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Women's Rural-Urban Migration in Lebanon:
Migration Determinants and the Quest for Empowerment

By

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Women's Rural-Urban Migration in Lebanon: Migration Determinants and the Quest for Empowerment

Sally N. Youssef

ABSTRACT

Women's sole internal migration has been mostly ignored in migration studies, and the concentration on migrant women has been almost exclusively on low-income women within the household framework. This study focuses on middleclass women's contemporary rural-urban migration in Lebanon. It probes into the determinants and outcomes of women's sole internal migration within the empowerment framework. The study delves into the interplay of the personal, social, and structural factors that determine the women's rural-urban migration as well as its outcomes. It draws together the lived experiences of migrant women to explore the determinants of women's internal migration as well as the impact of migration on their expanded empowerment.

Keywords: Rural-urban migration, Internal migration, Migrant women, Migration and empowerment, Sole migration, Determinants of internal migration, Migration and sociocultural contexts, Lebanon

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Research rationale

Migration has emerged as a defining feature of our contemporary world, and people more than ever are on the move. Every aspect of life in our world be it economic, political, cultural, individual, national, or global is touched by migration. The general focus on migration is overwhelmingly on international migration where the people's movements intertwine with world politics and economics. The daily global media publications reflect this central focus on international migration (IOM, 2018). In numbers, more people migrate internally within their countries of origin than internationally (Birchall, 2016; Deshingkar, & Grimm, 2005; IOM, 2018; Irvine, 2018; Lucci, Mansour-Ille, Easton-Calabria, & Cummings, 2016; UNDP, 2009). Nonetheless, with a trend that seemingly follows that of the global media and politics, research publications have focused less on internal migration and more on international migration (Deshingkar, & Grimm, 2005; Jolly, & Reeves, 2005; Lucci, et al., 2016; Pickbourn, 2018). This is especially the case for the studies on migrant women (Alexander, & Steidl, 2012; Erman, 1997; Lattof, Nyarko, Coast, & Leone, 2018). Foremost, the migration literature has been an androcentric scholarship. Women's migration is not a new phenomenon, however, one notes a growing interest in studying gendered migrations whether internally or internationally (Ghosh, 2009; Tittensor, & Mansouri, 2017). Though migration studies have taken into account the gender-balanced and even the female dominated migratory flows globally, the literature on internal migration still largely overlooks women (Alexander, & Steidl, 2012). Nonetheless, there is a growing recognition of women's internal migration as a prominent phenomenon that is likely to continue and increase with the proliferation of urbanization (Temin, Montgomery, Engebretsen, & Barker, 2013).

Commonly, internal migration is studied within the context of urbanization (White, & Lindstrom, 2005), and conversely the latter is mostly driven by internal

migration (Lucci, et al., 2016; UN-HABITAT, 2011). Literature on internal migration in Lebanon is not atypical. Lebanon has a long history of internal migration. The steady growth of internal migration, particularly rural-urban migration, dates to the mid twentieth century (Fawaz, & Peillen, 2003; Yassin, 2012). In fact, urbanization in Lebanon has been growing in parallel to the global urbanization process (UN-HABITAT, 2011). Nevertheless, there is little data on the characteristics, modes, and outcomes of Lebanon's internal migration as well as its respective migrants. While many studies focus on Lebanon's urbanization, especially the growth of the capital city, the studies do not deal with internal migration or the migrants per se. Rather, the existing literature centers on internal migration from the perspective of the urbanization predicament. It is largely preoccupied with challenges of urbanization that are brought about by internal migration, particularly urban congestion, the spread of informal settlements, and poverty in urban areas (for example, Dibeh, 2005; Faour, & Mhaweij, 2014; Fawaz, & Peillen, 2003; Nasr, & Verdeil, 2008; UN-HABITAT, 2011; Yassin, 2012). In addition to an exceptional pioneer work by Fuad Khuri on migrant households in Beirut's suburbs (check Khuri, 1975). The treatment of internal migration as one of the negative facets of the urbanization epidemic explains the lack of the general interest in studying this migratory movement, particularly when it comes to the daily experiences of the individual internal migrants. Viewing internal migration through the lens of negativity is not limited to Lebanon. It is believed that the global neglect of studying internal migration in its various aspects is due to the common interpretation of internal migration as a destabilizing process at the economic, social and political levels. Such interpretation is especially linked to the undesired effect of internal migration on approaches to development within individual states. Consequently, internal migration and women's internal migration are perceived as negative phenomena (Pickbourn, 2018). Different studies have attempted to explain the reasons behind the treatment of internal migration in negative terms, especially in its relation to development, poverty, social justice, and urban congestion (for example, Black, & Sward, 2009; De Haas, 2010a; UNDP, 2009).

Rural to urban migration has been described as the emblematic characteristic culminating in the twenty-first century (Jacka, 2005). This for rural-urban migration is

the dominant form of migration globally (Birchall, 2016; Deshingkar, & Grimm, 2005; Irvine, 2018; Jolly, & Reeves, 2005; UNDP, 2009). Migration literature does not overlook this phenomenon of rural-urban migration; however, it focuses almost exclusively on rural-urban migration in the form of the move itself neglecting the diversity and the outcomes of such migrations (Temin, et al., 2013). In the MENA region, rural to urban migration is depicted as a male dominated movement (Chant, 1998). In spite of that, some research studies sought to accentuate the position of women within this growing phenomenon. The studies highlight the role of women in this migratory movement and the effects of rural-urban migration on the migrant women and their families. However, the concentration on migrant women has been on low-income women within the household framework (for example, Bello-Bravo, 2015; Chant, 1998; Erman, 1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2001, 2002; Eryar, Tekgüç, & Toktas, 2018; Holmes-Eber, 1997). Women's sole internal migration, i.e. women migrating on their own, is still limited, and overlooked in the migration literature (Erman, 1997). Nonetheless, women are increasingly migrating on their own (Deshingkar, & Grimm, 2004; Martin, 2004), especially from rural to urban areas (UN-HABITAT, 2013). The patriarchal social norms in Lebanon still require single women to live with their families until they are married (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010). Nevertheless, there is a gradual change in Lebanese society as women are starting to increasingly migrate alone and live on their own, especially in Beirut, or even emigrate alone (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010; Drieskens, 2008). Yet, women's internal migration to Beirut is depicted as a temporary movement, either for the purposes of studying or working (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010). Women's long-term or permanent internal migration within Lebanon and the social and cultural drivers of such migration remain ignored.

Early work on gendered migration has focused primarily on women's economic empowerment and the stemmed change in gender relations through migration. Such focus is centered on gender relations in the migrants' new abode in the city. Recently, the literature shifted its focus to a more intersectional analysis of the structural hierarchies that shape migration including class, sexuality, capability, power relations, and so forth. The structural hierarchies are placed at the heart of gendered migration studies, since women's migratory experiences are shaped by the specificities of the

sociocultural contexts (Näre, & Akhtar, 2014). Moreover, the influence of the women's personal traits, aspirations, expectations, and preferences are increasingly being seen as powerful factors that shape the migration determinants, motives, experiences, and outcomes (Bonfanti, 2014; Deotti, & Estruch, 2016; Kavar, 2005). Migration has had a strong impact on the religious, political, social, and cultural values of migrants, as well as their sexual freedoms, in addition to higher economic returns (Gasper, & Truong, 2010). Yet, it should be noted that such impact depends on the migrants' individual experiences. Although the main reason for rural-urban migration is economic, it has been conceded that for women living in traditional rural communities, expanded freedoms and agency are potent drivers for migration into urban spaces. Women often migrate to urban areas to improve their economic status as well as to expand their power over their lives and strengthen their independence (Siddique, 2003). In the MENA region, studies on internal migrant women primarily focus on low-income women, the economic drivers and empowerment through migration (for example, Bello-Bravo, 2015; Erman, 2002; Eryar, et al., 2018). Little is known of the intersectional determinants and outcomes of internal migration, especially for middleclass women who migrate independently. In Lebanon, the migration literature is in an oblivion state vis-à-vis internal migration generally, and women's internal migration particularly.

1.2 Research interest and inquiry

Being an internal migrant woman myself and driven by the dearth of research on internal migration, and especially on internal migrant women, the study focuses on middleclass women's contemporary rural-urban migration in Lebanon. It probes into the determinants and outcomes of women's internal migration within the empowerment framework. It is based on the experiences and narratives of eight middleclass educated migrant women who moved alone from rural villages in the Beqaa governorate to the capital city, Beirut. In order to capture the commonalities and differences in the determinants and outcomes of the women's rural-urban migration, a similar background is a quintessential control variable to the study. Consequently, the women in the study share similar backgrounds in terms of their origin areas, their religious backgrounds, and their class. The women also share similar migratory patterns, where their first experience was a migration for higher education at one of the universities in Beirut.

Urban centers usually offer better quality education, instigating internal migration for education, which is often from rural to urban centers (Browne, 2017; Temin, et al., 2013). In Lebanon, there has been a dramatic increase in the level of women's education. The increased attention to female education, especially higher education, started in the 1970s (Chaaban, 2009), to the extent that today, female enrollment in higher education is higher than that of males (CAS, ILO, MoSA, & UNDP, 2008, Chaaban, 2009; Yaacoub, & Badre, 2012a). Yet, migration for education is predominantly male dominated in the Middle East region (Bell, & Muhidin, 2009). Nonetheless, women's increased migration for education has been recently noted by some scholars, though not studied in any depth (for example, Chemali-Khalaf, 2010; Drieskens, 2008; El-Hajj, 2016). Since migration for education can be the first step for further migrations to other areas (Tani, UNSW, & IZA, 2017), this study attempts to understand the manner women's migration for education have influenced their decisions to extend their migration and what motives drive them to choose living in Beirut. Migration for education by itself is not the focus of the research; it is one of the key variables utilized by the research for understanding the determinants and motives of women's contemporary rural-urban migration. Considering that little is known on the modes and outcomes of women's internal migration inside Lebanon, and it is not yet treated as a prominent phenomenon, my research focuses on middleclass sole migrant women. Accordingly, the migrant women have initially had access to financial resources that have enabled their migration and the extension of their migratory experiences. After all, migration for education is mostly embarked on by individuals of middleclass families, as this type of migration is costly in terms of education and living expenses and requires substantial resources (Browne, 2017; Jha, & Kumar, 2017). While the economic driver is important, the study focuses on other migration drivers that are related to women's expanded freedom and agency in the city. Women's empowerment as an outcome of migration requires extensive exposure and daily experiences (Ghosh, 2009 citing Hugo, 2008), which the study spotlights through personal interviews that look in on the participants' entire migratory experience.

Without further ado, the research delves into the interplay of the personal, social, and structural factors that determine the women's rural-urban migration as well as its

outcomes. The study draws together the lived experiences of migrant women to explore the determinants of women's internal migration as well as the impact of migration on their expanded empowerment. The study probes into the role of migration in shaping the migrant women's views, values, perceptions, identities, social and gender relations, and their attitudes towards rural life. It deploys the findings to understand how migration empowers women and incites them to negotiate their identities, gender roles and rights, and achieve self-realization and self-actualization. Understanding women's contemporary migration and its outcomes in Lebanon requires an understanding of the development of the economic, socio-cultural, and gender dynamics that intermingle to create the favorable conditions that support women's internal migration and shape its outcomes. Although women and men have similar motives for migration, women's migration is shaped by gender norms and power relations (O'Neil, Fleury, & Foresti, 2016). As such, gender is a determining element in identifying and understanding the determinants, motives, expectations, barriers, individual experiences, and outcomes of migration (Eryar, et al., 2018; Herrera, & Sahn, 2013; Tacoli, & Mabala, 2010). For women, escaping social and gender surveillance and control through migration has been widely determined as a common driver for women's migration (Birchall, 2016; Chant, 2013; Deotti, & Estruch, 2016; Deshingkar, & Grimm, 2004; Jolly, & Reeves, 2005; O'Neil, et al., 2016; Temin, et al., 2013). As a matter of fact, migration can be of intrinsic and instrumental value for the migrants. The intrinsic value is translated in the form of acquired freedom and agency, while the instrumental values of migration incorporate improving financial returns, education, and self-awareness (Bonfanti, 2014; De Haas, & Rodríguez, 2010; Näre, 2014). As such, the study aims at understanding the migration values for the Lebanese migrant women at two levels: the time at which the women make the decision to migrate, and throughout the ongoing migration process. To that end, the paper singles out empowerment as the crux in interpreting and analyzing the determinants and outcomes of women's internal migration in Lebanon.

The study deploys empowerment in its philosophical understanding as a choice and a relational process of change within the context of migration. Empowerment in the paper refers to the expansion of women's ability and freedom to make choices that were previously unavailable for them in their specific contexts (Kabeer, 2001; Malhotra, &

Schuler, 2005). To reach expanded empowerment as a migration outcome, change at three interdependent dimensions intertwine to enable the expansion of the migrant women's empowerment, which is centered on their ability to make choices independently. These dimensions include the resources, which create the enabling conditions for strategic choice making; agency, which is the effective enabler for choice making to be realized, i.e. it enables the process through which change occurs; and the achievements, which are the outcomes of the made choices (Kabeer, 2001, 2005). In other words, empowerment is epitomized as a choice and process that enhances the women's ability to discover, choose, and act upon options. This process encompasses an independent struggle through which women challenge the existing power-relations to achieve greater control and power and to reach change either in their personal lives or at other relational levels (Batliwala, 1993). The struggle against the existing power-relations for the migrant women can be either in their lives in the city or in their places of origin with their families and communities. Empowerment acts in the intersections of three levels, the structural level that constitutes background, class, and gender; the institutional level that constitutes the set of sociocultural rules and resources; and the individual level that constitutes the individual resources, agency, and achievements. Concomitantly, change at any level can positively result in further changes at the other levels (Kabeer, 2001), to which the paper gives special attention. Hence, empowerment is deployed as a relational process of change (Cornwall, 2016) that is shared yet unique to each woman in her specific context and experiences.

1.3 Value and limitations of the study

To start with, the paper acknowledges that the sample of eight participants is not large or diverse enough to be considered reflective or representative of all young migrant women in the Lebanese cities. Yet, it creates a platform for the voices of young women who embark on the journey of migration seeking freedom, agency, self-actualization as well as fulfillment of their career aspirations. As such, the research does not claim to represent a typology of women's contemporary internal migration in Lebanon. Nonetheless, the study focuses on the migrants daily-lived experiences in the city, which has the advantage of capturing the diversity and the complexity of the

participants' migratory experiences. To that end, the paper endorses the diversity of the participants' experiences and establishes the findings on the shared yet unique experiences of each of the participant women. By spotlighting young women's stories and their lived experiences, the study aims to understand internal migration from a woman's standpoint in light of the overlooked voices of rural migrants in Lebanon, particularly rural migrant women. In attempting to understand women's contemporary internal migration in Lebanon, the study sheds light on the economic, social, and cultural transformations that have made such migrations possible.

Moreover, by providing a synopsis of the impact of internal migration on middleclass women of rural origins, as well as a detailed mapping of these women's lived experiences throughout the process of internal migration, the paper shifts the focus of empowerment discourses from low-income to middleclass women. Thus, it contributes to a broader understanding of expanded empowerment through migration and provides a platform for the voices of middleclass migrant women and their experiences. By understanding the enablers of migration and the expanded empowerment of middleclass women as an outcome, the paper also contributes to understanding the recent sociocultural developments in contemporary Lebanese society and the effect of that on women's status in the family and society, especially that the expanded empowerment of middleclass women is believed to have a substantial spillover effect on women of lower socioeconomic classes, inciting them to follow a similar path (Shalaby, 2014).

A comprehensive understanding of people's decisions to migrate as well as their preferences and options requires a comparison between the migrants and those at their place of origin (Bilsborrow, 1992). However, as the literature is largely short of works on internal migration, a comparative study of migrant women with women who remain behind is beyond the scope and capacity of this research. This is because such comparisons require a larger research project with greater resources and time. For this, more research is needed to understand the contemporary migration of young women in Lebanese society, especially at the determinants and motives levels. More research is also needed on the returnee migrants, either after migrating for education or work, as

well as on women who have no migration experiences. Such research does not only add to the understandings of migration literature, but also contribute to tackling the social and cultural changes and their limitations in contemporary Lebanese society. Likewise, the study realizes the importance of including both men and women in the work. Yet, the narrow scope of the work limits the focus to women. The study highlights the salient internal movements of young Lebanese and calls for more research on internal migration and its outcome for both men and women in Lebanon. In addition, more research is needed on the extended internal migrations and the returnees, especially to understand the differences in the modes, determinants and motives of these movements. Moreover, including the families in such research can add a great value to understanding the Lebanese youth movements and their determinants. Consequently, the present study considers itself a launching base for further ontological studies and anatomies of the determinants and outcomes of internal migration, and paves the way to revisit contemporary rural-urban migration in Lebanon under a new light. On another note, the study will also impact other studies in social and cultural fields.

Chapter Two

Research Methodology

2.1 Methodological approach

The study follows a qualitative-interpretive methodological approach based on a methodical analysis of the participants' narratives and experiences in an urban setting within the context of migration. The qualitative-interpretive approach is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the attitudes, narratives, and experiences of the participants (Neuman, 2014; Silverman, 2016). Such approach helps in the understanding of the determinants and outcomes of the women's contemporary rural-urban migration within the milieu of a relatively conservative Lebanese society. The interpretation and analysis apply intersectional *modus operandi*, as it approaches the experiences and narratives of the participants from multidimensional and complex perspectives. Cultural, socioeconomic, and educational backgrounds of the participants; as well as their religiosity, perceptions, values, familial relations, and sexualities are recognized as potent determinants throughout the analysis process (Anthias, 2013; Cho, Crenshaw, & McCall, 2013).

2.2 Positional reflexivity

Considering my position as a woman sharing similar background and migratory experience with the participants and being initially driven by my own experience to conduct this research, I have adopted positional reflexivity, from an insider place, throughout the research process. It was pivotal during the research to maintain critical self-evaluation as well as constant re-evaluation of the data analysis and interpretation. This is to ensure minimal bias throughout the interpretation and analysis process. Approaching research from an insider position has its own advantages and challenges. Being an insider and sharing the same background and experiences with the participants helped immensely in building a solid rapport and trust with the participants, which led many of the participants to open up and share their most private and intimate experiences. The research generally gave many of the participants a feeling of

belonging, and a sense that their experiences were shared and understood. The sense of group belonging was often expressed by the participants through speaking in the plural form as members of an existing group. Commonly, their experiences were perceived as similar and shared. This repetitive sentiment was verbalized as “we are all the same” or “we all have the same experiences”. These sentiments were expressed when dealing with the positive experiences as well as the challenges that the participants faced. As Anthias mentions, belonging to a group can exist at the imaginary level, and it can affect the individuals’ socialization and generate claims for representation (Anthias, 2013). Considering that most of the participants share common networks, and that the research was launched with meetings, outings, and visitations prior to conducting the one-to-one interviews, established rapport and trust, which encouraged them to contribute to the study without inhibitions. Some of the participants even felt so involved with the research that they suggested themes they felt were important to them and should be included and highlighted in the research. Moreover, the insider position gave me a deeper insight and understanding of the participants’ attitudes and experiences. The insider position also helped me stretch the dimensions of the collected data and direct the interviews and meetings into broader horizons. More importantly, my obvious sensitivity towards the delicacy of some of the topics and subjects touched upon in the interviews supported building a stronger trust relation and empathy with the participants.

Contrariwise, being an insider has its own challenges. The major challenge faced throughout the research process was separating my own experiences and myself from the participants and their experiences; as well as minimizing the effect of that in interpreting and analyzing the data. This was particularly challenging during the data collection process where I had to be extremely cautious and conscious of not leading the conversations towards my own experiences. Giving the participants their own voices was the primary concern of the research. Positional reflexivity locates the intersections of the researcher with the studied subjects and the study itself (Macbeth, 2001), and necessitates a continual critical self-evaluation and a critical evaluation of the positionality of the self against the study itself (Berger, 2015). To this end, a systematic visitation and reinterpretation of my performance during the meetings and interviews, as

well as my reflections and interpretations of the participants' attitudes and experiences, were applied throughout the research process. Research is not immune from the researcher's biases, since absolute objectivity is an unattainable quest in the realm of research (Bourke, 2014). Thus, reflexivity recognizes the researcher's intimate relation with the research process and outcomes, especially from an insider's standpoint (Berger, 2015). For this, based on my position as a migrant woman who shares similar sociocultural and educational backgrounds and similar migratory experiences with the participants, I acknowledge that the research is not immune from traces of my situatedness at the different levels of the research process.

2.3 Research method and tools

The research methodology combines two research methods, structured and unstructured. It utilizes two tools for data collection, unstructured interviews and observations, in the form of meetings, outings, and visitations; and one-to-one semi-structured in-depth interviews. Both the structured and unstructured methods were applied in different settings, private and public spaces. The dynamics and the flow of the conversations did not seem to be dependent on the locale as much as the openness and willingness of the participants to share information. This is reasonable considering the caution that some participants would have towards sharing personal information in specific settings and presences (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2007; Gill, & Ryan-Flood, 2010), especially personal information with individuals coming from the same area of origin.

The semi-structured interviews adapted a format of open-ended questions that were followed for all the interviews. The open-ended questions allowed the participants to share their own voices and reflect on their own experiences (Bourke, 2014). The questions were designed to collect detailed data on the determinants of women's migration, their lived experiences, and the perceived outcomes of their migration. The one-to-one in-depth interviews aimed at ensuring consistency of the data tackled and collected from the participants and were used to construct the paper's main themes and findings. Moreover, the in-depth interviews allowed the study to capture the life changes of the participants through migration. This is mainly because the design of the questions

allowed the participants to revisit their experiences and reflect on them. These interviews were recorded.

The unstructured interviews and observations aimed at complementing the data collected from the structured interviews, and helped achieve greater clarity and authenticity (Joseph, 1988). For the unstructured interviews and observations, a journal of extensive notes taken from the meetings, outings, and visitations was kept and constantly updated. This journal keeping guided my decisions about what issues to pursue and investigate. The notes included the narratives and personal reflections of the participants, as well as my own interpretations and reflections. Hence, the analytical and reflexive process started with the onset of the research. The interpretations and reflections were revisited and edited several times at the different stages of the research. The insights and detailed data collected from the one-to-one interviews and the records in the notes were all categorized thematically, and constantly revisited and interpreted.

2.4 Selection and profile of participants

At the onset of the research process, three participants were selected as a convenience sample, followed by selection based on snowball sampling technique. Each of the participants was asked to recommend the women they know and who is eligible under the selection criteria. Two of the participants were recommended by an acquaintance who is not part of the study. Eventually, the research produced numerous unstructured interviews with eight participants, and eight one-to-one in-depth interviews. The referees were informed of the participation criteria. The research focuses on long-term migrants who initially migrated for study experience in Beirut. The initial migration for study experience aims at understanding the role of this migratory experience in shaping later migratory choices and decisions of the participants. This is because migration for education can lead to extended migrations, as women would seek better employment opportunities as well as increased freedom, agency, and autonomy (Ghosh, 2009). Eligible participants should be within the age range 25-35 and unmarried. Choosing participants between the ages of 25 and 35 was deliberate to ensure that the participants have had an extended migratory experience after the completion of their university studies. In addition, this choice was to ensure

that the participants have various and prolonged experiences and exposures in Beirut away from their place of origin. Migration can have a strong effect on empowering women when it separates them from their families and exposes them to extensive employment and social experiences (Ghosh, 2009 citing Hugo, 2008).

Choosing unmarried women was based on the research's interest in focusing on women who embark on the migration experience independently and establish their migration choices and decisions outside the household arena. The women's marital status is critical in determining autonomous and sole migration (Bello-Bravo, 2015), giving them better chances to migrate independently (Brockhoff, & Eu, 1993). The participants should also come from the Beqaa governorate. Choosing participants from a specific governorate serves to narrow the scope of the research. Lebanon, although a small country, is a mosaic of diverse cultures. The society is stratified into conservative and liberal communities with a range of different sociocultural and moral values. Although these differences are mainly marked by religion and confession, the differences extend to the geographical regions and areas (El Hajj, 2016). As such, the research focuses on women from a specific area in Lebanon. Including women from different areas in Lebanon would expand the scope of research and require an interpretation that is based on the background differences between the participants. Initially, the criteria did not state that the participants should be of a specific confession, or from specific districts or areas in Beqaa. However, as the recruitment was based on snowballing technique, the participants came from a specific confession, the Sunni sect, and from specific areas in Beqaa, namely central and west Beqaa areas. The common confessional background also serves my aim at narrowing the scope of the research by limiting the comparisons that are based on confessional differences. Additionally, as the differences are not only based on the religion, but also on the sect, choosing participants from a specific sect helps in authenticating the participants' shared background. Moreover, in matters like sexuality, which is discussed in this research, women of different Islamic sects are subject to different rules on the sexual practices. While, for example, mut'ah provides a leeway for some Shia women, Sunni women do not have the religious license to indulge in sexual activities.

Chapter Three

Internal Migration in Lebanon

3.1 Historical background

Beirut was a small coastal town with no economic or political significance throughout most of the Ottoman rule until the mid of the nineteenth century. With the Ottoman Empire's reforms, known as Tanzimat policies, which aimed at facing internal and external political and economic threats, Beirut's status as an urban center was elevated. Beirut's first municipal authority was initiated in the late 1860s; and by the beginning of the twentieth century, the city's topography and infrastructure were immensely improved. The changes in the global market during this period and the proliferation of maritime trade across the Mediterranean transformed the coastal cities to hubs for the flourishing trade mode. With these developments, Beirut evolved into the fount of the regional interactions and economic activities (Nasr, & Verdeil, 2008; Yassin, 2012). Beirut, the city, emerged as the economic and cultural center of Greater Syria (Halevi, & Zachs, 2013). The city enjoyed this elevated status owing to the prosperous silk industry in Mount Lebanon and to operating as a gateway for the trade exchanges between Europe and Mount Lebanon on the one hand, and the Syrian inland on the other. Following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the commencement of the French mandate, Lebanon and Syria were demarcated and divided into two separate states. 'Grand Lebanon', the newly formed state, expanded from including only Mount Lebanon to include main coastal cities, namely Tyre, Sidon, Tripoli, and Beirut that was declared the state's capital and the French headquarters for Lebanon and Syria. In addition to the coastal line, rural inland areas were attached to Lebanon including Akkar, Beqaa, and Jabal Amel. In line with the modernizing policies of the Ottomans, the French regenerated Beirut and established it as a gentrified economic, political, and cultural center. By and large, the French mandate's modernizing policies were centered on Beirut, an inclination that persisted after independence that was gained in 1943. The independent republic adopted a laissez-faire economic and social model that was mainly

sustained by the urban elites' skills and their networks with the Western markets (Nasr, & Verdeil, 2008; Yassin, 2012). Since its independence and until the early 1970s, Beirut grew as a regional urban center owing to the state's economic liberalism and laissez-faire policies, which attracted foreign capital from neighboring Arab oil countries, as well as remittances from the Lebanese emigrants (Fawaz, & Peillen, 2003). At the state level, the adopted modernizing policies promoted Beirut into the main political, economic and service center in the country, thus accentuating its metropolitan status and contributing to further expansion of the city's terrain and topography (Yassin, 2012). Henceforth, Lebanon witnessed a steady growth in its demography co-occurring with massive rural to urban migration. The rural-urban migration was dominated by internal migrations from the Beqaa and South Lebanon districts (Fawaz, & Peillen, 2003; Yassin, 2012).

The internal migration was ignited by the marginalization and neglect of the peripheral districts, which led to mounting inequalities and great income disparities between the capital city and the peripheral districts in Lebanon. By the late-1950s and mid-1960s exceptional social and developmental policies were initiated under the direction of President Chehab to halt the lopsided growth of Beirut; however, massive and accelerating rural-urban migration continued throughout the 1960s, marking the failure of these policies (Fawaz, & Peillen, 2003; Nasr, & Verdeil, 2008; Yassin, 2012). The lopsided growth of Beirut continued to accelerate the massive internal migration to the capital city. Whereby in the early 1970s, Beirut accommodated around half of the Lebanese population, while the rural districts lost more than third of their population due to internal migration. Beirut, by then, retained two-thirds of the economic activities in the country, and was the center of the state administrations (Kastrissianakis, 2016; Yassin, 2012).

Beirut is officially demarcated as a city with a municipality and as a governorate by itself. Nonetheless, the constant unhinged growth of the city led to a wider demarcation of the city, known as 'Greater Beirut', a definition that encompasses the city and its suburbs. The 'Greater Beirut' official and popular discourse, which was introduced in the 1960s, demarcated the city with ambiguous borders that incorporated

surrounding areas administered by Mount Lebanon governorate. According to this wider definition of the capital city, the population of Greater Beirut went up to around two-thirds the total population of Lebanon (Yassin, 2012). With the dramatic demographic growth in Beirut between the 1960s and 1970s, unregulated poverty-entrenched informal settlements spread around the city. These settlements incorporate low-income Lebanese, Palestinian refugees, and foreign laborers (Fawaz, & Peillen, 2003). Because of the city's growth and the state's neglect to address the poverty that spiked within the city's informal settlements and among the mostly Muslim areas surrounding them, inequalities started mounting within the city itself. Consequently, such neglect contributed to the surge of militarization among the Palestinian factions and the Muslim youth who were driven by poverty to join the Palestinian struggle against Israel. On the contrary, Christians were guarded and wary of such militarization and perceived it as a threat to the Lebanese state. This tense state-of-affairs culminated in 1975 with the outbreak of the civil war between the Muslims and Palestinians, on the one hand, and the Christians on the other. The first two years of the war were the most ferocious and were confined to Beirut and its surrounding areas. As a result, the city was destroyed and Beirut lost its regional power as an urban center (Yassin, 2012).

The outbreak of the civil war did little to halt the massive rural to urban migration in Lebanon. For instance, the massive migration to the city, especially from the Beqaa and the South, was aggravated by the internal displacement caused by the civil war between 1975 and 1990, as well as the internal displacements caused by the ensuing wars with Israel (UN-HABITAT, 2008, pp. 6). Hence, the unabated growth of the city continued during the civil war and afterwards (Yassin, 2012), ranking Lebanon as the country with the highest rate of urbanization among its neighboring countries (El-Baba, 2015). The disparities between the rural and urban areas in Lebanon have continued after the war (Makhoul, & Harrison, 2002), necessitating a continuum of rural to urban migration. Today, two-thirds of the Lebanese population are living in urban areas (UNDP, 2018, pp. 45), with one third of the population residing in the Greater Beirut area alone (Faour, & Mhaweji, 2014). Simultaneously, districts outside Beirut have suffered marginalization and neglect, especially with the social and development policies focusing mainly on Beirut (IOM, 2010, pp. 16). This is in addition to the lack of

regional and urban planning policies in the country (UN-HABITAT, 2008, pp. 6). The persisting disparities between Lebanon's urban centers and the periphery districts explains the high percentage of the population residing in districts different from those they are registered in. In Beirut, more than third the residents are internal migrants who are registered in other governorates, and the proportion of internal migrants reaches its highest in the southern suburbs of Beirut with estimates exceeding two-thirds the residents (CAS, et al., 2008, pp. 36). Most of the states around the world do not implement a registration system to document their population's intra movements and changes in place of residence (Skeldon, 2018). Few states that have planned economies, like China, design household registration systems that aims at controlling the movements of their populations across regions (DeWind, & Holdaway, 2008). Lebanon does not document or regulate the internal movements of its citizens, nor does it require internal migrants to change their registration of their place of residence, hence most of the internal migrants in Beirut and its suburbs are still registered in their place of origin.

3.2 Beirut's changing scene

Beirut has been always a vivid city where different worlds meet, amalgamate, and beget a realm of unique character where diversities diverge and converge in the city's small streets. Since the early Islamic era, Beirut had been a Muslim-Christian town. However, during the reign of the Memluks, as was the case with other coastal towns controlled by them, Beirut was established as Muslim-Sunni town. It was hence established as a city of the Memluks trusted coastal defense line against the Crusade invasions and other internal and foreign threats. By the early twentieth century, and under the Ottoman rule, most of Beirut's population were Christians. This was mostly due to the migration of Christians from Mount Lebanon and the Syrian Inland, in addition to the refugee waves from Armenia and Iskenderun. Christians were migrating to Beirut either for refuge or for economic and political interests (Yassin, 2012). By then, Beirut emerged as the hub for the Arab intellectual awakening, which resulted in redefining the Arab identity and in reviving the Arab language and culture. By the mid nineteenth century, the expanded trade and contact with the West necessitated the spread of formal education, which led to the flourishing of missionaries in the country. It is

then when modernization and westernization in terms of ideas and lifestyle started taking place gradually among the elite in Beirut. This vivid cultural and social history of the city resulted in the amalgamation of traditional Arab culture with western modernization (Halevi, & Zachs, 2013). In the succeeding period, between the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Beirut emerged as a prominent cosmopolitan city and as a trade center between Europe and Mount Lebanon on the one hand, and Syria's inland on the other. Thus, attracting a multitude of European merchants who frequented and resided in Beirut (Yassin, 2012). Beirut's sociocultural scene continued to become even more diverse. In the mid twentieth century, and following the Arab-Israeli war, waves of Palestinians fled to Lebanon seeking refuge. Most of these refugees settled in camps in Beirut and its suburbs. Enriched by its diversity, Beirut yet again emerged as a prominent multicultural and multi-confessional city (Fawaz, & Peillen, 2003; Yassin, 2012). Beirut's neighborhoods were a mixture of different cultures and confessions even when they were dominated by a specific sect (Seidman, 2009). However, this unique fiber of the city was targeted with the outbreak of the civil war.

Because of the war and its ferociousness, Beirut's multicultural milieu faded away, and mixed areas dwindled into homogenous sectarian neighborhoods. Christians were expelled to East Beirut and reciprocally Muslims to West Beirut and to Beirut's southern suburbs. Two Beiruts emerged with a physical militia line demarcating the two enclaves, the Christian East and the Muslim West. The civil war ended in 1990 with the peace settlement known as the Taif Accord. The agreement instigated a balanced power-sharing system with equal representations of Muslims and Christians, thus ending the war. The following year, the barriers constituting the segregation line between the two Beiruts were removed, indicating that the city and its people are reconnected. However, even with the efforts made to reconstruct the city and recreate its long-lost façade as the regional economic and cultural center, Beirut remained divided along the sectarian lines induced during the civil war. Such divisions are of spatial, class, sociocultural and sectarian nature (Kastrissianakis, 2016; Seidman, 2009, 2012; UN-HABITAT, 2011; Yassin, 2012). Areas in the city became homogenized and the neighborhoods divided into predominantly Christian, Sunni, or Shia localities. Spawned by the sectarian and

socioeconomic cleavages in Beirut, the social fabric of the city unraveled into segregated intra-bounded groups who forged their own intra systems of social relations (UN-HABITAT, 2011, pp. 79).

Despite all the vicissitudes, Beirut retained its position as the primary urban center in Lebanon for cultural, economic, and educational activities. The city, although small, remains home to a myriad of religions, sects, classes, nationalities, and cultures, which all contribute to its rich diversity and peculiarity (UN-HABITAT, 2011). Although praised for its vivid globalized cultural and intellectual life, Beiruti society is a polarized society with differing cultures. There is the multicultural city with a cosmopolitan façade with bars and restaurants and the western looks of women, and there is the city with a religious fundamental façade that is rooted in its sectarian communities, and traditional gender and paternalistic power relations. This polarization is reflected in Beirut's diverse streets and neighborhoods (Andersen, 2017). In Beirut, there are areas like Hamra, which is a mixed neighborhood with a range of traditional and liberal values. Hamra street is a cultural locale which embraces a cosmopolitan culture and rich diversity, as well as a hub for intellectuals and individual brands of life (El Hajj, 2016; Seidman, 2009). Other neighborhoods like Achrafieh is more liberal yet homogeneous neighborhood. On the other end of the spectrum, there are areas like the Southern suburbs that are more conservative and homogeneous, especially in terms of the women wearing the hijab or dressing in Islamic attire (El Hajj, 2016).

3.3 Situating the migrant women within Beirut's scene

The Lebanese have been moving to the capital city since the turn of the twentieth century. The internal migration in Lebanon was initially dominated by the Christian migration from Mount Lebanon. Following the declaration of the Lebanese state and the attachment of rural inland areas, Lebanon witnessed a steady rural-urban migration that started in the mid twentieth century and continues today (Fawaz, & Peillen, 2003; Yassin, 2012). The expansion of Beirut is credited to the rural-urban migration that has been in continuous growth (Kastrissianakis, 2016). Rural migration to the capital city was mostly from two governorates, the Beqaa and the South (UN-HABITAT, 2008). Migrants from Beqaa constitute almost a third of the population of Beirut and almost

fifth the population of Mount Lebanon (CAS, et al., 2008, pp. 36). This indicates the high proportion of rural-urban migration from the Beqaa governorate to Beirut and its suburbs. Rural migrants in Lebanon conventionally move into the city along the confessional lines and into homogeneous neighborhoods (Kastrissianakis, 2016). This might be especially the case for the migrant households in the city. For the young migrant women who move to the city on their own, homogeneity is the least desired attribute of the neighborhoods they prefer or choose to reside in.

As the women in focus had an initial migratory experience for studying, most of the participants initially lived in close proximity to their universities during their years of study. Most of the participants, except for two, were enrolled in a university that is located in a conservative Sunni neighborhood, Tariq al-Jadidah. For that, the participants' first move, though unintentionally, was along confessional lines. Nonetheless, the first move into one of the city's homogeneous neighborhoods cannot be treated as conformity to the traditional inward mobility patterns in Beirut. It is normal and logical for students to reside in close proximity to their universities when they migrate for education. Two of the participants were enrolled in a university that is located in a mixed neighborhood, Hamra street, and resided in that neighborhood during their university years. Considering that the study does not focus on migration for education itself, it does not dwell on the choice of the university and the rationale, consciousness and determinants of such choices. Thus, the focus here is not on the relation between the choice of a specific university and its location in the city, or on the meaning of that to the migrants and their families. Rather, the focus is on the change in location preferences within the city. For that, this section highlights one of the salient phenomena of the rural women's intra movements within the city and its periphery. Prior to describing the participants' intra movements, it is worth noting that the real-estate prices in Beirut are inflated mainly due to internal and international inward migration to the city, and due to the foreign investments in the real-estate sector. Hence, it is extremely challenging for the middle and lower income families, especially with a failed social housing sector, to own apartments in the city (UN-HABITAT, 2011, pp. 45). As a result, renting is the alternative method for housing in Beirut (Fawaz and Peillen, 2003). Considering that the participants are of middle income backgrounds,

none of them or their families own apartments in the city. The participants' living arrangements and intra movements are based on renting, which ultimately results in a heightened fluidity in these arrangements and movements.

The migrant women in the study experienced similar living arrangements and intra movement patterns within the city. To begin with, it is important to highlight that women who migrate to Beirut to study at a university usually go through different living transitions. While at the university, women live at shared dormitories with other female students. Later on, they move to rented apartments that are usually shared with other females, and finally the women move to live alone in rented apartments. However, due to the high livability expenses in Beirut, it is rare for women to live alone in a rented apartment (Drieskens, 2008). Capturing the details of each of the participants' living arrangement transitions and intra movements in the city is beyond the study's capacity and focus. For that, it broadly focuses on the salient commonalities of these arrangements and transitional movements. The preferred living arrangement for the majority of the participants is living alone. However, due to the high rents in the city, added to high livability expenses, the move has been a constant challenge for the participants. While few of them can afford making the move, most of the participants experienced irregularities in their living arrangements, succeeding to move alone at times and receding to shared apartments at others. The inability to have their own rented apartments is perceived by the participants as one of the flows of their migratory experience. For the migrant women, this meant that they are unable to enjoy their fullest privacy and independence. More importantly, it is a constant reminder of the dire economic situation and the scantiness of their financial situation. One of the participants considered it a reflection of her "failure" to achieve success in the city. Other participants considered it a reminder that city and the country are not theirs, a frequent expression that reflects a deep disappointment with the general situation in the country, especially the economic situation. For another participant, it was not an issue, not even desired. She attributed her disinterest to her financial constraints as well as the feeling of safety and security that living with other women provides her. Yet again, a remarkable phenomenon concurred with the living arrangements transitions, which is the intra movements among the city's neighborhoods and surrounding areas.

Neighborhoods are usually spaces for socializing and mixing with others (Seidman, 2009). The preference of specific localities reflects the individuals' sense of belonging. Beirut's neighborhoods reflect numerous spectrums of belonging. The neighborhoods are divided based on class, culture and sect. The majority of the migrant women had different intra movements within the city. The women who were living in homogeneous conservative neighborhoods, except for one participant, went through two stages of intra movements. The first stage was moving to more liberal and often diverse neighborhoods, and the second stage was moving to neighborhoods that they perceive to reflect their lifestyle and open avenues for them to socialize with likeminded individuals. In other words, the first stage of the intra movements was more to explore and immerse themselves in the city's vivid scene, the second stage of the intra movements was to search for a place with which they can identify and to which they can belong. The women were in continuous intra movements into selected neighborhoods searching for belonging. This "selective belonging" was not based on choosing neighborhoods that are socially cohesive. Rather, the choice was based on places where they feel the residents are likeminded and share their lifestyle (Savage, 2010). To illustrate the transitions, when the women were residing in homogeneous and conservative neighborhoods during their university studies, their next move after finalizing their studies and securing jobs was to move into more mixed and liberal neighborhoods like Hamra or more liberal yet homogeneous neighborhoods like Achrafieh. At a later stage, the women's preferences and selection of the neighborhoods were based on their search for belonging and on how they perceive the lifestyle of the neighborhood and its attendants and residents reflects theirs. The following account of one of the participants illustrates how the neighborhood selection reflects a deep sense of belonging and conformity:

I do not live in the city, I live in this street [Badaro], and this is the city to me. I wake up, go to Roy's [her favorite coffee shop], have my coffee and meet all these wonderful people. At night, I meet my friends at the bars. When I am bored, I just walk down the street and I meet hundreds of people I know. My apartment is close to everything I

need, the street is quite, and all the people who come here are similar to me. I can have great conversations with the people here, the people who come to this street are not children who want to get drunk and make the street noisy. Only grown-ups come here, people are tired of Hamra and its noisiness. It has changed, the people there are different now, it has changed, and you can see that the intellectuals prefer Badaro now... Badaro is Beirut to me. It is as if I am living in a bubble, and yes, you can say I am living in a bubble in the city; all people live in their own... Why should I go out if it gives me everything I need, the people I meet here are my community, we live in this same bubble.

As reflected by the participant's description of her own preference, the intra movement patterns reflect the women's own search for belonging and rootedness. It is at one stage, a step of distancing themselves from what they perceive a continuity of their village lifestyle. One of the participants described the neighborhood she first resided in as "worse than my village", explaining her inability to feel any social change by moving from her village to a similar conservative homogeneous setting in the city. Unlike the conventional belief that the migrants prefer neighborhoods that present familiarity, the participants were seeking difference, diversity, increased freedom and at a later stage belonging and rootedness in the city. It is worth noting that the one participant who showed no interest in the transition to live alone, showed the same disinterest in her refusal to move from her neighborhood, which is of a homogeneous and conservative nature. Like her explanation on the living arrangement, she attributes her disinterest to the feeling of safety and security, reflecting the participant's resistance to change and her adherence to familiarity. Similar to the living arrangement transitions, most of the participants experience irregularities in their intra movements, succeeding to move to their preferred neighborhoods at times and pushed to other alternatives at another. The main factor affecting their ability to make the preferred and desired intra movements is the financial. Due to the high housing and living costs in Beirut, the participants

sometimes opt to reside in the city's periphery or suburbs. Even so, the chosen locations are still liberal areas or neighborhoods. Such moves are usually taken when the participants are looking for apartments with affordable rents. Nonetheless, neighborhoods within the city itself remain the women's most favored place of residence. For the residents of suburban areas working in Beirut, they spend an ample amount of time commuting to and from the city due to traffic congestions and lack of public transportation. Added to this, with the high costs of fuel and transportation, residents of the suburban areas find themselves socially secluded from life in the city (UN-HABITAT, 2011, pp. 79). The participants cited the same reasons for their preference to live in the city rather than its surrounding areas and suburbs. This in addition to the extra services that they need to pay for in the suburbs, for example electricity bills and water services due to the shortages in these services outside Beirut. For that, the cost of living outside Beirut is higher for the participants, both socially and economically.

Chapter Four

Higher Education and the Changing Society

4.1 History of women's higher education in Lebanon

Eighteenth century Lebanon was under Ottoman rule. As the Empire was Islamic, education was primarily religious and focused on men; at that time there was no value to female education. Educated women came from the elite class and received their education through private tutoring or from their male relatives. Until the nineteenth century, women were denied any formal education and were not recognized on the intellectual and cultural maps of society. With the turn of the nineteenth century, a few intellectual women started to be recognized by the society and some even internationally. Their education was still informal, and the prominence of some women, either intellectually or culturally, was restricted to specific social classes and groups. Nonetheless, harsh gendered and domestic rules restricted the acceptance of women within the intellectual and social circles. Women's elevated intellectual and social status required marriage for recognition within the elite rank (Lattouf, 1999). Their voices could only be heard if they were married and had high socioeconomic status.

The nineteenth century witnessed the spread of formal education and missionary educational institutions. This was primarily due to the expanded trade and contact with the west. The missionary schools included girls and opened schools for them in Mount Lebanon. Initially, the Empire encouraged diplomatic, cultural and economic exchange with Europe, and opened doors to western education. Henceforth, European schools started to spread in the empire. The European educational and cultural ties were especially strong with the Christian Catholics (Halevi, & Zachs, 2013; Lattouf, 1999). By the mid nineteenth century, the increasing competition with Europe pushed the Ottoman Empire to enter into a modernizing phase through a variety of reforms. Education was at the heart of these reforms and was since nationalized. As a result, public schools spread and thrived in the urban centers, smaller towns and rural areas were not included under the sociocultural and educational modernizations. With the

upsurge of the Ottoman Empire, secular higher education institutions rose to support the administrative and military development, and these institutions were limited to males. The European's strong feelings about a superior Christian identity supported the education of Christians in Lebanon. By the end of the nineteenth century, other sects gradually began to acquire formal education (Lattouf, 1999).

By the mid nineteenth century, poverty, increased rural-urban migration, and emigration played a huge role in promoting women's economic participation, which in turn had a spillover effect on women's education. Women's education was needed to train and prepare women to be part of the workforce, and women were employed at the lower ranks of administrative jobs. These women's work was mainly to support their families financially. The inclusion of women in administrative-related education and administrative employment was limited to the poor in the cities. Middle and upper class women did not join the workforce (Lattouf, 1999). Nonetheless, during the late nineteenth century years, women were increasingly visible on the intellectual and cultural levels. Some women even started establishing their own publishing houses. Henceforth, their demands for more rights started to grow (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010).

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, elite women's education -except for elite Christian girls who received formal education at missionary schools- continued to be largely informal. Their education was in the form of study or literary circles that were held at the women's homes by rotation. By then, few wealthy women started initiating and administering small educational institutions; however, this was a rare occurrence. Women were still largely excluded from the public realm (Lattouf, 1999). The twentieth century witnessed the establishment of the first two American and French Jesuit universities in Beirut (American University of Beirut and Saint Joseph University) (EACEA, 2017; Lattouf, 1999). During this era, the emigration of males for education, mainly to Egypt, also flourished. Highly educated men started entering the Lebanese labor market. Desires for permanent migration driven by aspirations for better opportunities abroad, mainly to the Americas, started to emerge. By and large, the urban elites and the Christians, were the main groups who enjoyed the educational and cultural renaissance of that time. Though higher education institutions excluded women, they were able to acquire certifications for specific professions, namely midwifery, nursing,

and teaching. However, highly educated elite women appeared first in the medical field. These women received their education abroad or were trained by their male-kin physicians, mainly their fathers. Elite women's inclusion in higher education was driven by the market need for their expertise. Mass emigration, extreme poverty, and the shortage in medical, education, and administrative male professionals created a need for the women to fill the void (Lattouf, 1999).

Be that as it may, women were no strangers to the intellectual renaissance. Intellectual women were thriving, especially in the literary and journalism realms. The increase in women's education and employment further increased their demand for increased access to education and employment opportunities. Gradually, the universities, especially the American university, started accepting women in different majors, but they were only enrolled in the last two years of the university. Women had to complete the first two years at other higher institutions. In addition, women were banned from participating in the university's extracurricular activities. By then, Lebanon was under the French mandate. Women's inclusion in higher education eventually resulted in establishing a women's college (Lebanese American University), which prepared them to enroll in the last two years at the American University. Muslims remained resistant to women's higher education. For example, the first Muslim female medicine student in Lebanon was forced to abandon her education at the American university and resume it in the United States due to the threats that she and her family received from the Muslim community (Lattouf, 1999).

By and large, women's inclusion in higher education and employment shifted the society's attitude towards education. Formal education was not limited to the elite anymore; middleclass women were increasingly receiving formal education. Families started viewing education as an obligation towards their children, both their sons and daughters. Such social change came with a shift in the attitudes and views toward traditional gender roles, and women's work became more common (Fernea, 2000; Lattouf, 1999). Women's visibility at the intellectual, educational, social and political levels increased in an unprecedented fashion. Women initiated and administered organizations that offered health services, vocational training, and education to other women. Consequently, these changes increased the women's demands for greater

political and civil rights. The Lebanese constitution under the French mandate granted women equal rights except for the right to vote. With a long struggle, women gained their right to vote a decade after Independence (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010). By the 1950s, after the independence of the Lebanese state, higher education was exclusively private and centered in Beirut. Thus excluding the poor, the rural population, and the majority of women in the country. By then, the rural population was still deprived of education at all levels, and had very limited access to education, even at the primary level. This period witnessed the development of public education, especially secondary and higher education. A public university was established, the Lebanese University. The establishment of the Lebanese public university meant increased access to the disadvantaged groups. However, even this improved access was highly gendered. Considering that the public university had one branch only, its limited seats meant that Lebanese families gave preference to male children. Moreover, gender inequalities in accessing public higher education were accompanied by complex inequalities based on class and religion (Lattouf, 1999). By the onset of the civil war, female students in the public university constituted only one-third of the enrolled students (Khalaf, 1995). On the brighter side, by the mid-1950s, the women's college started bestowing four-year bachelor degrees allowing more women to attain higher education (Lattouf, 1999).

In 1975, the civil war broke out causing destruction, deaths, disabilities, and emigration, especially of males. This led to shortages in the labor force. Hence, these reasons combined with soaring divorce rates placed women in a state of an unprecedented urge to work and support their families. As for education, the geographical confessional divides induced by the war made it hard and dangerous for students and university faculty to commute within Beirut. This pushed the Lebanese government to branch the public university. Accordingly, new branches opened in different governorates including Beqaa (Lattouf, 1999). Moreover, until 1975, all universities were located in Beirut and Mount Lebanon. Ironically, the start of the civil war resulted in the spread of community-based universities in different areas around Lebanon. By the end of the war, universities were expanding and reaching the rural areas (Nahas, 2011). Since the end of the civil war in 1990, women's share in higher education has been equal to that of males (Lattouf, 1999), mainly due to the accelerated

expansion of universities all over the country, especially since the mid-1990s (Chaaban, 2009; El-Baba, 2015). Today, the spread of universities continues with the steady increase in demand and enrollment in higher education (EACEA, 2017; Nahas, 2011). Such accelerated spread of universities resulted in the initiation of nearly 40 universities in Lebanon, all of which are private except for one university, the Lebanese University with numerous branches (Chaaban, 2009). In spite of the expansion of universities in the country, Greater Beirut is still home to the majority of universities in Lebanon, which enroll more than two-thirds of the Lebanese students (Nauffal, 2004).

4.2 Education, the field of women's major success

In twenty-first century Lebanon, families heavily invest in their children's education expecting high returns of their investments in their children (Chaaban, 2009). They also pressure their daughters to complete their education and to work, nurturing their daughters a sense of achievement and equality (Drieskens, 2008). This increased attention to female higher education started in the 1970s and continues today (Chaaban, 2009). In the present day, the females' enrollment in higher education exceeds that of males (Chaaban, 2009; Charafeddine, 2013; Yaacoub, & Badre, 2012a, 2012b). In fact, women, specifically middleclass women, had outperformed their male counterparts in several specializations (Shalaby, 2014). Thus rendering education the field of women's major success and achievements (Charafeddine, 2013). Notwithstanding the women's radiant success in education, women have not achieved as much in other realms.

Although women's educational attainments seem fulfilled, high educational attainments have not automatically resulted in greater involvement of women in public enterprises. Women's participation is still largely impeded by structural barriers at the sociocultural, political, and legal levels (Shalaby, 2014). Moreover, this might be because women's education serves goals other than career aspirations. Such goals include the requirements of preserving one's social status, a general trend of attaining higher education in the society, or seeking increased socialization (Nahas, 2011). Women's economic activity tremendously increased from the 1970s onward. Yet, it remains extremely low (Charafeddine, 2013; Chemali-Khalaf, 2010; Fawaz, & Peillen, 2003), especially when it comes to highly educated women (Nahas, 2011). This reflects slow progress compared to their educational attainments. Even though women constitute

half of the society, only one-fourth of the economically active population in Lebanon are women (CAS, et al., 2008), and their economic participation is three times lower than that of men (CAS, & UNICEF, 2009; Yaacoub, & Badre, 2011). In addition to that, women's salaries remain lower than men in many categories of employment (Fawaz, & Peillen, 2003). Regardless of the women's underrepresentation in employment, professional women who hold university degrees are more than double the men with the same degrees (Yaacoub, & Badre, 2011).

On another level, patriarchy in Lebanon is embedded at all the levels of society, and is reinforced by the laws and the practices of citizenship (Joseph, 1999). Families, even when they encourage women's education and work, retain highly gendered family structures and intra dynamics (Drieskens, 2008). In rural areas, women's position is still essentially in the private sphere even when they are highly educated; they also have little access to the public sphere, and their views are largely ignored (Makhoul, & Harrison, 2002). Women's political representation is still very low (Charafeddine, 2013; Chemali-Khalaf, 2010), and women are even less powerful in rural areas in terms of decision making at the public level (Makhoul, & Harrison, 2002). The Lebanese constitution and the civil laws do not distinguish between males and females. However, there is no unified civil personal status law in Lebanon. Instead, each of the sects are left to manage their family affairs according to their religion. Consequently, women are subject to legal biases through the personal status laws that disadvantage women in marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance. Furthermore, the personal status laws enforce the traditional patriarchal gender roles within the family structure. Not to mention that the penal codes discriminate women in matters like adultery where the punishments are different for men and women, typically lighter for men. Additionally, men get reduced sentences for honor crimes. On top of that, women still do not have the right to pass their nationality to their children and spouses (Charafeddine, 2013; Chemali-Khalaf, 2010). With the larger picture of the women's status in Lebanon, the women's radiant success in education is not that shimmery after all.

4.3 Higher education and the youth on the move

Between the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Beirut emerged as a prominent cosmopolitan city and trade center. During that period, community

organizations, colleges, and universities started to emerge in the city. The prominence of the city's educational and cultural status continued to grow during the French mandate. Following Independence in the early 1940s and until the early 1970s, Greater Beirut retained all the higher education institutions in the country (Yassin, 2012). Today, Greater Beirut is still the country's educational center as it incorporates the majority of the universities, and subsequently the students (Nauffal, 2004). In fact, universities in Lebanon's urban centers are increasingly attracting more youth, who undervalue universities in rural areas that suffer from low enrollment of students (Chaaban, 2009) and shortage of qualified faculty. This is because urban centers usually offer better quality education, higher skills, and better job opportunities than the rural areas, and thus instigating rural-urban migration for higher education (Browne, 2017; Deotti, & Estruch, 2016; Temin, et al., 2013), regardless of the availability of educational opportunities in rural areas (Elder, de Haas, Principi, & Schewel, 2015). That is because families usually choose the best option for their children's higher education, and internal migration offers the aspiring parents and individuals access to better quality education, as well as better personal and cultural resources (Smith, & Jons, 2015).

Lebanese families usually allow their children to leave and live on their own in order to attend one of the universities in the urban centers, especially in Beirut (El-Hajj, 2016). Commonly, migration for education is male dominated in the Middle East (Bell, & Muhidin, 2009), and women's migration for education is still relatively small in proportion, yet a growing phenomenon worldwide (Ghosh, 2009). In Lebanon, the education of rural women has improved and the gap between males and females has decreased. However, not all rural women can have access to higher education. This is principally due to financial hardships, unavailability of higher education institutions in their areas, or their inability to migrate to Beirut to pursue higher education (Charafeddine, 2013). Although the Lebanese laws do not restrict women's freedom of movement or choice of place of residence, the patriarchal social system inhibits such freedoms. This is especially in rural areas where traditional norms are more rigid (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010). Subsequently, women's rural-urban migration for higher education is not expected to be of a great proportion in Lebanon. Nonetheless, women

are increasingly migrating alone and living on their own, especially in Beirut, either for the purposes of studying or working (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010; Drieskens, 2008).

Regardless of the young people and their parents' aspirations, education in Lebanon does not generate the expected high financial returns. Educated youth face many challenges in the Lebanese market, which act as drivers for emigration. These challenges include the high unemployment rates among the educated youth, internal political instability, the high cost of living, the incompatibility between the large numbers of highly educated youth and the market's low demand, and the youth expectations of earning higher financial returns than those available in the Lebanese market. These challenges, added to the educated youth aspirations of career advancement and larger exposures to the international markets, which are very limited in Lebanon, explains the high rate of emigration for employment. It is estimated that around half of the educated youth are emigrating annually. The emigration rates are especially high among educated males (Chaaban, 2009; El-Baba, 2015; Nahas, 2011). Lebanese women have lesser opportunities to emigrate (Nahas, 2011); despite that the present challenges in the Lebanese market affects women the most (Nasser, & Abouchdid, 2003). Verily, the high unemployment rates in the country translates into greater unemployment rate for women than men. This is mainly due to the added challenge of competing with men in a 'male-dominated' market (Roudi-Fahimi, & Moghadam, 2006). In spite of the diminished opportunities to emigrate, for some rural women, internal migration could offer them a window of opportunity to seek and fulfill their aspirations. This is especially true for rural women who initially migrated for higher education. This is because migration for education can often lead to permanent migration, as the women would seek better employment opportunities with higher returns than those available at their rural origin. Furthermore, when migrant women experience migration, it is probable that they will extend their migration due to increased freedom and agency they experience through migration. This is despite low employment returns (Ghosh, 2009).

Chapter Five

Women's Internal Migration in Context

5.1 Career aspirations, a driver and a tool

One of the major drivers for internal migration to cities is the economic, which is shaped by migrants' aspirations for higher employment returns and proper satisfying jobs (Chant, 2013; Elder, et al., 2015; Temin, et al., 2013). In Lebanon, income disparities between rural areas and Beirut has been the major driver of internal migration since the rise of this phenomenon. At present, employment returns in Beirut remain the highest in Lebanon while those in Beqaa among the lowest in the country (CAS, et al., 2008, pp. 109). Furthermore, it is easier and faster to find jobs in Beirut than in the peripheral areas in Lebanon. For example, securing a job in Beirut takes half the time needed to do so in Beqaa (Chaaban, 2009). Taking into consideration that employment in rural areas is based on patron-client networks that women have little access to (Makhoul, & Harrison, 2002), employment in Beirut provides favorable conditions for educated rural women who are capable of making the move. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the participants frequently cited employment and higher independent earnings as strong drivers for extending their migratory experience in Beirut.

High career aspirations is a common potent constituent in determining the participants' decision to stay in Beirut and not return to their villages. The desire to succeed professionally and to earn higher independent returns are strong drivers that shaped the women's decision to stay or return to the city. It is worth noting that half the participants returned to their villages upon the completion of their studies for varied periods. Nonetheless, the periods did not exceed a year in any of the cases. The return to their home villages was a temporary move, which constituted the waiting period to find a job in Beirut. The participants' first search for a job was centered on jobs in the city. Searching for jobs in Beirut was based on the women's belief that their place of origin cannot offer them proper employment opportunities nor provide prospects to advance professionally. It is important to note that the acquired education and skills through

migration are inherently linked to the migrants' decision to extend their migration in cities (Dustmann, & Glitz, 2011). This is because highly educated women seek better job opportunities through which they can improve their skills and advance their careers (Birchall, 2016; Ghosh, 2009). Additionally, earning independent returns is important to the participants. While some of the participants cited that earning higher returns in the city was one of the major determinants of their decision to work in Beirut, other participants were looking for independent earnings regardless of lower returns than that available at their place of origin. Two of the participants explained that their families owned businesses that they could work for and earn much higher than any other jobs would offer them. Nonetheless, the participants chose to look for jobs through which they can earn independent returns and feel more satisfied. In many cases, the participants made the decision to work in the city in spite of their inability to secure satisfying jobs, or in other words, as one of the participants explained, the job does not have to be their "dream job". Although Beirut offers diverse job opportunities as well as higher returns than those available in Beqaa, the participants often cited their inability to land jobs that they perceive satisfying in terms of its nature, prospects, and expected financial return. In fact, following the completion of their studies, employment was the pretext for most of the participants to extend their migratory experience in Beirut. Consequently, employment in Beirut is an end in itself and a tool used by the participants to extend their migration. The following account of one of the participants illustrates the way employment can be used as a tool to extend migratory experiences:

When I was in my last year [university years], I chose a specialization that does not have job opportunities in Beqaa. I wanted to choose something that has employment only in Beirut, and frankly to be able to justify to my family why I can only work here [in Beirut]. I was not that much interested in my specialization... I really wanted to ensure my stay in Beirut and my specialization was my only tool to do so.

The participant's account reflects the way securing specialized jobs in Beirut was used as a strategy to remain in the city. Proper employment was an instrument used to convince her parents of the rightness of her decision to stay in Beirut. In the same manner, most of the participants suggested that specialized employment was the negotiation tactic they used to extend their stay in the city following the completion of their studies. Nonetheless, high career aspirations remain of an inherent value to the participants. Dissatisfaction with the available job opportunities and the lack of career advancement opportunities were frequently mentioned by the participants. This indicates that although employment is used as a tool to extend their migration, the participants are concomitantly pursuing high career aspirations. Career aspirations grow with the participants' extended experiences in Beirut. At the first stage of their extended migration, employment offered them better and more desirable opportunities than those available in their place of origin. Such employments satisfied the participants' goals to access better job opportunities with higher independent earnings than those available at their place of origin, and ensured their stay in the city. However, with their extended experience in the city, the women began to look for more satisfying careers that meet their growing aspirations. One of the participants explained this progress as:

When I wanted to stay in Beirut and work here, I did not really understand what that would offer me. I just wanted to stay in the city... Yes, I wanted a job that would offer me something, and where I can learn and advance and I only saw that possible in Beirut. However, I did not think of what the city would offer me, I did not think of the opportunities that I can have or what the socialization here will give me. Now I know the value of my experiences in Beirut. Now I think of what I am capable of doing and what I can achieve. Maybe it took me so long to realize how much I grew in Beirut, but when you realize it, you start appreciating all your experiences. You appreciate how you change and grow here [in Beirut]. You start

thinking of what comes next, what you want in life, and what you can do and accomplish.

As reflected in the participant's account, at the onset of the women's career path, career aspirations were centered on finding better opportunities, which they compared to what is available for them in Beqaa. These career aspirations mature with their extended experiences in Beirut, and the women start pursuing higher career goals that meet their growing aspirations. This growing enthusiasm is shaped by the participant's experiences in the city, either professionally or socially. Nonetheless, the participants are facing frustrations in terms of employment returns. All the participants complained about their employment returns and their inability to make savings or cover expenses beyond their basic needs. The high rents and high living costs render it hard for the participants to make any savings. While employment returns in cities are higher than rural areas, the costs of living in the cities can generate unforeseen results for the migrants, in terms of the financial return of their migration. In addition to that, migrants might lose the welfare support provided to them by their families at home (Girsberger, 2015). Nonetheless, family support, either monetarily or materially, is common among the participants. For some of the participants, parents occasionally provide monetary support when the women are short of money. Even when the participants are not relying on their parents monetary support, the family still provides material support in terms of buying them items like mobile phones, cars, clothes, food supplies, or items for their apartments. Only one of the participants explained that she is completely independent and does not receive any kind of financial or material support from her family. Such direct or indirect dependency on the family and the participants' inability to earn enough to meet all their needs and to save create a feeling of lack of accomplishment. The women frequently expressed such feelings based on their financial shortage. Even so, except for one participant, the women still consider Beirut their preferred place to work and live in. In fact, the women's choice to live in the city has many layers to it; personal independence, freedom, sexuality, lifestyle, and cultural differences between the city and rural areas are pivotal determinants of the participants' extended migration.

5.2 Women's extended migrations: why Beirut?

Cities typically provide more economic opportunities as well as social and cultural opportunities than rural areas. Life in Beirut is attractive for being culturally and socially rich and inspiring due to religious and cultural diversity (UN-HABITAT, 2011). Indeed, cities have a charm about them as they offer people of rural origins opportunities to explore and to have different and new experiences, as well as diverse venues for socialization. In explaining the choice of extending her migratory experience in Beirut, one of the participants started with the charm of the city, with her perception of what the city can offer of new experiences and explorations:

When I think 'why Beirut?', I always recall a story that my school teacher told us in class. He talked about the time he spent studying in Beirut and how he used to get baffled by the people in cafes drinking colored drinks, blue and green drinks that he had not seen before. I wanted that! I wanted the weird colored drinks. I wanted all the colors of Beirut.

The participant's relation with Beirut started with a story she heard as a child. Her fantasies about the city were spurred by the possibilities open to her in the city. Her fantasies about Beirut have a strong impact on her desire to migrate, to explore and to have different and novel experiences. At another level, women's internal migration for education in Beirut provides them with elevated freedom to experience and explore themselves away from parental control (El-Hajj, 2016), which would incite them to extend their migration. This is the case for all the participants, except for one participant, whose case is discussed in the following section. The women relish the freedoms they enjoy in the city. In explaining their choice to extend their migration, the participants were constantly comparing their life in the city to life in their villages, and to what their lives would have been like had they returned to their villages and lived under its social and religious restrictions. For most of the participants, being able to live outside the confines of the families and traditional rural communities' surveillance and control is a strong driver to remain in Beirut. Some of the mentioned freedoms include

the women's ability to go out late or stay out late, go to bars or nightclubs, drink alcohol, choose how to dress, choose with whom to socialize, freely choose the topics that they want to talk about and discuss with others, freely experience intimate relationships, or freely express their opinions, values, beliefs and views. Such freedoms are unavailable for women in the rural Muslim areas that the participants come from.

In rural areas, women are expected to be reserved and adhere to the sociocultural norms that pervade life in their place of origin. Intimate relationships outside marriage are unacceptable within the rural community in Beqaa, especially for girls. This makes it hard for women to bolster their relationships with their boyfriends and partners and constantly subject them to the family and society's scrutiny. Additionally some of the participants explained that even their friendships and the people they socialize with are subject to scrutiny in their villages, which limits the women's ability to freely socialize and expand their social networks. Nightlife or alcohol consumption are prohibited in Muslim communities. Some Muslim men enjoy the freedom of going out late and staying out late, frequenting pubs or clubs and consuming alcohol; however, such freedoms are denied for women who are expected to adhere to Islamic law and culture and maintain a virtuous life. Some of the participants explained that women in rural areas do not always lead a life dictated to obedience and virtue, but rather a life of duplicity and fear of being shunned by their families and by the society if their private lives are publically exposed. Likewise, some women stressed on the limited freedom of expression in their place of origin, where they tend to censor their opinions and views on different issues that are considered sensitive in traditional communities. Some of the examples that the women gave on sensitive topics include religion, civil marriage, premarital sexual relations, cohabitation and homosexuality. One of the participants also explained that women are rarely engaged in discussing topics on politics or the economy as these are the domain of men, whereas women share more social conversations that are centered on their lives, families, children, housekeeping or fashion. It is often customary for men and women to be segregated in closed social events; such segregation is not based on separate spaces; it is rather based on occupying separate sides of the same room or space and conducting separate conversations. Since the

participant is more interested in politics and economics, she constantly feels marginal and isolated in the social visitations or events in her place of origin.

It is important to mention that not all the participants share a common perception of freedom. Most of the participants can be considered as liberal, in terms of their receptiveness to a life that does not adhere to religious and cultural norms and regulations, such as drinking alcohol and nightlife, having intimate partners and indulging in sexual activities. Nonetheless, for two of the participants, who are the youngest in the study sample, freedom is simply living in anonymity and without surveillance. Although these two women live by the guidance of religious and cultural rules, they feel that familial and rural communities' surveillance are not necessary. Freedom in the city, regardless of the way the women perceive it and interpret it, is a key constituent of their preference to live independently in the city. Responding to a question whether she prefers living in Beirut or in her village, one participant maintains:

I would return [to her village] if I could live like my brothers, if I can go out and return home whenever I want without anyone questioning me or be able to have a boyfriend openly, or for example drink alcohol with my brothers on a Sunday lunch... However, I cannot do that and I cannot live the way they want me to. I love what I have in Beirut and I cannot give it up.

It has been conceded that the leading drivers for women's migration include escaping familial and social surveillance and control, escaping discriminatory social norms that are based on gender, escaping pressure to conform to gender norms, or escaping restrictions on their freedom (Birchall, 2016; Chant, 2013; Deotti, & Estruch, 2016; Deshingkar, & Grimm, 2004; Jolly, & Reeves, 2005; Temin, et al., 2013). Likewise, most of the participants regarded living in the village an undesirable option due to the social restrictions and the lack of freedoms they enjoy in the city. On the returnees, i.e. the students who return to their villages upon the completion of their studies, the participants perceive it easier for males to return to their villages following their migration for education, as social control over males is less severe in rural Muslim

communities. The participants perceive men's return easier because they enjoy freedoms that women can only have if they live independently in the city. In articulating their conclusions, the participants frequently compared themselves to their male siblings, relatives or friends who studied in Beirut and returned to their villages. They relate the differences between the females' choice to extend their migration and the males' choice to return to the village to the cultural and gender norms that discriminate against women. Regarding the female returnees, most of the participants linked their return to their villages to two major reasons. The first factor is the women's personality and aspirations. The participants explained that some of the women who migrate to study in Beirut are "too afraid of change". In other terms, these women are resistant to the effect of the city life on their values and views. For this, in order to protect the values they carry from their families and rural communities, they return to their villages after completing their studies. As such, the return movement protects the women from any scrutiny over their morals by the rural communities especially that these communities view women's extended stay in Beirut negatively and often gossip about them. Moreover, the participants considered that the women returnees might have different ambitions and aspirations in life. They perceive the returnee women to be less concerned with advancing their personalities, skills, or careers and more focused on adhering to social expectations of marriage and having children. The second reason that the participants provided was concerned with family support. Women will be obliged to return to their villages if they do not receive the needed moral and financial support to extend their migration. This lack of support will make it hard for women to extend their migration experience in Beirut.

On a different note, the participants frequently mentioned the sociocultural differences between Beirut and Beqaa as a factor that shapes their preference of the city. The participants' immersion in the sociocultural life of the city greatly affects their preference of living in Beirut and shapes their attitudes towards rural life. The busy life of the city and its vivid scenery that includes a variety of leisure, educational, and artistic activities make life in Beirut more appealing to the participants than the boredom and repetitiveness of rural life. Most of the participants often described rural life as static, monotonous, or dull. Similarly, the diversity of the society in Beirut and the

participants' accessibility to different groups in the city have a defining role in shaping the participants' preference of the city. Most of the participants praise the city for its diversity and for the opportunities of socialization that it provides them. The participants oftentimes talked about their ability to socialize with likeminded people in the city, as well as to interact with people of different religions, cultures, values, or nationalities. Socialization in the diverse scenery of Beirut is considered an asset to the participants. Most of them describe their social and cultural experiences in Beirut with enthusiasm. They regard their sociocultural experiences as educational and transformational. That is, these experiences mold their personalities, widen their perspectives, and shape their views. Conversely, the participants' engagement with groups or networks they identify with and their exposure to diversity deepens the cleft between them and their place of origin. To illustrate this, one of the participants commented:

I cannot engage with people in my village or in the Beqaa in general. I cannot find anything in common between us... People are all the same there [in Beqaa], 'copy-paste' you know?. I cannot choose a certain circle of people as I do here [in Beirut]. People only gossip or talk about religion or TV series... We have nothing in common; I cannot have a decent conversation with anyone there [in Beqaa]. I have no relations with anyone other than my family... Look, I am not saying that it is their [rural people] fault. I mean I understand that this is how it is there; they do not know anything different. I know that I am privileged to have the opportunity to live and experience life in Beirut, and I know that had I stayed in Beqaa, I would have been the same as everyone else. I would think in the same way and have the same conversations. It is normal when you are in a place where people are all the same.

The participant's perception of rural life and attitude towards rural people are strongly affected by her experiences and personal relations in the city. As such, when the participants assess rural life, they do so by comparing it to their life in the city. Moreover, diversity is a defining mark in the women's preference of the city. The ability to choose with whom to socialize and to be part of networks that the participants identify with are pivotal social elements to the participants. In the same manner, privacy was repeatedly cited as a value that the women cherish and enjoy in Beirut. Having a private life and being able to enjoy experiences and self-explorations away from the family and community's surveillance is considered essential to the participants. Similarly, some of the participants mentioned the difference in social etiquettes between the city and the village as an element that makes them favor life in the city. For example, one participant talked about the difference in visitations etiquette. Visitations in the city are usually scheduled, whereas in the village visitors would show up unexpectedly. The participants are accustomed to the city's lifestyle and immersed in its social life in a way that makes it home for them more than their place of origin. Nonetheless, the women's ability to live in the city is closely related to the strong ties with their nuclear families and the support they receive from their families.

5.3 The role of the family

Women's migratory endeavors at a young age are typically dependent on the parents' approval and support, especially financial support (Temin, et al., 2013). Considering that the participants' initial migratory experience was migration for education, family's support was critical in initiating their migration. It is because migration for education is dependent on the family's financial support and the parental aspirations for their daughters to succeed at the social or economic levels (Browne, 2017; Jha, & Kumar, 2017; Temin, et al., 2013). Women need to be empowered at the family level to be able to migrate either for education or work (Mahapatro, 2013). As such, parents do not solely make the decision for their daughter's migration. Neither do women at young age make their decision to migrate by themselves. Young women's decision to migrate is usually a collective decision that is shared by the women and their families (Grabska, de Regt, & Del Franco, 2019; Temin, et al., 2013). Consequently, financial resources and women's personal and parental aspirations must go hand in hand

in order for young women to migrate, especially for education. Similarly, familial support is essential for young women to extend their migration, either temporarily or permanently, in cities (Browne, 2017). This is because women need their families' approval to stay in the city for financial support, rent, and living costs in times when they are not generating incomes.

For the participants, the family's support is constant throughout their migration. As discussed in the previous section, women still depend on their families' support when they face financial challenges, either monetary or material. In fact, in Lebanon, the family is the main source of security when the economic and employment conditions are challenging (Nasser, & Abouchedid, 2003). The Lebanese economy has been in continuous deterioration for years. The tumbling economy, which is coupled with rising inflation, has been long struggling since the end of civil war. It has been continuously affected by the internal political instability and regional or global economic and political instabilities. Recently, the unstable economic situation was even exacerbated by the Syrian crisis and the massive influx of refugees (Chaitani, & Diwan, 2014; Haykal, & Mehanna 2016; UN-HABITAT, 2011). The participants are not immune to the effect of the deteriorating economy and the rising inflation in the country. Indeed, the participants frequently mentioned their frustration and dissatisfaction with the economic situation and their employment returns. While in fact the employment returns in the cities are higher than that in rural areas, the costs of living in cities can generate unforeseen results for migrant women, in terms of financial return of their migration (Elder, et al., 2015; Girsberger, 2015). Consequently, even when the participants are employed and have independent earnings, they are still unable to sustain complete financial independency, and their families still support them when they need it. Due to the unfavorable economic and employment situations, women are inclined to resort to such support at times.

As the family is critical for enabling women's migration, the family is also key in shaping the women's preferences, either to live in the city or return to their villages. The participants directly relate their decision to extend their migration to their family's level of traditionalism. As discussed in the latter sections, women might decide to

extend their migration despite its low financial returns. While sociocultural life in the city is appealing to the migrant women, most of the participants referred to the freedoms they enjoy in the city as the most pivotal value of their migration. The lack of such freedoms in their place of origin is directly linked to the family's traditionalism, and indirectly linked to the rigidity of the traditional norms and surveillance of the rural society. The participants frequently talked about their freedoms in their villages within the context of the family first, and the society next. Two of the participants consider their families very liberal. One of these participants does not regard migration as a means to increased freedom and agency. At the time of the research, the latter participant was considering returning to her village. Her decision was primarily based on the low migration financial returns and her inability to make any savings in the city. She was not concerned with any surveillance or restrictions on her freedoms. The participant explained that her family is a liberal family that would not interfere in her personal life or put any restrictions on her choices and freedoms. She regarded the freedoms she enjoyed at her place of origin equal to those she enjoys in the city. As such, the family's openness and liberal lifestyle and values are key in determining the participant's decision to return to her village. Contrariwise, when the family is traditional and clings to religious or cultural norms and values, especially in terms of gender norms, it can be a key factor shaping the women's decision to extend their migrations despite the low migration returns. In contrast to the above-mentioned participant's decision to return to her village, the second participant who considers her family liberal as well, prefers the city and does not intend to return to her village either in the short term or in the long term. Although both participants enjoy some level of elevated freedoms at their place of origin that are protected by their parents, the latter participant regards her life in the village impossible due to her sexual orientation. The participant explained that being a homosexual in Beqaa is socially unacceptable, which makes it hard for her to be in relationships or enjoy her life as freely and openly as she does in Beirut. For her, her homosexuality renders Beirut "the only place" for her to live freely and as her true self. The following chapter briefly highlights the relation between women's migration and sexuality.

Chapter Six

Spotlight on Rural Women's life in the City

6.1 Sexuality and the city

Lebanese society is constructed around regulatory customs that intersect with gender, social class, family and kin, patron networks, sect, and place of origin (Joseph, 1993). The diverse Lebanese society with more than eighteen recognized sects and an emerging liberal secular community render it stratified into conservative and liberal communities. These communities convey striking differences in their sociocultural, moral and ethical values. However, honor and shame are values of great importance to all the communities, regardless of their differences in interpreting them (Clarke, 2008; El Hajj, 2016). Although the society has a relatively liberal lifestyle, it is still principally a patriarchal society and a relatively conservative one. Conservatism in the Lebanese society comprise firm traditional conservative sexual norms and boundaries that demand virginity before marriage (Awwad, Ghazeeri, Nassar, Shaya, Usta, & Younes, 2013; Chemali-Khalaf, 2010; El Hajj, 2016; Yasmine, El-Salibi, El-Kak, & Ghandour, 2015). Female virginity is associated with the family's reputation and honor in the society (Clarke, 2008; Dialmy, 2005; Seidman, 2009), and women are expected socially and legally to preserve their purity and chastity, hence the family's honor (Shehade, 2004). The "culture of honor" in the patriarchal Lebanese society considers 'the male' responsible for guarding and controlling women's behavior and sexuality (Baydoun, 2011).

Women's sexuality in the Lebanese society is perceived morally unacceptable. This is especially for the Muslim communities, which consider themselves under the threat of the immorality that is imported from the Western world through globalization and social media. This makes freedom very polemical within the Muslim communities, in all its forms, either sexual, social, economic, or political (Clarke, 2008). However, conservatism is not unique to the Muslim communities. Although Muslim communities are generally more conservative in terms of dress and freedoms, both Christian and

Muslim communities, especially conservative Christians, share the same moral values that are related to sexual activity and sexuality. On the other hand, individuals can demonstrate different values and views from that of their communities. Therefore, even among the same community, individual idiosyncrasies are prominent (El Hajj, 2016). Even though sexuality is taboo in Lebanese society, the young population are increasingly engaging with premarital sex, especially the males. However, the sexual activity carries serious social risks, particularly for young women (Awwad, et al, 2013; El Hajj, 2016; Yasmine et al, 2015). These social risks vary among the confessional communities as well as social classes (Clarke, 2008). The social risks are highest in rural areas, where the standpoints toward women are generally negative (Charafeddine, 2013), and women are more subject to honor crimes (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010). The social risks can be in the form of stigma, social exclusions and marginalization, and verbal and physical abuse. Nonetheless, the social risks decrease with the decrease of social control over sexuality (Clarke, 2008; El-Hajj, 2016). For this, internal migration can provide women the freedom to indulge in sexual activities. However, it should be noted that, it is hard to determine the effect of migration on women's sexual initiation and activity due to dearth of studies on this particular area (Temin, et al., 2013). Considering that the present study does not focus on sexuality per se, this section does not delve into the relation between migration and sexuality. It rather highlights one aspect of the rural women's experiences in the city.

The city typically shapes women's concepts and attitudes towards sexuality and liberation, as well as their views and perception of ethics and morality. The effect of globalization should not be undermined as well. El-Hajj draws attention to the role of globalization, in terms of the access and exposure to the internet and media, in diffusing the Western liberal values and norms into conservative societies like Lebanon. The diffusion of "modernized concepts" in Lebanon is occurring while the society as whole is not ready to cope with such changes (El-Hajj, 2016). The social change that is accelerated by globalization includes transformations in the attitudes and perceptions towards sexuality as well as sexual behaviors (Wellings, Collumbien, Slaymaker, Singh, Hodges, Patel, & Bajos, 2006). This is especially among young populations in cities. Young individuals who live independently in Beirut are generally open about

relationships and premarital sex, and often have intimate relationships (Drieskens, 2008). This was noticed for most of the participants who expressed liberal views on sexuality regardless of their religious beliefs. Among the participants, the two youngest participants have the most conservative views and values, especially in relation to sexuality. The rest of the participants have relatively liberal views. For some, the city allows them to experience their sexualities and indulge in sexual activities. Nonetheless, sexual freedoms in the city are accompanied with fears and anxieties, especially that the women are aware of the risks that accompany sexual engagements. The participants' concerns were centered on their families and the damage that this might bring on their relationships with their families. Consequently, women's sexuality is not public and only discussed in closed circles. In accordance to El-Hajj's argument, women who challenge the social norms that are related to sexual activity and sexuality do that in secrecy. This is because the women fear the harm that might be brought on their families by openly disclosing this. This shows that women, even when they challenge the traditional norms, are unable to escape the patriarchal system and are still submissive to it (El-Hajj, 2016). As such, the freedoms that women enjoy in the city, especially sexual freedoms, are contingent on the secrecy of such freedoms.

6.2 Women's participation in the city's public life

The previous chapter highlights the women's participation in the city's social and cultural life. This section focuses on the participants' civic and political participation in the city's life. The city typically provides a setting where women's private and public lives intertwine (Aghacy, 2001). The city is not only a field for women to pursue freedom and independence; it is also a field where they seek civic and political participation and involvement. In rural areas, women's civic and political participation and involvement are low, and there is lack of civil or official associations for rural women (Charafeddine, 2013). For five of the participants, the city provided them the opportunity to greater participation and involvement in the civic and political life of the country. More importantly, the city allowed the women to form their own political principles and views. During the informal meetings and interviews, the participants often discussed politics either philosophically or in relation to political life

in Lebanon, or in the region, or global politics. While discussing the effect of their extended migration on forming and shaping their political principles and views, four of the five participants consider their migratory experience to have the pivotal role of allowing them to form their own principles and beliefs. The participants explained that at the beginning of their migratory experience, especially at the stage of their university studies, their political principles and views were identical to their parents. However, their extended migration in the city allowed them to diverge from their parents' views that are typically shaped along sectarian lines and patron-client relations. The latter participants explained that their migration experiences allowed them to think beyond the sectarian patron-client politics and form their own political philosophies and opinions. One of the five participants explained that her migratory experience and social relations in the city provided her the opportunity to thrive politically and get a prominent role with the political party she supports. Migration in her case did not alter her original political views and support for a sectarian party, but rather expanded her chances to be politically engaged.

Except for the latter participant, the four other participants are more politically engaged in the city than their place of origin. The participants' political engagement and participation is more of social and civic nature. In Lebanon, women's activism and civic involvement has significantly increased since the end of the civil war, and women commonly participate in social and political protests (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010). The participants have varied experiences in activism and civic involvement. Some of them are more engaged in feminist movements and organizations, others in the development field, and two were actively engaged in the recent youth social and political mobilizations like the demonstrations on the garbage crisis in 2015 or the Beirut Madinati campaign, which was an independent secular campaign that calls for reforms and fights sectarianism and corruption. One of the participants who was active in demonstrations on the garbage crisis commented:

It was only us, the outsiders there in the protests. We were all people coming from the villages, Beirutis [Beirut's residents] do not really care for the city, and they were not

there with us. They are not present anywhere; you cannot see them. All the activists in Beirut come from outside Beirut. We fight their battles.

People from all the areas in Lebanon participated in the 2015 protests (Harb, 2016), and there are no reports or data that refer to the participant's claim that the internal migrants in Beirut led the protests. However, the participant's comments reflect her belief that internal migrants are the drivers of change in the city. By claiming to fight for the city on behalf of its residents, the participant is claiming the city as hers. Such claim reflects the women's attachment to the city and their sense of belonging to it. Such feelings of belonging are also evident in the participation of some of the women in the Beirut Madinati election campaigns in Beirut while refraining from participating in the election campaigns in their place of origins. This is despite the fact that the participants are registered in Beqaa governorate and can only elect in the Beqaa, either in the municipal or parliament elections.

Chapter Seven

Migration and Empowerment: Different Experiences

7.1 Making choices

Women's choice making started with the decision they made with their families to migrate for education. Migration for education equipped the women with education, skills, knowledge, and experiences that influenced their decision to extend their migration in Beirut. Notwithstanding that, young migrants commonly undergo complex transitions including cognitive, interpersonal, and social transitions, which shape their future migration decisions (Gavonel, 2017; Juárez, LeGrand, Lloyd, Singh, & Hertrich, 2013). Although extended migration requires family support and approval, the participants made the decision to extend their migration independently. None of the participants indicated any role of their families in making the decision to extend their migratory experience in Beirut. Extended migration expanded the participants' ability to make personal choices and to develop independently outside the influence of their family and community. The participants cited that their migration experiences in Beirut expose them to different cultures, sets of values and views, and lifestyles. These exposures challenge the women to broaden their thinking, knowledge, and perspectives on different issues. One of the participants stated:

When I moved to Beirut, I always felt I am ignorant on everything. I did not know the books they [residents in Beirut] read, the music they listen to, or anything about the topics they discuss. The city compelled me to learn and better my knowledge, I had to catch up by myself. I had to read, to listen to music that I did not know, to build knowledge on different topics. Beirut transforms you by challenging you to become more knowledgeable and more informed. You need that to communicate with the people and to feel equal to them... When people talked about

different ideas or views, I assessed not only my knowledge, but also all what I believed in, considered a fact, or took for granted.

Living in the city motivates migrant women to expand their knowledge and perspectives at different levels, be it artistic, cultural, social, or political. Since migration places migrant women outside the contexts that they are familiar with, it expands their ability to transform their awareness and expand their options (Kabeer, 2008). As discussed in the previous chapter, women, for example, form their own political principles and views in the city. The participants do not necessarily share the same principles and views, nor do they share those of their parents. Through socialization and interaction with people of different political views, the women experience extensive exposures to different political philosophies, principles, and opinions. These exposures allow the women to assess their principles and views and choose those that align with their expanded awareness and their identities. Similarly, the pluralistic society in Beirut helps migrant women to transcend differences and accept the 'other'. Socialization in the city with people of different religions, cultures, races, sexual orientations, or nationalities alters the participants' perceptions of the 'other'. Most of the participants cited variations in their perceptions and attitudes towards differences with those of their parents or communities. While most of the participants embrace tolerance, they cited that their parents, family, or rural community still hold negative stereotypes. Some of the participants explained that they constantly try to communicate these divergences either with their parents or with members of their communities. Though some participants believe that they can influence others' perceptions and attitudes, other participants feel it is hard to make an influence when the gap of understanding and accepting differences is steep between them and their families and communities. It is worth noting that not all the participants embrace the same level of tolerance towards varied differences or groups.

On another level, religion is one of the frequently mentioned topics by some of the participants. The level of religiosity vary greatly among the participants. The participants were divided between believers who do not practice the Islamic rituals,

practicing believers who practice most or some of the Islamic rituals, and nonbelievers. While one of the participants considers herself a practicing Muslim who adheres to the traditional Islamic and rural cultures, the rest of the participants adopt varied views and lifestyles. Some of the participants combine opposing views and lifestyles, choosing religion and tradition in some aspects of their lives and practicing liberal experiences in other aspects, like indulging in sexual activities or drinking alcohol. The latter participants and the nonbelievers who adopt liberal views and lifestyles share a common schism between their life in the city and their life with their families and communities in their place of origin. The participants have the freedom to choose their values, beliefs, and lifestyle in the city; however, most of these choices are concealed in their place of origin. Most of the participants do not openly share their views, values, beliefs, or lifestyles with their families or members of their communities. They rather choose what to share and the limit of sharing based on assessing their parents' or the individuals' capacity of understanding and acceptance. As such, the participants are reflexive. They assess and weigh how much, where, when, and with whom they can freely express their opinions and beliefs, or the way they prefer to live. Most of the participants explained that they usually alter their behaviors and the way they talk and express themselves when they are in their villages. Such alterations are also in the way some participants dress, one of the participants explained that she cannot wear all her clothes in her village, as they are considered inappropriate. Only two of the participants consider themselves living in harmony between the city and their village. Their behavior and self-expression is consistent whether in the city or in their place of origin. It is worth noting that these two participants come from liberal secular families. Another participant, also expressed that she lives in the city in the same way she is expected to live in her village, nonetheless, the participant gave contradictory statements as she also expressed that she enjoys freedoms in the city, like going out with her boyfriend or going out late at night, which are difficult for her in her village.

Marriage is another sphere where the participants make relational choices. Women in Lebanon are expected to marry from within the same confessional community. The family has a great influence on the choice of partner, and usually has expectations of the ideal partner for their daughters (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010; Drieskens,

2008). Some of the standards for the ideal partners that the families expect the participants to marry include being of the same confessional group, being educated, having a good job, being of a reputable family, and being well off. The participants who discussed the issue of marriage stated that they often find themselves in a position where they are unable to balance between their expectations of the ideal partner and their parents' expectations. One of the participants explained that her ideal partner would be a person who shares her beliefs, views and lifestyle; she expects her ideal partner to be liberal and sophisticated. While on the other hand, her family expects her to marry a well off, educated Sunni man. The participant, who is thirty-one years old, does not consider marriage an option for her unless she finds someone who would meet her expectations and her family's expectations of the ideal partner. She explained that her father's high social status in Beqaa prevents her from taking decisions that would negatively affect her family's status and reputation. The participant's family used to pressure her on the issue of marriage, often trying to introduce her to bachelors or asking her to attend social events, like weddings, where she could meet someone. The pressure came from her parents as well as members of her extended family. Nonetheless, these pressures decreased with time as she learned to be assertive in regards to choosing her partner by herself and to delay marriage. She achieved this by constantly refusing her family's invitations to match her with a possible future husband and explaining to them that she will only get married on her own terms and to a person she chooses. Another participant explained that her age of thirty-four helped her convince her parents to accept her partner who is Shite and does not have the lucrative job or income that her family expects. She explained that her family, especially her father, would have not approved of her partner had she been younger. The participant explained that being unmarried at her age creates a perception among her family and community that she cannot find the ideal partner they expect. As such, her age helped her negotiate her choice of the man she wants to marry. In Lebanon, parents' consent to marriage is of great importance for women, this is regardless of their own perceptions or attitudes towards their personal choices and freedom. Women seek their parent's consent due to their fears of rupturing their families and of becoming alienated from their families and community (Drieskens, 2008). Considering the importance of the

family's consent, the participant explained that although her parents approved of her partner, she was forced to make compromises regarding the type of marriage. The participant is a nonbeliever who prefers civil marriage. On the other hand, the participant's family expects her to have a religious marriage following the Sunni tradition, and they would not approve of a civil marriage. In Lebanon there is no civil marriage, it is generally consumed abroad (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010). Hence, the participant agreed to her parents' wishes to have a religious marriage arguing that religious marriage would be cheaper and less trouble to her with her family. Nonetheless, her decision to accept her parents' wishes required her to negotiate religious marriage with her partner who strongly opposes it, which in effect strained her relationship with him and led them to postpone marriage.

On another level, extended migration enabled some of the participants to make independent choices regarding their education and careers. Two of the participants talked about the way their extended migration enabled them to chase their dreams and change their majors and careers or simply have different work experiences that were otherwise impossible to do in their villages. The two participants explained that their choice of their university studies was mostly influenced by their parents' preferences. Working in the city allowed the participants to pursue degrees that they are interested in and that are more meaningful to them. The participants are enrolled in art programs at the Lebanese University, which is the only university they can afford on their own. The participants explained that pursuing a degree in arts was not an option for them when they moved to study in Beirut. This is because their families would have not supported such choice. One of these participants explained that changing her major was a life changing decision for her. When the participant started her degree in Fine Arts, she quit her corporate job that she did not like and took jobs that are considered unacceptable for her family and community. The participant initially worked as a waitress and later as a bartender in different pubs, and she described her experiences as "fascinating and inspiring experiences". The participant explained that through working in pubs, she could connect with people of different cultures and life views, which helped her to deepen her artistic work and perspective as well as build connections with artists and people involved in the art and culture scenery in the city. Such social connections,

eventually, helped her to land a job in an art gallery, which she considers a great opportunity to her in the art field. The participant explained that her family was oblivious to her work in pubs and she used to tell them she is working in NGOs or other formal jobs. This is because her family and community consider such jobs disgraceful and shameful for women. The participant explained that although taking such jobs put her at the risk of being shamed by her family had they found out, she needed to take the risk and get her chance of choosing the life and career path she desires. The participant explained that her “boldness” in making such decisions and steps in her life paid off as she is now working at a job that she loves, and she is currently working towards completing her Master degree in Fine Arts.

7.2 Negotiating rights and roles

As demonstrated in the above section, women’s choices are influenced by family relations and cultural background. Such negotiations reflect that the women understand the power that the familial relations and sociocultural system exert over their lives, and they position themselves in spaces where they constantly negotiate their integration and disintegration with these prevailing systems. Through such negotiations, the participants make relational choices that enable them to protect their freedoms and preferences in the city as well as preserve strong relations with their families, and other participants with their communities. Women go through a myriad of negotiations over their gender rights and roles in their daily lives, which this section highlights. The city gives rural women freedom from the confinements of the traditional rural community, such liberty from the rigid norms and traditions encourage women to challenge them. The previous chapters shed light on some of the participants’ actions against traditional gender norms, specifically those of Muslim rural communities. Some of the examples of their defiance can be by simply going out at night alone, living alone, having boyfriends, drinking alcohol, or for some experiencing sexuality. Batliwala explains that women may not openly challenge patriarchy, yet they defy it through acting against it. They go through an independent struggle by challenging the existing power-relations to achieve greater control and power over their lives, and to achieve change either in their personal lives or at other relational levels (Batliwala, 1993). The struggle against the existing power-

relations for the migrant women can be either in their lives in the city or in their places of origin with their families and communities.

One of the most powerful explicit actions that the participants have made against gender inequality is the demand for equal inheritance rights. In Lebanon, each sect has its own religious personal status law. These laws organize family matters such as marriage, divorce, custody, and inheritance (Charafeddine, 2013; Chemali-Khalaf, 2010). Islam allots women lower shares of inheritance than that of men (Hamdar, Hejase, El-Hakim, Le Port, & Baydoun, 2015). While non-Sunni women in Lebanon have equal inheritance rights and are subject to civil inheritance laws, Sunni women are subject to inheritance laws under the Islamic Sharia. Under the sharia law, the male inherits double the share of the female. Moreover, Muslim women customarily cede their inheritance shares in assets like lands or houses to their brothers under the dictation of the social norms that requires the male line to retain the land (Chemali-Khalaf, 2010). Nonetheless, inheritance is male preferential among all the confessional groups in Lebanon. The cultural and social norms generally, regardless of religion, dictates women to give up their inheritance to their male relatives, especially their brothers. In return, women might receive small amounts of money, and in many cases they do not (Usta, Makarem, & Habib, 2013). Two of the participants expressed their resentment towards the laws that disadvantage women in inheritance. One of the participants explained that she fought for years for equal inheritance share with her two brothers. The participant constantly demanded her father to give her equal shares as her brothers arguing for equal rights and based on the necessity of guarantying her future. Following years of insistence, her father dictated to his family that all his children should receive equal shares. Although her father did not transfer or formally register any of his assets to his children, however, in a noticeable step, he gathered his family to inform them that his will to them is to ensure that his daughter receives equal shares as her brothers. The participant explained that her awareness of women's disadvantaged and inferior status empowered her to fight for her rights, even if that was only at a personal level.

Had I not understood the gravity of our status as women
in the society and the world, I would have not been able to

demand my rights. After living for years in Beirut, I started to see myself as a human being, as a person of existence, not only a girl living in a multitude of fears. I understood that if I did not demand my rights no one would willingly give them to me. I demanded to have equal inheritance share from my father, I made it clear to my family and my two brothers that I will not be a good girl who will just leave everything to my siblings. In fact, after opening the subject many times, my father agreed and made it clear for my brothers that his inheritance will be divided equally between them and me... I deserve equal rights like them. I also need security. If the common belief is that men need the land and money more, well, I need them most, I need to know I have something to secure my future. I need to know that if I failed and if I had to go back to my village, I can have my own house there... I am planning to start building a house in the land that I will inherit once I start earning enough money.

The participant succeeded in convincing her father to acknowledge her right to get equal inheritance share as her two brothers and to get, at least, a verbal assurance of such right. For another participant, the battle did not lead to any change in her father's stand on inheritance. The participant explained that her father had registered most of his assets to his only son, and did not register any to his four daughters. Her father's argument over his decision to transfer his assets to his son is based on his belief that sons should inherit from their fathers, as for women, their fathers should provide them a prosperous life and proper education so that they would later on have good marriages and enjoy their husband's wealth. Such stand indicates that her father believes in a patriarchal social system that instigates the transfer of authority and guardianship from the father to the daughter's husband. Thus, providing a prosperous life and proper education are not solely meant to empower women, but also ensuring a high status for them and subsequently marriages that safeguard the perpetuation of such high

socioeconomic status. The participant elaborated on the matter of sending her to study in Beirut, clarifying that although her family hold such views, they still have very high expectations for her to excel professionally and often push her to look for opportunities to grow professionally and even pursue higher education degrees. Such attitudes reflect that her family has high expectations for their daughters and pressure them to attain high degrees and excel professionally. Nonetheless, for some families, especially fathers, high expectations for daughters are accompanied with rigid patriarchal views on family matters, especially regarding marriage and inheritance. Women are still considered dependent on male guardianship, which is reinforced by the Islamic Sharia and rural culture. The participant explained that her family is not religious, and that they observe Ramadan from the all other Islamic rituals. However, religion is sporadically used to justify male's control over inheritance or to control women. Such control over women is manifested in requiring women, for example, to dress and speak modestly, or to avoid relationships outside wedlock, which can range from simply being in a love relationship with a man or indulging in activities that are deemed dishonorable such as drinking alcohol or sexual activities. This reflects that although some families in rural areas exhibit facets of alterations in their attitudes towards women, especially in education and work realms, they still adhere to patriarchal sociocultural norms that restrict women. However, such adherence to patriarchal values and norms vary between families. The participant is aware of her family's capacity of embracing and nurturing empowerment that is based on equal rights and roles. Although she is aware that her arguments with her father over equal rights and inheritance share might not yield any effect, she made it clear that her insistence on frequently discussing the topic with her father aims at making her younger sisters understand that they are entitled to the same rights as men and should never quit demanding equality. Interestingly, the two participants who demand equal inheritance rights relate their courage in voicing such demands to their migration experience that allowed them to understand their status within their families and society, and understand their rights and the way laws and sociocultural norms deprive them of equality. One of the participants commented on rural women's attitudes towards equal inheritance rights as follows:

Girls and women in Beqaa understand the world only as they have always known. Even if they are educated, they only seem concerned about being good daughters, homemakers and mothers. They see their world through the male in their lives. In fact, they guard and defend the right of men to have more rights and access to money and inheritance, and justify this by referring to the righteousness of Islam that prescribe their rights... For them, men are supposed to support them and take care of their needs, so it is not a concern for them... Actually have I not had the opportunity to move to Beirut, I would have been just like them, I would have not been that different from women there [in Beqaa]. It is difficult to think differently if you do not have the chance to see and know what is different.

The participant's account reflects that the participant feel that her migration experience gave her advantage over women in her place of origin in regards to increased knowledge of her rights and her ability to act upon them. However, not all the participants share the same views, nor do they share the same level of awareness on their rights and roles, or act upon them in case they do. Some of the participants prefer to live in the city in accordance with their own principles of freedoms and equality, but choose not to negotiate them with their families and communities. One participant thinks it is pointless to try to negotiate rights or roles with her family. The participant commented:

I cannot change my family; that is the way it is. Even the simplest things do not change. For example, my father and brothers always come home and ask my mother or me or my sister to make them sandwiches. If one of my brothers asked for a sandwich and no one made it for him, my father intervenes and asks us to make it. Most of the times

I refuse and ask my brothers to do it themselves, it is not rocket science... However, other times I am too tired to argue, it is just pointless, and I just make it. It bothers me how you are always expected to meet their needs, even if it is in the middle of night. They come late from their outings and expect you to be ready to feed them... I live here [in Beirut] the way I want, I define how my relationships should be and the way people treat me. I would never except such attitude from my partner and would never be with someone who expects me to feed him and bring him a glass of water whenever he asks for it.

The participant explained that her partner should be someone who considers her an equal, and who would share housework with her. She explained that she does not have the power to change the gender-roles dynamics in her family or in society, but she can negotiate her role as an equal to men in her life in the city through standing up for equality at work, and with her friends and partner. Another participant exhibits a strong stand on women's role and rights. The participant is an activist in a women organization and stresses the importance of fighting for equality on the personal level as well as collectively. The participant stressed that women should be assertive either in their personal lives in the city or with their families and community. She explained that she gives little regard to what others might think of her, even if it was her family. She considers women's battle for freedom and equality to be at every level in their lives, the personal level, the social level that is their social relations, and the organizational and legal levels. Her following account reflects the way her constant negotiations interrelates between her personal life, social life and her activism at the organizational and legal levels.

It is an endless battle for us, we gradually learn how to deploy opportunities and push for change, even if these are small steps. My family is not a liberal family, so it has not been easy for me. However, I try as much as I can to

be myself and make them accept who I am and accept my choices in life... Actually, my sister took the same path previously and paved the way for me. She is the ultimate embodiment of a free person who lives by her own terms. I think it was harder for her since she was the first one of us to move to Beirut. I was very young, but I remember her clashes with my family to an extent that she was forced to move back to Beqaa. They simply cut off the money and told her 'you need to come here [to Beqaa] and continue your studies at a university close to us'. She had to move but soon after she dropped out of university and left the country to work in the Gulf. When it was my time to fight for who I am and for my freedom and decisions, my parents were more lenient and accepting of who I became... My work as a feminist activist would have no meaning if I do not challenge my family and the society. I represent what I stand for and believe in regardless if I am here [in Beirut] or in Beqaa, if I am with my family or with people from my village, or people I meet in Beirut, or officials or whoever it is.

As reflected by the participant's account, her activism starts with her personal life and her assertiveness to be accepted the way she is in her family and community. The participant voices her views and stands for women's rights and equality regardless of the place or the people's level of acceptance. However, in a different conversation, the participant expressed that she avoids discussing issues like sexuality with her family and members of her community. She considers her sexual life to be private and does not concern anyone but herself. This indicates that even when women are vocal on different issues related to their gender roles and rights or freedoms and choices, sensitive matters, especially sexuality, remain off-limits. On a different note, the role of migrant women in their sisters' lives seems to be central. Two of the participants frequently mentioned the role their older sisters, who had previous migratory experiences, in paving the way to

them through initiating the negotiations for their freedoms, choices, roles and rights with their families. Likewise, the participants with younger sisters often supports their sisters' right to freedom and to experience, as well as to make free choices. One of the participants recalled the time when her youngest sister was applying to universities. Her family did not approve of her sister's education in Beirut; they considered her too young and immature to move alone to the city. They also considered the city ruinous to the participant, as they see most of her ideas and behaviors unacceptable and unpleasant, and do not want her sister to change as she did. However, the participant stood for her sister's right to have her chance to move to the city and enrich her experience. She negotiated that with her parents through explaining the difference between the quality of education she would receive at a university in Beqaa and a university in Beirut, as well as the importance of diversity and socialization in the city in shaping her personality and perspectives. The participant also encouraged her sister to make her own choice of the major she wants, and to neglect the pressures from her family or community to major in specific specializations that they highly value.

On the other hand, one of the participants cited a negative role of her older sisters, who did not have a migratory experience. The participant explained that fighting for freedoms and choices is more challenging with her sisters than her parents, as her sisters constantly criticize her behavior and choices and ask her to respect their customs and traditions, often accusing her of being disgraceful for matters as going out with male friends. Another participant talked about her challenging experience with her younger sister who recently followed her to Beirut to attend a university and who lives with her in the same apartment. The participant explained that her sister is ashamed of her way of living in the city and the way she abandoned her religion and traditional values. The participants' sister criticizes her late outings, her relationships with men, as well as going to bars and drinking alcohol. Such strained relation created a feeling of guilt by the participant who tries to have the life she desires in the city as well as be very cautious in her behavior, especially with people from Beqaa. The participant explained that although she lives freely in the city, she always avoids people from Beqaa for fear of acquiring a bad reputation, which would reciprocally affect her sister. She explained that if rumors spread about her in Beqaa, this would not only be damaging to her, but

also to her sister who wants to return to her village and have a traditional rural life after completing her studies. As such, the participant is cautious about interfering in her sister's choices and about revealing her personal life to her family and community, even in the city. Although the participant's sister disapproves of her lifestyle, she shares a strong bond with the participant and reciprocally protects her by keeping her private life concealed from her family.

One of the participants considers rural traditional values and customs to be the best parameters that define one's life, and Islam the authority defining her rights and roles. Nonetheless, the participant often referred to today's "modernity", which she interpreted as a way of living that combines religion and tradition with more equality and freedoms for women. For example, the participant believes in women's right to meet men, have boyfriends, and choose their partners without any pressure from the family or community; nonetheless, she considers these freedoms to have limits that women should not cross, such as indulging in premarital sexual activities, which are prohibited in Islam. The participants have different negotiation experiences over their rights and roles, and these variances are dependent on the women's own identity that shapes their experiences, values and views.

7.3 Women in search for selfhood

The kin ordered patriarchal social structure in villages operates within well-established norms and roles. In such a context, rural women's path is a predetermined one. Women's behavior, choices, and roles are defined within these structures, and women are expected to live in accordance with the conventional norms and roles in rural communities. Challenging these norms and roles can subject women to social rejection and ostracism. In some cases, it can result in subjecting them to loss of rights or freedom of movement, and even to violence, either emotional or physical. One of the participants recounted the story of her cousin, which demonstrates the consequences women might face if they challenge the patriarchal rural structure especially the rules set by fathers.

My uncle does not believe in education and he did not want his daughter to go to university, though he has the financial means to send her to the best universities in the

world... After her insistence and with her mother's support, he agreed to let her attend a nearby university, though he was not happy about it... She had to go to her classes and then return home as soon as she finishes them... She had a boyfriend at her university and he was a Druze. My aunt's son somehow knew about the relation and told my uncle about it... You can imagine his [her father's] reaction! She was not allowed to have male friends and definitely not a boyfriend. Daring to have a boyfriend and worse a Druze one, drove him crazy; he burst out at her, and attacked her on the street and in public right in front of her house when she was on her way back from the university. She did not expect it and had no idea of what was going on. She was forbidden for a whole year from leaving her house or attending her classes at university. He considered her a disgrace for just having a boyfriend, and of course for allowing people to talk about her behavior and criticize his 'bad upbringing'... It is usually all about other people, and what they say and think about you. I think the fact that my aunt's son came to him with this news made him more enraged as he considered it insulting to him in front of his family.

The participant recounted this incident to explain that her move to the city was not received well within her extended family; their attitude was negative and some family members tried to dissuade her father from letting her go to a university in Beirut. The participant explained that she often got negative comments from family members when she moved to the city, as living alone in Beirut is perceived as inappropriate for girls and would bring her a bad reputation. She used her cousin's case to explain that there is an excessive control over girls in her extended family and in her village, and that her case was the exception. The participant considers her case as directly correlated to

the singularity of her father's mentality and attitude towards education and personal growth. The participant stressed that her father is very encouraging when it comes to education and does not have similar attitudes and behaviors as his brothers or other male members in her community; she even considered him more open and encouraging than her mother. However, she asserted that he is not liberal in the sense of accepting choices and behaviors that are considered taboo for women in her community. She gave examples on consuming alcohol, going to pubs or clubs, sexuality, or even openly having boyfriends or inviting them to her home.

The structured norms and gender roles in rural communities define rural women's path, especially by exerting the power of surveillance and reputation that is often linked to women's behavior. Nonetheless, the nuclear family has the greatest effect on women's ability to enjoy freedoms and make independent choices, and migration for education is directly linked to the family's openness and attitude towards women's education and hence empowerment. Even so, most of the families who support women's empowerment in education and work realms, still expect their daughters to respect the social norms and roles that pervade rural communities. The move to the city opens new possibilities for redefining such norms and roles. These are signaled by the women's subversion of traditional norms and roles, as well as their negotiations over their rights and roles either in their abode in the city or with their family and community in their place of origin. Kabeer explains that the change in identity and sense of selfhood results in the individuals' actions to combat constraints they face in their lives, be it in their personal lives, with their families, or within the wider society. Thus, individuals experiencing identity transformations act upon transforming such limitations and controls, within their capacity to act (Kabeer, 2001). Hence, the participants' actions against traditional norms and their negotiations over their rights and roles reveal that they are experiencing changes in their sense of selfhood.

Migration, in general, allows migrants to reconfigure their identities (Gasper, & Truong, 2010). Nonetheless, for educated youth, university years also play a vital role in shaping and altering the students' personalities, values, and identities (Harb, 2010), including their sexual identities like for example their homosexuality. This is mainly due

to the rich interactions that students experience in universities in Beirut with individuals of different backgrounds, lifestyles, beliefs, values, and views. Regarding the Lebanese migrant students who study in Beirut, El-Hajj notices that these students struggle with their identities and belonging due to exposures to opposing cultures, lifestyles and values in the city and their place of origin (El-Hajj, 2016). Through extended migration, migrant women use the city as a place to develop and affirm their sense of selfhood and ways of living that are unavailable within the confines of traditionalism and social homogeneity in the village. The participants exhibited different changes or transformations in their individual identities. For example, two of the participants used the city as a place to explore their sexuality and affirm their individual identities. One of these participants identifies as a homosexual and the other participant as heterosexual, and for both of them the city provided the freedom to experience their sexualities and other life perspectives. For the participant who identifies as a homosexual, the transformation in her identity was centered on her gender identity, which she adapts it to her religious belief. The participant identifies as a Sunni Muslim although she acts in contradiction of some of the Islamic religious and cultural rules especially by identifying as a homosexual and through for example, drinking alcohol or indulging in sexual activities. The participant stressed that she defines her own Muslim identity based on her own interpretations of her religion; she grounds her religious identity on believing in her religion and observing the month of Ramadan. She explained that she does not pray the five Islamic prayers per day; however, she has her own way of praying and connecting with her God. The participant considers her homosexuality unrelated to her religious belief and that she is able to be “a good Muslim” and a homosexual woman. Nonetheless, the participant is not open about her homosexuality and expressed that only specific people within the city know about it.

The other participant considers her experience in the city to be transformative, and her identity transformation encompasses multifaceted changes. The participant expressed “Beirut made me who I am today; I am a completely different person from the girl who came to the city twelve years ago”, indicating a complete transformation in her identity and sense of selfhood. In explaining the transformations she experienced, the participant talked about affirming her identity as a woman through challenging first her

inner views shaped by social and religious mores, which she formed and carried from her upbringing and the culture she was raised in. The participant's assessment of her identity as a woman was accompanied with transformations in her understanding of her identity as a Lebanese citizen, as a rural woman of Muslim background living in the city, and as a nonbeliever living in a conservative society. The participant elaborated on the way her migration experience allowed her to have individualistic choices and hence to explore and assess her religious beliefs, and her views of religion, politics and the social and political order, as well as women's position and status in societies. She considers her migration experience "life-changing" as it allowed her to become her "true self". Extended migration allows women to explore and define their individual identities and their sense of selfhood as well as become more conscious of the drawbacks of their choices and actions that contradict traditional norms; these transformations in migrants' self-identification are unique to each woman and do not follow similar paths or comprise the same elements of change. Each of the participants developed her own identity in the city, whether that means to choose to adhere to the rural culture, choose some elements to preserve from their rural culture and combine these with new views and values, or to abandon the traditional values and views of their past and adopt identities with different values, views, and beliefs. Sen explains that individuals value and weigh the different elements of their individual identity, and which of these they can act upon, as their choices are affected by the cultural contexts (Sen, 2008), and as demonstrated in the previous chapters the women's choices and ways of living are not free from entanglements.

Rural women face challenges in the city in terms of adjusting to the new social and cultural norms they are exposed to (Temin, et al., 2013). The identity transformations that women experience are accompanied with struggles to break the shackles of cultural norms and traditions; this is especially in their place of origin. Nonetheless, as Jacka explains, in our modern era, identities are constructed and positioned amid different cultural discourses (Jacka, 2005), especially with the open exposure to the world through internet and media. Without dismissing the effect of globalization, migration positions migrants in direct exposures to opposing cultures, the rural as opposed to the urban lifestyle. In the Lebanese context, social relations,

especially familial relations, are an intrinsic part of women's identities (Joseph, 1993), where their agency and choices are limited by these familial and social boundaries. This is because the generational gap, in terms of cultural differences between the young women and their families and community, is steep, especially when the families are more conservative and the migrant women are more liberal. The centrality of the family to women's identity explains the women's relational choices that take into consideration the family's position in their lives. In light of that, women's choice to conceal their views, beliefs, and lifestyles that they consider damaging to familial relations can be interpreted as an attempt to preserve an essential part of their identities. The below account of one of the participants reflects her struggle in positioning herself amid two different worlds that she belongs to, the city that represents her reality as it symbolizes the materialization of her freedom and self-realization, and the village that represents her roots and her family's abode:

It is as if I am living in two separate worlds, which one is the real one, I cannot really say. However, I guess they both are. A world of my own here [in Beirut] and another where I grew up and where my family will always be [in her village]. Both collide to create a unique reality, a messed up one actually... I cannot fully be here [in Beirut] but I really cannot exist there [in her village].

The construction of women's hybrid identities and positioning between the city and the village is also reflected in their social relations and sense of belonging. Women's social positioning in Beirut, in terms of creating social relations with residents in the city and distancing themselves from the rural community, friends from the village, and relatives, indicates that the participants are identifying as urbans. Anthias explains that individuals' positionality, in terms of differences in values and practices that are related to morality, are closely linked to othering and inferiority. These distinctions are at two levels: intersubjective, where practices of social bonding or distancing mirror the individual's belongingness and otherness; and experiential, where the narratives linked to the individual's feelings towards places and communities as well as the way they

dress or change their physical appearance mirror the individual's distinction, sense of selfhood, and otherness (Anthias, 2013). The participants' statements on rural community, like "people are all the same there" or "we have nothing in common" are powerful statements that reflect the otherness of the rural community to some participants. Moreover, for most of the participants, their social relationships are limited to residents in Beirut; only three of the participants said that they still have friendships or relationships outside their nuclear families in their place of origin. For the rest of the participants, their social relations in their place of origin is concentrated with their nuclear families, and for some with other immediate relatives.

Moreover, when migrants assume positions in the city, and claim spaces and rights within it, this indicates that they are identifying with the city and claiming the right to it. Secor explains that the migrants' claims to the right to the city and their identity formation go in unison. These are manifested in different forms, including, claiming the right to use the city's public utilities and spaces, claiming the right to freedom and anonymity in the city, and claiming the right to individualization in the city's social life (Secor, 2003). Based on that, each of the participants is considered to have an urban identity, even when they claim to be villagers living in the city. For example, one of the participants identifies as a villager, and claims to hold rural traditional values; however, she chooses to live in Beirut instead of her village, enjoys her anonymity in the city, and criticizes the rural community's surveillance. Claiming the right to anonymity and freedom in the city reflects the participant's identification with the city, even if it is subconscious. Similarly, the women's intra movements within the city and their search for belonging in its neighborhoods points toward their quest to position themselves as urban dwellers. By the same token, the participants' participation in the city's sociocultural, civic and political life are linked with urbanization. The preference of the city's social and cultural life over life in the village, as well as the civic and political involvement in the city rather than in their place of origin, to an extent that some participants claim their right to the city more than the Beiruti citizens themselves attest their identification as urbanists. Nevertheless, all the participants are still registered in Beqaa, and only one participant considered changing her place of residence registration to Beirut. The participant explained that she wanted to move her

registration to Beirut because she feels she belongs to the city, and does not have any attachment to her village or to Beqaa; she explained that she considers Beirut to be her home and wants to be officially a Beiruti and to be able to vote in the city's elections. The participant explained that she stopped pursuing that as she needs proof of residence in the city and does not have rent contracts to prove her prolonged stay. She also described her negative experience with a couple of mayors in Beirut who questioned her decision and told her that women move their registration when they get married and do not need to do that prior to marriage and on their own.

Notwithstanding the participants' identification with the city, their sense of belonging to their villages still manifests in introducing themselves as locals from Beqaa. Identifying as urbanists does not abolish the participants' identity as villagers. The participants often use the first-person plural -'we'- when talking about migrants in Beirut, especially those from Beqaa and particularly migrant women. Moreover, the participants often realize the difference between them and their urban counterparts in terms of education, knowledge and culture. In some cases, such differences are intersubjective and correlated with their perception of the missing rural values that they appreciate in the city. For example, some of the participants mentioned the difference in the culture of hospitality and generosity between locals from Beqaa and Beirutis, perceiving people from Beqaa to be more generous and hospitable. One of the participants' account shows the way women use of the first-person plural to relate to cultural qualities of locals from Beqaa:

We are different from Beirutis, men are different. Men in Bekaa are more generous and chivalrous. The Beirutis hate visitors and are miserly. We are very different from them! When you visit someone from Beqaa, they shower you with their hospitality; while when you visit Beirutis, you just feel unwelcomed.

Similarly, some of the participants also mentioned the difference in dialect and the use of foreign languages, especially the French language. Most of the participants speak only English as a second language, and perceive their inability to speak the

French language to be a challenge in communicating with urban dwellers who often use it in their daily exchanges; for some, the French language is also a communication challenge in their jobs. One of the participants explained that Beirutis often comment on her dialect and the wordings she uses, and criticize her inability to speak the French language, which irritates her and makes her feel inferior. The participants' identity and sense of belonging are constructed around merging both their rural and urban identities. For example, one of the participants maintains that she belongs to the city and claims one of its neighborhoods as her home, while she also plans to build a house in her village in the future. Similarly, in searching for their individual identities, the participants waver between rural values that they hold and for some have pride in, and the values and lifestyles they adopt in the city. Their stay in Beirut make it possible for them to balance their own set of rural traditional lifestyle and values with liberal urban lifestyles.

Chapter Eight

Discussion and Conclusion

8.1 Determinants of women's internal migration

Migration motives are diverse and include both economic and sociocultural drivers. The migration decision lays within the interplay of different variables at the micro and the macro levels, i.e. the individual and household levels as well as the local and national contexts. Although employment and wages might be the direct economic elements instigating migration at the individual or household levels, migration decision is influenced by cumulative causation. This means that the socioeconomic structures in a specific context and the proliferation of migration over time within a specific community can have a great influence on the individuals within it, in terms of their decision to migrate and hence creating even more migrations (Massey, 1990a; Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, & Taylor, 1993). In the Lebanese context, rural-urban migration from the Beqaa to Beirut has been in a steady growth since the proliferation of this phenomenon. Such migration has become self-sustaining and as a result can increase the likelihood of subsequent movements. This is because when migration reaches a certain level in a specific community, the Beqaa in this case, it accumulates social capital within it, in terms of gaining migration-related resources and knowledge that is based on the experiences of the previous migrants from these communities (Massey, 1999). Moreover, the political economy immensely shapes migration. The economic structure of the state and inequalities between the regions within it, as well as the distribution of the social capital among these regions can shape the internal migrations within a country (De Haas, 2010c; Massey, et al., 1993). Simultaneously, migration can deepen these inequalities and the concentration of capital in specific regions (De Haas, 2010b). The lopsided economic growth within Lebanon and the income disparities have had a defining role in instigating the rural-urban migration from Beqaa to Beirut, which is the center of the economic activities in the country and thus attracts the human capital that follow the job opportunities and higher

incomes. Additionally, the prior migration experiences, the gender norms and roles, and the marital status of migrants, as is the case in this study, can directly affect their migration intentions and behavior, leading to permanent migration decisions that are established around expectancy-based intentions, especially among women (De Jong, 2000). The migration intentions and behavior, i.e. the women's expectations and their decision to extend their migration experience can in effect influence their experiences and the outcomes of such movements.

The economic driver proved to be central for the participants' pursuit of better economic opportunities, high career aspirations, and professional development. Nonetheless, the study shows that sociocultural drivers can have an equal and in some cases a stronger impact on the women's decision to extend their migration experience. In fact, the economic and sociocultural drivers intermesh and shape migrant women's decisions to stay in the city. The participants' initial migration for education introduced migrant women to new cultures that include different values, views and lifestyles which are different from those they were familiar with in their place of origin. Such exposures, combined with enjoying anonymity and leniency away from the control of the family and rural community, play a central role in the women's choice of staying in the city. The sociocultural drivers have greater impact when upper middleclass women give up economic stability and higher earnings at their families businesses and seek financial independence and freedom in the city. For most of the participants, who come from middleclass backgrounds, both economic and sociocultural factors coincide in shaping their decision to extend their migration. Interestingly, employment in the city can be a driver as well as a tool used by migrants to ensure their stay in the city. The sociocultural drivers include seeking freedom and liberty from the confines of the families and traditional communities, escaping gender discrimination or conforming to gender roles in the place of origin, evading restrictions on sexuality and gender identities, as well as gaining improved empowerment through expanding their power over their lives and strengthening their independence, be it economic or personal. Moreover, the urban lifestyle and privacy in the city are strong pull factors for women who seek having a life of their choice without familial or social surveillance and control. In addition to that, the cultural and social life in the city, which allows women to

explore socialization and to form their own social networks, attracts women to it. Be that as it may, migration requires more than migrants' preferences in order to occur.

Migration is conditioned by the resources available to the individuals as well as factors that enable migrants to use these resources and make the move. The resources mainly come from the migrants' family and are dependent on their socioeconomic situation. In other words, family support, either morally or financially, is instrumentally essential for migrants to move to different destinations (Bonfanti, 2014). The study demonstrates the way family support is detrimental in enabling women to migrate and maintain their stay in the city. The women need their families' approval as well as their financial support in order to be able to stay in Beirut, especially at the initial stage of their extended migration. Family's financial support is needed for rent and living costs when migrants are not generating incomes or enough earnings to sustain the living standards they are accustomed to. Moreover, the family's support does not cease throughout the women's stay in the city. Families continue to provide financial and material support for migrant women, especially when they face financial hardships. Women resort to their families or accept their support mainly to maintain the living standards of their class. Even when women seek independence, including financial, they still want to preserve their class status in the city. The shortage of economic opportunities, the low wages, and the lack of social benefits in the Lebanese market constitute challenges for the migrant women in maintaining their socioeconomic status, and they thus utilize family support to preserve such status.

Moreover, women's personal traits, aspirations, expectations, and preferences go hand in hand with accessing familial financial and moral support in shaping women's decision to migrate. While migration for education was a collective decision that the participants made with their parents, the migrant women made the decision of extending their migration on their own. Women's sole migration, especially when it is not driven by economic hardships, is mostly affected by women's own desire to stay in the city and their expectations and aspirations for themselves. Even so, migrant women have varied motives and experiences in the city, and the migration determinants can be as diverse as these experiences. Be that as it may, anonymity, freedom, and independence in the city

as well as aspirations for self-realization are common determinants for women's extended rural-urban migration. Furthermore, young people are affected by their family's aspirations for them to have better higher-paying jobs, which acts as a driver for migration (Browne, 2017). The families' provided support to their daughters throughout their migratory experience reflects their aspirations and high expectations for their daughters. These in turn acts as factors that pushes women to think highly of themselves and their future, and hence to seek a better one in the city. As such, women's sole migration requires them to have a sense of empowerment from within in order for them to make the decision of moving independently. For them to migrate solely they need to believe that they can have better careers and live differently on their own.

8.2 Empowerment in context

Empowerment is not one thing, it is as diverse as the human beings are and is unique to each person (Carr, 2003). It is associated with people's wellbeing and their ability to live life as they want and to have control over their own lives. The individuals' wellbeing includes the mental, social, cultural, economic, material, or political dimensions of their lives; however, one's wellbeing cannot become whole without freedom, opportunities, and choice (Nussbaum, 2011; Robeyns, 2005, 2006; Sen, 1993). Hence, empowerment is the ability to make life choices that affects women's quality of life and day-to-day living, and this requires change (Kabeer, 2005). The process of empowerment for women entails changes in their self-image and their critical views on their worlds, situations, relationships, and opportunities (Cornwall, 2016). It encompasses challenging the ideologies behind inequality, changing patterns of accessing and controlling economic, social and intellectual resources, and challenging and transforming power structures within the family or society (Batliwala, 1993). Empowerment starts with transformations from within, which alters women's perceptions and self-worth rendering decision-making and exercising choice an entitlement for them (Kabeer, 2001; Nussbaum 2000; Sen, 1993). These transformations lead to women's negotiations with their families, society, and their realities at large (Deshmukh-Ranadive, 2003). Such negotiations can be in the form of individual actions

that are inconsistent with gender and cultural norms, and which challenge structural inequalities, even if their impact is limited (Kabeer, 2001).

In accordance with Eryar's conclusion on the contribution of rural-urban migration to women's empowerment, the study establishes rural-urban migration as an opportunity for women's increased empowerment, especially through education and increased awareness on gender-based biases (Eryar, et al., 2018). Living outside the traditional patriarchy of the rural community, in addition to the varied intellectual and sociocultural exposures in the city allow women to be more aware of their status and rights. Such awareness together with the freedom and agency they enjoy in the city encourage women to challenge gender roles and inequalities. Such challenges can be in both direct and indirect forms. Women's actions against traditional cultural and gender norms is an indirect form of challenging patriarchy; these include going out at night alone, living alone, having boyfriends, drinking alcohol, and experiencing sexuality. The direct forms of challenging patriarchy and the biases that are based on gender and cultural norms include women's demands for equal inheritance rights, their refusal to accept gender roles within the family, their insistence on shaping their own relationships in the city, and taking their own decisions on the issue of marriage and the choice of the spouse. Such actions reveal that the women are undergoing transformation from within that are altering their perception about making choices, having equal rights, as well as having control over their lives and be themselves. Nonetheless, the women's experiences reveal that their increased empowerment is confined by familial relations. Even when the city is a haven for women away from the traditional patriarchy and the control of the family and community, women's choices and actions are relational, and take into consideration preserving strong ties with their families as well as avoiding rupture with the family, which indicates the centrality of the family in the participants' life. In most cases, this leads to women's concealment of their way of living in the city from their families and communities. However, the women's experiences vary and this is dependent on their identities and level of attachment to traditional values, their willingness to risk familial relations in order to have greater self-realization and freedom, as well as the level of the family's traditionalism.

The research findings demonstrate the way rural-urban migration gives women more freedom, opportunities, and agency to make personal choices and to find meaning in their lives. Identity formation is one of the most powerful outcomes of the women's migratory experiences. Through migration, women were able to form and choose their individual identities, which results from the changes in their self-image and in their critical views on their worlds, situations, relationships, beliefs and opportunities. The independence that women gain in the city and their exposure to different cultures and views allow them to assess their views and beliefs in different realms be they social, religious or political. More importantly, the freedom to experience in the city allow women to affirm their gender and sexual identities and act against gender and cultural norms. Women's self-realization also extends to their choice of their studies and careers, which mirror their pursuit of a life that has meaning to them. Women's transformations in the city are diverse and may encompass subtle changes in specific aspects of their identities, or incorporate alterations of different aspects of their identities. Women's transformations through migration vary by the difference in their experiences in the city, their beliefs and values, as well as their level of awareness on different issues be it social, political or gender-related matters, including their willingness to defy traditional norms and values and their openness to change. It is also worth noting that age plays a central role in the women's inclination towards challenging the existing norms and seeking change; older women in the sample study seem more open to change and more capable of acting upon their choices.

The state of being and doing are dependent on the individuals own perceptions and values which in turn result in achievements or outcomes that are particular to each individual (Sen, 1985, 1993). As such, the women's adherence to rural and traditional values, and the trajectory of their lives and means of adopting new lifestyles and values differ from one migrant woman to another, especially that cultural values and beliefs have a strong impact on the individuals, which affects the empowerment process and necessitates that it start from within the women themselves. As such, exercising choice should encompass their 'sense of agency' that is the articulation of the motivation, meaning, and purpose of one's actions and choices (Kabeer, 2005). Empowerment is a process that encompasses consciousness, choices, resources, voice, agency, and

participation. It is context specific and the sociocultural and religious spheres greatly affect it (Charmes, & Wieringa, 2003). Consequently, the migration empowerment experiences and outcomes are affected by the individuals' character, gender, sexuality, age, religion, identity, as well as the familial and societal contexts.

8.3 Conclusion and future directions

The migration determinants and experiences are not one thing; they encompass a variety of personal, economic, familial and social factors. It is hard to single out specific factors that affect the determinants and outcomes of migration due to the complexity of the migratory process and the particularities of each individual experience. For middleclass educated women, migration determinants are a combination of different factors, which start with the women's own expectations and aspirations for themselves. Extended migration is dependent on the women's choice of their way of living. Choosing the city over the village incorporates many elements to it and varies from one woman to another; these elements include the pursuit of freedom, agency, self-actualization, sexuality, and fulfillment of their career aspirations. In addition to that, cultural factors can be detrimental to women's choice of extended migration; especially that life in the city is extremely tempting for women in its variety and richness. The study also determines the centrality of the family's moral and financial support to the women's ability to migrate. The family's significance in Lebanese women's life requires them to get their approval for major life decisions such as migration, and family financial support is critical for enabling them to make the move.

The centrality of the family in the women's life varies among migrant women and depends on their personalities, age, and their new formed identities that bring together their values and beliefs as well as their sense of selfhood. Rural-urban migration expands women's empowerment in terms of allowing women to be themselves, at least in their abode in the city. Migration allows women to reflect on their views, values, perceptions, identities, and social and gender relations. Such reflections, combined with the liberty from social control, enable the women to choose their own identities. The transformation in women's identities include changes in their self-image, their social relations and networking, and in their political, religious, or social views.

Migration provides women with agency and opportunities to make such choices, and empower them to define their own identities, defy the social and cultural control that was once imposed on them in their villages, challenge gender discrimination and inequality, and negotiate patriarchal and sociopolitical powers for an elevated status within the family and society. Moreover, such alterations can influence the women's attitudes towards rural life in varying degrees; the most common attitude is rejecting its surveillance culture and the lack of freedom for women within its social confines. Women's experiences cannot be grouped into one, as well as the outcomes of their migration in terms of increased empowerment. Empowerment through migration is a personal process. Some migrant women experience change in their values and lifestyles through migration, whereas others adhere to their community's traditions and values. Even those who experience change do not share the same phases or elements of change.

The empowering potential of internal migration is relational and dependent on the women's identity, their familial relations and sociocultural background, especially religious backgrounds. The family is detrimental in enabling women's migration as well as affecting the course of the migration experiences and outcomes. The ability to migrate independently is an empowering enabler that makes the migration experience a powerful empowerment agent; this is because women need to be empowered in their families in order to be able to make the move independently. Moreover, the family's level of traditionalism or liberalism affects the women's choices to continue their migration journey or to make other choices in their personal lives like marriage for example; it also affects the women's ability to voice their views and be open about their choices and lifestyles in both the city and their place of origin. Choice is encultured and women value and weigh the different elements of their identity, and make relational choices that balance between living according to their own desires and values and preserving familial relations. Accordingly, depending on each woman's identity and circumstances, they adopt different strategies to face the constraints and limitations they face. As Hanafi explains, the individuals, especially the youth, are reflexive. They understand the power that the social systems exert on their lives, and position themselves in spaces where they constantly negotiate their integration and disintegration with the prevailing social structures. Such negotiations seek attaining 'partial

emancipation' from the social systems as well as altering their place within the social structures (Hanafi, 2012).

The migration experience and its induced empowerment are linked to the women's specific contexts. In the Lebanese context where the social relations, especially the familial relations, are essential to women, their agency and choices remain, to a certain degree, limited by them. Nonetheless, even when women seem receptive and adapting to their circumstances, they still create alternative ways of action. As such, empowerment does not mean that women should only act upon their choice and exercise it everywhere, but also challenge the power relations through finding ways to live as they wish and still preserve relations that are essential to them, even if that pushes them to fluctuate between lifestyles as opposed to life in the village. Furthermore, as the study focuses on middleclass Sunni women of high educational backgrounds, the findings are limited to these peculiar socioeconomic factors. It should be noted that considering that the participants were selected based on snowballing technique and that the sample is small, it is hard to capture the experiences of other female migrants, especially those who move without familial support, or those who have severed their ties with their place of origin, either familial or social.

On a different note, the family's impact on the women's migratory experiences and outcomes requires further investigation on the family's reasoning for their support to their migrant daughters; this is especially when migrant women do not achieve the desired career advancements and financial returns. Rural families' support of women's sole migration marks a shift in the rural society; however, the scope and impact of such social change is under researched. As such further research is needed to understand these changes and their impact on rural society and the Lebanese society as a whole. Additionally, migrant women's changing perceptions of gender roles and of their social positions is considered as a driver for social change as these acquisitions can have a domino effect through generations (Temin, et al., 2013). The study shows the way migrant women diffuse these new perceptions through their negotiations with their families and community in their place of origin, or in their personal lives in the city, and even for some through activism at the national level. Migrant women's influence, for

example, on their sisters' increased empowerment is evident in many cases, and they are the direct recipients of these social diffusions. As such, the study opens the door for further research on the diffusion of empowerment through women's migration and its impact on families, rural communities, and the Lebanese society.

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NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL

To: Ms. Sally Youssef
Dr. Samira Aghacy
Professor
School of Arts & Sciences

APPROVAL ISSUED: 11 April 2019
EXPIRATION DATE: 11 April 2020
REVIEW TYPE: EXPEDITED

Date: April 11, 2019

RE: **IRB #:** LAU.SAS.SA1.11/Apr/2019

Protocol Title: Women's Rural-Urban Migration in Lebanon: Migration Determinants and the Quest for Empowerment

The above referenced research project has been approved by the Lebanese American University, Institutional Review Board (LAU IRB). This approval is limited to the activities described in the Approved Research Protocol and all submitted documents listed on page 2 of this letter. **Enclosed with this letter are the stamped approved documents that must be used.**

APPROVAL CONDITIONS FOR ALL LAU APPROVED HUMAN RESEARCH PROTOCOLS

LAU RESEARCH POLICIES: All individuals engaged in the research project must adhere to the approved protocol and all applicable LAU IRB Research Policies. **PARTICIPANTS must NOT be involved in any research related activity prior to IRB approval date or after the expiration date.**

PROTOCOL EXPIRATION: The LAU IRB approval expiry date is listed above. The IRB Office will send an email at least 45 days prior to protocol approval expiry - Request for Continuing Review - in order to avoid any temporary hold on the initial protocol approval. It is your responsibility to apply for continuing review and receive continuing approval for the duration of the research project. Failure to send Request for Continuation before the expiry date will result in suspension of the approval of this research project on the expiration date.

MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS: All protocol modifications must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

NOTIFICATION OF PROJECT COMPLETION: A notification of research project closure and a summary of findings must be sent to the IRB office upon completion. Study files must be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of notification of project completion.

IN THE EVENT OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ABOVE CONDITIONS, THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SHOULD MEET WITH THE IRB ADMINISTRATORS IN ORDER TO RESOLVE SUCH CONDITIONS. IRB APPROVAL CANNOT BE GRANTED UNTIL NON-COMPLIANT ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED.

If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact the IRB office by email at irb@lau.edu.lb

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The IRB operates in compliance with the national regulations pertaining to research under the Lebanese Minister of Public Health's Decision No.141 dated 27/1/2016 under LAU IRB Authorization reference 2016/3708, the international guidelines for Good Clinical Practice, the US Office of Human Research Protection (45CFR46) and the Food and Drug Administration (21CFR56). LAU IRB U.S. Identifier as an international institution: FWA00014723 and IRB Registration # IRB00006954 LAUIRB#1



Dr. Joseph Stephan
Chair, Institutional Review Board



DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED:

LAU IRB Exempt Application	Received 29 March 2019
Research Proposal	Received 29 March 2019, Amended 4 April 2019
Letter for Interviews "Consent Form"	Received 29 March 2019, Amended 4 April 2019
Research questions	Received 29 March 2019
IRB Comments sent: 1 April 2019 3 April 2019	PI response to IRB's comments dated: 1 April 2019 4 April 2019
NIH Training – Samira Aghacy	PENDING
CITI Training – Sally Youssef & CV	Cert.# 30707103 Dated (28 February 2019)