include the following:

- 1. Voluntary returnees:** Those returnees consist of migrants who completed their migration cycle and returned to invest.
- 2. Involuntary/compelled returnees:** Returnees migration cycle was interrupted due to family reasons and problems experienced in the destination country. They were forced/compelled to return.
- 3. Retirees:** Returnees consist of migrants who completed their migration cycle and returned to retire.
- 4. Spouses:** Spouses returned with their husbands voluntary or were compelled to return.

The choice for the inclusion criteria for the selected participants is to analyze the type of returnees within a pre-return condition to evaluate his or her level of preparedness. Inclusion criteria includes first-generation returnees, over 30 years of age, male and female, from Tripoli, Lebanon, and whom have returned three years or more ago. Exclusion Criteria involves any returnee who refuses to give informed consent.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

One crucial consideration presented is the ethical approach for this dissertation. This section covers the way I will treat the people involved in the research. It will highlight what factors are taken into consideration when engaging with the participants to avoid transgressing their rights, and I will bring forward the ethical principles and the process of collecting and analyzing the data. Furthermore, when explaining the issues that may arise during the research work, it is important to bear in mind that participants are inclined to withdraw from the research at any time. I am aware of the four main ethical principles; harm, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy, and deception. I will make sure that participants are not in any harmful situation such as causing stress or diminishing their self-esteem.

The initial step includes voluntary participants knowing the nature of the research without being deceived by withholding information or representing the study as something other than it is. Moreover, they are fully informed to their right to privacy which will be protected. Whether participants raise questions, that they should refuse to answer a question, or whether they are concerned with their identity, they have been informed of their right not to respond or withdraw from the study at any time. After receiving information about the study, informed consent is issued and signed before starting with the interview. If in any case, participants were not willing to sign a form then a verbal consent may be used instead with a presence of a witness, and he or she along with myself will document the time and date of the interview. Further, the participants were informed that a recording device was present and were ensured that their privacy is protected by not saving the file under the participant's name.

Concerning privacy, the transcription from informants do not disclose their identity. I have used pseudonyms in transcripts and altered specific details to secure their identification. Another ethical concern includes the investigation of a migrant's life before emigrating, their experience in the country of immigration, and their life post return. Returnees may relive uncomfortable or traumatic experiences, or they may feel tense or be subjected to reveal information that may not be accurate to avoid confrontation with the reality. One example may be not accomplishing his or her migration goal, which may distress the informant. If this situation had arose, the interview would have ceased immediately. I have also explained to the participant at the beginning of the interview that if they feel they are uncomfortable with the questions, they are free to

refrain from answering; this aimed to place them in a supportive/secure setting which they may share their information freely without any undue stress.

3.6 Data Management

This section includes preserving the confidentiality of the data from participants. Any information received by individuals in the context of this case study is considered private personal data. According to the Information Commissioner's Office, a UK based independent Data Protection entity set up to protect information rights, personal data is defined as “data which relates to a living individual who can be identified” (ICO, 2018). Thus, in this case, it is essential to take into consideration how the data is stored by researchers on the computer and the utmost importance to password protect and encrypt such data to ensure no participant identity is compromised. Priority has been given to ensure personal data from surveys, voice recordings, and transcriptions are properly locked, password protected, and encrypted.

The intent of retaining the information should not be kept longer than necessary, nor will the data be shared or transferred to anyone. Based on the data protection rights, the data will be disposed of after it longer serves any purpose to the study.

Chapter Four

Findings

This chapter presents the research findings on the semi-structured interviews carried out among 20 Lebanese returnees in Tripoli, North Lebanon between August 2018 and February 2019. The interviews, based on Cassarino's 'Preparedness Theory,' consist of three main nodes: Life before emigration, during immigration, and the return. In the *first node*, returnees were interviewed on their background in terms of their education level, languages they knew other than Arabic, the year and age in which they emigrated, and the motives for migrating. Questions on the *second node*, the immigrant life, were centralized on the arrival experience, professional experience, and on the links maintained with Lebanon during their time in the host country. The *third node* consists of returnee's post-return experience. The model views the migration cycle that has shaped the motivation of the migrant's return, which identifies whether their migration was completed, incomplete, or interrupted. The central element taken into account to determine the reintegration of returnees is the preparation to return, indicating whether migrants were willing and ready to return.

An Overview of the characteristics of Lebanese return migrants

The Lebanese return migrants, which I interviewed, include males (87.5%) and females (37.5%). Participants were divided into four categories.

1. **Voluntary returnees:** Those returnees consist of migrants who completed their migration cycle and returned to invest.
2. **Involuntary/compelled returnees:** Returnees migration cycle was interrupted due to family reasons and problems experienced in the destination country. They were forced/compelled to return.
3. **Retirees:** Returnees consist of migrants who completed their migration cycle and returned to retire.
4. **Spouses:** Spouses returned with their husbands voluntary or were compelled to return.

There are various patterns that influence the reintegration back home. In addition to the main variable (the type of return) other topics are taken into account to understand the characteristics and conditions of returnees' migration cycle. The topics are age

group, level of education, civil status, migration country, duration in the country of migration, motivation for return, and occupation status of returnees.

Voluntary returnees age group varied between 30 and up to 75 years old with the majority being retirees. Involuntary returnees contain a younger age group between 30 and 40 years old. Before emigration, 60% of returnees (mostly spouses, voluntary and involuntary) had completed university studies or masters and 40% (retirees) completed primary and secondary level. All men interviewed were not married before emigration. Upon their return, 35% of the men were married and returned with their spouses and some with their children. Whereas women were married or engaged at the time of departure and returned with their children.

Retirees had the longest duration with an average duration of 39 years in the immigration country and men returning for investment or for job opportunities had the shortest duration of 8.5 years. Spouses and involuntary returnees stayed 14 and 17 years respectively. Voluntary returnees were driven to invest in Lebanon or to seek employment. Their occupation status varied. It consisted of men establishing a business in the food and beverage domain, working in the family business, or teaching. Involuntary returnees are either unemployed, attempting to set up a business, or teaching.

Table 5 summarizes participant genders and the type of returnees.

	Type of returnee			
	Voluntary	Involuntary	Retiree	Spouse
Gender				
Female	1			5
Male	4	5	5	

Table 5. Returnees by gender and type of returnees

4.1 Voluntary returnees: Complete migration cycle

Re-turnee	Age	Sex	Age Left	Motive for leaving	C.O.I	Year of Return	Motives for returning	Status of returnee	Years in immigration country
1	30	M	20-25	Labor	KSA	3	Invest	Restaurant Owner	5 years
2	50	M	25-30	War	Canada	13	Invest	Family Business	5 years
3	55	F	30-35	Citizenship	Canada	5	Be with husband	Professor at Balamand	8 years
4	40	M	25-30	Labor	KSA	4	Invest	Coffee Shop Owner	5 years
5	50	M	25-30	Labor	Ghana	5	Invest	Catering	20 years

Table 6: Voluntary returnees characteristic

There are two types of voluntary returnees, migrants returning for retirement and migrants returning to invest in Lebanon. The characteristics of both groups vary, but their return was the same; they had decided and planned their return. In this section, findings on the return of voluntary migrants to invest in Lebanon are presented.

At the time of their emigration, interviewees completed university studies or master's level of education with a BA in Business administration, English Literature, Engineering, and an M.A. in Engineering Management. In addition, they knew a minimum of one language other than Arabic, English, French, or both.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, at the age of 20-25 (shown in table 2 above), interviewees decided to emigrate. Their motives were driven by employment, war, and citizenship. Two men describe their experience before emigration as follows:

“I was at the age where there was war. And you know, one could not leave Lebanon. So, we reached a point where one needed to find any way to leave Lebanon.” – Participant 10

“The point was that I did not think about emigrating. At all. At a certain point when my elder brother, which both of my brothers are Canadians, told me I should think about it for my children... And then in 2006, Israel attacked Lebanon. I had their files. It was chaotic in Lebanon, schools were closed, etc. So, I applied for the school, and in both, they got accepted.” – Participant 19

The two statements above were from two returnees who emigrated due to the Lebanese civil war (1990) and the Lebanese-Israeli conflict (2006). Migration was the optimal choice given the country's situation, thus prompting them to seek citizenship in Canada. None of the returnees had any information about Canada and did not know what to expect.

Labor and no opportunity for growth in Lebanon were considered to be the primary reasons for fresh graduates. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries were found to be the destination for most young graduates. One returnee refers to Tripoli as a type of community resembling a 'drug community'. By that, he means that young men like him are approached and advised by locals and migrants to try to seek employment in the Gulf. In the beginning, they may seem to be happy at the idea of having work but then with time, they began to feel the 'down affect'. At that time, their friends and acquaintances were emigrating for work. Thus, young graduates chose to emigrate because they did not want to stay in Lebanon without their friends and risk staying without a job.

Returnees in this category stayed the shortest time in the immigration country with a total average of 8 years. During their time in the immigration country, migrants planned to return after a certain period of time and after achieving their goal. One participant frequently visited Lebanon because he had a plan to invest in a restaurant. He planned to change his domain from engineering to food and beverage as soon as he returns. One man shares the following:

“ I expected to stay maximum of five years. Because I wanted to come back and do something in the country. I wanted to gain experience and capital. Because If you came back, you would have the experience and capital to work. If you don't have the experience, then no one would accept you to work. At the same time, you would be saving up on the money.” – Participant 9

As stated above, interviewees' intentions of remaining an average time of five years was to gain experience and capital and acquire citizenship. Those goals were achieved. Hence, their return, which was decided and planned, was not driven by unfavorable circumstances. Their professional career in the immigration country shifted from working in engineering, business, and education to establishing their own businesses, mainly in the food and beverage sector. The process was challenging, without knowing

the right people, having networks, or receiving any other assistance, returnees relied on themselves. Participant 9 stated the following:

“People would get encouraged to return and invest here in the country.

But if it is going this way, uncertain not knowing what will happen to them than they are taking a risk. They need to be brave and take a risk.

It is like gambling.”

In addition, stayees (those who stayed behind) did not encourage the return of migrants as they believed that remaining in the country of immigration was better suited for individuals, particularly young adults to work and to save up. Participant 9 enforced this idea by saying the following: “most of the people perceive you to be crazy. Crazy for leaving work, stability, I had a high salary and a stable income.”

Returnees can identify with returnees like them because they share similar experiences. Their circle of friends is small. They do not find the need to make new friends as they do not connect with them. Also, returnees do not feel accepted in the stayees’ social circles.

Moreover, throughout their time in destination countries, migrants created and maintained links with Tripoli through remitting money and visiting family and friends.

4.2 Return of Retirees: Complete migration cycle

Re-turnee	Age	Sex	Age Left	Motive for leaving	C.O.I	Year of Return	Motives for returning	Status of returnee	Years in C.O.I
1	70	M	20-25	Labor	Aruba	3	Retire	Investing	35 years
2	75	M	20-25	Educa-tion	USA	13	Family, not to be alone	Retired	45 years
3	75	M	20-25	War	Cura-cao	8	Health Problems, Retire	Retired	53 years
4	77	M	20-25	Labor	KSA	26	Done with responsibility	Retired	32 years
5	66	M	20-25	War	USA	10	Money problems	Retired	30 years

Table 7: Retired returnees characteristic

The second type of voluntary return is the return of retirees. Retirees are the oldest interviewees with an average age of 74 years old. All of the men interviewed completed secondary level education and were forced to interrupt their schooling due to

family-related matters and the need to work. In the years 1960s and 1970s, at the age of 20-25, interviewees decided to emigrate due to years of political instability that preceded the break out of the civil war in 1975. They left Lebanon seeking employment and/or to complete their education. They emigrated alone without any prior information of the country of destination. At that time, retirees did not expect anything other than staying a few years (four or five years) to acquire money and return, however, they ended up staying for a total average of 41 years. Participant 14 states the following:

“When I went there (United States) I expected to stay for 4 or 5 years. I ended up staying for 45 years. Why? Because I was enjoying it. And I was living very, very well.”

With their departure, migrants were advised to remain in the country of destination and not to return, as migration was considered to be the optimal option. Their intention of staying for a few years changed after they got married and had a family of their own. Interviewees did not visit Lebanon for years. Most of the returnees stayed more than ten years in the immigration country before visiting the first time. In addition, links were limited. Nonetheless, some continued remitting money to their parents and relatives and bought properties back home.

The majority of the retirees had relatives, such as brothers, uncles, or other family members in the country of destination who assisted with their accommodation and finding a job. A common characteristic found among retirees is their job experience in the country of immigration. In the beginning, they started helping their relatives and working several jobs. For instance, one common job was the ‘Kaskeh’ (carried by peddlers), loaning merchandise to customers then collecting the money. After some years, migrants in North and South America were able to establish their own company after acquiring and saving money

Those who emigrated to the United States and South America (Venezuela, Aruba, and Curacao) did not face any integration challenges with the local community as they either assimilated or adapted to the culture of the destination country. South American locals’ reception and acceptance of the Lebanese migrants helped with their integration and brought them a sense of belonging in the host country. One retiree state as follows:

“The locals are very nice. They loved foreigners and helped them. I was able to integrate. I considered them to be my second family. They accepted me.” – Participant 20

After almost 40 years living in the immigration country, in their ‘second home’ as most considered it to be, the men decided voluntarily to return to Lebanon for retirement. Returnees were happy with their decision as they missed Lebanon and wanted to be with their family. All men interviewed had purchased a house while living abroad and acquired money either to invest in a project or to save up. Many closed their companies, sold everything, or handed their business to a close relative without the intention of returning. Below, participant 4 explains how he prepared for his return:

“I had big shops and stores in Aruba, each 1200 square meters. I transferred my work to my son, but he didn't like it, he liked to work in tourism, so I closed some of my shops and rented some.” – Participant 4

Upon return, the common challenges faced were interacting with stayees and with the state. One of the challenges encountered was interacting with those left in the home-country. Retirees found them to be dishonest with a distinct mentality. One man describes his experience as follows:

“Of course, in the beginning, there are always challenges you encounter. The first person I worked with when I returned, I got shocked, yes, that lying for them is like water. I was shocked. I then considered every person that I would engage with him would be untruthful. We stepped back from people. Very much. We kept a distance.” - Participant 20

The quote stated above reveals the lack of trust retirees have towards stayees in benefiting from them -- mostly financially. Stayees expected returnees to invest in projects or other financial endeavors. Those actions were perceived as being taken advantage of for stayees’ self-interest.

The second challenge faced is corruption and bribery. Two of the five retirees interviewed undertook an investment upon their return. One returnee, in housing construction, faced multiple obstacles during the process which he was not accustomed to in his prior life. He witnessed corruption, bribery, and difficulty in dealing with government officials. Besides, the projects were expected to collect profits in three years;

however, after six years, the plan failed to make any earnings due to the difficult economic situation.

Retirees believe that Lebanon can benefit from returnee's capital, whether economically, culturally, or politically. However, they think that the government is unable to provide security for those who are willing to invest. In addition to the lack of governmental security, retirees withhold from investing because they are no longer at the age to do so. One participant commented: "When you reach a certain age, let's say 65, you retire, when you retire, you retire from investing, from working." For others, claim that investing in Lebanon is not their duty as Lebanon did not do anything for them. One man describes his beliefs as follows:

"Yes, Lebanon can benefit from it. But, to me, I worked very hard for my money. And the most important thing for me is to benefit myself and not Lebanon. I love Lebanon, that's why I live here, and that's why I returned after 45 years." – Participant 14

4.3 Involuntary returnees : Interrupted and incomplete migration cycle

Re-turnee	Age	Sex	Age Left	Motive for leaving	C.O.I	Year of Return	Motives for re-turning	Status of returnee	Years in C.O.I
1	36	M	25-30	Labor	Dubai	3	Economic situation deteriorating	Unemployed/wants to invest	9.5 years
2	50	M	20-25	War	KSA	3	Economic situation deteriorating	Unemployed/wants to invest	36 years
3	40	M	25-30	Citizenship	Canada	3	Family health problems	Teacher	9 years
4	60	M	20-25	Labor	KSA	3	Economic situation deteriorating	Setting up business	30 years
5	31	M	25-30	Change life	Spain	4	Family health problems	Architect	3 years

Table 8: Involuntary returnees characteristic

Involuntary returnees' characteristics vary. At the time of the interview, returnees include men from all age groups, the youngest being 31 years and the oldest being 60 years old. However, at the time of emigration, participants were from the same age group, 20-30 years old with the motive being employment, war, citizenship, or self-discovery. All men, before emigration, had completed university studies or master's education with degrees in Management Information System, Linguistic, Engineering, or Architecture.

The group consists of two subgroups — participants that emigrated in the early to mid-2000s, and others that emigrated in the 1970s and 80s. For clarification purposes, ‘Group A’ is addressed to the former returnees and ‘Group B’ to the latter. Group A (emigrated in the 2000s) remained in the immigration country for less than ten years; in contrast, Group B (emigrated in the 70s and 80s) stayed less than 35 years. Each of the subgroups’ lifestyle before emigration differed. Two men describe their life before emigration as follows:

“We were students...I had a good social life. I used to go out a lot, used to have many friends. I spent a lot of time between Beirut and Tripoli and Jbeil. Hanging out with friends, going out. Socializing, having fun.” – Participant 2

“I lived two years during the civil war. I was a militia member.” – Participant 11

The above transcriptions from each subgroup demonstrate returnees’ way of spending their time. Some were students and others took part in the war and worked before migration. Subgroup A had a more relaxed, carefree life as students who enjoyed their time with their friends while subgroup B was living during the civil war. Thus, their motives for emigration were mainly for security reasons. For example, one of the participants was an activist during the civil war. His relatives forced him out of the country to seek an alternative life in the United States.

North America (Canada and the United States) and the Gulf (Saudi Arabia and Dubai) were the choices for the country of immigration. It was by default that upon graduation, students emigrated with the purpose to seek employment in the Gulf because, as one of the interviewees mentions, “there were no opportunity for growth in Lebanon.” Young fresh graduates were concerned with changing their lives for the better or with seeking room for growth in the immigration country. Three men share their intention of staying in the immigration country as follows:

“I was hoping actually to find my place within the French Society. Let's say on a personal level to find a group of people with whom I can get along. I failed.” – Participant 13

“I intended to stay for my masters, two years, and return. I finished my masters. I returned. It was not good to get back at this time. It was not good for myself. I didn't mature enough in the city. I didn't mature

enough from the experience of living abroad. I was expecting to live the life that I always wanted to live which is irregular in a way.” — Participant 18

“I wanted to work first, and I planned to work for a few years, gain some experience, and make field experience, as you would like to call it, and then look into pursuing my master’s degree. I was focused mostly on my career and on what I wanted to do next. Because, as I told you I was a fresh graduate.” — Participant 2

All three quotes above indicate migrants’ hope, intention, and plan during their migration. It is observed that some were on the quest for self-discovery, exploring a different way of lifestyle, and gaining experience. Each of the goals were anticipated to be accomplished in an average period of four years. The aspirations came from migrants in subgroup A, thus, they were excited and hopeful. Subgroup B migrants shared an alternative view, accumulating money and ensuring survival. The reason for their choice was due to the political instability and lack of security that was occurring during their time before migration. One interviewee was not too happy with leaving because he wanted to remain in Lebanon to “become part of the construction of the country” (Participant 11) during the civil war.

Table 9: Involuntary returnees arrival experience in Immigration Country

Country	Arrival Experience
Saudi Arabia	Reality Check
Abu Dhabi	Similar to Lebanon/ Normal Lifestyle
Canada	Positive/Comfortable
United States	
Spain	Positive/Comfortable
France	

Table 9 indicates migrant's experience upon arrival in North America, The Gulf, and Europe. Saudi Arabia, to some migrants, was not considered to be a foreign country. Engaging with the Lebanese community at work and in the residential compound created a familiar feeling to their life in Lebanon. The integration experience in Abu Dhabi differed. It took one interviewer a while to adapt because he was out of his comfort zone, away from his social circle. He was exposed to many cultures in Abu Dhabi. One man describes his arrival experience as follow:

“The experience was kind of a cultural shock at first and a reality check as well. So, yeah, it was uncharted water, and I was learning all over again how to adapt, how to talk to people. I didn’t know anything about that, the real world and to understand different cultures.” – Participant 2

Arrival experience in the United States, Canada, and Spain was positive and seen to be comfortable. Participants who emigrated with motives for self-discovery or labor were excited and hopeful. They were able to integrate with various cultures they were exposed to. Also, North American and European locals were more welcoming. This helped migrants with their integration and created a feeling of belonging as opposed to migrant’s integration in Saudi Arabia. Below a returnee shares his experience as follows:

“Totally. I loved the fact that the people are kind, independent, and more aware of their acts, you know. They don’t have to fake things in front of people. They are just the way they are. And at the same time, they are super balanced in a way.” -Participant 18

The professional occupation of migrants in the Gulf differed than those who emigrated to North America and Europe. According to the research findings, one interviewee worked as an assistant professor while undertaking his PhD at the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia, and the other interviewee held a position of a real-time analyst for a call center in Canada. However, labor demand in the Gulf requested young Lebanese graduates and professionals to apply for positions with backgrounds in engineering, construction, and IT management in oil and gas.

Work life in the Gulf differed from that in North America and Europe. Migrants’ daily lives in the Gulf consisted mostly of working yearlong with limited vacation time. The strict labor policies and laws affected the links maintained with Lebanon. With the start of their jobs, labor workers in the first year were not given permission to leave the host country. Two men share their experience as follows:

“The employment laws there means when you work, when you start a new job, you have a probation period between 3 to 6 months, so between these times you can’t leave, and it’s actually up until a year that they permit you to travel..”

– Participant 2

“We were allowed to come only once a year and for a one-month vacation. So, I used to comply with the rules.” – Participant 11

After the first year, participants visited Lebanon once or twice a year to see family, mostly on short trips, longest being two weeks, 14 days with the weekend. The laws in the UAE allowed labor workers to take 21 working days of the annual calendar. With the holidays, participants stayed longer by linking the weekends with their days off to get a more extended vacation and save up on holidays. When not visiting Lebanon, participants helped create and were involved in Lebanese organizations and communities abroad. The motive was the inability to move much with the limitations of traveling to Lebanon and the choices available in Saudi Arabia. Also, being part of the Lebanese network in Saudi Arabia was seen as something natural to take part in. One man describes his experience as follows:

“Yes, there was. A big one. Yes, of course. We were in contact with the embassy, and we were involved in all the activities. In the last ten years, there were a lot of occasions, such as Independence Day, Hariri, we used to hold dinner or lunch.”

– Participant 16

The sentiment to be part of the Lebanese network in Spain did not coincide with one migrant. He mentions during his time in Spain that he did not know of any Lebanese organizations, but he did find a large Lebanese community. However, he did not find the need to get involved with the community as he considered it to be corrupt.

“If you do it here or if you do it there, it has its issues. You do bind in a way. You try not to create another community there because you would lose the experience of getting to know other cultures.” – Participant 18

The economic situation’s deterioration in the immigration country was one motive for migrants’ return. For the Gulf migrants, companies in Saudi Arabia began to lose contracts and also faced some economic issues leading to unpaid salaries for almost one whole year. Due to the financial situation, companies were restructuring and had to downsize letting its employees, who served for years, go. Also, Saudi Arabia began imposing taxes and constraints on foreigners. Migrants were no longer able to save money, construction companies owned by Lebanese migrants no longer received projects, and the country started to become expensive. Due to the oil crisis, one migrant

case in Abu Dhabi was also forced/compelled to return because his company was closing. The laws and regulation of the UAE did not permit a person without a work visa and a sponsor to stay. Hence, without having a choice, he returned unwillingly.

Involuntary returnees' migration process was interrupted. As a result, their goal was not met. Those who had lived in the Gulf for more than ten years and up to 36 years considered the country to be their home. Interviewees were not ready to return because they had a life there, and some had the plan to stay until retirement. However, with the political conflict in the region and restrictions and constraint on the Lebanese in the Gulf, the return was the only alternative. One man shares his unplanned return to Lebanon as follows:

"36 years in Riyadh... My wife came before me in June. I stayed behind to pack and sell what I needed to sell. I had a plan at the age of 61 or 62; now I am now 61. I had a plan to return once my financial situation in Riyadh is well and after I buy a house in Lebanon because I didn't want to stay all my life there (Riyadh) But, of course I returned and it was not planned. I had a plan to come after two years, but I came two years before my initial plan." – Participant 11

The returnee was able to stay behind to arrange his belongings of 36 years in the immigration country. However, one of the returnees interviewed did not have the same chance. He shares his intention of staying in Lebanon as follows:

"Well, when I came back to Lebanon, I was only coming back for a short period because before I came back, I found a job and I signed a job offer although it wasn't the perfect position for me or the perfect paycheck, it was much less than I was getting. I just wanted to stay in UAE, I did, I signed the job offer because I wanted to keep my residency, and at that time, nine years down the line I had a car, loans, you know I had a life there. I was... I wasn't ready to give it up just yet."

– Participant 2

Returning involuntarily caused one interviewee to feel that he wasted his time. As he comments, "I would say that I wish that I never emigrated. I wish I had waited a few years and continued here. Because, in the end, the work and effort that you experience and do abroad are not yours." Returnees had to start new in a market that they had been

cut off for years, and they were required to reintroduce themselves at the beginning again; especially since they planned to stay indefinitely.

Family health problems in Lebanon was the second motive for migrants returning from Canada and Spain. Migrants from both countries were compelled to interrupt the migration experience to be next to family and offer support. One man describes the motive for his return as follows:

“It was because of my family they insisted too much for me to come. I had to stay in a way to support my brother because he was very young, my father couldn’t follow up with my brother. And, things were getting out of control because my dad was very in control of everything and when he had his health problem things started to get loose.” – Participant 18

Returnees were not pleased with the feeling of a sense of hopelessness with no expectations. The aim they aspired to accomplish was for self-discovery. However, the life they set out was not met. Returning after a short stay in the immigration country, Lebanese returnees intended to stay for a brief time with the aim to re-emigrate. However, they remained in Lebanon.

The return was hard as they all faced several challenges. Challenges for both groups included old friends not around, corrupted state, mafia, and no order. All returnees mentioned corruption upon settling back into the country. One interviewee dealt with corruption while working on official paperwork at the Seray (Lebanon’s administration building). None of the returnees had in mind to be employed, instead, they planned to establish their own company/business. One returnee founded his own business in the construction sector but commented on the challenges faced due to corruption. One man describes the mafia and corruption below:

“Mafia and corruption are found in the country. Meaning, certain people are taking the jobs, whereas the others are not. Even if they do take some jobs, the price would be very little.” – Participant 16

In addition, because the financial situation of the country was not promising, stayees and the wives of returnees (those who were married) were not encouraged invest, rather men were told to wait before investing. For example, one returnee shared his wife’s opinion on investing their savings during the country’s economic situation. He comments, “...she thinks more than me because she is more cautious in terms of

money. So, she said to take my time, be patient.” Thus, the returnee is taking his time as he observes the market until he is ready to invest his money.

The main measures necessary to encourage migrants in undertaking any investment is assistance, such as having a group or organization that would facilitate returnees’ admission into the system and their means of communicating with the stayees and stakeholders. Another returnee believes that the country will not be of assistance. His suggested solution is to find someone that will facilitate the integration process due to the lack of trust in the government. One man describes his perception on the government below:

“The government is a hopeless case. I tried to access the government, and I saw the corruption. I tried the municipal position, but I saw all the corruption that people have, a lot of schedules, a lot of to-do lists. In the end, we all know that nothing is going to happen from this to-do list. You understand that the system is so corrupted you cannot do anything if you are in the system.” – Participant 18

4.4 Return of Spouses: Complete, interrupted and incomplete migration cycle

Re-turnee	Age	Sex	Age Left	Motive for leaving	C.O.I	Year of Return	Motives for returning	Status of returnee	Years in C.O.I
1	40	F	20-25	Marriage	USA	4	Family reasons	Works with husband	21 years
2	40	F	20-25	Marriage	Canada	4	Family reasons	Housewife	13 years
3	50	F	20-25	Marriage	KSA	3	Husband’s work	Housewife	30 years
4	36	F	20-25	Marriage, Children	KSA	5	Husband’s work	Housewife	5 years
5	31	F	20-25	Marriage	KSA	3	Husband’s work	Housewife	5 years

Table 10: Spouses returnees characteristic

The return of spouses consists of women who accompanied their husband or returned alone with their children due to a decision taken together with their spouse.

Before departure, the women interviewed were enrolled at a university but decided to stop their academic life to get married. Most of them were in their last year of university studying Law, Interior Architect, and Interior Design. One woman described her experience as follows:

“I was 19, 20 years old. I had one or two years left to finish university. I didn’t complete my university. My destiny came, and this is how things went and we left.” – Participant 12

Young women mostly spent their time as students, living a happy, comfortable, and conservative lifestyle. In that period, the concern was mainly getting married when the ‘right’ man presented himself for marriage, rather than completing education. “Education at that time was not as important as it is today,” one woman commented. As the marriage took place, they emigrated to follow their husband which they expected to stay a couple of years.

As shown in table 8, the countries of immigration included the United States, Canada, and Saudi Arabia. None of the women interviewed had any information about the country of destination, nevertheless, all expressed a feeling of excitement and concern with their new life as a newlywed in a new country. Most of the accommodations were arranged before spouses’ arrival as their husbands were already living in the country of immigration. One woman describes her experience as follows:

“What was nice was that Jamil (husband) had his friends there. So, we had a group, us women, and they made it easier for us. People who were there before us and were there for a much longer time. They used to teach me how to behave/act, how I can’t laugh in the supermarket the way I do.” – Participant 12

Locals in Saudi Arabia were not welcoming to the immigrant group. Saudi locals made them feel as if they were guests and in need of them. The quote below from participant 15 addressed how the Saudi locals treated them as follows:

“Wherever I went to the mall, cafe, wherever, they used to stare at you as if you came to occupy their country. Like stare at you saying who are you? Especially when you are standing in queue, even if you are standing before here, she goes before because she is in her country. They used to see us as less than foreigners. They stared at you like you are nothing.” – Participant 15

Hence, interviewees bonded mostly with the Lebanese community within their residential compound or at the school they worked at, consisting of only Lebanese teachers. Contrastingly, the American and Canadian locals were more accepting and welcoming to the new immigrants. One participant shares her arrival experience as follows:

" I was shocked when once I was walking in the mall, I mean in the grocery store, I saw someone as I was pushing the cart; he was coming towards me and smiled. I thought what was going on. I wasn't used to this in Lebanon unfortunately. And then after, I saw a woman also smiling at me. The people are like this, although they don't know me, they are like this naturally. Their nature is to give you a push. Like, when I used to talk with someone (in English), I used to excuse myself that my English was broken. They used to say 'No, you are doing great. You are fine.' I mean very friendly. They are very lovely." – Participant 7

Working in the immigration country for some was limited due to the professional availability and maintaining their household chores. Professions, such as teaching or tutoring, were only available for those in Saudi Arabia. Others, in North America, had different professions. One participant worked alongside her husband where she took orders at their restaurant. For another participant, establishing her own interior design company was not feasible. Thus, she worked 'under the table' for a company, meaning the salary payment slip was not under her name. It came under her husband's name as if he was the one who did the job. Below, participant 7 shares the difficulty of living in the United States in terms of taking care of the children and household chores without any help.

"I had two children, boy and a girl, so as I told you, he was diabetic so I couldn't do much. My husband didn't want me to work. Life in the States is not that easy. You need to go and get your things. Although I was lucky enough that it was a small town and I didn't need to drive. So, he didn't want me to work nor did I want to work. But I used to help him around at the restaurant." – Participant 7

Moreover, she was unable to work because she had to follow up with her son's injection shot every two hours. Similarly, another interviewee struggled with continuing

her master's in interior design because the graduate classes were in the afternoon. She was unable to leave her children in the care of someone who is not family. It is worth noting that this would be hardly the case in Lebanon. Living in Lebanon, women have easy access to domestic help and can seek assistance from extended family members. For example, grandparents could babysit the children while mothers go to work or attend classes.

As spouses followed their husbands for work purposes in the new country, their return was in the same matter. Not all were happy with the decision of return as it was somehow compelled/forced. For example, a returnee from Saudi Arabia experienced sadness because her goal was not met, and the decision to return was taken due to the socio-economic problem her husband faced. One woman described her feelings as follows:

“We were packed to leave for Jeddah, not to Lebanon. I was coming for vacation. We had everything packed and the house to emigrate to Jeddah. Then my husband tells me that there are a lot of taxes, so think about it...My husband stayed behind. But my kids if you ask them where they want to be, they will say we want to go back. At least for vacation. As for the tax for each person was 100 Riyal (26 USD), then next year 200 Riyal (53 USD), then 300 (79 USD), then 400 Riyal (106 USD). Imagine if you have four kids. It is impossible. Whatever you are earning, you are spending. This is when my husband told me it is not worth paying this.” - Participant 15

Generally, the economic deterioration in Saudi Arabia compelled migrants to return since it became relatively expensive to stay in and save money while many were also losing their jobs. As a result, spouses were bound to return with their children while the husband remained in the immigration country or the entire family returned together. The collected data below demonstrates the difference between the feelings of a voluntary and involuntary/compelled return spouse before arrival.

The Saudi Arabia return spouse:

“ When I was at the airport, I teared up and felt this is the last time I will be here (Saudi Arabia). I even said goodbye to every tree that was on the road.”

The US return spouse:

“ I never lost this feeling (returning to Lebanon). On the contrary, this was the only thing that made me want to come back. The feeling of being in my country. I wouldn’t trade this feeling for anything.”

The differences between the two return spouses indicate their feelings before arrival: as one spouse is sad to leave her husband in Saudi Arabia while she returns alone with their children; the other spouse is excited and happy to return with her husband after reaching their desired goal.

All spouses upon arrival experienced similar challenges which included difficulty dealing with the people who stayed behind (stayees), the difference of mentality, and engaging with dishonest and judgmental people. Spouses consider themselves to be ‘straight to the point and honest’ while stayees are not. Second, while in the immigration country, migrants became used to living a private life. With their return, spouses complained about the interference of relatives and friends in personal matters.

“When I was living abroad, I got used to living alone. This solitude about not having people know about your affairs. No one knows anything about me, and I don’t want to know anything about anyone because everyone has their own privacy.” – Participant 8

Words like the gap in mentality, snobs, and money-oriented, were expressed by voluntary returnees towards reintegrating with family and friends again. “There was a gap. You feel, not that they are wrong, and I am right, but there was a gap” (Participant 7). Returnees were able to connect with returnees like them who had same experience. Participant 12 comments, “I can relate with them because we have the same worries and the same things we can talk about. Here they see the migrant as someone who is a snob, who comes from another place and such.”

Returnees faced challenges with their reintegration in Tripoli. They struggled with adapting to the country’s chaos and lack of order, and they experienced negative responses when in contact with stayees. Interviewees were skeptical of people’s intentions toward them. One of the participants mentioned that stayees wanted to “discover and get to know you to see what is good and how to take news from you” (Participant 8)

Based on the findings, the lives of spouses are centralized around their family and household chores. Their transnational links were stronger than men as they visited Lebanon frequently and stayed longer with their children during holidays and vacations. Despite their level of preparedness, women's self-identification was oriented toward both countries. The quote below confirms Kuschminder (2014) on the "notion of 'home' having multiple meanings to an individual." One spouse explains her multiple feelings of home by sharing the following:

"I feel of course I am Lebanese. I lived abroad in Saudi, so there is a part of me there. I don't know. To be honest, I don't know (Laughing). I have mixed feelings. I don't know. I love it here and I love it there."
– Participant 15

"I am Lebanese. 100% Lebanese. Even my sons ask me why I made him live here, that he is American. I tell him you are half American. But your origins are Lebanese. I am Lebanese. I did not leave my identity, no one is better than me."

When it comes to returnee spouses working or investing, all except for one was unemployed. One spouse works with her husband in the food and beverage business. As for others, reasons for not investing or opening a store in Tripoli are due to lack of assistance, connection, the opportunity for work, and security. As one participant comments:

"So, this is the difficulty. I was approached to open a chocolate store, but I don't have the connection for it to do well. So, this is the key thing, connection plays a big role. It is the most important thing." – Participant 8

One interior designer interviewee explains that as a returnee, who does not have connections, it is difficult to find a job and to have a private business succeed. However, in her opinion, for a business/investment to succeed one is obligated to follow or befriend certain people in the society who have influence and connections— something that she was unable to do.

Lack of security hinders returnees' investment of their savings, especially forced returnees, without a secured income to rely on. This makes taking a risk more difficult.

One spouse explains, “but currently, in this situation, no one has the guts to invest.” Another states, “they (returnees) don’t have the guts to invest. Not be afraid if they want to invest and think that they might lose money. We need safety and security.”

4.5 Conclusion

For this Lebanese research case study, the structure of the interview was influenced by Cassarino (2004). The findings of this study demonstrated the migration lifecycle of participants within the four categories of return. The importance of the migration lifecycle was to highlight the experience of Lebanese migrants throughout their three migratory phases to understand their return process to Lebanon and allow us to understand how Lebanese returnees reintegrate and why some reintegrate better than others. The main themes in the findings were the context of the migrant in the home country, the integration opportunities and experience in the migration country, the factors influencing migrant’s return, and migrant’s return preparedness. Thus, the variables in the migrant’s lifecycle determine the reintegration experience of returnees and their ability to act as agents of change. In the following chapter, the findings will be analyzed to examine the reintegration strategies of each return group and their role as agents of change in Tripoli.

Chapter Five

Return migration is not the end of the migration cycle, rather it is another step in the migration process (Cassarino, 2015; De Haas, 2010).

Analysis: Lebanese return migrants' reintegration

The primary purpose of this research was to investigate the motives of Lebanese migrants' return and their post return experience. This section presents the analysis of the research findings on the Lebanese return migrants to confirm or disprove the theories and studies by Cassarino (2008), Kuschminder (2014), De Haas (2010), and Sussman (2010), and whether their findings are in concordance with the result in this case study.

The first section gives a brief summary to reintroduce the theories on return and reintegration. The theories are based on research done by Cassarino's study on the return migrants to the Maghreb (Northern Africa), Kuchminder's reintegration strategy study of female return migrants to Ethiopia, De Haas et al. on the post-return experiences and transnational belonging of return migrants, and Sussman's Culture Identity Model. The second section analyzes the migration cycle of each categories, their reintegration strategies, and their role as agents of change.

5.1 Considering Cassarino

Cassarino's (2008) study examines the migration cycle that shapes returnees' reintegration and their contribution to development in the country of origin. To understand the pattern of reintegration, his questionnaire consists of three main elements which are: the context in the migration home country before departure; the duration and type of experience abroad; and factors and conditions influencing migrant's return. This is the model applied in the previous chapter. According to this scholar, two key variables in determining migrant's reintegration are the *choice of return*, whether the return was decided or compelled by unfavorable circumstances; and the *level of preparedness*, consisting of a migrant's willingness and readiness to return.

Cassarino divides the types of return into two categories- voluntary return (consisting of migrants who chose to return to their country of origin for either a temporary or

permanent time) and compelled return (due to unfavorable circumstances in the host country or due to other motives).

In addition, migrants' preparation for' return (the process of gathering the necessary resources and information to support the return and to facilitate with their reintegration) is essential component for successful reintegration. Cassarino's 'level of preparedness' states that returnees who have completed their migration cycle are found to be voluntary returnees because their return was highly organized and based on accumulating the necessary resources needed to transfer to the origin country. Thus, returnees in this category have achieved their desired goal that was set before departure. Furthermore, migrants in the category of incomplete and interrupted migration are less inclined to invest and may have difficulties with their reintegration.

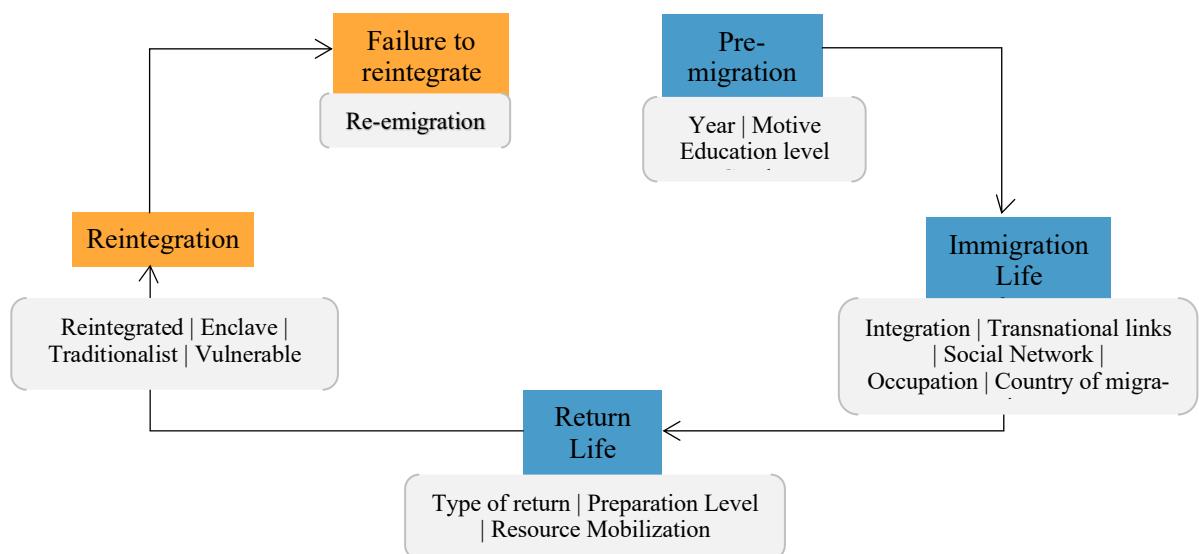


Figure 1: Cassarino's Migration life cycle

Cassarino (2004) posits “the interrelationship between the completeness of the migration cycle and the level of return preparedness is contingent on willingness and readiness to return”. As shown in the figure above, the migration cycle consists of three interrelated main elements (highlighted in blue); the conditions of a migrant’s life in the home country; the migration experience abroad; and the conditions of their return which includes their level of preparation. Thus, the various variables come together to influence returnees’ strategies of reintegration, however, the failure to reintegrate may result in their re-emigration.

All aspects in one phase of the cycle will influence the outcome in the next phase of the cycle. The life before emigration influences the experience and opportunities a migrant may have during the second phase. The starting point for every migrant differs. Lebanese migrants emigrated during different periods, and for multiple reasons. In addition, there are other variables such as gender, country of immigration, the expected time duration that affects a migrant's integration in the host country, and their transnational activities with their home country. Through integration, it is implied that individuals 'find their place' in the destination country while they maintain their norms (De Haas et al., 2010). In addition, integration or the failure to integrate into the host country may result in return (Ammassari, 2009). Thus, the success or failure of integration may influence returnee's reintegration process back in the home land. As Cassarino (2004) explains, a migrant's integration, including their occupational status, in the host country is one of the factors influencing returnees investing in the country of origin.

Based on interviews with our population sample we observed that the lifecycle of women emigrating with their husbands differs from men emigrating for work and seeking better living conditions abroad. Women intended to stay a short duration of four or five years while most men expected to stay longer. The intention to stay affected their integration in the host society and transnational activities with their home country. One participant describes her experience as follows:

“Although I had in mind that I was staying five years and returning to Lebanon. I didn't even learn English. Basically, I was at home the whole time, I was watching ART (Lebanese Channel). My children were still young, and I did not see the need to engage with the teachers. The idea was four or five years and, in the end, return to our country with our children.” – Participant 7

The quote above describes how one woman did not find the need to integrate into the host country by learning the language or by engaging with locals as she had in mind to stay for a short time. Instead, she maintained ties with Lebanon by engaging in transnational practices.

The emigration of spouses therefore was significantly different from men in that they did not pursue their education, starting a career, and struggling to integrate with the locals. Their sense of belonging remained to be oriented towards their country of origin. Aside from bonding with the Lebanese community in the immigration country,

spouses' transnational activities mostly consisted of visiting Lebanon frequently (some twice a year, depending on their children's vacation days), phone calls with their relatives, Skyping, watching Lebanese news and TV shows, cooking traditional home cuisine, speaking Arabic with their children, and their social ties were focused mostly on their husbands and children. This confirms Levitt et al. (2007) underlining the maintenance of transnational relations, finding a correlation between expectations of temporary stay with tight connections to the homeland.

According to the CRIS study (Cassarino, 2014), mentioned in the literature review, the role of women changes as she departs with her spouse. His study claims that migration typically results in overturning the traditional labor division prevalent in migration country ; turning traditional housewives into participants in the labor market. My findings show that this is not always the case. The country of emigration is a factor in women ability to adopt other roles such as entering the labor market. Women in Saudi Arabia worked as teachers or tutors. These occupations were the only available choices for women who wanted to work. Whereas, women who emigrated to North America found it challenging to work since they had no caretakers to look after their children. Those who were not able to work in their new country, were left alone at home while their husbands went to work long hours. One participant stated the following:

“You feel like why am I here? What am I doing? Like they come home from work just to eat and sleep. For example, like he comes from work at 10 and wants to sleep right away. This is something that becomes irritating. There, work has no time. All that time I sat alone. I had my baby girl to pass the time.” – Participant 6

This confirms De Haas' (2004) observation “the way these women define their ‘home’ is relatively independent of space or national boundaries and more focused on family relations.” Thus, their lives were centered around their home, children, and spouses.

The conclusion that can be drawn from my findings is that spouses' integration in the new country was seen to be challenging in the beginning in all cases more than the men. Men who were driven by war, employment, citizenship or self-discovery, did not have challenges with their integration in the host country where the economy was much better and provided many positive changes. Some of these men intended to stay more than five years while others did not have a specific time limit to their migration timeline. Their return depended on achieving their goals, which were to gain capital,

experience, and skills. All men in our sample interviewed emigrated single. Those who had a relative, friend, or acquaintance residing in the host country received assistance with their accommodation and integration. Migrants were given the basic tips on how to start their new life, to get a job, and to get settled in. This helped in the transition and made their arrival experience bearable although they faced minor challenges.

Men were integrated professionally as they were either employed or self-employed and socializing abroad. Men working in Saudi Arabia became part of the Lebanese community easily as the companies they worked for as well as their colleagues often were Lebanese. However, migrants who chose to emigrate to Spain, Canada, United States, and Dubai, integrated mostly with the locals rather than with the Lebanese community. Overall men integrated either with the locals, other nationals, co-nationals, or with all and had limited transitional links with Lebanon. Various factors affected men's ties with their home country. Such factors include the proximity of the country of immigration, the period of migration, lack of communication technology, and employment laws and -conditions regarding vacation days. This supports previous findings in the literature on the pre-migration phase influencing the migration experiences and opportunities in the destination country.

Cassarino's third cycle (return migration) underlines the importance of the level of preparation of returnees, as it is this factor which shapes returnees' patterns of reintegration. The elements of preparation are the willingness and readiness to return and the mobilization of migrant's resources (Cassarino, 2004; Kuschminder , 2014). Our findings demonstrate that men returning for retirement, socioeconomic reasons, and women returning to be with their husbands were ready and willing to return which meant they had a high-level of preparation. Whereas, men and women returning due to experiencing problems in the destination country were not ready and returned unwillingly had a low level to no preparation. They returned involuntarily without reaching their migration objectives. This supports previous findings in the literature on a returnee's preparedness to be either a voluntary act with a complete migration cycle or with no preparedness which results in an involuntary act with an interrupted and incomplete migration cycle (Cassarino, 2014).

Confirming Cassarino's findings, our results clearly show that returnees with a complete migration cycle and a high level of preparedness had no difficulties reintegrating back home, as compared to migrants whose migration cycle was interrupted or incomplete.

The findings demonstrate that men who voluntary returned were employed and had jobs while involuntary returnees were unemployed on their return back to Lebanon. From my sample, all voluntary returnees who returned for socioeconomic reasons (after a stay of a minimum of five years) either invested in, or went to work in, the family business. Their high level of preparedness allowed them to gather the necessary tangible and intangible resources to be mobilized. Thus, they had the time to consider, organize, and prepare for their return. The findings do not support entirely that the optimal reintegration should be when long migration duration and favorable motivations to return are met (Cassarino, 2014). When analyzing their reintegration, my findings were the various qualities making up the migration experience outweigh the migration duration. In fact, migrants returning to invest had the shortest migration experience. (In this discussion of work- related reintegration of voluntary-well prepared returnees, retirees were excluded, as their objective is non-economic by nature and their motive for return is to retire and not to invest).

Those in my sample who were compelled to return, are currently either working as a teacher, working freelance, attempting to set up a business, or unemployed. They had longer experiences in the immigration country causing them not only to integrate better in the immigration country but also become further estranged with their home country. With an incomplete and interrupted migration cycle caused by involuntary return their problems of return are compounded. These returnees are likely to experience difficulties reintegrating in the labor sector. They were unable to find jobs and those who wanted to start their own business refrained from doing so. These observations confirm findings by Cassarino (2004) and De Haas et al. (2010). As highlighted in the literature review, returnees, driven by a negative push and having no agency in their return-decision making process, find it difficult to reintegrate and are more likely to be unemployed and unable to succeed professionally.

The post-return condition in the country of origin also determines the success of returnees' reintegration (Cassarino, 2014). Two perspectives are prevalent when considering the home countries conduciveness to returnees – economic and social conditions (Kuschminder , 2014 cites Gmelch, 1980). Failing to readapt could result in migrants considering re-emigrating. Economic conditions in Lebanon have differed wildly causing very different reintegration trajectories (and again causing new generations to consider emigrating).

However, socially conditions play an equally important role in determining reintegration and often an unexpected and problematic one. Based on my findings, it is clear that all returnees interviewed, regardless of their level of preparedness, encountered challenges readjusting socially to Tripoli. Returnees found it difficult to connect with their friends and relatives who stayed behind as they considered them to have a different way of thinking and little in common. All those interviewed felt that they were able to connect with other returnees better than with stayees.

Overall, considering our findings against Cassarino model, we consider the Tripoli case study to all but mostly confirm Cassarino's conclusion on the willingness to return and level of preparedness to be the key elements when examining the success of returnee's reintegration.

5.2 Considering Kuschminder

“ Reintegration can be defined as the “process through which a return migrant participates in the social, cultural, economic, and political life in the country of origin” (Cassarino, 2008; Kuschminder , 2014).

Kuschminder develops more the research on return migration and reintegration by addressing a new approach she terms as ‘reintegration strategies.’ The strategy is influenced by Cassarino’s elements on the type of return and the level of preparedness. According to Kuschminder , returnees are not to be considered as a homogenous group when analyzing their reintegration in the country of origin. Her new approach takes into account how returnees reintegrate across four dimensions which are culture, social network, self-identification, and access to rights and labor market (Kuschminder , 2014). To her the debate is not whether return migrants reintegrate or not, but rather how. According to Kuschminder’s multidimensional framework, individuals reintegrate very differently in the form of being simply ‘reintegrated’, staying in an ‘enclave’, becoming ‘traditionalist’, or becoming ‘vulnerable’. In addition, for Kuschminder , returnees’ reintegration is affected by the structural and cultural environment of the home country. This relates to how the government, local population, and the labor market institutions shape the arrival of returnees.

Table 2 below shows the Reintegration Strategies as the framework for analyzing how returnees reintegrate across the four dimensions.

Table 11 : Kuschminder 's Reintegration Strategies: Framework for Analysis

Dimen-sions	Reintegrated	Enclave	Traditionalist	Vulnerable
Return Migrant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abroad for longer duration - Decided return - High return preparedness - Economic Success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abroad for longer duration - Decided return - High return preparedness Economic Success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abroad for shorter duration - Decided return - Medium return preparedness Economic Stability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abroad for shorter duration - Forced return - No return preparedness Economic Vulnerable
Cultural	Value both culture of origin and host	Value the culture of host	Value the culture of origin	Rejection of culture of host & Rejection from dominant society in country or origin
Social Network	Locals, returnees and cross border ties	Returnees and cross border ties	Locals	Ties to kin and other vulnerable groups
Self-Identification	Transnational	Transnational	Unidirectional	Unidirectional
Access to rights and labor market	Limited or full access to rights in country of origin	Limited access to rights in country of origin	Full access to key institutions in country of origin	Full access to key institutions in country of origin

We will now analyze our four categories (voluntary, involuntary, retirees, and spouse) against Kuschminder 's four reintegration strategies.

5.2.1 Reintegrated – only retirees

My findings demonstrate that retirees are the only group that can be considered as 'reintegrated' (according to Kuschminder 's definition) in Lebanon. Returnees in this group stayed an average of 39 years in the immigration country, had a complete migration cycle with high-level preparation, and economic success and wealth. This confirms Kuschminder 's definition of the first strategy termed 'reintegrated.' As indicated by Kuschminder (2014), a reintegrated returnee is one that reintegrates across all four dimensions. As illustrated in the table below, reintegrated retirees reintegrate in all dimensions except for one.

The table below summarized and highlights the retirees' reintegration across the dimensions.

Table 12 : Tripoli Case study findings on ‘reintegrated’ returnees across the four dimensions of Kuschminder

Type of migrant	Dimensions			
	Cultural Orientation	Social Network	Self-Identification	Access to right and labor market
Retirees	Value both Lebanese culture and destination <i>(Reintegrated)</i>	Locals, returnees and cross border ties <i>(Reintegrated)</i>	Unidirectional origin <i>(Traditionalist)</i>	Limited or full access to rights in country of origin <i>(Reintegrated)</i>

Culture orientation of ‘reintegrated’ returnees

Retirees (male), having lived the longest duration in the country of immigration, were integrated and assimilated well in the country of destination. During their time abroad, men had very limited contact with Lebanon and attempted to integrate in the country of migration. Two participants share their experience by stating the following:

“I was happy the way I was. They say in the United States, when in Rome do as the Romans. I was in America, so I did like the Americans. So, I forgot Lebanon.” – Participant 14

“When I am in Curacao, I consider myself from there, when I am here, I consider myself Lebanese.” – Participant 17

It is evident from the transcriptions above that retirees, during their time abroad, were assimilated to the cultural ways of the immigration country. In addition, another factor influencing their practice of maintenance of the culture of the home country (Kuschminder uses the term cultural maintenance) is the proximity of the country of immigration. My findings show it was harder for those who emigrated to North and South America to keep close ties with Lebanon by either visiting or by calling, compared to those whom emigrated to the Gulf. Although retirees integrated successfully into the culture of the country of immigration, upon their return, they valued both cultures -- home and destination. Our data confirm Kuschminder’s findings on return migrants’ maintaining and valuing both cultures (in our data set, only retirees qualify for this category).

Aspects of Lebanese culture valued by retirees in my sample were: the advantage of having family, friends, and access to medical assistance. This is also shared with the findings by other scholars as well (Ammassari, 2009; Kuschminder , 2014). One retiree explains the reason he values Lebanon's culture below:

"After years I decided I was fed up [...]. I decided to come back to Lebanon because of the advantage of having a family, brother, sister and other relatives, so I did that. And I thought after coming back that I made a good decision." – Participant 14

Self-Identification of 'reintegrated' returnees

All retirees in my sample identified themselves as Lebanese. One retiree shares the following: "of course, I am Lebanese. This is my country. No matter how much I left, I want to return here because I am attached to my country." Thus, they always had the sentiment that Lebanon would be their country despite their long stay abroad. This finding contrast with Kushmider's thought on the identity of returnees as being transnational or belonging simultaneously to both countries. However, it confirms Sussman (2010) on returnees feeling no distress but 'feeling happy and motivated when returned [to the host country]'. This is due to the sociocultural adaptation migrants experience in the destination country. During their stay, individuals were aware of the different cultures and yet adapted the new culture without shifting away completely from their own identity.

Social network of 'reintegrated' returnees

Retirees kept transnational links throughout their stay by maintaining social contacts, buying homes, and saving up on money for retirement. They had a strong social network which helped facilitate their reintegration. The links were maintained because of retirees' notion of returning to Lebanon after accomplishing their desired goal.

Labor market and social rights of 'reintegrated' returnees

As indicated by Kuschminder (2014), the evidence points to reintegrated retirees to have access to rights and the labor market in the country of return. All retirees hold dual citizenship and have the same rights as any citizen. However, it is important to note that although retirees have access to the labor market, they had no desire and intention to invest or work.

5.2.2 Enclaves of return: voluntary returnees and spouses

The second strategy of reintegration is the called ‘enclave.’ According Kuschminder , an enclavist returnee is similar to a reintegrated returnee but differs in two dimensions which are the culture orientation and social network (Kuschminder , 2014). In our sample, five voluntary returnees and two spouses qualify as enclavist. These migrants returned to invest and work in Lebanon stayed an average total of 8.5 years in the migration country. They had a complete migration cycle as their return was driven by achieving their migration objectives, and they had a high level of preparation as they were ready and willing to return and able to mobilize the necessary resources needed. All were in this category were economically comfortable.

Table 13 : Tripoli Case study findings on ‘enclavist’ returnees across the four dimensions of Kuschminder

Type of migrant	Dimensions			
	Cultural Orientation	Social Network	Self Identification	Access to right and labor market
Voluntary and Spouse	Value culture of destination <i>(Enclaves)</i>	Returnees and cross border ties <i>(Enclaves)</i>	Transnational <i>(Enclaves)</i>	Limited access to rights in country of origin <i>(Enclaves)</i>

Culture orientation of ‘enclavists’ returnees

Enclavist returnees in this sample valued the culture of the country of migration and viewed the local culture to be different than what they remembered or fantasized. According to King (2017), it is incorrectly assumed that migrants and ‘home’ have not changed. He argues that the experience migrants encounter abroad exposes them to new cultures and the host society influences their reintegration back home. Thus, “re-insertion back ‘home’ is not straightforward”. Findings in our sample supports this interpretation. One man describes his experience as follows:

“Of course, you like the thing that you gained there. But here (Lebanon), we are doing things that are wrong because it became the norm. Till now whenever I see someone throwing something, even a Kleenex, I find this

wrong and tell them, ‘Sorry, this fell from you by accident.’” – Participant 10

Social networks of ‘enclavists’ returnees

In addition, enclavist returnees in this sample found it challenging to connect with stayees and found themselves connecting with returnees like themselves and their networks across borders. One returnee compared his friends in Canada to his friends in Lebanon. He was of the opinion that people he encountered in the country of immigration did not wish him harm and were helpful, unlike Lebanese. The example he provides pertains to Lebanese people’s need to be superior in different situations.

“It is not like he [Canadian] talks to you because his father is better than your father. No, on the contrary, we sit and talk a long time with an open heart, about problems, financial, life, everything. When I talk to them, I know, that they are trustworthy.” – Participant 13

For these enclavist in this sample, their motivation for return was set early on, and their return carefully decided and planned. Men in this category had the desire to return once they achieved their goal. Thus, while abroad, they created and maintained transnational links with their family and friends which eased their return. For many of the individuals interviewed in this category, they felt a sense of belonging towards both countries.

Self-identification of ‘enclavists’ returnees

Several returnees in the Tripoli sample expressed their sense of belonging and self-identification as transnational- meaning they don’t feel confined to one identity but rather to multiple belongings. As referred by Sussman (2010), the transnational belonging of returnees results from a shift in identity due to their integration in the country of migration. A recurring theme in the interviews with the selected returnees was a cultural identity change as these migrants learned and adopted the cultural and social ways of the country of immigration. For instance, one participant describes his integration experience by stating, “I gained knowledge, the language, the way of being, being independent, and learned to live alone.” As indicated by Sussman (2010), the findings point to returnees undergoing an additive identity shift as migrants add to their origin’s culture and to forming a bicultural and hybrid identity. This affected their thinking style, decision making, activities, behaviors and values. The interviews clearly indicated that returnees became more reserved with their personal space as they

stressed to preserve their privacy and often found themselves in conflict with stayees. One participant describes her experience as follows:

“There’s always the stare I get that I am the alien that left my husband for 6 years, such as, ‘ya haram (translation: “poor him”) she left him for 6 years.’

One time there was some guy, during dinner, he told me that I am cold hearted because I left my husband to live alone. I told him really? And he isn’t cold hearted for leaving me and my children to live alone? And I am single mother? I told him who are you to tell me this? What do you know about me and my husband? I got crazy. Who are you to judge me?” – Participant 6

The quote above demonstrates the criticism and judgments returnees receive from social surroundings. Thus, the perception and treatment of stayees toward returnees, indeed influence their reintegration experience. They feel more comfortable with, and are able to relate more to, returnees like themselves, as they share the same experience. (This in affect shows Kuschminder dimensions of self-identification and social network may actually have a causal relationship.) Similarly, the above confirms the observation by Gmelch (1980) and Sussman (2010), showing obstacles to reintegration caused by identity shift among returnees. In the sample, not only did returnees experience criticism from stayees, but they also equally rejected their friends, family, and other locals (stayees) as being narrowminded and backwards. Thus, obstacles for reintegration sit on both sides of the equation.

The spouses who returned voluntary valued the culture of the country of immigration. They were exposed to various cultures which they have encountered in their building, residential compound, or nearby neighborhood. They engaged with Palestinians, Syrians, Jordanians, Americans, Canadians, and other people from different backgrounds. The life in the immigration country made spouses more open, tolerant, and acceptant because they had to live with people of other nationalities.

“I took from each person something. I learned something from the Egyptian, from the Moroccan; I learned something from the Syrian. Each one gave me something. Of course, this makes you more open minded and accept others easily.” – Participant 12

Having increased their own tolerance, on their return, spouses found stayees to be intolerant and discriminatory towards people of other cultures.

“Here (Lebanon), it is limited. They know this thing, they are accustomed to one thing, you cannot change them. And they don’t know anything else. And they don’t accept to think that there is something else in this world. They think they are above other people.” – Participant 12

In addition, returnees criticized the attitudes of stayees toward their work and responsibility. Returnees saw stayees to have not advance compared to when they departed themselves- still sitting in coffee shops, gossiping, poor work ethics, low sense of personal responsibility and a high sense of entitlement. Comparing this to the work ethic in the immigration country, spouses observe workers in the immigration country as being dedicated, responsible, and professional – on their return, they measured the stayees against these experience.

Labor market of ‘enclavist’ returnees

Voluntary returnees faced challenges in accessing the labor market at the beginning of their return. From the start, they perceived the government to be an obstacle in the way of opening a business. One returnee comments, “The officials try to get to you, they try to see ways how they can take money from you rather than to help you out to open a business. Corruption. If you don’t know the right people, if you don’t have the networks, solid networks here, then you cannot do anything.” Thus, as Gmelch (1980) notes, “[returnees often are] ..unhappy with the way things are done at home”. This relates to how returnees attempt to find their way in the labor market but struggle as they are unfamiliar with how things are done in the country of origin. However, despite facing such challenges, these returnees with their high level of preparedness and willingness to return, were able to secure employment or entrepreneur.

In conclusion, seven individuals in my sample, reintegrated as predicted by Kuschminder’s enclavist strategy. They qualified across four dimensions (cultural orientation, social network, self-identification, access to labor and rights). We can therefore rightfully state all voluntary returnees chose an enclavist strategy.

5.2.3 Vulnerable: Involuntary returnees

The third reintegration strategy by Kuschminder is called ‘vulnerable’. Vulnerable refers to a condition consisting of short duration of migration, involuntary return and no or low level of preparedness, and economic failure on return. We will now discuss the results of my interviews to either confirm or disconfirm the prediction of Kuschminder, looking at dimension of the vulnerable strategy.

Table 14 : Tripoli Case study findings on ‘vulnerable’ returnees across the four dimensions of Kuschminder

Type of migrant	Dimensions			
	Cultural Orientation	Social Network	Self-Identification	Access to right and labor market
Involuntary Returnees and Spouses	Rejected by the dominant society of origin country Values culture of country of migration <i>(Vulnerable and Enclave)</i>	Other returnees Ties to other vulnerable groups <i>(Vulnerable and Enclave)</i>	Transnational <i>(Reintegrated)</i>	Full access to rights in country of origin Limited access to institutions <i>(Vulnerable)</i>

Culture orientation of ‘vulnerable’ returnees

All involuntary returnees became familiar with the migration country’s cultures. Thus, on their return, migrants faced cultural challenges. Returnees continued to apply the cultural values gained from the migration country on their return. One participant explains the Lebanese culture in terms of following a specific ‘layout’ for achieving success in life.

“[Before migrating] ..I was following the layout. I thought this is the layout that I should follow, otherwise, I would fail in life. Until really, I had this shift. First the layout was getting fragmented since I failed in school. Then again it fragmented when I failed in University. I pushed off. And my father was like ok we are going to push the layout a little bit, but then I found that, man, there should be no layout. And this is when I discovered this when I moved to Spain. And I discovered that people there are so chill, that they keep on telling me chill until I understood that when you chill it is nice. It gives you time to think, to recap what you did, to understand what you will do. Because you are always in a rush you actually find yourself doing nothing.” – Participant 18

The quote above highlights the cultural shift of the returnee during his short time abroad. The Lebanese culture, as he considered it, was to have a specific layout for life and fast pace of life. This was then altered to a more relaxed lifestyle. Moreover, working men maintained their work ethics and professionalism in terms of being punctual and being precise with the task. This was considered to be a key to productivity

and applicable upon return. One participant mentions: "...you start to react and apply it automatically (in the origin country)."

Self-identification of 'vulnerable' returnees

Men in this group did intend to return to Lebanon, however, their return was before they had originally anticipated. During their stay abroad, they maintained transnational links by remitting money to either save or to help their relatives. In addition, they were able to secure a home to return to one day. This pattern is observed most among individuals who emigrated to the Gulf. In addition, men were engaged in the country of immigration with the locals and with the Lebanese community. Thus, having a job, family, and a life abroad, men generally felt at home. One interviewee shares his sense of identity by stating the following:

"Of course, I am Lebanese. I was born here; I belong here. I would, and I am sure a lot of immigrants or expats, or Lebanese living abroad, would love to come back here and retire here because your family is here. Your memory, childhood memories. Anyone would wish to come and live back in Lebanon. I'm pretty sure about that." – Participant 2

However, being willing and ready to return influences returnees reintegration. Men were compelled to return to Lebanon before accomplishing their goal and before the intended time they set before their original departure. According to De Haas (2014), involuntary returnees generally feel nostalgic to the time before their problems in the country of immigration occurred. This in fact is confirmed in my findings, as one interviewee shares his sense of belonging post return: "It changed when I went there [Spain]. Here [before emigrating] I felt that I had a sense of belonging. But the moment that I traveled, the moment that I left, I did not feel that I had a nostalgic feeling [toward Lebanon], I didn't feel that I had any kind of attachment here [Lebanon]."

Social network of 'vulnerable' returnees

The involuntary group struggled with their reintegration with the stayees. Sussman (2010) notes returnees experience cognitive distress as they feel different than stayees and experience confusion and isolation. This is due to a subtractive identity shift migrants experience in the host country as their identity shifts away from their own home culture. My findings confirm Sussman, as most of the returnees found it difficult to engage with stayees. A majority expressed difficulty as they perceived stayees to have

“no morals as they had in the past”, and “a lack of sincerity”. Returnees perceived stayees to be intrusive, little respect for personal boundaries, fake, and tricky. As one interviewee commented, “a person now needs to be very careful.”

However, interviewees were able to socialize with people that had similar experiences to them. One interviewee shares the following: “this was the time that I discovered that I could relate to these kinds of people. Now apparently, I am putting the parts together and I am seeing that yes, they are returnees.”

Access to rights and labor market of ‘vulnerable’ returnees

Of the four groups interviewed (voluntary, involuntary, retirees, and spouses), men who were compelled to return due to socioeconomic problems in the migration country, as of now are unemployed upon return. Those who were compelled to return due to family-related issues were able to secure employment after two years. Men were disappointed with unfortunate events that occurred prompting them to return unwillingly and unprepared. On their return, involuntary returnees attempted to invest their savings by establishing a business of their own. However, without having the right access to the labor market, understanding of the market and business opportunities, returnees found their plan floundering. This confirms the research of Ammassari (2012) who found returnees who do not have access or connection were discouraged to proceed. One interviewee describes his experience in the labor market below:

“You try, and you learn. Your survival kicks in and you strive effortlessly to do whatever you have to do to stand back up on your feet to do your own thing. So, for me, I did after I came back. I worked almost a year - 10 months- then I realized it was nothing like working or doing what I usually do. It’s not the same environment that I was in, and I don’t know or think it was the right experience to judge upon, but I realized it’s going to be the same or slightly better. Then, I decided no, why not do my own thing. We all dream about doing something, always wanting to do it but never get the chance to do it. So yeah, at the moment, I am working on that thing I wanted to do, just for the sake of saying I tried. – Participant 2

The sentiment expressed in this quote is shared among several other men interviewed; several wanted to open a business and to create opportunities for themselves and their family, but were unable to do so. The economic conditions of returnees (for example having a job on their return) affects how they readjust back in the country of origin

(Gmelch, 1980). The main element necessary to encourage men to undertake an investment is assistance in understanding the economic context. In addition, their no or low level of preparedness makes it challenging for men to become economically successful. These two quotes underline this:

“I advise anyone who wants to return not to work for the first two years until he understands the country.” – Participant 11

“I started asking around. There were two things. First, [my wife] said to take time and to be patient. Second, I had friends in the market who are contractors, when I used to go to see them, they used to ask me what I wanted to do [with my savings]. They said be patient, in a few years things will get better. And our situation is not well, and we have debt and it did affect me.” – Participant 16

Returnees in my sample were discouraged as well by the lack of government services and access to benefits and rights. In general, they became familiar with the society based on the rule of law and the government using public funds to reinvest in public institutions and works. One participant shares this sentiment:

“You [are] at some point when you come back and see where you were, you miss these things and you wish these things were or are applied to Lebanon. That’s when you know you are living in a very nice place. And that’s, in my opinion, to many, that’s what will make Lebanon great. Minor adjustment if you want to call it. I mean like for some of you who grow up in this environment then travel and come back, you feel a little bit alienated. Alienated in the sense of the system, laws, regulation.” – Participant 2

5.3 Agents of change

The third objective of the thesis is to examine return migrant's agency for change. Migrants returning from developed countries were expected by stayees to take the role as agents of change. This assumption is seen in the literature as well, for example Van Houte (2014) and Åkesson et al. (2015). Both note a prevalent assumption holding migrants desire to invest and to transfer the acquired resources to help the country of origin, thereby becoming actors of change. Based on my findings, individuals who

were perceived to have returned with capital, well off, and having achieved great success were expected to invest. Voluntary returnees who reintegrated as ‘enclave’ were the only group that invested in Tripoli. Returnees who reintegrated as ‘vulnerable’ and ‘reintegrated’ did not invest.

The overall findings of the Tripoli case study, therefore differ to some extent from the model of Kuschminder (2014) and Cassarino (2014). According to Kuschminder (2014), a returnee can have the potential to be an agent of change after meeting all of five conditions: (1) ability to integrate abroad; (2) voluntary and preparedness of return; (3) sustained network; (4) willingness to work with locals; and (5) returnees occupying a position of power. My results indicate only **enclavist returnees** to have met some of the conditions required for returnees to act as agents of change. In contrast, Kuschminder’s theory predicts only ‘**reintegrated**’ returnees to qualify as actors of change (i.e. in our sample only retirees qualify as ‘reintegrated’). Taking the Tripoli case study, Kuschminder’s five conditions disqualify the whole sample set from being actors of change.

My results differ to some extent from those of Kuschminder (2014), as it could nevertheless be argued that some of the returnees in my case study qualify as actors of change. The majority of enclavist returnees in my study reinvested in sectors that already existed in Tripoli (i.e. the food and beverage industry). This indicates that returnees contribute to reinforcing a particular sector which already exists, by offering for example products/items that were acquired abroad. One participant who owns a coffee shop explains his motive for change by stating the following:

“Look, Lebanon is a country that has a lot of stigma. When they think Lebanon, they remember the war. They remember the sectarianism. They remember the corruption, pollution, all of these things; it solidifies that stigma. The people in power have a lot of money that push that stigma. This is something that us, as a community, we need to realize that we are missing out. Us and our children, I don’t want to leave, I don’t want my children to leave. There’s a possibility that they might. I don’t want them to. I am working really hard to give them that opportunity for them not to. When I am saying I am giving them opportunity, I am giving their whole generation an opportunity.” – Participant 5

The remaining enclavist returnees either worked as teachers or in the family business. One participant shares the following:

“For me, I love to give my knowledge. I do this in my class. I try to open

my colleagues' minds with what to do with their children. From my experience before, I was a different human being. I changed...I transfer this [knowledge] in my class. I talk a lot with my students. We talk a lot. I try to expand their knowledge. We talk about racism. Like, you are not the best human beings. I show them things, we do debates and discuss topics. I feel that this is the way I can help.” – Participant 19

These two interviewees clearly qualify as actors of change.

R reintegrated returnees (in our sample set only represented by retirees) who met all five conditions of Kuschminder for being actors of change, did not act as agents of change on their return. All of the participants in this group believed that migrants should be able to contribute in some way to Lebanon, however, none realized this. My results show that one explanation of this none realized potential for change is because migrants felt that their country did not do anything for them before they emigrated. One ‘reintegrated’ returnee explains his motives for not investing by stating:

“Yes, Lebanon can benefit from it. But, to me, I worked very hard for my money. And the most important thing for me is to benefit myself and not Lebanon. I love Lebanon that’s why I live here and that’s why I returned after 45 years.”

This finding contrasts with Kuschminder’s (2014) model that predicts that ‘enclavist’ were less likely to invest than ‘reintegrated returnees’. In fact, my result shows the exact opposite. However, it may well be that the retiree factor explains the absence of agency of change. Unfortunately, however, because of the small size of the sample set, ‘reintegrated’ returnees all happened to be retirees coincidentally.

The **vulnerable returnees** in my sample set, who had an interrupted or incomplete migration cycle, found it challenging to invest or otherwise act as agents of change. From my findings, it was observed this was caused by their return being forced and unprepared. This finding supports the model of Kuschminder (2014) and Cassarino (2014) as they posit ‘vulnerable’ returnees are not likely to invest. ‘Vulnerable’ returnees in my sample set did not meet the required five conditions of Kuschminder for being an actor of change, except for one condition – the ability to integrate abroad. This suggests that not failure to integrate in the country of migration is the key factor, but rather other factors determine whether change is remitted. As Levitt (2007) explains, the integration of a migrant in the destination country could result in what Levitt

coined ‘social remittances’. Social remittances include the transfer of ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from the country of destination to the country of origin. However, my findings indicate that despite being integrated, vulnerable returnees were not able to be the source of change to transfer the skills, knowledge, and know-how acquired abroad.

The figure below illustrates the summary of reintegration strategies for the four groups interviewed.

Table 15: Lebanese returnee’s reintegration strategy in the Tripoli case study Summary

Return Migrant	Dimensions			
	Cultural Orientation	Social Network	Self Identification	Access to right and labor market
Voluntary	Value culture of destination <i>(Enclaves)</i>	Returnees and cross border ties <i>(Enclaves)</i>	Transnational <i>(Enclaves)</i>	Limited access to rights in country of origin <i>(Enclaves)</i>
Involuntary	Rejected from the dominant society of origin Value culture of migration <i>(Vulnerable and Enclave)</i>	Returnees Ties to other vulnerable group <i>(Vulnerable and Enclave)</i>	Transnational <i>(Reintegrated)</i>	Full access to rights in country of origin Limited access to institutions <i>(Vulnerable)</i>
Retirees	Value both Lebanese culture and destination <i>(Reintegrated)</i>	Locals, returnees and cross border ties <i>(Reintegrated)</i>	Unidirectional origin <i>(Traditionalist)</i>	Limited or full access to rights in country of origin <i>(Reintegrated)</i>
Spouses	Value culture of destination <i>(Enclaves)</i>	Returnees and cross border ties <i>(Enclaves)</i>	Transnational <i>(Enclaves)</i>	Limited access to rights in country of origin <i>(Enclaves)</i>

Summary

In this case study, return migrants reintegrate differently across Kuschminder’s (2014) four dimensions. Based on Kuschminder ’s reintegration strategy (2014), returnees in the *first dimension* (cultural orientation) either value both the culture of the country of immigration and origin; the culture of the country of immigration; the culture of country of origin; or reject the culture of the immigration country and the dominant society in the country of origin. In this case study’s findings, voluntary and involuntary return-

ees valued the culture of the immigration country. The *second dimension* (social network) focuses on returnees' links and relationships with the locals, returnees, or cross-border ties. All participants in this case study encountered challenges reintegrating with the stayees. Most returnees were able to re-integrate with returnees like them and maintained cross-border ties with their friends in the immigration country. Returnees in the *third dimension* (self-identification) either identify themselves as belonging either to the country of immigration; the country of origin; or to both (home and host) countries. In this case study finding's, majority of Lebanese returnees identified themselves as Lebanese or as hyphenated Lebanese. In the *fourth dimension* (access to rights, institutions, and the labor) all participants in this case study's sample shared one issue that hindered returnees' reintegration in this dimension- the lack of job opportunities and the inability to do work or do business in Lebanon.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

“We all have this idea of those who acquired the Canadian experience or American experience to bring back to the country to use it and to benefit the (home) society. However, I don't know if all of these are dreams and may not find their way and may simply die.” – Participant 5

The story of Lebanon is interwoven with various waves of migration throughout the years. As a result, Lebanese settled in various parts of the world. Some of these migrants, after building a new life for themselves abroad, returned to Lebanon- either voluntary or involuntary. This paper has investigated the return of Lebanese migrants, their reintegration, and their role as agents of change, in Tripoli. The research objectives were threefold: to present the motives of a migrant's return and their level of preparedness; to explore the post-return experience of Lebanese returnees and their reintegration; and to examine returnees' role as agents of change. This chapter will present the summary of the findings, and the contribution of the study.

6.1 Summary of Findings

The methodology used to answer my thesis question consisted of a two-step process: a review of literature to introduce the terms, concept and theories in the subfield of return migration, and an empirical research carried out in Tripoli. The purpose of my research was to fill a gap on the current knowledge of return Lebanese migrants and their post-return experience.

As stated in the literature review, ‘return migration’ is defined as “the process whereby people return to their country after being away for at least 12 months and either return voluntary or involuntary to stay temporarily or permanently” (King, 2017, United Nations, Ammassari, 2012). ‘Reintegration’ is defined as “the process in which return migrants are supported in maintaining their cultural and social identities by the host society and the whole population acquires equal civil, social, political, human and cultural rights” (Kuschminder, 2014).

However, the reintegration of returnees may experience challenges. This may include experiencing culture-reverse shock, struggle with self-identity and belonging, and/or problems with stayees. The challenge occurs because return is not simply “a matter of

going home” (De Haas et al, 2010) and reintegration is not simply ‘fitting back’ in the home country. Thus, the migration experience- before, during, and after migration- influences returnees’ reintegration process. The second step examined my sample set across four categories of return I designed (voluntary, involuntary, retirees and spouses), and analyze these against the backdrop of the literature.

My first conclusion: a return migrant returning willingly and with a high-level preparedness (complete migration cycle), is more likely to succeed on return to his home country than a migrant returning unwillingly with low- or no-level preparedness (due to an incomplete or interrupted migration cycle). Of the four categories analyzed in this sample, involuntary returnees, were the only group that struggled with their reintegration because they were compelled to return, and their return was ill prepared.

My second conclusion: from the four categories interviewed, retirees were the only group with a successful reintegration as defined by Kuschminder. Retirees returned voluntarily with a high level of preparedness and reintegrated successfully in Tripoli. However, despite having the optimal reintegration strategy, retirees did not have the desire to act as an agent of change because their motive for return was to enjoy their retirement.

My third conclusion: involuntary returnees, having an interrupted or incomplete migration cycle, are more likely to encounter endemic challenges. This confirms both Cassarino’s (2014) and Kuschminder ’s (2014) preparedness and reintegration strategy theory.

Finally, none of the Tripoli return migrants reintegrated as ‘traditionalist’ across the four dimensions. This suggest that the identity dimension of migration (identity shifts toward multiple belongings) is under appreciated and perhaps crucial in determining return success. As a consequence, asking returnees to reintegrate is perhaps asking for the impossible.

The fifth conclusion: while the general (and local Lebanese) expectation is to consider return migration as a form of success (own and bring back money) and consider the return migrant’s role upon return as being an agent of change, the reality shows return migration to be much more diverse, layered, complex and problematic. These assumptions of success contain a lot of wishful thinking on behalf of everybody involved: migrants, stayees, government, activists, and social scientists. The evidence doesn’t support many of these hoped-for outcomes.

6.2 Contribution

Further research needs to be carried out to further investigate the study on a larger sample and in different areas in Lebanon. It is hoped that this study has shed a light on the challenges faced by returnees that hinder return migrants to act as agents of change. There is no state support or policy provided to return migrants. This leaves return migrants on their own. Thus, it is recommended that future work should focus on providing assistance and policies framework to facilitate the return and reintegration for both voluntary and involuntary returnees. Policies may be catered to the different needs of migrants before their return such as designing programs for employment, assistance in business development, counseling, and programs for distressed returnees who were forced to return.

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Appendix

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

**(This interview is inspired by Cassarino and Kuschminder's questionnaires)*

Survey #	--
Date of interview	-- / -- / --
Background Information	Start & End Time ____ - ____

Age	____	
Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male	
Occupation	_____	

PHASE ONE: BEFORE EMIGRATION	
Themes	Question
1) Life before emigration	Please describe how was your life before emigration
(A) Personal background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First, in terms of your education level? 2. Did you know any languages other than your native language? 3. Work situation, were you working before you emigrated? 4. What kind of work? 5. What about your financial situation, were you earning enough to live comfortably, cover your expenses and save up?
(B) Living situation/Time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Describe your housing situation, how did you perceive your house, your neighborhood and your surroundings? 6. Were you happy living in your social environment? 7. What about your time, how was it spent after work?
(C) Satisfaction/Sense of belonging	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. How satisfied were then? any negative or positive aspects before leaving? 9. Did you feel you had a sense of belonging?
(D) Family	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Describe your family situation before emigrating? In terms of if you were married, have kids, who you left behind?
2) Reasons for emigration	Explain your motive for leaving Lebanon?
(A) Choice of country of emigration/ information about the country	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Where did emigrate to? What was the reason for you to choose that country? 12. Did you have any information about the country prior to leaving? Did you know anyone living there? Did you visited it before? Did you know the language? 13. Was it your first country of emigration? What other country did you live before? For how long? Why did you decide to leave that country for the last one? 14. Who was involved and supported you during your emigration? In Lebanon and outside?
(B) Expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. What were your expectations when leaving Lebanon? What did you expect to find there? 16. Did you hear from someone (network,gatekeeper) about the country to make you want to leave for that country? 17. How long did you expect to stay? and how long did you end up staying?

PHASE TWO: IMMIGRANT LIFE	
Themes	Question
3) Arrival Experience	Describe your experience as an immigrant in the destination country?
(A) Company	<p>18. Did anyone emigrate with you? who?</p> <p>19. If not, did anyone follow you (friends or family, after how long)</p> <p>20. Did your family/friends help you with your experience?</p>
(B) Assistance/ accommodation	<p>21. Please provide your experience the moment you arrived in the destination country</p> <p>22. Did you receive any assistance? If yes, what type and who assisted you ?</p>
(C) Integration Challenges and Opportunity	<p>23. What can you say were the challenges and opportunities that you faced during your arrival and time in the country?</p> <p>24. Did you feel you were able to integrate?</p> <p>25. Did you feel a sense of belonging?</p> <p>26. What did you do to get integrated (try to integrate) ?</p>
4) Financial/professional experience	Describe your work and financial experience
(A) Professional situation	<p>27. What was your first profession when you arrived? Did anyone help you get a job or did you arrange one before arriving?</p> <p>28. If not, how long did it take you to find a job? how did you come to find a job? who helped you ?</p> <p>29. What other work where you involved in?</p>
(B) Financial situation	<p>30. How was your financial situation in comparison with the one you had in Lebanon?</p> <p>31. And your living condition? where did you stay? with who?</p> <p>32. Were you living comfortably?</p> <p>33. How did you spend your time outside of work?</p>
5) Link with Lebanon	Maintaining links with country of origin
(A) Links with Lebanon	<p>34. During your time abroad, did you maintain links with Lebanon? If yes, what type? What was the reason for maintaining links? (listening to Lebanese music, watching Lebanese news, calling home, sending money)</p> <p>35. Did you visit Lebanon? If yes, How many times? How was your experience before you trip and during your stay there?</p>
(B) Hometown Association	<p>36. During your stay abroad, did you join a HTA? If yes, what was your reason for being part of HTA?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type was it? • How were you involved? and how often did you participate? • What type of activities was involved? • What was the use of the HTA?
(C) Remittances	<p>37. Did you send any money back home? If yes, why? and to who?</p> <p>38. How much did you send roughly?</p> <p>39. Did you send money to save up?</p>

PHASE THREE: RETURN LIFE	
Themes	Question
6) Return experience	Returning to Lebanon
(A) Motivation for return	<p>40. After how much time did you return back to Lebanon?</p> <p>41. How did you come to this decision? <i>Forced? Voluntary? Retirement?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was your return something you planned? • Can you list some of the reason that were involved in your return? • What did you consider before moving back? <p>42. Describe how the process took when returning?</p> <p>43. What was your expectations before arriving?</p> <p>44. Do you feel like you accomplished your goal?</p>
(B) The return	<p>45. When you returned, how long did you intend on staying?</p> <p>46. Who returned with you? Were they happy to have returned?</p> <p>47. Were you prepared to return? how?</p> <p>48. How is your living situation now different than before you left?</p>
7) Reintegration	Reintegration in homeland
A) Reintegration Experience	<p>49. How can you describe your return experience? What did you expect upon returning? Did you experience any cultural reverse shock?</p> <p>50. Any big challenge since your return</p>
B) Structural and cultural conditions of the return environment	<p>51. Describe your culture orientation with regards to the values you practice and events you follow. What kind?</p> <p>52. Did your values or beliefs change since returning? Can you describe?</p> <p>53. How did those who stayed receive you? Do you have any challenges connecting with them?</p> <p>54. Did you meet any returnee like yourself ?</p> <p>55. Can you describe which you feel you can be more yourself with?</p> <p>56. Are you still in contact with your friends in the migration country? Why? How often do you contact them?</p>
C) Identity and Sense of Belonging	<p>58. Before emigration, how did you identify yourself?</p> <p>59. After returning, how do you say you identify yourself?</p> <p>60. Do you feel a sense of belonging? Explain your reason?</p> <p>61. Describe your activities have changed or remained since you returned. In terms of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading books, newspaper, magazines from your migration or home country 2. Groceries and restaurant selection 3. Music / movies </p> <p>62. What language are you most comfortable speaking? With who?</p> <p>63. Do you feel accepted in Lebanon after your return?</p>
Rights and Labor Market	<p>64. What is your current professional situation? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did you get the job ? 2. Are you satisfied? 3. How can you say your financial situation changed before emigrating? and How is different than when living in your host country? </p> <p>65. Do you receive any financial assistance from your host country?</p> <p>66. What are the challenges that you faced during the process?</p>

8) Agents of Change	Post return
(A) Contributors to change	<p>67. Do you believe stayees have expectations for you be agents of change?</p> <p>68. Do you believe you have a duty to contribute to change?</p> <p>69. Do you believe Lebanon can develop with the capital, skills, and money gained from you during your time abroad? If yes, in what way?</p>
(B) Policies and Programs	<p>70. Did you receive any assistance before returning?</p> <p>71. Do you believe a pre and post-return assistance would help with your return experience?</p> <p>72. Describe what programs would facilitate your reintegration</p>
End of the interview: Is there anything additional you would like to add?	
Thank you for your time and participation.	