

Motivations and Impacts of Burundian Women's Migration to Middle Eastern Countries: A Study Involving Women Back Home in 2024

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.9010275>

Received: 18 December 2024; Revised: 08 January 2025; Accepted: 10 January 2025; Published: 18 February 2025

ABSTRACT

The research is intended to analyse the effects of women's migration on themselves and their families, focusing on the balance between opportunities and risks. It intends to identify the main reasons why Burundian women are migrating to the Middle East, and to explore the positive and negative socio-economic impacts of their migration. This study was carried out using a qualitative method based on thematic content analysis of the life stories of migrant women back to Burundi.

The research results show that Burundian women migrate mainly because of poverty, need for business assets and employment, housing problems, avoidance of stigma, low wages and search for autonomy. This migration has positive impacts such as the acquisition of business assets, land purchase housing self-construction, financial support for families remaining in Burundi, economic empowerment of migrant women, and education of children. However, the negative impacts include the poor living conditions and health problems of children, hard working conditions, difficulties related to family separation, and stigmatization.

These results highlight the complex socio-economic implications of Burundian women's migration, with material and financial benefits, but also social and economic challenges. These findings underscore the complex realities of Burundian women's migration, highlighting both material and financial benefits and significant social and economic risks. This duality calls for targeted interventions to address the vulnerabilities faced by these women and ensure their well-being, as well as that of their families.

Keywords: Women's Migration, Work Migration, International Migration, Motivations, Impacts, Risks, Opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

The migration phenomenon on a global scale is increasing (Bigirimana, 2023). The number of migrant persons is constantly increasing, with 281 million international migrants in 2020, a significant increase compared with previous decades (IOM, 2020). These individuals are often looking for right opportunities and living conditions for themselves and their families.

The data presented by the IOM (2022) reveal the main countries of origin of migrants, such as India, Mexico, Russia and China. The Syrian Arab Republic is also mentioned, with over 8 million emigrants, largely refugees scattered across countries such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. These statistics underline the scale and diversity of migratory flows around the world.

The main destinations for international migrants are the United States, followed by Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia and the United Kingdom. Asia, North America and Africa are identified as the regions with the greatest growth in terms of receiving migrants between 2000 and 2020, illustrating the geographical distribution of migratory flows on a global scale (IOM, 2020).

In Africa, the part of women among all international migrants is estimated up to 47%. And this one is very similar to the global proportion of female migrants (48%) (IOM, 2020). Within the continent, the proportion of female migrants is highest in East Africa (50%), followed by Central and West Africa (47% each), Southern Africa (44%) and North Africa (43%) (IOM, 2022).

In Burundi, the visibility of women in migratory flows has been slow. This was due to gender-based discrimination in Burundian tradition, in which roles involving openness to the outside world, such as decision-making and public speaking, were entrusted only to young boys (Mizrahi et al., 2010). At the end of the 20th century, there was a very clear difference between men and women among the migrant population: women only moved within the boundaries of the commune (42% of cases) or, at most, the province (70% of all female migrants), whereas men who settled abroad were in the majority (53%) (Guichaoua, 1982).

The socio-political crises that have repeatedly shaken Burundi have increased the number of poor people (69%) and the number of female heads of household has risen to 21.3% (Mizrahi et al., 2010). This has raised awareness of women's roles and responsibilities.

Today, the phenomenon of Burundian women migrating to Middle Eastern countries in search of work has intensified over the last few decades due to Burundi's difficult economic situation. These women are mainly looking for jobs in sectors such as health, cleaning, catering and hotels (Limani & Sodergren, 2023).

The overall aim of this study is to analyse the impact of Burundian women's migration on their families, society and the Burundian economy. Specifically, the aim is to identify the main reasons why Burundian women migrate to the Middle East and to explore the positive and negative socio-economic impacts of this migration.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature shows that the main reasons why women migrate include the search for a decent wage (Leroy, 2023), family solidarity (Dupuis, 2011), the search for security (Adam-Vézina, 2020), the desire for emancipation (Moujoud, 2008), etc. However, it also highlights positive consequences such as the transfer of funds to families back home (Nyberg, 2013), the empowerment of women on their return from migration and emancipation (Leservoisier, 2020). However, negative consequences are also noted, including the risk of divorce (Caarls Caarls & Mazzucato), discrimination and stereotypes (Salem, 2020), and the constraints associated with adapting to the language of the host country (Noblecourt, 2014).

Studies on the migration of Burundian women to the Middle East, focused on economic and feminist emancipation theories, remain limited as they overlook social, cultural, and political dimensions. While migration may provide opportunities for independence, it also exposes women to exploitation and isolation. Social networks and family expectations, though significant, can be constraining. Methodologically, current research lacks diversity and depth in exploring individual narratives. An ethnographic and comparative approach, based on testimonies, could address these gaps and shed light on the varied impacts of these South-South migrations.

METHODOLOGY

Methodological approach: qualitative exploration

This study is part of an exploratory approach intended to analyse the impact of Burundian women's migration on their families, society and the Burundian economy. This approach enabled us not only to gain a better understanding of the motivating factors behind this migration, but also to assess how these movements influence the family and societal fabric, as well as the resulting economic issues. By adopting a qualitative methodology,

it was an opportunity for us to gather relevant and significant data that enriched the debate on this crucial issue. The method of gathering data using life stories interviews offers access to discourse and therefore to linguistic production made up of words which are the traces on which the analysis can be made (Parpette & Liu, 2022). Our study was therefore based on the participants' life stories in order to get as close as possible to their perspectives and subjectivities in terms of the meaning they attach to their situation.

Data collection

The target population for this study is Burundian migrant women who have travelled to countries in the Middle East and who have already returned to Burundi. They will be considered as the reference population for the socio-economic impact analyses.

To recruit participants, it was used the 'snowball effect' method. Although Burundian migrant women are not easily to identify, they know themselves one another. For this purpose, 'an initial sub-group of the population is interviewed, which identifies other members of the group, who, when interviewed in turn, identify other people belonging to the population, and so on' (Académies des Sciences Sociales, 1994) To approach the participants, we went to their respective places of work. For the shopkeepers, for example, we acted like their customers.

Using this method, we can continue ad infinitum, like a snowball whose size increases until we have enough data to analyse in order to draw the most relevant conclusions (Johnston & Sabin, 2010).

Interviews process

The interviews were individual. They were conducted in the local language, Kirundi, which enabled the participants to express all their feelings and avoid any language barrier. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants so that the data could be accurately transcribed and coded. Once the data had been collected in the national language, we translated it from Kirundi to English for analysis.

Our interview guide was made up of three main parts: the introduction, which contains the researcher's presentation, motivation and approval to start the discussion; the context, which includes a whole series of background questions to help us gather the necessary data; and finally the conclusion, which in turn includes additional ideas and acknowledgements.

Data processing and analysis

The analysis method used was thematic and comparative. This involved transcribing and coding the data, categorising the data and/or grouping the data by theme, and finally the comparative approach.

Firstly, we transcribed the data recorded from audio form to text. Secondly, we coded the data. This involved reading carefully the transcriptions and identifying key words or ideas. Once we had coded the ideas by themes, we were able to group similar codes together to form categories. A thematic approach involved identifying recurring themes or key elements in the data and analysing them in depth. This could be done by focusing on central concepts or by grouping similar ideas together to create thematic categories.

This approach involved comparing different responses or opinions within the data. By the process, we were able to analyse the differences or similarities between the participants, or compare the results with previous studies. The data is coded using a number where the first digit indicates the theme number and the last two digits indicate the verbatim number. In order to preserve the interviewee's anonymity, the pseudonym is made up of the first syllable of the surname and the last syllable of the first name.

Ethical considerations

Ethics have always played a central role in qualitative research in the humanities and social studies. Martineau (2007) emphasises the importance of dialogue as the first fundamental principle, based on mutual recognition between interlocutors (Martineau, 2007). Respecting the dignity of at all stages of the research is essential, in accordance with the ethical principles of Beauchamp and Childress (1983, cited by Kühner-Jucker, 2021). In our

study, these ethical principles were applied by explaining the purpose of the research to the migrant women beforehand, so that they to understand their role. Participants were encouraged to ask questions about the study. The interviewer precised the particiapnts' freedom to choose choice to take part to the interview, to offer or not the possibility of recording the data. The participants had the rught to stop the interview at any time, according to their availability. In addition, we undertook to preserve the anonymity of the participants by guaranteeing the confidentiality of their declarations, taking care not to include any data that might identify them, and by deleting the records once the transcription was complete.

RESULTS

The results were transcribed and analysed using a thematic classification of the motivations and impacts mentioned by the interview participants. The results were also presented according to the three themes corresponding to the motivations, positive and negative impacts of the migration to Middle Eastern countries.

Motivations for migration by Burundian women to Middle Eastern countries

There are many reasons why Burundian women migrate. The push-pull factors include the need for employment and income, improving living conditions and financial support for families remaining in Burundi.

Poverty, need for business assets and employment

Poverty is one of the main reasons why Burundian women migrate to the Middle East. Facing the hard socio-economic conditions in Burundi, these women are looking for employment opportunities and stable incomes to improve their financial situation.

MAFU.108 expresses this need in the following terms:

'... Poverty was the first factor that pushed me to take the decision to migrate...'

Housing problems

Housing difficulties in Burundi prompt some women to migrate to the Middle East, where they hope to find more stable living conditions and access to decent housing.

HACE.12 expressed the need to find a place to live that prompted her to migrate:

'.... Firstly, I didn't have any accommodation, in other words I was living in a rented house. It was difficult for me to pay the rent...'

DENIE.116 argues in theses terms:

'... Basic needs were met, but we had a housing problem. I used to go to this country to look for shelter to avoid untimely rent bills...'

The need for a decent wage

The search for better pay opportunities is a key factor for many Burundian women who decide to migrate to the Middle East, in the hope of earning a higher income to support their families.

ALPHA.120 says:

'For me, it wasn't poverty that caused me to migrate. I migrated in search of a better life because I had a job here in Burundi. But the salary was so low that I was always in debt.'

BINTU.110 adds:

'I had a restaurant, but the income was always disappointing. I realised that I couldn't develop my business. So I decided to migrate to the Middle East.'

The quest for autonomy

The quest for autonomy, both economic and personal, drives some Burundian women to make the journey to the countries of the Middle East, where they hope to take control of their own destiny and build a more promising future.

BINTU. 111 says:

'...I was looking for financial independence so that, like my husband, I could contribute to the development of our family. So I wanted to show my husband that I was able to contribute ...'

The search for business assets

The search for business assets and investment opportunities is an important motivation for some Burundian women considering migration to Middle Eastern countries, in the hope of generating financial resources or supporting entrepreneurial projects.

AGORA.114 talks out it:

'... Another thing, we were poor, I was going to look for capital to set up a business and ensure the self-financing of our household...'

Positive socio-economic impact of the migration of Burundian women to Middle Eastern countries

If Burundian women leave the country to go to the Middle East, they expect to have a positive impact on their socio-economic life and that of their families. This includes sending remittances and financial support to families in Burundi, acquiring professional and personal skills, empowering migrant women economically, learning about the culture and changing attitudes.

Buying land and building houses

The purchase of land is a major positive impact of the migration of Burundian women to Middle Eastern countries. By investing in the land they build on, these women can secure their financial future and establish a solid base for their families in the long term.

AGORA. 212 explains that her migration led to the purchase of a plot of land:

'... . If I hadn't migrated, I wouldn't have been able to buy a plot of land'.

As well as buying land, the money earned by migrating to the Middle East gives migrant women's households the opportunity to build houses and make their homes stable by fulfilling the dream of owning their own home.

HACE.21 expresses the stability she has after establishing a home with the money she earned from her migration, saying:

'I went to this country, and now I've bought a plot of land and made myself a house; I no longer have a housing problem, I'm just looking for something to eat...'

AGORA.202 and HACE.202 add, respectively, the short time after which they were able to buy the land and build a house, and the purchase and construction of a second plot of land that generates money by being rented out.

'... But after six months, the plot I wanted was bought; I've built my house and I have tenants...'

'... I also bought another plot and built a large rental house on it, which I own...'

Obtaining business assets

Obtaining a business asset through migration to Middle Eastern countries offers Burundian women the opportunity to invest in commercial projects, fulfil their entrepreneurial ambitions and contribute to the economic development of their home communities.

BUZIA.20 and HACE.219, respectively, describe the gain in business assets as follows:

'I have gained business that I did not have before, the children are in school.'

'...I received a business for selling clothes and I bought a sewing machine'.

Empowerment of migrant women

Income generation by Burundian women working in the Middle East gives them financial independence and the ability to provide for their own needs, thereby boosting their self-confidence and economic autonomy.

AGORA: 214 expresses her financial autonomy from renting a house she has built:

'... At the end of each month, I receive rental fees from these landlords. That makes it easier for me to be financially independent. I'm independent for the moment. ... '

NINA.219 expressed her autonomy in the following terms:

'I bought a plot of land, I got a business selling clothes and I bought a sewing machine. I've learnt Arabic. My children are studying peacefully. Yes, there are positive impacts because I was going without a plot but I bought one...'

Payment for schooling

The analyst will find in the respondents' comments that their migration to the Middle East enables them to pay their children's school fees, the fact that shows that this phenomenon contributes to investing in the education and future of the younger generations, preparing them for access to opportunities.

ALPHA.225 says this to the subject:

'... For my children, migration has been beneficial because no one has lacked exercise books, minerval, food, clothing, etc.'

Sending funds

Regular remittances sent by Burundian women working in the Middle East to their relatives back home provide essential financial support to cover daily needs, children's education and medical expenses, thereby strengthening their family's financial security.

ZABU: *'... I sent money to connect my house to drinking water and electricity...'*

BINTU: *'... The family benefited from my migration because I sent them money to meet their needs...'*

Change of mentality

Another positive impact of the migration of Burundian women mentioned is the change in mentalities. By going abroad, these women are exposed to new cultures, values and ways of life that challenge their own beliefs and traditions. This openness can lead to a gradual change in attitudes, especially with regard to the traditional roles assigned to women in Burundian society. These migrant women can become agents of change, transmitting new ideas and perspectives.

ALPHA expresses this change in the following terms:

'First, I am delighted to have travelled, leaving my home country and going to contemplate cultural diversity. I was able to discover that Burundi is a country of good morals even if the living conditions are not satisfactory [...] I could also see how education is in these countries: With us, if the child asks for something that his parents do not have, He is scolded, sometimes he is punished. But I understood that if the child asks me something that I don't have, I can tell him to wait later...'

Negative socio-economic impacts of the migration of Burundian women to Middle East countries

The migration of Burundian women can have negative impacts on their socio-economic life and that of their families. Some migrants may experience family separation and associated psychological problems. They may be exposed to problems related to exploitation and abuse in the workplace, precarious working conditions or health issues. They are also racially segregated in the host countries.

Poor living conditions for children

The poor living conditions of children left behind in Burundi because of their mothers' migration have a profound negative impact. This parental absence affects the emotional, social and educational well-being of children, thus compromising their overall development and safety. School dropout, exploitation by their stepmother and unwanted pregnancies are the consequences.

HACE.301 shows that her absence from home cost her child's school drop-out. She says:

"... For me, I have not lost much. The departure of a housewife cannot be without harmful consequences for children. One of my children has dropped out of school..."

AGORA.313 shows how her absence paved the way for her children to be exploited by their stepmother, leading to her child's dropping out of school. It says this:

"... my child dropped out of school to help her stepmother with housework. The children were not well-treated by their stepmother because they did not treat them as well as I would. I was very sorry, but I persevered until the end of my contract..."

MAFU.36 lives with the regret of having found her 12-year-old daughter who was pregnant and takes the blame for leaving her child in the hands of a father who did not provide adequate care for their child.

"... I lost a lot. When I got back, I found that my 12-year-old daughter had become pregnant because of the lack of follow-up from her father..."

Problems of migrant diseases

Illness problems such as stress, anxiety and depression can affect the mental and physical health of Burundian migrant women working in the Middle East. Separation from family, hard work and adjustment difficulties can contribute to health problems that require appropriate support and care.

Many countries in this region do not guarantee safe and healthy working conditions, which puts these women at risk of their health. Long working hours, lack of adequate rest, poor living conditions and lack of access to health care can lead to short- and long-term health problems for these migrant women.

ALPHA says she still feels tired after returning from the Middle East to show how hard life was in there. She says:

"... Now I feel the tiredness that I have experienced in these countries. I can't stand for long. You must know that if you work in these countries you are so exhausted that you can no longer do other work requiring force. We work a lot of time without respite ..."

BINTU: *"... The hard work we had deteriorated our health to the point where I almost died."*

Hard working conditions

The hard working conditions that sometimes face migrant Burundian women in the Middle East, such as long hours, low wages, lack of social protection and abuse, can have a detrimental impact on their well-being, physical and emotional. In addition, exploitation and abuse in the workplace are another major negative impact of the migration of Burundian women to countries in the Middle East. Many of these women find themselves in domestic work or informal sectors where they are often victims of verbal, physical and sexual abuse. Some employers often take advantage of their vulnerability due to their precarious immigration status and lack of legal knowledge to exploit and abuse them

BINTU.309: explains his difficult living conditions during migration in the Middle East countries in these terms:

“... I was tortured (with visible wound marks on her body). They took 6 months of my salary. We are being abused”

Disorders remated to separation

The emotional and psychological problems associated with the family separation caused by the migration of Burundian women to the Middle East can affect their mental well-being and their ability to maintain strong emotional ties with their families that have remained in the country. These obstacles must be addressed to provide adequate support for migrants and their families. First, family separation and the associated psychological problems are a major challenge for these migrant women. When they leave their home countries, they are often forced to leave behind their families, including their children and spouses. Geographical distance and financial barriers to frequent travel make it difficult to maintain close family ties. This prolonged separation can lead to psychological problems such as anxiety, depression and loneliness.

AGORA.317, a woman whose husband took another wife due to her absence, expresses the pain she had to be able to put herself once again in the arms of a man:

“I spent four years without remarrying because I had a deep wound in my heart [...] I just got married again, a week ago to try for second chance.”

Racial segregation

Given the racial difference between the country of departure and the country of destination, migrant women may face difficulties related to racial segregation. In many countries in the Middle East, African migrant women face systematic discrimination, negative stereotypes and unequal treatment because of their ethnic origin. They may be excluded from certain spaces, including public places, and may be subject to prejudice and racist acts. ZABU who worked in Saudi Arabia and Oman expresses the relative nature of racial segregation by country as follows:

‘... some Arabs can’t reach out to a black man, it seems like he compares him to an animal [...] Before cutting onions for example, one must wear gloves... [...] But in Oman you can share the meal even on the same plate....’

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The objective of this study was to find out the motivations behind the migration of Burundian women to the countries of the Middle East and the positive as well as negative impacts of this migration. In the following paragraphs, the results are compared with those of previous studies.

Different motivations of the migration of Burundian women to the countries of the Middle East

Poverty, the need for business and employment funds, housing problems, derisory wages and stigma are all barriers that hinder the social integration of Burundian women and their socio-economic development. The findings of Bachmann and Kohn (2019) support our findings in that they state that the main motivations for women’s migration to seek employment are economic. Employment opportunities in their countries of origin are limited, not least because of low economic development and unemployment rates are among the main causes of migration. In our interviews with migrants, we found that Burundian women migrate for economic reasons.

The work of Baude (2008) supports our findings when he says that the per capita income gap between host and home countries becomes a major cause of migration. We found that some women even had income-generating activities and even employment, but decided to migrate for the improvement of living conditions. The low wage and low income are the main push factors.

The work of Moujoud (2008) supports our findings. In his research, he shows that the project of migrants' departure is motivated by a search for autonomy begun in their home society. Some of the migrants interviewed expressed that they were looking for financial autonomy to implement their projects, but also to contribute to the development of their households. The migration of Burundian women to other countries is also motivated by factors related to family solidarity

These results converge with those of the work of Saidane (2021) saying that women who migrate are attracted by higher wages and savings opportunities that allow them to finance projects such as land purchase or business start-ups upon their return (Saidane 2021). In addition, the conversion of foreign currencies into local currency gives them a higher purchasing power, which encourages them to seek out work opportunities abroad (Torre, 2001). As far as motivations are concerned, a decent wage is one of the main motivations for Burundian migrant women, just as it is for those from West Africa or South-East Asia. For example, Burundi's poor economic development and high unemployment rates drive these women to migrate to Middle Eastern countries, where they hope to earn higher wages to support their families. Similarly, Filipino and Indonesian women migrants seek similar economic opportunities in Gulf countries (Saidane, 2021).

Positive impacts of migration for Burundian women

Regular remittances from Burundian women working in the Middle East to their relatives who are still in the country constitute essential financial support for daily needs, child education and medical expenses that enhances the financial security of their families. These results are in line with those of Muragwabugabo (2003), who states that women's migration is also motivated by factors related to family solidarity. Many women decide to migrate in order to support their families who remain in Burundi (IOM, 2022). This family solidarity is deeply rooted in the Burundian culture, where women generally assume the role of economic support for the family.

In addition, the search for autonomy and business funds, the purchase of plots of land, the construction of houses, as well as the sending of funds to families in Burundi highlight the efforts made by these women to improve their situation.

The work of Stark and Bloom (1985) is consistent with the results of this study. In their conclusions, they point out that migration can also, through savings transfers, help the family left behind to reduce their vulnerability to local economic conditions in countries where social security systems are almost non-existent. The schooling of children and poor living conditions also highlight the family responsibilities often assumed by these migrant women.

One of the most significant impacts of Burundian women's migration is the improvement of their economic situation and that of their families. As reported by AGORA.202 and HACE.202, migrant women send remittances to their families, enabling them to finance projects such as land purchases or business start-ups on their return. This phenomenon is also observed among migrant women in the Philippines and certain West African countries, where remittances play a crucial role in improving the living conditions of relatives back home (Asis, 2017,. Migration is also a factor of emancipation, enabling Burundian women to acquire greater financial and personal independence, as expressed by AGORA: 214 and NINA.219. This is also true of African and Latin American migrant women, who, by migrating, seek to free themselves from the dominant patriarchal structures in their countries of origin (Staab, 2004).

Negative impacts of migration on Burundian women

Illness problems, poor working conditions, racial segregation, stereotypes, and separation troubles add additional complexities to their already difficult daily lives.

Our results are supported by the work of Salem (2020) who mentions in his work that only sub-Saharan women mentioned being victims of abuse and aggression, violence that also affects sub-Saharan men in Tunisia. These

acts of violence are therefore both racist and misogynistic, as they are based on skin colour but also on cultural stereotypes attributed to black women.

Caarls and Mazzucato (2015) work that states that different expectations and attitudes of spouses with respect to gender can be important stressors and increase the risk of divorce, supports our findings. The migration of Burundian women to Middle Eastern countries may increase the risk of separation or even divorce. The difference between their results and those found in this study is that they talk about risk, while this study mentions only some exemplary cases. Wanner (2008) in his study found that economic dependence on remittances allows migrants to make more important decisions within the family. This supports our findings in that some migrant women, in the face of misappropriation behaviour, may decide to stop sending funds.

In the case of Burundian women, stories often focus on the challenges of resettlement and the abuses suffered in the destination country. In contrast, studies carried out in West and North Africa focus more on the difficulties encountered along the way. According to Sattler and Cook (2020), financial problems, hunger, thirst and lack of shelter are the major difficulties encountered by migrants during the journey, affecting 47%, 41% and 38% of respondents respectively. These data show that female migrants from sub-Saharan Africa in transit across the Mediterranean or other migratory routes face obstacles related to the crossing, while Burundian women suffer mainly from conditions in host countries. Burundian women in the Middle East suffer forms of racial segregation and discrimination reminiscent of those of sub-Saharan migrant women in Tunisia, as mentioned in Salem's study (2020). However, one notable difference lies in social conditions: in Tunisia, migrant women from sub-Saharan Africa are more exposed to aggression in public spaces due to their isolation, while Burundian women mainly face discrimination in private spaces such as domestic workplaces. In addition, migrant women from the Middle East and North Africa working in Tunisia often benefit from a more protected environment, and feel more at ease in the workplace (Salem, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study was to analyse in depth the motivations and impacts of this migration on different aspects, including the family, society and economy of Burundi. It is in this perspective that the collection of qualitative data based on the life stories of migrant women was organized and carried out. The data collected were analysed by the thematic content analysis method.

The results of the analysis show that the motivations for this migration are, among others, poverty, the need for business assets and employment, housing problems, avoidance of stigma, low wages and the search for autonomy. This migration has positive impacts such as the acquisition of business assets, land purchases, housing construction, financial support for families remaining in Burundi, economic empowerment of women and child education. These elements highlight the transformative potential of migration in socio-economic terms, allowing for improved living conditions and the achievement of certain key objectives.

However, there are negative impacts that include living conditions and health problems of children, difficult working conditions, difficulties related to family separation, as well as stigma. These elements highlight the challenges and difficulties faced by these migrant women and their families, requiring special attention from policy makers and civil society actors.

In short, it is crucial to recognize that the migration of Burundian women to countries in the Middle East is a multidimensional phenomenon with varied implications. Policy-makers need to take these findings into account in order to implement policies and programs that promote the positive while mitigating the negative. It is imperative to adopt a holistic approach that integrates support, protection and empowerment measures for these migrant women and their families.

Study strengths and weaknesses

The results of this exploratory research provide a valuable contribution to understanding the phenomenon of women's migration, especially with regard to their motivations and positive and negative impacts. Despite the limited sample size, this study highlights unique pathways shaped by spatial, cultural, social and temporal

migrations, and enriches the scientific debate on female migration dynamics. These results also open up avenues for future research, particularly by exploring the motivations and consequences of these migrations.

However, as with any qualitative study, the results are not generalizable to the entire population. They are limited to the seven participants and the particular context in which their stories were collected. We also recognize that this research is not exhaustive. It is a first step in the initiation of scientific research. We encourage other researchers to continue along this path, and even expand the topic to a comparative study of the living conditions of migrant and non-migrant women.

Ethical requirements

This study was carried out with the approval of the Research Office of the University of Burundi, which issued the research certificate. In addition, the consent process was carried out and the participants agreed to take part in the interviews without constraint and in the sure knowledge of the respect of their private life.

Declaration of conflict of interest

The authors declare no interest conflict.

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