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# Report on Egyptian Women Migration

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**CARIM Notes d'analyse et de synthèse 2011/13**

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**CARIM**  
**Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration**

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**Report on Egyptian Women Migration**

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This publication is part of a series of papers on Gender and Migration written in the framework of the CARIM project and presented at a meeting organised in Florence: “Gender and migration in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and Sub-Sahara African countries” (18-19 October 2010).

These papers will be discussed in two meetings between Policy Makers and Experts on the same topic in winter 2011. The results of these discussions will also be published.

The entire set of papers on Gender and Migration are available at <http://www.carim.org/ql/GenderAndMigration>

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## **CARIM**

The Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM) was created at the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), in February 2004 and co-financed by the European Commission, DG AidCo, currently under the Thematic programme for the cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum.

Within this framework, CARIM aims, in an academic perspective, to observe, analyse, and forecast migration in Southern & Eastern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Countries (hereafter Region).

CARIM is composed of a coordinating unit established at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) of the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), and a network of scientific correspondents based in the 17 countries observed by CARIM: Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Palestine, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey.

All are studied as origin, transit and immigration countries. External experts from the European Union and countries of the Region also contribute to CARIM activities.

CARIM carries out the following activities:

- Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan migration database;
- Research and publications;
- Meetings of academics and between experts and policy makers;
- Migration Summer School;
- Outreach.

The activities of CARIM cover three aspects of international migration in the Region: economic and demographic, legal, and socio-political.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: [www.carim.org](http://www.carim.org)

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## **Abstract**

To understand female migration and its interrelation with socio-economic development, a consideration of the selectivity of female migrants, their characteristics and differences with respect to female non-migrants as well as male migrants together with an analysis of the forces leading to such selectivity is an important first step. The general structural determinants of female migration have been categorized as: (i) those related to the economic development context and stemming mostly from government policies that influenced gender-based economic opportunities and constraints in areas of origin and destination; (ii) those determinants related to institutional factors that maintained gender inequalities; (iii) those determinants arising from the socio-cultural system of gender roles and relations operating in accordance with prevalent norms, values and expectations. The promotion of equal employment opportunities for men and women is needed: it is important to prevent the perpetuation of segmented labor markets. At the household level, migration might be treated as part of a household strategy of risk diversification wherein a member of the household is encouraged or helped to migrate so as to send back remittances. Finally, it should be noted that the outcome of migration for women varies considerably according to the socio-cultural and family contexts in which migration takes place.

## **Résumé**

Pour comprendre le phénomène de la migration féminine et ses liens avec le développement socio-économique, il convient d'étudier, dans un premier temps, la sélectivité des migrantes, leurs caractéristiques et différences par rapport aux femmes non-migrantes et aux migrants de sexe masculin, ainsi que d'analyser les forces conduisant à une telle sélectivité. Les déterminants structurels généraux de la migration féminine ont été classés comme suit : 1) déterminants liés au contexte du développement économique et provenant principalement de politiques gouvernementales ayant influencé les opportunités économiques et les contraintes dans les zones d'origine et de destination dans une perspective de genre; 2) déterminants liés à des facteurs institutionnels maintenant les inégalités entre les sexes; 3) déterminants découlant du système socio-culturel des rôles et des relations entre les sexes et s'appuyant sur les normes et valeurs courantes. La promotion de l'égalité des chances entre les hommes et les femmes est nécessaire. Il est, de fait, important d'empêcher la perpétuation des marchés du travail segmentés. Au niveau des ménages, la migration peut également être considérée comme partie prenante d'une stratégie de diversification des risques des ménages au sein desquels un membre est encouragé à migrer afin de bénéficier des envois de fonds. Enfin, il convient de noter que le résultat de la migration pour les femmes varie considérablement selon les contextes socio-culturels et familiaux dans lesquels cette migration a eu lieu.

## Introduction

In general migration is a process affecting the lives of millions of women in the developing world and may potentially lead to changing their roles and status.

In this note, understanding the female migration and its interrelations with socio-economic development, consideration of the selectivity of female migrants their characteristics and differences with respect to female non-migrants and male migrants and of the forces leading to such selectivity has been a first step.

The general structural determinants of female migration have been categorized as 1) those related to the economic development context and stemming mostly from government policies that influenced gender-based economic opportunities and constraints in areas of origin and destination; 2) those related to institutional factors by maintaining gender inequalities, 3) those arising from the socio-cultural system of gender roles and relations operating in accordance with prevalent norms, values and expectations.

The promotion of equal employment opportunities for men and women is needed. It was important to prevent the perpetuation of segmented labor markets. At the household level, migration can be treated as part of a household strategy of risk diversification wherein a member of the household is encouraged or helped to migrate so as to send back remittances. The outcome of migration for women varied considerably according to the socio-cultural and family contexts in which migration took place.

## 1 Female work in Egypt

### 1.1 Gender Segmentation of the labour market

Women in developing countries in general and in Egypt in particular are typically the first victims when economic changes occur. Macro-economic policies including economic structural-adjustment policies concentrate on the reallocation of resources as to achieve both stability and growth rather than on micro-economic issues and gender differentiation. These policies are male biased as they fail to take into account the specific conditions of women in particular in the labor market. This could be the result of a long-term neglect of the role of gender in institutional theories about structures of internal labor markets, dual labor markets and labor market segmentation. Labor-market theories were developed emphasizing the segmentation of the labor markets by race, color, religion, economic activity, age, geographical location, regulation, educational level, wage system and occupational structure. Currently more recent research has shown how the structure of the female labor market differs from that for men in terms of occupation, sector as well as work status. Some scholars (see e.g. Brown et al., 1987) argue that women are more likely to be subordinate workers and less likely to be independent primary workers such as craft workers, managers and professionals. Internal labor markets treat workers as members of groups and tend to treat workers within these groups differently segregating women and men into different jobs rather than paying them unequally for the same job.

The acceptance of gender segmentation's dynamics in the labor market highlights three socio-economic factors responsible for the male bias in economic policies and in structural and liberalization policies in particular (Elson, D.1991):

- 1) The sexual division of labor. This factor implies that some kinds of jobs are *socially constituted* according to sex. This is the result of social values and household organization, i.e. the division of labor inside as well as outside the household.
- 2) The second kind of bias is the lack of recognition of unpaid work required for the reproduction and maintenance of human resources and the work done by women outside the house to help

their husbands, especially in the agricultural sector. The explicit exclusion of this work by different economic policies leads to the sub-ordination of women to men.

- 3) The third aspect is that in some cases economic policies tend to increase women's responsibility within the household (e.g. by augmenting the cost of living) without providing women with the necessary resources to undertake these. Price liberalization policies and the rise in the cost of living accompanying structural policies in particular lead to the rise of electricity fees and kerosene prices. This will throw an additional burden on working women given their traditional role in the household, while they will be compelled to make savings on help in the housework, whether human or electrical, to control the financial obligations of the family, and she also needs to have a job outside the house to compensate the decrease in the family income.

## 1.2 Labor force

The average annual rate of growth in the female labour force was about 2.3% over 1990-2008 showing an increased supply of women engaged in the economic life of the country.

**Table 1. Labour force population by sex (in million),  
Egypt, 1990, 2008**

Year	Men	Women
1990	11.6	3.9
2008	19.2	5.5
<b>Average annual rate of growth (%)</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>2.3</b>

Source: Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization And Statistics (CAPMAS)

As to the labour-force participation rate of women, it increased from 12.5% in 1998 to 16.0% in 2009.

**Table 2. Labor force participation rate by sex (in %),  
Egypt, 1998-2009**

Year	Male	Females	Total
1998	44.1	12.5	<b>28.7</b>
2000	44.8	13.4	<b>29.4</b>
2003	44.9	13.3	<b>29.4</b>
2004	45.6	15.0	<b>30.6</b>
2005	46.4	14.5	<b>30.8</b>
2006	48.2	14.5	<b>31.8</b>
2007	48.4	15.9	<b>32.5</b>
2009	49.6	16.0	<b>33.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Labor Force Survey, various issues

However, such estimates seem still to underestimate the potential of women in entering the labour market.



### 1.3 Employment status

Employed individuals in Egypt in 2008 were around 22.5 million. As to their educational profile, their skills are relatively moderate: in 2008, 40.6% were illiterate or could only read and write; 30.7% had an intermediate level of education while those with a university degree represent only 15.5%. This profile was highly differentiated by sex: employed women were more likely to be illiterate than men (39.9% vs 27.7%) but they are also more likely to hold a university degree (22.8% vs 13.7%)

**Table 3. Employed population by level of education and sex, Egypt, 2008**

Level of education	Males		Females		Total	
	00s	%	00s	%	00s	%
Illiterate	50,031	27.7	17,796	39.9	<b>67,827</b>	<b>30.1</b>
Read & Write	22,100	12.2	1,613	3.6	<b>23,713</b>	<b>10.5</b>
Below Intermediate	18,921	10.5	1,368	3.1	<b>20,289</b>	<b>9.0</b>
Intermediate	3,246	1.8	618	1.4	<b>3,864</b>	<b>1.7</b>
Technical Intermediate	54,569	30.2	10,724	24.0	<b>65,293</b>	<b>29.0</b>
Above Intermediate	6,908	3.8	2,365	5.3	<b>9,273</b>	<b>4.1</b>
University and Above	24,640	13.7	10,173	22.8	<b>34,813</b>	<b>15.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>180,415</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>44,657</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>225,072</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Labor Force Survey 2008

### 1.4 Occupational status

In accordance with their educational profile, women are squeezed in a limited number of occupations at the lowest rungs as well as in the highest rungs of the occupational ladder. In 2008, 46.0% of female workers were employed in farming, fishing and hunting. Yet, 35.2% are employed in professional and technical occupations (20.6% in professional occupations, and 14.6% as technicians and professional assistants). Women's contribution remains, instead, low in some occupations, e.g. production (1.4%) as well as legislative, administrative and managerial occupations (4.3%).

**Table 4. Employed population by occupation and sex, Egypt, 2008**

Occupation	Males		Females		Total	
	00s	%	00s	%	00s	%
Legis., admin. & managerial	15,830	9.3	1,978	4.3	<b>17,808</b>	<b>8.2</b>
Professional	18,683	10.9	9,538	20.6	<b>28,221</b>	<b>13.0</b>
Technicians & professional assistants	12,961	7.6	6,758	14.6	<b>19,719</b>	<b>9.1</b>
Clerical occupations	4,778	2.8	1,996	4.3	<b>6,774</b>	<b>3.1</b>
Services & sales	18,576	10.9	2,170	4.7	<b>20,746</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Farming, fishing and hunting	45,919	26.9	21,313	46.0	<b>67,232</b>	<b>30.9</b>
Artisans	32,194	18.8	1,157	2.5	<b>33,351</b>	<b>15.4</b>
Production	14,817	8.7	662	1.4	<b>15,479</b>	<b>7.1</b>
Unskilled workers	6,934	4.1	718	1.5	<b>7,652</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>170,896</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>46,342</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>217,238</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Labor Force Survey 2008

## 1.5 Occupational sector

Looking at the distribution of women by occupational sector, the same squeezed pattern is observed among employed women. In 2008, the largest group of females (45.6%) were absorbed in the agricultural activities and the “educational, health, social activity and personal services” sector (39.0%). Female engagement in agriculture was always regarded as part of their role as housewives, and, for long periods, it was not considered an economic activity at all. In this sector the basic problem facing women is not related to a lack of work opportunities, but to the fact that they are working all the time without any financial evaluation of their participation in this sector (Nassar, 1997). Looking at the distribution of male workers, the profile of working men by economic activity is more diverse with only 27.7% of total working men employed in agriculture, and 20.1% in the “educational, health, social activity and personal services” sector. Men are much better represented in the manufacturing sector and construction (respectively 12.9% and 12.2%); while the share of women in these activities is still very limited (respectively 4.5% and 0.6%). Moreover, women working in manufacturing are concentrated in labor-intensive industries such as textiles and garments, food processing and pharmaceuticals. In 2006, nearly 44% of working women in the private manufacturing sector are employed in the ready-made garments sector, followed by food and beverage (17.0%), followed by textiles (10.5%) and pharmaceuticals (8.5%) (CAPMAS, 2008)

**Table 5. Employed population by occupational sector and sex (in %), Egypt, 2008**

Occupational sector	Males	Females
Agriculture and hunting	27.7	45.6
Mining and quarrying	0.2	0.0
Manufacturing	12.9	4.5
Electricity & gas	1.5	0.4
Construction and Building	12.2	0.6
Retail & wholesale trade & repair	11.6	5.9
Hotels and restaurants	2.5	0.2
Transportation, storage and comm.	8.3	1.3
Financial mediation	2.8	2.3
Education, health, social activity and personal services	20.1	39.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS

Moreover, it could be concluded that gender segmentation in the labour market has increased over time. Women’s share in agriculture and services increased 1995-2008 *vis-à-vis* the share of men, which witnessed, instead, a decline over the same period. On the other hand, while men’s share in the manufacturing sector has declined modestly from 15.7% to 13% 1995-2008; women’s share there has dropped more sharply from 8% to 4.5% over the same period.

## 1.6 Gender sectoral bias is apparent in the Egyptian society

Most job opportunities for females in the formal sector are concentrated in the government and to some extent in the public sector, particularly when compared with the male labour market. There is, indeed, a growing feminization of the government sector. The percentage of working females in this sector to total working females exceeds that for males: 37.5% for women *versus* 20.3% among men in 2008. The equal opportunity environment prevailing in the government sector has resulted in some progress for women in access to senior positions. However, women in this sector face several other challenges, particularly the deterioration in the status of government employees as wages decline in

real terms. Second, privatization might have had negative effects on the working females in the public sector. Certainly, it is notable that the percentage of females is high among public-sector redundancies.

We can also study the formal and informal nexus which proxies better working conditions and for protection for the labour force. The percentage of females working outside an establishment (i.e. in the informal sector) is rather similar to the percentage for men. However, women's share in the formal private sector is nearly half men's share: 12.1% for women *versus* 25.5% among men in 2008. As a matter of fact, a relatively higher number of working females in the private sector has no social-insurance safety net and is exposed to bad working conditions and exploitation.

The informal sector has served as an unplanned mechanism to absorb surplus labour force in general. For illiterate females it is the most suitable sector and for educated females it could enable them to increase their incomes with no fixed working hours. While women's share in the formal private sector declined from 2001 to 2008, the opposite occurred in the informal private sector. However, men tended to keep their share in the private formal sector (about one quarter in 2001-2008). When females resort to this sector it is mainly due to shrinking job opportunities in the formal sector, unsuitable working conditions and the need for extra payment.

**Table 6. Employed population by employer's status and sex (in %), Egypt, 2001, 2008**

Employer's status	2001			2008		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Government	24.5	41.9	<b>27.7</b>	20.3	37.5	<b>23.7</b>
Public	6.5	3.3	<b>5.9</b>	3.9	1.5	<b>3.4</b>
Private (formal)	25.5	19.9	<b>24.5</b>	25.5	12.1	<b>22.9</b>
Private (informal)	42.1	33.7	<b>40.6</b>	48.2	47.9	<b>48.1</b>
Investment	0.9	0.8	<b>0.9</b>	1.7	0.8	<b>1.5</b>
Others	0.4	0.5	<b>0.4</b>	0.4	0.3	<b>0.4</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Labour Force Survey 2001 and 2008

### 1.7 Conditions at work

Looking at the working status of employed women, it might be concluded that more than half of all working women are engaged in paid work. However a large proportion of women are still engaged in unpaid family work (34.7%). This percentage is much higher than the corresponding percentage of male workers in unpaid family work (9.0%). On the other hand, the percentage of males as employers (17.7%) far exceeds women employers, only 3.4% of total female employment. Women engaged in private business seem to be more often self employed: 10.6% of total working women in 2008.

**Table 7. Employed population by condition at work and sex, Egypt, 2008**

Condition at work	Males		Females		Total	
	00s	%	00s	%	00s	%
Paid Worker	112,449	62.3	22,626	50.7	<b>135,075</b>	<b>60.0</b>
Employer	32,017	17.7	1,822	4.1	<b>33,839</b>	<b>15.0</b>
Self Employed	19,644	10.9	4,723	10.6	<b>24,367</b>	<b>10.8</b>
Family non-paid worker	16,306	9.0	15,488	34.7	<b>31,794</b>	<b>14.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>180,416</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>44,659</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>225,075</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Labor Force Survey 2008

## 1.8 Unemployment

Being a major problem in Egypt, unemployment tends to have a female face: the unemployment rate among women was three to four times men's unemployment over 1998-2008.

**Table 8. Unemployment rate by sex, Egypt, 1998-2008**

Year	Males	Females	Total
1998	5.1	19.9	<b>8.2</b>
2000	5.1	22.7	<b>9.0</b>
2003	7.5	23.3	<b>11.0</b>
2004	5.9	24.3	<b>10.3</b>
2005	7.1	25.1	<b>11.2</b>
2006	6.8	24.0	<b>10.6</b>
2007	5.9	18.6	<b>8.9</b>
2008	5.6	19.3	<b>8.7</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Labor Force Survey

In 2008, the distribution of the unemployed population by age and sex shows that the highest unemployment rates for both males and females is in the under 30 years old age groups that represented more than 90% of all the unemployed in Egypt in 2008. The age group (20-24) is the most severely hit by unemployment, with more than half of the unemployed in Egypt in 2008. Most of these young unemployed men and women are first-time job seekers. The young are especially vulnerable to marginalization in the labour market because they lack skills, work experience, job-search abilities and the financial resources to find employment. As a consequence, young people are more likely to be unemployed or employed on more precarious contracts. Moreover, young people have not acquired the occupational skills required by the labour market and lack 'on-the-job training. Hence there is greater propensity to quit jobs and there is greater turnover.

**Table 9. Unemployed population by age group and sex, Egypt, 2008**

Age group	Males	Females	Total
15-19	18.5	18.3	<b>18.4</b>
20-24	51.3	51.0	<b>51.0</b>
25-29	22.8	21.2	<b>22.0</b>
30-39	5.8	8.5	<b>7.0</b>
40-49	1.0	1.0	<b>1.1</b>
50-64	0.6	0.1	<b>0.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Labour Force Survey 2008

Furthermore, there has been the retreat of the government as a major employer after four decades of offering guaranteed public employment,<sup>1</sup> which was a crucial source of employment for youth despite the low remuneration. As the government suspended its graduate employment policy in 1984,

<sup>1</sup> After the 1952 revolution, the state offered guaranteed employment for high school and university graduates. The number of those employed in the government and the public sector soared from 350,000 in 1951-52 to 1.2 million in 1969-70. See Ibrahim, S., "Social Mobility and Income Distribution in Egypt, 1952-1977," in G. Abdel-Khalek, and R. Tignor (eds.), *the Political Economy of Income Distribution in Egypt*, (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982), p. 431.

and as Egypt is determined to move towards a free-market economy where the private-sector is expected to play a larger role, the economy has failed to absorb new labour entrants and has not managed to create meaningful, productive jobs for them.

It should be noted, however, that although a guaranteed employment policy has been officially abandoned, the fact that it is still effective through different mechanisms (e.g. temporary contracts, and employment of current public employees' children) raises the expectations of the young that they will obtain a permanent job with the government. Public employment is more favorably perceived among youth than private-sector employment. This is because the former offers security and more privileges (in terms of social security and less working hours), even though monthly incomes are lower than in the private sector. Job security is highly regarded in Egyptian culture, which tends to be risk averse. This was evident in 2002, when 5 million candidates applied for 170,000 jobs in the announced government employment program (Galal, 2002). This applies more to women and young women graduates who seek government employment that offer working conditions that would be suitable for married women.

In this respect, the problem of unemployment is more profound for women in the private sector too because of discriminatory attitudes on the part of employers, who often consider women as being less attached to work, reluctant to work long hours and with high absenteeism and turnover rates. Legislation also works against women, as the law obliges the private sector to extend some privileges to women, such as paid and unpaid maternity leaves, child-care provisions, and restrictions on working hours. This, in effect, increases the cost of hiring women. Furthermore, the lack of labour-intensive export industries, which have proved instrumental in female employment in other countries, reduces the ability of the economy to absorb female labour. An exception is the ready-made garment industry, which relies primarily on female employment.

The distribution of unemployed individuals by education and sex in 2008 shows that the highest unemployment rates are found among those with secondary education (especially technical education). About half of the unemployed males and nearly two thirds of the unemployed females are intermediate education graduates. Unemployment is prevalent as well among university graduates where more than one third of both unemployed males and females are university educated graduates. This is a reflection of the mismatch between the output of the education system and the skills required by the job market (this will be examined in detail in the next section on education and training). On the other hand, unemployment among the uneducated is lower than other groups, as they cannot afford to be out of employment, even if that employment is poorly remunerated.

**Table 10. Unemployed population by level of education and sex, Egypt, 2008**

Level of education	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Illiterate	312	2.9	62	0.6	<b>374</b>	<b>1.7</b>
Read & Write	196	1.8	67	0.6	<b>263</b>	<b>1.2</b>
Below Intermediate	514	4.8	128	1.2	<b>642</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Intermediate	281	2.6	188	1.8	<b>469</b>	<b>2.2</b>
Technical Intermediate	5,363	49.7	5,951	55.8	<b>11,314</b>	<b>52.8</b>
Above Intermediate	740	6.9	834	7.8	<b>1,574</b>	<b>7.3</b>
University and Above	3,380	31.3	3,426	32.2	<b>6,806</b>	<b>31.7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,786</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10,656</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>21,442</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS, Labour Force Survey 2008

One could conclude that a main barrier facing Egyptian youth in the labour market is their limited skills. Most jobs created in the 1970s and 1980s were concentrated in low-skill activities, namely, construction, retail and traditional handicrafts. In the last decades the demand on a skilled labour force rose at the national and international level, while 59% of the unemployed young have intermediate qualifications.

### 1.9 Wage gender gap

It should be noted that the average weekly wage among women in the public sector is higher than for men. This could be explained in terms of the equal-opportunity environment that is a major feature of the government and the public sector; also this could be due to the relatively higher-educational status of women working in the public and government sector as compared to their male colleagues. On the other hand, the private sector has a considerable gender wage gap averaging about 22 percentage points (p.p.). In the private sector, the gender wage gap is highest in the electricity, gas and water sectors (35 p.p.) and in hotels and restaurants (27 p.p.).

**Table 11. Average weekly wages (Egyptian L.E.) according to the occupational sector and sex, Egypt, October 2006 (first week)**

Occupational sector	Public Sector			Private Sector			Total		
	Male	Female	Gender gap (%)	Male	Female	Gender gap (%)	Male	Female	Gender gap (%)
Agriculture & forestry	204	298	-46.1	127	133	-4.7	142	167	-17.6
Mining	131	127	3.1	134	137	-2.2	132	128	3.0
Manufacturing	337	332	1.5	650	647	0.5	534	592	-10.9
Electricity, gas & water	299	351	-17.4	162	105	35.2	210	159	24.3
Construction	341	391	-14.7	287	373	-30.0	334	387	-15.9
Retail & wholesale trade	254	290	-14.2	211	251	-19.0	242	274	-13.2
Hotels & Restaurants	259	224	13.5	232	169	27.2	248	204	17.7
Transport, comm. & storage	131	128	2.3	149	169	-13.4	148	168	-13.5
Financial Mediation	287	399	-39.0	249	293	-17.7	279	367	-31.5
Real estate	328	324	1.2	452	514	-13.7	356	368	-3.4
Education	191	147	23.0	228	261	-14.5	225	242	-7.6
Health and social work	0	0	0.0	104	94	9.6	104	94	9.6
Social, personal & other ser.	417	100	76.0	139	95	3.7	170	96	43.5
<b>All the sectors</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>-22.5</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>13.2</b>

Source: CAPMAS

## 2. Emigration from Egypt from the perspective of gender

Despite the fact that little data on emigrants is currently available according to sex, in this section, both Egyptian and destination countries' statistics will be used in order to draw as comprehensive as possible a picture of the role of women in Egyptian emigration. However, in most cases, it is not clear whether women are independent migrants or whether they are companions who happen to be working in the destination countries.

**Table 12. Stock of Egyptians residing abroad by migrant status, 2006**

Migrant status	Number	%
Temporary migrants	2,020,958	71.0
<i>of which working migrants</i>	784,912	27.6
<i>companions</i>	1,236,046	43.4
Permanent migrants	824,000	29.0
<b>Total migrants</b>	<b>2,844,958</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS

In 2005, there were more than 2.8 million Egyptians residing abroad. The majority were considered as temporary migrants (71.0%), of whom 61.2% were companions, while the rest were migrant workers.

**Table 13. Temporary working Egyptian migrants by region of residence and sex, 2008**

Region of residence	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Arab Countries	1,025,432	96.0	32,226	99.5	<b>1,057,658</b>	<b>96.1</b>
European Countries	34,022	3.2	101	0.3	<b>34,123</b>	<b>3.1</b>
Australasia	19	0.0	0	0.0	<b>19</b>	<b>0.0</b>
African Countries	1,140	0.1	16	0.0	<b>1,156</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Asian countries	537	0.1	10	0.0	<b>547</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Americas	537	0.1	14	0.0	<b>551</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Foreign Ships	5,967	0.6	12	0.0	<b>5,979</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,067,654</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>32,379</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,100,033</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS

In 2008, Arab countries hosted 96.0% of the total of Egyptian temporary working migrants (table 14).

**Table 14. Temporary working Egyptian migrants residing in Arab countries by country of residence and sex, 2008**

Country of residence	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Saudi Arabia	509,866	49.7	12,104	37.6	<b>521,970</b>	<b>49.4</b>
Kuwait	168,139	16.4	12,320	38.2	<b>180,459</b>	<b>17.1</b>
Jordan	158,425	15.5	154	0.5	<b>158,579</b>	<b>15.0</b>
U.A.E	133,606	13.0	4,853	15.1	<b>138,459</b>	<b>13.1</b>
Qatar	33,320	3.3	808	2.5	<b>34,128</b>	<b>3.2</b>
Oman	8,086	0.8	1,630	5.1	<b>9,716</b>	<b>0.9</b>
Lebanon	9,069	0.9	36	0.1	<b>9,105</b>	<b>0.9</b>
Bahrain	3,400	0.3	252	0.8	<b>3,652</b>	<b>0.4</b>
Algeria	616	0.1	1	0.0	<b>617</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Yemen	484	0.1	64	0.2	<b>548</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Syria	219	0.0	-	-	<b>219</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Somalia	41	0.0	-	-	<b>41</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Djibouti	36	0.0	3	0.0	<b>39</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Sudan	36	0.0	-	-	<b>36</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,025,432</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>32,226</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,057,658</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS

The GCC countries hosted about 85% of all Egyptians residing in Arab countries. Nearly half of Egyptian migrants to Arab countries were found in Saudi Arabia (49.4%) followed by Kuwait (17.1%) and U.A.E (13.1%). On the other hand, Jordan hosted about one sixth of the Egyptian migrants to the Arab countries (15.0%). From a gender perspective, women represent a small percentage of migrants. According to CAPMAS, the total number of working temporary migrants reached 1.1 million migrants in 2008, of which only 3% were women. It is evident that the small number of Egyptian women migrants mostly resided in Arab countries, mainly Saudi Arabia (37.6%), Kuwait (38.2%) and the U.A.E. (15.1%). A small percentage of female migrants was also found in European countries and particularly take up residence in Italy, Cyprus and France (table 15).



**Table 15. Egyptian temporary working migrants residing in European countries by country of residence and sex, 2008**

Country of residence	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Italy	23,260	68.4	29	28.7	<b>23,289</b>	<b>68.3</b>
Cyprus	2,281	6.7	42	41.6	<b>2,323</b>	<b>6.8</b>
France	187	0.6	18	17.8	<b>205</b>	<b>0.6</b>
U.K.	202	0.6	-	-	<b>202</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Spain	171	0.5	-	-	<b>171</b>	<b>0.5</b>
Russia	152	0.5	-	-	<b>152</b>	<b>0.5</b>
Portugal	120	0.4	-	-	<b>120</b>	<b>0.4</b>
Malta	110	0.3	-	-	<b>110</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Romania	107	0.3	-	-	<b>107</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Ireland	92	0.3	2	2.0	<b>94</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Austria	91	0.3	1	1.0	<b>92</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Albania	52	0.2	-	-	<b>52</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Germany	47	0.1	1	1.0	<b>48</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Moldova	41	0.1	-	-	<b>41</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Greece	6,923	20.4	5	5.0	<b>6,928</b>	<b>20.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,022</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>341,23</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS

## 2.1 A focus on emigrants' educational profile

Looking at the educational profile of temporary Egyptian migrants, available data does not include the disaggregation of migrants by gender. In general, the educational profile of Egyptian migrants to the Arab countries are distributed among the three educational groups, where about two fifths of Egyptian workers in Arab countries have low education levels less than intermediate (36.9%), while more than one third have intermediate education (33.1%), and one quarter are University graduates (26.3%). Looking at the distribution of Egyptian workers by educational level in the European countries nearly half of the Egyptian temporary migrants have an intermediate education (49.4%), one third are from lower levels of education (29.2%) and a lower share have had a university education (16.0%). Meanwhile, Egyptians with higher education constitute an important share of Egyptian migrants in the Americas (55.5%) (table 16).

**Table 16. Egyptian temporary working migrants by level of education and region of residence, 2008**

Number					
Level of education	Arab Countries	European Countries	Australasia	Americas	Total
Higher education	277,834	5,464	16	306	<b>286,855</b>
Above intermediate	39,060	1,840	0	31	<b>41,276</b>
Intermediate	350,553	16,853	3	160	<b>370,894</b>
Below intermediate	390,211	9,966	0	54	<b>401,008</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,057,658</b>	<b>34,123</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>1,100,033</b>
In %					
Level of education	Arab Countries	European Countries	Australasia	Americas	Total
Higher education	26.3	16.0	84.2	55.5	<b>26.1</b>
Above intermediate	3.7	5.4	0.0	5.6	<b>3.8</b>
Intermediate	33.1	49.4	15.8	29.0	<b>33.7</b>
Below intermediate	36.9	29.2	0.0	9.8	<b>36.5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: CAPMAS

## 2.2 Egyptian emigrants in OECD countries

On the other hand, the OECD offers gender disaggregated data<sup>2</sup>. The paper will analyze these tables to give a more in-depth view of women migrants in OECD countries according to their main characteristics.

As a whole, around 2000, there were about 309,000 Egyptian migrants in OECD countries, of which women represented around 42% (OECD.stat). The US is the main destination both for men (35.3%) and women (34.2%) followed by Canada and Australia (each receives 12% of total women migrants) then the European countries Greece, Italy and the U.K. (respectively 12.0%, 9.0% and 8.2% among women migrants). As for male migrants, their distribution across the OECD countries resembles that of their female counterparts with a difference in the ranking of countries; where the US comes in the first place (35.3%) followed by Italy (11.5%), Canada (10.2%), Greece (9.4%), Australia (9.1%), and the United Kingdom (7.0%).

<sup>2</sup> The OECD's Database on Immigrants in OECD Countries (DIOC) provides comprehensive and comparative information on a broad range of demographic and labour-market characteristics of immigrants living in OECD countries. The main sources of data are population censuses and population registers, sometimes supplemented by labour force surveys in years around 2000.

**Table 17. Egyptian migrants residing in OECD countries by country of residence and sex, circa 2000**

Country of Residence	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Australia	16,369	9.1	15,812	12.2	<b>32,181</b>	<b>10.4</b>
Austria	6,096	3.4	2,263	1.7	<b>8,359</b>	<b>2.7</b>
Belgium	1,202	0.7	607	0.5	<b>1,809</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Canada	18,275	10.2	15,945	12.3	<b>34,220</b>	<b>11.1</b>
Czech Republic	113	0.1	35	0.0	<b>148</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Denmark	817	0.5	398	0.3	<b>1,215</b>	<b>0.4</b>
Finland	345	0.2	35	0.0	<b>380</b>	<b>0.1</b>
France	12,962	7.2	8,107	6.3	<b>21,069</b>	<b>6.8</b>
Greece	16,866	9.4	15,500	12.0	<b>32,366</b>	<b>10.5</b>
Hungary	208	0.1	44	0.0	<b>252</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Ireland	417	0.2	153	0.1	<b>570</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Italy	20,667	11.5	11,676	9.0	<b>32,343</b>	<b>10.5</b>
Luxembourg	54	0.0	51	0.0	<b>105</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Mexico	66	0.0	30	0.0	<b>96</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Netherlands	2,145	1.2	0	0.0	<b>2,145</b>	<b>0.7</b>
New Zealand	552	0.3	444	0.3	<b>996</b>	<b>0.3</b>
Norway	267	0.1	70	0.1	<b>337</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Poland	123	0.1	48	0.0	<b>171</b>	<b>0.1</b>
Portugal	49	0.0	37	0.0	<b>86</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Slovak Republic	24	0.0	2	0.0	<b>26</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Spain	1,340	0.7	600	0.5	<b>1,940</b>	<b>0.6</b>
Sweden	1,485	0.8	760	0.6	<b>2,245</b>	<b>0.7</b>
Switzerland	2,524	1.4	1,792	1.4	<b>4,316</b>	<b>1.4</b>
Turkey	372	0.2	251	0.2	<b>623</b>	<b>0.2</b>
United Kingdom	12,548	7.0	10,610	8.2	<b>23,158</b>	<b>7.5</b>
United States	63,340	35.3	44,236	34.2	<b>107,576</b>	<b>34.8</b>
<b>OECD – Total</b>	<b>179,226</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>129,506</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>308,732</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: OECD.stat

### 2.2.1 Participation in the labour market

Looking at the participation of Egyptian migrants in the labor market; it is evident that the largest portion of women in OECD countries is 'inactive' (58.1%), which could reflect the fact that they are companions to their husbands or families. More than two thirds (36.2%) are instead employed, while 3.9% unemployed. As to males, the majority is employed (67.3%) and 5.7% are unemployed while 26.2% are 'inactive'.

**Table 18. Egyptian migrants residing in OECD countries by labour force status and sex, circa 2000**

Labour force status	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Employed	120,397	67.3	46,844	36.2	<b>167,241</b>	<b>54.2</b>
Unemployed	10,167	5.7	5,003	3.9	<b>15,170</b>	<b>4.9</b>
Inactive	46,944	26.2	75,304	58.1	<b>122,248</b>	<b>39.6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>178,959</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>129,560</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>308,519</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: OECD.stat

### 2.2.2 Occupation

Looking at the distribution of Egyptian migrants in OECD countries by occupation, it is evident that the nearly half of the working women in the OECD countries are concentrated in the highly-skilled occupations: senior officials & managers (11.2%); professionals (22.5%) and technicians & associate professional (15.1%). One third is instead concentrated in the lower skilled occupations: clerks (22.6%) and services & sales (15.1%). As for male migrants, their distribution resembles female distribution in terms of the importance of the highly-skilled occupations with a higher share in the crafts and elementary occupations: respectively 13.2% and 10.2%.

**Table 19. Egyptian migrants residing in OECD countries by occupation and sex, circa 2000**

Occupation	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Senior officials and managers	12,847	18.0	2,768	11.2	<b>15,615</b>	<b>16.3</b>
Professionals	15,172	21.3	5,570	22.5	<b>20,742</b>	<b>21.6</b>
Technicians and associate professionals	7,733	10.8	3,732	15.1	<b>11,465</b>	<b>11.9</b>
Clerks	3,518	4.9	5,592	22.6	<b>9,110</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Services & sales	8,682	12.2	3,743	15.1	<b>12,425</b>	<b>12.9</b>
Skilled agriculture and fishery	656	0.9	111	0.4	<b>767</b>	<b>0.8</b>
Crafts	9,381	13.2	409	1.7	<b>9,790</b>	<b>10.2</b>
Plants and machine operators	4,514	6.3	371	1.5	<b>4,885</b>	<b>5.1</b>
Elementary occupations	7,258	10.2	1,822	7.4	<b>9,080</b>	<b>9.5</b>
Unknown	1,419	2.0	592	2.4	<b>2,011</b>	<b>2.1</b>
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>71,295</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>24,720</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>96,015</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: OECD.stat

As to the distribution of Egyptian working emigrants to OECD countries according to educational level in 2000, it is evident that both men and women working in the OECD countries are of high education (58.7% and 57.1% respectively).

**Table 20. Employed Egyptian migrants residing in OECD countries by level of education and sex, circa 2000**

Level of education	Males		Females		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
ISCED 0/1/2	11,714	10.4	4,483	10.1	<b>16,197</b>	<b>10.3</b>
ISCED 3-4	32,338	28.8	13,711	31.0	<b>46,049</b>	<b>29.4</b>
ISCED 5-6	65,969	58.7	25,311	57.1	<b>91,280</b>	<b>58.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>112,407</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>44,293</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>156,700</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: OECD.stat

### 2.3 Profiles and motives of women migrants: results from two *ad hoc* surveys

This section displays the results of two field studies as reported by Bilborrow and School (2006) and Talani et al. (2003). The former (Bilborrow and School, 2006) is based on a multi-country survey project on the determinants and mechanisms of international migration. Five predominantly migrant-sending countries (Egypt, Ghana, Morocco, Senegal, and Turkey) and two migrant-receiving countries (Italy and Spain) participated in the project. In Egypt, the sample included 2,588 households, and the fieldwork was conducted in April - May 1997. The gender distribution of the migrants' sample reflects that most migrants were men. The sample included 1,593 male migrants and 213 female migrants. As to the latter (Talani et al., 2003), the survey was conducted in April-May 2003 in Cairo with the support of the International Organization for Migration and included 103 qualitative interviews with Egyptians willing to migrate abroad. The interviewees included 74 males and 29 females.

#### 2.3.1 Age distribution

Theories on international migrants indicate that migrants are usually young adults. Most are in their twenties or thirties, with women migrating at slightly younger ages than men. The small number of Egyptian women emigrants is significantly younger than their far more numerous male counterparts, with almost half in the 15-24 age group (48.0%) compared to only 21.9% for males.

**Table 21. Distribution of Egyptians residing abroad and Egyptian return migrants by age group and sex (in %), 1997**

Age group	Current migrants		Return migrants	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
15-24	21.9	48.0	29.3	39.1
25-39	66.5	40.0	54.2	45.7
40-59	11.0	10.0	16.0	15.2
60+	0.6	2.0	0.5	0.0

Source: Bilborrow and School, 2006

### 2.3.2 Education

Women migrants tend to be better educated than their male counterparts. The study shows that most Egyptian women who emigrated are either following husbands to western destinations or migrating independently, for work or education. Female migrants are relatively younger, over half of female migrants have superior or university-level education compared to less than a quarter of the men, and virtually all women migrants have secondary or higher education.

**Table 22. Egyptians residing abroad and Egyptian return migrants by educational level (at time of migration for the former and at time of the survey for the latter) and sex (in %), 1997**

Education level	Current migrants		Return migrants	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
None	31.8	6.1	36.9	6.7
Primary	12.8	2	12.8	33.3
Secondary	31.8	34.7	32.1	22.2
Tertiary	23.6	57.1	18.2	37.8

Source: Bilsborrow and School, 2006

### 2.3.3 Marital status

Marital status has significant implications both for male and female migration. It might be expected that married women would, unlike married men, rarely migrate themselves or autonomously. However data show that in Egypt, the (relatively few) women who migrate internationally are slightly more likely to be married than male migrants. The explanation for that could be that they are educated women who got married and who travel to continue their higher education. (Bilsborrow and School, 2006)

### 2.3.4 Work Experience

Despite the fact that available data covers a small number of women migrants, it is clear that it is more likely for both women and men migrants to have had some previous work experience, as migration is, by definition, a selective process.

**Table 23. Egyptians residing abroad and Egyptian return migrants by work experience prior to migration and sex (in %), 1997**

Work experience	Current migrants		Return migrants	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Yes	86	57.1	88.3	50
No	14	42.9	11.7	50

Source: Bilsborrow and School, 2006

### 2.3.5 Country of Destination

Analyzing the results of the second survey (Talani, et al., 2003), both male and female migrants seem to prefer migration to Arab countries versus western countries (52.4% among males and 63.0% among females).

**Table 24. Survey question: Which of the following countries would you prefer to migrate to? (year 2003)**

Country	Males	Females	Total
Netherlands	4	3.4	<b>3.8</b>
Italy	1.3	0	<b>1</b>
UK	10.7	10.3	<b>10.6</b>
France	1.3	3.4	<b>1.9</b>
Total European countries	17.3	17.2	<b>17.3</b>
US	9.3	13.8	<b>10.6</b>
Australia	1.3	6.9	<b>2.9</b>
KSA	28	31	<b>28.8</b>
UAE	18.7	17.2	<b>18.3</b>
Kuwait	14.7	6.9	<b>12.5</b>
Oman	2.7	3.4	<b>2.9</b>
Jordan	2.7	0	<b>1.9</b>
Lebanon	1.3	0	<b>1</b>
Bahrain	2.7	3.4	<b>2.9</b>
Qatar	1.3	0	<b>1</b>
Total Arab countries	72	62.1	<b>69.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Talani, L. et al.(2003)

### 2.3.6 Reason for leaving country of origin and the decision to migrate ('push factors')

Economic motives largely explain the migration of males, while reasons for female migration are more diverse. The impact of the family in deciding migration was more evident among women compared to men as the majority of women said that the decision to migrate was made jointly by spouses and by others.

**Table 25. Egyptians residing abroad and Egyptian return migrants by main motive for emigration and by sex, 1997**

'Push' motives to migrate	Current migrants		Return migrants	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Economic	94.4	21.4	93.1	31.3
Family	1.7	71.4	1.2	62.5
Others	3.9	7.1	5.7	6.3

Source: Bilborrow and School, 2006

**Table 26. Egyptians residing abroad and Egyptian return migrants by persons involved in the decision to emigrate and by sex, 1997**

Persons involved in the decision to migrate	Current migrants		Return migrants	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Mostly or entirely the migrant	93.1	50	93.4	37.5
Migrant and others	4.9	35.7	3.6	37.5
Mostly or entirely others	2.1	14.3	3	25

Source: Bilsborrow and School, 2006

### 2.3.7 Networks and migration

E. Bilsborrow, R. et al. 2006 reveals that women are more likely than men to have had networks available to them before migration to Egypt. The data shows that 80% of interviewed migrant women had such networks compared to about half of interviewed men.

**Table 27. Egyptians residing abroad and Egyptian return migrants by presence/absence of a network before migration and by sex (in %), 1997**

Network Status	Current migrants		Return migrants	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Had network	85.7	54	62.5	52.4
No network	14.3	46	37.5	47.6

Source: Bilsborrow and School, 2006

### 2.3.8 Choice of country of destination ('pull factors')

For both men and women, the importance of the economic factors as 'pull factors' is lower compared to its importance as a 'push factor'.

**Table 28. Egyptians residing abroad and Egyptian return migrants by main motive for choosing country of destination and by sex, 1997**

Motive	Current migrants		Return migrants	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Economic	21.4	62.4	18.8	51.2
Familial	78.6	18.5	62.5	11.4
Others	0	19.1	18.8	37.4

Source: Bilsborrow and School, 2006

The migration networks represent a major source of information for both men and women migrants. According to the survey results, the majority of men and women migrants depend on friends and relatives as a source of information. However the percentage among female migrants seem to be notably higher compared to males (64.8% among men vs. 75.0% among women). Other factors such as the ease vs. difficulty of getting a visa or gaining admission illegally, or, indeed, educational opportunities are also important. However, for women family reasons are considered to be the major reason for choosing the country of destination for women vs. men.



**Table 29. Survey question: what is your source of information on your preferred country of destination? (in %) (year 2003)**

Source of information	Males	Females	Total
Friends/Relatives	64.8	75.0	<b>67.7</b>
Authorities	4.2	0.0	<b>3.0</b>
Embassies	1.4	0.0	<b>1.0</b>
Internet	12.7	10.7	<b>12.1</b>
General literature	16.9	14.3	<b>16.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Talani et al., 2003

**Table 30. Survey question: was there any special event or development that prompted your decision? (in %) (year 2003)**

	Males	Females	Total
Yes	65.0	73.5	<b>71.8</b>
No	35.0	26.5	<b>28.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>If yes, please specify:</b>			
	Male	Female	Total
Going there for training before	15.4	0.0	<b>10.0</b>
An invitation to visit the country	7.7	0.0	<b>5.0</b>
Prior study abroad	7.7	0.0	<b>5.0</b>
Marriage there	7.7	0.0	<b>5.0</b>
Husband is there	0.0	57.1	<b>20.0</b>
Announcement for teachers to Arab countries	7.7	0.0	<b>5.0</b>
Have been there already	7.7	0.0	<b>5.0</b>
A friend went to this country	15.4	0.0	<b>10.0</b>
Family went to this country	23.1	42.9	<b>30.0</b>
Unemployment in Egypt	7.7	0.0	<b>5.0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Talani et al., 2003

### 2.3.9 Migrants' Companions

Whether migrants move with other family members reflects the marital status and family situation of the migrant, whether he/she desires to migrate with them, and whether he/she is able to migrate. The majority of men, who migrate are either married and leave their spouse behind or are unmarried. 'Married, brought family immediately' followed by 'married left spouse' and then unmarried women is the nature of the migration of women. Though these data might suggest more autonomy in women's migration, on the other hand, it could be due to economic pressures and the encouragement of other family members to migrate for economic reasons.

**Table 31. Egyptian residing abroad and Egyptian return migrants by type of migration and sex (in %), 1997**

Type of migration	Current migrants		Return migrants	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Unmarried	18.2	44.0	30.0	42.3
Married, left spouse	27.3	52.1	40.0	54.6
Married, brought family immediately	54.5	2.4	30.0	1.8
Married, brought family later	0.0	1.6	0.0	1.2

Source: Bilborrow and School, 2006

**2.3.10 Work and employment status**

Among both current and return migrants; women are mainly to be found in two categories: 'not working' and 'wage workers'. However, among male migrants; they are predominantly wage workers with a small percentage as 'non workers'. The percentage of entrepreneurs among male migrants is significantly higher, especially among the return migrants; while the category of 'entrepreneurs' is minimal among both current and return migrants.

**Table 32. Egyptians residing abroad and Egyptian return migrants by current work status (in %), 1997**

Current work status	Current migrants		Return migrants	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Employer	2.0	1.6	1.7	7.7
Self-employed	2.0	3.3	0.0	13.2
Wage worker	23.5	81.3	37.3	50.8
Casual worker, family	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Worker, 'other' worker	0.0	10.8	1.7	15.0
Unemployed	0.0	1.3	5.1	6.3
Other non-workers	72.5	1.7	54.2	6.9

Source: Bilborrow and School, 2006

Female migrant workers may face severe consequences and discrimination depending on their entry status to the destination country, whether as illegal female migrant workers; or as 'dependents' of a male migrant worker who is a member of their family (usually the husband).

False documents may expose women allowing them to be caught by the authorities of the sending or the destination country. When their entry status is as 'dependents' of a male migrant worker, many women face discrimination since they might be prohibited from working in the host state. Furthermore entry status often determines residency and employment rights, ability to gain legal citizenship, access to social services such as health and education, access to language training and income security programs.<sup>3</sup>

### 2.3.11 Return Migration

When asked about return migration, the majority of male and female migrants state that they hope to return home. The economic reasons (earning enough money) played a major role in taking the migration decision.

**Table 33. Questions about return migration attitudes  
(in %) (year 2003)**

<b>Do you intend to return?</b>			
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
Male	73.8	65.2	<b>71.8</b>
Female	26.3	34.8	<b>28.2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>If yes, under what conditions?</b>			
Reasons to migrate disappeared	8.5	31.6	<b>14.1</b>
Earned enough money	84.7	68.4	<b>80.8</b>
Hopes did not materialize	6.8	0.0	<b>5.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Talani et al., 2003

### 3. Women's remittances

In many countries, women's remittances make up one of the largest sources of cash revenue. Literature indicates that migrant women both within the country and beyond its borders send home a higher proportion of their wages than men do. It is believed as well that a higher percentage of women's remittances is directed to social needs such as health, education and other social needs which benefit from these transfers.

Remittances constitute a major source of foreign currency for Egypt along with Suez Canal receipts and tourism. According to official data, remittances from Egyptian migrants increased during (2001/02-2007/08) from 2952.5 million dollars in 2001/02 to 8550.2 million dollars in 2007/08. The value of remittances was increasing on average at 17.5% annually during (2001/02-2007/08). The remittances decreased somewhat 2008/2009 due to the financial crisis. There are four countries, from which more than 4/5 of remittances flow (80.8% over 2001/2002-2008/2009). These countries are: the US (32.8% of total remittances); Kuwait (16 % of total remittances); Saudi Arabia (15.7% of total remittances) and the U.A.E (14% of total remittances).

**Table 34. Remittance flows to Egypt (\$US Million), 2001/2002 – 2008/2009**

<b>Financial year</b>	<b>Remittances (US Million)</b>	<b>Annual rate of growth (%)</b>
2001/2002	2952.5	
2002/2003	2962.6	0.3
2003/2004	2999.6	1.2
2004/2005	4329.5	44.3
2005/2006	5034.2	16.3
2006/2007	6321.0	25.6
2007/2008	8550.2	35.3
2008/2009	7805.7	-8.7

Source: Central Bank of Egypt

**Table 35. Remittance of Egyptians working abroad by country from which remittances are sent (US\$ million), 2000/2001-2008/2009**

Country	2000/2001		2001/2002		2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Saudi Arabia	681.3	24.0	621.2	21.0	634.4	21.4	639.6	21.3	725.5	16.8
Kuwait	222.3	7.8	376.4	12.7	254.3	8.6	205.6	6.9	589.2	13.6
U.A.E	301.9	10.6	349.4	11.8	302.9	10.2	278.8	9.3	371.6	8.6
Qatar	44.4	1.6	45.4	1.5	48.5	1.6	46.2	1.5	63.8	1.5
France	48.8	1.7	47.3	1.6	63.3	2.1	63.4	2.1	68.7	1.6
Germany	96.6	3.4	89.1	3.0	125.9	4.2	131.1	4.4	230.5	5.3
U.K.	95.7	3.4	116.0	3.9	124.0	4.2	122.8	4.1	169.4	3.9
Italy	34.6	1.2	32.4	1.1	48.3	1.6	64.3	2.1	74.9	1.7
Switzerland	105.4	3.7	119.9	4.1	97.7	3.3	91.5	3.1	102.7	2.4
U.S.	1048.8	36.9	955.9	32.4	1025.9	34.6	1111.1	37.0	1619.6	37.4
Others	197.5	6.9	231.9	7.9	285.7	9.6	309.5	10.3	388.5	9.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2842.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2952.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2962.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2999.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4329.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Country	2005/2006		2006/2007		2007/2008		2008/2009		Total	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Saudi Arabia	775.8	15.4	859.4	13.6	959.4	11.2	976.1	12.5	<b>6872.7</b>	<b>15.7</b>
Kuwait	922.8	18.3	1106.0	17.5	1797.1	21.0	1594.0	20.4	<b>7067.7</b>	<b>16.1</b>
U.A.E	729.0	14.5	989.6	15.7	1392.9	16.3	1380.3	17.7	<b>6096.4</b>	<b>13.9</b>
Qatar	109.0	2.2	102.1	1.6	131.0	1.5	140.7	1.8	<b>731.1</b>	<b>1.7</b>
France	49.8	1.0	53.5	0.8	61.1	0.7	50.2	0.6	<b>506.1</b>	<b>1.2</b>
Germany	198.4	3.9	209.6	3.3	229.3	2.7	208.2	2.7	<b>1518.7</b>	<b>3.5</b>
U.K.	147.4	2.9	235.5	3.7	267.5	3.1	481.8	6.2	<b>1760.1</b>	<b>4.0</b>
Italy	54.0	1.1	42.0	0.7	71.1	0.8	72.3	0.9	<b>493.9</b>	<b>1.1</b>
Switzerland	143.1	2.8	261.0	4.1	255.5	3.0	213.1	2.7	<b>1389.9</b>	<b>3.2</b>
U.S.	1516.3	30.1	2080.3	32.9	2762.9	32.3	2269.1	29.1	<b>14389.9</b>	<b>32.8</b>
Others	442.6	8.8	424.0	6.7	702.5	8.2	233.6	3.0	<b>3215.8</b>	<b>7.3</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5034.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>6321.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>8559.2</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7805.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>43807.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Central Bank of Egypt

Unfortunately, Egyptian data on remittances is not gender disaggregated. This does not allow us then to assess gender impact on remittance flows. The following table displays the total remittance inflows to the Egyptian economy. However, the gender of the senders is not obvious. As mentioned above, women migrants represent a small portion of migrants.

**However an important question needs to be posed concerning the impact of remittance flows on women. What happens to women when it is their husbands who leave the household to work abroad?**

When males migrate for better work opportunities, females are often left behind to head households and care for families. This might have a positive impact on women's empowerment as women are able to act more independently, gain economic independence, confidence and greater freedom. But, at the

same time, women could be exposed to more challenges as women are left behind to deal with added responsibilities and discriminative patriarchal structures. (ESCWA, Centre for Women 2007)<sup>4</sup>

Many studies have tried to assess the impact of male migration on those women who are left behind. Khafagy (1984) undertook an in-depth study of a village in the Giza governorate. She concluded that there was a distinct change in women's decision-making status due to the fact that women took control of the remittances sent by their husbands and were responsible for their allocation. This gave women more experience in interacting with different individuals (such as private merchants, the village agricultural cooperative) and institutions (the local health unit). Khafagy (1984) also found that a new angle was added to the husband-wife relationship as women become advisors to their men and this new power will not disappear upon a husbands' return. Brink (1991) studied a sample of uneducated, unemployed migrants' wives in an Egyptian village, using four variables to measure the status of women: ability to allocate food money, ability to allocate money for routine expenditure, ability to decide on buying expensive purchases, and freedom to leave home without permission. She found that because of the increased income, migration helped young wives move from extended to nuclear houses sooner. This gave them more control over food money, over routine expenditures and money dedicated to ongoing projects such as building a house. However, being illiterate, women do not make decisions on expensive items.<sup>5</sup>

In brief, most of the studies on Egypt found that migration can have a positive impact on female empowerment given increased control over the household budget. However, the extent of change in decision-making power depends on factors such as household-living arrangements and which stage of a reproductive cycle a woman is at.

Elbadawy et Roushdy (2009) found that remittances can enhance female status by: speeding up the shift to a nuclear household; while male absence and female headship can empower women by giving them control over resources and opportunities to make household and budgeting decisions. However, this is conditional on factors like living arrangements and the household head before and after migration: they concluded that gains in women status might be reversed upon the return of the migrants.(Elbadawy, A. et al. 2009)<sup>6</sup>

## 4. Smuggling and Trafficking

### 4.1 Relevance of the phenomenon and the main routes

It has always been understood that in labor-receiving countries, policies managing immigration give greater rights and possibilities for regular migration to those taking up jobs usually performed by men. As such, women tend to become more vulnerable and are pushed into illegal channels or into the 'unprotected' informal sector where exploitation and poor working conditions, exploitation and low earnings are widespread. Hence it is important to understand the determinants and consequences of migration from a gender perspective. This requires better data on female migration.

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<sup>4</sup> Women, as the receivers and distributors of remittances, can also gain empowerment and autonomy as they contribute to the decisions for allocating remittances within households. (Fandrich, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Louhichi (1997) conducted a survey in Egypt and found that the percentage of urban women who had complete control over their household budget increased from 37% to 86% following their husband's migration. For rural Egyptian women, their control increased from 8% to 64%. Furthermore, the survey revealed that the wife's control or shared control over family property, including farms, commercial and housing property, increased from 31% to 57% after male-migration. Moreover, Louhichi (1997) found that the percentage of households where the husband's relatives were in control of the household budget decreased from 34.3% to 28.5% after the migration of the husband. He finds that the age of the wife and her residential independence are key factors in her ability to acquire power in his absence. (Elbadawy, A. et al. 2010)

<sup>6</sup> Trafficking does not occur only between neighboring countries – in some cases women and children pass through transit countries before reaching their final destination

According to the Palermo Protocol definition in Dec 2000; ‘Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.’ (UNICEF, 2005)

Although in practice there are some problems in distinguishing between trafficking and smuggling, one of the most important results of such a distinction is that it is mainly women and children who are the victims of traffickers. Increasingly, according to Interpol, Africa is a source region, with more clandestine movements, more diverse transit points and complex changing dynamics. There are two main reasons that a country is designated as a transit country, one is geographic proximity and the other is ease in facilitating passage.

According to a UNICEF report on the Trafficking of Women & Children in Africa, North Africa could be considered a transit point to Europe and the Middle East. Egypt was reported as a country of transit for women who are trafficked from Eastern Europe to Israel. According to the U.S. State Department Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report for 2007, women from Uzbekistan, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, and other countries in the region transit through Egypt towards commercial sexual exploitation in Israel. (UNICEF, 2005)

The table below offers a synoptic summary of the Protection Project which released a global report on Trafficking in 2002. The table shows clearly that the GCC countries are recipients of trafficking, with the Mashrek and Maghreb as transit as well as destination countries. Three countries namely: **Egypt**, Turkey and Jordan – are considered source countries.

**Table 36. Trafficking of women and children in the MENA region; characteristics & trafficking routes, 2002**

	Destination	Origin	Transit	Related Countries
Israel	■			Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Brazil, Dominican Rep., S. Africa, Turkey
Kuwait	■			Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Russia, Ukraine
Lebanon	■			Ethiopia, Madagascar, Poland
Oman	■			Nepal, Asia, Africa
Qatar	■			Bangladesh, South Asia
Saudi Arabia	■			Burma, Indonesia, Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Ethiopia
Syria	■			Poland, Russia
U.A.E.	■			Eastern Europe, CIS, Asia
Bahrain	■		■	Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Russia, Ukraine, Philippines
Morocco	■		■	Africa, Asia; Spain, western Europe
Egypt	■	■	■	Eastern Europe; Middle East; Israel
Turkey	■	■	■	Bulgaria, India, Iraq, Jordan, Philippines, Romania, Russia, Ukraine; Asia, Saudi Arabia
Jordan		■	■	Israel, Turkey; Ukraine, Eastern Europe
Libya			■	Africa, Sri Lanka; Spain, western Europe
Algeria			■	Italy, southern Europe

Source: The Protection Project, 2002 (in Baldwin-Edwards, 2005)

#### 4.2 Government Response (US State Department, 2007)

1. In June 2008, the government enacted amendments to the Child Law (126/2008), which include provisions prohibiting the trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. These amendments prescribe sentences of at least five years' imprisonment, which are sufficiently stringent and commensurate with penalties prescribed for other grave crimes (US State Department, 2009).
2. Establishing a national coordinating Committee to combat and prevent trafficking in persons on July 2007 the Committee shall offer a consultative reference to concerned authorities and other national institutions. The committee would be responsible for:
  - Drafting a national plan of action to combat the issue of trafficking in persons; following up its implementation; and preparing an annual report to be submitted to the Council of Ministers.
  - Preparing and drafting legislation to combat the phenomenon of trafficking in persons; cooperating with the specialized office of the United Nations and other concerned authorities; and suggesting measures to assist and protect the victims of this crime.
  - Suggesting policies and programs, and guide research; increasing media awareness campaigns; developing educational *curricula*, and building up the capacity of criminal justice officials, other concerned authorities responsible for the implementation of the criminal justice system, and those in charge of the application of the provisions of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.
  - Preparing a central data bank in coordination with the Center of Criminal and Social Research and other research institutes.
  - Supporting the international judicial mechanisms of cooperation involved in criminal matters, and reviewing the relevant national legislation.
  - Having a specialized Secretariat responsible for the preparation of studies and research and the preparation of topics that will be submitted to this committee. The committee shall take the necessary measures to implement its decisions and recommendations.
  - Meeting every month and forwarding its recommendations and suggestions through the Foreign Ministry to the Council of Ministers.
  - The decision to establish a national committee to combat trafficking in Egypt is significant because it reflects a political will on the part of the government to address the problem of trafficking, which constitutes a gross violation of human rights and is a threat not only to state security, but to the security and dignity of human beings.
3. Egypt is too a signatory of several international agreements reflecting a serious political will to combat trafficking crime; Egypt is a signatory of (UNICEF, 2005):
  - The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime CTOC.
  - The Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (1990) UN
  - The Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery
  - The Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others
  - The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography
  - The UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

## 5. Forced migration

Egypt does not seem to be a sender for refugees or asylum seekers. According to the latest data of the UNCHR Statistical Report 2009, Egypt does not show up as one of the sending countries for refugees. As for the asylum seekers; the table below shows the distribution of the asylum applications in 2009. However, there is no gender disaggregated data to show the distribution of the Egyptians who asked for asylum by gender.

**Table 37. Asylum applications by Egyptians by country of asylum, 2009**

Country of asylum	Number of applications
Australia	134
Cyprus	191
Greece	145
Sweden	146
United States	331

Source: UNCHR, Statistical Year Book 2009

**On the other hand, Egypt represents one of the main recipient countries for refugees, asylums and displaced persons.** Egypt's capital Cairo accommodates one of the five largest refugee populations living in urban areas' in the world. This assessment is based on the number of asylum seekers received by UNHCR. However it is impossible to give precise numbers for refugees in Egypt. 'Guestimates' vary from 500,000 to 3 million. (Zohry, A. 2003)

The flow of refugees and asylum seekers started in the 1990s as a result of civil wars and political instability in the horn of Africa, especially in Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia (Roman, H. 2006), in addition to Iraqi refugees who have increased considerably recently, as a result of the political instability and economic deterioration in Iraq. Since the late 1990s, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) Cairo office has seen a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers. In just one year, from 1998-1999, the number of asylum seekers doubled. In 2001, the number of asylum seekers was 13,176, which represents a 96% increase from 1998. 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, Afghanistan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Yemen, and Burundi. In Egypt, UNHCR determines refugee status, not the Egyptian government. UNHCR also has responsibility for stateless people in Egypt. However, thousands of refugees denied recognition by UNHCR also continue to live in Egypt.

Several reasons might explain Egypt's attractiveness; Egypt is seen as one of the few stable countries in the region. Changing patterns of civil conflicts, especially in Sudan and Somalia, as well as political and economic deterioration in Iraq have led more people to seek refuge in Egypt .

Furthermore, Egypt is also an attractive destination on account of having one of the largest resettlement programs in the world, both through the UNHCR and through private sponsorship programs to Canada, Australia, the US and Finland. With the Sudanese and Somali Diasporas in many of these western states, resettlement programs constitute a huge incentive. At the same time, the number of refugees who remain in Egypt, especially those who were unsuccessful in being granted refugee status, is quite significant. Without legal status and protection in Egypt, and often unable to return to their countries of origin, these people live on the margins of society, struggling to secure their livelihoods as illegal 'aliens' within the socio-economic and policy context of contemporary Egypt. The vast majority choose to live in the city of Cairo, where they negotiate space, their identity, and reconcile cultural and religious differences on a daily basis (Grabska, K. 2006)



**Table 38. Refugees in Egypt by nationality, 1996 - 2009**

Nationality	1996	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2009
Palestine	15	-	-	-	134	70,195	70,215	70,245	70,255	70,024
Sudan	1,461	1,863	2,577	2,833	4,659	7,629	14,178	14,904	13,446	9,818
Somalia	3,493	3,119	2,568	2,610	1,177	1,639	3,068	3,809	3,940	6,096
Ethiopia	47	44	56	54	102	111	329	481	516	-
Iraq	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,572
Yemen	559	669	678	683	628	412	344	319	209	-

Source: UNHCR Statistical Yearbook, 2005 and 2009

**Table 39. Asylum applicants in Egypt by nationality, 1996 - 2009**

Nationality	1996	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006(*)	2009
Sudan	2,057	4,953	5,202	12,206	9,529	6,253	5,726	9,720	2,400	2,523	1,310
Somalia	113	197	647	1,822	2,559	1,977	224	340	538	1,135	659
Ethiopia	97	295	-	547	545	299	325	289	189	193	213
Eritrea	14	-	-	211	224	59	55	106	153	208	672
Iraq	26	-	-	64	23	92	57	20	133	2,870	-

Source: UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2005 and 2009, (\*) UNCHR, 2006

The table below shows the demographic characteristics of refugees and the population of concern for UNHCR. According to UNHCR data, women represent about half of the population of concern (46%). Nearly two thirds of children and elderly are women.

**Table 40. Age structure of the population of concern for UNHCR in Egypt (in %) (\*), end-2009**

Share of age group in total		Percentage female per age group (%)	
"0-4"	15.0	"0-4"	48.0
"5-11"	17.0	"5-11"	57.0
"12-17"	17.0	"12-17"	36.0
"<18"	49.0	"<18"	47.0
"18-59"	49.0	"18-59"	44.0
"60>"	2.0	"60>"	59.0
<b>Population for which data is available</b>	<b>107,913</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>46.0</b>

Notes: (\*) Percentages may not be representative for the total population of concern in Egypt. The table comprises the data for population for which these data are available, that does not necessarily equal the total population of concern in the country.

Source: UNHCR Statistical Yearbook 2009

Many studies aim at assessing the situation of refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. However, there is lack of studies focusing on the gender aspect of forced migrations. This paper would display the main studies conducted on forced migration in Egypt and would try to highlight the situation of women refugees in Egypt, especially their access to major social services (education and health) as well as access to work.

Sharmani (2004)<sup>7</sup> conducted eight-months of field research in 2003 and examined the livelihood strategies of the Somali refugees in Cairo. El-Abed, Oroub (2003)<sup>8</sup> conducted a qualitative study to provide an analysis of the livelihoods and coping strategies adopted by Palestinian exiles to adjust their life in Egypt.

### ***Access to Education***

Looking at the educational profile; Sharmani (2004) concluded that more women than men had received no education at all (19 to 3). There exists a gap between the numbers of men and women who have high school degrees (51 to 39).

Interviews conducted by Sharmani 2004 show that out of a total of 294 school-age children (6-18 years old) ninety seven of these children receive some kind of schooling, while 197 do not receive any schooling. Many of the refugees lack educational resources for themselves and their children. Many cite lack of legal residence, financial resources, and a sense of stability as the main impediments for them to send their children to school. Moreover, many refugees found that their situation as temporary refugees – with no rights to permanent resettlement, citizenship, and employment – discourages them from pursuing long-term educational opportunities. (Sharmani, 2004)

The Egyptian government in 1993 decided to provide exemptions to various Palestinian categories,<sup>9</sup> letting them off 90% of the fees. This helped many Palestinians to attend primary and secondary schools. However, university education was not assured because fees must be paid in foreign currency. (El-Abed, 2003)

The limited opportunities to get education has a more negative impact on women refugees as they are dragged into a vicious circle of poverty and illiteracy.

### ***Access to work***

Interviews conducted by Sharmani (2004) showed that over half of the Somali interviewees did not have any previous work experience: 17% worked as street vendors, 11% worked as professionals such as teachers or nurses and less than 5% worked as skilled vocational workers or drivers. But it was obvious that certain occupations were dominated by women mainly petty sales, while more men than women held professional jobs (20 to 13). Sale businesses, housekeeping and childcare are exclusively carried out by female refugees. Teaching jobs are exclusively held by male refugees. Moreover, there was a significant gap between the numbers of women and men who had no previous work experience (104 to 67).

El-Abed, O. (2003) revealed that many of the interviewed Palestinians work in the private sector mainly in small enterprises. However, it is common for small enterprises and small-scale businesses not to provide employees with social insurance. In addition, they tend to hire skilled and unskilled workers without contracts. If a worker does not have a work permit, as is true in most cases, he or she may be easily exploited by the employer in terms of working hours, conditions and payment.

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<sup>7</sup> The field research included conducting questionnaires and in-depth interviews with a total of 300 Somali refugees of different age groups, sex, and clan affiliation, patterns of flight and displacement, and legal status. The majority of the interviewees are young (between 20-35) with only 3.4% above 50. The sample was almost equally divided between male and female, with slightly more female

<sup>8</sup> Eighty visits to Palestinians households were made in three governorates: Cairo, Sharqieh and Qalubieh, 59 interviews were conducted in households comprising 401 persons. Of these there were 215 men and 186 women. Face-to-face interviews were conducted through a series of open-ended questions structured to evoke descriptive qualitative data on the survival strategies of refugee households and to gain an understanding of the factors influencing refugees' livelihoods.

<sup>9</sup> These include: the children of government employees; the children of Egyptian widows and divorcees; the children of mothers who passed their Egyptian high school exams; continuous residents of Egypt; and students in need of financial assistance.

The difficulty that irregular migrants and accordingly – women irregular migrants – tend to face in getting a job related to the legal context governing the right to work for the irregular migrant in Egypt. Egypt is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, with reservations on provisions granting refugees the right to work and access to public services (e.g. Health & Education). As a result of the reservation placed by the government on the right to work, refugees are treated as any other foreign nationals who are required to obtain a work permit.

Although there are obstacles to accessing the labour market, legally, refugees are permitted to work in Egypt. Application for the work permit has to be carried out by the employer and is subject to several criteria, including the number of Egyptians working in the organization and the activities of the organization. Once the application is approved, the employee has to submit an HIV test result, travel documents, a copy of his or her passport and any other legal document such as UNHCR refugee card, and a letter of reference. Subsequently, the employer has to pay a work permit fee amounting to LE 1,000. Foreign nationals are barred from certain professions such as tourism, oriental dancing, exports and customs related jobs (Grabska, 2006).

The 2003 decree also capped the number of foreign nationals who could work in any establishment at 10%. The 2003 Labor Law required reciprocity from a foreign national's state toward Egyptians, effectively excluding Palestinian refugees from practicing professions. Employers had to prepare detailed biannual registers of all foreign nationals they employed, including listings of the Egyptian assistants they were training. Finally, the 2003 Decree prohibited foreign nationals from working as tourist guides and, except Palestinians, in export industries. A 2004 decree on the issuance of work permits exempted those married to nationals, stateless persons with permanent residence, 'political refugees' (in the narrow sense of the Constitution), those born in the country, Palestinians, and those with special or ordinary residence from the non-competition requirement. The 2004 decree, however, also restricted professions to Egyptians unless the regulations of a profession allowed exceptions. It also excluded foreign nationals from work in the export and import sectors, customs clearance, and tourism. The 2006 decree restricted earlier liberalization of work permits for domestic workers, requiring the personal approval of the Minister and limiting them to 'cases necessitated by humanitarian, social or practical circumstances'. (United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2007)

Based on bilateral agreements and special relations, some foreign nationals, such as Palestinians, Sudanese citizens, Italians and Greeks are exempted from paying the high fees. With regard to the Sudanese, a potentially significant development was the signing of the Four Freedoms Agreement in September 2004 between the governments of Egypt and Sudan guaranteeing freedom of movement, residence, work and ownership of property for nationals of these two countries. (Grabska, 2006)

### ***Access to Health Care***

Under the Egyptian national policies on health care, refugees are considered foreign nationals in terms of access to services. Until recently, recognized refugees were referred by UNHCR to Caritas, one of the implementing partners of UNHCR providing services for refugees. When a recognized refugee falls sick, he or she can get subsidized treatment through the Caritas office, which covers 50 percent of total medical expenses. In a study of Sudanese refugees, almost all recognized refugees among the respondents had used Caritas medical services with three of the respondents resorting to private clinics or the All Saints Clinic, a church offering a variety of services to refugees in Cairo. However, the subsidized services did not address all the medical needs of refugees. If expensive treatment is required, and refugees cannot afford to pay even half the cost, they have to forgo medical care. As in the case of rejected asylum seekers, refugees depend on relatives and friends who have resettled in the West, asking them for financial assistance, especially in cases of pregnancies or more complicated illnesses such as tuberculosis.

In February 2005, the Minister of Health issued a new regulation allowing access to public primary and preventive healthcare services for all foreign nationals residing in Egypt. It was agreed that forced migrants would pay domestic fees for the services. This change in policy will have a direct impact on access to public hospitals and government clinics by recognized refugees as well as those without legal status in Egypt (Grabska, 2006)

Interviews with Palestinian refugees in Egypt have also reported some difficulties in access to special medicine for chronic diseases, as well as unsubsidized medicine. Although they showed some satisfaction with the provision of health services regarding the minor medical needs. For such needs, many Palestinians reported that these services are affordable and adequate. However, one major complaint expressed by Palestinians is in regards to chronic diseases. When a devastating illness strikes or a costly medical operation is needed, it can disrupt the entire household economy. Costs for the treatment of sudden illnesses and injuries, are, as many reported, often overcome by mobilizing other livelihood assets. (El-Abed, 2003)

The negative impact of the limited access to the healthcare among refugees is expected to be more acute among women refugees. Women are usually the first among family members to forgo health care in cases of limited financial ability. Moreover, undocumented female migrants could suffer from the lack of access to affordable and accessible maternal care services, thus jeopardizing their lives' and their babies'. (Geddie, et al. 2008)

### ***Looking at Palestinian women situation in livelihoods in Egypt***

Interviews conducted by El-Abed, O. 2003 showed that Palestinian women have assumed increasingly vital roles in the family's financial well being and in making important decisions for the household. Many of the women reported that they were engaged in petty trading or worked in the informal or service sectors. Economic pressures have led many women to take on active roles in the labour market and to assume the role of breadwinner. Moreover; it was reported that women were often responsible for handling Egyptian bureaucratic and administrative matters, for example residence renewal and for processing the paperwork for children's schools. The burden seems to be heavier as well for women who were abandoned or divorced when their husbands returned to Gaza. In turn, women's responsibilities increased dramatically as they became solely responsible for earning an income in addition to their work in running the house. (El-Abed, 2003)

To conclude, it is evident that Egypt is not a major sending country for refugees or displaced persons *per se* as shown by the statistics of Asylum applications lodged by Egyptians. However, Egypt is increasingly considered a major host country for the refugees and Asylum seekers from surrounding African and Arab countries. Moreover, Egypt is a major route of trafficking in women and children in the MENA region, which has meant increased government attention.

## **6. Conclusions and recommendations: how to mainstream gender concerns in the migration process?**

If women and men are to benefit from the empowering and development potential of migration, a shift is needed to a gendered human-rights approach to migration. The key elements of such an approach could be:

- Immigration and emigration policies that enable women as well as men to take up opportunities that safe and regular migration may offer, and which will foster the positive impacts of migration for the social and economic development of migrants, and the receiving and sending countries.
- The mobilization of support for international rights frameworks that offer protection for women migrants to ensure that governments ratify and adhere to these rights. This includes not only those relating to migrants such as ICMW, and trafficked peoples (Palermo Protocol),

but also women-specific frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN Resolution 1325 and the Beijing Platform for Action.

- Support for the acknowledgement and realization of the rights of migrants throughout the migration process, including pre-departure information on legal rights, facilitating remittances, ensuring access to basic services such as housing, education and health, and supporting migrant organizing and solidarity between different migrant groups to address issues of exclusion and isolation.

**In general one can group the recommendations into:**

### **1. Research needs**

- Gender-disaggregated statistics and research on gender and migration trends are lacking in Egypt. There is a strong need to collect, analyze and make available data on female migration, including flows of migrants, permanent migration, cyclical migration and irregular migrants. There is a need to undertake more research and produce more documentation on gender and internal and international migration, the gendered aspects of remittances and Diaspora investment, research and analysis on migration should include those left behind. Household surveys should be constructed to reflect mobility so that migrants become more visible. (Jolly, S. et al. 2005)
- More gendered research and a building up of research capacity is needed to provide the knowledge for context-specific and evidence-based migration policies. (Jolly, S. et al. 2005)

### **2. Mainstreaming gender concerns in the migration process (ESCWA, Centre for Women 2007)**

If women and men are to benefit from the empowering and development potential of migration, a shift is needed to a gendered human rights approach to migration. The key elements of such an approach could be:

- Immigration and emigration policies that enable women as well as men to take up opportunities that safe and regular migration may offer, and which will foster the positive impacts of migration for the social and economic development of migrants, and the receiving and sending countries..
- Mobilize around and support for international rights frameworks that offer protection for women migrants to ensure that governments ratify and adhere to such. This includes not only those relating to migrants such as ICMW, and trafficked peoples (Palermo Protocol), but also women-specific frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN Resolution 1325 and Beijing Platform for Action.
- Support for the acknowledgement and realization of the rights of migrants throughout the migration process, including providing pre-departure information on legal rights, facilitating remittances, ensuring access to basic services such as housing, education and health, and supporting migrant organizing and solidarity between different migrant groups to address issues of exclusion and isolation.
- Recognition of gender-related issues and suitable services and information for specific gender-related issues including: greater risks of violence, theft and fraud; trafficking and coercion, including forced marriage; access to and capacity for health and other services, including reproductive health services. (UNFPA & IOM)
- Providing pre-departure programs (in co-operation with migrant organizations in destination countries) including information and training for women on: conditions in the intended countries of destination; legal migration routes and the implications of irregular migration; human-rights entitlements, including rights to basic services; assistance in countries of transit

and destination, including consular support, local migrant organizations and destination-country NGOs; protecting health, including reproductive health; job opportunities in countries of destination; destination-country languages; and optimizing remittances while abroad and on return. (UNFPA & IOM), (ESCWA, Centre for Women 2007)

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