

Migration and Development in Egypt

by
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I. Demography, Labor Market, and Migration History

Migration in Egypt is strongly influenced by poverty, economic difficulties, and improper socio-economic policies. Until the mid-1950s, foreigners came to Egypt but Egyptians rarely migrated abroad (Zohry, 2003). Egyptian emigration was not only a reflection of the oil boom in the Arab Gulf countries and the need for manpower in neighboring countries in mid-1970s, but also of economic difficulties and high rates of population growth in Egypt in the second half of the 20th century. Rapid population growth is one of the crucial problems that have hindered development efforts in Egypt. While the doubling of Egypt's population between 1897 and 1947, from 9.7 million to 19 million, took fifty years, the next doubling took less than thirty years, from 1947 to 1976. Today, Egypt's population is about 76 million which means that another population doubling occurred in the last 30 years. The annual population growth rate is around two percent. About 95 percent of the population is crowded into around five percent of the total land area that follows the course of the Nile. The remaining 95 percent of the land is arid desert. Although it can be seen as a kind of 'natural response' to the geography of economic opportunity, migration to large cities has further unbalanced Egypt's population distribution.

Associated with rapid population growth is a high level of unemployment. Current official unemployment rate in Egypt is about 10 percent, but independent estimates push the rate up to 20 percent (Zohry, 2006). However, to control unemployment, Egypt will need to generate about 800,000 new jobs each year in order to absorb new entrants into the labour force. The size of the informal sector and the level of over-employment in the public sector add to the complexity of the problem.

This study explores the interrelationships between migration and development in the Egyptian case. Since a comprehensive model that links migration variables with development variables is not yet available neither in the migration literature nor in the development studies literature, the analysis in this study focuses on the economic aspects

of migration (such as remittances and labor market implications of migration) and the socio-cultural correlates of migration (such as migration and values and norms).

I.1 Demographic trends

While Egypt's population doubled from 9.7 million to 19 million in 50 years (between 1897 and 1947), the next doubling to 38 million people took less than 30 years (from 1947 to 1976). Since then, the population size has almost doubled again, totaling 76 million in 2006. This observation can be explained by a considerable increase in life expectancy at birth from 54 to 71 and a decrease in infant mortality from 110 to 33 (per 1,000 live births) between 1975 and 2005. The annual population growth rate has increased from 1.5% in the beginning of the 20th century to a maximum of 2.8% between 1975 and 1985. However, from 1975 to 2005, the fertility rate fell from 5.5 to 3 children per woman, pushing the growth rate down to 2.1% in the period 1986-1996. For 2006, annual population growth rate is estimate at a level of 1.8% (Table 1).

Egypt's rapid population growth is further complicated by the fact that its cultivable land is extremely scarce relative to the size of its population. Over 95 percent of Egypt's population is concentrated on the narrow ribbon, which follows the course of the Nile and represents only around 5% of the total land area of 1,000,000 square kilometers. The remaining 95% are arid desert, resulting in a rather inelastic supply of agricultural land. However, arable land has been extended "horizontally" by developing new areas for cultivation and represents now 5% of total land, while "vertical" expansion through intensified productivity is envisaged on existing cultivated area.

Table 1
Main Egyptian demographic and socio-economic indicators

Indicator	Year				
	1975	1985	1995	2005	2006
Population					
Mid-year population (millions)	39.3	49.6	61.2	74.0	75.4
Population growth rate (annual %)	2.2	2.3	1.9	1.9	1.8
Total fertility rate (live births per woman)	5.5	4.8	3.5	..	3.2
Life expectancy at birth (years)	54.0	61.0	67.6	71.2	..
Rural population (millions)	22.2	27.8	35.0	42.7	..
Urban population (millions)	17.1	21.8	26.2	31.3	..
Urban population (% of total population)	43.5	43.9	42.8	42.3	..
Labor force					
Labor force size (millions)	9.6	12.8	17.1	..	21.9
Participation rate (% of total population)	44.6*	49.4*	41.4*	52.8	..
Employment in agriculture (% of total)	43.2	37.3	29.9	..	..
Employment in Industry (% of total)	15.3	14.4	15.2	..	..
Employment in Services (% of total)	41.5	48.3	54.9	..	..
Unemployment (%)	4.3	11.1	9.0	10.0	9.3
Economy					
GDP (current US\$) (Billions)	..	..	..	89.7	107.5
GDP growth (annual %)	..	..	..	4.5	6.8
Foreign direct investment (current US\$) (billions)	..	..	..	5.4	..
Social indicators					
Human Development Index (HDI)	0.439	0.540	0.611	0.702**	..
Human Development Index (ranking)	NA	NA	NA	119	..
Adult literacy (%)	38.0	45.0	50.0	71.4**	..
Population with access to safe water (%)	N/A	75	N/A	97	..
Migration					
Egyptian Expatriates (millions)	..	..	..	..	3.9
Percent of Expatriates to Total Population	..	..	..	..	5.2
Workers' remittances (US\$) (billion)	..	..	..	5.0	5.3

Sources: United Nations Population Division; Egypt Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics; United Nations Development Program (UNDP); Source: World Development Indicators database, 2007 ; Zohry 2006.

* 1976, 1986 and 1996 figures respectively

** 2004 figures

I.2 Labor market situation

It is very difficult to obtain reliable data on the Egyptian labor market, and inconsistencies between different sources are high. According to CAPMAS Statistical Yearbook 2006 and 2006 Census data, the Egyptian labor force increased from 16.8 million in 1994 to 21.9 million in 2006. These figures are well below the labor force estimates in the World Bank's World Development Indicators, which estimated 2003's number at 26.7 million. In addition, the 2005 figure is 21.3 million according to the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration. This may be attributed – in part – to using different labor force participation rates.

The results of the 1988 Labor Force Sample Survey (1988 LFSS) and the 1998 Egyptian Labor Market Survey (1998 ELMS) provide more detailed data on the major employment segments of the Egyptian labor market. The agricultural sector absorbs about 40% of the employment, while the private non-agricultural sector absorbs about 30%. The government is still a major employer: It absorbs, along with the state-owned enterprises, almost 30% of employment (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution (%) of employment by major labor market segments (1988 an 1998)

Segment	1988	1998
Government	19.0	23.9
State-owned enterprises	8.6	5.2
Agriculture	42.4	39.1
Private sector (non agricultural)	30.0	31.8
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Assaad, 2002

Unemployment

The 1986 census reported that 12% of the labor force were unemployed (up from 7.7% in 1976). Even if the unemployment rate fell to less than 9% of the labor force between 1997 and 1999, the total number of unemployed did not decrease accordingly due to overall population growth (CAPMAS, 1999). In absolute numbers, unemployment has

increased from less than a million in the 1980s to constantly over two million in recent years, according to various CAPMAS reports. At the same time, the unemployment rate has returned to around 10% (Table 3). In addition, there remains the statistically unmeasured phenomenon of underemployment or disguised unemployment, which is widely recognized to be huge.

Table 3
Unemployment in Egypt (1988-2006, various years)

Year	Total unemployment (thousands)	Rate (% of total labor force)
1988	890	5.4
1998	1,446	7.9
2002	2,021	10.2
2003	2,015	9.9
2004	2,087	10.0
2006	2,040	9.3

Source: CAPMAS 2007; Assaad 2002; 1988 Labor Force Sample Survey (LFSS) and 1998 Egypt Labor Market Survey (ELMS).

Providing Egypt's youth with job opportunities is undoubtedly one of the major challenges faced today by the Egyptian government. High rates of population growth have resulted in large numbers of young people entering the labor force in recent years, contributing to the growing unemployment. Table 4 and Table 5 underline the severity of primary unemployment among young people and especially educated young people. Between 1988 and 1998, the unemployment rate among those aged 15 to 19 increased from 11.1% to 15.2 %, while it soared from 10.4% to 18.6% for the age group 20 to 29 years, which includes university graduates. In 2002, unemployment was highest for graduates from technical secondary schools (32.1%) and university (14.4%)¹. Women

¹ It has to be noted that there might be a bias in the lower numbers for less and none educated people, insofar as they work primarily in the informal sector and tend to declare their unemployment situation less

were particularly hit with respectively 38.8% and 22%. This reflected the generally higher level of unemployment among them (23.9%) compared to their male counterparts (6.3%).

Table 4
Unemployment (%) by age and gender, Egypt (1988 and 1998)

	1988	1998
Age		
15-19	11.1	15.2
20-29	10.4	18.6
30-39	2.1	3.2
40-49	1.5	1.2
50-59	0.6	1.4
60-64	2.6	0.2
Gender		
Male	4.0	7.0
Female	7.8	9.4

Source: 1988 Labor Force Sample Survey (LFSS) and 1998 Egypt Labor Market Survey (ELMS).

I.3 Evolution of migration

Different migration phases can be distinguished in the Egyptian migration evolution, which are defined by changing international conditions, events and labor market needs, particularly in the Arab region, but also different economic factors and policy decisions at the national level. In the first phase, prior to 1974, the government of Egypt was motivated to bear the burden by providing job opportunities. However, increasing population growth, along with the lack of growth in the economic and technological

frequently than higher educated people. This indicates again the fact that all these numbers are clearly underestimated.

sectors, diminished the state's ability to provide jobs. The State authorized permanent and temporary migration in 1971 and lifted restrictions on labor migration in 1974. Large numbers of temporary migrants began to work in the Arab Gulf countries, where oil revenues had quadrupled in 1973 due to the oil embargo. Graduate students' permanent migration had already commenced after the end of the war of 1967. Between 1970 and 1974, an estimated 300,000 people migrated, compared to a migrant stock of 70,000 in 1970².

Table 5
Unemployment (%) by educational level and sex, Egypt (2002)

Educational Status	Sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Illiterate	0.2	0.4	0.2
Reading and writing	0.2	2.6	0.3
Less than secondary	0.8	3.3	0.9
Secondary	14.7	38.8	32.1
Higher than secondary	6.1	13.1	8.4
University	11.2	22.0	14.4
Total	6.3	23.9	10.2

Source: El-Ahwani, 2005

It was followed by an expansion phase (1974-1984). The increased oil prices fueled ambitious development programs in the Arab oil-producing countries, increasing in turn the demand for foreign labor. To resolve unemployment problems and use remittances to supply payment deficits and finance private projects, the government further eased migration procedures and created the Ministry of State for Emigration Affairs (1981) that sponsored Egyptian migrants and drew up an overall migration strategy. The number of Egyptian emigrants increased to about two million by 1980, with an increasing demand

² Source: estimations of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)

for teachers in other Arab countries. Iraq became a favored destination for unskilled labor, while cheaper Asian and South Asian labor began to migrate to the Arab countries.

The contraction phase (1984-1987) began after the start of the Iran-Iraq war, which depressed oil revenues and temporarily pushed down the number of Egyptian emigrants to about 1.4 million (1985). In addition, Egyptian migrant labor had to face a number of new problems since the second half of the 1980s, such as the end of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988, falling oil prices, declining demand for construction workers in Arab countries, and the policy of replacing foreign with national labor in the Arab Gulf States. The Egyptian government promulgated the Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law in 1983, while skilled migrants progressively replaced unskilled workers.

The following phase (1988-1992) was characterized by a stagnation of the number of Egyptian emigrants, with a significant flow of return migrants from the Gulf area to Egypt and a considerable decline in the number of contracts granted to new emigrants. The 1990 Gulf War in particular forced about one million Egyptian migrants in Iraq and Kuwait to return home. By 1992 however, the number of Egyptian migrants exceeded 2.2 million (Zohry, 2003). In 2006, number of Egyptian migrants abroad is about 3.9 million.

With respect to migration to Egypt, since 1983, massive immigration has taken place from Sudan and other Sub-Saharan countries due to conflict and political instability, with inflows estimated at 0.3 to 3 million people (Zohry, 2003). In addition, illegal emigration from Egypt to Europe through Libya has increased.

II. Contemporary Egyptian migration

Over the last three decades, two distinct destinations have emerged for Egyptian migration. Emigrants have moved to the countries of the Arab Gulf, mainly on the basis of temporary work contracts, without the perspective of permanent stay and the right to citizenship privileges. Since the 1960's, growing numbers have been migrating to Europe, North America and Australia with the intention of staying permanently in the destination countries. Official secondment through governmental authorities on the basis of bilateral contracts was one of the main forms of temporary migration to Arab countries.

II.1 Migration stocks

Number of Egyptian migrants abroad is estimated to be between 3 and 5 million in 2006 (Zohry, 2006). This interval estimate is based on the 2000 estimates of the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) and the new developments in Egyptian migration, especially illegal migration to Europe and massive youth migration to Libya and Jordan. Recent figures by country of destination are not available and we are compelled to use CAPMAS estimates of 2000. According to the estimates of the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the total number of Egyptian migrant laborers to the Gulf is about 1.9 million (2000). Saudi Arabia hosts almost 50% of them, Libya, Jordan and Kuwait another 40%. Together, 87.6% of the total number of Egyptian migrant laborers who go to these countries (cf. Table 2 and Figure). With 824,000 migrants (2000), the total number of permanent Egyptian migrants in non-Arab countries is less than half the Arab countries migrant stock. 78.6% of them are concentrated in five countries: the United States (318,000 or 38.6 %), Canada (110,000 or 13.3%), Italy (90,000 of 10.9%), Australia (70,000 or 8.5%), and Greece (60,000 or 7.3%). The rest, approximately one fifth of the total number, are mainly in Western European countries such as Holland, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Spain (Table 6 and Figure 1 and 2).

Table 6
Egyptian Migration by Receiving Country (2000)

Receiving Country	Number of migrants	Distribution by destination for Arab countries and non-Arab countries (%)	Overall distribution (%)
Saudi Arabia	923,600	48.3%	33.7%
Libya	332,600	17.4%	12.2%
Jordan	226,850	11.9%	8.3%
Kuwait	190,550	10.0%	7.0%
UAE	95,000	5.0%	3.5%
Iraq	65,629	3.4%	2.4%
Qatar	25,000	1.3%	0.9%
Yemen	22,000	1.2%	0.8%
Oman	15,000	0.8%	0.5%
Lebanon	12,500	0.7%	0.5%
Bahrain	4,000	0.2%	0.1%
Total Arab countries	1,912,729	100.0%	69.9%
U.S.A	318,000	38.6%	11.6%
Canada	110,000	13.3%	4.0%
Italy	90,000	10.9%	3.3%
Australia	70,000	8.5%	2.6%
Greece	60,000	7.3%	2.2%
Holland	40,000	4.9%	1.5%
France	36,000	4.4%	1.3%
England	35,000	4.2%	1.3%
Germany	25,000	3.0%	0.9%
Switzerland	14,000	1.7%	0.5%
Austria	14,000	1.7%	0.5%
Spain	12,000	1.5%	0.4%
Total non-Arab countries	824,000	100.0%	30.1%
Total all countries	2,736,729		100.0%

Source: CAPMAS (2001), "The Permanent Migration of Egyptians 2000"

Figure 1
Percentage Distribution of Temporary Egyptian Migrants by Receiving Country

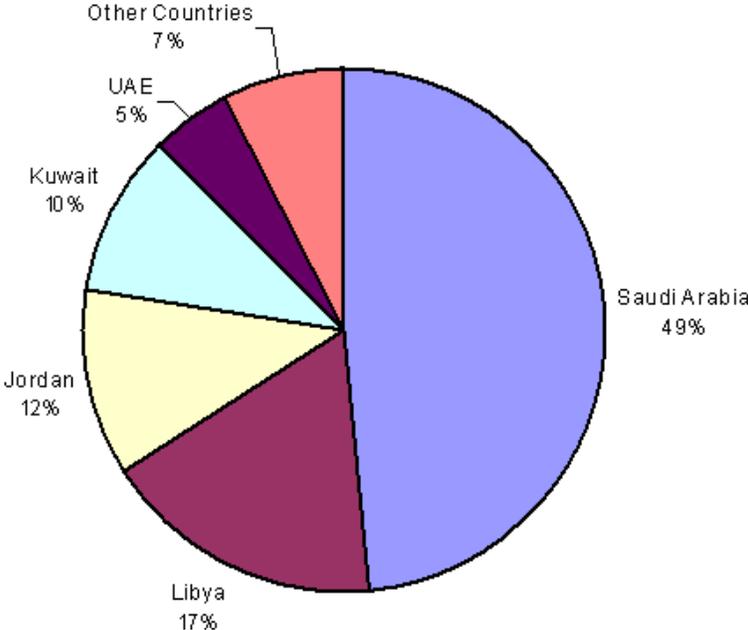
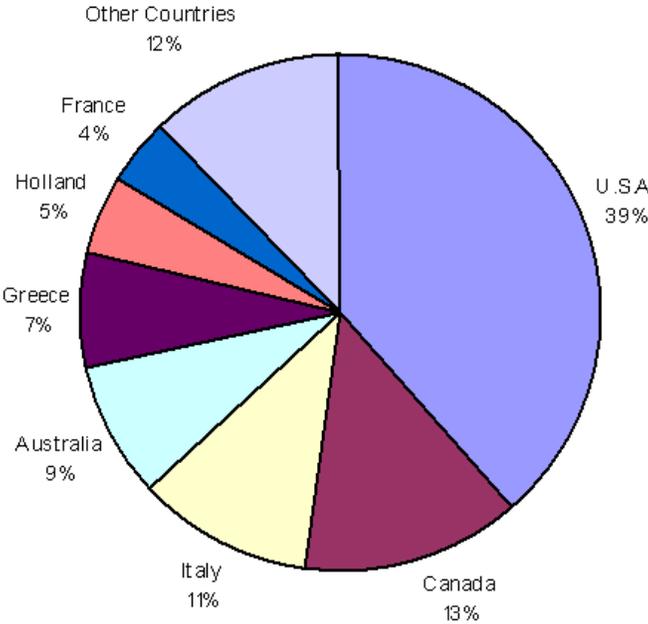


Figure 1
Percentage Distribution of Permanent Egyptian Migrants by Country of Destination



According to these stock figures, flows of migrants to neighboring Arab countries have largely exceeded migration to Europe, North America and Australia, which makes up 30 percent of the total number of Egyptian migrants abroad.

It has to be noted however that the CAPMAS figures are estimates drawn from reports of Egyptian consulates in the respective destination countries, records of cross-border flows from the Ministry of Interior, emigration permits from the Ministry of Manpower, and some other sources. As such, they differ considerably from estimates of the destination countries, by up to 900% in the case of Switzerland (Table 7). The total difference of 145% sheds some light on the degree of inaccuracy of migration data in general and Egyptian migration data in particular. Taking into account differences in the definition of a migrant, illegal immigration, destination country nationality acquisition, and other sources of error, it can be inferred that the numbers closest to reality lie between the Egyptian and the destination country values. Most recently, CAPMAS announced that the total number of Egyptian abroad at the time of 2006 census (November 2006) was 3.9 million.

Towards the end of the 1980s, Egyptians in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries comprised a much smaller proportion of the foreign workforce than in the late 1970s before major construction projects were completed. In the 1980s, Egyptian workers represented 40 percent of the total foreign labor in Saudi Arabia. A smaller workforce was in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). In the same period, number of workers from South-East Asia increased. For example, number of Indian workers in Saudi Arabia increased from 270,000 in 1983 to 650,000 by 1990 (The Indian Diaspora, 2006). The fluctuation of the number of migrant laborers to Iraq and Libya in the last three decades was affected by political tensions including the Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, and the political and economic sanctions on Libya. In recent years, and after the end of its civil war, Lebanon has become a new destination for unskilled Egyptian construction workers.

Table 7
Number of Egyptian emigrants according to the statistics of origin and
Destination countries (circa 2000)

Country of Destination	Country where migrants are counted			
	Country of Destination	Country of Origin	Difference (Origin – destination)	
			Value	%
Austria	4,721	14,000	9,279	197%
France	15,974	36,000	20,026	125%
Germany	14,477	25,000	10,523	73%
Greece	7,448	60,000	52,552	706%
Italy	40,879	90,000	49,121	120%
Netherlands	10,982	40,000	29,018	264%
Spain	1,567	12,000	10,433	666%
United Kingdom	24,705	35,000	10,295	42%
Australia	33,370	70,000	36,630	110%
Canada	35,975	110,000	74,025	206%
Jordan	124,566	226,850	102,284	82%
Switzerland	1,369	14,000	12,631	923%
United States	113,395	318,000	204,605	180%
Sub-total	429,428	1,050,850	621,422	145%
Arab countries*	N/A	1,685,879		
Total		2,736,729		

Source: Fargues (2005: 21)

* Excluding Jordan since it is listed above in the table.

II.2 Migration flows

Migration flows to Arab countries

The availability of migration flow data is a major issue, since it is very difficult to distinguish the different causes (emigration and immigration, naturalization, return migration, death, etc.) in the variation of migration stock data over time. In the case of Egypt, there are statistics on the number of contracts signed by the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration for Egyptian workers in Arab countries (Table 8). Even if these figures are far below the real migration numbers, they show a considerable fluctuation, which is consistent with the history of migration in the region depicted earlier. The total number of contracts increased from a very low level of 589 in 1991, after the Gulf War, to a peak of almost 83,500 in 1993/1994. After a sharp decrease to less than 5,000 in 1997, flows have recovered slightly in the recent period. The figure of 2005 is the highest (100,839) which indicates an increasing demand on Egyptian labor force in the Arab countries. However, this latest number is illusive since about 40% of this number is for migrant workers to Jordan after setting new regulations for migration to Jordan³. In general, even after excluding migrants to Jordan, number of contracts has increased.

With respect to trends in Egyptian migration to Arab countries in the last decade of the 20th century, one can notice an increasing share of Egyptian migrants in Saudi Arabia as a percent of total migrants; the percent of Egyptian migrants in Saudi Arabia increased from 29.3% in 1990 to 48.3% in 2000. Egyptian migrants in Iraq decreased sharply from 44.1% in 1990 to 3.4% in 2000; this is mainly attributed to political instability in Iraq. Egyptian migrants in Libya increased from 3% in 1990 to 22.9% in 1993, and then decreased to 17.4% in 2000. One should not ignore the undocumented migration to Libya in the last decade since Egyptian nationals, until March 2007, were not obliged to obtain visas or work contracts to enter Libya (Table 9).

³ In the past it was easy for Egyptian laborers to enter, stay, and work in Jordan without any restrictions, but since 1998 Egyptians who wish to work in Jordan should secure a work contract through their relatives and friends there before entering the Jordanian lands, otherwise, their passport will be stamped "Not Allowed to Work in Jordan" upon entry.

Table 8
Number of Contracts for Egyptians to Work in Arab Countries (1991-2005)

Year	Number of Contracts
1991	589
1992	39,812
1993	83,464
1994	83,458
1995	49,372
1996	9,601
1997	4,643
1998	7,201
1999	6,586
2000	17,652
2001	14,722
2005*	100,839

Source: General Directorate for External Employment, Ministry of Manpower and Emigration.

* For the period from July 1st, 2004 until June 30th, 2005.

Table 9
Percent distribution of Egyptians by country of destination (Arab countries)
1990-2000

Country	1990*	1993*	2000**
Iraq	44.1	6.9	3.4
Saudi Arabia	29.3	45.9	48.3
Kuwait	9.3	9.0	10.0
Jordan	6.5	9.4	11.9
UAE	4.3	2.9	5.0
Libya	3.0	22.9	17.4
Yemen	1.6	0.9	1.2
Qatar	1.0	1.1	1.3
Oman	0.6	0.6	0.8
Bahrain	0.1	0.2	0.2
Other Arab Countries	0.2	0.2	0.7
Total	100	100	100

Source: * Farrag, 1999

** CAPMAS, 2001

While the dependence on migrant workers has increased over the last 30 years in the Arab Gulf states, the share of immigrants from Arab countries among all expatriates has been more than halved between 1975 and 1996, plummeting from 72% to 31%. Table 10 shows the considerable, though uneven decline in all six states of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Table 10
Share of Arab nationals in the expatriate population of Arab Gulf countries
(1975-1996)

	1975	1985	1996
Bahrain	22	15	12
Kuwait	80	69	33
Oman	16	9	11
Qatar	33	33	21
Saudi Arabia	91	79	30
UAE	26	19	10
Total	72	56	31

Source: Shah, 2004 "Arab Migration in a Globalized World"

A major reason for this phenomenon has been the mounting competition of immigrant workers from Asia. Indeed, workers from countries East of the Gulf region (Pakistan, but also South and South-East Asian countries) have started to arrive in the 1980s, offering even lower expectations on salaries and work conditions, even if the cultural and linguistic bonds confers the Egyptian work force some competitive advantage. As shown with the example of Kuwait in Table 11, this pressure has resulted in a quasi-inversion of the respective foreign labor force shares of Arab and Asian nationals. While Arab workers represented almost 60% of the total immigrant population in 1989, by 2001, their share had sunken to 45%. By contrast, the Asian share rose from 39% to 54% over the same period.

The decrease in the total number of expatriates in Kuwait also reveals that Arab Gulf countries have tried to reduce their overall dependency on foreign workers. This has exerted additional pressure on the Arab non-national labor force (including workers from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria), which has been replaced by citizen workers.

Table 11
Expatriate population of Kuwait (1989 and 2001)

Nationalities	1989		2001	
	Numbers	% of Total	Numbers	% of Total
Arab	870,454	59%	621,022	45%
Asian	577,948	39%	746,092	54%
Others	15,552	1%	20,633	1%
Total	1,463,954	100%	1,387,747	100%

Source: Shah, 2004 “Arab Migration in a Globalized World”

Migration flows to Western countries

Though it is extremely difficult to infer migration flows from existing data on stocks, as mentioned earlier, some conclusions can however be drawn from census, register data, and other sources of the main destination countries in Europe for Egyptian migration as estimated by the Arab Labor Organization (Table 12). There has been a considerable flow of Egyptian migrants over the period 1971-2000, which has increased the number of migrants in major European destination countries. In absolute numbers, Italy has attracted the largest share of this migration, followed by Germany and the United Kingdom.

With respect to Egyptian migrants in the United States of America, and according to the results of the last two population censuses of the United states (1990 and 2000), Egyptian migrants increased from 78,574 to 142,832 with an increase of 81.8 percent (US Census Bureau, 2003) . This growing flow of Egyptian migrants to Western destinations is consistent with the stagnation or even reduction of migration flow towards the Arab Gulf countries.

Table 12
Change in stocks of Egyptian immigrants in European countries
destination countries (1971-2000)

Country	1971	1981	1991	1997	1998	1999	2000
France		4,300	6,300				
Germany	5,349	8,587	8,640	13,595	13,927	13,976	13,811
United Kingdom				3,000	4,000	6,000	
Italy				25,272	27,286	30,582	
Spain					778	919	972
Greece	1,116	2,415	4,012	6,903	6,599		
Austria	781	1,574	4,509				
Switzerland					1,624	1,534	1,591
Norway						111	131
Sweden						596	605
Denmark							576
Belgium						613	
Hungary					449	451	456
Finland					217	220	218
Netherland			4,546	3,105	3,101	2,933	2,771

Source: Arab Labor organization (2001), Bulletin of Arab Migration Statistics in European Countries 1971-2000.

Irregular Migration

In the face of the tightened policy adopted by the European Community (European Union), especially after the Schengen agreement in 1990 and the Maastricht Treaty (requiring a visa, strict border surveillance, and imposing a selective ceiling for work permits), illegal migration increased and illegal migration networks grew, especially from Morocco to Spain across the Straits of Gibraltar and from Tunisia and Libya to the nearby Italian coasts and islands across the Mediterranean. Statistically speaking and due to the clandestine nature of this movement of people, accurate figures of the numbers involved are difficult to estimate. Although the governments of sending countries set measures to stop illegal migration, they cannot eradicate it completely. Similarly, the governments of host countries in Europe cannot stop the movements of illegal migration with high rates of success due to the complicated nature of this phenomenon and its linkages to policy and socioeconomic conditions in the sending and receiving countries.

The current stream of Egyptian irregular migration to Europe started in the eve of the 21st century with massive number of fresh graduates and poorly-educated unemployed youth engaged in irregular migration to Europe either through the Mediterranean Sea via Libya or by over staying touristic Schengen visas. The main reasons behind this new type of migration are not related to the tightened policy adopted by the European community, but mainly to high unemployment rates among Egyptian youth, the difficulty for Egyptian youth to find employment opportunities in the Arab Gulf countries due to the competition they face there due to the massive number of cheap South East Asian labour that migrate to the same destination, and the geographical proximity between Egypt and Europe and the ease of travelling to Libya where most of the boat journeys to Europe are originated (Zohry, 2007). Due to the clandestine nature of this phenomenon, it is quite difficult to quantify this migration stream or even to give an approximate number of Egyptian youth who follow this route. However, it is true that about 15 thousand Egyptians are repatriated yearly from Europe (mainly from Italy and Greece) due to illegal migration (Al-Ahram Newspaper, 2007:13)

II.3 Skill composition of migrants

While the distribution of Egyptian migrants to the Arab Gulf countries and Libya is relatively well-documented and frequently researched, less is known about the skills composition of Egyptian migrants to the West (North America, Australia, and Europe). The majority of Egyptian labor migrants are expected to return home eventually, but thousands left their country each year with the intention of permanently resettling abroad. These emigrants tended to be highly educated professionals, mostly doctors, engineers, and teachers. Iraq was the Arab country most likely to accept skilled Egyptians as permanent residents.

Skill composition of migrants in Arab countries

Egyptian migration to Arab countries is a male-dominated involving both skilled and unskilled men. On the one hand, at least 90 percent of migrant workers to the oil-rich Arab countries since 1970 have been males (Zohry 2003). On the other hand, all professions, ranging from scientists and technicians to laborers, migrate. While most workers were employed in construction during the earlier phases of massive labor migration in the mid 1970s, the proportion of scientists and technicians has increased since mid-eighties of the last century (Table 13). Due to competition from new streams of cheap labor from South-East Asia, the share of laborers declined from 43% in 1985 to 26.2% of all registered emigrants in 2005. Scientists and technicians, who represented 20.4 % of the migrant contracts in 1985, made up 40.2% and 39% in 1990 and 2002 respectively and then decreased sharply in 2005 to 21.3%. In both categories, Egyptians generally fill jobs that citizens of the destination countries are either untrained (skilled workers) or unwilling to do (semi-skilled and unskilled workers). The change that occurred in the composition of Egyptian migrants in 2005 is mainly attributed to regulating the Jordanian labor market, where Egyptians – as well as other nationalities – who wish to work in Jordan were required to have a contract before working there. Most of Egyptian migrants to Jordan are unskilled laborers who work in agriculture or in the informal sector of the Jordanian economy. In 2005, about 36 thousand Egyptians migrated to Jordan to work in agriculture out of a total number of migrants amounted to less than 40 thousands.

Table 13
Percentage distribution (%) of contracts of Egyptians to work in Arab Countries
by occupation (1985-2005)

Occupation	1985	1990	2002	2005*
Scientists and technicians	20.4	40.2	39.0	21.3
Managers	0.3	0.3	2.4	0.1
Clerical workers	8.8	8.0	1.5	2.4
Sales and services	18.5	17.3	12.7	9.0
Agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing	8.9	5.3	8.6	40.9
Production workers	43.0	28.9	35.8	26.2
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration

* From July 1st, 2004 until July 30th, 2005

The skills composition of new contracts of Egyptian migrants to work in the different countries of the Arab Gulf and Libya for 2005 indicates that Libya, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar have the highest share of highly skilled migrants in technical and scientific positions, while Jordan, and to a lesser extent the Kuwait, recruit mostly low- or unskilled production workers (Table 14). But the figures of Table 14 mask the fact that most of Egyptian workers who migrate to Libya everyday join the informal sector of the Libyan economy, so that they do not appear in the statistics of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration because they were not required to have a work contract before departure until March 2007.

Table 14

Percentage distribution of Egyptian migrants' contracts by occupation and Arab destination country (Arab countries 2005)*

Country	Occupation						Total
	Scientists and technicians	Managers	Clerical workers	Sales and services	Agriculture animal husbandry and fishing	Production workers	
Saudi Arabia	41.8	0.9	1.2	11.5	4.7	39.8	9,359
Kuwait	22.3	0.1	5.7	16.1	12.9	42.9	33,476
UAE	40.3	0.0	2.3	15.5	2.7	39.3	13,312
Qatar	40.4	0.0	1.6	9.3	4.1	44.6	4,673
Jordan	6.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	91.1	2.5	39,531
Libya	96.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	413
Other Countries	40.2	0.0	0.0	8.5	6.3	45.0	189
Total	21,510	140	2,411	9,103	41,301	26,488	100,953
	39.0%	2.4%	1.5%	12.7%	8.6%	35.8%	100.0%

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration.

*Includes contracts from July 1st, 2004 until July 30th, 2005

The labor market conditions in the receiving countries play a major role in determining the skill mix of migrant workers. Libya with a pre-mature labor market absorbs thousands of Egyptian unskilled laborers to work in the informal sector and family sector of the Libyan economy. Jordan, with a shortage of unskilled laborers, absorbs unskilled and semi-skilled Egyptian laborers to work in agriculture, construction sector, and services. In more organized labor markets in the Arab Gulf countries, migration of Egyptians is more difficult than their migration to Libya and Jordan, so that the selectivity of migrants tends to work against unskilled laborers (Zohry, 2005b).

Due to the shared language and the familiarity of Egyptians with the legal and educational systems in the Arab Gulf countries' systems, which were set up in the past

mainly by Egyptian experts, these countries are expected to continue contracting the services of Egyptian labor to satisfy their needs. South-East Asian labor force lack the Arabic language proficiency which is needed in many workplaces and sectors, especially in education. In addition, the nationalization of labor force in the Arab Gulf countries may take a long time.

Skills distribution of migrants in the West

According to “gray literature” (non-scientific reports, media, and newspapers), Egyptians in the West are more educated than migrants to the Arab Gulf countries. Their migration is family-natured⁴ by opposition to Arab migration, which is mainly of males. Even if there is a lack of reliable data on the occupations of Egyptian migrants in Europe, North America and Australia, limited qualitative statements are possible.

Active and successful Egyptian-American communities exist at present in most of the large metropolitan areas of the USA, but also of other Western countries. Some of these Egyptians were sent by their government to study abroad and stayed in the country of destination to teach and conduct research, others have made a career as businessmen. Likewise, Egyptian networks in Europe are well-established. Egyptian medical doctors established their own society (Egyptian Medical Society) in the United Kingdom, which includes more than 120 members, many of whom reside in London and are university professors (Egyptian Medical Society UK, 2007). In addition to medical doctors, Egyptians in the UK are mostly highly skilled professionals (scientists, pharmacists, journalists, engineers), in addition to a small proportion of semi-skilled workers.

However, with the expansion of irregular migration, especially to Italy and other European countries, a balance in the skill composition could be achieved within this decade, since most of the migrants to these destinations are less educated or unskilled young men who escape poverty and (primary) unemployment in Egypt. Networks of

⁴ Migration to the West is family-natured; by family nature we mean that migrants go to the destination country with their family members. In the Gulf and since migration is temporary, most of Egyptian migrants tend to leave their families in Egypt and migrate alone.

smugglers and traffickers bring hundreds of Egyptian youth from the Libyan coast across the Mediterranean Sea to reach the “European heaven” (at prices of up to 15,000 Egyptian pounds, or 2,500 US dollars). The risks linked to these dangerous crossings with primitive boats to the nearest Italian Island are now well-known thanks to media reports on regular casualties as well as through research on the topic (Hamood, 2006; Zohry, 2005a).

II.4 Characteristics of migrants

Despite the fact that CAPMAS issues an estimate of Egyptians abroad associated with every census, the Egyptian census itself does not include any questions or information on international migration of Egyptians, so that the only available data sources are specialized surveys or census data of destination countries, if available. The “Pull and Push Factors of International Migration Project”, sponsored by Eurostat and the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) published in 2000 the results of a survey conducted in Egypt to improve the understanding of the direct and indirect causes and mechanisms of international migration from an internationally comparative perspective⁵.

The data indicates that migrants tend to come from larger households than non-migrants (6.01 against 5.24 persons per household), while a majority of them (59%) were married before migration. However, no strong conclusions could be drawn on the financial incentives for migration, since 57% of the migrants perceived their financial situation to be sufficient compared to 65% of the non-migrants.

⁵ Other sending countries surveyed were Ghana, Morocco, Senegal, and Turkey. On the receiving end, Italy and Spain were included in this study. In 1996, the Cairo Demographic Center (CDC) and CAPMAS collected data from 1,943 households in the different regions of Egypt. Any adult aged 18-65 years qualified for interviewing. The sample included households with recent and non-recent migrants as well as non-migrants. *Current migrants* are those who migrated from Egypt and actually live abroad at the time of the interview. *Return migrants* have lived abroad for a continuous period of at least one year, but have returned to Egypt, where they live at the time of the interview. A *non-migrant* is a non-international migrant. The word *migrant* therefore refers to the first two categories together. If eligible household members were not available for individual interviews, direct questioning was substituted, if possible, by interviews with proxies (family members). Proxies were only allowed for current migrants. The data collection took place in April and May to capture a large number of current migrants during their summer vacation.

Age

Concerning the age structure, it was shown that the average age of return migrants was about five years below that of non-migrants (29.8 versus 35.0 years). While almost 75% of the migrant interviewees were younger than 35 years, this applied to only half (53.1%) of the non-migrant sample (Table 15).

Table 15
Percentage distribution (%) of Egyptian migrants and non-migrants by age

Age group	Migrants	Non-migrants
18-24	29.8%	25.7%
25-29	27.4%	16.1%
30-34	17.4%	11.3%
35-39	11.1%	11.6%
40-49	11.7%	17.6%
50+	2.6%	17.7%
Total	100%	100%
Number of individuals	1,121	3,672
Average age (years)	29.8	35.0

Source: Eurostat, 2000: "Pull and Push Factors of International Migration"

Education

According to the NIDI study, the majority of migrants have at least completed secondary school (53.9%), and only 34.1% of migrants have less than a full primary education. This relationship is inverted in the case of non-migrants: 56.2% have no formal or incomplete primary education, while only 30.2% have secondary or university education. These findings support the hypothesis that migrants have better educational qualifications than non-migrants and that there is a selection process that operates through the migration process (Table 16).

Table 16
Educational level of Egyptian migrants and non-migrants at last emigration
(migrants) or five years ago (non-migrants)

Educational level	Migrants	Non-migrants
No formal education	15.4%	37.7%
Incomplete primary	18.7%	18.5%
Primary	7.8%	8.8%
Preparatory	4.2%	4.9%
Secondary	32.7%	15.7%
University or higher	21.2%	14.5%
Total	100%	100%
Number of individuals	1,121	3,672

Source: Eurostat, 2000: "Pull and Push Factors of International Migration"

Economic activity

Economic activity also came out to be an important aspect that affects migration opportunities. Among male migrants, 40% were working as employees (in the government and public sector) before their migration compared to 53% among non-migrants. Because of the higher insecurity of tenure in the private and informal sectors, workers tend to be more motivated to migrate than their counterparts in the public sector. Female migrants have more frequently had a job and responsibilities as employer than women that do have not migrated. This materializes in the fact that about 32% only were working in households among female migrants compared to 66% among non-migrants. But these results should be treated with caution due to the masculine nature of Egyptian migration and the small sample size of females (Table 17).

Table 17
Economic activity/employment status before last emigration
by international migration status

Employment Status	Migrants		Non-Migrants	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Working as employer	14.1%	28.4%	27.7%	3.5%
Working as employee	39.8%	31.5%	52.8%	13.1%
Working as casual laborer	18.6%	0.0%	6.0%	1.6%
Other work	9.4%	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%
Unemployed	7.2%	0.0%	1.5%	2.6%
Student	1.7%	4.6%	1.4%	0.6%
Work in household	0.0%	31.6%	0.7%	66.0%
Other non work	9.2%	3.9%	9.9%	6.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of individuals	865	30	255	305

* For reference persons currently aged 23 or older in non-migrant households
Source: Eurostat, 2000: "Pull and Push Factors of International Migration"

Recent data on characteristics of migrants to Europe

A field survey was carried out in 2006 by the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, in cooperation with IOM and Italia Cooperation to investigate attitudes of Egyptian youth towards migration to Europe (Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, 2006). The results of this survey indicate that return migrants have higher educational profile than non migrants (see Table 18 for more details).

Table18
Educational status of return migrants (from Europe) and non-migrants,
Egypt 2006

Education	Migration Status		Total
	Non Migrants	Return Migrants	
Non Education	10.6%	5.5%	9.0%
Primary/Preparatory	14.1%	11.6%	13.3%
Secondary (General)	13.5%	8.1%	11.8%
Secondary (Tech.)	39.6%	48.3%	42.3%
University +	22.2%	26.5%	23.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (2006) *Attitudes of Egyptian Youth towards Migration to Europe 2006*.

II.5 Migration to Egypt

In recent years, Egypt has also become a major immigration country. In 2005 the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration issued 17,456 work permits for foreigners to work in Egypt; 40% of them come from Arab Countries (See Table 19). This voluntary migration of usually highly skilled people is negligible when compared with the forced migration of refugees and asylum seekers to Egypt, for which it is impossible to give precise numbers. “Guesstimates” vary from 500,000 to 5 million (Zohry, 2003). The main refugee communities in Egypt are Sudanese, Palestinians, Somalis, Ethiopians, Eritreans, and some other African nationalities. Although all refugees in Egypt face similar hardships and most of them rank among the poorest of the poor, each community in Cairo has its own, unique cultural and religious background.

- Sudanese refugees have fled to the country in two waves (during the first civil war from 1955 to 1972, since the beginning of the second civil war in 1983), mainly from Southern Sudan, South Kordofan, the South Blue Nile regions and more recently from the Muslim north, because of persecution and famine. The number

- of Sudanese refugees in Egypt is unknown. Independent estimates vary widely from 500 thousand to three million (Zohry and Harrell-Bond, 2003).
- According to unofficial sources, there were said between 50,000 and 70,000 Palestinians in Egypt in 2003.
 - Since civil war began in Somalia in 1991, there are roughly 5,000 refugees in Cairo, though the UNHCR had recognized only about two thousand.
 - Ethiopian refugees came to Egypt to escape the Mengistu regime's "Red Terror" from 1977 to 1979 and after its decay in 1991/1992. The recent border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea (1998-2000) and following suppression of civil liberties in both countries has contributed to further emigration to Egypt. Numbers for both nationalities are estimated at 5,000.

Table 19
Number of work permits issued to foreigners in Egypt by type of permit
and main nationality groups (2005)

Nationality Groups	Type of Permit			Percent
	First Time	Renewals	Total	
Arab Countries	1253	5775	7028	40.3
African Countries	54	92	146	0.8
Asian Countries	1407	2985	4392	25.2
European Countries	2275	3031	5306	30.4
Americas and Australia	550	930	1480	8.5
Other Nationalities	37	67	104	0.6
Total	5576	11880	17456	100.0

Source: Annual Statistics 2005, Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (2007)

It is worth mentioning that forced migrants are often perceived by Egyptians as competitors to the national labor force in the informal sector, because they accept lower wages than Egyptians and accept working extended hours under harsh work conditions as casual laborers since refugees in general have low educational profile.

The lack of national laws on refugees, and the unwritten non-integration policy of the Egyptian government have all contributed to the hardships of refugees in Egypt. The government has allowed UNHCR to assume the responsibility for refugee status determination. But when UNHCR functions as the decision-maker (or judge) in the decision process, it cannot effectively fulfill its primary mandate of refugee protection. Because of the difficulty for refugees to integrate and naturalize, Egypt is viewed by most refugees as a transit country.

II.6 Determinants of migration

The factors influencing migration in Egypt can be divided into three categories. The first and most important one in terms of migration flows is economic. On the one hand, the accelerated population growth in Egypt since after the Second World War has triggered socio-economic problems. High rates of unemployment and poverty, and improper socioeconomic policy answers to these problems became and still are the prime “push” factors of emigration. In this context, it is worth mentioning that Lower Egypt (North) is considerably more developed than Upper Egypt (South). Lower Egyptians' customs historically varied from those of the Upper Egyptians, the latter being more rural-based. Today, Lower Egypt is much more industrialized, and more influenced by trade and commerce with the rest of the world. As a result of this historical development, Upper Egypt has generated a continuous migration flow, which was estimated at about one million in the first six decades of the twentieth century (Hassan, 1969) and which still supplies a reasonable amount of semi-skilled and unskilled labor, not only to the local labor market, but also to the neighboring countries in the Gulf and other Arab countries. On the other hand, the oil boom in the Arab Gulf countries, the need for manpower and the resulting employment opportunities in neighboring countries constitute a major “pull” factor.

Egyptian “brain drain” is mainly attributed to a set of factors related to the country of origin (Egypt) and countries of destination. The prime push factors are the low return to education in Egypt and unemployment, while the prime pull factors are the reverse of the push factor – high return to education and attractive job opportunities. Other factors to be considered are bureaucracy, economic conditions, and socio-cultural conditions that prevail in Egypt compared to conditions in countries of destination.

A second category comprises political factors in the countries of origin and destination. While migration laws in the sending country and admission policies in the receiving country have proven to play a major role, political events in Egypt (such as the Nasser regime) as well as in its neighbor countries (civil wars in Africa, Gulf wars, etc.) explain major waves of migration.

The third category refers to social factors such as assistance migrants might get from relatives and friends who preceded them, or social tensions and unrest in Egyptian history. Concerning the former, migration networks play an important role in lubricating migration flows and help sustain specific migration streams. Until the turn of the 21st century, Egyptian migration networks were focused on the Arab Gulf destinations, Iraq, Jordan, and Libya. Male migration members who had managed to get a work contract abroad were usually able to also secure work contracts to their close relatives. However, the competition from Asia that Egyptian labor force faces today in the Arab Gulf Countries has narrowed the entry door for more Egyptian workers. Concerning the latter, one might cite the example of Egyptian Copts who, after the war of 1967, emigrated to Western countries, as a reaction to economic, social and political pressures caused by Muslim sectarian strife that flourished during this period.

III. Migration Policies and Management

III.1 Migration Policies and Laws

Migration Laws

The promulgation of the Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law no. 111 of 1983 is regarded as the main migration law in Egypt⁶. The law consists of five chapters that cover general provisions applicable to all migrants, duration of stay abroad and rights of migrants (temporary versus permanent stay abroad), and privileges of migrants and return migrants. The Law indicates that migrants' capital utilized in investment projects in Egypt is to be granted the same advantages granted to foreign capital. In general, the Egyptian Emigration Law has two objectives:

- To arrange both permanent and temporary emigration system; the law secures, in fact, the right of any individual to emigrate in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. It also outlines the rules and procedures to be followed in order to emigrate.
- To outline the provisions dealing with providing the necessary care and extending facilities to Egyptian emigrants before their actual departure from Egypt or after their arrival to host countries as well as to those who decide to return. The goal is to maintain strong ties with Egyptians abroad.

The Egyptian Emigration Law is perceived as the practical formulation of the Egyptian government's tendency to liberate people's movement associated with the implementation of the "open door" economic policy. However, this law liberated Egyptians' ability to move and to migrate abroad, but articles related to investment in Egypt and attracting established Egyptian migrants abroad and return migrants to invest in Egypt need to be reinforced. This will help creating new jobs in Egypt through migrants' and return migrants' investment in their home country (See Annex for the full text of the Migration Law).

Migration policies

⁶ The Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law no. 111 is basically for Egyptian migrants abroad. It does not include anything about migration to Egypt, refugees, or foreign workers.

Other than the Law number 111, a single and unique formal document on migration policy in Egypt does not exist. However, Egyptian migration policy in general aims at fulfilling five main objectives:

1. Encouraging emigration to ensure equilibrium in the domestic labor market;
2. Fighting illegal migration;
3. Maximizing economic benefits of migration and increasing migrants' remittances;
4. ensuring the welfare of emigrants; and
5. Meeting labor demand in receiving countries.

The five main points above are concluded from the general tendency of the government and verbal statements by policy makers in different occasions. Also, in practice, Egypt has no concrete policies or programs to tap into global demand for labor (through diversified migration, channels, or special migration programs). Pre-departure orientation (language/culture) and skills training for migrants do not exist; however, they are stated clearly in Article No. 5 of the Migration Law No. 111.

One may safely say that the government of Egypt implemented the emigration law in a way that facilitates migration and eases people's movement after a period of restriction, rather than regulating migration in a way that maximizes benefits through pre-departure training for example.

III.2 Migration management

With respect to migration policies and laws, these cannot be separated from their legislative and implementing bodies, the authorities and entities. Several ministries and authorities are responsible for legislating, analyzing and organizing migration issues. The main authorities include:

1. The Higher Committee for Migration
2. Ministry of Manpower and Emigration

3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and
4. Ministry of Interior.

A brief description of these entities and their competencies is given below.

The Higher Committee for Migration (HCM)

The Higher Committee for Migration

The Higher Committee for Migration was formed by Resolution no. 2000 of 1997, and incorporates main entities concerned with migration. Article 4 of the Emigration law states that a Higher Committee for Migration will be set up and headed by the Minister concerned with emigration affairs (Currently Minister of Manpower and Emigration). The membership of the said committee includes representatives of the ministries and entities concerned with migration. Based on this article, the Prime Minister Resolution No. 2000 of 1997 has been issued for the purpose of setting up the Higher Committee for Migration, which is headed by the Minister of Manpower and Emigration in his/her capacity as the Minister concerned with emigration affairs.

The competences of the Higher Committee for Migration include considering the establishment of professional training centers for potential migrants, organization of specialized courses for the purpose of qualifying potential migrants, suggesting the facilitations to be granted to migrants, whether before their departure, or during their stay abroad, or after temporary or permanently returning to their homeland. The Higher Committee for Migration convenes once every three months at least, upon the request of its chairman (The Minister of Manpower and Emigration). The committee may set up other secondary committees from among its members or other members to study the issues put forward.

Despite the fact that HCR should convene at least once every three months, by request of its chairman, HCR does not convene regularly and most of the tasks of the HCM were not implemented, particularly the establishment of professional training centers for potential migrants. The current Minister of Manpower and Emigration, Mrs. Aisha

Abdelhadi, gives more attention towards the activation of the HCR as an important policy and coordination mechanism.

Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (Emigration Sector)

The post of Minister of State for Emigration Affairs and Egyptians Abroad was created in 1981 by the Presidential Decree No. 574 and was enacted to define the responsibilities of the Minister. The Presidential Decree No. 165 of 1996 was issued transferring the responsibilities of the Ministry of State for Emigration Affairs to the Ministry of Manpower and Employment (Currently, Ministry of Manpower and Emigration).

The current strategy of the Emigration Sector focuses on two dimensions; first, developing work systems by introducing new technologies to establish an updated Egyptian Migration database that includes job opportunities abroad as well as numbers and statistics, and a computerized system through the Internet to link Egyptians abroad to their homeland. The second dimension of the Emigration Sector strategy is to reinforce the role of the “Union of Egyptians Abroad” and other civil society organizations that represent Egyptian abroad.

The Emigration Sector is dependent on projects funded and supported by foreign governments and international organizations; for example the establishment of Migration Information System is under the Integrated Migration Information System project (IMIS) project, and a national survey on “Attitudes of Egyptian Youth Towards Migration to Europe” was carried out under Information Dissemination for the Prevention of Irregular Migration from Egypt (IDOM)⁷ were funded by the Italian Government.

The budget of the Emigration Sector should be increased in order to integrate activities related to data management, data collection, and research as essential elements of the Emigration Sector’s mandate. Funds for training and capacity building of researchers and

⁷ IDOM project is implemented by the Emigration Sector with technical support from IOM to reduce the volume of irregular migration from Egypt through information dissemination.

employees should be available within the government budget and should not be dependent on foreign aid.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Egyptian embassies and consulates provide Egyptian citizens abroad with an array of services such as:

- Free registration in the consulates' records during the first six months of their stay abroad.
- Repatriation of families in case of emergency.
- Renewal of passports and other documents
- Authenticating formal documents.
- Recording civil events such as birth, death, divorce, and marriage.

The ministry aims at protecting legal migrants from racial discrimination, and protecting the rights and dignity of Egyptian community abroad, in full respect of the laws of hosting countries. The ministry cooperates with different bodies to fight illegal migration of Egyptians through joint technical, security, judicial, and legislative mechanisms.

The Ministerial Decree No. 121 was issued in 1969, whereby this ministry established a division responsible for coordinating with other government bodies in order to facilitate the migration process and to undertake studies that could enhance policies. In 2007 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs founded another authority to sponsor Egyptians abroad

Ministry of Interior

The Ministry of Interior grants work permits to temporary Egyptian migrants prior to their departure, as well as keeping records of all passengers who cross the Egyptian borders through its control points in the airports, ports, and land points throughout Egypt. The Ministry of Interior controls migration from/to Egypt and regulates non-nationals' residence in Egypt. The Ministry of Interior works in cooperation with other ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Education, and Labor. With respect to irregular migration, the

Ministry of Interior cooperates with all relevant organizations and institutions in order to reduce illegal migration from/through Egypt.

Regional and bilateral cooperation on migration

Regional and bilateral cooperation on migration in Egypt is always the initiative of the other parties and key international players rather than the initiative of the Egyptian government. Two examples of bilateral cooperation on migration are the projects “Integrated Migration Information System” and the “Information Dissemination for the Prevention of Irregular Migration from Egypt” projects. The institutional frameworks of these projects are based on cooperation between the Italian Government as a funding agency, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as the provider of technical support, and the Emigration Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration through which the projects are implemented. A brief description of the two projects is given below.

Integrated Migration Information System project (IMIS)

The Integrated Migration Information System project (IMIS) started on the 22nd of June 2001 and is the result of a joint collaboration among the Emigration Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, the Italian Government as the donor partner and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as the implementing agency. IMIS is a technical tool and a capacity building mechanism that supports the Emigration Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration in the management of regular migration flows from Egypt, improving Egyptian migrants' social status in receiving countries and channeling human and financial resources resulting from the phenomenon of migration.

The setting up and launching of a website for *job opportunities* abroad and the creation of a *portal for Egyptian migrants* represent the main outputs of the project. The web site is tailored to provide services to employers abroad and Egyptian job seekers. It furnishes an automatic job matchmaking system between demand and offer.

It is important to highlight that the job matchmaking system does not create a binding relationship between the employees and the potential candidate. Foreign employers reserve the right to choose the employers according to their recruitment needs. In addition to the job seekers' roster, the website provides the users with practical and comprehensive information concerning the receiving countries (mainly western European). This set of information is gathered in a module called “Misriat”. Currently “Misriat” contains information about France, Italy, Norway, and Spain. In the near future, the project aims to expand the “Misriat” module to other potential countries of emigration. Moreover, by using Italy as a pilot case study, the project endorses an awareness campaign for entrepreneurs in need of employees.

The portal for Egyptians abroad is a tool provided to the Egyptian Government to reinforce relationships between the Egyptian Diaspora and the home country. The system represents a pilot experience that aims towards self-sustainability. As a matter of fact, the job matchmaking mechanism represents a practical example of the applicability of the system. Full deployment of the system would require the planning and implementation of *ad hoc* projects. Likewise, the Italian case study is a testing ground, the outputs of which will determine the development of an *ad hoc* project for the application of the mechanism at a national level, as well as in other countries. The International Organization for Migration, in full cooperation with the Egyptian Government, implemented the project by providing capacity building.

The IMIS project helps as a mechanism for capacity building in the Emigration Sector as well as its function as a policy-making tool. IMIS project is replicable and Egyptian government should seek other partners in the northern shore of the Mediterranean.

Information Dissemination for the Prevention of Irregular Migration from Egypt

The International Organization for Migration, the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration” the Emigration and Egyptians Abroad Sector, and the Italian government have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the “Information

Dissemination for the Prevention of Irregular Migration from the Arab Republic of Egypt” project (IDOM).

This project aims at limiting irregular migration and curbing its risks. Through the provision of information, it aims at positively influencing the choices of Egyptian potential migrants and to let them achieve a better understanding of migration realities (Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, 2007). The Emigration and Egyptians Abroad Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration cooperates with IOM in defining the profile of Egyptian irregular migrants and in raising their awareness on the realities and risks of irregular migration including migrant trafficking. IOM through this project aims at assisting the Government of Egypt in developing specific means of information through the cooperation of institutional, non-institutional and media counterparts in order to reach potential target groups and influence their perception of migration realities. A mass Information Campaign combining selected media, the participation of NGOs/Youth groups and tackling the multiple aspects related to irregular migration was launched in 2006/2007.

IV. Migration and Development

“The role that migrants play in promoting development and poverty reduction in countries of origin, as well as the contribution they make towards the prosperity of destination countries, should be recognized and reinforced,” (Global Commission on International Migration, 2005: 23). However, the relationship between migration and development is complex. While, migration implies a change of place of usual residence and development means growth and better living conditions, assessing the relationships between these two concepts is not an easy task (Skeldon, 1997). Theoretically speaking, the relationships between migration and development were explored through assessing the impact of migrants’ remittances applying economic theories of migration since Ravenstein’s laws of migration (1885, 1889) until the latest economic theories of migration such as the “new economics of migration” (Stark, 1991), passing through Lee’s theory of migration (Lee, 1966), the dual economy model of development and migration introduced by Lewis (1954), later extended by Fei and Ranis (1961), and the work of Todaro and Harris in this domain (Todaro, 1969; Harris and Todaro, 1970). One can easily notice that most of the available literature on migration and development focuses on remittances and their economic impact. Few studies were written about socio-cultural development and migration (see for example Brinks and Sinclair, 1980; Brink, 1991; Levitt, 1998).

Theoretical models were proposed to assess the relationship between migration and development (see for example Fischer, et al, 1997), however empirical studies reveal different impacts of migration on development depending on the type of movement (permanent versus temporary and circulation), effects of remittances, and the stage of development in origin. A recent study by de Haas (2003) on migration and development in Southern Morocco indicates the importance of migration in enabling livelihood diversification among households through remittances of laborers who work in other places in Morocco or internationally. This study indicates that households that receive international migration remittances are more likely to invest than other households. In

this part of the study I focus on economic impact of migration at the micro- and macroeconomic levels, as well as some socio-cultural aspects of migration.

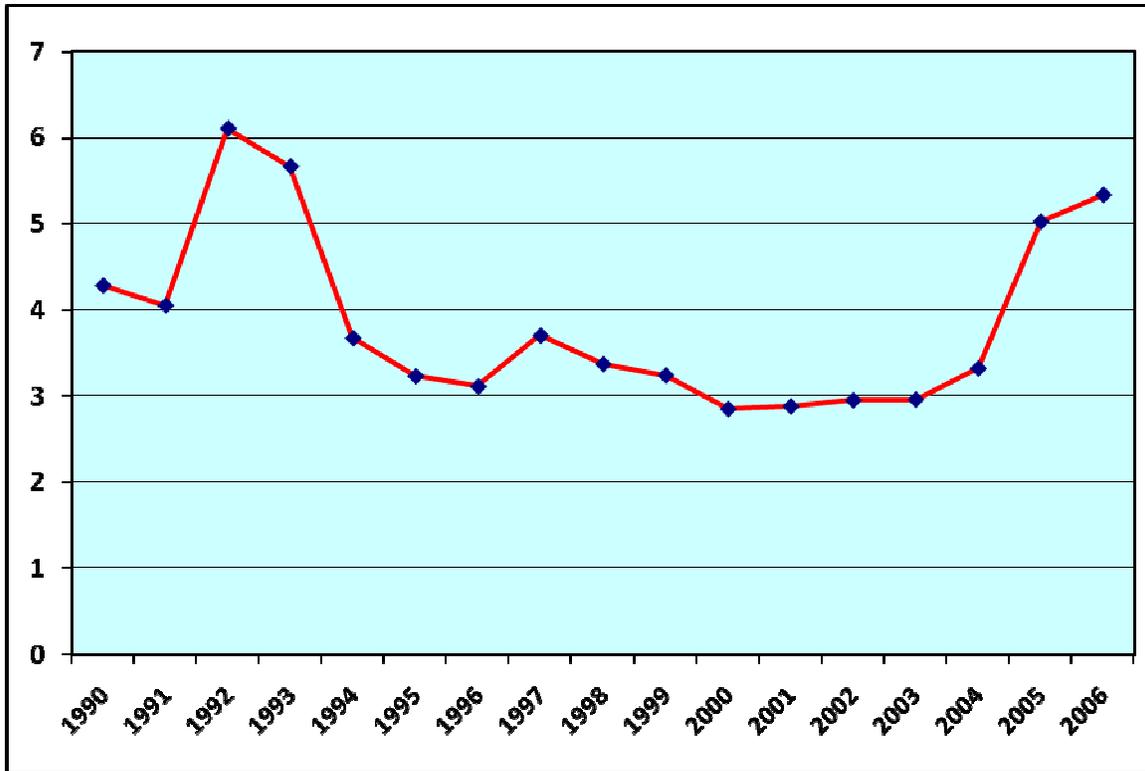
IV.1 Migration and the economy (Remittances)

In economic and financial terms, the most important aspect of migration for the sending country are remitted money (usually cash transfers) and goods, the so-called *remittances* that migrant workers sent back to family or friends at home. Such flows of wealth are important to both the families of migrants and to the economy of sending countries (Caldwell 1969). Almost all remittances are sent by individual migrants (*individual remittances*), yet a fraction is sent by groups of migrant workers through their associations (*collective remittances*). Formal remittances (sent through banks, post offices, exchange houses and transfer companies) are the only form that can be accurately measured. Their size and frequency are determined by several factors such as the number of migrant workers, wage rates, the, exchange rates, political risk, economic activity in the host and sending countries, the existence of appropriate transfer facilities, the level of education of the migrant, the number of people accompanying the migrant, the number of years since migration, and the difference of interest rates between sending and receiving countries.

Volume of remittances

A time series of remittances to Egypt from 1990 until 2006 is given in Figure 3. Remittances of Egyptians working abroad have peaked due in the early 1990s to the substantial return of Egyptian migrants from the Arab Gulf countries after the Gulf War. Between 1993 and 2003, the level of remittances has stabilized around \$3 billion. In recent years however, remittances have soared again to over \$5 billion, maybe due to the second war in Iraq started in 2003.

Figure 3
Remittances to Egypt by Egyptians abroad (1990-2006,
million current US\$)



Origin of remittances

Out of the \$5.3 billion sent home by Egyptian migrants in 2006, the largest amount (\$1.7 billion) came from the United States with a share of 32.0% of the total remittances volume. Kuwait ranked second at \$982.7 million (18.4%), followed by the United Arab Emirates (\$823.8 million or 15.5%) and then Saudi Arabia (\$785 million or 14.7%). Remittances from these four countries together comprised more than 80% of all remittances to Egypt (80.6%). Remittances from Western Europe represent 12.6% of the total amount (\$675.1 million), with Germany, the United Kingdom and Switzerland being the biggest contributors (Table 20).

Table 20
Egyptian remittances by country of emigration (2006, in million US\$)

Country	Remittances	Percent
United States of America	1703.6	32.0
Kuwait	982.7	18.4
United Arab Emirates	823.8	15.5
Saudi Arabia	785.0	14.7
Germany	215.7	4.0
United Kingdom	167.6	3.1
Switzerland	142.4	2.7
Qatar	84.4	1.6
France	54.9	1.0
Italy	38.3	0.7
The Netherlands	34.8	0.7
Bahrain	30.7	0.6
Lebanon	25.4	0.5
Oman	20.1	0.4
Greece	14.1	0.3
Canada	9.4	0.2
Spain	7.3	0.1
Japan	3.8	0.1
Libya	1.2	0.0
Other Countries	184.3	3.5
Total	5329.5	100%

Source: Central Bank of Egypt, *Monthly Statistical Bulletin* (October 2007)

Formal and informal remittances

This analysis in total numbers per country however has to be complemented by looking at the relationship between the total number of migrants in a country and their remittances. Table 21 presents per migrant remittances for the year 2000 based on the number of migrants estimated by Egyptian authorities.

Table 21
1 Egyptian per migrant remittances (2000)

Country	Remittances 2000/2001 (million US\$)*	Migrants by country of origin 2000 (Egyptian estimates)**	Remittances per migrant 2000 (US\$, Egyptian estimates)
United States of America	1,048.80	318,000	3,298.11
Saudi Arabia	681.3	923,600	737.66
United Arab Emirates	301.9	95,000	3,177.89
Kuwait	222.3	190,550	1,166.62
Switzerland	105.4	14,000	7,528.57
Germany	96.6	25,000	3,864.00
United Kingdom	95.7	35,000	2,734.29
France	48.8	36,000	1,355.56
Qatar	44.4	25,000	1,776.00
Italy	34.6	90,000	384.44
The Netherlands	16.5	40,000	412.5
Lebanon	14.6	12,500	1,168.00
Bahrain	12.7	4,000	3,175.00
Oman	11	15,000	733.33
Canada	6.2	110,000	56.36
Greece	5.6	60,000	93.33
Spain	3.1	12,000	258.33
Libya	2.6	332,600	7.82

Source: * Calculated from Central Bank of Egypt *Monthly Statistical Bulletin* (November 2005) and Table

Based on official Egyptian estimations and financial statistics, it appears that the emigrants living in Germany, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and the United Kingdom sent back the largest amounts of money (between \$2730 and \$3865). Egyptian migrants in Saudi-Arabian sent back approximately \$740 only, while migrants in Libyan send less than \$8!

Remittances transferred through informal channels or brought by travelers and return migrants are unlikely to be captured in official records, although they may represent a substantial addition to remittances sent through official channels (World Bank, 2006). Hence, one should not ignore informal and in-kind remittances made by Egyptian migrants not only from Arab countries, but also from European countries such as Italy. In-kind remittances that are sent or brought with migrants mainly include clothes and electronic equipment (Brink 1991; Eurostat 2000; Zohry 2005b). In addition, a significant proportion of remittances made by Egyptian migrants from the Arab Gulf and Libya are channeled through informal paths, either by sending money to the family in Egypt through colleagues and relatives, when they return for holidays to Egypt, or by bringing the money on their own return. Libya in particular is an example of the prevalence of informal remittances, since most of Egyptian migrants are engaged in the informal sector of the Libyan economy, with no fixed salaries or bank accounts (Zohry, 2005b). Remittances through formal channels are only available for those who have formal work contracts with the Libyan government or large companies there. Indeed, one can conclude that migrants in these countries send back several hundred to several thousands of dollars to Egypt, depending on the numerous factors stated above and in particular the number of family members left behind at home country.

Concerning the exceptionally high flow of remittances per Egyptian migrant in Switzerland (\$7530), it must be assumed that this high figure is biased either by the real number of Egyptian emigrants in the country or by the existence in Switzerland of bank accounts of affluent Egyptians.

Nevertheless, the numbers indicate clearly that the return to migration is very different for the home economy, depending on whether an Egyptian worker moves to the USA, selected countries in Europe or in the Gulf, or whether he works abroad in Saudi-Arabia or Libya. This difference must probably be further explained by the education level and jobs occupied by Egyptians in their respective host countries.

Macroeconomic impact of remittances

Remittances are among Egypt's largest sources of foreign currency, along with Suez Canal receipts and tourism. As early as 1979, these remittances amounted to 2 billion US\$, a sum equivalent to the country's combined earnings from cotton exports, Suez Canal, transit fees and tourism (Nassar, 2005). As shown in Table 22, between 1990 and 2006, workers' remittances accounted for an average of 6.1% of annual GDP.

Even if their contribution to GDP has declined from 14.6% in 1992 to 5.0% in 2006, remittances remain an important capital flow for the Egyptian economy that is not correlated to GDP growth. Moreover, their role appears even more clearly when compared to investment and export figures.

Moreover, the volume of per migrant remittances has to be put aside what an Egyptian household earns per year. Based on an average of 6 people per household and a GDP of 1,300 US\$ per capita, we can determine the yearly revenue of an average Egyptian household to be around 5,000 to 7,000 dollars. Concerning, remittance, the observed flows of at least 1,000 to 3,000 US\$ (including in-kind remittances and depending on the host country) might not be directed to one household only, but cover two or more. But even if each migrant splits his remittances of 3,000 US\$ between two households, they will represent between 20% and 30% of the annual revenues of these households, and probably more for the poorer ones among them.

Table 22
Trends in remittances of Egyptian migrants (in billion current
US\$, 1990-2006)

Year	Remittances	GDP	Remittances as a percent of GDP
1990	4.28	43.13	9.9
1991	4.05	36.97	11.0
1992	6.10	41.86	14.6
1993	5.66	47.20	12.0
1994	3.67	51.90	7.1
1995	3.23	60.16	5.4
1996	3.11	67.65	4.6
1997	3.70	75.87	4.9
1998	3.37	82.08	4.1
1999	3.24	89.09	3.6
2000	2.85	99.43	2.9
2001	2.88	98.48	2.9
2002	2.95	89.85	3.3
2003	2.96	82.43	3.6
2004	3.32	78.50	4.2
2005	5.02	89.69	5.6
2006	5.33	107.48	5.0

Source: 1990-2003: World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects 2005*

2004-2006: Central Bank of Egypt, *Monthly Statistical Bulletin October 2007*.

With respect to financial sector development, remittances help develop the financial sector through increasing the aggregate level of deposits or credits intermediated by the local banking sector. In addition to banks, specialized transfer institutions such as Western Union and Money Gram handle transfer of migrants' remittances.

Impact on poverty alleviation

The impact of remittances on poverty alleviation in Egypt is not entirely clear. Research on the use of remittances has shown that 75% of these funds are used for daily expenses household such as food, clothing, and health care (Zohry 2005b), while expenditures on

building new houses and education come as second and third items in remittances utilization. This confirms other findings, according to which remittances are also spent on building or improving housing, buying land or cattle, and buying durable consumer goods (Zohry 2002). The distribution of uses indicates in any case the importance of migration and remittances in poverty alleviation.

Research however has also revealed that once-abroad migrant households spend a smaller share on consumption than non-migrant households, while returnees from migration invest up to 50% of their savings into housing (Nassar, 1991; Nassar, 2005:21). These results confirm that the impact of remittances upon the national economy and development cannot be ignored.

Impact on investments, enterprise creation and employment

Generally speaking, only a small percentage of remittances are used for savings and “productive investments”, i.e. for activities with multiplier effects in terms of income and employment creation (Brink 1991; Eurostat 2000; Zohry 2005b). However, the entrepreneurial activities of return migrants contribute to the Egyptian economy. Investments by return migrants are a continuation of their support to the national economy. According to Nassar (2005), about 10% of returnees invest in economic projects. They put more capital in their businesses, engage more in service activities and the formal sector and create 1.4 more jobs per establishment than non migrants. Finally, McCormick and Wahba (2003) find that the amount of savings going back to urban areas is more than three times that going to rural areas, most investments being made in Cairo.

In addition, remittances help families to establish family-based and family-managed small projects such as raising cattle, opening a mini market, or buying and operating a taxi, especially in rural areas. Many taxi drivers in Cairo and other governorates bought their car upon their return and operate it themselves or through hired taxi drivers as their main source of income.

However, attempts to attract businessmen among the Egyptian diaspora to invest in Egypt seem not to have had the expected success. One of the main reasons for the foundation of the former Ministry of Emigration and Egyptians abroad and for the promulgation of the Egyptian Migration Law was to attract Egyptians abroad to maintain links with their origin and to invest in Egypt. But government bureaucracy and suspicion from many Egyptians abroad have been obstacles to a significant flow of investments into the country.

IV.2 Impact of labor emigration on the Egyptian labor market

In recent years, more than two million Egyptians or approximately 10% of the labor force have been officially seeking an employment in Egypt, in addition to all those who have not declared their under- or unemployment. Most of them are primarily unemployed, fresh graduates of a stagnant educational system, which are not equipped to compete in either the local or regional and international markets. Moreover, there are approximately 3 million Egyptian migrants, even if not all of them are actually having a job abroad. Under the hypothesis that 75% of the migrant population form part of their host countries' labor force, roughly 2.25 million workers are currently withheld from the Egyptian labor market, which would be otherwise un- or underemployed, pushing the unemployment rate up to 20%.

Brain drain?

“Emigration can cost poor countries some of their most valuable people. The thousands of dollars spent on educating a doctor or an engineer disappear when they take their skills abroad” (Stalker, 2007). This statement might apply to some extent to Egypt, as the country is not capable of keeping its skilled labor force at home. Permanent migration of Egyptians to the West is the main source of the “brain drain” as it has always been the migration of the better educated citizens. Some 77% of Egyptian Migrants to the USA have obtained tertiary education. Many Egyptian migrants to other OECD countries are highly educated professionals as well – mainly doctors, engineers, and teachers (Nassar,

2005). One can say that migration is responsible for this loss of highly-skilled citizens to developed countries in addition to a significant number of semi-skilled workers to developing countries (mainly Arab countries).

Does Egypt however suffer a shortage of highly skilled workers needed by the national economy that would substantiate the “brain drain” hypothesis? No quantitative studies have assessed this problem. However, I argue that at the beginning of the migration era (1975-1980), Egypt has suffered a severe shortage of highly qualified and skilled workers who temporarily migrated to the Arab Gulf countries. The Egyptian cinema has documented this loss of needed people in many social movies. Nowadays, and talking about the migration of highly skilled professionals to the Arab Gulf and the West, migration should not be regarded as a brain drain, given the fact that the Egyptian bureaucratic government with its current institutional and organizational structure cannot by any mean absorb highly qualified professionals and offer them suitable salaries and work conditions.

IV.3 Socio-cultural impact of migration (Migration and the society)

Migrants remit money, goods and commodities, as well as ideas and behaviors that affect sending countries, positively or negatively. Levitt calls this kind of remittances as “social remittances” (Levitt, 1998:927). “Social remittances are the ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving- to sending- communities”. She further identifies three types of social remittances; normative structures (ideas, values, and beliefs), systems of practice (actions shaped by normative structures), and social capital (Levitt, 1998).

Since most temporary Egyptian migrants are males who leave their families behind, other family members take over migrants’ responsibilities in the country of origin, such as agricultural work. The husband’s absence forces women to manage alone which makes for woman empowerment (Brink 1991; Zohry 2002). By contrast, migration to the origin

of Wahhabism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, for example, affected the Egyptian society and reproduced a new version of social and theological behavior. This behavior might have increased the tendency to fatalism and fundamentalism, as well as the marginalization of women in society.

Finally, one should not ignore the interaction between migration and globalization. Globalization, made possible by new communication and information technologies and increased mobility, has spread new and different types of consumption patterns. In remote villages in the Nile Delta and Upper Egypt, one can notice the increasing number of satellite dishes attached to television sets that bring international channels to these households and influence their behavior and perception of migration.

V. Conclusion

An attempt was made in this study to explore migration and development interrelationships in Egypt. Egyptian migration is a response to unemployment, failure of economic policies, and as a response to limited opportunities in origin. However, one should not be so pessimistic, “migration, rather than being seen as a failure of development, can be seen as an integral part of any pro-poor development strategy” (Skeldon 2003). In the last three decades, Egyptian migrants abroad remitted about 50 billion US\$ to Egypt; remittances contributed to the economic development of Egypt at the macroeconomic level (as a source of hard currency), as well as the microeconomic level (through poverty eradication and as a source of household incomes). With about four million Egyptians abroad, migration should be in the heart of political and public agenda. Migrants to Arab countries and to the West with a variety of skills and qualities should be regarded as an important national resource. They contribute to the development of Egypt by remitting part of their income to their families in Egypt and bring down the level of unemployment.

Saudi Arabia is the main destination of Egyptians in the Arab region with almost about one million Egyptians working there. The United States, Canada, Italy, Australia are the main destinations for Egyptian migration in the West. Data on Egyptian migration flows are not reliable but one can notice a slight shift in the direction of Egyptian migration in favor of Western countries – and Libya - due to the competition that Egyptian migration faces in the Arab Gulf countries. With respect to migrants’ characteristics, Egyptian migrants in general are young, Egyptian migrants to the West have higher educational profile than migrants to the Arab Gulf countries and Libya. With respect to the main determinants of migration, it is clear that Egyptian migration is motivated by economic factors such as unemployment and low income and wages in Egypt.

Migrants’ remittances are the most important aspect of migration for sending countries. Egypt is one of the major remittances’ receiving countries. However, the government of

Egypt needs to encourage migrants to remit through official channels to enhance the economic impact of remittances. Established Egyptian migrants should be encouraged to invest in Egypt through an organized effort and providing incentives for them to invest in Egypt. Migrants with low volume of remittances should be encouraged to establish cooperative businesses and activities at the local level to enhance development efforts. NGOs can play a role in disseminating information and providing training and consulting on the management of micro projects relevant to local setting.

With respect to migration policies and migration management, Egypt may need to adopt an export-oriented migration policy. A practical step towards the implementation of export-oriented labor policies is to get-benefit of the experience of successful countries in this domain, especially the Philippines. In addition, Egypt has more than one thousand vocational training centers that can absorb about 120 thousand trainees every year, but they are not fully utilized. The mandate of these centers is to supply local market with the needed skilled labor. Given the geographical spread of these centers all over the country, they should be used as a base for labor-export scheme.

Participation of the civil society and NGOs in the fields of migration is a rising need. Reinforcing the role of the “Union of Egyptians Abroad” and other civil society organizations that represent Egyptians abroad will help implement national policies and strategies concerned with connecting migrants to their homeland. In the long run, this will contribute to increasing socio-economic exchanges between receiving and sending countries, and ultimately to the development processes in Egypt.

Studies on the relationships between migration and development in Egypt tend to quantify this relation by focusing on economic aspects of remittances and their effects at the macro- and microeconomic levels. Few studies investigated the socio-cultural effects of migration and their societal impact; future studies should shed some light on such issues.

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Annex

Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law no. 111 of the year 1983

Law no. 111 of the year 1983 for promulgating the Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians abroad law. In the name of the people, the president of the Republic, the people's Assembly decided the following law, which has been promulgated.

Article (1)

The provisions of the attached Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad law shall be put into force and applied. Any other provisions counter to the provisions herein shall be made null and void.

Article (2)

Ministers of Defense, Interior, and Emigration Affairs are to issue the executive resolutions of the provisions of this law in six months starting from the date of putting this law into force. The Minister Concerned with Emigration Affairs is to issue the executive regulation of this law after coming into agreement with the Minister of Interior during the said period.

Article (3)

This law shall be published in the official newspaper, and put into force on the day following the publication date. This law shall be sealed by the seal of the state, and put into force as one of its laws.

Promulgated at the presidency of the Republic on 22 Shawal 1403 Hijra, Corresponding to August 1st, 1983 A.D. (**Hosni Mubarak**)

Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law

Chapter 1

General provisions

Article (1)

Egyptians, whether individuals or groups, shall have the right to permanent or temporary migration, whether the purpose of migration necessitates permanent or temporary stay abroad, in accordance with the provisions of this law and other laws in force. Egyptians shall keep their Egyptian nationality according to the Egyptian nationality law. Their permanent or temporary migration shall not result in violating the constitutional or legal rights they enjoy in their capacity as Egyptian citizens, as long as they do continuously keep their Egyptian nationality.

Article (2)

The state shall sponsor Egyptians abroad and do its best to strengthen their ties with Egypt. The Minister concerned with Emigration Affairs shall take all necessary measures, issues all resolutions necessary for achieving this purpose, and specifies the means of ensuring this sponsorship, such as: a) Holding and organizing conferences and seminars inside and outside the country to consider and solve Egyptian migrants' problems, acquaint them with the affairs and national issues of their homeland, and know their opinions and suggestions.

b) Delegating some of the Egyptian mission attaches abroad to be responsible for sponsoring Egyptians' affairs in the countries of emigration, in agreement with the Minister Concerned and in accordance with the objectives of the law herein.

c) Appointing honorary consuls in the cities that include large Egyptian gatherings, where no Egyptian missions are available, in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in accordance with the diplomatic and consular corps law.

d) Promoting the establishment of Egyptian unions, clubs, and leagues in the countries of emigration, and supporting the existing ones both spiritually and materially, with a view to establishing strong Egyptian gatherings.

- e) Providing the mass media suitable for addressing the issues of interest for Egyptians abroad, as well as providing them with reliable information about their homeland.
- f) Maintaining the Arab language and culture, the national heritage as well as the spiritual ties among migrants, and disseminating them among their new generations through the following:
 - 1 – Enabling migrants' children to pursue their education according to the Egyptian educational systems.
 - 2 – Establishing Arab cultural centers where migrant gatherings exist, and providing them with libraries.
 - 3 – Encouraging the conferences and seminars that address national issues.
- g) Facilitating migrants' visits to their homeland, as well as their relatives' visits to the countries of emigration

Article (3)

The Minister concerned with Emigration Affairs shall, in cooperation with the ministries and entities concerned, undertake the following responsibilities:

- A) Sponsoring Egyptian migrants abroad.
- B) Planning, organizing, implementing and following up emigration policies with a view to strengthening Egyptian ties with their homeland, and contributing to the objectives of social and economic development and the national interests of the country.
- C) Preparing draft laws and resolutions related to emigration.
- D) Preparing draft agreements with foreign countries so as to open new emigration markets for Egyptians, in addition to facilitating Egyptians' residence in the countries of emigration and securing their rights and interests guaranteed by these countries.
- E) Suggesting means of capitalizing on the expertise and know how of Egyptian scientists abroad in the development and production fields in their homeland.
- F) Considering and suggesting the means that enable Egyptian migrants abroad to contribute with their savings in productive development projects in Egypt.
- G) Preparing an overall routine survey of the numbers and categories of Egyptians abroad, in collaboration with other entities.

Article (4)

Setting up a Supreme Committee for Emigration headed by the Minister concerned with Emigration Affairs. The membership of this committee shall include the representatives of the following ministries, from among high-ranking officials:

- 1 – The Ministry of Manpower and Training
- 2 – The Ministry of Education and Scientific research.
- 3 – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- 4 – The Ministry of Interior.
- 5 – The Ministry of Economy.
- 6 – The Ministry of Planning.
- 7 – The Ministry of Defense.
- 8 – The Ministry of Information.
- 9 – The Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation.
- 10- The Ministry of Insurance.
- 11- The Ministry of Finance.

Setting up the said committee and organizing its work shall take place by virtue of the Prime Minister's resolution based on the suggestions of the Minister of Emigration Affairs. The prime Minister may also issue a resolution to add a representative of any other ministry or entity, viewed by the Minister of Emigration Affairs as necessary in the membership of the said Committee.

Article (5)

The Supreme Committee for Emigration stated in the above mentioned article shall be responsible for the following:

- A) considering the establishment of professional centers for training potential migrants, especially in the fields of agriculture and industry The Ministries and entities concerned shall issue resolutions for establishing these centers, and organizing its work as well as the rules of joining them, without prejudice to the private sector's right to provide training opportunities in its industrial, professional and production units.

B) Considering the organization of specialized courses aiming at qualifying potential migrants. The Minister concerned with Emigration Affairs is to issue a resolution for organizing these courses and defining its programs.

C) Providing Egyptians abroad with the necessary cultural, media, and national materials that maintain their ties with their homeland; in addition to providing the means of diffusing the Arabic language among migrants' children; and supporting the efforts exerted by Egyptian religious entities to deepen the spiritual heritage among Egyptians abroad .

D) Suggesting the facilitations to be granted to migrants, whether before their departure, or during their residence abroad, or after temporarily or permanently returning back home.

Article (6)

Without prejudice to the Egyptians' right to Emigration, temporary potential migrants shall request to be registered in a record prepared for this purpose in the Ministry concerned with Emigration Affairs. The Emigration opportunities shall be distributed among the registered persons according to their fields of specialization and capacities and the fields of specialization required in the countries of emigration, providing that priority of registration is observed. The Minister concerned with Emigration Affairs is to decide the priorities of some specializations or qualifications required in the countries of emigration or exceeding the needs of Egypt. A resolution issued by the Minister concerned with Emigration Affairs shall regulate registration in the record referred to, as well as registration procedures and conditions.

Article (7)

Persons holding certificates from the training centers and qualification courses referred to in items (a) and (b) of article (5) herein shall be prioritized in getting the emigration or work opportunities abroad, available for the ministries and entities concerned , in accordance with the needs and fields of specialization required .

Chapter 2 Permanent Emigration

Article (8)

A permanent migrant is the Egyptian who stays abroad permanently, by obtaining the nationality of a foreign country , or a permanent residence permit to stay in this country ; or who stays abroad for at least ten years, or obtains an emigration permit from one of the countries of emigration specified by a resolution of the Minister concerned with Emigration Affairs .

Article (9)

The Egyptian citizen who seeks permanent emigration is to be granted a permanent emigration permit by the administrative entity concerned in the Ministry of Interior, after submitting an application according to the procedures and conditions demonstrated in the executive regulation of this law. In order to get an emigration permit, the following conditions must be fulfilled:

A) Obtaining the permission of the country of emigration.

B) Obtaining the permission of the entity concerned in the Ministry of Defense, according to the rules and conditions stated in a resolution issued by the Minister of Defense, after consultations with the Minister Concerned with Emigration Affairs. People granted a permanent emigration permit shall be registered in a record prepared for this purpose in the Ministry concerned with Emigration Affairs. The said record and the registration process shall be controlled by the executive regulation of this law.

Article (10)

A Permanent migrant shall have the right to acquire the country of emigration nationality along with preserving his Egyptian nationality. The same right is applicable to the migrant's wife and dependent children who emigrate with him, as well as the migrant's foreign wife, if she applied for acquiring the Egyptian nationality, in accordance with the provisions and procedures stated in the Egyptian Nationality law.

Article (11)

Each person born of an Egyptian permanent migrant shall enjoy the same rights and advantages enjoyed by his father. This is applicable to the children of an emigrating mother, who still preserve their Egyptian nationality.

Article (12)

A permanent migrant status may be dropped in the following two cases:

A) If the person does not travel to the country of emigration within six months after getting the emigration permit.

B) If the person returns to stay in his homeland for more than one continuous year, providing that his stay is not due to force majeure or necessitated by his work conditions. In all cases, it is imperative for the migrant who stays in Egypt for more than the period specified to get the permission of the Ministry concerned with Emigration Affairs so as to be considered of a migrant status. Migrants at conscription age, who return back to their homeland and stay for more than six months and have not previously performed the military service, must obtain the permission of the Ministry of Defense. A citizen who is no longer considered of a migrant status shall consequently be deprived of the advantages acquired by migrants, starting from the date the migrant status is dropped.

Chapter 3 Temporary Migration

Article (13)

A temporary Egyptian migrant is the Egyptian Citizen, who is not a student, or seconded employee, who settles and sets up his main activity abroad, and has a job to make his living, providing that he has stayed abroad for one year and has not taken the permanent emigration procedures stated herein, or that he has taken the said procedures and returned to his homeland before fulfilling any of the conditions stated in article (8) herein. The period of one year referred to in the above mentioned paragraph is to be considered a continuous year even if it is interrupted by intervals not more than thirty days . This provision shall not prejudice the extension of sponsorship duty to all Egyptians abroad.

Article (14):

A temporary migrant status shall be dropped in the following cases:

A) IF the citizen returns home and stays for more than six continuous months.

B) If the citizen returns to work at his homeland. A citizen whose migrant status is dropped shall consequently be deprived of all the advantages he acquires in his capacity as migrant, starting from the date the migrant status is dropped.

Chapter 4 Migrants' rights

Article (15)

The returns of the investment of Egyptian migrants' deposits in one of the banks operating in Egypt shall be exempted from all taxes and fees. Egyptian migrants' or expatriates' capital utilized in projects or investments in the country shall be granted all the advantages decided for foreign capital operating in the same field , or national capital, which is better .

If capital is to be treated in various ways according to the foreign capital nationality, then the capital of migrants contributing in the said fields shall be treated according to the most advantageous way.

Article (16)

Taking into consideration the provisions of the president of the Arab Republic of Egypt's resolution in law no. 73 of the year 1971 , in relation to the treatment of Egyptian expatriates who return to their homeland , an Egyptian worker who emigrated and had been working in the government , one of the local governance units, general agencies or public sector, and whose resignation had been accepted for the purpose of permanent emigration, and who returned back home within two years from the date his resignation has been accepted, shall be re-appointed at the entity where he had been working before emigration if he applied for this within three months from the date of his final return . A worker shall be appointed to his last post, if it is still vacant, or to another similar post. A person whose emigration duration exceeds the period referred to in the previous paragraph may be reappointed, if he meets the conditions required for

filling the post. In such case, the said person shall be exempted from the examination procedures or the contest required for filling the post.

Chapter 5

Concluding and transitional provisions

Article (17)

In all cases, temporary and permanent migrants as well as their children residing in Egypt or abroad must get the approval of the entity concerned in the Ministry of Defense, in accordance with the rules and conditions stated in the resolution issued by the Minister of Defense, after consultation with the Minister concerned with Emigration Affairs.

Article (18)

The one-time compensations stated in Social Insurance laws may not be granted to temporary migrants.

Article (19)

The Egyptian citizen who emigrated and has become considered a migrant on the date of putting this law into force may apply for registering his name in the permanent emigration record. In such case, he shall enjoy all the rights granted to those permitted to permanent emigration according to the provisions of the law herein. Submission of the application referred to in the above paragraph, as well as admission conditions shall be controlled by the executive regulation of this law.

Article (20)

A person who had emigrated before putting this law into force, and who was registered in the permanent emigration record according to the provisions of the above mentioned article, shall have the right to retain his Egyptian nationality, upon his request, if it has been dropped. Consequently, his minor children shall acquire the Egyptian nationality; his foreign wife also may be granted the Egyptian nationality if she applies for this within two years from the reply date, as long as the Minister of Interior does not object within two years from the application date; his major children may also apply for acquiring the Egyptian nationality within two years from the date of putting this law into force. Submitting the applications referred to in the previous paragraph shall be controlled by a resolution from the Minister of Interior after agreement with the Minister concerned with Emigration Affairs.