

Working Paper
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**Contemporary Egyptian Migration:
An Overview of Voluntary and
Forced Migration**

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1. INTRODUCTION

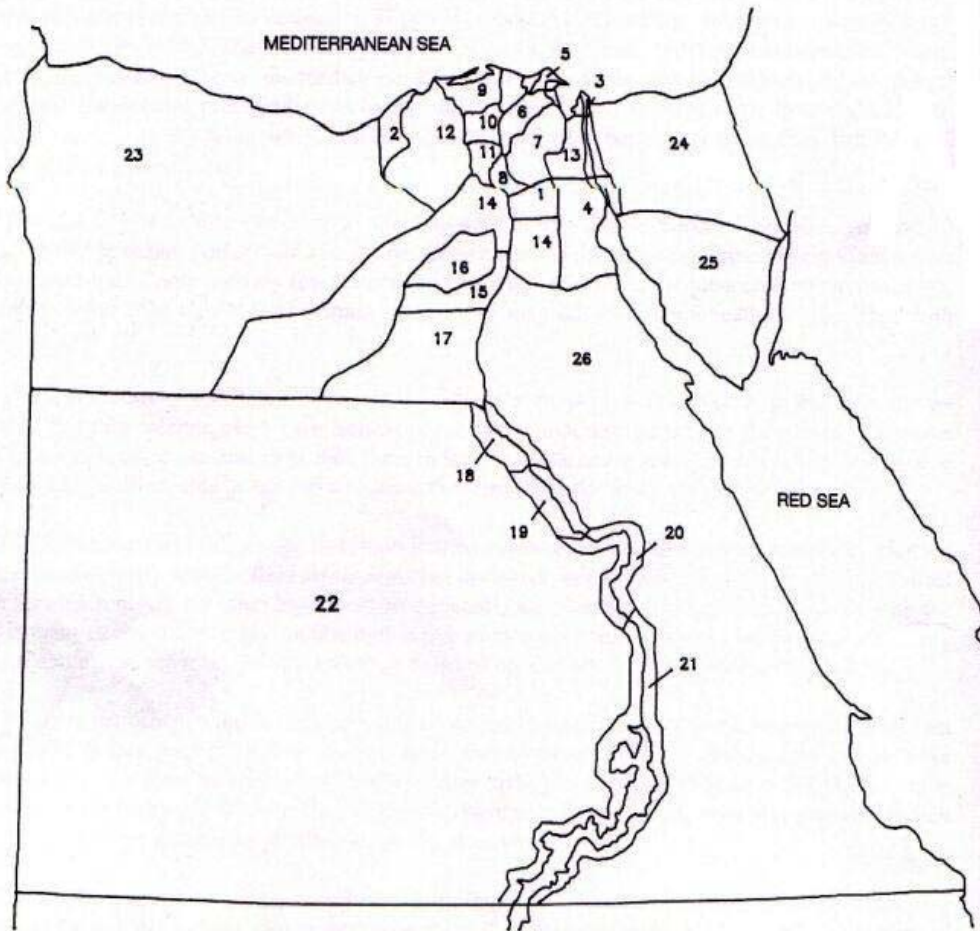
This paper surveys Egyptian emigration, migration within Egypt, and immigration to Egypt, mostly of refugees. The study explores these phenomena and concludes with a list of key gaps in the literature that can be addressed through further research. The sections on Egyptian internal and international migration are migrant-focused, though some elements of Egyptian government policy are also included. The section on migration to Egypt focuses on refugees, using as examples the largest populations from Palestine, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia, because they form the majority of new migrants to Egypt. This section is primarily concerned with the policies of the Egyptian government and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which decides refugee status in Egypt. To take a migrant-focused approach to refugees in Egypt, who come from at least 30 different countries, would require political and economic analyses of their countries of origin, and this is beyond the scope of this survey.

Migration has always played a role in Egyptian history. Until the mid-1950s, foreigners came to Egypt but Egyptians rarely migrated abroad. Egyptian emigration was not only a reflection of the oil boom in the Arab Gulf countries and the need for manpower in neighbouring countries, but also of economic difficulties and high rates of population growth in Egypt. Internal migration was a natural response to poverty and the uneven distribution of economic activities, and played a major role as a balancing mechanism as Egyptian migration flows to the Gulf and elsewhere began. It still plays a major role in sustaining the livelihoods of many families in rural Egypt.

1.1 Population, Migration and Livelihoods

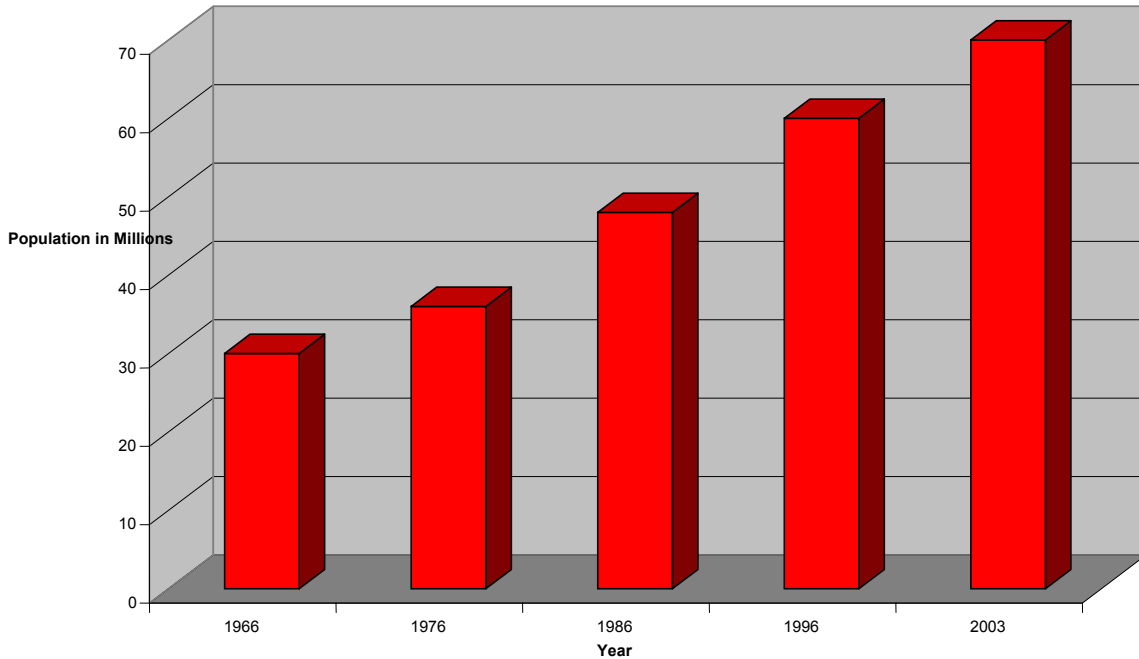
The dominant geographical feature of Egypt is the River Nile. The Nile represents the main source of water for agriculture, and consequently is a major determinant of the spatial distribution of population and economic life. Administratively, Egypt is divided into 27 governorates. Four of them are totally urban (Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, and Suez). Nine governorates are found in the Nile Delta (Lower Egypt), which extends from Cairo to the Mediterranean Sea, and nine are located in the Nile Valley (Upper Egypt). An additional five frontier governorates are found on Egypt's western and eastern boundaries (See Figure 1 for more details).

Rapid population growth is one of the crucial problems that has 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 approaches 70 million (see Figure 2). The annual population growth rate is around two percent. About 95 percent of the population is crowded into around 5 percent of the total land area that follows the course of the Nile. The remaining 95 percent of the land is 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.



- | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|----|-------------|----|--------------|----|-------------|
| 1 | Cairo | 8 | Qalyoubyya | 15 | Beni-Sueif | 22 | New Valley |
| 2 | Alexandria | 9 | Kafresheihk | 16 | Fayoum | 23 | Matrouh |
| 3 | Port-Said | 10 | Gharbia | 17 | Menia | 24 | North Sinai |
| 4 | Suez | 11 | Menoufia | 18 | Assiut | 25 | South Sinai |
| 5 | Damitta | 12 | Behera | 19 | Souhag | 26 | Red Sea |
| 6 | Daquhlyya | 13 | Ismailia | 20 | Qena & Luxor | | |
| 7 | Sharqyya | 14 | Guiza | 21 | Aswan | | |

FIGURE 2
Population of Egypt (1960-96)



Family planning started in the 1950s, but an explicit population policy did not emerge until 1985, when the National Population Council was established. The early phase of Egyptian emigration started in the same decade. Egypt's population still grows each year by approximately 1.4 million people. United Nations projections indicate that the population will grow from 70 million in 2003 to 96 million by 2026 and will reach 114.8 million before it stabilizes in the year 2065. This increase will occur for two reasons: fertility rates are still high (3.5 births per woman), and 'population momentum' (see below) will cause the population to continue to increase even after fertility rates reach low levels. Fertility rates are especially high in the poor rural areas of Upper Egypt. The region of Upper Egypt has the highest percent of families living under the poverty line (35 percent). High fertility imposes costly burdens on Egypt: it hinders economic development, increases health risks for women and children, and erodes quality of life by reducing access to education, nutrition, employment, and scarce resources such as potable water.

Even after the country reaches replacement-level fertility – just over two children per woman – the population of Egypt will continue to grow for a number of years. This is because of population momentum. Momentum occurs when a large proportion of women are in the childbearing years due to the young age structure of the population. When this is the case, the total number of births can increase even though the rate of childbearing per woman falls.

Associated with rapid population growth is a high level of unemployment. Official estimates placed unemployment at about 8.4 percent in 2000/2001, down from 9.2 percent in 1991/1992. Independent estimates push the number to 14 percent (Zohry 2002). However, to control unemployment, Egypt will need to achieve a sustained real GDP growth rate of at least 6 percent per year. The economy has to generate between 600,000 and 800,000 new jobs each year in order to absorb new entrants into the labour force. Between 1990 and 1997, however, only about 370,000 new jobs were created each year. The size of the informal sector and the level of over-employment in the public sector add to the complexity of the problem.

With about 2.7 million Egyptians abroad (1.9 million in the Arab Gulf countries) and the severity of overpopulation and unemployment, Egyptian migration can be seen as a survival and livelihood strategy. At the macro level, Egypt's economy relies mainly on four sources of income: tourism, remittances from Egyptians working abroad, revenues from the Suez Canal, and oil.

1.2 Methodology

This study relies mainly on secondary data. We draw on research papers, books, and studies of Egyptian and international migration, as well as population censuses and migration surveys. Primary data come from Ayman Zohry's observations and informal interviews with senior officials in the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration while working as a consultant in the Integrated Migration and Information Systems project (IMIS). The section on refugees draws on a body of research and experience providing legal aid to refugees in Cairo since 2000. It should be borne in mind that migration data are generally incomplete, based more on estimates than hard facts, so that even simple trends are often hard to confirm.

Section Two of this paper explores the patterns of internal migration. Section Three analyses aspects of the international migration of Egyptians. Determinants of migration and migration mechanisms are analyzed in Section Four. The socio-economic impact of migration is discussed in Section Five. Section Six is an analysis of migration to Egypt in the form of refugees. The final section identifies major gaps in the literature and offers recommendations.

2. TRENDS AND PATTERNS IN INTERNAL MIGRATION

2.1 Characteristics of Egyptian Internal Migration

Trends and Directions of Internal Migration

Internal migration in Egypt has generally been: a) from South to North, b) from South and North to the Canal Zone, c) from Egypt's hinterland to Cairo and Alexandria, and d) from Egypt's centre to its peripheries. As numerous studies have shown, the biggest convergence of migration streams is in the Greater Cairo Region, which includes Cairo, Giza, and Qalyoubiya governorates (Adams 1986; Aldakhil 1999; Burden 1973; El-Boraey 1984, 1986; El-Kurdy 1974; Ibrahim 1986; Nassef 1985; Sharaa 1964; Sharnouby 1968; Shoieb *et al.* 1994).

a) Migration from South to North: By 'South' in the present context, we are referring to the governorates of Middle and Upper Egypt. Hence South includes Fayoum, Menia, Beni-Sueif, Assiut, Souhag, Qena, Luxor, and Aswan. These governorates represent a narrow strip of green land on both sides of the Nile. As a function of limited opportunities for either vertical or horizontal agricultural expansion (through intensification of the already highly intensive agricultural regime or expansion of cultivation to new areas), mounting population pressure has been felt for the last hundred years. One response to this pressure has been a steady stream of migration to the north.

Souhag, Qena, Aswan, and Assiut have been the major suppliers of migrants to the North. Hassan (1969) estimated the net loss from the South to the North at about one million over the first six decades of this century. Of course, this figure is much lower than the volume of internal migration recorded in recent decades, but the total Egyptian population was itself much lower in the past; in 1947 it was only 19 million. El-Badry (1965), after elaborate calculations, contends that the four southernmost governorates exported a net 13 percent of their combined population to other

regions in Egypt during these same decades. From the 1960s to the 1990s, the same trends continued, but with some variations. Aswan, for example, is now more of a population exchanger, having seen a marked decline in its net loss.

b) The Suez Canal Zone: Until the 1947 census, this area was administratively divided into two governorates: the Canal (which comprised the two cities of Port Said and Ismailia) and Suez. By the following census (1960) the Canal was sub-divided into two separate governorates known at present as Port Said Governorate and Ismailia Governorate – with the latter incorporating substantial rural areas. The inflow of migrants to the three governorates began upon the opening of the Suez Canal in the 1860s. The two neighbouring governorates of Daquhlyya and Damitta accounted for most of the supply to Port Said. Sharqyya provided most of the inflow to Ismailia. Qena, in the deep South, contributed the largest share of the net migration gain of Suez.

c) Migration from the hinterland to Cairo and Alexandria: The two largest Egyptian cities have been the greatest magnets for migration. Besides their net population imports from the South, the two cities attract similar streams from the Delta.

About two-thirds of the scholarly studies on Egyptian migration have concentrated on the capital city of Cairo. Over the long term, Cairo's net gain from the South averages about 40 percent of its total in-migrants. The Delta governorates have contributed the balance of 60 percent during the twentieth century. Most of this hinterland contribution to Cairo's population has come from Menoufia, Souhag, Assiut, Gharbia, Daquhlyya, Qalyoubyya and Qena (Abdel-Hakim 1966, 1968, 1974, 1975; Aldakhil 1999; Nassef 1985). Only in very recent years has the momentum of (recorded) population arrival begun to slacken.

Students of Egyptian migration have not focused on Alexandria to the same extent as on Cairo, even though it is the second largest city and displays many of the same demographic dynamics. Alexandria has seen net migration gains since the turn of the century, although at a rate smaller than Cairo. Like Cairo, Alexandria received most of its migrants from Menoufia in the Delta, and from Souhag, Qena, and Aswan in the South. Other migrants from the Delta have come from Behera, Gharbia, and Kafresheihk.

d) The Frontier Governorates: A minor stream of migration has occurred from the centre to the Red Sea and Sinai areas from the late 1930s onwards. (Naturally, the flow to Sinai was interrupted during the years of Israeli occupation, 1967–84). Although very small in absolute volume, it looms large in relative terms because of the low population of these areas. The main suppliers of migrants to the frontier areas were Qena, Souhag, and Cairo itself. The expansion of the Red Sea and south Sinai coastal resorts will probably stimulate further migration to these developing coasts – provided the tourism industry emerges from its current stagnation.

One-Step Versus Multi-Step Migration

One-step migration refers to direct migration from the place of origin to the place of settlement, whereas multi-step migration involves intermediate stays in a third place before final settlement. Egyptian census data do not provide information on the number of steps in the migratory process. There are, however, a few old small sample surveys that shed light on this point (Hegazy 1971; Ouda 1964; Saad 1976). The available evidence reveals that the overwhelming majority of migrants to Cairo, for example, have come to it directly from their communities of origin, bypassing small and medium-sized towns. In one sample survey, one-step migrants accounted for 78 percent of the total (Saad 1976). Another sample survey indicated that only 13 percent of the migrants had engaged in more than one move between the point of origin and the destination, the rest (87 percent) having engaged in one-step migration (El-Kurdy 1974). The spatial distribution of population, transportation, and settlement in Egypt, together with the long establishment of migration flows, probably account for the lack of a stepwise migratory process in Egypt.

Characteristics of Migrants

Studies of Egypt's internal migrants illustrate their characteristics. Most studies concentrate on the statistical age and sex composition; a few describe the occupational, educational and socio-economic profiles of migrants. The overall conclusions are the strong preponderance of males over females, and of young over old; and the lack of an explicit 'selection process' as regards migrants' socio-economic characteristics. The studies show, however, that the migrants tend to be of relatively higher educational and occupational background than their counterparts at the point of origin, but lower than their counterparts at the destination (Attiya 1976; CAPMAS 1989).

One of the strongest factors motivating internal migration in Egypt is the hope of better work opportunities, thereby enabling migrants to come out of poverty. However, despite the prominence of this factor, only a few studies on Egyptian migration reviewed in this section have focused specifically on it. One such study was carried out by Toth (1999). He conducted anthropological research on migrant farm workers in Kafreshiik governorate in the lower Delta region in 1980-82.

Toth described a composite migrant labour pattern out to work sites on the perimeter of Egypt's northern Delta region. He examined why poor farm labourers migrate to work in non-agricultural activities. Seasonal unemployment and the region's underdevelopment were cited as the two main reasons, but Toth's analysis also incorporated a powerful political economy perspective which linked rural migrant workers to state control of labour resources in the context of public infrastructural and development projects through the 1960s and 1970s.

The Decision-Making Process

Few studies have focused on the decision-making process in migration. Reviewing this limited literature, *communication*, *inducement* and *facilitation* seem to be three key variables which explain the differences in migration patterns among rural Egyptians who otherwise appear to have similar socio-economic profiles. Two dated empirical studies (Ouda 1974; Saad 1976) revealed that migrants had first- or second-hand knowledge about the chosen destination while still at their place of origin. Pre-migration visits to the destination were common. Those who had made prior visits to the target destination had learned about it from friends, relatives, or the media. Serving in the army was also a way of getting acquainted with urban areas. The inducers of migration were either persuasion from relatives and friends, or the desire to emulate others in the home community. The facilitator variable refers to actual or expected help upon migrating to the new community, where kin, friends, and co-villagers facilitate new migrants' arrival and settlement, for example in terms of housing and work.

Modes of Adjustment

Most of the studies on migrant adjustment in Egypt have been inspired by the work of Janet Abu-Lughod (1961, 1969). Some researchers have dealt with rural migrant adjustment in urban areas (Hegazy 1971; Ouda 1974). Others have focused on the adjustment of a particular type of migrant (Guhl and Abdel-Fattah 1991; Zohry 2002). A common feature in the adjustment pattern among migrants is seeking help from relatives or folk-kin in the new community in finding a place to live, and/or

employment, and smoothing the acquaintance with the new community. The new migrants often reside with or near older migrants from their original community. This tends to create concentrated pockets of migrants from closely-related backgrounds in an otherwise impersonal urban world. These clusters also assist in finding employment nearby or in places where relatives, friends, and people of similar background are employed.

Causes of Internal Migration

Many of the studies on Egypt's internal migration mention the following push factors:

a) **Mounting Demographic Pressure:** Mounting demographic pressure is often inferred from the rising population density and rapid population growth in the twentieth century (Abdel-Hakim 1966, 1975; M. M. Ismail 1990; Nassef 1985; Sharnouby 1967, 1968). Demographic pressure is not in itself a cause of migration; it becomes a causal factor when mediated through a relationship with economic resources such as employment, income, or land. In Egypt, high population density is assumed to interact most significantly with the extent of cultivable land. As the pressure increases, a population increment which cannot live off the land has to go somewhere; migration thus acts as a 'safety-valve'.

b) **Declining Economic Opportunities:** Declining economic opportunities are explained in the case of rural areas in terms of a) the increasing number of landless families; b) the increasing fragmentation of land-holdings because of inheritance, thus making it progressively more difficult for a family to support itself; and c) the low level of wages for those who can find employment locally (Abdel-Rahim 1971; CAPMAS 1973; Fadil 1978; INP-ILO 1968; Magdoub 1972; Toth 1999).

Adams (1986) confirmed that internal migration from rural to urban areas in Egypt is one of the strategies that the rural poor use to survive. During the winter months (December to March), when there is limited demand for agricultural labourers, poor peasants were found to temporarily migrate to Cairo in search of unskilled work. With the recent boom in the construction industry in Cairo, many of these poor peasants have found temporary employment as brick-carriers, cement-mixers, labourers, and porters.

A more recent study by Aldakhil (1999) suggested that low income levels in Egyptian rural governorates encourage people to move toward high-income governorates. Theoretically this

should mean that inter-governorate wage differentials have been narrowed by migration, but the statistical evidence to verify this hypothesis hardly exists. Aldakhil found that the unemployment rate was a major determinant of an individual's decision to migrate. Although the official estimate of rural unemployment by the Ministry of Manpower is 11 percent, this figure probably hides a great deal of underemployment and disguised inactivity. Higher rates of unemployment at origin undoubtedly tend to encourage migration from rural and urban areas. Migration to urban areas is more responsive to unemployment than migration to rural areas.

c) Scarcity of Services and Other Social Amenities: Several authors have collected data to show the relative deprivation in some areas of Egypt in terms of education and health services. The greatest differentials are obviously between rural and urban Egypt. But even among the urban centres, Cairo and Alexandria have a disproportionate share of these resources as opposed to provincial capitals and smaller towns (Abdel-Hakim 1975; CAPMAS 1989, 1999; El-Kurdy 1974; Fadil 1978; Ibrahim 1977).

If push factors underlie the decision to leave the community of origin, it is the pull factors which determine where migrants go. Most studies of Egyptian migration have highlighted the tremendous concentration of production, employment opportunities, services, wealth, and political power in Egypt's major urban areas, especially Cairo and Alexandria. This concentration has made them unrivalled magnets for the country's internal migrants from both rural and smaller urban areas (CAPMAS 1973; El-Kurdy 1974; Farag 1970; Hegazy 1971; Hussein 1988; INP-ILO 1968; Saad 1976).

2.2 Rural/Urban Migration

An overview of inter-governorate migration for urban and rural areas by rural/urban origin or destination for the last three censuses – 1976, 1986, and 1996 – is in Table 1. In Table 1 and subsequent census-based tables in this study, migration is recorded by comparing present residence with previous residence in a different governorate. There is no time limit on the inter-governorate residential move. Hence the move could have taken place one year before the census date or twenty years before. In the latter case the same people are likely to be recorded as being migrants across successive censuses, unless they die or make another move across a

governorate boundary. The censuses therefore contain no information on the length of a migrant's residence.

TABLE 1
Urban/Rural Migration by Type of Movement, Egypt, 1976–1996*

	Census Year		
	1976	1986	1996
Urban–Urban	2,577,959 (64.3%)	3,003,054 (72.9%)	2,535,864 (60.4%)
Rural–Urban	984,469 (24.6%)	540,933 (13.1%)	562,471 (13.4%)
Urban–Rural	260,295 (6.5%)	422,955 (10.3%)	949,489 (22.6%)
Rural–Rural	186,724 (4.7%)	152,296 (3.7%)	147,611 (3.5%)
Total	4,009,447 (100%)	4,119,238 (100%)	4,195,435 (100%)

Source: Calculated from the 1976, 1986, and 1996 census data (CAPMAS 1979, 1989 and 1999)

*Place of current residence vs. place of previous residence

Two further background notes must be borne in mind for the following discussion. First, governorates are divided into 'urban' and 'rural' areas. In most governorates, the 'urban' consists of the governorate capital, plus the smaller 'district' capital settlements, whilst the 'rural' consists of villages, scattered rural settlements (satellite villages and hamlets) and Bedouin encampments (in the frontier governorates only). Frontier governorates include New Valley, Matrouh, North and South Sinai, and the Red Sea. They comprise only about one percent of Egypt's total population. Four governorates are entirely urban: Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, and Suez. The second point to note is the very uneven size and unusual configuration of governorates, dictated by Egypt's unique geography and population distribution (see Figure 1).

Rural to urban migration decreased as a proportion of total migration from 24.6 to 13.1 percent between 1976 and 1986. Between 1986 and 1996 the percentages remained about the same, but the volume of movement increased slightly, in view of the overall Egyptian population growth. In contrast, urban to rural migration increased from 6.5 to 10.3 percent of the total inter-governorate

flows between 1976 and 1986, then to 23 percent in 1996. Urban to urban migration (inter-urban) is the largest. It fluctuated from 64.3 (1976) to 72.9 (1986) and to 60.4 percent (1996). Rural to rural migration was the least important type of movement, at around 4 percent at each census.

Other points can be drawn out of the aggregate data in Table 1. The first is the remarkable consistency of the total migration recorded in each of the three censuses – a little over 4 million. Whilst this continuity is indeed remarkable, it is partly explained by the census's method of measuring migration whereby the same individual migrant continues to be recorded at each census as a 'migrant' no matter how long he or she has been there. On the other hand, the disaggregation of migration types – urban to urban, rural to urban, and so forth – shows that the nature of migration flows is indeed changing. Hence total migration seems to remain constant, whilst the individual components of that mobility are shifting. Two noteworthy trends can be highlighted: the sharp fall of rural to urban migration between 1976 (984,000, 25 percent) and 1986 (541,000, 13 percent), and the equally sharp rise of urban to rural migration between 1986 (423,000, 10 percent) and 1996 (950,000, 23 percent).

2.3 Inter-Governorate Migration

More details about the four types of rural-urban in- and out-migration are given at the governorate level in Table 2. In this table, 'urban to urban' refers to migrants from urban areas of other governorates to urban areas of the given governorate, or out-migrants from urban areas of the given governorate to urban areas of other governorates. The same is true for 'rural to rural' streams. 'Urban to rural' refers to in-migrants from urban areas of other governorates to rural areas of the given governorate or out-migrants from urban areas of the given governorate to rural areas of other governorates, and 'rural to urban' refers to the reverse streams. The magnitude of the various streams in absolute numbers is given in Table 3. The criterion for recording migration – the simple fact of a cross-boundary change of residence at some unspecified time in the past – remains the same for Tables 2 and 3, as it was in Table 1. The flows recorded in these tables are simple gross migration moves.

TABLE 2
Percentage Distribution of Inter-Governorate in and out Urban–Rural Migration Streams,
Place of Previous Residence Data, Egypt 1996

Governorate	In-migration				Out-migration			
	Urban to Urban	Rural to Urban	Urban to Rural	Rural to Rural	Urban to Urban	Urban to Rural	Rural to Urban	Rural to Rural
Cairo	89.0	11.0	NA	NA	69.1	30.9	NA	NA
Giza	64.4	6.1	28.1	1.4	44.8	44.5	8.7	2.0
Qalyoubyya	50.7	10.1	36.1	3.2	51.7	26.4	17.8	4.1
Alexandria	83.7	16.3	NA	NA	76.4	23.6	NA	NA
Damitta	9.8	11.1	68.0	11.1	60.4	30.0	8.1	1.5
Daquhlyya	18.7	27.2	48.8	5.2	56.1	17.4	17.7	8.8
Sharqyya	29.4	28.5	35.5	6.7	56.0	20.6	18.2	5.2
Kafresheikh	16.7	22.9	45.2	15.1	43.5	29.4	21.5	5.7
Gharbia	24.1	32.6	38.8	4.5	54.4	21.3	19.8	4.4
Menoufia	26.5	30.4	38.4	4.7	62.4	10.9	21.5	5.2
Behera	12.6	7.5	62.2	17.8	46.9	31.7	17.0	4.4
Ismailia	52.4	6.8	30.1	10.7	55.2	36.8	6.1	1.9
Port Said	91.1	8.9	NA	NA	84.4	15.6	NA	NA
Suez	87.0	13.0	NA	NA	87.0	13.0	NA	NA
Fayoum	26.0	26.6	42.1	5.3	67.6	15.2	13.9	3.3
Beni-Suif	27.2	22.8	41.0	9.0	67.1	14.9	15.1	2.9
Menia	17.2	30.8	45.7	6.2	56.4	18.5	22.3	2.7
Assiut	30.3	37.7	28.9	3.1	62.9	12.7	19.7	4.7
Souhag	21.9	30.0	44.4	3.6	62.9	12.1	20.2	4.8
Gena	27.5	18.0	49.3	5.2	59.9	11.4	23.6	5.2
Aswan	49.8	20.8	23.0	6.4	71.4	16.8	10.2	1.6
Luxor	74.0	7.6	12.7	5.8	77.3	13.4	6.5	2.8
Red Sea	50.7	31.4	12.2	5.8	66.0	25.1	5.6	3.3
New Valley	34.4	28.7	20.1	16.9	50.1	13.9	34.0	2.0
Matrouh	47.8	8.9	29.0	14.3	60.9	27.7	10.7	0.8
N. Sinai	58.4	24.0	9.6	8.0	43.5	35.4	10.0	11.1
S. Sinai	57.1	29.2	9.9	3.8	57.6	29.3	12.1	1.1
Total Egypt	60.4	13.4	22.6	3.5	60.4	22.6	13.4	3.5

Source: Calculated from the 1996 census data (CAPMAS 1999)

TABLE 3
Volume of Inter-Governorate in and out Urban–Rural Migration Streams,
Place of Previous Residence Data, Egypt 1996

Governorate	In-migration				Out-migration			
	Urban to Urban	Rural to Urban	Urban to Rural	Rural to Rural	Urban to Urban	Urban to Rural	Rural to Urban	Rural to Rural
Cairo	716,640	88,556	NA	NA	593,648	266,004	NA	NA
Giza	567,778	53,727	247,312	12,719	98,722	98,217	19,166	4,470
Qalyoubyya	243,275	48,407	173,048	15,167	84,833	43,261	29,247	6,722
Alexandria	231,524	44,975	NA	NA	77,167	23,797	NA	NA
Damitta	5,771	6,542	40,058	6,512	65,725	32,606	8,796	1,667
Daquhlyya	17,687	25,722	46,102	4,949	197,213	60,998	62,088	30,979
Sharqyya	40,553	39,259	48,931	9,209	194,184	71,444	63,005	17,917
Kafresheihk	10,835	14,807	29,274	9,789	40,935	27,714	20,215	5,339
Gharbia	28,580	38,722	46,068	5,323	136,387	53,459	49,751	11,080
Menoufia	16,403	18,798	23,740	2,920	177,208	31,052	61,010	14,707
Behera	18,697	11,098	92,621	26,423	85,039	57,500	30,850	7,980
Ismailia	122,662	15,810	70,470	25,065	24,205	16,144	2,668	853
Port Said	190,639	18,603	NA	NA	17,585	3,238	NA	NA
Suez	166,139	24,749	NA	NA	27,494	4,111	NA	NA
Fayoum	6,041	6,172	9,763	1,220	72,114	16,189	14,786	3,559
Beni-Suif	9,143	7,688	13,797	3,018	67,246	14,930	15,106	2,866
Menia	9,617	17,193	25,520	3,453	80,946	26,631	32,059	3,938
Assiut	12,868	15,998	12,276	1,320	138,289	27,857	43,229	10,369
Souhag	10,694	14,641	21,673	1,775	178,304	34,327	57,159	13,504
Qena	6,876	4,505	12,344	1,303	100,566	19,115	39,582	8,731
Aswan	28,944	12,118	13,358	3,749	45,151	10,631	6,429	1,015
Luxor	2,895	297	495	225	16,101	2,784	1,362	575
Red Sea	20,337	12,576	4,881	2,306	3,849	1,461	327	192
New Valley	6,742	5,629	3,942	3,306	6,266	1,736	4,254	245
Matrouh	14,592	2,709	8,835	4,371	2,643	1,201	464	35
N. Sinai	21,370	8,787	3,501	2,918	3,353	2,731	773	855
S. Sinai	8,562	4,383	1,480	571	691	351	145	13
Total Egypt	2,535,864	562,471	949,489	147,611	2,535,864	949,489	562,471	147,611

Source: Calculated from the 1996 census data (CAPMAS 1999)

NA = Not applicable (Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, and Suez have no rural areas)

From Table 2 it is clear that the 'urban to urban' in-migration stream is the largest. The proportion of 'urban to urban' stream is higher than the national average in Port Said, Cairo, Suez, Alexandria, Luxor, and Giza. The dominant role of inter-urban flows amongst the major metropolitan centres should be remembered here, as was pointed out above. The 'rural to urban' stream's proportion is above the national average in 17 governorates out of 27. The urban to rural' flow is the second largest stream, but its size is about one third of the 'urban to urban' stream. Its proportion is above the national average in 18 governorates. The highest was found in Damietta governorate while the lowest was found in North and South Sinai. The last and the smallest is the 'rural to rural' in-migration stream which constitutes less than 5 percent of all in-migrants. Behera, New Valley, Kafresheikh, and Matrouh have significantly higher proportions for this type of movement.

The proportion of relative distribution of out-migrants among the four types of rural/urban migration streams indicates that the 'urban to urban' stream is the largest one in all governorates without exception. The second largest stream is 'urban to rural' with the highest percent in Giza and Ismailia. The third largest stream is 'rural to urban'. It represents 22.6 percent of all out-migrants. Its proportion is higher for New Valley, Qena, and Menia, while significantly lower for Luxor, Ismailia, and Red Sea. The last stream, 'rural to rural', constitutes only 3.5 percent of out-migration.

Governorate Migration Indices

When the streams are grouped by type of destination for in-migrants and by type of origin for out-migrants, one can throw some light on in- and out-migration for urban and rural areas. It is, however, more informative to compare in-, out- and net-migration for urban and rural areas (Table 4).

The first striking fact revealed by Table 4 is that urban areas are net losers in the majority of non-urban governorates of Lower and Upper Egypt. Thus, the net loss of 387,018 is the net balance of considerable net gains in some of these areas and net losses in others. The major net gains in non-urban governorates are those of urban areas in Giza and Qalyoubya in the Greater Cairo Region. The 387,018 net gain to rural areas represents the balance of net gains of 648,956 in these areas in a number of governorates and 261,938 net losses in the remaining areas.

Again, the major net gains in non-urban governorates are those of rural areas in Giza and Qalyoubya, mainly those within the GCR. Migration from rural Egypt to rural areas in these two

governorates comprises 60 percent of the net gain to rural areas (388,641 out of 648,956). I may assume, with a high degree of confidence, that this is an implicit rural to urban migration. This may be attributed, in part, to the housing problem in Cairo. Migrants prefer to live in the peri-urban villages, slum areas, and suburban districts where housing is less expensive than in the older planned areas in Greater Cairo. This trend is confirmed by mappings of Cairo's census districts (*kisms*) in Sutton and Fahmi (2001), which show consistent decline, sometimes over several censuses, in centre-city *kisms*, and rapid growth in outer districts. These peripheral areas are considered in the census as 'rural' areas. The definition of rural areas in Egypt depends mainly on administrative custom, rather than their 'objective' rural or urban character, which of course changes over time. Due to the desire to limit public expenditure and protect agricultural land, the government of Egypt tends not to revise the official rural/urban split.

TABLE 4
Migration Streams by Governorates and Urban–Rural Categories, Egypt 1996

Governorate	Volume						Indices (per 1000 population)					
	Urban			Rural			Urban			Rural		
	In	Out	Net	In	Out	Net	In	Out	Net	In	Out	Net
Cairo	805.196	859.652	-54.456	NA	NA	NA	119	127	-8	NA	NA	NA
Giza	621.505	196.939	424.566	260.031	23.636	236.395	242	77	165	119	11	108
Qualvoubvya	291.682	128.094	163.588	188.215	35.969	152.246	218	96	122	96	18	78
Alexandria	276.499	100.964	175.535	NA	NA	NA	83	30	53	NA	NA	NA
Damitta	12.313	98.331	-86.018	46.570	10.643	36.107	49	393	-344	70	16	55
Daquhlyva	43.409	258.211	-214.802	51.051	93.067	-42.016	37	220	-183	17	31	-14
Sharovva	79.812	265.628	-185.816	58.140	80.922	-22.782	83	276	-193	18	24	-7
Kafresheihk	25.642	68.649	-43.007	39.063	25.554	13.509	50	135	-84	23	15	8
Gharbia	67.302	189.846	-122.544	51.391	60.831	-9.440	64	180	-116	22	26	-4
Menoufia	35.201	208.260	-173.059	26.660	75.717	-49.057	64	380	-316	12	34	-22
Behera	29.795	142.539	-112.744	119.044	38.830	80.214	33	157	-124	39	13	26
Ismailia	138.472	40.349	98.123	95.535	3.521	92.014	387	113	274	270	10	260
Port Said	209.242	20.823	188.419	NA	NA	NA	444	44	400	NA	NA	NA
Suez	190.888	31.605	159.283	NA	NA	NA	459	76	383	NA	NA	NA
Favoum	12.213	88.303	-76.090	10.983	18.345	-7.362	27	198	-171	7	12	-5
Beni-Suif	16.831	82.176	-65.345	16.815	17.972	-1.157	39	188	-150	12	13	-1
Menia	26.810	107.577	-80.767	28.973	35.997	-7.024	42	168	-126	11	14	-3
Assiut	28.866	166.146	-137.280	13.596	53.598	-40.002	38	218	-180	7	26	-20
Souhaq	25.335	212.631	-187.296	23.448	70.663	-47.215	37	314	-276	10	29	-19
Qena	11.381	119.681	-108.300	13.647	48.313	-34.666	22	232	-209	7	25	-18
Aswan	41.062	55.782	-14.720	17.107	7.444	9.663	99	135	-36	31	13	17
Luxor	3.192	18.885	-15.693	720	1.937	-1.217	19	115	-95	4	10	-6
Red Sea	32.913	5.310	27.603	7.187	519	6.668	291	47	244	218	16	202
New Valley	12.371	8.002	4.369	7.248	4.499	2.749	181	117	64	99	61	38
Matrouh	17.301	3.844	13.457	13.206	499	12.707	148	33	115	140	5	135
N. Sinai	30.157	6.084	24.073	6.419	1.628	4.791	215	44	172	63	16	47
S. Sinai	12.945	1.042	11.903	2.051	158	1.893	483	39	445	82	6	75
Total Egypt	3,098.33	3,485.353	-387.018	1,097.100	710.082	387.018	123	139	-15	32	21	11

Source: Calculated from the 1996 census data (CAPMAS 1999)

2.4 History of Internally Displaced Persons

In the second half of the twentieth century, Egypt experienced two major forced displacements: after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and during the construction of the Aswan High Dam.

Forced Migration After the 1967 War

As a consequence of the Arab-Israeli War of 1967 and the Israeli occupation of Egypt's Sinai peninsula, Egyptian sovereignty temporarily ended at the Suez Canal. The three governorates on the west bank are Port Said in the north, Suez in the south, and Ismailia in the middle.

After the Arab-Israeli War, the three cities of Port Said, Suez, and Ismailia were evacuated. Over 60 percent of their populations became temporary forced migrants in other parts of the country. The total number of forced migrants was nearly three-quarters of a million. Many migrants settled in Sharqyya governorate, the nearest governorate to the Canal Zone. Zagazig – the capital of Sharqyya governorate -- received 56,000 migrants from the Canal area. This would have been about 6-7 percent of all migrants. The vast majority of migrants re-located in Cairo or in their father's homeland governorates in the Nile valley and the Delta. The peak of migration from the Suez Canal area to the rest of Egypt was in 1967-1969. Starting in 1974, after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, many of them returned home. The return movement continued until about 1976 (Abdel Shakur et al. 2002).

The Aswan High Dam and the Nubian Exodus

The region known as Nubia is the area stretching from the Nile's first Cataract, in the north near Aswan, to the southern end of its great bend, midway between the Third and Fourth Cataracts. Nubians constitute an ethnic group of nearly 120,000 people (0.29 percent of the total population of Egypt at the time of relocation in 1963).

The Aswan High Dam was completed in 1970 and is one of the largest earthen embankment dams in the world. Although the reservoir has benefited Egypt by providing power and controlling floods, it has also had detrimental effects on the Nile system. Before the dam was built, an estimated 110 million tons of silt was deposited by the annual flood of the Nile, enriching agricultural lands (NASA 2003).

Cernea (1990) has calculated that 1.2 million to 2.1 million people are internally displaced worldwide every year by the construction of dams. The number of people affected by major dams in the last few decades ranged between 12 thousand (Nangbeto dam, Togo/Benin) and 383 thousand (Danjiangkou, China). The people affected by development-induced migration in general, and the construction of dams, are often the very poorest and the least powerful in society (Cernea, 1990; Scudder and Colson, 1982).

When it was built, the new reservoir required relocation of nearly 100,000 residents and some archaeological sites. The people who were most affected by the dam were the Nubians. All Nubian lands within Egypt and about one-third of the Sudanese Nubian Valley were completely flooded. All Egyptian Nubians and those Sudanese affected by the new lake had no choice but to leave their homeland (Fahim 1981, 1983).

The Nubian resettlement to Kom Ombo (New Nubia) in 1963-64, a district belonging to Aswan governorate 'created a number of stresses associated with the move itself such as shifts in agricultural styles, food and water problems, and the general upheaval of the social structure' (Fahim 1983: 66). The Nubians have always felt that the dam severely disturbed their traditional life and placed them, against their will, in an uncertain situation.

2.5 New Types of Internal Migration

The growing difficulties that the Egyptian population faces in finding productive employment created new types of human movement. Youth in rural areas, where the economic base is largely dependent on agriculture, face a different set of employment problems than do young people in urban areas, where the economic base is more varied. This new type of migration is known as 'survival migration' (Hugo 1998; Zohry 2002). In the Egyptian case, rural youth who represent the surplus of the agricultural sector have no way to survive other than migrating to cities, but their movement to urban areas is somewhat different from classical rural-urban movements due to agrarian systems and agricultural seasonality. Their movement is circular/pendular and independent of agricultural seasons since at any point of time, surplus labour exists.

The motives for migrating are overwhelmingly economic. Cairo and Alexandria offer better wages (generally around triple those in rural Egypt), somewhat more regular work (and therefore more regular income), a more exciting lifestyle, and the chance to support family members at home in the village.

Circular migration is not comparable to the literature-based definition of migration, which is the permanent or semi-permanent change of habitual residence. Typologically, it can be classified as 'labour circulation' or 'circular migration'. Circular migration can normally only be detected by specialised surveys. It cannot be captured by census data because circulation does not imply a change in the usual place of residence. Labour circulation, an even more specific type of circular migration, is when people periodically leave their permanent place of residence in search of wage employment in places too far away for them to commute daily (Mitchell 1985). Labour circulation means that labourers do not change their legal place of residence in the village but are working elsewhere for longer periods. Such movement can be associated with permanent full-time employment at the destination, but usually involves non-permanent work in the informal sector of the urban economy (Hugo 1982; Zohry 2002).

Zohry (2002) used a specialised survey to capture the 'labour circulation' phenomenon between Cairo and Upper Egypt. He interviewed 242 migrants, and found that the circular movement is a 'survival strategy' to sustain the basic needs of migrants' families left-behind in Upper Egypt. Upper Egyptian labourers live a miserable life in Cairo in order to ensure a decent life for their families. This marginalised group, which is partially absorbed by the capital's large informal economy, has some similarities with refugees in Cairo in terms of living and working conditions. This type of migration is totally male-dominated. It is not socially acceptable for women to undertake such migration.

3. INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

3.1 Historical Development

International migration has always been considered a demographic and socio-economic phenomenon, which is affected by both internal and external factors. The most important among

these factors is the labour market at the international level and the political conditions in both sending and receiving countries (Choucri 1999). Egyptian government policy toward migration has gone through different phases. Phases are defined by changing international conditions and international labour market needs, particularly in the Arab region. These phases overlap and the beginning and end points of each phase are not discrete. There are no standard phases in the Egyptian migration literature that are agreed-upon by all researchers.

Phase 1: The Early Phase of Migration (Before 1974)

Historically, Egypt was a land of immigrants rather than emigrants. Students went abroad in the nineteenth century and some temporary migration for political reasons occurred in association with early Egyptian nationalism. However, systematic migration started only with Egypt's provision of school teachers to Iraq in the 1930s, a programme that spread to additional countries after the 1952 revolution (Sell 1988). Until about 1961 other migration policies mostly concerned immigrant issues, such as the legal status of the non-Egyptian heritage population. Little attention was paid to Egyptians who left or wanted to leave. Political controls on migration were in force, mainly through 'exit visa' requirements (Choucri 1977).

Egyptians' interest in migration began in the mid-1950s. This was due to political, demographic, and economic pressures. The government 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 sectors, diminished the state's ability to provide jobs. However, this phase was characterised by virtual full-employment, as unemployment rates were very low.

After 1967, many factors combined to motivate the state to promote migration. The state had previously imposed restrictions on the migration of skilled workers, but in mid-1966 it eased migration procedures and permanent migration commenced. Many graduate students were tempted to stay abroad due to unfavourable economic conditions at home after the 1967 war. This was the start of the Egyptian 'brain drain'.

In 1971, permanent and temporary migration was authorised under Article 52 of the 1971 Constitution, which stated that 'all Egyptians were granted the right to emigrate and to return home'. Also in 1971, the government issued Law 73, which gave public sector employees the right

to return to their jobs within one year of resignation. This was then extended to two years and other legal impediments were removed. Large numbers of temporary migrants began to work in the Arab Gulf countries.

Phase 2: The Expansion Phase (1974-1984)

The expansion phase started directly after the 1973 war. The oil embargo led to a large increase in oil prices, which was followed by ambitious development programmes in the Arab oil-producing countries. This situation increased the demand for Egyptian labour. The number of Egyptian emigrants was estimated by the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS) to be about 70,000 in 1970. By 1976 the figure had increased to about 1.4 million according to that year's census.

During this period, the government further eased migration procedures. Migration became a top priority for the following reasons:

- To solve unemployment problems
- To use remittances to supply payment deficits and finance private projects
- To supply Arab countries with required labour
- To relieve pressure caused by political and economic factors

There was a sense of stability in relation to labour migration as government agencies took responsibility for organising labour migration.

Increasing demand for teachers became evident in other Arab countries during this phase. Government supported migration from the health sector, including doctors, veterinarians, pharmacists, and dentists. Iraq became a favoured destination for unskilled labour due to its liberal immigration policies towards fellow Arabs, and its need for foreign labour as a result of the war against Iran.

However, the inflow of cheaper Asian and South Asian labour to the labour-importing Arab countries began to threaten Egyptian workers. To counter this, Presidential Decree No. 574 of 1981 established the Ministry of State for Emigration Affairs. This new ministry sponsored

Egyptians going abroad and provided them with a number of services. In addition, it drew up an overall migration strategy aimed at national development.

Phase 3: The Contraction Phase (1984-1987)

The contraction phase began around 1983 after the start of the Iran-Iraq war, which depressed oil revenues. From 1983, the number of Egyptian emigrants became smaller. From the second half of the 1980s, Egyptian migrant labour faced a number of new problems:

- End of the Iran-Iraq War in 1988
- Fall of oil prices
- Declining demand for construction workers in Arab countries
- Policy of replacing foreign labour with nationals in the Arab Gulf states

During this period, skilled workers migrated to the labour-importing countries to replace the unskilled workers who had been dispensed with. Some countries implemented schemes to provide training for national workers to reduce the dependence on foreign labour. The promulgation of the Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law No. 111 of 1983 was one of the most important outcomes of this period. Consisting of five chapters, this law is regarded as the main migration law in Egypt.

Chapter 1 covers the general provisions applicable to all migrants, whether permanent or temporary. The chapter elaborates the responsibilities of the Minister concerned with Emigration Affairs.

Chapter 2 covers permanent emigration. According to the provisions stated in this chapter, a permanent migrant is the Egyptian who:

- Stays abroad permanently (by obtaining the nationality of a foreign country and or a permanent residence permit)
- Stays abroad for at least 10 years
- Obtains an immigration permit from one of the countries of destination

The Emigration Law stipulates that permanent potential migrants shall be granted a 'permanent emigration permit' after obtaining the approval of the countries of immigration. The data of potential migrants are to be recorded.

The law grants migrants the right to retain their Egyptian nationality along with the nationality of the country of destination. Permanent migrant status may also be dropped in the following cases:

- If the person does not travel to the country of destination within six months after obtaining the emigration permit.
- If the person returns and stays in Egypt for more than one continuous year, providing that his stay is not due to forced reasons

If a migrant stays in Egypt for more than one year, he must obtain the permission of the Ministry in order to regain migrant status.

Chapter 3 covers temporary emigration. A temporary migrant is someone (not a student or seconded worker) who works abroad for one continuous year. Migrant status is dropped if the citizen returns home for more than six months; or if the citizen returns to work in Egypt.

Chapter 4 covers migrants' rights to sponsorship and to exemption from taxes and fees on the returns of their deposits invested in Egyptian banks. Moreover, migrants' capital invested in projects in Egypt is granted the same advantages as foreign capital.

Chapter 5 enumerates various rules and transitional provisions.

Phase 4: The Deterioration Phase (1988-1992)

This stage was characterised by a significant flow of return migrants from the Gulf area to Egypt and a continuous decline in the number of contracts granted to new emigrants from Egypt. With 1988 as the base year, the number of contracts halved in 1989. This big decline was due to the decrease in the number of contracts with Jordan, Iraq, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab Gulf countries. In 1990, the number of contracts further decreased to 43 percent (of the base year 1988). In 1990, however, contracts with Saudi Arabia and Libya increased. The 1990 Gulf War

forced almost all Egyptian immigrants in Iraq and Kuwait to return to Egypt.

Phase 5: The Recent Phase (1992-2003)

After the Gulf War, migration rates returned almost to *status quo ante* the beginning of the war. Receiving countries wanted to minimise the number of immigrants. Moreover, many returned migrants settled down in Egypt. According to the findings of the latest census of 1996, the number of migrants abroad was almost 2.8 million.

The responsibility for migration and for Egyptians abroad was added to the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration by Presidential Decree No. 31 of 1996. A Higher Committee for Migration (HCM) was formed in accordance with Resolution No. 2000 of 1997. It incorporates all the government entities concerned with migration. The membership of the HCM includes representatives of the ministries and entities concerned with migration, and is headed by the Minister of Manpower and Emigration.

The competencies of the HCM had already been enumerated in Article 5 of the Emigration Law No. 111 of 1983:

- The establishment of professional training centres for potential migrants.
- The organisation of specialised courses for the purpose of qualifying potential migrants.
- Providing Egyptians abroad with media and cultural materials to maintain ties with their homeland; providing the means of teaching the Arabic language to migrants' children; and supporting the efforts by Egyptian religious entities to deepen the spiritual heritage among Egyptians abroad.
- Suggesting the facilities to be granted to migrants, whether before their departure, or during their stay abroad, or after temporary or permanently returning back to their homeland.

The HCM convenes at least once every three months, by request of its chairman. The committee may set up other secondary committees to study specific issues.

The HCM was formed fourteen years after Emigration Law No. 111 of 1983, which stated explicitly that a Higher Committee for Migration was to be formed. Most of the tasks of the HCM were not implemented, particularly the establishment of professional training centres for potential migrants.

3.2 Temporary Versus Permanent Migration

'Egyptians have the reputation of preferring their own soil. Few ever leave except to study or travel; and they always return ... Egyptians do not emigrate' (Cleland 1936: 36, 52). This was the case until the middle of the twentieth century with few exceptions. Only small numbers of Egyptians, primarily professionals, had emigrated before 1974. Then, in 1974, the government lifted all restrictions on labour migration. The move came at a time when Arab Gulf states and Libya were implementing major development programmes with funds generated by the quadrupling of oil revenues in 1973. The number of Egyptians working abroad in the Arab region around 1975 reached about 370,000 as part of about 655,000 total migrants (Brinks and Sinclair 1980). By 1980 more than one million Egyptians were working abroad. This number more than doubled by 1986 with an estimate of 2.25 million Egyptians abroad (CAPMAS 1989). The emergence of foreign job opportunities alleviated some of the pressure on domestic employment. Many of these workers sent a significant portion of their earnings to their families in Egypt. As early as 1979, these remittances amounted to \$2 billion, a sum equivalent to the country's combined earnings from cotton exports, Suez Canal transit fees, and tourism (see Remittances below).

The foreign demand for Egyptian labour peaked in 1983, when an estimated 3.28 million Egyptians workers were employed abroad. After that year, political and economic developments in the Arab oil-producing countries caused a cutback in employment opportunities. The decline in oil prices during the Iran-Iraq War forced the Arab Gulf oil industry into a recession, which cost some Egyptians their jobs. Most of the expatriate workforce remained abroad but new labour migration from Egypt slowed considerably. Even so, in the early 1990s, the number of Egyptian workers abroad still exceeded 2.2 million.

The majority of Egyptian labour migrants are expected to return home eventually, but thousands left their country each year with the intention of permanently resettling in various Arab countries,

Europe, or North America. 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. Iraq, which sought agricultural professionals trained in irrigation techniques, encouraged Egyptian farmers to move to the sparsely populated but fertile lands in the south. Outside of the Arab countries, the United States was the preferred destination.

Temporary Migration

'Egypt is now experiencing what is called *the permanence of temporary migration*' (Farrag 1999: 55). In the last three decades, flows of temporary migrants to neighbouring Arab countries exceeded permanent migration to Europe and North America. Official secondment through government authorities on the basis of bilateral contracts is one of the main forms of temporary migration, with work largely in branches of Egyptian companies, particularly the construction sector.

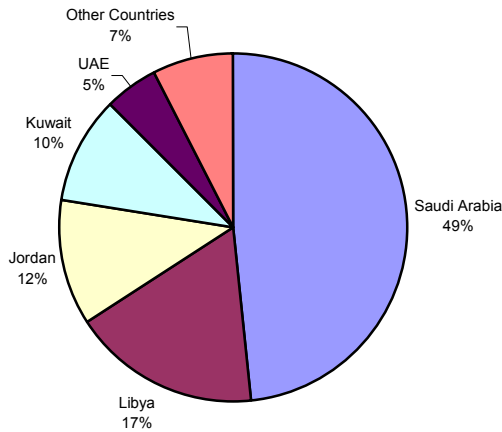
According to CAPMAS estimates, the total number of Egyptian temporary migrant labourers is about 1.9 million. Most of the demand for Egyptian labour comes from Saudi Arabia, Libya, Jordan, and Kuwait. Migrants to these countries comprise 87.6 percent of the total number of Egyptian migrant labourers. In recent years, and after the end of its civil war, Lebanon became a new destination for unskilled Egyptian migrants working in construction (See Table 5 and Figure 3).

TABLE 5
Temporary Egyptian Migration by Receiving Country

Receiving Country	Number of Migrants	Percentage
Saudi Arabia	923,600	48.3
Libya	332,600	17.4
Jordan	226,850	11.9
Kuwait	190,550	10.0
UAE	95,000	5.0
Iraq	65,629	3.4
Qatar	25,000	1.3
Yemen	22,000	1.2
Oman	15,000	0.8
Lebanon	12,500	0.7
Bahrain	4,000	0.2
Total	1,912,729	100

Source: CAPMAS (2001)

Figure 3
Percentage Distribution of Temporary Egyptian Migrants
by Receiving Country



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 labour in Saudi Arabia. A smaller workforce was in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the UAE. The fluctuation of the number of migrant labourers 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.

Contracts for Egyptians to Work in Arab Countries: The total number of contracts by year represents the flow of migration and its dynamics. When the total number of contracts for Egyptians to work in Arab countries is tracked from 1991 until the most recent available data for 2001, we notice that the data series fluctuates. This may be related to the close relation between migration and politics.

The total number of contracts increased from a very low level of 589 in 1991, after the Gulf War, to 39,812 in 1992. Contracts reached their peak in 1993/94, then decreased sharply to reach the lowest level in the 1990s in 1999. However, the number has started to recover in the last few years.

The total number of contracts presented in Table 6 represents contracts through the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration; they do not represent the overall flows of migration from Egypt.

TABLE 6
Number of Contracts for Egyptians to Work in Arab Countries (1991-2001)

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
TOTAL	317,100

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

Characteristics of Current Temporary Migration: Egyptian temporary migration involves both skilled and unskilled people. All professions migrate temporarily, ranging from scientists and technicians to labourers. At least 90 percent of temporary labour migration to the oil-rich Arab countries since 1970 has consisted of men.

During the earlier phases of massive labour movement in the mid 1970s, most workers were employed in construction. Since then, the proportion of scientists and technicians has increased and the share of labourers has declined (though it still made up one-third of emigrants in 2002). Unskilled labourers face competition from new streams of cheap labour from Southeast Asia. The percentage of scientists and technicians increased from 20.4 percent of the total professions in 1985 to 40.2 percent in 1990. The rate for 2002 is almost the same as that for 1990. Egyptians generally fill jobs that citizens are either untrained or unwilling to do. Duration of stay abroad varies according to skill level (see Table 7 for more details).

TABLE 7
Percentage Distribution of Contracts by Occupation Between 1985 and 2002

	Occupation	1985	1990	2002
1	Scientific and technicians	20.4	40.2	41.0
2	Managers	0.3	0.3	2.4
3	Clerical workers	8.8	8.0	1.5
4	Sales and services	18.5	17.3	12.7
5	Agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing	8.9	5.3	8.6
6	Production workers	43.0	28.9	33.8
	Total	100	100	100

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration

Saudi Arabia, Libya, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, Yemen, and Oman absorb most highly skilled Egyptian workers. The percent of technical and scientific migrants to these countries ranges between 69.1 in Yemen to 40.5 in Saudi Arabia. The highest proportion of unskilled migrants is found in Lebanon, where they comprise about 75 percent of the total number of Egyptian migrants. Iraq and Jordan rank second where 69.2 percent of migrants are unskilled labourers. Some 50 percent of the Egyptian migrants to UAE are unskilled labourers. The percent of unskilled Egyptian labourers in other Arab countries ranges between 37.4 percent in Qatar and 7.7 percent in Yemen. The Gulf Cooperating Council (GCC) countries plus Libya absorb most of the skilled Egyptian labourers; while Iraq and Jordan and the GCC countries absorb most of the unskilled Egyptian migrants (see Table 8 for more details).

TABLE 8
Percentage Distribution of Egyptian Migrants by Occupation in Arab Countries,
Egypt 2002

	Country	Occupation					Production workers	Total
		Scientific and technicians	Managers	Clerical workers	Sales and services	Agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing		
1	Saudi Arabia	40.5	0.4	0.3	20.6	7.1	31.1	100
2	Libya	57.0	9.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	34.0	100
3	Jordan	1.4	0.0	2.1	1.7	31.9	62.9	100
4	Kuwait	53.5	1.1	9.6	21.5	0.2	14.1	100
5	UAE	41.1	4.0	1.0	2.9	0.9	50.1	100
6	Iraq	2.6	0.0	0.0	1.5	33.0	62.9	100
7	Qatar	51.5	1.9	2.1	6.1	1.0	37.4	100
8	Yemen	69.1	18.1	4.0	1.1	0.0	7.7	100
9	Oman	52.9	8.1	2.0	4.1	1.4	31.5	100
10	Lebanon	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.3	21.1	74.6	100
11	Bahrain	27.2	5.5	9.3	24.3	0.0	33.7	100
	Total	39.0	2.4	1.5	12.7	8.6	35.8	100

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration.

Due to the shared language and the familiarity of Egyptians with the legal and educational systems of the Arab Gulf countries – which were set up in the past by Egyptian experts – these countries should continue to depend on Egyptian labour to satisfy their needs.

Permanent Migration

From the beginning of the 1960s, political, economic, and social developments led some Egyptians to migrate permanently to North America and European countries. According to CAPMAS estimates, the total number of permanent Egyptian migrants in non-Arab countries is slightly more than 0.8 million (824,000). About 80 percent of them are concentrated in five countries: USA (318,000 or 38.6 percent), Canada (110,000 or 13.3 percent), Italy (90,000), Australia (70,000), and Greece (60,000). The other 20 percent are mainly in Western European countries, such as

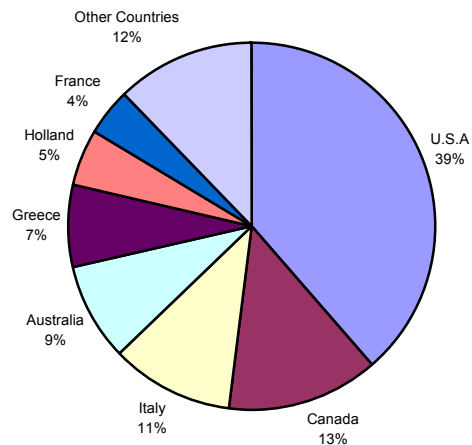
Holland, France, England, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Spain (See Figure 4 and Table 9 for more details).

TABLE 9
Estimated Number of Permanent Egyptian Migrants by Country of Destination

Country of Destination	Number in Thousands	Percent
U.S.A	318	38.6
Canada	110	13.3
Italy	90	10.9
Australia	70	8.5
Greece	60	7.3
Holland	40	4.9
France	36	4.4
England	35	4.2
Germany	25	3.0
Switzerland	14	1.7
Austria	14	1.7
Spain	12	1.5
Total	824	100

Source: CAPMAS 2001- 'The United Evaluation 2000'

Figure 4
Percentage Distribution of Permanent Egyptian Migrants by Country of Destination



The statistics given by CAPMAS are just estimates which are drawn from the reports of Egyptian embassies abroad, records of cross-border flows from the Ministry of Interior, emigration permits

from the Ministry of Manpower, and some other sources. Receiving countries' estimates differ from those of CAPMAS. For example, the Italian government estimates there are around 35,000 Egyptians in Italy whereas CAPMAS gives a figure of 90,000. Estimates by CAPMAS may need to be revised whenever reliable data are available.

Migration Flows: The Travel, Migration and Naturalisation Department (TMND) of the Ministry of Interior collects data on Egyptian emigration through forms submitted by Egyptian citizens in Egypt (Form No. 348) or by Egyptians abroad who are naturalised (Form No. 349). These data, which were compiled by CAPMAS (CAPMAS 2001), do not, however, include all Egyptians who were naturalised abroad.

The total number of permanent migrants amounted to 590 in 2000, of whom 221 travelled in their capacity as permanent migrants and 369 were naturalised. It is clear that these figures seem unreasonably low. The number of male migrants amounted to 441, which is about 75 percent of the total number. The greatest number of migrants are in the USA (158 migrants, comprising 70 percent of those who initiated their migration from Egypt). Those who were naturalised are mostly in Italy (113 migrants, which is 30 percent of those who were naturalised).

Most permanent migrants were in the age groups of 30-39 and 40-49 years. The number of migrants in these two categories is 185, which is almost one-third of the total number of recorded permanent migrants. Migrants who initiated their permanent migration from Egypt are younger and concentrated in the first age group, while migrants who were naturalised abroad are older and concentrated in the second age group.

Migrants working at foreign entities and those who have never worked constitute 388 migrants, which is about two-thirds of the total number of migrants. The total number of migrants with university degrees and postgraduate degrees is 271, which is 46 percent of the total number for the year 2000 (See Table 10 for more details).

TABLE 10
Number of Emigrants and Who Acquired the Nationality of Another Country
while being Abroad, Egypt 1991-2000

Year	Emigrants from Egypt	Acquired another nationality while being abroad	Total
1991	797	360	1156
1992	765	444	1209
1993	494	337	831
1994	701	371	1072
1995	1395	453	1848
1996	769	484	1253
1997	451	549	1000
1998	381	501	882
1999	258	475	733
2000	221	369	590

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

3.3 Civil Society Institutions

The National Union of Egyptians Abroad (NUEA) is the main civil society organisation representing Egyptians abroad. There are many unions of Egyptians abroad in Arab Gulf countries, North America, and Australia. The Egyptian unions in the Arab Gulf countries are semi-official and linked to the Egyptian embassies. They are less active than the Egyptian civil society organisations in the West. Egyptian Copts are more active than Muslims with regard to civil society institutions.

The Egyptian Coptic Church plays an important role in strengthening ties between Egyptian Copts and their country through the Church missionaries to the West and the foundation of Coptic churches in the diaspora.

3.4 Policies and Programmes of International Agencies

In 2002 the Emigration Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration started to implement the Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS). IMIS is intended to provide enhanced services for Egyptians abroad and potential migrants using information technology. An integrated database of Egyptians abroad and a website containing the laws and regulations of potential migration

destinations were established. The project aims also to establish a Migration Research Unit within the ministry to conduct migration studies. IMIS is funded by the Italian government and implemented by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

3.5 Regional Integration

Egypt and other Arab countries lack a vision of regional integration in migration matters. Neither the Arab League nor the Arab Labour Organisation effectively coordinate member states. Euro-Mediterranean cooperation is another option, but current events have weakened cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

4. DETERMINANTS OF MIGRATION¹

The factors influencing migration include macro-structural factors in Egypt, household characteristics, individual characteristics, and macro-structural factors in destination countries. Admission policies in receiving countries are a major factor, as are employment opportunities and assistance migrants may receive from relatives and friends who preceded them.

4.1 Macro-Structural Factors in Egypt

Employment structure and opportunities, wage levels, land tenure systems, transportation, communication, kinship ties, inheritance systems, community facilities, economic development, regional inequality, and ethnic structure are some 'origin' factors that help to explain differences in migration intensity between communities or regions. At the macro level, a high rate of unemployment is the main motive for migration in Egypt.

4.2 Household Characteristics

The data revealed that the average household size for return migrants was 6.01 persons (6.36 for

¹ This section depends mainly on the results of the 'Pull and Push Factors of International Migration' (2000) which was sponsored by Eurostat and NIDI. The surveys were conducted in five sending countries, including Egypt, and two receiving countries, Spain and Italy. The Egyptian study was conducted by the Cairo Demographic Center and CAPMAS. Data were collected from 1,943 representative households.

current and 5.61 for return households)² compared to 5.24 for non-migrant households. Migrants come from larger households than non-migrants. Fifty-nine percent of migrants were married before migration.

Migrants' financial situation influences the migration decision of the household. Forty three percent of the migrants perceived their financial situation to be insufficient to sustain their families. Thus, Egyptian migration may be seen as a livelihood strategy to alleviate poverty.

4.3 Individual Characteristics

Age at Last Emigration

More than 75 percent of the return migrants were less than 35 years of age at last migration. The largest proportion of the group of return migrants, 29.8 percent, belongs to the 18-24 age group. Only a very small number of return migrants (2.6 percent) is found in the 50 or older age group, while it is 17.7 percent among non-migrants in the same age group. It is predominantly the youngest people who migrate. The mean age of return migrants is about five years below that of non-migrants (29.8 vs. 35.0 years). For more details see Table 11.

TABLE 11
Percentage Distribution of Migrants and Non-Migrants by Age at Last Emigration (Migrants) or Five Years Ago (Non-Migrants)

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	1,121	3,672
Mean age	29.8 years	35.0 years

* For all non-migrants currently aged 23 or older

² *Current migrants* are those who migrated from Egypt and actually lived 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. A *non-migrant* in the context of this study is a non-international migrant. When using the absolute word *migrants* we refer to the first two categories together. If an eligible household member was not available for interview, interviews were carried out with proxies (family members). Proxies are allowed only for current migrants. The data were collected in April and May to capture a large number of current migrants during their summer vacation.

Educational Level

The majority of migrants have completed secondary school (32.7 percent), whereas the majority of non-migrants had had no formal education (37.7 percent). The percentage of those who had completed secondary school or higher education was very low compared to the migrants group (30.2 and 53.9 percent respectively). These findings support the hypothesis that migrants have better educational qualifications than non-migrants and that migration depends on selectivity. In other words, migrants are not a random sample of a given society. For more details see Table 12.

TABLE 12
Educational Level of 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	1,121	3,672

Economic Activity

Economic activity is an important aspect that affects migration opportunities. Among return migrants, 40 percent of the men were working as employees (in the public sector) compared to 53 percent among non-migrants. Because of the high rates of instability of working in the private sector and the informal economy, workers tend to be more motivated to migrate than their counterparts in the public sector. For women, about 32 percent were working in households among return migrants compared to 66 percent among non-migrants. Those who work as employers or those who have their own business are less migratory than those who do not.

5. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MIGRATION

5.1 Remittances

In economic terms, the most important aspect of migration is remitted money and goods. Such flows of wealth are important to both the families of migrants and to the economy of sending countries (Caldwell 1969). *Remittances* are defined as money transmitted from one place to another, although remittances can also be sent in kind. However, remittances usually refer to cash transfers. *Migrant worker remittances* are a part of total remittance flows transmitted by migrant workers, usually to their families or friends back home. 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 are sent through banks, post offices, exchange houses and transfer companies. The advantage of formal remittances for the analyst is that they can be measured.

Remittances: An Overview

Globally, total remittances increased from less than \$2 billion in 1970 to \$70 billion in 1995. Growth in total remittances is erratic from year to year and remittance data are generally under-reported.

Developing countries received \$35 billion in worker remittances in 1995, up from \$31 billion in 1994. Five countries paid 80 percent of remittances in 1995: Saudi Arabia (\$16.6 billion), USA (\$12.2 billion), Germany (\$5.3 billion), France (\$3.1 billion), and the United Kingdom (\$2.7 billion). Kuwait paid \$1.8 billion, and Oman \$1.3 billion in 1995. There are several ways to examine remittances, including the ratio of remittances to merchandise exports, and remittances per capita. In 1994, total remittances were equivalent to over 75 percent of merchandise exports in Egypt, El Salvador, and Jordan (IMF 1990-2002). Egypt received the largest single year amount of workers' remittances of \$6.1 billion in 1992.

The size and frequency of total remittance flows is determined by several factors, such as the number of migrant workers, wage rates, economic activity in the host and in the sending country/region, exchange rates, political risk, facilities for transferring funds, level of education of

the migrant, whether or not accompanied by dependents, years since out-migration, household income level, and relative interest rate between labour sending/receiving countries.

Remittances of Egyptian Migrants

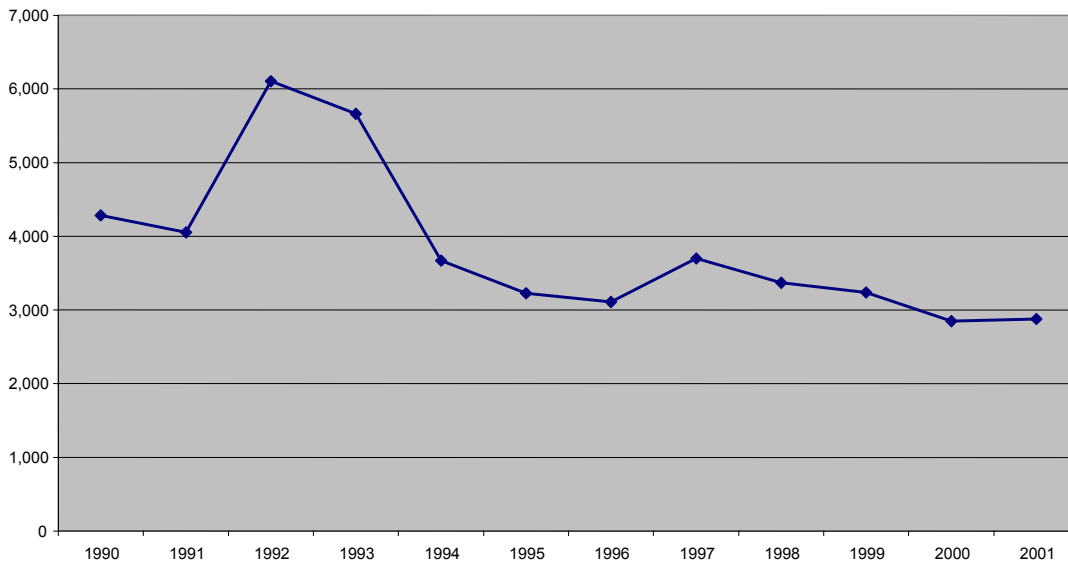
Trends in Remittances: Remittances are among Egypt's largest sources of foreign currency, along with Suez Canal receipts and tourism. A time series of remittances to Egypt from 1990 until 2001 is given in Table 13 and Figure 5. With the exception of 1992 and 1993, the data show a stable, but slightly decreasing trend in remittances at the level of \$3.0 billion. The high levels of remittances in 1992 and 1993 may be attributed in part due to the substantial return of Egyptian migrants from the Arab Gulf countries after the Gulf War.

TABLE 13
Trends in Remittances to Egypt by Egyptians Abroad, 1990-2001

Year	Remittances
1990	4,284
1991	4,054
1992	6,104
1993	5,664
1994	3,672
1995	3,226
1996	3,107
1997	3,697
1998	3,370
1999	3,235
2000	2,850
2001	2,876

Source: IMF, Balance of Payments Yearbook, and various issues, Washington, D. C.: IMF.

FIGURE 5
Remittances to Egypt by Egyptians Abroad (1990-2001)



* Remittances in US\$ Million

Current Level of Remittances: According to the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) data for the fiscal year 2001/02, the total remitted money by Egyptians abroad was \$2.8 billion. According to the International Monetary Fund data, Egypt ranked fifth among developing countries in remittances. The largest amount of remittances came from the United States, from which Egyptians sent \$956 million home, which comprises almost one-third (34.5 percent) of the total remittances by Egyptians. Saudi Arabia ranked second at \$612 million representing 22 percent, followed by the United Arab Emirates at \$312.7 million (11 percent). Remittances from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates together (33.4 percent) were one percentage point below the remittances from the United States. Remittances from the three countries together comprise more than two-third of the remittances to Egypt in this fiscal year (68 percent). Adding Kuwait to this list with \$246 million and 9 percent of the remittances will push the contribution of the four countries to more than three-quarters.

Remittances from western European countries comprise 15 percent of the total (\$425 million). The correlation between number of migrants and the percentage share of remittances is not clear in the European case. The percentage contribution of Egyptians to the total amount remitted from

countries such as Italy, Greece, and Netherlands, which are the main destinations of Egyptian migrants, is less than countries with fewer numbers of Egyptians, such as Switzerland and the United Kingdom. This may be attributed, in part, to the differences in migrant mix in these countries by occupation and skill level. See Table 14 for more details.

TABLE 14
Remittances of Egyptians Working Abroad by Country in U.S. Dollars (millions), Egypt
2001/02

Country	Million US\$	Percent
United States of America	955.9	34.5
Saudi Arabia	612.4	22.1
United Arab Emirates	312.7	11.3
Kuwait	246.0	8.9
Switzerland	119.9	4.3
United Kingdom	116.0	4.2
Germany	89.1	3.2
Bahrain	54.2	2.0
France	47.3	1.7
Qatar	42.2	1.5
Italy	32.4	1.2
Netherlands	12.0	0.4
Oman	11.3	0.4
Lebanon	10.3	0.4
Japan	8.6	0.3
Canada	5.9	0.2
Greece	5.2	0.2
Spain	3.4	0.1
Libya	3.0	0.1
Other Countries	85.6	3.1
Total	2773.4	100

Source: Central Bank of Egypt (March 2003) - Monthly Statistical Bulletin – Vol. (72)

Economists attribute the current standstill in workers' remittances to falling oil prices in the Gulf countries. Whenever oil prices are high, workers' remittances increase.

Poor exchange rates in Egypt discourage Gulf migrant workers from sending money home. The workers are worried about losing money when converting into Egyptian pounds. Remittances to Egypt have also suffered as a result of the general slowing down of the world economy. Further,

restrictions on visas are making it more difficult for workers to travel to other countries.

Remittances and Number of Migrants

Evidence shows that there is a relationship between the total number of migrants and remittances per country: the higher the number of Egyptian migrants, the higher the total amount of remittances. But the relation is not linear. Saudi Arabia with the highest number of temporary Egyptian migrants ranked second after USA with the highest number of permanent Egyptian migrants. While the total number of Egyptian migrants in Saudi Arabia is almost three times that of USA, the total amount of remittances made by Egyptians in the USA is one and a half that of Saudi Arabia. Some other socio-economic factors affect the power of this relation but generally, the relationship is positive.

Use of Remittances

Research on the use of remittances shows that a large part of these funds are used for daily expenses such as food, clothing, and health care. Funds are also spent on building or improving housing, buying land or cattle, and buying durable consumer goods (Zohry 2002). Generally, 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.

The Egyptian data indicate that about 74 percent of migrant households spend the largest share of funds received from relatives abroad on daily household expenses. This percent indicates the importance of migration and remittances in poverty alleviation. Permanent housing and education rank second and third (7.3 and 3.9 percent respectively). In-kind remittances mainly include clothes and electronic equipment (Eurostat 2000).

Although the local use of remittances focuses on daily expenditure, the impact of these remittances upon national economy and development plans cannot be ignored.

5.2 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, forthcoming). In Egypt, schooling is free to qualified students through the university level. However, the country suffers large-scale 'brain drain'. Egypt is simply not capable of keeping its skilled labour force at home. The brain drain from Egypt includes 2.5 percent of individuals who migrate to the United States and another 5 percent migrating to other OECD countries (Carrington and Detragiache 1999).

5.3 Return Migration and Investment

Entrepreneurship amongst return migrants contributes to the Egyptian economy. Investments by return migrants are a continuation of their support to the national economy, similar to remittances. A study by McCormik and Wahba (2000) found that the amount of savings going back to urban areas is more than three times that going to rural areas. Based on a comparison between non-farm small enterprises owned by returnees and those owned by non-migrants, the researchers conclude that most investments by returnees are made in Cairo.

5.4 Migration and Society

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 land. The husband's absence forces women to manage alone (Brink 1991; Khafagy 1983; Khattab and El-Daeif 1982; Zohry 2002).

The use of remittances in building new houses and purchasing durable goods enhances the living conditions of migrants' households. Investment in education is one of the main ways that remittances are used.

Some returnees have adopted social and theological norms while abroad, notably those from the Gulf countries.

6. MIGRATION TO EGYPT: REFUGEES

From Biblical times, Egypt has been a haven for people fleeing persecution and natural disasters. Egypt has continued to fulfil this role into the present. People fled to Egypt after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917, the Armenian massacres in Turkey in the 1920s, and from both World Wars. Egyptians hosted 25,000 Croats in 1944 (Corsellis 1993) and during World War II, it hosted the Albanian and Greek governments in exile. Numerous African nationalist politicians or their families – notably those of Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba – found sanctuary in Egypt during the 1960s.

The term ‘refugee’ as used in this paper includes Palestinian refugees who began arriving from the mid-1930s, with mass arrivals in 1948, 1967, and 1990-91 (El Abed 2003). It also includes those of other nationalities who have been termed refugees by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In Egypt, UNHCR determines refugee status, not the Egyptian government. Thousands of refugees denied recognition by UNHCR also continue to live in Egypt (Kagan 2002; 2003a).³ Wars and massive human rights violations in Africa and the Middle East have been the main source of refugees. Of the thirty nationalities of refugees known in Egypt, Palestinians form the largest group, followed by people from Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. Other nationalities come in smaller numbers, but groups of significant size come from Afghanistan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Yemen, and Burundi. UNHCR also has responsibility for stateless people in Egypt.

Today, Egypt’s capital Cairo ‘accommodates one of the five largest refugee populations living in urban areas’ in the world (Ismail 2002). This assessment is based on the number of asylum seekers received by UNHCR. It is impossible to give precise numbers of refugees in Egypt and ‘guesstimates’ vary from 500,000 to 3 million. Although all refugees in Egypt face similar hardships and most rank among the poorest of the poor, each community in Cairo has its different cultural and religious background that makes it unique.

³ Ironically, these same refugees would have been recognised on *prima facie* grounds had they been in Kenya or Uganda.

6.1 Egyptian Policies Concerning Refugees

Article 53 of the Egyptian Constitution guarantees asylum for political refugees. Article 53 states that 'Egypt is obliged to grant the right of political asylum to any foreigner who has been persecuted for his defence of the interests of people, or of human rights, peace or justice.' The Office of the President is in charge of granting asylum to political refugees. However, little is known about the procedures for qualifying as a 'political refugee' (Anon 2002). It seems mainly reserved for certain high-profile cases such as the Shah of Iran, Jaafar Nimeri of Sudan, or the wife of the last king of Libya. Palestinian refugees are regulated by a separate office. When they apply for residence permits, their cases are treated separately by the Ministry of Interior.

Article 151 of the Constitution states that international treaties ratified by Egypt have force of law and in all cases supersede domestic law. In 1951, Egypt was, with Turkey, the only non-western member of the drafting committee of the UN Convention on Refugees. UNHCR established its office in the country in 1954 (GoE 1954).

In 1980, Egypt ratified the Organisation of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems and the 1951 UN Convention. In 1981 it ratified the 1967 Protocol. In 1984, it ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which also provides for the right to seek and obtain asylum. The Arab Declaration in 1992 also urged Arab States to adopt a broad concept of 'refugee' and 'displaced person' as well as a minimum standard for their treatment, guided by the provisions of the United Nations instruments relating to human rights and refugees as well as relevant regional instruments, and to also guard against *refoulement* (Grindell 2003).

At the time of ratifying the 1951 Convention, Egypt entered reservations to the following articles, making them inapplicable in Egypt: Articles 12.1; 20; 23; and 24. These cover personal status, unequal treatment of refugees compared to nationals if there is a rationing system in Egypt; and access to public relief, but the two articles having the greatest impact on refugee populations living in Egypt are Article 22 on free primary education and Article 24 on employment. For these reasons alone refugees in Egypt have no chance for 'integration', one of UNHCR's three 'durable solutions'.

Egypt is a signatory of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which stipulates that children have the right to free access to education and support for psychological recovery after war. Nevertheless primary and secondary education for most refugees is not allowed in Egyptian public schools.⁴ (Until 1978, Palestinians were an exception to this prohibition.) Refugees who want a university education must pay foreigners' fees in foreign currency. Palestinian students have been specifically excluded by decree from studying medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, and engineering (El Abed 2003).

With the restriction on the right to work, refugees are forced to rely on the informal sector and are thus easily exploited. However, a policy issue open to exploration is Article 17(1), (2) and (3) of the 1951 Convention, to which Egypt did not enter reservations. Article 1 states, 'the Contracting States shall accord to refugees lawfully staying in their territory the most favourable treatment accorded to nationals of a foreign country in the same circumstances, as regards the right to engage in wage-earning employment'.

1. In any case, restrictive measures imposed on aliens or the employment of aliens or the employment of aliens for the protection of the national labour market shall not be applied to a refugee who was already exempt from them at the date of entry into force of this Convention for the Contracting State concerned, or who fulfils one of the following conditions:
 - a. He has completed three years' residence in the country;
 - b. He has a spouse possessing the nationality of the country of residence. A refugee may not invoke the benefit of this provision if he has abandoned his spouse;
 - c. He has one or more children possessing the nationality of the country of residence.
2. The Contracting States shall give sympathetic consideration to assimilating the rights of all refugees with regard to wage-earning employment to those of nationals, and in

⁴ A Presidential decree signed in 2001 declared that Sudanese children of recognised refugees should be allowed to attend public schools. However, for the most part, this has not been implemented due to the requirement that each pupil should have a residency permit. In some cases, only residency stamped in a passport is accepted (Afifi 2003; Dingemans 2002).

particular of those refugees who have entered their territory pursuant to programmes of labour recruitment or under immigration schemes.

6.2 Refugee Communities in Egypt

*Palestinian Refugees*⁵

Palestinians have been subjected to changing policies which have become increasingly restrictive, largely due to the shifts in political relations among the government of Egypt, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), and Israel. The Egyptian media promotes a general stereotype of Palestinians as wealthy, though the actual number of the 'wealthy' is very small. Another common and negative media image of Palestinians is that they have brought trouble on their own heads, having sold their land to the Israelis. It is often speculated that Egypt's restrictive policies towards all refugees in general are a product of its policies towards the Palestinians.

The first Palestinians in modern history to flee to Egypt came in 1929 when violence erupted between Jews and Arabs in the Burak Rebellion. Palestinians also fled the civil strife between 1936-1939 when the Arabs in Palestine tried to halt Zionism. However, the major influxes of Palestine refugees occurred during the 1948 and 1967 wars. In 1948, some 3,000 Palestinians set out for Port Said and Alexandria by boat. Another 10,000 to 15,000 went to Gaza. The Egyptian government responded by setting up camps to receive these refugees.

No official figures on the Palestinians are available from the government. In 2003, according to unofficial sources, there were said to be 50,000 to 70,000 Palestinians in Egypt. According to newspapers – *Al-Wafd*, *Al-Ahram* and *Al-Ahram Hebdo* – the number of Palestinians in Egypt during the 1990s varied between 80,000 and 100,000. According to the Palestinian ambassador there were 53,000 Palestinians living in Egypt in 2001. The Arab League and the Egyptian Foreign Ministry continue to set the figure at 70,000. Yassin (1996) states that 256,973 Palestinians held Egyptian travel documents in 1994, yet, according to the second secretary at the Egyptian embassy in Amman, there are one million Palestinians – residing both inside and out of Egypt – who hold Egyptian travel documents.

⁵ This section is largely drawn from El Abed (2003).

Today, most Palestinians live dispersed over many villages and towns across Egypt, existing beneath (or even far below) the poverty line. Due to the severe restrictions on education, Palestinians in Egypt are probably the least educated of all the Palestinian diaspora. Repeated Arab League resolutions advising governments to treat them on par with nationals have not been heeded by Egypt. In 1948, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was established to provide assistance (not protection) to Palestinian refugees in the host states: Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza. But UNRWA was never invited to work in Egypt.

In 1948, with the great numbers of Palestinians entering the country through land and maritime borders, an immense camp, Qantara Sharaq, was created in northeastern Egypt near the Suez Canal.⁶ Another camp, Azarita, was created in the north near Alexandria. Palestinians who desired to leave the camps were required to have an Egyptian guarantor. Subsequent arrivals found their way to relatives across the country.

In 1950, Egypt's King Farouk signed an agreement with UNRWA to assist Palestinian refugees in Gaza but did not permit them to operate in Egypt. He wished to discourage Palestinians from staying in Egypt on the grounds that Egypt was already 'too crowded with its own people and [could not] receive the refugees on their territories' (El Abed 2003). After the 1952 revolution, General Mohammed Naguib, the first President of Egypt, made it clear that Egypt would *not* accept refugees from the Gaza Strip.

When Gamal Abdel-Nasser became president he addressed the Palestinian issue more favourably. Nasser set up 'employment projects' for the 50,000 Palestinians residing in the Sinai in order to improve their situation. Nevertheless, Palestinian refugees were not allowed to work (except in the British army), open their own businesses, or hold Egyptian passports. In 1954, Nasser allowed Palestinians to work as teachers and in 1962 he passed Law 66 that permitted Palestinians to work in the public sector and 'to be treated as nationals of the Arab United Republic' (El Abed 2003). In addition to this law, Egypt ratified the Casablanca Protocol in 1965 which pledged to treat Palestinians on par with citizens and to work to preserve the Palestinian identity.

⁶ Palestinians took the road from Gaza to Zagazig or Faqous (in Sharqyya) using camels. Those taking boats stopped in Alexandria or Port Said. The estimated number of those two groups arriving in 1948 was 11,000 (Hanafi 2000).

By the late 1970s, these favourable policies toward Palestinians in Egypt were withdrawn. In 1973 President Sadat succeeded in regaining control of the Sinai from Israel, after which he sought to make peace in exchange for economic and military aid from the United States. Palestinians saw Sadat's peace negotiations with Israel as unacceptable, and this strained relations between Egypt and the PLO. The assassination of the Egyptian minister of culture by a PLO faction further soured ties.

Later that year, two administrative regulations, Nos. 47 and 48, were issued, rescinding all regulations that gave Palestinians the same rights as nationals. With these special privileges taken away, Palestinians had no more rights than other foreigners. From 1978 until today, they have been prohibited from work in the public and private sectors, they need a permit for any work, they must pay foreigners' fees in hard currency for university education,⁷ their rights to travel are severely restricted, and those who overstay travel permits are subjected to deportation or detention.

In 1948, the Egyptian government began issuing travel documents and birth certificates to Palestinians. One-year residence permits without permission to work were also issued. Travel documents issued after 1960, during the period of Egyptian-Syrian unity, prohibited Palestinians from travelling to Syria without a visa. In 1964, new provisions were made for travel documents, extending their validity to two years. These documents did not permit Palestinians to return to Egypt without re-entry visas issued in advance of departure. Those arriving after the 1967 war were issued travel documents valid for only three years. There are different charges for renewing residence permits, according to the refugee's date of arrival in Egypt. Most important, and despite the fact that Palestinians in Egypt are those who cannot go back to Palestine, 'being granted residence permits is contingent on providing a reason to remain in Egypt'. The only accepted reasons are studies in a recognised educational institution, licensed work, marriage to an Egyptian, or evidence of an Egyptian business partnership.

⁷ Some special arrangements were briefly put in place during the two intifada, permitting Palestinians to attend school without paying fees. Some destitute families get special help if they live in an area where there are no private schools and they can prove their financial circumstances. Al Azhar University offers free education only if students are studying Arabic and Sharia. Other faculties demand payment in foreign currency. Certain categories, such as children of employees of the PLO, the Ain Jalout forces, and the administration office of the governor of Gaza were able to attend public primary and secondary schools and receive 90 percent remission of university (foreign) fees (El Abed 2003).

Those working in (or retired from) government service, the Administrative Office of the Governor of Gaza, or the PLO, have the fewest problems renewing residence permits. However, the majority of Palestinians work in the informal sector and face great obstacles. Without a residence permit, Palestinians are subject to detention and deportation. Young men are particularly vulnerable when they reach age eighteen and have been forced to stop school, or have graduated from university but cannot find licensed work. Men in this situation are forced to live illegally in Egypt until they can provide authorities with an official reason for their stay.

Palestinians who have travelled out of Egypt, especially those who have gone to Gaza in the hopes of finding employment and have overstayed their six-month re-entry permits, find themselves unable to return.⁸

Sudanese Refugees

'Sudanese in Egypt have for long enjoyed a status close to nationals on account of a number of bilateral agreements, the most recent being the Nile Valley Agreement of 1976 which inter alia allowed for free movement of goods and people across the common borders' (Sperl 2001: 20). During the civil war from 1955 to 1972, the first wave of Sudanese asylum seekers came to Egypt. The second wave of Sudanese began arriving as a result of the current civil war that began in 1983. Most of the recent asylum seekers in Egypt are from Southern Sudan, South Kordofan, and South Blue Nile regions of Sudan (SCDP 1998). A significant number of Sudanese from the Muslim north have also sought refuge from persecution since 1983. Besides civil war and fear of persecution, some Sudanese have come to Egypt because of famine and the impossibility of sustaining life in the displaced camps around Khartoum (Cooper 1993: 2).

Until 1995, it was not necessary for Sudanese refugees to seek asylum; they were usually referred to as 'displaced people'.⁹ However, the 1995 assassination attempt on President Mubarak in Ethiopia, allegedly by members of Egypt's Islamic fundamentalists said to be supported by the Sudanese government, changed Egypt's open-door policy toward their southern neighbours. Since

⁸ Palestinians studying abroad are granted one-year re-entry permits, as are those who have contracts for work abroad.

⁹ In 1994, however, the government of Egypt asked UNHCR to check on the situation of employment among Sudanese lest they 'engage in activities incompatible with law and order or get mobilised by organisations advocating violence' (RO Cairo 1997, as quoted by Sperl (2001:20).

then, every Sudanese must have a visa to enter Egypt and, if a refugee, must proceed through the refugee status determination process at UNHCR.

In 2001 there were only 2,960 recognised refugees from Sudan. Their recognition rate in 2000 was only 30 percent and does not come anywhere near reflecting the true number of Sudanese who have fled their country because of war and persecution.

As with most refugee populations, the Sudanese see education for their children as the only way out of poverty, but they have been barred from the free Egyptian public school system. Christian churches and refugee-run NGOs are the only source of education for refugees in Cairo. Only one of these primary school programmes teaches the Egyptian curriculum. There are not nearly enough facilities and resources to educate the tens of thousands of refugee children living in Egypt and there are no secondary schools.

In December 2000 the minister of education announced a plan to address the lack of public primary education for Sudanese children and in 2001 a ministerial decree was issued (Peterson 2001). The decree is problematic in two ways. Families are required 'to present extensive documentation, including a birth certificate, last schooling level certificate, identity document with legal residence permit, and letter from the Embassy of Sudan' (Peterson 2001).¹⁰ A second obstacle is the resistance of the Sudanese refugees to the idea of local integration, preferring English-language teaching no matter how few opportunities are available, as preparation for their hoped-for resettlement in English-speaking countries in the West. Their resistance to Arabic teaching is also related to their deep-seated aspirations for an independent Southern Sudan where, as one Sudanese man put it, 'Arabic is not going to be the main language' (Peterson 2001).

Somali Refugees

Prior to the Somali civil war that began in 1991, Somalis residing in Cairo consisted of three main groups: (1) diplomats and their families, (2) university students on scholarships, and (3) female-headed families who came to Egypt for the education of their children while their husbands worked

¹⁰ The Egyptian government has waived the letter from the Sudanese embassy but must have all other documentation before a child can attend school.

in the Gulf (Al-Sharmani 2003). According to UNHCR, in 2003 there were 1,832 recognised Somali refugees, 952 rejected applicants, and 1,544 asylum seekers.¹¹

Somalis who came to Egypt before the war or shortly thereafter differ from those who came to Egypt in the late 1990s. The first Somalis to settle in Cairo came mainly from urban areas, were highly educated, had held professional or administrative jobs, and fled Somalia via Kenya or the Gulf. The more recent Somali refugees have both urban and rural origins, are more likely to be unskilled and young. Many are illiterate, and a number of them fled first to the Gulf before coming to Cairo.

Somalis are concentrated in two districts of Cairo, Ard El-Liwa and Nasr City. Because the Somali community in Cairo is 'an integral part of well-connected communities of the transnational Somali diaspora that have very strong economic and social ties,' many Somalis receive remittances from relatives in western countries and Saudi Arabia, in addition to their income from the informal sector in Cairo (Al-Sharmani 2003).

Somalis suffer from the restrictions on attendance of public schools and very few, if any, benefit from the church-based educational programmes on offer in Cairo. Self-help schools organised by the Somali Refugee Committee of Egypt (SRCOE), and other small NGO initiatives, provide an alternative for a few children. Also, some Somali households who have resisted resettlement out of fear of cultural assimilation in the West, are said to receive more assistance from Caritas, UNHCR's implementing partner for humanitarian assistance to refugees in Egypt. This differential treatment understandably creates tensions within the group.

Ethiopian and Eritrean Refugees

From 1977-1979, Ethiopian refugees came to Egypt in order to escape the Mengistu regime's 'Red Terror' (Cooper 1992a). Another influx of refugees came in 1991-1992 when the Mengistu regime fell. Some were members of the military. The recent border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea (1998-2000), the suppression of civil liberties in both countries, and the turndown in the economy are all reasons why Eritreans and Ethiopians have continued to flee to Egypt. Eritrean refugees

¹¹ The Somali community maintains that there are at least 5,000 in Cairo.

living in Sudan began coming to Egypt after UNHCR and the Eritrean government invoked the cessation clause (Article 1C(5)) of the 1951 Convention in 2000 because they feared forced return.

The majority of Ethiopians and Eritreans in Cairo during the early 1990s were educated and skilled single young men from urban areas, from both Muslim and Christian backgrounds (Cooper 1992a). More than half came to Cairo directly by plane while others came by foot or train after having spent some time in other African and Gulf countries. Financial support mainly came from relatives in the West and local churches.

More recent data on the make-up of the Ethiopian and Eritrean refugee population in Egypt are not available. However, if trends from the early 1990s hold true, the profile of refugees from Ethiopia and Eritrea will have greatly changed. Before 1990, men coming from these two countries made up the majority but by 1992 more women than men were fleeing to Cairo (Cooper 1992a).

UNHCR statistics show that as of March 2001, there were only 18 Eritrean and 59 Ethiopian recognised refugees living in Cairo. The recognition rate was 13 percent for Eritreans and 14 percent for Ethiopians in 2000. Nevertheless, the actual Eritrean and Ethiopian community is around 5,000. Most of their files have been closed by UNHCR, and they are vulnerable to detention and deportation, and still unable to return home.

6.3 UNHCR Policies in Egypt Concerning Refugees

Despite constitutional provisions concerning refugees, the maintenance of Egypt's reservations to the Convention, 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 fulfil its primary mandate of refugee protection.¹² Moreover, there is no judicial review of the status determination procedures and no independent appeal process to which rejected refugees have recourse (Kagan 2002, 2003a).

¹² Steps have been taken, especially since 2002, to convince the Government of Egypt to take over its responsibility for status determination so that UNHCR may focus primarily on protection.

Since 1997 there have been 63,243 registered asylum seekers, but only 18,537 have been recognised (of which 12,251 have been resettled). In the past six years over 32,000 claims have been rejected and their files closed by UNHCR.¹³ This latter group, who fear to return home, earn a meagre living in the informal economy, and live under the constant threat of detention and deportation (Grindell 2003). The acceptance rate for asylum seekers has varied widely, ranging from 24 percent in 1997, to 38 percent in 1998 and 1999, back down to 31 percent in 2000, up to 42 percent in 2001, down again to 27 percent in 2002. From 1 January to 31 March 2003, the recognition rate was 23 percent, but in May 2003, it jumped to 71 percent.¹⁴

Before November 2002, asylum seekers eighteen and older who sought refugee status from UNHCR were given a minute slip of paper that only showed the date of the interview and passport number. It was not stamped by UNHCR and offered no other information. The holder of such a paper is supposed to be regarded as 'under the protection of UNHCR,' but police and security do not recognise it. Since most asylum seekers must wait for more than a year for a decision on their case, they continue to be at serious risk of detention or deportation (Grindell 2003). Since November 2002, new asylum seekers are issued yellow cards. This new card, valid for six months and renewable three times, provides refugees with residency from the Ministry of Interior through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁵ Those who are recognised as refugees by UNHCR are issued a blue card that allows them to reside in Egypt. Most recently, the stamp 'work prohibited' has been removed from the residence permit, a significant positive step by the Government of Egypt.

UNHCR has a special relationship with Palestinian refugees. Article 1D of the 1951 Convention excludes any group of refugees who receive protection or assistance from another UN agency. This provision was intended to exclude most Palestinian refugees from UNHCR's mandate, because they had been assisted by UNRWA (see above) since 1948, and it was included at the behest of Arab governments. However UNRWA has never been allowed to operate in Egypt, so

¹³ These statistics have been provided by UNHCR Cairo.

¹⁴ For an explanation of such wide variations when the largest group of asylum seekers are from the Sudan (74%), where the conditions leading to flight have only become more severe over these years, see Kagan (2002; 2003b). The sudden rise in the rate of acceptance in May 2003 is explained by UNHCR's shift in policy to apply the OAU Convention as part of its mandate, to the effects of its radical overhaul of its staff within UNHCR and status determination procedures, and, finally, from policy emanating from Geneva.

¹⁵ Since this card is not issued to individuals who filed for refugee status before the end of last year, many asylum seekers are still almost completely unprotected.

Palestinians in Egypt do fall under UNHCR's mandate. Arab countries continue to advocate the exclusion of Palestinians from the mandate of UNHCR and from the 1951 Convention. They are primarily concerned that Palestinians continue to receive special United Nations attention. The Arab governments fear that Palestinian refugees '...would become submerged [with other categories of refugees] and would be relegated to a position of minor importance' (Takkenberg 1998:66).¹⁶ The fear is that Palestinian refugees would effectively forfeit their right to return if UNHCR's 'durable solutions', which include resettlement and integration as well as repatriation, were offered to them. The Palestinian refugee problem, Arab governments argued, was to be resolved with a special formula of repatriation and compensation rather than resettlement in a third state (Akram 2001: 173).

This has left the Palestinians in UNRWA areas without protection and those outside them without either assistance *or* protection, even though in principle they fall under UNHCR's mandate. The 1951 Convention has not been consistently applied to Palestinians outside of UNRWA areas.¹⁷ Recently, however, UNHCR has published a note on the applicability of Article 1D to situations such as Egypt (UNHCR 2002b). They have determined that Palestinians living in Egypt fall within Paragraph 2 of Article 1D and are automatically entitled to the benefits of the 1951 Convention, 'providing of course that Articles 1C, 1E and 1F do not apply'.¹⁸ UNHCR has now appointed a Palestinian 'focal point' in Egypt, and accepts applications, especially from destitute youth. So far it has recognised some forty cases. In deference to the Arab League's concerns, it does not recommend them for resettlement.

Resettlement

Because of Egypt's reservations to the 1951 Convention do not permit refugees to enjoy their basic rights, Egypt is viewed by most refugees as a transit country. There are significant resettlement

¹⁶ The review of the preparatory work has also revealed that the international community did not decide to exclude Palestinian refugees from the general legal regime for the protection of refugees. Although the Arab states did not consider themselves primarily responsible for financing the relief effort, they were concerned that assistance or protection be extended to the Palestinian refugees irrespective of whether relief by the United Nations would continue to be provided. They therefore made it clear that the provision, included upon their request in the draft convention, was only to exclude Palestinian refugees temporarily (Takkenberg 1998: 66).

¹⁷ Suzan Akram (2001) analyses the article's 'protection or assistance' and '*ipso facto*' phrases, which were intended to provide Palestinian refugees with continuity of protection under various organisations and instruments. Article 1D's function was to ensure that if for some reason either of these agencies failed to exercise its role before a final resolution of the refugee situation, that agency's function was to be transferred to the UNHCR and the Refugee Convention would fully and immediately apply without preconditions to the Palestinian refugees.

¹⁸ The fact that such a person falls within Paragraph 2 of Article 1D does not necessarily mean that he or she cannot be returned to UNRWA areas, in which case, once returned, the person would fall within paragraph 1 of Article 1D and thereby cease to benefit from the 1951 Convention (UNHCR 2002b).

programmes to such countries as Australia, Canada, Finland, and the US. With the decreasing number of places for resettlement and the increasing number of refugees arriving in Egypt, UNHCR and refugees are forced to accept that Egypt will by default become a country of integration, despite the obstacles discussed above.¹⁹

From 1997 to May 2003, UNHCR have resettled 12,051 refugees to western countries.²⁰ This does not include refugees who have managed to get 'sponsorship' to Australia and Canada through special programmes. It also does not include refugees who have left Egypt for Libya in order to attempt to reach Italy using traffickers. Somalis are known to take this route, but other groups may also do so. Other refugees use traffickers to reach Israel.²¹

6.4 The Economic Situation of Refugees in Egypt

Egypt's unemployment is estimated at around 20 percent (Sperl 2001; SUDIA 2003). African refugees frequently experience racism on the streets and the media have been known to make xenophobic statements about refugees, who are seen as competing with Egyptians for work. However, 'the thousands of refugees living in Cairo are irrelevant to the explanation of the pressing economic and social problems found in Cairo' (SUDIA 2003). They are 'irrelevant' because they are consumers from the moment of their arrival, they receive remittances from abroad, they work in jobs not filled by Egyptians, and they receive very little assistance from UNHCR or the NGOs,²² which, in any case, represents income to Egypt in foreign currency.²³ They, unlike many poor Egyptians, depend on the private sector for housing where rents are high. Refugees must pay school fees (when they can afford them). This expenditure directly benefits the local economy. And,

¹⁹ Long delays in the resettlement programmes cause many problems for refugees and place many in a precarious security situation (Grindell 2003).

²⁰ Statistics provided by UNHCR Cairo. UNHCR is never able to process enough recognised refugees to fill the quota of the U.S. or Canada.

²¹ More is known about this route because recently a group of Liberians who suffered serious security and economic problems in Egypt were trafficked to Israel. They are charged \$3,500, a sum that they are expected to pay after reaching Israel and getting work. They are warned that collectors will be there to ensure that they do pay. Many are apprehended by the Egyptian security, others by Israeli security and we learn about their cases when there is information about their detention either here in Egypt or from a human rights lawyer in Israel. At least one Rwandan refugee has also followed this route.

²² Although most Palestinians are unaware of them or do not qualify for their assistance, the Palestinian Labour Union, the Palestinian Women's Union, the Association of Martyred and Injured Palestinians, the Palestinian Charitable Association, and the Palestinian Red Crescent Society provide some assistance to destitute Palestinians who have connections with the PLO. The few NGOs who serve the other refugees are Judeo-Christian. As UNHCR's implementing partners they are required to be 'non-sectarian', but the tendency is for only Christians, usually southern Sudanese, to frequent them.

²³ Stefan Sperl (2001) estimates the budgets of the NGOs and finds them below \$500,000 per annum.

unlike poor Egyptians, refugees have lost the social networks upon which they, like everyone everywhere, depend upon for support.

Assistance by NGOs is concentrated in Cairo and 'discourage[s] the dispersal of refugees throughout the country' (I. Ismail 2002). Alexandria is the only other city in Egypt in which refugees receive (limited) assistance from UNHCR and churches. These services, which benefit at most a few hundred people, include education, health, food, and vocational training to help refugees obtain employment (as domestic workers, for example).

UNHCR gives monthly stipends to a limited number of refugees through its implementing partner Caritas. However, while the number of refugees in need has been increasing each year, funds have been decreasing. From 1997-2002, this money has declined from \$2,928,129 to \$1,677,088. If every recognised refugee (the only ones eligible for assistance) was given these funds on a per capita basis, they would have received only \$186.34 in 2002. That amount would not even pay the average household's rent for six weeks. UNHCR attempts to 'target' the most 'vulnerable' (the aged, the infirm, minor children). In doing so it has arbitrarily cut off assistance to certain categories who may also be 'vulnerable', such as single men, *all* Sierra Leoneans, and *all* Liberians. In 2002 UNHCR had a budget of LE780,000 to pay for the education of a small number of refugee children (excluding Sierra Leoneans). The steady decrease in subsistence allowances, combined with the reduction of UNHCR support for health and education, has forced many families into crisis. The large backlog of unassisted asylum seekers has aggravated the situation since many of them survive on the stipends of friends or family (Sperl 2001: 3).

A self-reliance study in 1997 found that a refugee family in Cairo would need to spend \$5,300 per year in order to cover the costs of rent, school fees, food, and utilities (Sperl 2001: 15).²⁴ Since refugees cannot depend on UNHCR or NGOs for assistance, they clearly rely on income from informal work and remittances from abroad. Stefan Sperl (2001) says that 'a closer look...shows that even the combined revenue of [remittances, work, assistance from NGOs] will rarely add up to the target figure.' At the same time, '...refugees have been known to get involved in illegal activities such as alcohol brewing and prostitution in order to make a living; it is said that some have even resorted to selling their organs' (Sperl 2001:19).

²⁴ According to UNDP (2003b), the average per capita income for Cairo was LE9,292.

A Yemeni family...may stand as an example to illustrate [the] employment constraints faced by the refugee... The father is elderly, the mother chronically ill with arthritis and neither can work; they have sons in their early twenties who have acquired basic vocational training diplomas in electricity and air-conditioning maintenance. However, due to the employment restrictions neither has been able to find a skilled job; one now works as an occasional labourer polishing marble, the other does a daily 12 hours shift as a bakery assistant. Their combined monthly wages add up to some US\$100. The family cannot survive on this income despite the fact that their rented accommodation is unusually cheap, costing only US\$72 a months (Sperl 2001).

As noted, refugees contribute to the Egyptian economy. For example, in a study of 300 Somalis, the rent they paid amounted to more than LE1 million per year (Al-Sharmani 2003). This small group of refugees account for over \$500,000 per year (or \$1,667 per refugee) in remittances from abroad, virtually all of which is spent on daily living costs.

Hardly any refugee family of five actually earns (or receives through remittances) the presumed minimum of \$5,300 needed per year. They compensate by living in overcrowded accommodation (up to 20 in a three bed-room flat), they do not send their children to school, and they economise on food. Ainsworth (2003), in a pilot study, found that refugees never eat more than two meals per day and most were reduced to only one meal.²⁵ At the same time UNDP's 2003 report states that (for Egyptians) 'nutrition and hunger are not a problem in Egypt' (UNDP 2003b).

Despite the paucity of comparative data, the evidence suggests that refugees in Egypt belong to the poorest of the urban poor. Egypt calculates its poverty line on the basis of the cost of a diet sufficient to yield the daily minimum of 2200 calories. The annual cost of the minimum diet was estimated at LE4,439 for urban areas. 'This is considered as the food-based poverty line. Those who are below this line are referred to as ultra poor' (UNDP 2003a: 115-6).

²⁵ The clinic at All Saints Cathedral in Cairo is currently treating severely malnourished children. It reports many nutrition-related diseases, including night blindness among pregnant women.

7. KEY GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

Despite the quantity of literature on migration to and from Egypt, important gaps remain. While the focus of researchers seems to be turning away from migration studies, understanding the problems of people moving in search of work and security remains vital. Migration will remain a major response to poverty and human rights abuse for many years to come. There is a need to study past migration flows while also anticipating and theorizing future ones.

Another area of research is the assessment and understanding of the net cost, benefit and impact of the huge temporary movement of labour to oil rich Arab countries. Although this movement has been quantified and analysed, the existing work is fragmentary.

Forced migration has been the plight of an estimated 6 million people in the Middle East (Roudi, 2001). The national, regional, and global policy environment in which these movements and the conditions that cause them are enacted is another important area of study. Forced migration has been subject to some study but the articulation of this system with the conditions and structures in Egypt has not been addressed.

Cairo hosts one of the largest urban refugee communities in the world. A programme of research that goes beyond the simple documentation of refugee policy and the position of Egypt and other host governments in the region is suggested. Research is to look at the intersection of policies that affect the conditions of refugees. The research may explore how refugees interact with the policy environment in this region and identify means of developing policies that enhance refugees' survival strategies and contributions to the host society and address the concerns of host nationals. A comparison between marginalised groups of nationals and refugees should be carried out. A focus on how to strengthen/create protective mechanisms for forced migrants could be areas for future reviews and research.

A big gap in the Egyptian migration literature is the absence of a systematic conceptual overview of causes/dynamics of migration (forced and voluntary) and links with poverty/ livelihood issues. The relationship between migration and poverty has not been properly researched in Egypt. The

implications of these dynamics for governance, policy making and citizenship merit study and contemplation.

More attention also needs to be paid to the gender dimensions of migration. What role do women play in migration decisions? What are women's views about the extra responsibilities they must shoulder? And what views do they have about the future of their families, households, and children?

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