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Heba Nassar

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Demographic and Economic Module

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Temporary and Circular Migration: The Egyptian Case

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Abstract

The Egyptian distinction between temporary and permanent emigration depending on the destination countries is presented here mentioning that the key characteristic is that Egyptian emigration is mostly temporary.

Therefore, this is an attempt to capture circular migrants' economic and social behavior through a large set of field surveys and empirical data. The description focuses on the historical overview of the Egyptian emigration through its main periods, waves and destinations. Then, the main socio-demographic emigrants' characteristics (age, sex, education, activity) are presented with a focus on return migrants as a proxy for circular migrants.

The impact of emigration on the Egyptian economy and development has been tackled through two perspectives: a probable reduction of the demographic pressure on the labor market but with a controversial impact of migrants' transfers and social capital.

Finally, it has been suggested a mobility system where governments regulate and protect migrants through easing legal recruitment, providing clear emigration routes and enhancing the integration of return migrants.

Résumé

Au début, la distinction adoptée en Egypte entre émigration permanente et émigration temporaire selon les pays de destination a été rappelée mentionnant surtout que l'émigration égyptienne est essentiellement temporaire.

Ainsi, un essai d'approcher les comportements économiques et sociaux des migrants circulaires en revenant sur un large éventail de données d'enquêtes existantes a été initié. La description de l'émigration égyptienne a été abordée par un aperçu historique et à travers ces principales phases, vagues et destinations. Ensuite, les principales caractéristiques sociodémographiques des migrants (âge, sexe, éducation, emploi) sont présentées avec un accent mis sur les migrants de retour.

L'impact de l'émigration sur l'économie égyptienne a été abordé sur deux plans : un effet probable de réduction de la pression démographique sur le marché de travail conjugué à un impact incertain des transferts et du capital social des migrants.

Enfin, on préconise un système de mobilité régulé avec protection des migrants par les gouvernements à travers la facilitation du recrutement légal, la clarification des routes migratoires et la participation à l'intégration des migrants de retour.

Introduction

In recent years, a growing interest in reviewing and extending schemes for labour migration has emerged. Nevertheless, at a practical level, temporary or circular labour migration schemes appear to offer the best possibility for compromise between the interests of the governments and societies of origin and destination and the migrants themselves.

Of more direct concern to destination countries is the problem of how to ensure that temporary migration remains temporary, in spite of the notion saying that ‘there is nothing so permanent as temporary migration”.

A new approach to temporary labour that has received considerable attention recently involves extending commitments to service provision under Mode 4 of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which governs service provision through the temporary movement of natural persons (TMNP).

1. Egyptian migration stages

In general Egyptian labor migration underwent several phases. It started with a period of restrictions from the mid-1950’s until 1967 followed by a period of allowing migration, while trying to organize it from 1967 until the early 1970’s. During this period, Egypt signed the Labor Movement Agreement at the Arab League of Nations. Egypt also signed a number of dual agreements. At this time, a number of phenomena appeared. The most important of which is the gradual increase of oil revenues along with a critical economic condition in Egypt after the 1967 war (Nassar, H. 1988). Restrictions on migration were removed during the third phase, which starts from 1974 until now. The considerable rise of oil prices during the 1970’s was a major player in attracting Egyptian labor. The migration trend started falling back in the mid-1980’s when the number of Egyptian expatriates actually decreased for the first time in 1985. It then dropped drastically after the second Gulf war then gradually started increasing during the second half of the 1990’s.

Recent, middle range estimates suggest that there are almost more than three and half million Egyptians abroad (MOM, 2006). The large scale of remittance transfers suggests that emigrants remain in very close contact to their home societies. Emigration is clearly extremely significant at the national level. Egypt’s principle migration legislation, law number 111 of 1983, makes a clear distinction between permanent and temporary migration, though in practice the distinction is simply a geographical one with all migrants to Arab states defined as temporary, even though some have been there many years, and all migrants to Europe, North America or Australia defined as permanent, including those who have arrived very recently.

2. Egypt’s migration waves

Egypt is engaged in the three trends of migration in the MENA Region. Two trends of them are to a large extent. The first trend is the one that takes place between some MENA countries and other MENA countries that are not located in the Gulf area as Libya. Libya has been a pole of attraction for Egyptian labor in the South/South context, who were employed in nearly all sectors of the economy (notably construction), as oil revenues fueled phenomenal growth in government revenues and related investment in development projects.

The second trend is rather a phenomenon where the same sending country is the hosting country of migrant labor or rather, as precisely defined, the replacement migration as the case of Jordan. The third type is the traditional type of migration, which takes place between the non-Gulf labor exporting countries to the Gulf labor importing countries. At least until 1990, the predominant direction of

Egyptian migration within the MENA region was to the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for employment opportunities associated with increased government and private spending fueled by the high oil prices in the 1970s (Nassar et al, 2003).

Labor migration to oil Arab countries is mainly temporary through public and governmental authorities on the basis of bilateral and personal contracts with public and private authorities. Working in branches of Egyptian companies, especially in the construction sector, was one of the channels of temporary migration. In some cases, where temporary migrants resided for decades Egypt is experiencing, what is called *the permanence of temporary migration* as they always intended to return back.

In spite of the difference between temporary and circular migration we might come to the conclusion that *most of the Egyptian is temporary migration* and part of temporary is likely to be circular.

Meanwhile, since the beginning of the 1960s, with the nationalization wave, some Egyptians migrated permanently to USA, Canada, Australia, and Western European countries.

The most important five host countries of Egyptian migrants (Temporary and Permanent Migrants) are: Saudi Arabia, Libya, Jordan, USA and Canada. These five countries host 70.1% of Egyptian migrants in 2000. Saudi Arabia hosts alone more than 1/3 of Egyptian migrants.

Arab countries are the most important receivers of Egyptian temporary workers. The most important five host countries receiving outflows of employed nationals are: Saudi Arabia, Libya, Jordan, Kuwait and Iraq. These five countries received 91.4% of Egyptian employed outflows in 2000. Saudi Arabia alone received about 1/2 these outflows. Hence two-thirds of Egyptian migration is temporary, while the other third is permanent (IOM, 2003).

While Egyptian temporary migration witnessed an upsurge during the seventies and up till the late 1980s, the period 1989-2006 distinguished four phases:

During the period 1989-1991: Egyptian migration witnessed a downward trend due to the second Gulf war and the sudden huge return. Outflows of employed nationals decreased from 1.511 million in 1989 to 1.103 million in 1991, at an average annual rate of -14.6%. Total number of nationals abroad decreased too from 1.964 million to 1.541 million, at an average annual rate of –11.4%.

The period 1992-1997 witnessed an upward trend after the second Gulf war and the return to Kuwait as well as the stable economic conditions. Total number of contracts for Egyptian workers in Arab countries increased from a very low level of 589 in 1991 to 83.458 in 1994, when it reached its peak and then it began to decrease sharply.

Outflows of employed nationals increased from 1.221 million in 1992 to 2.181 million in 1997, at an average annual rate of 12.3%. Total number of nationals abroad increased from 1.856 million to 2.901 million, at an average annual rate of 9.3%. The increasing rate reached its peak in the years 1992/93 and then it tended to decrease sharply.

However, *beginning 1998,* another downward trend took place. This is partly due to the slowdown in the world economy as a consequence of the collapse of the East Asian Financial markets in 1997. Outflows of employed nationals decreased from 1.982 million in 1998 to 1.9 million in 2000, at an average annual rate of –2.1%. Total number of nationals abroad decreased from 2.806 million to 2.724 million, at an average annual rate of –1.5%. Hence, Egypt is witnessing in 2002 a negative net immigration rate (-0.42). Net number of migrants reached –150 thousands.

The new Labor Market Survey in 2006 indicated an increase in migration over the period 2003-current. The number of Egyptian migrants started to witness a continued increase starting 1999. *The period (2002-2005)* witnessed a significant increase in migration trend, jumping from 9.97% in 2002 to 20.17% in 2005 (Table 1 in Appendix).

Looking at the migrants flow in the last ten years, the following conclusions can be obtained:

- In households with only one member migrant, the number of Egyptian migrants started to witness a continued increase starting from 1999. The period (2002-2005) witnesses a significant increase in migration trend. (Jumping from 9.97% in 2002 to 20.17% in 2005).
- In households with two members migrants, 1991-1992 represented the minimal flow of migrants. Three points of peak can be found in terms of migration flows; 1997 (13.48%), 2001 (12.36%) and the highest (2004-2005) witnessing an increased trend of migration (from 19.48% in 2004 to 32.21% in 2005).
- In households with three members migrants, More than three quarters of the migrants departed in years 1999 and 2002.

Finally, Egypt is witnessing now a phenomenon of illegal migration from a few numbers to countries like Italy, Malta and Cyprus, the number of these migrants are increasing but in the range of hundreds. However, no one can predict its trend whether permanent or temporary and no consistent information is available.

3. Characteristics of migrants

This section highlights the main characteristics of Egyptian migrants in general depending on the results of several surveys: ILO-International Labour Migration Database (ILM) and Ministry of Manpower Data, the 1991, 1998 and 2006 CAPMAS/ERF (Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics/Economic Research Forum) survey (last national survey on migration) and the survey conducted with the support of the International Organization for Migration during the period between April and May 2003 in Cairo and included 103 interviews to Egyptians willing to migrate abroad. The interviews took place in the Emigration and Egyptian abroad Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Migration. This section is also referring to the results compiled by CAPMAS 2001 from data collected by "The Travel, Migration and Naturalization Department" (TMND) of the Ministry of Interior, from the permanent migration requests submitted by Egyptian citizens in Egypt (form no. 348) or from those submitted in the countries of destination by Egyptians, who obtained foreign citizenship (form no. 349). The data, which was compiled by CAPMAS, 2001 is not inclusive of all Egyptians who applied to be nationals of other countries or those, who became nationals of other countries while being abroad, but it can be used as an indicator of the relative volume and direction of Egyptian permanent migration. However the total number of permanent migrants amounted to 590 in the year 2000, of whom 221 travelled in their capacity as permanent migrants and 369 acquired the nationality of other countries while being abroad, this means that the characteristics of Egyptian migrants refer mainly to the characteristics of temporary migrants as they are the majority.

3.1. The majority of migrants are males

CAPMAS 1991 and 2006 survey indicated that Egyptian migrants were almost males (97.7% of current migrants). The majority of perspective migrants interviewed in the Migration section of the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Migration were, also, males (71.8%). This has several implications for the labor market in particular when migrants come from rural areas and women had to work on the farm as a substitute, phenomena observed during the peak of migration to the Gulf countries in the seventies and eighties and had several social implications.

3.2. Temporary migrants are relatively younger than permanent migrants

In general, Egyptian migration is characterized by strong age selectivity. The percentage of young age groups (18-34) among migrants is higher than among non-migrants. The probability to migrate is less among Egyptians 40 years old and above. Average age among migrants is 29.8 years old, while it is 35 years among non-migrants. The temporary nature of migration explains this pattern as younger people are ready to leave for a shorter period (Table 2 in appendix).

However for permanent migration, the average age structure is relatively higher, as the decision for a lifetime migration might be related to some more experience in life. CAPMAS 1991 and 2006 data show that the age group is for almost 90% of cases between 20 and 44 years old. The majority of perspective migrants interviewed in the Migration Section of the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower is composed of young and elderly people between 20 and 50 years of age (86.4%) and according to CAPMAS 2001 and the Labor Market Survey 2006, the age group of most of the permanent migrants ranges between 30-39 and 40-49 years old.

3.3. The majority of migrants are married

Concerning permanent migration the figures relating to the marital status in CAPMAS 1991 and 2006 are coincident with the results collected in the Ministry of Migration and Manpower. 63.1% of Egyptian migrants interviewed in the Migration section of the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower, while in CAPMAS results, 63.5% of cases, emigrants were married. Despite of that the surveys on Egyptian temporary migration show that most male migrants travel alone to the Gulf countries in the contrary to Jordanian and Lebanese family migration to the Gulf countries, which is also longer in time or even permanent. This pattern of migration has several social implications on the family structure, children's behavior and social norms.

3.4. The educational bias of migrants

In general, migrants in Egypt are better educated. The percentage of those with secondary and higher education among migrants is far higher than among non-migrants. More than 1/2 of Egyptian migrants (53.9%) completed secondary school or higher level of education, while they represent only less than 1/3 of non-migrants (30.2%). The percentage of those who did not get any formal education (15.4%) among migrants is less than half the percentage among non-migrants (37.7%) (Table 3 Appendix).

On the contrary of the last two decades, the CAPMAS and ERF Labor Market Survey 2006 shows that migration tends to be concentrated in two main educational groups; technical education graduates (32%) and university graduates (19%). But still illiterates constitute a considerable portion of the migrants as about one fifth of the migrants are illiterates (23.5%) (Table 4 Appendix).

3.5. The occupational status of migrants

The data show that since mid 1980s, the percentage of scientists and technicians has increased and the share of production workers in Egyptian migration has declined, although the percentage remains high comprising one-third of migrants in the year 2002. Unskilled laborers face labor compression in their traditional markets, due to new streams of cheap labor migrants coming from South-East Asia and heading the GCC countries. The percentage of scientists and technicians increased from 20.4% of all professions in 1985 to 40.2% in 1990 till 2002 (IOM 2003). While the percentage of scientists and technicians almost doubled, the percentage of clerical workers decreased to less than 1/5 the percentage in 1985. Sales and services and production workers tend to decrease also as a percentage of total temporary migrants (Table 5 & 6 in appendix.)

However, in the Labor Market of 2006, crafts workers represent two thirds of the migrants. Professionals and service workers came in the second place (15%) each while about one tenth of the migrants are skilled agricultural and fishery workers (Table 7 in the Appendix). Looking at the migrants sector of employment, most of the migrants (89%) work in the private sector (Table 8 in the Appendix).

3.6. Destinations of migrants

Still in 2006 the Gulf Arab countries represent the major recipients of Egyptian migrants (Table 9 in the appendix). Saudi Arabia comes in the first place absorbing around two fifths of the migrants (38.3%) followed by Jordan (14%), then Kuwait and Libya in the third place. Among the developed countries, the U.S.A. comes first followed by Italy. However we cannot consider this type of migration as circular migration

4. Circular migration before and after the Millennium

Table 10 in the appendix presents the characteristics of return migrants in Egypt in 1988 and 2006. Return migrants in 2006 had 12 percentage points more women in comparison to 1988 and were more likely to come from rural areas. Only 74 percent of returnees were heads of households in 2006 compared to 86 percent in 1988. Wahba, 2006 indicated also the higher level of education for returnees in 2006 to the returnees in 1988.

It was expected to observe the retreat in Iraq’s position as a destination country while, in 1988, Iraq was the main overseas destination, Saudi Arabia in 2006 was attracting around one-third of all overseas migrants.

4.1. Characteristics of Return circular migrants

The 2006 Labor Market Survey shows that more than three fourths of the return migrants are males (Table 11 in appendix). Looking at the age group; it seems that the rate of return migration moves upwards as the age group increases. It reaches its peak with the age group (40-49) (35.3%) and (50-59) (22.8%) and then it starts to decline significantly (Table 12 in appendix). When asked about the year the migrant departed the country previous to current location, year 1990 represented the peak (10.89%). The percentage of return migrants departing was very low across the period (1962-1984). The trend of the percentage of return migration showed a slight increase during the period (1993-1999) (Table 13 in appendix).

Year 2005 represents the peak for return migrants, nearly one fifth of the return migrants came back. Over the period 1996-1999, the trend of return migration witnessed a continuous increase to reach 16.67% in year 1999. However, the trend slowed down in 2000-2001 then it took off again to reach 11% in 2002 (Table 14 in appendix).

Examining the current occupation of the return migrants; one fifths were professionals, nearly one third is divided equally among legislators, senior officials and managers (16.85%) and skilled agricultural and fishery worker (16.85%) followed by technicians and associate, professional (12.8%) and craftsmen (11.97%) (Table 15 in appendix).

Meanwhile looking at the usual occupation of the return migrants; the same results obtained above apply. One fifths were professionals, nearly one third is divided equally among legislators, senior officials and managers (16.67%) and skilled agricultural and fishery worker (16.67%) followed by Technicians and associate, professional (12.7%) and craftsmen (12%) (Table 16 in appendix). Looking at the current job economic activity; services employ nearly half the return migrants (48.3%) with high concentration in trade, public administration & defense, social security and education. Industry comes in the second rank employing nearly one third of the workers (32.8%). Manufacturing and Construction absorbs the majority of return migrants employed in industry. Agricultural, hunting, and forestry comes in the third rank employing about one fifth of the return migrants (Table 17 in appendix). Looking at the current sector, the private sector employs about half of the return migrants (54.1%) followed by the government (39.4%) (Table 18 in appendix).

Looking at the country previous to the current location; Saudi Arabia and Iraq were the two main points of departure for the majority of return migrants (35.7% and 24.7% consecutively). The percentage of migrant workers who have departed from developed countries is minimal indicating the prevalence of temporary migration (Table 19 in appendix).

5. Impact of Migration on the Economy

5.1. The Labor Market

In general, return migration as either individual, relating to individual reasons for return, or part of 'reflux' migration larger scale returns responding to a change in conditions in the country of emigration. Reflux migration could have potentially negative effects on the Egyptian labour market due to the sudden, and typically unpredictable, increase in unemployment, often in similar sectors. Returns from permanent migrants from Libya in the mid 1980s or Iraq at the onset of the war with Iran were very significant events, involving tens of thousands of individuals returning within the space of a few months. Further research examined the effects of savings and skills acquired by return migrants while abroad.

In Egypt, unemployment is officially estimated at 8% in 2006 after 10% in 2005 and 9.2% in fiscal year 2000/01. Under-employment and reliance on the informal economy (often estimated at one third to one half the size of official GDP) are also major features of Egypt's economy. Government and private estimates put the number of job seekers entering the labor market annually at anywhere from 700,000 to 800,000.

Egypt's current employment problem is characterized by inadequate labor absorption of graduate students and under utilization of unskilled human resources. Additional problems are overstaffing in the government sector, coupled with shortages in skills, and negative implications for employees' productivity (Nassar, H.2006). The labor force (15+) reached 30.1% of total population. In accordance to official figures females represent 28 percent of the labor force (15+). The services sector absorbs the largest share of the labor force (48.6 percent) followed by the agricultural sector (30.4%), then the industrial sector (21%). The public sector still provides a large proportion of employment (29% of total employment in 2002). Given the fact of the limited capacity of the formal private sector in providing enough jobs, the informal sector -often estimated at one third to one half the size of official GDP- is playing an increasing role in providing employment opportunities. Almost 60% of the unemployed in Egypt are new entrants to the labor force. The profile of the currently unemployed differs significantly from that of workers who are likely to be displaced by economic reforms. Unemployment rate among secondary school graduates is the highest (20.4%) followed by university graduates (14.4%). Female unemployment rate was 25% in 2004 (CAPMAS, LFSS, 2004).

Several factors have contributed to this difficult situation in the labor market such as structural imbalances and inefficient policy on the supply and demand side, as well as mismatch between labor market requirements and educational output.

The streamlining and modernization of Egypt's civil service, through civil sector reform and privatization programs is ongoing. Layoffs are partly responsible for the relatively high rate of unemployment, despite national efforts at job creation. The private sector is still not large enough to absorb new entrants into the labor force. Egypt's growing population which, according to some estimates, may exceed 100 million people by 2020 continues to place a burden on limited resources.

Labor migration, whether temporary or permanent migrants, can affect the national labour market through many ways. It reduces the size of labour force by the number of migrants. It can reduce the number of unemployed by the same number either directly, if those who migrate were unemployed before their departure, or indirectly if they had been employed but were replaced by drawing from the unemployed. Migration affects labor force and the level of employment in other ways as well. The flow of remittances increases effective demand by increasing consumption and investment expenditure of the migrants and their families, which would inevitably be reflected in an increased demand for labor and a reduction in unemployment or at least in the level of unemployment that has revealed in the absence of migration. The greater availability of foreign exchange through remittances may also encourage an expansionary policy, which would have the same result. Migration may also increase the productivity of migrants if they acquire new work experiences and skills abroad and may through their savings and willingness to take risk add to supply of entrepreneurial abilities after their return to home country. On the other hand, migration may have a negative impact on specific sectors on the economy as a whole in so far as it creates shortages of certain skills that are not easily replicable.

In general, Egyptian labor migration, especially to major oil-exporting countries in the Middle East, may have provided Egypt a channel for surplus labor. However, little data is available that would allow to ascertain to what degree labor migration has helped to curb the unemployment problem in Egypt. Despite the fact that Stalker (2000) examined data for Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Turkey, Mexico and Egypt and found no significant relationship between emigration and unemployment, Bharagavi (2003) found that the single country where emigration has had effects on employment is Egypt.

Various other arguments support the evidence of the importance of migration as a channel for surplus labor. The 1960s and 1970s saw a transition from a Lewis-type labor surplus economy, where labor surplus manifests itself primarily as underemployment of low-skill labor in agriculture, to a stage where job creation was led by employment policies in the public sector. As this policy lost its importance as a labor absorptive policy, the labor market moved to a stage of high unemployment. With the growing working age population, this problem is intensified and migration was regarded as an outlet (Assaad, R. et al. 6/2000). Secondly, the importance of migration is manifested in the consequences the Egyptian economy was suffering from during the Gulf crisis, when Iraq and Kuwait were effectively removed from the map of receiving countries of the Gulf labor market for some years (Fergany 2001). Despite of the previous arguments several other writings emphasized the weak relationship between migration and unemployment. They pointed to the impact of selectivity of migration on the labor market. Migration is selecting the skilled from each occupation and many, who migrates has been working before, i.e. migrants were not coming from the unemployed pool (Nassar, H.2004).

However, despite the fact that temporary, or even permanent, migration provided an important safeguard to higher unemployment in all Egypt, particularly in the 1970-1980s, this option for employment abroad seems to be closing for many reasons. Indeed, migration to the Gulf appears to have reached its peak in the 1980s and leveled off somewhat since 1985. The main avenues for migration from Egypt to Europe and the GCC are no longer taking as much of Egypt’s excess labor supply as before. Falling oil prices in the 1990s and rising unemployment among nationals in the GCC countries, combined with competition from cheaper unskilled labor from Asian countries is also limiting the potential for migration from the Maghreb and the Mashreq to the Persian Gulf. The recent surge in oil prices does not seem reverting this trend. As a result of these factors, the capacity of Egypt to export its excess supply of labor is diminishing.

Moreover with globalization there will be a decline in the demand on unskilled workers. Most jobs created in the Arab Region in the 1970’s and 1980’s were concentrated in low-skill activities such as construction, retail and traditional handicrafts. The decrease in the migration of unskilled workers in both extra and intra regional migration coupled with the increase in skilled workers' migration, has triggered adverse implications for the competitive advantages in the Arab labor sending countries, both in their local and international markets.

On the other hand, the growing role of multinational companies led to a category of culturally distinct employees that are compatible with all countries where the company operates. Different systems apply to these employees and they gradually become detached from their societies, and their traveling among countries is determined by their companies and not by traditional immigration laws. The role these multinational companies play in migration in Arab countries is greater than their role in other parts of the world because of the globalization nature of several sectors in the Arab Region such as trade, transportation, finance, and oil. Their demand on workers follow international standards, consequently, the nature and sources of migration to these countries was divided into migration of costly qualified foreign skill and Arab/Asian migration of less skill workers (Fares, 2003). Hence, in the 1980's, the percentage of Arabs out of total incoming labor dropped from 75% in 1975 to 56% in 1985, and to almost 30% leaving great room for Asian migration.

Globalization will lead also to new distinct forms of migration. Among these forms is migration without departing the original country. Some companies resort to utilizing local labor in a climate that resembles work and life in the recipient countries. In doing so, they depend on communication means as is the case in India. Hence Egyptian labor face less migration opportunities to the Gulf states not only due to the diminishing economic capabilities, the completion of the infrastructure stage and the replacement by national labor force, but also because of the increasing orientation to new economy in the areas of communication and information, which reduces the need for unskilled labor and increases the need for high specific skills usually unavailable among nationals or neighboring countries nationals (Fares, 2003). Moreover, Egypt faces in the last years new forms of migration, including migration in place, where some companies would employ local labor force in a work environment similar to that in receiving countries, through the use of communication.

In addition, technology has helped create new types of work and there has become a need for more studies on what is so called "e-labor". These standards reduce the advantages of hiring expatriate labor and also impose amendments to local laws that govern migration.

5.2. Migrants' remittances in Egypt

The most obvious concern for new temporary labour migration schemes is the relationship between the duration of the migration and its development effects. Length of time spent abroad will be likely to influence savings and skills acquired and both are important in terms of remittances and the impact of return migration.

Barry McCormick and Jacqueline Wahba (2001; 2003) found that migrants who spent longer periods of time abroad returned with higher savings and were also more successful in the entrepreneurial activities that they were engaged in. Skill levels are less important than the relevance of those skills once the migrant has returned. Entrepreneurial ability is obviously the most important issue since a migrant who is able to create employment for others on their return is an extremely valuable asset.

These results have clear implications for temporary labour migration schemes. Egypt received the largest single-year amount of workers' remittances: $6.1 billion in 1992. According to the latest figures of the International Organization for Migration (2003), Egypt ranks third, after India and Mexico, among the countries, which receive the highest amount of remittances from migrants abroad (Ministry of Manpower & Migration-a 2003). As early as 1979, these remittances amounted to US$2 billion, a sum equivalent to the country's combined earnings from cotton exports, Suez Canal, transit fees and tourism. Remittances of Egyptians abroad amounted $2,876 million, making 4% of the Egyptian Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and resulting in $42 per capita (remittances divided by the total population of Egypt in 2001). Remittances in 2002/03 were about 85% of its value in 1993/94. The value of remittances deteriorated at –1.75% annually (Table 20 in appendix**).**

A previous study of the author indicated that remittances are among Egypt's largest sources of foreign currency, along with Suez Canal receipts and tourism revenues. Over the period 1990-2004 with the exception of the years 1992 & 1993, the data show a stable, but slightly decreasing trend in remittances at the level of US$ 3billion.(Ministry of Manpower and Migration-A,2003). In 2003-04, remittances contributed 6.3% of G.D.P. The upsurge in 1992/93 is explained partly by the fact that the Middle East, especially the Gulf region began to return to normality again after the Gulf War II to rebuild after the war (Nassar, H. 2004). The decline after this upsurge is attributed to the fall in oil prices in the Gulf countries that represent the major destinations for temporary Egyptian migrants. Poor exchange rates and general economic conditions in Egypt also discourage Gulf migrant workers from sending money home. Remittances declined during (1992-2001) faster than they did in the previous phase (at –8% annually). Net remittances decreased from 4257 million dollars to 2876 million dollars in 2001 at –3.5% annually. An obvious downward trend emerged during (1997-2001), reflecting the deceleration of the world economy after the collapse of the East Asian Financial markets 1997. Remittance decreased at –6.1% annually during (1997-2001) (IOM, 2003).

In 2003/04, the Arab countries as a whole contributed with 40.3% of remittances (1210.1 million $US) to Egypt, Saudi Arabia comes first contributing 21.3% of total remittances (639.6 million $US). U.S.A has the highest contribution, 37% of total remittances. A correlation can be observed between the number of migrants in these countries and the remittances sent. U.S.A. and Saudi Arabia have the highest number of permanent and temporary Egyptian migrants and they came first and second in terms of remittances. (Table 21 in appendix)

6. Impact of remittances on development in Egypt

The key question is do migrants invest in economic activities that raise the production capacity and generate further employment and capital/or do they spend their money on consumption? (Nassar, H. 2004)

At this point a kind of contradiction between the meaning of investment at the national and individual level may appear. For a return migrant, a new house or gold can be a kind of investment, whereas at the national level this kind of expenditure does not add to the productive capacity of the country.

Previous data show that half of all rural-origin returnees, and 42% of urban-origin returnees, invested in housing (mainly permanent). Such behavior may stimulate the creation of jobs in the national economy on a temporary base and not on a self generating base like productive investment. This pattern of investment is more prevalent in rural areas than urban areas. Another common factor in the studies of returnees' investment is the limited size of investment for buying new land for agriculture. This was explained on the ground that returnees are not any more attached to farming after migration. The rate of investment in gold and Jewellery and in Islamic banks is almost the same in urban and rural areas. A continuous yield is preferred than a promising yield, which means that return migrants are not innovators, who aim to alter a life style or change economic or social status but rather conservative migrants, who want to retain a certain life style (Table 22 in the appendix).

Ten percent of returnees invested in economic projects. The majority of enterprises are small scale with less than 5 employees- 86% of returnees' and 85% of non migrants. Moreover, to some extent, migration abroad (one seventh) resulted in a kind of economic partnership among return migrants. This is more prevalent in urban areas, where joint ventures and cooperatives are relatively more found than in rural areas and where the majority of families of permanent migrants reside.

There is a regional bias in the location of firms and jobs created by returnees compared to non-migrants, in favor of the capital city or the mega city. This means that the job creation will be concentrated in urban areas as returnees create on average 1.4 more jobs per establishment than do non migrants. Overall, return migrants are responsible for 15% of the capital invested in small enterprises and 15% of the associated employment generation (Nassar, H. 2004).

Moreover in several studies it was indicated that the migrants remittances are an important source of revenues for families, 74% of migrant households spent the largest share of funds received from relatives abroad on daily household expenses such as food, clothing and health care. Buying, building and/or renovating a house and financing the education of a household member rank second and third (7.3% and 3.9% respectively). Remittances in kind mainly include clothes and electronic equipment (IOM, 2003). Generally, only a small percentage of remittances are used for savings and "productive investments", i.e. for activities, which can generate income and employment.

Concerning the effects of migration on poverty, it has been indicated in a previous study that remittances are shown to have a small but positive effect on poverty. Remittances accounted for 14.7% of the total predicted per capita income of the poor households (Nassar, 2006).

Moreover, as indicated by Labor Market Survey 2006,, the main reason for 63% of temporary migrants (mostly from rural to urban) is to find work. This mechanism can be an important informal mechanism for poverty alleviation and job creation. Migrants network form a social capital in both countries of origin and countries of destination. On the one side, former migrant communities established in countries of destination facilitate the arrival and settlement, and often the employment, of new immigrants which are related to them, by kinship or just neighborhood, in the country of origin. In this case, migration builds on pre-existing social capital. It has been indicated that households, who receive remittances do not resort to financial aid as a coping strategy for difficulties as much as the other group of households.

7. Concluding Remarks: Important Considerations for New Circular Labour Migration Schemes

The question is how to explain the differences between the situations where circular migration promotes development and the situations where it appears to act more as a barrier to that development. In this respect, one must note that the private sector management of a large proportion of existing labour migration cannot be compared to the official regulation of migrant labour and protection of individual migrants, which must ultimately be the task of governments. Proposals for extension of GATS Mode 4 schemes to cover unskilled migration offer one of the easiest possibilities for the combination of greater ease of legal recruitment of foreign labour and increased penalties for illegal recruitment will inevitably have some effect. Subcontracting already operates in certain areas, such as construction, and could quickly and easily fill the gap in the legal labour market. Binding these agreements into the GATS system would provide clear routes to emigration that could also offer individuals in poorer countries immediate access to the labour market elsewhere.

Provision of necessary services for migrants, such as transport, decent housing and communication with family and friends in the home country would help the integration of the return migrants in their homes.

Recommendation includes significant measures to safeguard the rights of migrant workers in their temporary residence as well as the provision of inducement and information on the national labor markets.

Appendix

Table 1: Year migrants leave to work in a foreign country. Egypt, 2006

Year of leaving to abroad	Person, who work or live outside, serial no.			
	1	2	3	Total
1996	138	0	0	138
	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	2.50	0.00	0.00	2.37
1997	133	36	0	169
	78.70	21.30	0.00	100.00
	2.41	13.48	0.00	3.26
1998	190	0	0	190
	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
	3.44	0.00	0.00	3.26
1999	324	15	17	356
	91.01	4.21	4.78	100.00
	5.87	5.62	43.59	6.11
2000	672	24	0	696
	96.55	3.45	0.00	100.00
	12.17	8.99	0.00	11.94
2001	356	33	0	389
	91.52	8.48	0.00	100.00
	6.44	12.36	0.00	6.67
2002	551	19	17	587
	93.87	3.24	2.90	100.00
	9.97	7.12	43.59	10.07
2003	944	2	5	951
	99.26	0.21	0.53	100.00
	17.09	0.75	12.82	16.31
2004	1,102	52	0	1,154
	95.49	4.51	0.00	100.00
	19.93	19.48	0.00	19.79
2005	1,114	86	0	1,200
	92.83	7.17	0.00	100.00
	20.17	32.21	0.00	20.58
Total	5,524	267	39	5,830
	94.75	4.58	0.67	100.00
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: ERF and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table 2: Distribution of Migrants (return migrants) and non-Migrants by Age at Last Emigration (Migrants) or Five Years ago (Non-Migrants). Egypt, 2003

Age Group	Migrants	Non-Migrants
18-24	29.8	25.7
25-29	27.4	16.1
30-34	17.4	11.3
35-39	11.1	11.6
40-49	11.7	17.6
50+	2.6	17.7
Total (%)	100	100
Number	1.121	3.672
Mean Age	29.8 years	35.0 years

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (2003). Final Report of The Project: Why Do Migrants Leave Their Countries? Motivations to Migrate at The Point of Departure: The Case of Egypt.

Table 3: Educational Level of Migrants and Non-Migrants at Last Emigration (Migrants) or Five Years Ago (Non-Migrants).

Educational Level	Migrants	Non-Migrants
Non Formal Education	15.4	37.7
Incomplete Primary	18.7	18.5
Primary	7.8	8.8
Preparatory	4.2	4.9
Secondary	32.7	15.7
University or Higher	21.2	14.5
Total (%)	100	100
Number	1.121	3.672

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (2003). Final Report of The Project: Why Do Migrants Leave Their Countries? Motivations to Migrate at The Point of Departure: The Case of Egypt.

Table 4: Education level of Migrants. Egypt, 2006

Member's highest education level	Number	Percent	Cumulative percent
None	1,525	23.55	23.55
Primary	532	8.21	31.76
Preparatory	381	5.88	37.65
General Secondary	171	2.64	40.29
Technical Secondary	2,131	32.91	73.19
Above Intermediate	328	5.06	78.26
University	1,256	19.39	97.65
Post Graduate	152	2.35	100.00
Total	6476	100.00	

Source: ERF and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006.

Table 5: Distribution (%) by occupation of contracts between 1985, 1990 and 2002

Occupation	1985	1990	2002
Scientists and technicians	20.4	40.2	41.0
Managers	0.3	0.3	2.4
Clerical Workers	8.8	8.0	1.5
Sales and Services	18.5	17.3	12.7
Agriculture animal husbandry & fishing	8.9	5.3	8.6
Production workers	43.0	28.9	33.8
Total	100	100	100

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (2003). Final Report of The Project: Why do Migrants Leave Their Countries? Motivations to Migrate at The Point of Departure: The Case of Egypt.

Table 6: The highly skilled Egyptian migrants to OECD countries according to country of residence, 2003

Country of Residence	Number (in Thousands)	%
USA	318	38.6
Canada	110	13.3
Australia	70	8.5
United Kingdom	35	4.2
France	36	4.3
Germany	25	3
Switzerland	14	1.8
Netherlands	40	4.8
Austria	14	1.8
Italy	90	10.9
Spain	12	1.4
Greece	60	7.4
Total	824	100

Source: CAPMAS, 2003.

Table 7: The occupational status of migrants. Egypt, 2006

Member current occupation (1-digit code)	Number	%
Legislators, Senior officials and manager	95	1.56
Professionals	970	15.97
Technicians and associate, professional	303	4.99
Clerks	152	2.50
Service workers, shop and market	934	15.38
Skilled agricultural and fishery worker	689	11.35
Craft and related trades workers	2396	39.45
Plant and machine operators and assembly	381	6.27
Elementary occupations	153	2.52
Total	6073	100.00

Source: ERF and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table 8: Distribution of Migrants by sector of activity. Egypt, 2006

Member sector of employment	Number	%
Government	362	5.66
public enterprise	100	1.56
Private	5704	89.19
Investment	76	1.19
Foreign	134	2.10
Other including cooperatives	19	0.30
Total	6395	100.00

Source: ERF and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table 9: Distribution of migrants by country of residence and work. Egypt, 2006

Country of destination	Number	%
Egypt	19	0.29
Libya	855	13.21
Saudi Arabia	2,461	38.03
Iraq	19	0.29
Kuwait	856	13.23
Jordan	929	14.36
Emirates	780	12.05
Lebanon	57	0.88
Qatar	115	1.78
Oman	38	0.59
South Africa/Sudan	76	1.17
France	19	0.29
USA	114	1.76
Italy	76	1.17
Canada	38	0.59
Greece	1	0.02
Afghanistan	18	0.28
Total	6741	100.00

Source: Economic Research Forum and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table 10: Characteristics of return overseas migrants in 1988 & 2006

	1988	2006
Male (%)	94.32	82.01
Mean Age (in years)	38.84	41.86
Heads of Households (%)	86.35	73.06
Education (%)		
Illiterate	29.7	15.71
Read & write	18.06	6.97
Less than Intermediate	9.56	12.83
Intermediate	20.1	36.76
Higher than Intermediate	4.25	4.69
University	18.3	23.04

Region of Origin (%)		
Urban	48.54	36.18
Rural	51.46	63.82
Occupation (%)		
Technical & Scientific	23.07	31.96
Management	2.32	15.83
Clerical	7.13	6.49
Sales & Services	13.41	5.77
Services		
Agriculture	28.27	18.83
Production	25.8	21.13

Source: Wahba, Jackline (2006) "Preliminary Analysis of Internal and International Migration"*(Preliminary Results of Egypt Labour Market Survey 2006)*

Table 11: Distribution of return migrants by gender. Egypt, 2006

Sex	Number	%
Male	475	79.17
Female	125	20.83
Total	600	100.00

Source: Economic Research Forum and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table 12: Distribution of return migrants by age group. Egypt, 2006

Age group	Number	%	Cumulative %
15-19	32	5.33	5.33
20-29	87	14.50	19.83
30-39	94	15.67	35.50
40-49	212	35.33	70.83
50-59	137	22.83	93.67
60-64	26	4.33	98.00
>65	12	2.00	100.00
Total	600	100.00	

Source: Economic Research Forum and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table (13): Distribution of migrants by year of travel to the country previous to current location. Egypt, 2006

Year of travel	Number	%	Cumulative %
1955	1	1.23	1.23
1966	2	2.47	3.70
1976	6	7.41	11.11
1977	1	1.23	12.35
1978	1	1.23	13.58
1979	4	4.94	18.52
1980	1	1.23	19.75
1981	1	1.23	20.99
1982	5	6.17	27.16

Year of travel	Number	%	Cumulative %
1983	2	2.47	29.63
1984	2	2.47	32.10
1985	5	6.17	38.27
1986	2	2.47	40.74
1987	2	2.47	43.21
1988	4	4.94	48.15
1989	5	6.17	54.32
1990	4	4.94	59.26
1991	4	4.94	64.20
1992	10	12.35	76.54
1993	1	1.23	77.78
1994	2	2.47	80.25
1995	3	3.70	83.95
1996	1	1.23	85.19
1997	4	4.94	90.12
1998	2	2.47	92.59
1999	3	3.70	96.30
2000	2	2.47	98.77
2002	1	1.23	100.00
Total	81	100.00	

Source: Economic Research Forum and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table (14): Distribution of migrants by year of return from migration. Egypt, 2006

Year return from migration	Number	%	Cumulative %
1996	18	10.00	10.00
1997	17	9.44	19.44
1998	24	13.33	32.78
1999	30	16.67	49.44
2000	9	5.00	54.44
2001	6	3.33	57.78
2000	20	11.11	68.89
2003	10	5.56	74.44
2004	13	7.22	81.67
2005	32	17.78	99.44
2006	1	0.56	100.00
Total	180	100.00	

Source: Economic Research Forum and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table 15: Distribution of migrants by current Job Occupation. Egypt, 2006

Current job occupation	Number	%
Legislators, Senior officials and managers	76	16.85
Professionals	91	20.18
Technicians and associate, professional	58	12.86
Clerks	32	7.10
Services & shop / market sale Workers	30	6.65

Skilled agricultural and fishery worker	76	16.85
Craft and related trades workers	54	11.97
Plant and machine operators and assembly	25	5.54
Elementary occupations	9	2.00
Total	451	100.00

Source: Economic Research Forum and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table 16: Distribution of migrants by usual job occupation. Egypt, 2006

Usual job occupation	Number	%
Legislators, Senior officials and managers	75	16.67
Professionals	90	20.00
Technicians and associate, professional	57	12.67
Clerks	32	7.11
Services & shop / market sale Workers	32	7.11
Skilled agricultural and fishery worker	74	16.44
Craft and related trades workers	54	12.00
Plant and machine operators and assembly	26	5.78
Elementary occupations	10	2.22
Total	450	100.00

Source: Economic Research Forum and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table 17: Distribution by Current Job Economic Activity. Egypt 2006

Current Job Economic Activity	Number	%
Agricultural, hunting, forestry	81	17.96
Fishery	2	0.44
Mining & quarry	2	0.44
Manufacturing	45	9.98
Electricity, Gas & water supplies	5	1.11
Construction	29	6.43
Wholes & retail trade	67	14.86
Hotels & Restaurants	12	2.66
Transportation, storage & communication	30	6.65
Financial intermediation	5	1.11
Real estate, rent.& business activity	13	2.88
Public administration & defense/ social security	66	14.63
Education	61	13.53
Health & social work	19	4.21
Others community, social & personal services	12	2.66
Private households with employed persons	2	0.44
Total	451	100.00

Source: Economic Research Forum and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table 18: Distribution by Current sector. Egypt, 2006

Current sector	Number	%
Government	163	39.37
Public enterprise	18	4.35
Private	224	54.11
Joint venture	7	1.69
Other	2	0.48
Total	414	100.00

Source: Economic Research Forum and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table 19: Distribution of migrants by country previous to the current location. Egypt, 2006

Country previous to the current location (return migrant)	Number	%
Libya	67	12.09
Saudi Arabia	198	35.74
Iraq	137	24.73
Kuwait	41	7.40
Jordan	47	8.48
Emirates	15	2.71
Lebanon	4	0.72
Qatar	5	0.90
Oman	7	1.26
Yemen	9	1.62
Syria	2	0.36
Algeria	1	0.18
South Africa/Sudan	9	1.62
USA	1	0.18
Italy	3	0.54
U.K.	1	0.18
Cyprus-Turkey	2	0.36
Australia	1	0.18
Greece	1	0.18
Netherlands	1	0.18
Slovakia	2	0.36
Total	554	100.00

Source: Economic Research Forum and Population Council, Egypt Labor Market Survey, 2006

Table 20: Worker's Remittances 1993/94 to 2002/03 at Constant Prices (1999/2000=100)

Year	Worker's Remittances-US$ Millions	Average Growth Rate%
1993/94	4866.11	-
1994/95	4325.41	-11%
1995/96	3522.20	-19%
1996/97	3690.87	5%
1997/98	3873.02	5%
1998/99	3465.90	-11%

1999/2000	3711.00	7%
2000/2001	2926.40	-21%
2001/2002	2907.87	-1%
2002/2003	2689.25	-8%
1993-2003	-44.7% (total period)	-6.4% (annually)

Source: Ministry of Foreign Trade Bulletin, Several issues.

Table 21: Remittances of Egyptian Working Abroad by Country in US$ (million), 2001/02*

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

*Fiscal year 2001/2002.

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

Table 22: Use of Savings by Region of Origin %

	Urban	Rural	Total Sample
Islamic Companies	3.64	1.18	2.88
Banks	14.99	3.46	9.02
Investment Companies	3.76	0.96	2.35
Gold & Jewellery	3.61	3.37	3.49
Agricultural & Land reclamation	0.85	3.29	2.11
Housing	41.27	50.81	46.20
Land	0.88	0.77	0.82
Other Economic Projects	11.32	3.30	7.17
Securities and Shares	0.06	0	0.03
Others	8.95	7.75	8.33
No Saving	29.6	34.7	32.3

Source: Nassar, Heba (1991) "Labor Information System Project: Return Migration" (Cairo: Central Agency for Public Mobilization)

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