



Viewpoints

Migration and the Mashreq

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Introduction

The first volume of the Migration and the Arab World series dealt primarily with the trends in, consequences of, and policy responses to labor migration in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states since the “oil boom” period of the 1970s. This volume focuses on the countries of the Mashreq (i.e., Egypt and the Levant) as source and destination countries for various migrant groups, dating from the late 19th century up to the present day.

The 17 essays included in this volume depict the Mashreq as a magnet for foreign workers and as a labor pool for unskilled and skilled workers who have fanned out across the Middle East and the world. They also depict the Mashreq as home to one of the world’s largest populations of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), whose presence, among other things, has transformed the region’s urban landscape.

The essays discuss the underlying and proximate causes of migration, as well as the agents and networks that have enabled migrants to find work, finance their trips abroad, sustain themselves, and maintain their attachments to their native lands and the families they have left behind. In so doing, the contributors shed light on the transnational processes that nurture economic interaction and a sense of shared identity between migrant and diaspora populations.

I. Patterns

Lebanese Migration to the Gulf (1950-2009)

Guita Hourani

Migration from Lebanon, a phenomenon that began in the late 1800s, has ebbed and flowed according to the socio-political situation in the country, as well as in the countries of immigration. Prior to the First World War, Lebanese emigrated to the United States, Canada, Australia, Africa, and Latin America. After the Second World War, migration shifted to the oil-producing countries of the Arabian Peninsula, mainly Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Since the 1980s, all of the Gulf states, and especially the United Arab Emirates (UAE), have attracted a large number of Lebanese migrants, whose remittances have been a major boon to their country of origin.



THE “PULL” OF LEBANESE MIGRANTS TO THE GULF

According to Boutros Labaki, migration from Lebanon to the oil-producing countries increased between 1960 and 1970, when “the demand for manpower in different sectors of their economies ... gave the decisive boost to Lebanese emigration.”¹ One of the “pull factors” was the increase in oil prices after 1973.² Riad Tabbarah puts the number of Lebanese emigrants residing in the Arab oil-producing countries by 1980 at 110,000. According to his calculation, Kuwait was the main destination in 1975 with 25,200 Lebanese emigrants, followed by Libya with 10,900, and Saudi Arabia with 8,000.³ However, a shift subsequently took place whereby Saudi Arabia became the largest employer of Lebanese migrants with 97,300 in 1980, followed by Kuwait with 34,500, and the UAE with 18,000.⁴ According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), by 1982 there were 127,000 Lebanese emigrants in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman.⁵

The majority of Lebanese migrants in the Gulf in the early 1980s worked in construction, followed by the trade, tourism, transport and communications, banking, and public service sectors.⁶ Marwan Maaouia states that “while there is a generally valid correlation to be drawn between job occupation and geographical origins, this correlation does not hold for the Lebanese who have tended to play in a league of their own ... The Lebanese do not fit into the correlation that is otherwise to be found between job occupation and nationality. They have tended to spread themselves fairly evenly in different sectors.”⁷

Nor does the typical Lebanese migrant to the Gulf fit the stereotype of the unskilled and

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1. Boutros Labaki, “Lebanese Emigration During the War (1975-1989),” in Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi, eds., *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, The Center for Lebanese Studies (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1992), p. 605.

2. Marwan Maaouia, “Lebanese Emigration to the Gulf and Saudi Arabia,” in Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi, eds., *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, The Center for Lebanese Studies (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 1992), p. 651.

3. Riad Tabbarah, “Arab Development and Lebanese Human Resources,” in *Population Policy in Lebanon* (Beirut: Lebanese University Institute of Social Sciences Research Centre Publications, 1982), p. 50.

4. Tabbarah, “Arab Development and Lebanese Human Resources,” p. 50.

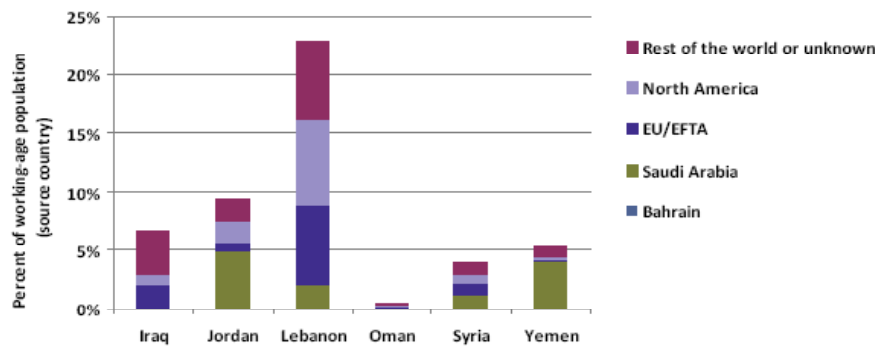
5. Labaki, “Lebanese Emigration During the War (1975-1989),” p. 611.

6. Labaki, “Lebanese Emigration During the War (1975-1989),” p. 612.

7. Maaouia, “Lebanese Emigration to the Gulf and Saudi Arabia,” p. 654-655.

illiterate worker. As Maaouia has shown, even in the early 1980s “the Lebanese emigrant tends to be an educated worker in the high salary bracket.”⁸ Philippe Fargues estimated in 2006 that 51.8% of Lebanese emigrants had a university education.⁹ According to a multinational leader in the field of transportation and computer solutions with a regional office for the Middle East, North Africa, and the Indian subcontinent stated “that 35% of the directorship positions in the Gulf countries are occupied by Lebanese.”¹⁰ The latest World Bank publication ranked Lebanon 28th among the 30 countries with the highest emigration percentage as a proportion of its educated labor force; at that time, the emigration rate in Lebanon exceeded 38%.¹¹

Figure 10: Destination of out-migration (estimated stock of migrants; in per cent of working-age population of source country)



Note: Due to the lack of data for a number of countries, the actual levels of out-migration could possibly be significantly higher.

Source: Own calculations based on D. Ratha and W. Shaw: South-South Migration and Remittances, World Bank Working Paper 102 (Washington, DC, 2007) and United Nations World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision (New York, United Nations).

Source: Impact of Financial Crisis on Arab Countries. p. 11.

In an interview with *As Safir* newspaper in December 2008, Finance Minister Mohammad Chatah stated that about one-third of Lebanon’s workforce, or about 350,000 people, were working in the Gulf.¹² However, it is important to note that the total number of Lebanese immigrants in the Gulf countries is based on estimates. Different sources claim different numbers; these numbers range between 124,000 (Fargues) and 350,000 (Shatah).

Maaouia states that the reason for migration to the Gulf states is that “the greater number of emigrants come from the two extremes of the social ladder: the already successful and wealthy in search of new opportunities, and the underprivileged who hope to do better abroad than they did at home.”¹³ The massive destruction and displacement resulting from the summer 2006 war in Lebanon, as well as the subsequent civil unrest and intermittent assassinations, gave a further boost to migration. In a study entitled *Insecurity, Migration and Return: The Case of Lebanon Following the Sum-*

8. Maaouia, “Lebanese Emigration to the Gulf and Saudi Arabia,” p. 655.

9. Philippe Fargues, “International Migration in the Arab Region: Trends and Policies,” paper presented at the United Nations Expert Group Meeting on International Migration and Development in the Arab Region, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Secretariat, Beirut, May 15-17, 2006, p. 11, http://www.un.org/esa/population/migration/turin/Symposium_Turin_files/P09_Fargues.pdf.

10. Choghig Kasparian, “La Migration Circulaire au Liban: Perspective Démo-économique,” *Série sur la Migration Circulaire: Module Démographique et Économique*, CARIM AS 2008/06, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): Institut Universitaire Européen, pp. 4-5.

11. Ç. Özden and M. Schiff, *International Migration Remittances, and the Brain Drain* (Washington, DC and New York: World Bank and Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 173-176.

12. “Lebanon Starts to Feel the Pinch of Financial Crisis,” *Reuters*, December 6, 2008, <http://www.gulfnews.com/BUSINESS/Economy/10265415.html>.

13. Maaouia, “Lebanese Emigration to the Gulf and Saudi Arabia,” p. 657.

mer 2006 War, of the 460 surveyed Lebanese residents between the ages of 21 and 45, 60% indicated that they wanted to emigrate, just over two-thirds of whom confirmed that the war had helped lead them to the decision. The same study showed that the main destination preferred by those who intended to emigrate was Europe, followed by the Gulf countries.¹⁴

THE INFLOW OF REMITTANCES TO LEBANON FROM THE GULF STATES

Lebanon relies heavily on remittances from Lebanese expatriates. Remittances played, and continue to play, a vital role in the life of Lebanon and its people. They are country's most stable financial flow. On the micro level, remittances are considered a safety net for families afflicted by political and security turbulence, unemployment, underemployment, and the burdens of children's education, and/or caring for the sick. Facilitated by both the sending countries and receiving countries, remittances "have emerged as a critical insurance mechanism for residents of countries afflicted by economic and political crisis (Lebanon during its civil war, Haiti...)"¹⁵ On the macro level, remittances increase the country's stock of foreign currency, and when consumed, remittances generate a positive multiplier effect.

There is no exact figure for the total remittances inflow originating from the Gulf. However, we can estimate that the majority comes from the Gulf based on migration numbers. According to Dilip Ratha and Zhimei Xu, the stock of emigrants in 2005 stood at 621,903, or 17.4% of the population.¹⁶ If we accept this figure of 621,903 emigrants and Choghig Kasparian's estimate that 35% of Lebanese emigrants are in the Gulf, then taking the \$5 billion of remittances received by Lebanon in 2005, we can estimate remittances by Lebanese from the Gulf at \$1.7 billion. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries accounted for 57% of the total of \$960.4 million electronic cash transfers to Lebanon in 2008, with the UAE being the leading source with \$227.3 million.¹⁷ Some experts estimate that an equal number is remitted informally, both in cash and in kind.

Figure 14: Estimated distribution of outgoing remittances from Saudi Arabia (2005)



Source: D. Ratha and W. Shaw: South-South Migration and Remittances, World Bank Working Paper 102 (Washington, DC, 2007).

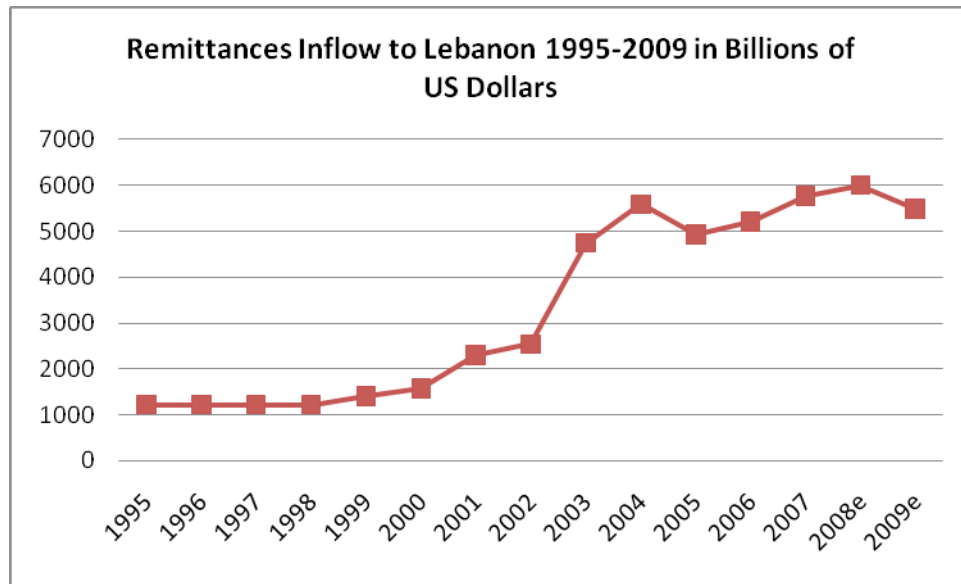
Source: Impact of Financial Crisis on Arab Countries, p. 15.

14. Guita Hourani and Eugene Sensenig-Dabbous, *Insecurity, Migration and Return: The Case of Lebanon Following the Summer 2006 War* (Florence, Italy: The Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration [CARIM]), http://www.iue.it/RSCAS/e-texts/CARIM-RR2007_01_Hourani&Sensenig.pdf.

15. Devesh Kapur and Center for Global Development, "Remittances: The New Development Mantra?" (August 25, 2003), http://www.livelihoods.org/hot_topics/docs/RemitMantra.pdf.

16. "Migration and Remittances in Lebanon," *Migration and Remittances Factbook*, Development Prospects Group, World Bank, c. 2005, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1181678518183/Lebanon.pdf>.

17. "Cash Transfers up 32% to \$1.4bn in 2008, UAE is Largest Source and Philippines is Main Destination," *Lebanon this Week*, Bank By-blos, Issue No. 126 (July 20-24, 2009), p. 3.



Source: World Bank, *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2008* (March 2008). The 2009 figures are estimates. The World Bank estimated that remittances for 2009 will drop between 7-10%.

Gross remittance inflows are vital to the Lebanese economy, constituting between 20% (2008)¹⁸ and 24.4% (2007)¹⁹ of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), making the country one of the largest recipients of remittances as a share of GDP in the world. Indeed, Lebanon's Finance Minister Mohammad Chatah has stated that the income of Lebanese expatriates working in the Gulf is four times that of their compatriots in Lebanon.²⁰

CONCLUSION

The flow of remittances into Lebanon has been on a rising trajectory, as the above graph illustrates. This is due not only to the good incomes that Lebanese expatriates earn, but also to the steady increase in the number of emigrants from Lebanon to many destinations, especially to the Gulf states. If insecurity continues to plague Lebanon and if the Gulf states maintain their pace of development and their need for qualified personnel, emigration from Lebanon will continue to intensify, especially if Lebanon continues to possess "a reservoir of qualified human resources."²¹

18. "IMF Report Proposes Adding Remittances to Lebanon's GDP," *Daily Star*, September 30, 2009, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=3&article_id=106972.

19. UNDP, *Human Development Report 2009: Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (2009), p. 160, http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR_2009_EN_Complete.pdf.

20. "Lebanon Starts to Feel the Pinch of Financial Crisis."

21. Kasparian, "La Migration Circulaire au Liban: Perspective Démo-économique," pp. 4-5. The UNDP World Population Prospects predicts that in 2015 Bahrain will be the main destination of emigration for those in the 20-25-year-old age bracket. See Philippe Fargues, *Emerging Demographic Patterns Across the Mediterranean and their Implications for Migration through 2030* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, November 2008), p. 25.

Syro-Lebanese Migration (1880-Present): “Push” and “Pull” Factors

Eliane N. Fersan

The earliest examples of modern Lebanese¹ migration date to the 1850s with Anthony al-Bishalani, who migrated to the United States. However, scholars consider the 1880s to be the beginning of a larger migration phenomenon. A few decades after al-Bishalani set foot in America, Michel Chiha asserted that “we could not be able to live without emigration, but if emigration became too vast, it would be the end of us.”² After five waves of emigration, Lebanon today faces just such a dilemma.

THE FIRST WAVE: 1880-1914

According to Charles Issawi, migration from Lebanon to the New World began to intensify during the second half of the 19th century, when Mount Lebanon was the scene of several regional and international conflicts that led to civil wars, notably between Maronite Christians and the Druze in 1840 and 1860.³ After 1861, peace also had its share in promoting migration: Missionaries founded medical dispensaries and schools that helped to reduce mortality and raise the level of education to meet the needs of a flourishing tertiary sector. This led to a demographic boom in the Mount Lebanon area, spurring an “internal exodus,” mainly to Beirut, while the number of educated people outnumbered the available jobs, pushing those who were less educated to seek employment outside Lebanon. Furthermore, Beirut’s population, which had quadrupled between 1830 and 1850, doubled between 1865 and 1920, as a result of the internal exodus from the over-populated Mount Lebanon area.⁴

The Mutasarifiat brought new challenges: The new political regime allowed free trade, which led to an influx of European goods into the Lebanese market. As a result, Mount Lebanon’s economy shifted rapidly from an autarchic regime to enmeshment with the world economy, which required the use of cash whereas Lebanese relied on barter and exchange of goods. Peasants tried to compensate for this deficiency by taking personal loans to buy mulberry trees, necessary for the production of silk — then the backbone of the Lebanese economy, accounting for 82% of Mount Lebanon’s exports.⁵ At that time, 40% of cultivated land was allocated to growing mulberry trees. This resulted in an export-driven monoculture,⁶ and Mount Lebanon had to resort to importing raw foodstuffs such as wheat in a period of demographic expansion and heavy debts. In



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1. The early migration from the Ottoman occupied lands was mainly from Lebanon. However, Lebanese were first registered in official records of ports of entry as Turks, as they held Turkish passports. Therefore, the term “Syro-Lebanese” is the proper term to refer to the pre-Mandate era, taking into account that the majority of migrants originated from modern day Lebanon.

2. Michel Chiha, *Lebanon at Home and Abroad*, Leo Arnold and Jean Montegu, trans. (Beirut: The Publications of the Cenacle, 1966), p. 114.

3. Charles Issawi, “The Historical Background of Lebanese Emigration: 1880-1914,” in Albert H. Hourani and Nadim Shehadi, eds., *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), pp. 13-31.

4. Leila Tarazi-Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut*, Harvard Middle Eastern Studies, No. 18 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), pp. 2-3.

5. Akram Khater, “House to Goddess of the House: Gender, Class and Silk in the 19th Century Mount Lebanon,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (1996), pp. 326-27.

6. Boutros Labaki, “L’émigration libanaise en fin de période ottomane (1850-1914),” *Hannon Revue Libanaise de Géographie*, Vol. 19 (1987), p. 9.

1890, 18 years after the silk boom, the economy was heavily challenged: A “silk crisis” occurred, as cheaper and better quality Chinese silk products flooded European markets, previously the main destination for Lebanese silk.

This crisis corresponded with the 19th-century coastal revival, “owing to growth of trade with Europe following the industrial revolution and the development of steam navigation.” At least ten steam navigation lines operated regularly from the port of Beirut. Migrants could thus easily go back and forth, carrying home success stories from America and attracting more young, and ambitious but unskilled men seeking wealth and prosperity in the New World.⁷

However, seeking a better life was not the only motive for migration; a large number of young men fled conscription. Hitti asserts that every steamer heading to the Americas was full of young men seeking to avoid military service.⁸ Here Christian residents of the *wilayets* of Beirut, Saida, and Tripoli were the direct targets, as Christians of the Mutassarifiyate were granted a special status guaranteed by the *Règlement Organique*.⁹ “It was like a gold rush,” as steamship agents — usually returning migrants who marketed their success stories in the New World — “recruited passengers for the ships in form of cheap labor for America’s industries.”¹⁰ High-interest credit was offered to those who could not afford to buy a ticket.¹¹

**Seeking a better life
was not the only mo-
tive for migration.**

Red-tiled Italian-style houses were seen all over the mountain; everywhere, signs of prosperity and wealth encouraged young men to emigrate, leading to an “emigration fever.”¹² About 45% of Mount Lebanon’s population is said to have emigrated between 1860 and 1914; Mount Lebanon’s population in 1913 is estimated to have been 468,714.¹³

The irreversible Occidental orientation of Lebanon, as described by Karam Rizk, also was encouraged by the missionary schools, which introduced Western culture to Lebanese society. Meanwhile, foreign languages were taught and spoken in the streets of Beirut,¹⁴ attracting yet more Lebanese youth to the West.

Egypt was the first destination for Syro-Lebanese, who were drawn there by its prosperous economy and the freedom of speech promoted under British tutelage. Later on, two large exhibitions held in Philadelphia in 1876 and in Chicago in 1893 had a significant influence on migration, as the Ottoman Empire favored wider participation and representation of the Sultanate in these exhibitions and therefore encouraged Syro-Lebanese to participate.¹⁵

It was the economic growth in the Americas that had a direct impact on migration: Syro-Lebanese were “pulled” by the opportunities that were offered in the United States, which had the highest growth rate of income per capita among industrial countries (4.3% *per annum*) between 1879 and 1913.¹⁶

7. Tarazi-Fawaz, *Merchants and Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Beirut*, p. 2.

8. Philip Hitti, *The Syrian in America* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1924), p. 51.

9. Abdallah Al-Mallah, “Mount Lebanon Mutassarifiyate Between 1903 and 1915: The Global Political and Sociological Reality,” PhD dissertation, Fanar, Lebanese University, Section II, 1990, p. 11.

10. F. Kleem, “The Cleveland Maronite Lebanese and Education,” PhD dissertation, Cleveland, Ohio, 1986, p. 20, cited in Louis Ferkh, “Conflict and Migration: The Lebanese Emigrants’ Potential Role in the Development of Lebanon,” PhD dissertation, University of Limerick, 1991, p. 84.

11. Hitti, *The Syrian in America*, p. 53.

12. Ferkh, “Conflict and Migration: The Lebanese Emigrants’ Potential Role in the Development of Lebanon,” p. 84.

13. Youssef Courbage and Philippe Fargues, *La situation démographique du Liban, Analyses et données* (Beirut : publication du Centre de Recherches de l’Institut des Sciences Sociales de l’Université Libanaise, 1974), cited in Boutros Labaki, “*L’émigration libanaise en fin de période ottomane* (1850-1914),” pp. 8, 15.

14. Rev. Karam Rizk, “Vie spirituelle et culturelle au Liban de 1845 à 1870,” *Parole de l’Orient*, Vol. 15 (1988/89), pp. 321-322.

15. Alixa Naff, “Lebanese Immigration into the United States: 1880 to the Present,” in *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration* (Oxford: The Center for Lebanese Studies, 1922), p. 144.

16. Boutros Labaki, “*L’émigration libanaise en fin de période ottomane* (1850-1914),” p. 14.

The rubber boom in Brazil also attracted migrants in the 1890s. Demography was an essential catalyst, as the underpopulated American continent offered opportunities for both skilled and unskilled migrants. In Brazil, the abolition of slavery allowed Lebanese to find work as peddlers, selling goods in the Brazilian hinterlands.¹⁷

Freedom of speech also was an essential “pull” factor — attracting immigrants to the United States, Canada, Brazil, Argentina, and other Latin American countries. Lebanese migrants, according to Hitti, “hardly [...] fail to refer to [their] desire [...] to live [a] life free and unhampered from political restraints as the chief motive for [their] coming into the United States.”¹⁸ This could be the reason behind the founding of several Arabic magazines in the New World addressing Mount Lebanon and issues of the homeland. The number of newspapers and magazines surpassed that in the Mutasarifiat.¹⁹ Chiha attributes Syro-Lebanese emigration to “the ingenuity of the Near Easterner [which] is a basic element in his assets — an integral part of his stock-in-trade; and this ingenuity becomes effective only outside or above regulations and restraint.”²⁰

This first wave of Syro-Lebanese immigrants — most of whom were illiterate, unskilled, and single males — remitted large sums of money that helped balance Mount Lebanon’s economy and contributed to the decongestion of the cities by reducing the toll of unemployment — the direct outcome of rural exodus.

THE SECOND WAVE: 1915-1945

The First World War sea blockade halted emigration for three years (1915-18), but the outflow of Lebanese resumed as soon as the war ended. Emigration continued until the third quarter of 1920 and the proclamation of the French Mandate over Lebanon. Thereafter, a series of factors dramatically reduced the number of emigrants: the US quota for immigration, the stability brought to Lebanon by the French Mandate, and the international economic crisis — the Great Depression — that swept through the United States and Europe. The French Higher Commissioners report a significant number of returnees in 1924, 1927, and 1928.²¹ This new trend, however, did not last. The year 1925 saw an increase in migration, as the Druze insurrection in Syria quickly spread to Lebanon and resulted in clashes, notably in the Christian Beqaa town of Rashaya. These incidents reminded the Christians of the 1840 and 1860 massacres. It also undermined their trust in the French Mandatory powers to help them secure an independent Lebanese entity. Lebanon’s economy continued to suffer from the destruction and high mortality rate of the First World War. Meanwhile, France faced an enormous economic crisis. These circumstances prevented investment in the building of Lebanon’s economy and attracting successful Lebanese migrant capitalists.

This wave of migration included a significant increase in the number of women, who departed primarily for purposes of family reunion. This wave also included new destinations for Lebanese migrants, such as Australia and West Africa.

THE THIRD WAVE: 1943-1975

Although migration waned immediately after Lebanon achieved independence, this trend did not prevail. Starting in

17. Jeff Lesser, “From Peddlars to Proprietors: Lebanese, Syrian and Jewish Immigrants to Brazil,” in *The Lebanese in the World*, pp. 395-401.

18. Hitti, *The Syrian in America*, p. 51.

19. Hitti, *The Syrian in America*, p. 135.

20. Chiha, *Lebanon at Home and Abroad*, p. 119.

21. M.A.E., *rapport à la SDN pour l’année 1927*, p. 53. M.A.E., *rapport à la SDN pour l’année 1925*, p. 95. M.A.E., *rapport à la SDN pour l’année 1927*, p. 89. M.A.E., *rapport à la SDN pour l’année 1928*, p. 94.

This first wave of Syro-Lebanese immigrants — most of whom were illiterate, unskilled, and single males — remitted large sums of money that helped balance Mount Lebanon’s economy and contributed to the decongestion of the cities ...

the 1950s, political unrest, a high cost of living, and a high rate of unemployment drove more Lebanese to emigrate. Further spurring emigration were the 1956 Suez crisis, political persecution, discrimination following the unsuccessful coup attempt by the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, and Israel's daily raids in South Lebanon in an attempt to crush Palestinian guerrillas attacking northern Israel.

As a result of instability, 164,000 Lebanese fled the country between 1973 and 1974: 72,000 to the Arab countries, 64,000 to Europe, 21,000 to the United States, 1,600 to Australia, 61,000 to Africa, and 17,000 to Asian countries.²²

Yet, despite the amplitude of the number of migrants in 1973-1974, emigration during this period was far less impressive than the first wave. At the same time, the migrants' profile changed significantly: Young men and women seeking better education migrated to the United States, Canada, and Europe, while those who sought employment opportunities migrated to the Gulf in the "oil boom" era.²³

THE FOURTH WAVE: 1975-1990

During this 15-year period, which was marked by civil war, approximately one million Lebanese fled the country.²⁴ Labaki asserts that at the beginning of the civil war, most migrants returned as soon as the situation returned somewhat to normalcy (in 1976), while a large number continued to go back and forth. After 1985, however, migration became permanent.²⁵

Nowadays, Lebanese migration is mainly a process of "brain drain."

It is not surprising that war and its effects were the major "push" factors during this period. According to the Centre Catholique d'Information, over 800,000 families were displaced.²⁶ This massive internal movement was followed by an economic crisis, the devaluation of the Lebanese lira, and a dramatic rise in the unemployment rate, which reached 35% in 1987.²⁷ The breakdown of the educational system prompted youth and family migration, as Lebanese families traditionally accorded great importance to education.²⁸

Reunion Acts pulled many families to join their relatives abroad. However, terrorist attacks in Beirut led to worldwide scrutiny of all Lebanese; consequently, visa procedures became much more difficult. This prompted all those who had relocated temporarily to work to acquire new nationalities in their host countries. Lebanon thus lost these migrants for good.²⁹

THE FIFTH WAVE: 1990-PRESENT

Nowadays, Lebanese migration is mainly a process of "brain drain" whereby the most educated men and women seek better jobs and opportunities abroad. During the period of Syrian hegemony over Lebanon (1990-2005), corruption, inflation, an increase in public debt, and political persecution prevented many Lebanese from returning and prompted many among those who had stayed to leave. Unemployment gutted the middle class, which adversely affected the Lebanese economy as a whole. Twenty-eight percent of Lebanese families lived below the absolute poverty line.³⁰ Meanwhile,

22. *Al-Minbar*, No. 49, March 1990, p. 16.

23. Nabil Harfouch, *The Lebanese in the World, Documents and Censuses*, Vol. III, Beirut, 1978, p. 24.

24. Ferkh, "Conflict and Migration: The Lebanese Emigrants' Potential Role in the Development of Lebanon," p. 88.

25. Boutros Labaki, "*L'émigration libanaise en fin de période ottomane (1850-1914)*," p. 607.

26. Joseph Khoreich, *Results of the Lebanese War 1975-1997*, Liban, Centre Catholique d'Information, p. 7.

27. Salim Nasr, "The Political Economy of the Lebanese Conflict," in Nadim Shehadi and Bridget Harney, eds., *Politics and the Economy in Lebanon* (Oxford: The Center for Lebanese Studies, 1989), pp. 42-50.

28. Ferkh, "Conflict and Migration: The Lebanese Emigrants' Potential Role in the Development of Lebanon," pp. 90-95.

29. Ferkh, "Conflict and Migration: The Lebanese Emigrants' Potential Role in the Development of Lebanon," p. 100.

30. Antoine Haddad, "The Poor in Lebanon," *The Lebanon Report*, No. 3 (1996), p. 1.

each year, 50,000 new job seekers competed in the Lebanese labor market for 35,000 new jobs.³¹

The repeated Hizbullah/Israel clashes resulted in continuous political and security unrest. The most recent conflict, which occurred in 2006, sowed doubt among young men and women that a safe and prosperous Lebanon was achievable. In her latest field research, Choghig Kasparian demonstrates that obtaining work motivates 52.4% of those who decide to migrate, education 8.8%, family reasons 25.4%, and other factors, including security and politics 13.4%.³² The proportion of men who have migrated (22.9%) is slightly more than double that of women (11.5%),³³ which is widening the demographic gap between the sexes.

Recently, the Lebanese government has devoted more attention to immigrants' needs. Lebanese politicians are constantly making visits to the *Mahjar* (Arab diaspora), taking into account that the remittances are undoubtedly the strongest bulwark against the collapse of the Lebanese economy in the face of the worldwide economic crisis.

With the lack of legislation favoring investments by migrants in Lebanon, this chain of support from remittances can be easily broken, once the family ties are lost, notably as families relocate to the West, Australia, and even Africa. Some migration specialists claim that this trend is not applicable to the majority of Lebanese migrants to the Gulf, as it is a short-term migration with no possibility of permanent residence. However, the latest trends show that a large number of those in the Gulf are seeking re-emigration to the West in the light of the ongoing corruption and instability in Lebanon. Thus far, Lebanon has failed to reverse the Brain Drain and convert it to a Brain Gain. The departure of many of the best and brightest Lebanese men and women is mortgaging the country's future.

Recently, the Lebanese government has devoted more attention to immigrants' needs ... [but] ... the departure of many of the best and brightest Lebanese men and women is mortgaging the country's future.

31. Kamal Hamdan, "Economist Slams Policies," *Alternative-Online*, Lebanon, Vol. 1, No. 7 (2003), p. 3A.

32. Choghig Kasparian, "Les jeunes libanais dans la vague d'émigration de 1992-2007," *L'émigration des jeunes libanais et leurs projets d'avenir*, Vol. 2, PUFJ (2009), p. 24.

33. Kasparian, "Les jeunes libanais dans la vague d'émigration de 1992-2007," p. 15.

The Migration of Syrian Christians

Salam Kawakibi

“The question is no longer one of who remains or who departs, but how to leave and how to remain?”¹

President Bashar Asad often attends the various Christian religious celebrations or delegates this task to someone else. This is a long-standing tradition. For his part, the Grand Mufti of the Republic, Ahmad Hassoun, often partakes in religious festivities in various churches with different Syrian Christian rites. He never fails to invoke the importance of Christianity and its ancient role in the construction of the nation. For him, Syria “provides a perfect example for the world of coexistence and harmony between its fellow-citizens of all religions.”



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Christians never fail to demonstrate their attachment to the country and their fraternity with Muslims. In the context of Western pressure on Syria following the assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri on February 14, 2005 and the deterioration of the situation in Iraq, almost all of the businesses owned by Christians in all Syrian cities displayed portraits of the President bearing the slogan: “We all are with you, Bachar.” The image is one of almost utopian cohabitation between the communities. Nevertheless, this has not prevented Christians from migrating.

In 1860, Mount Lebanon and the city of Damascus were the scenes of bloody confrontations between Christians and Muslims who were supported by the Western powers. These events caused a large proportion of the Christian population to choose exile. Their destinations were Egypt, Europe, and America. Another departure was recorded between 1903 and 1930, primarily related to the famine which devastated the area. The union between Syria and Egypt in 1958 triggered the migration of Christians and Muslims mainly towards Lebanon. In spite of its laic (secular) nature, the Ba’th Party, which after gaining power in 1963 instituted socialist policies, fueled middle-class migration, especially that of Christians. Thus, the nationalization of mission schools was a catalyst for the migration of the Christians. Between 1978 and 1982, violence erupted between the authorities and the Muslim Brotherhood. The alarm bell once again sounded among Christians, even though they were not directly involved in the confrontation.

The constant hemorrhaging of Syrian Christians started in the early 1990s. The religious authorities refrain from disclosing the number of migrants lest this encourage the phenomenon, and they try to minimize its significance. Indeed, the real figures could sow fear among those who remain. A recent unpublished study is alarming: It estimated that the Christians’ proportion of the population in 2008 had fallen to just 4.6%. Several clergymen revised this figure downward, saying: “We are not more than 3%.” If Christians had constituted over 15% of the population in the early 1980s, what are the reasons for such a precipitous decline in their number?

At the regional level, the fear has been contagious. Iraqi Christians who were forced to leave the country and entered Syria reported terrible accounts of the atrocities committed

1. Unsi Al-Haj, quoted in the daily newspaper *Al-Akhbar* (Beirut), October 26, 2006.

ted against them. Lebanese Christians also are worried about their future. These circumstances, along with the situation of the remaining Christians in Palestine, have contributed to a feeling of precariousness in Syrian Christian communities.

Given developments in the region, Christians in particular are asking: Does a real “Islamist threat” to destroy the harmony of Syrian society exist? Will the country inexorably move towards the hegemony of fundamentalism?

Since the creation of the modern state and the establishment of a sociopolitical system inspired by the West’s ideological diversity, Syria has experienced a secular reform movement and a school of interpretation whereby society has been marked greatly by religion. Currently, there is a renewal of religious observance. The number of women wearing the *hijab* has increased exponentially in recent years. Religious books have enjoyed great popularity. In addition, the circles of religious studies have multiplied. There also has been a wave of violent religious expression in social and cultural spheres. This has caused anxiety among Syrian Christians — heretofore protected by an imposed laicism (secularity) and a strong central authority — who see themselves being submerged beneath this wave.

The regime represents for [Syrian Christians] the last rampart against radical Islamism. The democratic alternative is often associated with the Islamization of the sociopolitical sphere.

Almost unconditional support for the regime seems to be nearly unanimous not only in the ranks of the clergy, but also in a good part of the Christian community, which is frightened by what has happened to their Christian neighbors in Iraq. The regime represents for them the last rampart against radical Islamism. The democratic alternative is often associated with the Islamization of the sociopolitical sphere. Therefore, they fear that Islam in its political form will seek to strip away any presence other than its own, driving a wedge between them and causing members of the Christian community to migrate.

At the same time, Christian clerical leaders are conscious of the dangers of the current situation for their communities. All endeavor to convince their flocks that the solution does not lie in migration. Some even insist that economic need is the principal reason for migration. The Church can merely encourage Christians to remain. It asks the state to carry out economic projects in order to maintain the young people of the community. In the same vein, the migration of members of the community to the cities is due mainly to the lack of economic development in rural areas.

The Bishop of Aleppo reports that his “faithful constitute a minority and that they feel compelled to leave. Then, they gather around the Church to seek guidance. If the political system democratizes and changes, perhaps our manner of functioning will evolve, but for the moment, that is not the case. Today, my faithful aspire to another quality of life. I am obliged to assist them ... I must give them the possibility of marrying, of finding employment, of remaining in the country ... The missionary has an obligation: to testify to Jesus Christ. I do not want these missionaries, my faithful, to flee.” Believers see the situation in a realistic manner. They avoid evoking spirituality in their testimonies and reflections. Fear exists, and beautiful sermons do nothing but soften it.

Another bishop worries about the intentions of young people who say that “this land is not ours anymore, we do not feel that we have a future here.” He notes that in spite of the State’s efforts, there is no real equality between Christians and Muslims, while the West proposes “freedom, equality, and secularity to them — three pillars of modern life for which they are petitioning.”

Today one finds all types: Christians who swear that they will never leave the area (the cradle of Christianity), others who are hesitant to take the leap, and still others who are already taking the initial steps to do so. They give different reasons — political, economic, social, religious, and cultural — to explain their behavior. The “fold” of ideology, the weakening of laic (secular) currents, the abortion of democratic experiments, the failure of attempts at socioeconomic development, and the amplification of fundamentalist movements, form a constellation of factors that encourage the

Christians of the area to migrate. Lastly, certain Western countries — though fewer and fewer — continue to grant permission to the Christians of the East who are eager to come to join their co-religionists.

According to a European priest, there exists more and more “of these young people who have little room to grow yet who, without being able to say exactly why, decide to remain. They are animated by a flame which reveals in them a strong presence of the Lord. Engaged in the many movements of young people of the various Churches, they resist joyously a dark future which, however, appears inescapable.” Must we separate out the spiritual dimension in explaining a certain resistance to leaving the country? A definitive answer to this question is not easy in an opaque landscape where spiritual and economic needs, along with the desire for freedom, are mixed together.

The solution, here as elsewhere, lies in the introduction of democracy, which makes it possible for individuals to transcend their primary memberships (tribal, clannish, regional, religious, etc.) and to mobilize for the implementation of political and economic programs in which these data no longer have significance. The democratization of public life in Syria is not an external requirement. It is a deeply felt need inside the country. No one believes that fundamentalist movements will dominate those nations which choose democracy.

L'immigration des Chrétiens de Syrie

Salam Kawakibi

« La question n'est plus on reste ou on s'en va, mais comment partir et comment rester ? »¹

Le Président Bachar Assad assiste souvent aux différentes célébrations religieuses chrétiennes ou il délègue quelqu'un pour le faire. Une tradition qui ne date pas d'aujourd'hui mais sur laquelle la lumière est bien fixée dans cette période que les Chrétiens d'Orient traversent. De son côté, le grand Mufti de la République, Ahmad Hassoun, partage souvent les festivités religieuses dans les différentes églises des différentes rites chrétiennes en Syrie. Il ne cesse d'évoquer l'importance de cette religion et son rôle primordial dans la construction nationale. Pour lui, la Syrie « donne un exemple parfait pour le monde en matière de cohabitation et d'harmonie entre ses concitoyens de toutes les religions ».



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Les chrétiens, de leur côté, ne cesse de démontrer leur attachement au pays et à la fraternité avec les musulmans. Suite aux pressions occidentales sur la Syrie après l'assassinat du premier Ministre libanais Rafic Hariri le 14 février 2005 et l'embrasement de la situation en Irak, presque tous les commerces tenus par des chrétiens dans toutes les villes ont accroché les portraits du Président avec le slogan : « Nous sommes tous avec toi Bachar ». L'image est presque utopique de la cohabitation entre les communautés mais cela n'empêche toujours pas les chrétiens d'être tentés par le départ vers l'ailleurs.

En 1860, la montagne libanaise et la ville de Damas ont connu des affrontements sanglants entre les chrétiens et les musulmans alimentés par les interventions des puissances occidentales. Ces événements ont poussé une partie importante de la population chrétienne à choisir l'exil. Leurs destinations étaient l'Égypte, l'Europe et les Amériques. Un autre départ a été enregistré entre les années 1903 et 1930 lié essentiellement à la famine qui a ravagé la région. L'union entre la Syrie et l'Égypte en 1958, a suscité quant à elle une migration des capitaux chrétiens et musulmans principalement vers le Liban. Malgré la nature laïque du parti Ba'ath qui a conquit le pouvoir en 1963, son renforcement des mesures socialistes a poussé une migration aussi général dans les rangs de la classe bourgeoise mais cela était plus ressenti chez les chrétiens. Ainsi, la nationalisation des écoles des missions a été un incitateur de poids pour la migration des chrétiens. Entre 1978 et 1982, la Syrie a connu des affrontements sanglants entre le pouvoir et les mouvances islamistes radicales. Une sonnette d'alarme a resurgi chez les chrétiens même s'ils n'étaient pas directement concernés.

L'hémorragie commence d'une manière constante au début des années 1990. Les autorités religieuses ne dévoilent pas le nombre des migrants pour ne pas encourager le phénomène et pour essayer de le minimiser. Les chiffres peuvent semer la peur chez ceux qui restent. Une étude récente, qui n'a pas été publiée, est alarmante : 4.6 % de la population en 2008 est chrétienne. Ce même chiffre est revu à la baisse par plusieurs religieux : « nous ne sommes pas plus de 3 % ». Si le pourcentage s'élevait à plus que 15 % au début des années 1980, quelles sont les raisons d'une telle « chute » ?

Au niveau régional, la peur est contagieuse. Une perte de contrôle de la situation en Irak, avec ses chrétiens qui sont obligés de quitter leur pays vers la Syrie chargés d'anecdotes

1. Unsi al-Haj, le quotidien *al-Akhabar* (Beyrouth), 26 octobre 2006.

terribles sur les atrocités commises contre eux, l'évolution de la situation au Liban où les chrétiens sont préoccupés par leur avenir et la situation de ce qu'il restait comme chrétiens en Palestine, il se développe dans les communautés en Syrie un sentiment de précarité.

Dans ce climat qui entoure la Syrie, une question est posée particulièrement par les chrétiens : Y a-t-il « un vrai danger islamiste » qui menace l'harmonie dont la société syrienne se vante? Le pays se dirigera-t-il nécessairement vers une hégémonie du fondamentalisme ?

Depuis la création de l'Etat moderne et la fondation d'un système sociopolitique inspiré de l'Occident avec ses diversités idéologiques, la Syrie a connu un mouvement de réforme séculaire et une école d'interprétation qui ont pu influencer une société très marquée par la religion. Actuellement, un net regain de la pratique démonstrative de la foi s'observe. Le nombre de femmes portant le voile a augmenté d'une manière exponentielle ces dernières années, les livres religieux ont un gros succès, et les cercles d'études religieuses se multiplient. Il y a aussi une montée « violente » de l'expression religieuse dans les pratiques sociales et culturelles. Cela engendre une vraie anxiété chez les chrétiens syriens de voir cette vague submerger leur espace protégé jusqu'à maintenant par un laïcisme imposé et par un pouvoir central fort.

Le soutien presque inconditionnel porté au régime semble recueillir l'unanimité pas seulement dans les rangs des religieux, mais également chez une bonne partie de la société chrétienne qui s'effraye de ce qui arrive aux voisins chrétiens en Irak. Le pouvoir représente pour eux un dernier rempart face à l'islamisme radical. L'alternatif démocratique est souvent lié à une islamisation de la sphère politico sociale. Donc, ils craignent que l'Islam sous sa forme politique, cherchera à rayer toute présence autre que la sienne et cela amènera à les enclaver, voire à partir vers l'étranger.

Les responsables religieux chrétiens sont conscients à la fois des dangers de la situation actuelle pour leurs communautés. Tous s'efforcent à convaincre leurs ouailles que la solution ne réside pas dans la migration. Même si certains insistent sur le besoin économique comme une raison principale de la migration. L'Eglise ne peut qu'encourager les chrétiens à rester. Elle demande à l'Etat de réaliser des projets économiques afin de maintenir les jeunes de la communauté. Dans le même registre, la migration des ruraux de la communauté vers les villes est due principalement à l'absence de développement économique dans ces mêmes régions.

Un évêque d'Alep, constat que ses « fidèles constituent une minorité et ils se sentent laisser pour compte. Alors, ils se rassemblent autour de l'Eglise en cherchant une tutelle. Si le pouvoir politique se démocratise et se transforme, peut-être que notre manière de fonctionner évoluera mais pour l'instant, ça n'est pas le cas. Aujourd'hui, mes fidèles aspirent à une autre qualité de vie. Je me trouve obligé de les assister. (...) Je dois leur donner la possibilité de se marier, de trouver un emploi, de rester au pays. (...) Il y a une obligation missionnaire : témoigner de Jésus-Christ. Je ne veux pas que sous mon mandat, ces missionnaires, mes fidèles, s'enfuient, décampent ». Les croyants voient la situation d'une manière plus réaliste. Ils évitent d'évoquer la spiritualité dans leurs témoignages et leurs réflexions. La crainte existe et les beaux discours ne font que l'adoucir.

Un autre évêque s'inquiète d'entendre les jeunes dire que « cette terre n'est plus à nous, nous ne sentons pas que nous avons un avenir ici ». Il constate que même avec les efforts de l'Etat, il n'y a pas une vraie égalité entre les chrétiens et les musulmans tandis que l'Occident leur propose « la liberté, l'égalité et la laïcité. Trois piliers de la vie moderne dont ils sont demandeurs ».

On trouve aujourd'hui de tout : des chrétiens qui jurent qu'ils ne quitteront jamais la région, berceau du christianisme, d'autres qui hésitent à sauter le pas ; d'autres qui sont déjà engagés dans une démarche de départ. Les uns et les autres usent, pour parvenir à des conclusions différentes, de raisons politiques, économiques, sociales, religieuses, culturelles... identiques. Le « repli » des idéologies ainsi que l'affaiblissement des courants laïcs, l'avortement des expériences démocratiques, l'échec des tentatives de développement socio-économique, l'amplification des mouvements intégristes,

forme un ensemble de facteurs qui incite les chrétiens de la région à l'immigration. Enfin, certains pays occidentaux - il est vrai de moins en moins nombreux - continuent d'accorder des facilités aux chrétiens d'Orient désireux de venir rejoindre leurs co-religieux déjà établis chez eux.

Pour un religieux européen, il existe de plus en plus « de ces jeunes que tout pousse à partir et qui pourtant, sans trop pouvoir dire pourquoi, décident de rester. Ils sont animés par une flamme qui révèle en eux, une forte présence du Seigneur. Engagés dans les nombreux mouvements de jeunes des différentes Eglises, ils résistent joyeusement à un avenir sombre qui apparaît pourtant inéluctable ». Faut-il partager la dimension spirituelle dans l'explication d'une certaine résistance au départ ? La réponse à cette question ne peut être facile dans un paysage opaque qui mélange le spirituel, le besoin économique et le désir de liberté.

La solution, ici comme ailleurs, passe par l'instauration d'une démocratie qui permette aux individus de transcender leurs appartenances primaires (tribales, claniques, régionales, religieuses...) et de se mobiliser pour la mise en oeuvre de programmes politiques et économiques dans lesquels ces données n'ont plus de signification. La démocratisation de la vie publique en Syrie n'est pas une exigence extérieure. C'est un désir profond ressenti à l'intérieur. Rien ne laisse à penser que les mouvements intégristes vont dominer les systèmes politiques qui choisissent la démocratie.

Egypt's Place in the Euro-Mediterranean Migration System

Ayman Zohry

Egyptian migration to Europe started in the early 19th century, following Napoleon's campaign in Egypt (1798-1801). At that time, Muhammad 'Ali, the founder of modern Egypt, sent the first Egyptian mission to Italy in 1813 to study printing arts, and another mission to France in 1818 to study military and maritime sciences in order to establish a modern Egyptian Army based on European standards of that time. Since then, there has been a channel of communication between Egypt and Europe. Europeans used to migrate to Egypt, where they formed successful minorities in Alexandria and Cairo until the early 1950s.¹ The economic pressures and transition to socialism during the Nasser era led many European Egyptians to return to Europe. In addition, Egyptians started to migrate to the West in the 1960s. Currently, successful Egyptians live in most of the large metropolitan areas of Europe.

From the beginning of the 1960s, political, economic, and social developments led some Egyptians to migrate permanently to North America and Europe. According to the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Emigration's estimates, the total number of Egyptian migrants in non-Arab countries is about 1.7 million (2008 estimates). More than 90% of them are concentrated in seven countries: the United States and Canada (780,000), the United Kingdom (250,000), Italy (190,000), France (160,000), Australia (80,000), and Greece (80,000). The total number of Egyptians in Europe is about 790,000. The statistics given by the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration are just estimates drawn from the reports of Egyptian embassies abroad, records of cross-border flows from the Ministry of Interior, emigration permits from the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, and other sources.

Egyptians in the West are perceived to be more educated than migrants to the Arab Gulf countries. They include Egyptians who were sent by the Egyptian government to study abroad, many of whom preferred to remain in their country of destination to teach and pursue research. They also include a successful cadre of businessmen.

IRREGULAR MIGRATION OF EGYPTIANS TO EUROPE

The current stream of Egyptian irregular migration to Europe started on the eve of the 21st century with thousands of fresh graduates and poorly educated unemployed youth engaged in irregular migration to Europe either through the Mediterranean Sea via Libya or by over-staying Schengen tourist visas. There are four main reasons for this new type of migration: 1) high unemployment rates among Egyptian youth, 2) the difficulty that these youths face in obtaining work in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries due to competition from low-wage Southeast Asian labor migrants, 3) the geographical proximity between Egypt and Europe, and 4) the ease of travelling to Libya, where most of the journeys to Europe by boat originate.



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1. Mainly Italians and Greeks.

TOWARDS EUROPE

According to a survey carried out in Egypt in 1996 as part of a European Commission study,² for Egyptian non-migrants and return migrants who intended to migrate, Saudi Arabia was still the favorite destination (40%), compared to only 6% who preferred to migrate to any European country. However, a recent survey carried out by the European Training Foundation (ETF)³ indicates a shift in the preferred destination of Egyptian youth towards migration to Europe. Over 33% of those surveyed who expressed their desire to migrate prefer to migrate to any European country, compared to 61.9% who expressed their desire to migrate to any Arab country.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CURRENT MIGRATION STREAM TO EUROPE

A field survey was carried out in 2006⁴ to identify the push factors in Egypt as identified by past and potential migrants. The results of this survey indicate that push factors in the country of origin (Egypt) are overwhelmingly economic. Egyptian youth regard migration — regular or irregular — as a possible way to escape poverty and unemployment. The study indicates that the main reasons behind migration are the low wages and salaries in Egypt compared to European salaries, bad living conditions, and the lack of job opportunities in Egypt, especially among recent graduates. At the time of the fieldwork, about 40% of the interviewees were not engaged in any work for cash.

The choice of destination country in Europe is not a freely made decision; it is closely related to the migration networks and linkages between origin and destination.

The choice of destination country in Europe is not a freely made decision; it is closely related to the migration networks and linkages between origin and destination. Migration networks that stimulate migration flows between Egypt and Europe are completely different from migration networks between Egypt and Arab Gulf countries. The migration of Egyptian youth to Europe is managed and activated by kinship and family ties. On the other hand, the migration of Egyptians to Arab Gulf countries is usually managed by a set of regulations, certified migration brokers, and many other conditions. Migration to Europe is concentrated in a set of Egyptian villages in specific governorates; each village has its own destination. The two major destinations are Italy and France. Thus, one may say confidently that migration to these two destinations occurs in a closed market where new entrants come from the same village or group of adjacent villages. For example, a single village in the Fayoum governorate specializes in sending migrants to Italy, while another village in the Gharbiya governorate sends migrants to France. Additionally, some villages in the Nile Delta shifted their migration directions from the Arab Gulf countries to Italy. Youth in these villages claim that migration to the Arab Gulf countries is not beneficial like before and “*working for one year in Italy is better than working ten years in the Gulf.*” The migrant population to Italy from these villages is increasing, and youth compete to find a way to migrate, legally or illegally.

Another important factor that plays a major role in stimulating migration streams to Europe is the wealth of successful migrants and return migrants. Remittances of Egyptian migrants who work in European countries are important factors that stimulate a continuous stream of migration. Potential migrants claim that ordinary workers can save an average amount of 6,000 euros per annum while working abroad (about 50,000 Egyptian Pounds). Potential migrants claim that the “savings of one year of work in Europe is more than a lifetime salary in Egypt.” Building luxurious houses in rural Egypt, marriages, and the consumerist behavior of returnees are strong factors that attract the young men to migrate. When youth weigh the risks of illegal migration against the expected returns, they prefer to take the risk for what they assume will be a better life.

2. Eurostat, “*Push and Pull Factors of International Migration — A Comparative Report*,” Eurostat and The European Commission, 2000.

3. ETF, “*The Contribution of Human Resources Development to Migration Policy in Egypt*,” European Training Foundation, 2007

4. Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, *Attitudes of Egyptian Youth Towards Migration to Europe 2006*, Emigration Sector, Ministry of Manpower and Emigration in cooperation with Italia Cooperation and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Cairo, 2006.

The results of the study indicate that the vast majority of youth who want to migrate to Europe intend to return to Egypt after a temporary stay abroad. Despite the fact that the legal framework for migrants to the Arab Gulf countries is very different than the legal framework for migrants to European countries, these findings suggest that Egyptian migration to Europe is a re-production of the Egyptian migration pattern to the Arab Gulf countries, where young males migrate to achieve specific financial goals and then return to Egypt.

Egyptian migration to Europe is different from other migration streams that target the same destination. Egyptian migration is male-dominated and consists mainly of temporary laborers, while other streams typically involve individuals who intend to stay in the destination countries for longer periods of time. It also is important to note that the contemporary Egyptian migration stream to Europe is different from the Egyptian migration stream to the West in the 1960s and early 1970s, which was motivated by political unrest, economic pressures, and the transition to socialism. Most Egyptian migrants at that time were highly educated and economically established. Contemporary migrants to the West (to Europe) are less-educated males who suffer from poverty and unemployment to the extent that one may call this new stream of migration the “migration of the poor.”

SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the experiences of the current stream of Egyptian youth migration to Europe, some policy recommendations may emerge. Since low income and unemployment are the main push factors that affect migration, and in order to decrease unemployment rates, the government of Egypt should create new job opportunities in the local market through attracting foreign direct investment and the private sector. This should go hand in hand with an emigration-oriented policy and the opening of new markets for the Egyptian labor force. Bilateral agreements between Egypt and European countries regarding labor mobility are important. The quota for Egyptian migrant workers should be negotiated with receiving countries in Europe.

Egypt should make creating new jobs an economic priority in order to reduce irregular migration to Europe. If a sufficient number of job opportunities are not created in Egypt, a great proportion of the surplus of the Egyptian labor force will be channelled — regularly or irregularly — to labor markets abroad. Given the saturation of the labor market in the Arab Gulf countries and the increasing competition that Egyptian laborers face in the Gulf (due to the increasing number of Southeast Asian migrants in the region), the most feasible destination for Egyptian migrants is Europe. Regulating Egyptian migration to Europe should be one of the priorities of the Egyptian government. In addition, job matching schemes and pre-departure training of migrants should be considered.

Contemporary migrants to the West (to Europe) are less-educated males who suffer from poverty and unemployment to the extent that one may call this new stream of migration the “migration of the poor.”

Indian Labor Migrants in Lebanon: A Comparative Study of Migrants from Punjab and Tamil Nadu

Seema Gaur and Prem C. Saxena

Historically, voluntary international labor migration has been a means by which people in developing countries seek to improve their economic and social conditions. In order to finance their travel abroad, the majority of labor migrants sell their belongings or take loans against property or land. This essay compares migrants from Punjab and Tamil Nadu with respect to their socioeconomic, demographic, and household profiles, their mode of financing the trip, and their debt status at the time of emigration.¹



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CHARACTERISTICS OF PUNJAB AND TAMIL MIGRANTS

While macro-level factors set the framework within which migration decisions are made, each decision (in the case of voluntary emigration) results from a number of factors that operate at community, household, and individual levels.² In this section, we look at the migrants from individual and household levels.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Profile

RESIDENCE

In many developing countries, particularly in Asia, low and declining rural income and rural unemployment/under-employment are the major factors pushing migrants towards economically developed areas. Our study revealed that migrants were predominantly (84%) of rural origin. Punjab had sent a slightly higher percentage of migrants from rural areas as compared to Tamil Nadu.

RELIGION

The pattern of migration is influenced by the migration policies of Middle Eastern countries. Covertly and overtly, Muslims are preferred over other religious groups, since they are culturally and ethnically closer to nationals. This is why, generally, Muslims are



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1. The study is based on primary data collected in Lebanon in November-December 2001. A sample of 402 laborers (201 each from Punjab and Tamil Nadu working in Lebanon) was selected, using a stratified sampling scheme from the records maintained by *Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee — Nehr-e-Ibrahim* for the migrants from Punjab and from the *Tamil-India Cultural and Welfare Association* for the migrants from Tamil Nadu. These associations maintained a register which provided the basic information of the migrants such as name, age, sex, occupation, address in Lebanon and in India, and the date of their first entry in Lebanon. These registers constituted the sampling frame for the present study. Data was collected through personal interviews. A structured questionnaire was developed and used to collect information on the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of migrants, yearly remittances, factors influencing remittance decisions, and mode of remittances. Methods of descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data; and bi-variate statistical method was used to discern the inter-relationships between variables of interest.

2. Nasra M. Shah, "An Overview of Present and Future Emigration Dynamics in South Asia," *International Migration*, Vol. 32, Nos. 1-2 (1994), pp. 217- 288.

the majority of migrants in almost all of the Middle Eastern countries. Lebanon, however, is the exception. The fact that Lebanon is a multiethnic, secular society that does not show a preference for a particular religious group in attracting migrants acts as a “pull factor” for Hindus. All of the migrants from Punjab were Hindus, as were more than 80% of those from Tamil Nadu.

SEX

In the present study, all of the migrant laborers were males. This is due to emigration restrictions by the government of India on females seeking to work outside the country as unskilled labor.

AGE

As found in several studies on migration, as well as in our sample, migrants were mostly between the ages of 18 and 35 at the time of migration. However, due to pressure to improve the economic status of households, even the aged were found in the sample. By and large, migrants from Punjab had a relatively younger age distribution compared to migrants from Tamil Nadu. Only 14% of Punjab migrants were over the age of 35, compared to 25% of Tamil migrants. The average age of migrants from Punjab was 23, as opposed to 29 for Tamil migrants.

MARITAL STATUS

For both the states combined, about 50% of the migrants were married at the time of migration. A state-wise breakdown shows that in the case of Tamil Nadu, nearly 57% were married compared to about 44% for Punjab. In the combined samples, almost 86% of migrants in the 18-24 age group were unmarried at the time of emigration.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS

One of the unique features of migration flows to the Middle East is that they have been dominated by unskilled labor with poor educational backgrounds. Our study confirms this pattern. As in other Middle Eastern countries, there was heavy demand in Lebanon for unskilled labor, especially in the fast-expanding service and construction sectors. In Lebanon, this demand was spurred by the need to rebuild the country following the devastating civil war (1975-90).³ A comparison of the educational status of the migrants from the two states suggests that nearly 13% of Punjab migrants had no schooling against 9% of those from Tamil Nadu. On the other hand, 6% of migrants from Tamil Nadu were graduates compared to 3% from Punjab. In essence, the overwhelming majority of migrants were unskilled workers.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Migrants' employment status and nature of employment before emigration reflect the economic conditions of their households. The workforce, broadly classified, was engaged in household agriculture and allied activities, and employed by others and self-employed. Slightly more migrants from Punjab were unemployed (23.4%) than those from Tamil Nadu (19.9%). The work participation rate in Punjab in general is lower than the all-India average, while it is the reverse in Tamil Nadu. Nearly 31% in Tamil Nadu worked for others, mostly as casual laborers either on farms or in village fields, or on petty jobs in urban areas with little difference across the two states. Nearly 36% in Punjab and 30% in Tamil Nadu were employed in households — a kind of disguised underemployment. The self-employed constituted 10.5% and 18.9% in Punjab and Tamil Nadu, respectively, which included petty occupations in traditional sectors like small shops, fishing, carpentry, etc. The migrants from both states had low economic status and were dependent on casual occupations for sustenance.

3. Regarding the Lebanese civil war and its impact, see Prem Saxena *et al.*, “Nuptiality Transition and Marriage Squeeze in Lebanon: Consequences of Sixteen Years of Civil War,” *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* (Special Issue on Turbulence in the Middle East), Vol. 35, No. 2 (2004), pp. 241-258.

Table 1: Socioeconomic and Demographic Profiles of Indian Migrant Laborers from Punjab and Tamil Nadu

Characteristics	Punjab		Tamil Nadu		Both States Combined	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Place of Origin						
Rural	178	88.6	171	85.1	349	86.8
Urban	23	11.4	30	14.9	53	13.2
Religion						
Hindu	201	100	165	82.1	366	91.0
Muslim	---	---	36	17.9	36	9.0
Age						
< 25	80	39.8	64	31.8	144	34.7
25-34	92	45.8	88	43.8	180	45.4
35 +	29	14.4	49	24.4	78	19.1
Mean Age	23.37	---	29.18	---	28.27	---
Marital Status						
Married	88	43.8	115	57.2	203	50.5
Unmarried	113	56.2	86	42.8	199	49.5
Education						
Illiterate	16	8.0	10	5.0	26	6.5
Read and Write Only	9	4.5	8	4.0	17	4.2
Primary School (1-5)	43	21.4	37	18.4	80	19.9
Junior School (6-8)	41	20.4	47	23.3	88	26.9
Senior School (9-12)	86	42.8	67	33.3	153	38.1
Graduate	6	3.0	12	6.0	18	4.5
Employment Status						
Unemployed	47	23.4	40	19.9	87	21.6
Employed	61	30.3	63	31.3	124	30.8
Employed in household	72	35.8	60	29.9	132	32.8
Agriculture/ Self-employed	21	10.5	38	18.9	59	14.7

Household Profile

Migration decisions are often shaped within the household context and are rarely individualistic. Therefore, we describe below the household characteristics of migrants from Punjab and Tamil Nadu.

TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD

About 89% of migrants from Punjab were from joint households compared to nearly 80% from Tamil Nadu migrants. Again, the percentage of migrants from Punjab from rural joint families was more (78.6%) as compared to those from Tamil Nadu (69.1%). (See Table 2 on the following page).

Table 2: Household (at the Origin) Characteristics of Indian Migrant Laborers in Lebanon Prior to Migration from the States of Punjab and Tamil Nadu

Household Characteristics	Punjab		Tamil Nadu		Both States Combined	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Household Size						
1-5	64	31.8	85	42.3	149	37.1
6-10	122	60.7	95	47.3	217	54.0
11+	15	7.5	21	10.4	36	8.9
Mean Household Size	6.8	---	6.4	---	6.6	---
Household Type						
Joint	179	89.1	160	79.6	339	84.3
Nuclear	22	10.9	41	20.4	63	15.7
Joint Family						
Rural Migrants	158	78.6	139	69.1	297	73.9
Urban Migrants	43	21.4	62	30.9	105	26.1

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

Relatively more migrants came from large households, with 68.2% Punjab migrants hailing from households larger than five against 57.7% from Tamil Nadu. Average household size in the case of Punjab was 6.8 compared to 6.4 for Tamil Nadu. This is in line with findings from available studies in India, which show that migrants generally come from large families.

LAND OWNERSHIP

It is difficult to collect information on income directly. Therefore, characteristics like land ownership, housing condition, household amenities, and possession of consumer goods have been used as proxy variables to indicate economic status of households from which migrants came. In rural areas, one of the important determinants of the economic status of a household is land ownership. Land is also a stable source of income compared to other rural casual occupations. To view the status of the households of the migrants from this perspective, the amount of land owned by rural households before emigration has been given in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Landholding by Households of Indian "Rural" Migrant Laborers Prior to Emigration from Punjab and Tamil Nadu

Characteristics	Punjab		Tamil Nadu		Both States Combined	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Landless	97	48.3	173	26.9	76	37.8
Land size (in acres)						
Marginal (.5-3)	35	17.4	90	38.0	55	27.5
Low (3.1-6)	33	16.3	69	19.3	36	17.8
Moderate (6.5-9)	17	8.4	31	5.8	14	7.2
High (> 9)	20	9.6	40	9.9	20	9.7
Mean Size (in acres)	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0
S.D	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.7	4.7

Strikingly, the incidence of landlessness is found to be as high as about 38% for the migrants from both the states combined. Almost half of the migrants from Punjab and nearly 27% from Tamil Nadu were landless at the time of emigration. There was no difference in the average sizes of landholdings between the migrants from the states of Punjab and Tamil Nadu. The average size of landholding was three acres.

DEBT STATUS

Debt status is also a reflection of the economic status of a household. In rural areas, poor households generally resort to taking loans for various purposes such as consumption, buying agricultural inputs, etc. About 53% of migrants' households in Punjab and 68% in Tamil Nadu were in debt at the time of emigration. Except in a few cases, the entire debt was incurred (by migrants from Punjab and Tamil Nadu alike) to finance the trip to Lebanon. The data indicates that Punjab migrants had a relatively better financial capacity than their counterparts from Tamil Nadu to canvass financial resources for migration through non-loan means (Table 4).

Table 4: Percentage Distributions of the Indian Migrant Laborers in Lebanon by Debt Status and Reasons for Taking a Loan, Punjab and Tamil Nadu

Characteristics	Punjab		Tamil Nadu		Both States Combined	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Debt Status						
Indebted	107	(53.2)	136	(67.7)	243	60.4
Not indebted	94	(46.8)	65	(32.3)	159	39.6
Reason for Taking Loan						
i) Travel to Lebanon	199	99.0	196	97.5	395	98.0
ii) Marriage (self and other household members)	-	-	3	1.5	3	1.0
iii) Household problems	2	1.0	2	1.0	4	1.0

HOUSEHOLD AMENITIES

An index of household amenities has been computed by giving suitable weights to various amenities available in the household.⁴ On the basis of the value of the index, a household has been classified as low, medium, or high. Just 12% of Punjab households fell in the low category against nearly 30% of Tamil Nadu households. Forty percent of the households of migrants from Punjab and 18% of Tamil Nadu belonged to the high category. This clearly indicates that Punjab migrants came from relatively better-off households in terms of amenities as compared to Tamil migrants.

Mode of Financing the Trip to Lebanon

Thirteen percent of Tamil migrants (19% of total rural Tamil migrants) financed their trip from personal savings compared to 47% of rural landless Punjab migrants (51% for overall rural Punjab migrants). This implies that in spite of being landless, almost half of the Punjab migrants could mobilize the resources needed for their trip mainly through personal savings. Rural landless Punjabis were not much different from the rest of Punjab migrants in terms of access to housing, housing amenities, consumer goods, and the capacity to mobilize the resources for migration, though about 31% of them were unemployed and 54% were working for others as casual laborers. Most of these migrants sold their small and marginal landholdings to finance the trip. Further, a large number of these rural landless remain unemployed

4. For computational details, see Seema Gaur, "Indian Migrant Labour in Lebanon: Factors Affecting Migration Decisions, Remittances and Expenditure Patterns (*A comparative study of migrants from Punjab and Tamil Nadu*)," Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai, India, 2003.

due to the limited capacity of agriculture to absorb labor due to increasing mechanization in Punjab. This was compounded by the fact that household industries in Punjab were waning. In addition, the capacity of Punjab industries to generate employment remained low. In the face of population growth and a lack of employment opportunities, many marginal and small farmers were being pushed into the pool of landless laborers. These landless still possessed relatively better houses and had the capacity to mobilize resources for migration. They considered migration to be the best possible opportunity to find employment and earn more due to the higher wages available in the Middle East. These people cannot be called the poorest of the poor. To some extent, it also applies to rural landless in Tamil Nadu. However, those landless who did not own even a house and basic goods such as a radio or a clock and were living in mud houses without any amenities may be called the poorest of the poor. By this criterion, certainly 10-13% of rural landless Punjab migrants fell into the category of the poorest of poor. In terms of total Punjab migrants, these constituted only about 5% of migrants. As far as Tamil migrants were concerned, such migrants constituted about 25% of rural landless and 12-13% of total Tamil migrants who belonged to the poorest of the poor. All such migrants took loans from their relatives and/or friends to finance the trip to Lebanon.

Migration Networks and Channels of Migration to Lebanon

MIGRATION NETWORKS

Migration networks play an important role in perpetuating labor migration. Although economic factors may initiate movements, social factors like networks facilitate the supply of international migrants to meet the labor demand of a host country. Furthermore, interpersonal ties are the only means by which international movements are perpetuated. Migration sustains itself in such a way that migration tends to create more migration.⁵

The migrants of the present sample came to Lebanon through networks operated by agents in the host country and their families in Punjab and Tamil Nadu and through relatives/friends and employers. However, the majority of migrants reached Lebanon from a few selected districts of each of the two states solely with the help of agents.

Table 5 gives the district-wise distribution of migrants from Punjab and Tamil Nadu. All of the districts where migrants were less than 3% of total migrants have been subsumed in the category "other districts." Selectivity of districts of emigrants is quite evident from the table. In both states, the majority of emigrants were from three districts. In Punjab, out of 17 districts, nearly 64% migrants were from just three districts, namely, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, and Hoshiarpur (Jalandhar alone accounted for almost 27%). Interestingly, these three districts are contiguous (see Figure 1). Our investigations revealed that the recruitment agent himself was from Jalandhar. His wife and family members helped facilitate emigration from Jalandhar and its neighbouring districts to Lebanon.

In the case of Tamil Nadu, spatial concentration was even more striking, with 42% of migrants emerging from Sivaganga alone and about 17% and 13% from Ramanathapuram and Thanjavur, respectively. Together, these districts accounted for 73% of migrants from Tamil Nadu. However, unlike Punjab, in the case of Tamil Nadu, just two districts (Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram) are contiguous (See Fig. 1). The recruitment agent in Lebanon came from Sivaganga. He and his family members were involved in the business of sending labor to Lebanon from Tamil Nadu. The present study supports the findings of other research on the subject that the incidence of emigration is largely region specific.⁶

Major streams of migration from the three districts of each of the two states to Lebanon are shown in Figure 1.

5. S. Massey Douglas *et al.*, "Social capital and international migration: a test using information on family networks," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol.106 (2001), pp. 1262-1299.

6. P.R. Gopinathan Nair, "Incidence, Impact and Implications of Migration to the Middle East from Kerala, India," UNDP/Asian Employment Programme (ILO/ARTEP), New Delhi (1988).

Table 5: District-Wise Distribution of Indian Migrant Laborers to Lebanon from Punjab and Tamil Nadu

Districts	Punjab		Tamil Nadu		
	Number of Migrants	Percent	District	Number of Migrants	Percent
Jalandhar	54	26.9	Sivaganga	85	42.3
Kapurthala	38	18.9	Ramnathpuram	34	16.9
Hoshiarpur	36	17.9	Thanjavur	27	13.4
Nawansahar	18	9.0	Chennai	11	5.5
Ludhiana	12	6.0	Madurai	7	3.5
Moga	10	5.0	Thiruvarur	7	3.5
Ropar	9	4.5	-	-	-
Patiala	8	4.0	-	-	-
Other Districts #	15	7.5	Other Districts *	30	14.9
Total	201	100.0	Total	201	100.0

Note: "Other districts" includes districts which have less than 3% of total emigrants.

Other Districts include Amritsar, Batinda, Fatehgarh, Gurdaspur, Muktsar, and Sangrur.

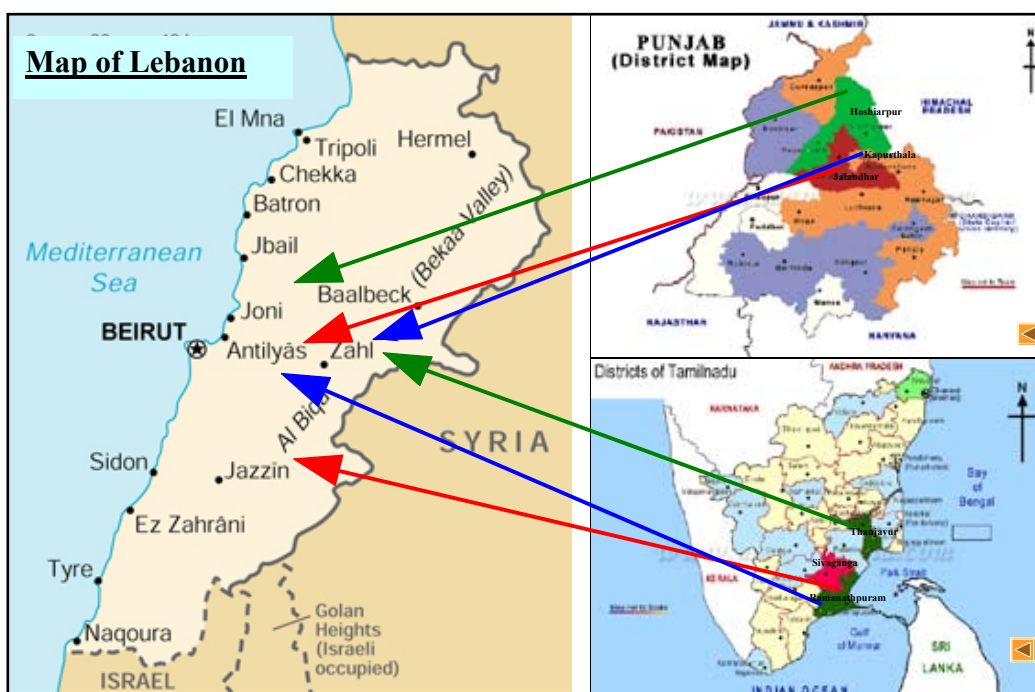
* Other Districts include Coimbatore, Cuddalore, Dindigul, Kanyakumari, Nagaipattinam, Namakkal, Pudukottai, The Nilgiris, Thiruvallur, and Vellore.

MIGRATION CHANNELS

As stated earlier, recruitment agents, friends/relatives, and direct hiring by employer in the host country are the channels of labor migration to Lebanon. The recruitment of labor through a government agency was virtually absent. The channels of migration used by the emigrants from the three major labor exporting districts and other districts (the rest of the districts of each state are lumped together) are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

The data suggest that of the total number of emigrants from Punjab, 55.2% migrated to Lebanon through recruitment agents, 39.3% got employment through relatives/friends, and 5.5% were recruited directly by employers. From the three major labor exporting districts of Punjab, however, 70.3% of laborers migrated through recruitment agents.

Figure 1: Major Streams of Migration to Lebanon from Districts of States of Punjab and Tamil Nadu of India



In contrast, the majority (62.2%) of migrants from Tamil Nadu arrived in Lebanon through relatives and friends, and only about 31% emigrated through recruitment agents. In the case of three districts — Sivaganga, Ramanathapuram, and Thanjavur — the majority of the migrants came through relatives or friends only. Out of 30 districts, 15 were not represented at all while another 12 cumulatively accounted for 27% of the migrants.

Table 6: Channels of Emigration of Indian Migrant Laborers to Lebanon by District of Punjab

District	Channel of Migration					
	Agent		Friend/Relative		Employer	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Hoshiarpur	21	58.3	13	36.1	2	5.6
Jalandhar	33	61.1	17	31.5	4	7.4
Kapurthala	24	63.2	14	36.8	-	-
Others	33	45.2	35	47.9	5	6.9
Total	111	55.2	79	39.3	11	5.5

Table 7: Channels of Emigration of Indian Migrant Laborers to Lebanon by District of Tamil Nadu

District	Channel of Migration					
	Agent		Friend/Relative		Employer	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sivaganga	21	23.5	61	71.8	4	4.7
Ramanathapuram	8	23.5	24	70.8	2	5.9
Thanjavur	11	40.7	15	55.6	1	3.7
Others	22	41.8	25	45.5	7	12.7
Total	62	30.8	125	62.2	14	7.0

The above findings bring out the role played by networks in furthering the migration process, which led to migration selectivity from only a few districts in both the states. However, the Punjab and Tamil Nadu migrant networks differ. In the case of Punjab, recruitment agents have become well developed, particularly in the region of Doab — where Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, and Kapurthala are located — which has a long history and tradition of migration. The agents facilitate migration from these districts by supplying information and arranging visas, passports, and jobs in Lebanon. In the case of Tamil Nadu, networks of friends and relatives perpetuate the migration and concentrate it, by and large, in Sivaganga, Ramanathapuram, and Thanjavur. Thus, in the case of both states, the majority of migrants originated from a few select districts and migrated to Lebanon mainly through one particular type of network, whether formal or informal. Recruiting networks thereby have played a key role in making migration a “chain process” and a self-perpetuating phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

The above profile of migrants from Punjab and Tamil Nadu to Lebanon is indicative not only of their poor economic background and poor asset base, but also of their poor job and earning potential at home. In both states, though a sizable number of migrants had been employed before migration, it was the traditional sectors (e.g., household agriculture) or petty household occupations with poor and unstable incomes that absorbed them. This is again a reflection of the very low economic status of the households, as most of them were dependent upon rural casual occupations for sustenance. The under-employment problem is also acute in these occupations. In such an environment, children play an economically useful role by engaging in some employment at a tender age. The absence of schooling and the high early dropout rate is attributable to this demand for children arising out of the poor economic condition of households. In turn, the lack of schooling contributes to low earning potential at home. This environment itself acts as a “push factor.” Indeed, most migrants cited the desire to earn more money as their reason for emigrating, with unemployment ranking second in importance. In addition to the strong demand for labor in the Middle East, the wage differentials between the countries of South Asia and Middle East continue to be large enough to act as a strong “pull factor,” despite a decline in wages in recent years. In fact, wage differentials are the major determinant of migration to Middle East, including Lebanon. This explains the pressure on workers to migrate to countries where even with their low education and lack of skills, they can earn many times the salary of those working in similar occupations in their home country.

II. Impacts

The Impact of Migration on Those Left Behind: Evidence from Egypt

Ragui Assaad

Migration has played an important role in Egyptian society since the early 1970s. By the mid-2000s, remittances from migrants accounted for about 6% of Egypt's GDP, which places Egypt among the top ten remittance-receiving countries in the world. With 5% of Egypt's population estimated to be living abroad in 2006, and a large proportion of these migrants sending money back to their relatives at home on a regular basis, migration has had substantial domestic effects. While acknowledging that spillover effects could be important, this essay is primarily concerned with the direct effects of migration on family members left behind rather than on the full impact of migration on the economy.



The impact of migration on family members left behind can be both positive or negative, depending on whether the migrant is away temporarily or permanently and whether or not they remit money back home. On the one hand, migration, if accompanied by remittances, can loosen household budget constraints — leading to greater investments in household enterprises, increases in children's schooling, and higher current consumption. If migration is temporary or circular, the return of the migrant could also bring back valuable skills acquired abroad as well as entrepreneurial potential. On the other hand, the withdrawal of what are usually prime breadwinners from the household's labor supply pool could either increase the work burden of others or decrease their labor supply depending on the flow of remittances and their use.

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This essay summarizes the available evidence on the impact of migration from Egypt on household poverty, the labor supply of adult members of the household, child schooling, child labor, and the empowerment of women, as measured by decision-making and attitudes about gender norms. Before doing that, however, we provide a brief characterization of the nature of migration flows from Egypt in recent decades.

A BRIEF CHARACTERIZATION OF EGYPTIAN MIGRATION FLOWS

Migration from Egypt can be broadly characterized as largely made up of the temporary migration of male household members for work in other Arab countries. While there is a long tradition of permanent migration of entire households to the United States, Canada, and Australia, the vast majority of migrants are unaccompanied males heading to Saudi Arabia, the other Gulf countries, Libya, and Jordan. After peaking in the early 1990s, on the heels of the first Gulf War, migration flows from Egypt ebbed significantly until the early 2000s, when a significant increase in migration occurred, and continues to the present time. Although undocumented migration to European destinations has received a great deal of media attention lately, it does not yet show up much in existing nationally representative household surveys, possibly because of its highly concentrated nature in certain villages and communities, which may or may not appear in national surveys not designed to measure such a geographically concentrated phenomenon. Migration from Egypt tends to be somewhat selective by education. Twenty-two percent of migrants in the first half of the 2000s had a university education or higher as compared to 16% of all adult males in 2006.¹ Sixty-five percent had secondary education. Rania Roushdy, Ragui Assaad, and Ali Rashed, "International Migration, Remittances and Household Poverty Status in Egypt," Background paper for the World Bank Program on International Mi-

tion and above, compared to 51% of adult males.

THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES ON HOUSEHOLD POVERTY

Most studies suggest remittances from migrants reduce poverty worldwide. Recent estimates for Egypt confirm this conclusion. With an average incidence of poverty of about 20% in Egypt in the mid-2000s, remittances from migrants are estimated to reduce a household's poverty rate by eight or nine percentage points, or just under half.² While this is a substantial reduction in poverty for the affected households, the impact on overall poverty is limited. With only 3.5% of households receiving remittances — and an even smaller proportion of poor households, because migration tends to be more prevalent among the non-poor — the national poverty rate would only increase by 0.4% if migration stopped, assuming negligible spillover effects. The impact of remittances on household poverty varies, depending on the characteristics of the household. While no significant differences in the impact of migration on household poverty were found between urban and rural households, greater poverty reduction was detected when the spouse left behind was educated at the secondary level or above, presumably indicating that the migrant himself is also educated.

THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON THE LABOR SUPPLY OF ADULTS LEFT BEHIND

In theory, migration could have contradictory effects on the labor supply of those left behind. On the one hand, by helping the household meet its basic needs, the receipt of remittances could act as a disincentive to work, thus reducing labor supply. On the other hand, remittances could allow households constrained by imperfect access to finance to start or expand family enterprise, raising the demand of the labor of household members. In the absence of remittances, migration could induce an increase in labor supply by forcing other household members to substitute for the lost labor of the migrant. Recent empirical studies have found little evidence of any reduction in overall labor supply due to migration. Binzel and Assaad find that although the number of hours of wage and salary work among both adult males and adult females is somewhat reduced in migrant households that receive remittances, it is more than made up by the increases in the incidence and intensity of self-employment and unpaid family work induced by an increase in family enterprise activity.³ This increase in self-employment is particularly pronounced for adult females, who are more likely to constitute the adults left behind. Their results also indicate that women's domestic and subsistence work burden also increases in migrant households. Households with migrants that do not receive remittances experience an unambiguous increase in labor supply as the remaining adults strive to make up for the migrant member's lost income.

With only 3.5% of households receiving remittances — and an even smaller proportion of poor households, because migration tends to be more prevalent among the non-poor — the national poverty rate would only increase by 0.4% if migration stopped, assuming negligible spillover effects.

IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND REMITTANCES ON CHILD SCHOOLING AND CHILD WORK

The expected effects of migration and remittances on child work and schooling are somewhat less ambiguous. The loosening of household budget constraints due to remittances is likely to reduce the need to have children perform market work and increases the chances that they would be sent to school. However, it is possible that the domestic work burden of adolescent males could increase as they attempt to substitute for the contribution to household responsibilities of an absent father or older brother. Empirical findings confirm these expectations. Elbadawy and Assaad find that the receipt of remittances does in fact significantly reduce market work for boys 6-14 left behind, but does not have a significant impact on their school attendance, probably because school attendance among this group is already very high in both

gration from the Middle East and North Africa and Poverty Reduction Strategies, The World Bank, Washington, DC, 2009.

2. Rania Roushdy, Ragui Assaad, and Ali Rashed, "International Migration, Remittances and Household Poverty Status in Egypt."

3. Christine Binzel and Ragui Assaad, "The Impact of International Migration and Remittances on the Labor-Supply Behavior of those Left behind: Evidence from Egypt," DIW Discussion Paper No. 954, Berlin, DIW, 2009.

migrant and non-migrant households.⁴ They do find, however, that remittances enhance school attendance among university-aged boys 19 to 21. They also find that the domestic work burden of boys 15-17 increases in migrant households. For girls, the receipt of remittances has no discernible impact on reducing market work, because levels of market work among girls are very low in Egypt to start with, but they do reduce involvement in domestic work, probably as a result of the time-saving devices that remittances allow the household to acquire. They also find a positive impact of remittances on the probability of girls ever enrolling in school and on school retention rates for 15- to 17-year-old girls.

THE IMPACT OF MIGRATION AND RETURN MIGRATION ON WOMEN'S DECISION MAKING AND GENDER ROLES

Because migration in Egypt usually involves the temporary departure of an adult male, to the extent that this male was the head of the household prior to the departure, there is a *de facto* increase in the need for the spouse left behind to make important decisions relating to the welfare and maintenance of the household. The question is whether this *de facto* empowerment outlasts the return of the husband or is reversed upon his return. Elbadawy provide solid evidence for the latter.⁵ Not only is the ability to make decisions on the part of adult women left behind in Egypt reversed when the migrant returns, but it is even reduced compared to households that never experienced migration. They also find that attitudes about gender roles are more socially conservative in households that experienced migration than among those that have not. These results can be interpreted in light of the dominant pattern of migration from Egypt, which are typically to more socially conservative societies like Saudi Arabia and Libya, where migrants can be influenced by the cultural norms of the host country. They also could simply be attributable to return migrants asserting the male prerogative after a period of absence.

[There is] a positive impact of remittances on the probability of girls ever enrolling in school and on school retention rates for 15-17 year-old girls.

CONCLUSION

Migration has had a large impact on a significant portion of Egyptian households in the past three decades. The empirical studies reviewed here show that migration has had an unambiguous impact on reducing poverty and point to various mechanisms for poverty reduction besides simply increasing current household consumption. One of the main mechanisms by which migration appears to affect household welfare is to allow households to invest in starting or expanding family enterprises, in a context where the access to finance through the financial system is often highly constrained. The presence of such enterprise increases household welfare in part by creating opportunities to better utilize the labor of household members, especially adult women. Migration and remittances also contribute to reducing the intergenerational transmission of poverty by allowing households to increase investments in children's human capital through education. Migration also offers an opportunity for the empowerment of women simply by the fact that they often become the *de facto* decision makers when adult males are away. Research on Egypt has found, however, that this *de facto* empowerment is short-lived, and is essentially reversed when the migrant returns. In fact, the typically more conservative gender norms of the host countries Egyptian migrants are likely to go to may even come back with them, resulting in less progressive gender roles and attitudes among migrant households than among households whose men stayed home.

4. Asmaa Elbadawy and Ragui Assaad, "Impact of International Migration and Remittances on Child Schooling and Child Work: The Case of Egypt," Background paper for World Bank Program on International Migration from the Middle East and North Africa and Poverty Reduction Strategies, The World Bank, Washington DC, 2009.

5. Asmaa Elbadawy and Rania Roushdy, "Impact of Migration on Women's Decisionmaking and Gender Role Attitudes: the Case of Egypt," Background paper for World Bank Program on International Migration from the Middle East and North Africa and Poverty Reduction Strategies, The World Bank, Washington DC, 2009.

Palestinian and Iraqi Refugees and Urban Change in Lebanon and Syria

Mohamed Kamel Dorai

Migration is a key issue in most of the Middle Eastern countries affected both by a high rate of emigration and increasing immigration. Due to political instability, the region has one of the largest refugee and internally displaced populations in the world, mainly consisting of Palestinians and Iraqis. Most of these migrant populations reside in urban areas such as Cairo, Amman, Beirut, and Damascus. At the same time, the whole region is experiencing rapid urban development. The urban population increased from one quarter of the total population in the 1950s to over 60% in 2005. The migrants — domestic and international, forced or not — are one of the main drivers of urban development in the region.¹



Despite the diversity of existing situations, refugee movements are generally long-lasting, and the ends of conflicts do not always mean a return for the entire refugee population. The settlement of these populations generates profound changes in entire neighborhoods. Thus, refugees should not be considered only as recipients of humanitarian assistance, waiting for an eventual return or resettlement in a third country, but also as actors who contribute, through their initiatives and coping strategies, to the development of the cities that host them. An important part of the southern suburbs of Beirut was inhabited by Palestinian refugees following the 1948 war and, later, by internally displaced Lebanese originating from south Lebanon, along with other migrants, including Syrians.² Cities like Amman have experienced substantial changes with the arrival of 300,000 Palestinians expelled from Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion in 1990.³ More recently, some neighborhoods in Damascus have been transformed profoundly by the settlement of thousands of Iraqis escaping war, violence, and economic difficulties since the 1990s and by a larger scale flight since 2003.⁴

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IRAQI REFUGEES AND THE URBANIZATION PROCESS IN DAMASCUS

Urban development in Damascus depends largely on the arrival of new migrant populations, both Syrian and from abroad, who settle in the city's suburbs. Since 1948 (not to mention previous waves prior to the country's independence), Damascus has been a place of settlement for different groups of refugees, mainly from the Arab world. The proportion of refugees and displaced persons compared to the total population of the Syrian capital is very high. Mainly composed of Palestinians (more than 350,000 in the

1. See Nadjé Al-Ali, "The Relationship between Migration within and from the Middle East and North-Africa and Pro-Poor Policies," Discussion Paper. Department for International Development, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, 2004, <https://eprints.soas.ac.uk/4888/2/migrationMENAreport-1>; Philippe Fargues, "Introduction," *CARIM Mediterranean Migration Report 2008-2009*, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole: European University Institute (2009), pp. 19-38; Dominique Tabutin and Bruno Schoumaker, "The Demography of the Arab World and the Middle East from the 1950s to the 2000s: A Survey of Changes and a Statistical Assessment," *Population*, Vol. 60, Nos. 5-6 (2005), pp. 505-615.

2. Valérie Clerc, "Beyrouth: l'influence du foncier et des plans d'urbanisme sur la formation des quartiers irréguliers de la banlieue sud," *Mappemonde*, Vol. 84, No. 4 (2006), p. 15.

3. Nicholas Van Hear, "The Impact of the Involuntary Mass 'Return' to Jordan in the Wake of the Gulf Crisis," *International Migration Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2005), pp. 352-374.

4. Mohamed Kamel Dorai, "Lexil irakien à Damas. Modes d'insertion urbaine et reconfiguration des réseaux migratoires," *EchoGéo*, No. 8 (2009), <http://echogeo.revues.org/index10976.html>.

Damascus area), the refugee group also includes several hundred Somalis, Afghans, Sudanese, and Yemenis, as well as the large displaced population from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights (estimated at 300,000). Since 2003, thousands of Iraqi refugees have settled there.⁵ In the absence of refugee camps to accommodate them, more than two-thirds of the Iraqis registered by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) live in Damascus. The proportion of refugees and displaced people is very high for a city of just over four million inhabitants.

Since the 1970s, Syria had hosted opponents of the previous Iraqi regime. Following the First Gulf War (1991), the situation changed. The majority of Iraqis who arrived in Syria left Iraq because of the political situation and economic difficulties. Most of these Iraqis were young men who settled in large numbers in Sayda Zaynab, a southern suburb of Damascus. Most of them worked as day workers or street vendors, but some of them developed small businesses. The poorest stayed in Syria until 2003, while the richest or those who have structured migratory networks managed to emigrate to Europe, North America, or Australia.

The vast majority of Iraqis in Syria are of urban origin, primarily from Baghdad. They, like previous waves of migrants, settled in Damascus. There they found it easier to find employment and to gain access to international agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The Iraqi presence in Damascus is concentrated in some of the neighborhoods of suburbs such as Sayda Zaynab, Jaramana, Massaken Barzeh, Yarmouk, and Qodsiyyeh; in more remote localities where the rents are relatively low such as Sednaya and Tell; and, to a lesser extent, in other cities such as Aleppo, Lattaquieh, and Deir el Zor.

The urban landscape [of Syria] has changed dramatically since the Iraqis' arrival.

The urban landscape has changed dramatically since the Iraqis' arrival. Iraqi businesses and restaurants as well as travel agencies specializing in Iraq have developed rapidly and have modified the local townscape. The Iraqis have developed their own economic activities in the different suburbs of Damascus, ranging from street vendors to small clothing manufacturers and small groceries. These activities are both connected to the personal itineraries of the entrepreneurs and workers and the rather flexible urban context in which they are situated, which has facilitated the adaptation of the newcomers.

FROM CAMP TO CITY: THE URBANIZATION PROCESS OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CAMPS

In the Palestinian case, due to the Middle East's rapid urbanization, most of the refugee camps are part of the capitals and main cities in their respective countries or host regions. Sixty years of exile have generated new forms of local integration, especially in urban areas where refugee camps are now part of the cities that surround them. Since the late 1940s, refugee camps transformed markedly, from tents to very densely built up areas. Since the 1950s, the places where Palestinians settled in the Beirut suburbs were not only Palestinian areas, but poor and segregated neighborhoods where marginalized migrants, such as Syrians, Kurds, and Armenians, also settled.⁶ Parallel to the urbanization process, the refugee camp population has profoundly changed due to emigration, internal displacement, and social mobility.

Refugee camps can become parts of urban areas or may become themselves urban centers due to their demographic weight and the variety of activities developed there (e.g., socioeconomic activities, political decisionmaking) and the central role they play in the Palestinian society in exile. In some specific cases, the categorization depends upon the institution in charge of the refugees. For example, in Damascus, Yarmouk is considered a refugee camp by the Syrian authorities whereas the UN Relief Works Agency (UNRWA) does not recognize it as such. At an operational level (i.e., international responsibility, access to services, the legal context, etc.), a clear distinction exists between camp dwellers. 5. In the absence of a census, there is a debate on the actual number of Iraqis in Syria. Syrian authorities claim that there are around 1.2 to 1.5 million Iraqis in Syria, whereas the UNHCR registered about 200,000 since 2003. According to many observers, the actual number is close to that of UNHCR registrants.

6. Jihane Sfeir, *Lexil palestinien au Liban. Le temps des origines (1947-1952)* (Paris: Editions Karthala, and Beirut: ifpo, 2008), p. 208.

and urban refugees. But the analysis of the geographical development of refugee camps in their local context leads us to consider the refugee camps as urban areas. Camps tend to look increasingly like that of the poorer informal urban areas nearby. The temporal dimension of the Palestinian exile is also a key element to take into consideration. Sixty years of exile have led to a specific relationship with their host societies, with a strong local integration linked to a rapid urbanization of the different host countries parallel to a strong segregation due to the socio-political and legal context.

Refugee camps themselves host, temporarily or more permanently, different waves and groups of refugees. New immigrant communities also settle in and/or around the camps. In Damascus for example, Iraqis refugees settle in neighborhoods composed of Palestinian refugees, internally displaced Syrians from the Golan, and internal migrants coming from the countryside. The same pattern can be found in many other cities in the region, such as Beirut, Amman, and Cairo. Urban margins, where refugees and migrants settle, are not disconnected from the urban dynamics of the surrounding cities. Refugee camps develop ties with their urban environment. Even if they are segregated and marginalized, they nonetheless are part of the urban settings that host them.

CONCLUSION

In an unstable Middle Eastern political context, Iraqi and Palestinian cases demonstrate the importance of forced migration in urban development and their articulation with other forms of migration, such as internal migration and international labor migration. Most of the current refugee populations settle in urban areas to access resources and develop in certain localities their own social and economic activities contributing to the urban change. In the specific Palestinian case, a diachronic analysis of the different camps' evolution enables us to retrace their specific history and the different ties with their local urban environment. On the one hand, camps appear to be marginalized and segregated areas due to the special — and often changing — regulation and modes of control as well as the legal status of their Palestinian residents. On the other hand, refugee camps are strongly connected to their urban environment through the daily mobility of Palestinian refugees, the growing presence of other groups of refugees and migrants (such as foreign workers, asylum seekers, and refugees), and the development of commercial activities that blur the boundaries of the refugee camps, making it a part of the city.

Refugee camps develop ties with their urban environment. Even if they are segregated and marginalized, they nonetheless are part of the urban settings that host them.

Transnational Networks and Local Challenges: Iraqis in Cairo

Sara Sadek

It is estimated that over four million Iraqi refugees have fled to neighboring countries in the region since the 2003 war began. While migration continued after the war, the peak of this influx was witnessed particularly in and after 2006 due to the acceleration of violence in central and southern Iraq. More particularly, the majority of these refugees fled due to direct threats to their lives and their immediate families.

It also is estimated that the number of Iraqi refugees in Egypt ranges between 20,000 and 40,000 including those not registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).¹ The Iraqi community in Egypt has often been neglected, owing to the fact that their estimated number is less than their counterparts in the other neighboring countries, especially Jordan and Syria. While the Iraqis living in Egypt appear to be different from the others, their socioeconomic situation is just as difficult.

LOCAL REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

Background

Refugees in Egypt do not have access to public services owing to Egypt's reservation on relevant clauses to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. Due to their lack of access to public services, they always have been perceived by policymakers and by themselves as temporary, pending one of UNHCR's "durable solutions" (i.e., return to country of origin, local integration, or resettlement to a third country as the most preferred).²

The gap in providing UNHCR assistance has resulted in refugees adopting other strategies such as community-based support systems.³ Moreover, some refugee groups take part in unskilled labor or count on assistance from organizations and remittances from family and friends in countries of resettlement as sources of income in Egypt. Yet community-based support remains an integral source helping African refugees survive socially and economically in Egypt.

The Refugee Scene in Egypt

The refugee scene in Cairo is composed of three main layers: Intergovernmental Or-



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This essay is based on a presentation delivered at the conference of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration, June 2009, in Cyprus. It also is based on the author's involvement in three research projects on Iraqis in Egypt that were conducted between February 2008 and June 2009 as well as on volunteer work and social encounters with Iraqi families.

1. UNHCR Statistics 2009; P. Fargues, S. Sadek *et al.*, "Iraqis in Egypt: A Statistical Survey in 2008," (Provisional Copy), Centre for Migration and Refugee Studies and Institute of Decision-making and Support Centre, December 2008.

2. Fateh Azzam, "A tragedy of failures and false expectations. Report on the Events surrounding the three-month sit-in and Forced Removal of Sudanese Refugees in Cairo, September-December 2006," The American University in Cairo, Forced Migration and Refugees Studies, 2006; Katarzyna Grabska, "Living on the Margins, the Analysis of the Livelihood Strategies of Sudanese Refugees with Closed files in Egypt," Working Paper No. 6, The American University in Cairo, Forced Migration and Refugees Studies, 2005.

3. Katarzyna Grabska, "Who Asked them (refugees) Anyway? Rights and Well-being of Refugees in Egypt," Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalization and Poverty. The American University in Cairo, Forced Migration and Refugees Studies, 2006.

ganizations (or IGOs, mainly the UNHCR and International Organization for Migration or IOM), service providers manifested in churches or legal aid organizations, and community-based organizations (CBOs). The African refugee communities in Cairo are known to be highly active in their community support systems. To date, more than 30 CBOs are operated in Cairo by the Sudanese community alone. Their services can include providing trainings, services, and, in some cases, funds. Most of them operate a kindergarten to accommodate children of full-time working mothers most of whom hold jobs as domestic workers.

Despite the fact that the majority of these CBOs face continuous challenges in terms of managing and funding their organizations, they still support individual refugees and act as at least a social outlet for these refugees to meet and share ideas or even problems.

Iraqi Refugees

Despite the fact that Iraqis share with other refugees the same restrictions on public services, their social and economic coping mechanisms remain very different in Egypt. Iraqi refugees depend mainly on savings and remittances for their livelihoods in Egypt.⁴ Yet their uniqueness as a refugee community in Egypt in their being a highly educated middle class community who do not readily engage in unskilled labor, especially for Egyptians. Their concern to provide the best education for their children has driven them to spend huge amounts of money on private school and university fees.

Despite the fact that Iraqis share with other refugees the same restrictions on public services, their social and economic coping mechanisms remain very different in Egypt.

Iraqis in Jordan and Egypt tend to count primarily on transnational and internal social networks (in the case of the Jordan and Syria) as a source of information and economic survival.⁵

Thus the situation of Iraqis in Egypt becomes worse with the hidden restrictions imposed on this community that prevent it from forming its own community-based organizations for fear of sectarian tensions.⁶ Unlike other refugee communities in Cairo, Iraqis are not allowed to form their own community-based organizations (CBOs).

Despite the fact that active Iraqis in Egypt tend to criticize the prohibition on their creating their own CBOs, many Iraqis praise this policy. The Iraqis in Egypt are very diverse in their sectarian affiliations as well as professional backgrounds and political orientations. For some, an identifiable Iraqi community would threaten their security in Egypt, lest the parties targeting them in Iraq should know their current places of residence. Despite the fact that they live in clustered areas, they prefer to restrict their contacts with one or two Iraqi families whom they trust. In these instances, they tend to trust their new friends in different aspects, but they continue to refrain from discussing their reasons and conditions of displacement from Iraq.

THE ROLE OF NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOS)

Iraqi Refugees Access to Services

In addition to UNHCR and IOM, there are five churches and NGOs serving the Iraqi community in Egypt. Two of

4. Fargues, Sadek *et al.*, "Iraqis in Egypt: A Statistical Survey in 2008."

5. Geraldine Chaterlard, "Jordan as a Transit Country: Semi-protectionist Immigration Policies and Their Effects on Iraqi Forced Migrants," European University Institute (2002), pp. 21-22; Mohamed Dorai, "Iraqi Refugees in Syria: Paper Prepared for Migration and Refugee Movements in the Middle East and North Africa," Centre for Migration and Refugee Studies, The American University in Cairo, 2007.

6. There is only one Iraqi community/legal aid office in Egypt under the umbrella of St. Andrew's Church, which is headed by young American lawyers and interns who are assisted by some Iraqi interpreters. The office is continuously supervised by Egyptian national security staff.

these organizations — Caritas and Catholic Relief Services — are UNHCR implementing partners. Caritas provides health services, while Catholic Relief Services provides tuition waivers and, recently, an awareness program for return. The Egyptian Foundation for Refugee Rights (EFRR) also supports Iraqis, by representing them legally in local courts in Egypt.

In June 2008, the first Iraqi-focused organization was initiated. It serves as a legal aid organization, helping those who are eligible for resettlement according to UNHCR and IOM criteria. Currently, this project is operating under the auspices of St. Andrew's Church and congregation in Cairo. The office has recently extended its services to include psychosocial support to clients. Iraqis, among other refugees, also receive English classes provided by Student Action for Refugees (STAR) operating under the auspices of the American University in Cairo.

Resettlement ... Resettlement!

Iraqi resettlement to the United States increased to 17,000 in the fiscal year 2009,⁷ and by March 2009 over 75,000 Iraqis are estimated to have been resettled to the United States and 16 other Western countries.⁸ However, resettlement by UNHCR is anticipated to decrease in the future due to funding constraints.⁹ Meanwhile, Iraqis in Egypt — due to their perception of the challenges of living there — are keener to use the services that will help them resettle. In fact, seeking a resettlement application has turned into a survival strategy in itself among Iraqis. Thus they often misperceive the assistance furnished by service providers. In interviewing Iraqis, some were skeptical of the legal services furnished by a service provider on the grounds that it only serves those who supported the US Army. Yet in fact, a specific category of Iraqis might receive support simply because they are more likely to be resettled (i.e., they fit the IOM resettlement criteria). The existence of service providers to help with resettlement cases also has fostered the impression among Iraqis that resettlement is a *right* and is *the* solution to their problems. Although in theory resettlement should be regarded as the best option for Iraqis, resettlement opportunities continue to shrink due to funding limitations and policies.

Although in theory resettlement should be regarded as the best option for Iraqis, resettlement opportunities continue to shrink due to funding limitations and policies.

Transnational Networks as a Coping Mechanism

Whereas the internal communal strategies remain vague¹⁰ owing to factors of mistrust as well as the local restrictive policies (discussed below), the impact of the bigger “Iraqi Diaspora” on Iraqis’ livelihoods in Egypt is very interesting. Iraqis in Egypt are well connected with their family members and friends in Iraq and resettlement countries.

Koser identified three important factors helping the transition of refugees into transitional communities: the decision not to return, the links established with the homeland community, and the institutionalization of the diaspora by the government.¹¹ The first two factors, which are intertwined, apply to the case of Iraqis in Egypt. They count on their families’ advice and information on security conditions in Iraq more than they do on news announced in the media. According to many, even though kidnappings and killings in Iraq have decreased in comparison to 2006, they are still

7. International Rescue Committee, “Iraqi Refugees in the United States: In Dire Straits,” June 2009

8. Jeff Crisp *et al.*, “Surviving in the City: A Review of UNHCR’s Operation for Iraqi Refugees in Urban Areas of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria,” UNHCR, July 2009.

9. Crisp *et al.*, “Surviving in the City: A Review of UNHCR’s Operation for Iraqi Refugees in Urban Areas of Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.”

10. In September 2008, there was an initiative among the Iraqi leaders and volunteers to raise money for destitute families. The leaders also conducted a focus group to identify the assets the community members have which could be useful in providing free of charge medical and educational services to other families.

11. Khalid Koser, “From Refugees to Transnational Communities?” in Nadjie Al-Ali, ed., *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home* (London: Routledge, 2002).

Sadek...

targeted at the borders and are advised by their families not to return.

Most of the literature has considered remittances to be coming from resettlement countries to countries of origin in the form of ideas and funds that transform the community at home.¹² Yet in the case of Iraqi refugees, remittances are sent primarily from the country of origin to the refugees in the first country of asylum (i.e., Egypt). Having originated from an oil-rich country, Iraqis in asylum in neighboring countries count on remittances sent by family members to sustain them. Thus the flow of information from Iraqis in Iraq and in third countries to Iraqis in Egypt is an important factor affecting the perceptions and the decisions to stay in Egypt.

CONCLUSION

The Iraqi community in Egypt is highly dependent for its daily survival on the Iraqi diaspora. This dependence is manifested in the flow of information and funds from those in Iraq to Iraqis in Egypt. While this connection has helped them after their displacement, it has added to their isolation and the perception of their lives as temporary in Egypt.

12. Peggy Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001).

Remittances of Egyptian Migrants: An Overview

M.I.T. El-Sakka

The importance of migrant remittances as a source of foreign exchange to labor-exporting countries has increased significantly over time. In fact, quite often, remittances are found to exceed in their flows the more customary sources of foreign exchange, i.e., external borrowing, foreign direct investment (FDI), and foreign aid. Perhaps the main advantage of remittances is related to their appealing characteristic of being costless to the countries of origin, as they would not bear any future financial commitments in relation to them. Given the demographic trends in industrialized countries, it is expected that labor migration will play an increasingly significant role in these economies in offsetting the effects of depopulation on their labor markets. This will be translated into even larger remittance flows to the labor-exporting countries in the future.

Worker remittances to Egypt are a clear example of how important such flows are to the countries of origin. In this case, remittances represent the biggest sources of foreign exchange after exports, and a significant source of household income.

A GENERAL BACKGROUND OF MIGRANT REMITTANCES TO EGYPT

Egypt is one of the world's leading labor exporting countries. The mix of Egyptian emigrants includes labor of almost all professions and specializations, emigrants spread all over the world. Within the Middle East Egyptians migrate largely to the oil-producing countries of the Gulf and Libya, and to a lesser degree to Lebanon and Jordan. Outside the Middle East, Egyptians migrate to the United States, Europe, Canada, Australia, and Japan. Emigration to oil-producing countries is always "temporary," as residency laws in these countries deny permanent residency to emigrants. Egyptian emigrants who seek permanent residency abroad have no choice but to go to countries where such residency is permissible, in particular to Australia, European countries, and the United States. However, given that labor markets in these countries are highly competitive, only skilled emigrants are able to emigrate to them and receive residency privileges. Essentially, this is a form of the "brain drain" from which Egypt has been suffering. By contrast, most of the Egyptian workers who emigrate to oil-producing countries in the region are less skilled and of lower educational levels, including teachers and clerical and construction workers. All those are temporary migrants, i.e., they have a target level of savings that they seek to achieve and then return to Egypt with those savings.

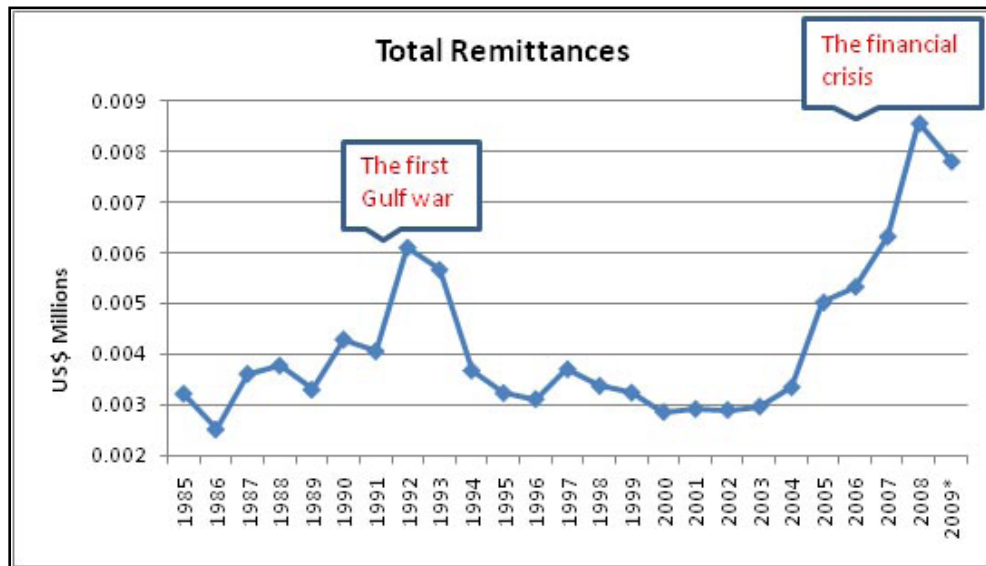
Figure 1 shows the evolution of Egyptian migrant remittances during the period from 1985 to 2000. Emigrant remittances increased from \$3.21 billion in 1985 to \$8.56 billion in 2008, before falling to \$7.8 billion in 2009 as a result of the financial crisis. Although the remittances of Egyptian migrants are flows of private capital, they are substantially affected by a number of economic and political factors. For example, the exceptionally high levels of remittances in 1992 and 1993, which reached \$6.1 billion and \$5.66 billion, respectively, reflected the developments in the immediate post-Gulf War period, when the Gulf states decided to replace large numbers of Jordanians, Palestinians, Sudanese, and Yemeni workers with Egyptian labor. During the period of 1985-2009, the average annual migrant remittances were about \$4.22 billion.



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There is no doubt that the evolution of remittances reflects, in addition to economic and political factors, changes in stocks of migrant workers abroad, especially those of temporary emigrants with low skills, who tend to be in high demand in the Arab oil-producing countries in times of expansion. The stock of skilled labor is more stable both in the oil-producing countries and in industrial countries.

Figure 1: Total Remittances of Egyptian Migrants



Source: UNCTAD and the Central Bank of Egypt

The geographic distribution of the stock of Egyptian migrants abroad is reflected vividly in the sources of remittance flows to Egypt. Table 1 shows the flows of remittances from different immigration countries during the period from 1999 to 2009. It is clear that the United States is the largest source of remittances to Egypt. On average, one-third of all flows of remittances to Egypt are derived from the United States. As mentioned above, migration to the United States is mainly permanent. However, the problem with transfers from permanent migrants is their tendency to diminish, as linkages between emigrants and their country of origin weaken over time. The second generation are primarily associated with their places of birth and have almost no links with their countries of origin. Therefore, unless there is a continuous flow of new emigrants, remittances from permanent migrants eventually stop.

As a source of remittances to Egypt, and with respect to their relative importance, the Gulf states rank second. Egyptian workers transferred \$1.5 billion from the Gulf states in 1999/2000. Nearly ten years later, in 2008/2009, remittances have more than doubled to \$4.15 billion. Saudi Arabia had been the most important source of remittances for Egypt until 2004, ahead of the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait.

Since 2004, remittances from Kuwait have grown in an unprecedented manner to the extent that Kuwait has become the most important source of remittances from the Gulf to Egypt. Kuwait has witnessed a huge balance of payments (BOP) surplus and abundant foreign assets due to higher crude oil prices. Soaring oil revenues matched with the adoption of an ambitious plan to transform Kuwait into a financial center resulted in an explosion in construction and infrastructure projects, which in turn drove labor demand in these sectors. This demand has been primarily met from Egypt or from the stock of Egyptians working in the neighboring countries. The substantial rise in the number of Egyptian workers in Kuwait has caused a dramatic increase in remittances to Egypt. In 2007/2008, \$1.79 billion were remitted from Kuwait alone, which represented nearly 20% of total remittances flowing to Egypt from abroad, compared to \$1.38 billion from the United Arab Emirates and \$959.4 million from Saudi Arabia. As such, Kuwait has become the second largest source of remittances to Egypt after the United States.

Table 1: Sources of Remittance Inflows (million US \$)

Source country	1999/ 2000	2000/ 2001	2001/ 2002	2002/ 2003	2003/ 2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009*
Saudi Arabia	737.3	681.3	621.2	634.4	639.6	725.5	775.8	859.4	959.4	976.1
Kuwait	410.9	222.3	376.4	254.3	205.6	589.2	922.8	1106	1797.1	1594
UAE	283	301.9	349.4	302.9	278.8	371.6	729	989.6	1392.9	1380.3
Qatar	41.7	44.4	45.4	48.5	46.2	63.8	109	102.1	131	140.7
Bahrain	19.4	12.7	54.2	23.8	7.1	10.5	47	21.9	77.6	36.4
Oman	12.1	11	11.3	14.9	15.5	18.4	24.9	17.7	31.6	27.5
Libya	3.3	2.6	3	1.6	2.7	2.1	3.5	5.5	33.2	20.5
Lebanon	16.4	14.6	10.3	18	14.6	20.6	27.6	24.6	18	22
USA	1018.8	1048.8	955.9	1025.9	1111.1	1619.6	1516.3	2080.3	2762.9	2269.1
France	46.6	48.8	47.3	63.3	63.4	68.7	49.8	53.5	61.1	50.2
Germany	91.2	96.6	89.1	125.9	131.1	230.5	198.4	209.6	229.3	208.2
Italy	33.6	34.6	32.4	48.3	64.3	74.9	54	42	71.1	72.3
The Netherlands	9.9	16.5	12	22.4	36.6	25.9	19.3	32.5	17.7	19.4
United Kingdom	113.1	95.7	116	124	122.8	169.4	147.4	235.5	267.5	481.8
Greece	4	5.6	5.2	7.9	8.4	11.6	13.8	14.1	16.7	22.4
Spain	5.1	3.1	3.4	10.7	6.3	12.4	15.2	10.4	8.4	6.5
Switzerland	135.1	105.4	119.9	97.7	91.5	102.7	143.1	261	255.5	213.1
Japan	6.6	14	8.6	9	3.8	19.8	17.1	3	4.1	5.1
Canada	9.6	6.2	5.9	8.3	8.7	12.9	11.4	13.2	28.7	26.5
Other Countries	69.3	76.6	85.6	120.8	141.5	179.4	208.8	239.1	395.4	233.6
Total	3067	2842.7	2952.5	2962.6	2999.6	4329.5	5034.2	6321	8559.2	7805.7

Source: The Central Bank of Egypt

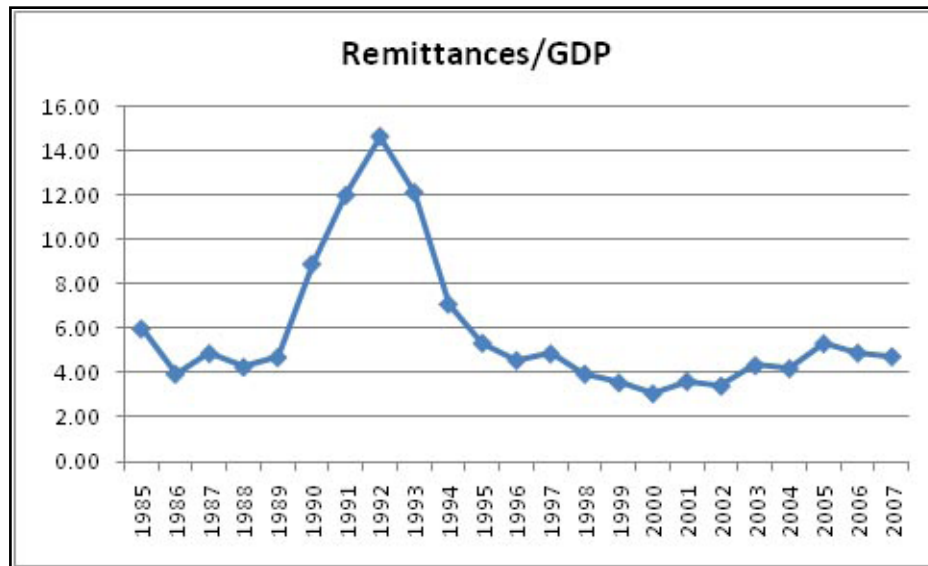
THE IMPORTANCE OF REMITTANCES TO THE EGYPTIAN ECONOMY

The significance of remittances to the country of origin could be assessed on the basis of several indicators, including the proportion of remittances to GDP. Figure 2 shows the proportion of migrant remittances to Egyptian GDP. As a percentage of GDP, remittances reached a peak during the first Gulf War, with an inflow accounting for about 15%. On average, during the period of 1985-2009, the ratio of remittances to GDP has been about 5.9%. On the other hand, the average remittances per capita peaked in 2008, (at about \$105). The average annual remittances per capita during 1985-2009 has been around \$61.4. These figures may seem to be low, but if the average number of family members per emigrant is taken into account, in addition to the average per capita income in the country, these numbers become quite significant at the household level.

Until 1994, the remittance flows had exceeded the value of Egyptian exports of goods. Starting from this year (with the exception of 1998), the proportion of remittances to Egyptian exports has continuously declined, reaching its lowest level in 2008, which corresponded to 32.6% of total exports. During the period of 1985-2009, the average ratio of remittances to total exports was at around 105%. In 1991, remittance flows to Egypt amounted to 16 times the FDI inflow. During the period of 1985-2006, the average proportion of remittances to the FDI inflow was about 482%. Remittance flows also were more than five times that of official foreign aid. During the period 1985-2006, the average percentage of

remittances to the total official foreign aid was about 210%.

Figure 2: The Proportion of Remittances to GDP



The previous analysis reveals that migrant remittances are vital to the Egyptian economy. Therefore, policymakers must deal with remittances with extreme caution in order to ensure the stability of the foreign exchange market and the Egyptian pound.

POLICIES TO ATTRACT REMITTANCES

Unfortunately, when migration of Egyptian labor started to increase at the end of the 1960s and 1970s, Egypt had very strict rules in place regarding holding and dealing in foreign currencies, which led to a flourishing black market for foreign exchange. The black market had been the main venue of remittance flows explained by an undervalued pound. A very active network of black market agents collected currencies from Egyptians working abroad to be used, through informal channels, to finance the smuggling of foreign goods and other illicit trade activities.

To control the black market, the government attempted to reform gradually and partially its foreign exchange policy. In 1971, for example, individuals were granted the right to open special foreign exchange accounts in Egyptian banks. In 1973, a parallel market for foreign exchange was established with the intention of attracting the savings of emigrant workers by offering them incentive exchange rates. In 1974, emigrant workers were allowed to finance imports from abroad. In 1976, individuals were granted the right to hold foreign exchange and to deal in it through licensed banks. In 1977, privileges granted to foreign investors were extended to Egyptian investors to encourage emigrant workers to invest their savings in Egypt. Believing in the importance of migration to the Egyptian economy, the Ministry of Emigration and Working Abroad was established in 1981, which later merged with the Ministry of Labor to form the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration. During the period from 1983-1985, several foreign exchange premiums were granted to emigrants who converted their savings from abroad. Finally, in 1991 the government abolished the two-tier foreign exchange rate system and replaced it with the unified exchange rate. This resulted in the full liberalization of the Egyptian pound, thus avoiding any possible negative effects of the foreign exchange policy on the inflow of remittances.

DETERMINANTS OF EGYPTIAN MIGRANTS' REMITTANCES

Despite the importance of remittances for the Egyptian economy, applied research on the determinants of remittances

remains very limited. In a panel study of remittances to the Arab labor exporting countries, it was found that remittances are positively related to economic growth in the host countries as well as to inflation in the home country.¹ It also was found that exchange rate differentials between official and black markets have a negative impact on the inflow of remittances through official channels. El-Sakka and McNabb² estimated a macro model for the total inflow of remittances through official channels in Egypt. They found that levels of income in both host and home countries have a positive impact on the inflows of remittance to Egypt. They also found that remittance flows are highly responsive to black market premiums. The results also support the hypothesis that interest differentials at home and abroad have a negative impact on the inflows of remittances through official channels. The limited evidence available on the determinants of remittances to Egypt stresses the need for further research to identify appropriate policies aimed at securing increased inflows of remittances through official channels.

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The Impacts of the Global Economic Crisis on Migration in the Arab World

Md. Shahidul Haque and Priyanka Debnath

“The current global financial crisis adds further serious complications...we are concerned about the loss of migrants’ jobs; a decrease in migrant remittances; a reduction in Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and most seriously of all, the stigmatization and scapegoating of migrants tending towards xenophobia.”

— William Lacy Swing, IOM Director General at 106th Executive Committee Session, Geneva, June 26, 2009



The global economy is passing through the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

According to the IMF, in 2009, the world economy experienced the biggest contraction in the last 60 years. It is expected that in 2009-10, in the best case scenario, 18 million people will be unemployed globally, and in the worst case, this figure will rise to 30 million. The impact of the crisis has varied by country, sectors, and the degree of linkages of those sectors with the global economy. Before turning our attention to the current crisis, it might be useful to discuss briefly the magnitude and the impact of the past three world financial crises, particularly in relation to labor mobility. Prior to the Great Depression (1929-1934), the doors of the US and the European countries were “open” for migration. In fact, between 1880 and 1920, there was maximum labor mobility in the US and European countries. However, during the Great Depression, international labor migration declined sharply. In spite of pressure to return migrants to their home countries, many of them stayed put, eventually acquiring citizenship in the US and Europe. No large-scale return took place during that time. However, the years following the Great Depression witnessed an emergence of a more restrictive migration policy regime in Western countries.

Since the Great Depression, the world has faced two other significant economic crises. The first of these was the 1973-74 oil crisis, which had a far-reaching effect on labor mobility globally. Indeed, the crisis marked a turning point in the international migration paradigm owing to an end to the European guest worker migration program and the emergence of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries as major new destinations for temporary contract labor.¹

In 1997, the so-called “Asian financial crisis” broke out, which severely affected the rising Asian “tiger” economies, but did not spread globally. During this crisis, in some countries, migrants were used as “scapegoats” for unemployment; however, these economies quickly realized that the local workforce was not willing to take up the usual “migrant jobs” even during a recession. Therefore, in some Southeast Asian countries, employers sought to prevent migrant expulsion approaches initiated by their governments.

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1. The GCC countries are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS OF 2009 AND THE ARAB ECONOMIES²

In order to analyze the impact of the current financial crisis on migration in the Arab region, it is of paramount importance to first explore the impact of this crisis on the Arab economies. With the exception of Dubai, the Arab region has a very limited *direct* exposure to global financial stress and toxic assets. Unlike certain regions, the Arab region had relatively weaker economic ties with US financial markets, and thus was not affected severely when the US financial sector was in turmoil. Nevertheless, there are three *indirect* channels through which the financial crisis has had a trickle-down effect on the Arab region.

First, there has been a sharp drop in oil prices, from \$147 per barrel in July 2008 to around \$60 per barrel in mid-2009.³

Second, there has been a contraction in global demand and, consequently, trade and related activities.

Third, there has been a tightening of the international credit markets, reducing the ability of the Arab countries to borrow. This tightening also has contributed to a decline in the overall level of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the region.

The sectors and areas in the Arab economies that could be affected most adversely in the long run are likely the following:

- Banking and the financial sectors;
- Export sectors, due to a fall in the global demand for goods and services;
- Rise in overall unemployment level;
- Local investment as well as FDI will be negatively affected;
- Fall in the demand for Arab labor in the international market, resulting in a decrease in the level of remittances.

In fact, the impact of a fall in the level of remittances in the region will prove to be a crucial transmission mechanism of the effects of the global financial crisis on the developing countries, particularly labor exporting countries. For instance, in Egypt it is expected that remittances will fall by 16% as a result of the crisis.⁴ Globally, remittances have dropped from \$305 billion in 2008 to approximately \$272 billion in 2009. It is estimated that the level of remittances will rise beginning in 2010.⁵

The overall economic growth in the Arab countries slowed down to approximately 2.5% in 2009 from 6% in 2008. The unemployment level is projected to have risen to 10.8% in 2009 from 9.4% in 2008. In other words, within this year, the region will have at least three million additional unemployed persons. The region, which is usually characterized by high inflationary pressure, has been experiencing disinflationary pressure, with a drop in the inflation rate from 15.8% in 2008 to 14% in 2009. This rate is projected to decrease to approximately 11% by 2010. Nevertheless, this inflation rate is still quite high relative to what economists regard as “acceptable.”

Within the Arab region, it is important to note, there are two different groups of countries, each of which will have ex-

The impact of a fall in the level of remittances in the region will prove to be a crucial transmission mechanism of the effects of the global financial crisis on the developing countries, particularly labor exporting countries.

2. Unless mentioned otherwise, all the data appearing in this essay have been gathered by IOM's Cairo office using OECD, ILO, IMF, UNDP, and World Bank data sources.

3. The Daily Oil Prices, <http://www.prices-oil.org/daily-oil-prices/daily-oil-prices-22-july-2009/>.

4. Data collected by IOM Cairo from the Central Bank of Egypt.

5. Dilip Ratha and Sanket Mohapatra (2009). Revised Outlook for Remittance Flows 2009 - Migration and Development Brief No. 9. World Bank.

perienced somewhat different impacts. One group, oil exporting countries (OEC),⁶ generally have more links with the global financial markets. These countries will be unfavorably affected by the fall in the price of oil, as oil and gas contribute almost 50% of their gross domestic product (GDP) and 80% their revenues. In addition, with the tightening of the credit markets, these countries experienced a sharp drop in their net flow, from approximately \$890 billion in 2007 to \$141 billion in 2009. The growth in real GDP is expected to decline from 5.4% in 2008 to 3.8% in 2010. In the worst case scenario, a prolonged decrease in the real GDP growth of these countries might leave a deep negative imprint on their overall socioeconomic growth.⁷

The other group, oil importing countries (OIC),⁸ will have experienced limited direct impacts on their economies. One of the main factors responsible for this is their relatively weak links with the global financial markets. Nevertheless, this group of countries will not remain immune to the negative impacts resulting from a decrease in their overall export level. It is important to note that most of the OIC countries are labor exporters. Therefore, a fall in the demand for their labor abroad, as well as job losses abroad faced by their labor migrants, will lead to a decline in overall remittances. Real GDP growth is projected to have decreased from 6.2% in 2008 to 3.2% in 2009. Similar to OECs, OICs' total export level will be found to have fallen significantly by the end of 2009. The disinflationary pressures will have been high, with a drop in the inflation rate from 14.4% in 2008 to 9.7% in 2009. The total imports are projected to have fallen by about \$29.3 billion between 2008 and 2009. The OIC countries will have lost out heavily due to a decrease in tourism from the nearby Gulf countries as well as from Europe. For instance, Egypt during the first quarter of 2009 experienced a reduction in its tourism income by more than \$2 billion and a decline in its income from the Suez Canal by approximately \$4 million.⁹

ARAB HUMAN MOBILITY DYNAMICS

There are three broad mobility “subsystems” or “dynamics:”

- Maghreb labor mobility: This includes Algeria, Morocco, Libya, and Tunisia.
- Mashreq labor mobility: This includes Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen.
- GCC labor mobility: This includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

A fall in the demand for their labor abroad, as well as job losses abroad faced by their labor migrants, will lead to a decline in overall remittances.

The above categorization arises due to the differences in the characteristics of the population as well as the varied labor market features of these three groups. Simply put, the mobility-related indicators in the Arab region arise due to the following specific causes:

- Diversity in population growth: The average population growth rates in the GCC countries ranges from 1.7 to 2.5%. In the Mashreq, this rate is lower (between 1% and 2.2%). It is even lower in the Maghreb (between 1 and 1.9%).
- Varied human development experiences: The human development index (HDI) varies across these three groups. They rank anywhere between 33 and 153. The GCC countries do well in relation to the other two groups. GCC countries rank between 33 and 61. Maghreb countries rank between 56 and 126 whereas Mashreq countries rank between 86 and 112. Yemen has the highest rank (153).

6. OEC countries include Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

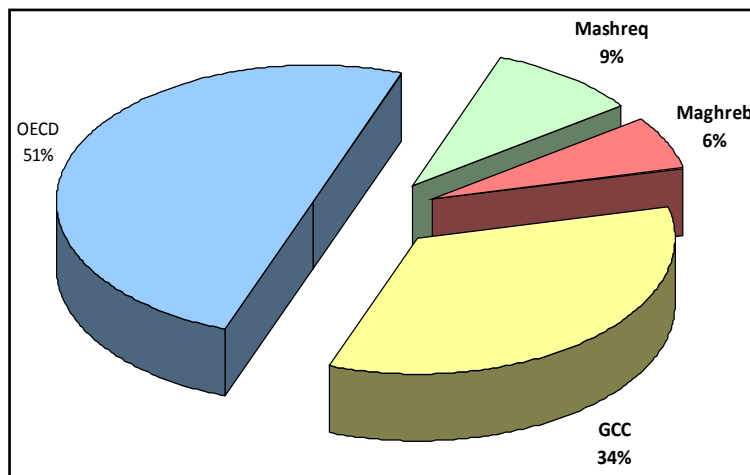
7. A few of the OECs encountered some problems in their banking sectors, however, their respective governments stepped in on time and swiftly managed the problem to prevent it from spreading. A positive impact of the crisis on these economies has been a fall in their inflation rates. The overall inflation rate in OECs is projected to decline from 10.3% in 2007 to 8.5% in 2010.

8. OIC countries include Djibouti, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Mauritania, Lebanon, Syria, and Tunisia.

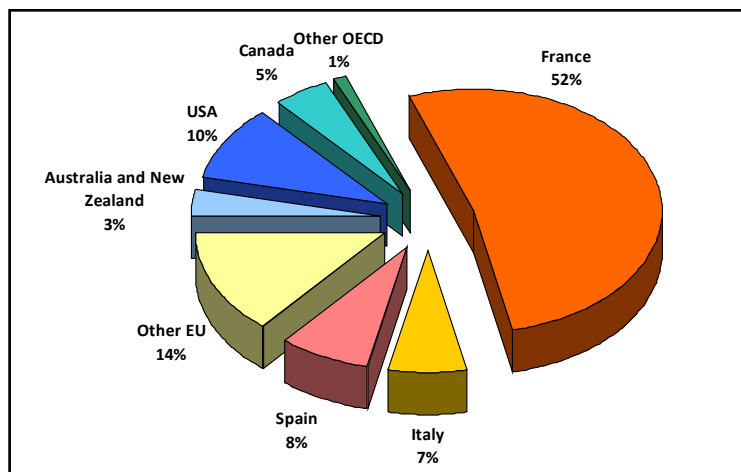
9. Data collected from the Central Bank of Egypt.

- Variation in the population pyramid: All three sets of countries are characterized by a large population under the age of 15. In GCC countries, approximately 20% to 31% of the population is under the age of 15; in the Maghreb, this figure ranges between 23% and 30%. The Mashreq has the highest percentage of population (between 25% and 42%) who are below the age of 15.
- Difference in unemployment rates and labor market conditions: There is a labor force of approximately 125 million in the Arab region with an annual growth rate of 2%. The GCC countries have the lowest unemployment rate (1.1-5.2%) compared to the Maghreb (11-15%) and the Mashreq (25-42%). This translates into about 12 million unemployed persons in the region, requiring/pressuring the region to create four million new jobs annually.

In order to better understand the impact of the economic crisis, we need to look at the geographical distribution of Arab migrants. As the pie charts below show, during the year 2008, 50% of Arab labor mobility was in fact within the Arab region. Thirty-four percent of Arab labor migrants went to the GCC countries while 6% went to the Maghreb countries and only 9% to the Mashreq countries. This distribution has been more or less static in recent decades. Only 50% of the Arab labor migrant force went to the OECD countries in 2008; of these, the majority went to France (52%), followed by other European Union (EU) countries (14%) and the US (10%).



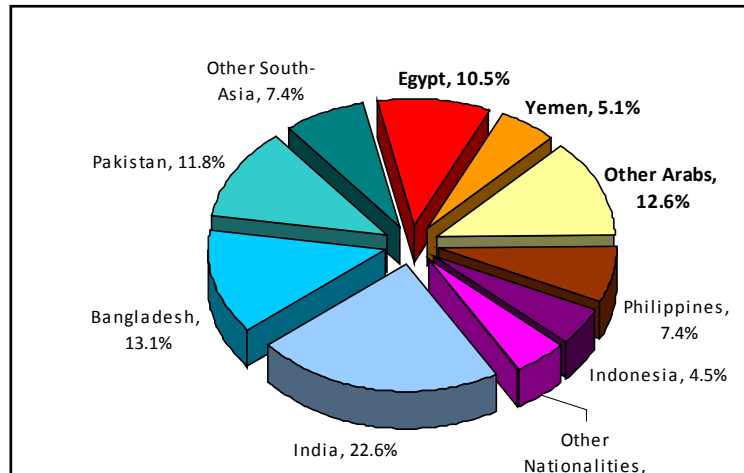
Source: World Bank's World Development Indicators (2008). Compiled by IOM Cairo.



Source: OECD Database compiled by IOM Cairo (2007).

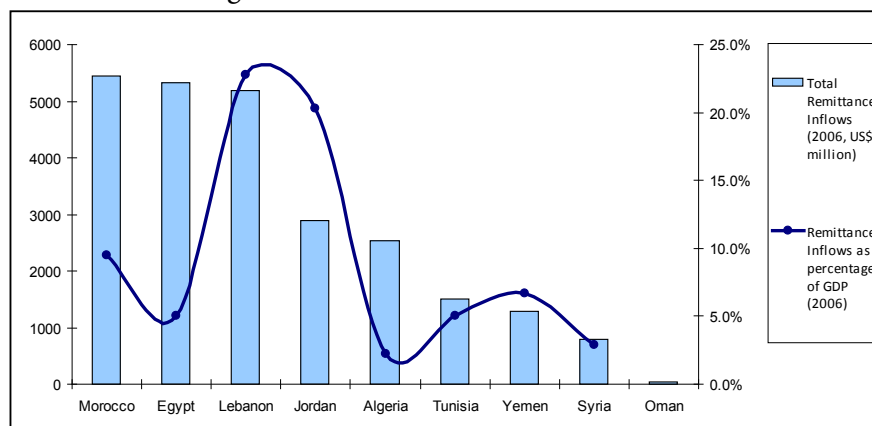
As mentioned earlier, 50% of Arab migrants move within their own region; the majority of these migrants go to the GCC countries (34%). Nevertheless, as shown in the pie chart below, in comparison to the percentage of overseas

workers in the GCC countries, Arab workers are not the majority. The greatest inflow of overseas workers to the GCC countries comes from South Asia (54.9%).¹⁰ Arab workers constitute approximately 28.2%, followed by Southeast Asian migrants.



Source: Data compiled by IOM Cairo (2008).

As mentioned at the outset, remittances play a crucial role as a percentage of GDP for many Arab countries, particularly OICs such as Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan. In 2006, all four of these countries recorded remittances of more than 10% percent of their GDP. As can be seen in the graph below, in 2006, the largest inflow of remittances was received by Morocco; however, if calculated as a share of GDP, Lebanon ranked first (23% of their GDP). Furthermore, from the graph below it is evident that although remittances to Syria are the lowest of the countries listed, they nonetheless constitute approximately 3% of GDP. In the Arab region, the GCC countries are typically the ones producing the highest remittances since almost 34% of Arab migrants reside in the GCC states.



Source: Data collected from World Bank Report (2008) and compiled by IOM Cairo.

THE DEBATE VS. THE REALITY OF THE IMPACT OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS ON REMITTANCES

Opinion is divided as to whether the level of remittances will rise or fall as a result of the current financial crisis. Some believe that the level of remittances received by the Arab countries might rise because they think that Arab migrants will be severely adversely affected by the economic downturns in their countries of destination. Since the financial crisis

10. This 54.9% is a cumulative figure obtained after adding the percentages for Pakistan, Bangladesh, India, and other South Asian countries.

has deeply impacted countries belonging to the OECD group, where half of Arab migrants go, the first employees to be let go when these economies suffer job losses are generally the migrant labor force (temporary workers). Depending on how migrants perceive their conditions of recovery in the destination countries, some might prefer to return to their countries of origin permanently or at least until the crisis is over. Hence, in preparation for their return, these migrants will channel their savings to their countries of origin. Thus, the Arab countries will face an increase in their level of remittance inflows, particularly from countries facing economic hardships as a result of this crisis.

On the other hand, some commentators believe that the level of remittance inflows will decrease as a result of the financial crisis as Arab migrants try to weather the crisis in their countries of destination. They will not return to their countries of origin due to temporary job losses. As a result, these migrants might not be able to remit as much money as previously. They will need to use some of their savings to meet their current and future expenses in the host countries pending the end of the crisis period in those countries.

In reality, the overall global remittance inflows into the countries of origin are projected to have declined from \$305 billion in 2008 to \$267 billion in 2009 as a result of the crisis.¹¹ The Arab remittance picture is not much different from the global picture. However, the countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region will not be among the worst-hit developing economies. The overall remittance inflow to the MENA region is expected to decline by 7%, and remittances from the GCC countries to the rest of the Arab region by 9%. Nevertheless, remittance inflows to the MENA countries are expected to pick up in 2010.¹²

While these figures are very appealing, the ramifications of the crisis might trigger more complex dynamics at a regional level, as migration is one of the main forces behind regional economic integration. Moreover, the fall in oil prices might be compounded with the ripple effects of the financial crisis. The World Bank draws attention to the different impacts of a slowdown in construction and financial services sectors. In countries that are more dependent on trade, finance, and real estate, the ripple effects of the global credit crunch will be more manifest than other economies which depend primarily on oil revenues. According to the same report, remittance outflows from Saudi Arabia in recent years have been uncorrelated with oil prices, as many GCC countries are following a long-term strategy of infrastructure development for which they have funding from large reserves accumulated over the years. While it is possible that investment may slow down given the uncertainty of the current global economic climate, it is unlikely that infrastructure investment will stop altogether and that migrant workers will be laid off in large numbers.¹³

At the same time, employers might benefit from resorting to migrant workers (whose bargaining power will be lower during times of crisis) to keep costs low, especially in countries like the UAE and Qatar, where migrants represent more than 90% of private sector employees. Some analysts also suggest that the financial crisis will hit hardest in those countries where demand is led by services (such as in Dubai) as opposed to oil-led economies where investments have been planned according to oil revenues that have been accumulated during previous years.

IMPACTS OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS ON THE MIGRATION PATTERNS IN THE ARAB REGION

As a direct impact of the crisis, there has been a reduction in the number of fresh migrant inflows into the advanced economies suffering from economic difficulties. However, the crisis is unlikely to lead to a return of migrants *en masse*.

11. Dilip Ratha and Sanket Mohapatra, "Revised Outlook for Remittance Flows 2009," Migration and Development Brief No. 9, World Bank, 2009.

12. Ratha and Mohapatra, "Revised Outlook for Remittance Flows 2009."

13. Ratha and Mohapatra, "Revised Outlook for Remittance Flows 2009."

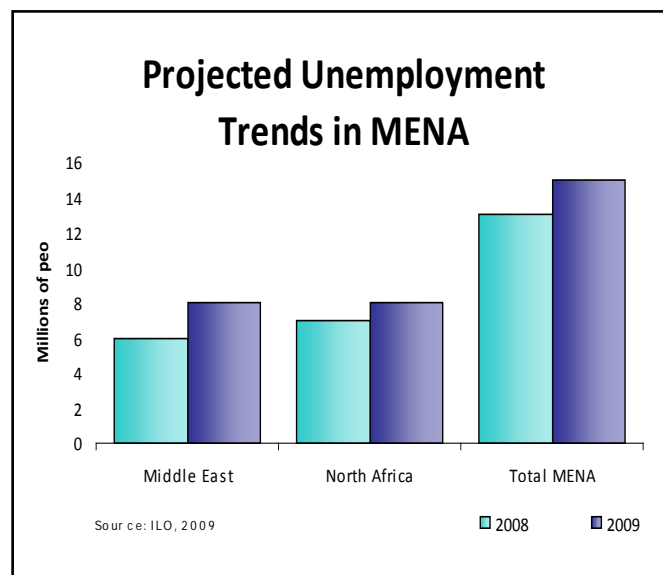
The ramifications of the crisis might trigger more complex dynamics at a regional level, as migration is one of the main forces behind regional economic integration.

This is not to negate the fact that migrants might find themselves in precarious situations (such as a becoming a part of the underground economy or becoming “irregular” migrants due to sudden job losses) in certain destination countries.

The direct impacts of the crisis on the employment situations of both the national and expatriate workforces in the Arab states are likely to be limited. The participation of the expatriate workforce in the Arab economies is likely to remain static or decrease negligibly. Hence, the overall inflow of foreign labor into the Arab economies is unlikely to *stop* as a result of the global financial turbulence. Nevertheless, these economies might experience a shrinking job market particularly in finance, construction, tourism, services, and manufacturing, which might adversely affect the migrant workforce more than to the Arab nationals. There is also the risk that governments might enact more restrictive migration policies, with the unintended consequence of spurring irregular labor migration. Furthermore, there might be a reduction of wages in certain sectors and a deterioration in working conditions affecting both migrant as well as Arab workers.

Arab economies have been suffering from the chronic high unemployment of nationals for years. National employment statistics concerning both nationals and migrants are not available. However, according to the International Labour Organization, unemployment in the Middle East region is expected to have risen from 9.4% in 2007 to 11% in 2009.¹⁴ This increase will have resulted in approximately three million workers losing their jobs. Unfortunately, data is too scarce to project how this increase in unemployment levels will impact migrant workers both in origin and destination countries.

The graph below depicts the (projected) changes in the unemployment figures between the years 2008 and 2009. It is amply evident that the Middle East region alone will have had two million new unemployed persons, while the North African countries will have had an additional one million new unemployed persons in their workforce.



POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSE TO MITIGATE THE IMPACTS OF THE CRISIS

Before designing any policy response, it is important to emphasize the fact that *migrants are not a part of the crisis, but a part of the solution*. Migrants can be used as an effective tool to aid the economies hit by the present crisis. Furthermore, migrants are foreign workers; hence, treating them with dignity during both the economic boom and bust periods is essential to project a positive image of the host country. It is important to fight the stereotype that migrant workers are

14. ILO, Global Employment Trends, January 2009, https://webdev.ilo.org/asia/info/public/pr/lang--en/WCMS_101494/index.htm.

only treated well during the economic boom period of the host country. Hence, it is essential to raise awareness within the host countries about the value of the economic and social contributions made by the migrants to these countries. This could be achieved by organizing public seminars and outreach programs on a regular basis. The host country could show its commitment to the rest of the world by discussing this issue and its accompanying concerns in bilateral and multilateral fora.

The countries of origin also have an important role to play during difficult times like this. The origin governments need to devote efforts to ensure that the rights and well-being of their migrants, especially those affected by the economic downturn, are protected. The governments need to enhance the role of their embassies and labor attachés. Finally, there are equally important roles to be played by international organizations in assisting the governments of both the origin and destination countries to help mitigate the adverse impacts of the crisis, as well as to ensure the best interests of the migrant workers.

It is of cardinal importance to understand that regular labor migration channels need to remain open with a view to meeting any continuing demand for migrant workers in the region. There need to be effective bilateral arrangements, along with periodic regional and global dialogue to understand the changes in the labor markets and their ensuing effect on the migration paradigm. Having regular channels of migration also will help to reduce irregular or clandestine human trafficking and smuggling necessitated by the underground economies.

Enhanced reintegration programs for returnee migrants need to be in place to ensure that these workers can put their skills and knowledge into effective use in their countries of origin. Both the host and the origin governments will need to cooperate in order to ensure proper implementation of these special assistance programs (e.g., micro-financing support, etc.) for mutual benefit.

Finally, the Arab Regional Initiatives can play a significant role in addressing the economic difficulties born out of the current financial crisis. Implementation of the Arab Summit Resolution on global financial crisis (Kuwait, December 2008) as well as the recommendations adopted in the Arab Labour Conference (Jordan, April 2009) will help to mitigate the adverse impacts of the crisis on the Arab region as well as to ensure a quick recovery of the affected sectors.

CONCLUSION

The global economic situation is expected to begin to improve in 2012. However, the initial recovery will be at a rate of growth of approximately 1.9%. It is projected that it will take until 2014 in order to reach the pre-existing level of economic growth (4.8%). This is perhaps the first time since the United States emerged as a hegemon that a recovery of this type is unlikely to be US-led. History might perhaps witness for the first time an economic recovery that will be led by emerging economies such as those of India, China, Brazil, and South Africa. The economic recovery already has begun in these countries, and is expected to be followed by the European countries and the United States.

Migrants offset the structural and the cyclical shortages in the labor markets. Hence, migrants cannot be labeled as a short-term solution. They form an integral part of the labor market in the destination countries and are thus a long-term structural solution for addressing market difficulties. Also, since the structural fundamentals of a market tend to remain unchanged most of the time, migrants will remain an essential component of the post-crisis global economy. In the Arab region, many of the economies are heavily structurally dependent on the migrant workforce. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid a short-term outlook, which would turn the current economic crisis into a migration crisis. As mentioned earlier, the Arab countries are not among the worst hit by the present crisis. Hence, it is important for these economies to engineer solutions to mitigate the negative effects of the crisis rather than disturbing the fundamental fabric of the pre-crisis economy.

Migrants offset the structural and the cyclical shortages in the labor markets ... and are thus a long-term structural solution for addressing market difficulties.

III. Responses

The Labelling of Palestinian Camp Refugees: The Case of Dheishe

Nina Gren

Large-scale displacement gives rise to entire regimes of organizations, assistance programs, and regulations. Refugees in general inhabit an extremely institutionalized world, made up of non-governmental organization (NGOs), governmental or local authorities, and international agencies, which provide them with assistance.¹ As a category, refugees are entitled to certain privileges, and it is therefore necessary to define who is a refugee. An institutional or bureaucratic identity is created that is largely beyond the control of the displaced people themselves. This contributes to the development of an asymmetric relationship of power and influence. Although the refugee regime and the aid it delivers shapes the refugee label in a humanitarian and seemingly neutral guise, bureaucracy and resource distribution often carry political implications and objectification.² As we will see, such refugee labelling is, nevertheless, not a one-way process, but a complex outcome of mutual social categorization and identity formation.³ In the Palestinian refugee camp of Dheishe in the West Bank, the dynamic process of institutionalization interacted with processes of place-making, politicization, and affirmation of existing social identities.



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This essay builds on a one-year ethnographic fieldwork that was carried out in Dheishe in 2003 and 2004. This refugee camp is the largest out of three in the Bethlehem area, both in terms of geography and population. It is situated on a hillside and is about half a square kilometer in size. Dheishe houses some 9,000 registered refugees; most of the refugees did not experience flight personally, but are the descendents of the destitute Muslim peasants who lost their homes and lands in the war over Palestine between Jewish and Arab forces in 1948. They originate from more than 40 different villages south of Jerusalem. Some of the lost villages are only kilometers away from the camp, inside today's Israel.

Palestinian refugees are a textbook case of refugee labelling. The "Palestinian refugee" thus emerged when charity organizations and the United Nations began to assist those who registered as refugees after their flight in 1948. By registering with the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), people in Dheishe obtained ration cards, which proved that they were Palestinian refugees.⁴ From the start, the lost village was used as a social unit for organizing and distributing relief and the village headmen served as intermediaries with aid organizations. The UNRWA inherited refugee lists compiled by agencies already in the field and then carried out investigations to determine who was in need of relief. In this process, there was also a restriction of access to rights; for instance, each refugee was allowed a certain amount of aid. There seems to have been an ongoing negotiation of trust concerning rations between relief workers and refugees, which was informed by power imbalances in aid

1. Roger Zetter, "Labelling Refugees: Forming and Transforming a Bureaucratic Identity," *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (1991), pp. 39-62.

2. Barbara Harrell-Bond, *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

3. Zetter, "Labelling Refugees: Forming and Transforming a Bureaucratic Identity."

4. Julie M. Peteet, *Landscape of Hope and Despair – Palestinian Refugee Camps* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Benjamin Schiff, *Refugees unto the Third Generation – UN Aid to Palestinians* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1995).

provisions. Elderly refugees recounted their doubts that everyone had been treated equally, and relief workers seemed to have doubted that people were sincere about the numbers of family members and villagers. Dheishean women and children were sent out to collect rations since accepting relief was considered shameful for adult men. Palestinian refugees are still ambivalent about accepting aid since the shame of dependency is mixed with needs and rights as victims of expulsion and ongoing hostilities.

Having lost their land and their means of living, the displaced also started to search for employment as unskilled workers. The UNRWA developed into a major employer of refugees. Today in Dheishe, many of the employees in local UNRWA institutions, such as schools and healthcare clinics, are refugees from the camp. In refugee administration, one aim is to provide “rehabilitation;” the UNRWA interpreted this as giving access to education and work. “Works,” as in the “W” in UNRWA, were central to the attempts to rehabilitate exiled Palestinians. This was a project of modernization connected to a refashioning of identities: Through interventions such as vocational training and resettlement, “the refugee” would enter the modern world and acquire a new sense of self while coming to terms with displacement.⁵

Palestinian refugees both rejected and accommodated UN interventions. The UNRWA has been despised for being part of the organization that initially voted for a partition of the Palestinian homeland in addition to its inability to implement political rights. However, among Palestinians, ration cards also have been interpreted as “tickets home:” The card implies that its holder is indeed a Palestinian refugee and as such has the right to return to places of origin inside Israel. Registration with the agency implied legal recognition of refugee-ness and connections to the lost land. Fraught with contradictions, the UN organization came to stand for survival and social continuity as well as victimization and new identities.

Dheisheans and other Palestinian camp refugees have creatively contested and subverted the label “Palestinian refugee” in many ways.

Bureaucratic categories are, however, not only political, but also dynamic. They change in tandem with local policy and the integration and/or marginalization of the refugees. They also reflect refugees’ own construction of identity through such efforts as political mobilization or the re-assertion of pre-existing identities. Dheisheans and other Palestinian camp refugees have creatively contested and subverted the label “Palestinian refugee” in many ways. By introducing competing images of “refugee-ness,” camps may thus “become generative, productive sites for social and political invention and transformation.”⁶ This may bring a sense of empowerment to displaced people. Being refugees has both empowered and restricted Dheisheans. They have acted within frameworks set by the bureaucratic labelling that followed their flight, but they also have sought to subvert or modify these frameworks.

Although the refugee camp was (and still partly is) viewed as a provisional place of residence before one could go back home, Dheisheans became actively involved in place-making as a way to form a community-based “home” in the camp.⁷ Everyday practices, a conscious reflection on place of living, as well as the daily sharing of goods, favors, and knowledge helped transform a space into a social place. In Dheishe, a community of fate developed through shared rural origins and shared experiences of suffering and struggle. Older generations of refugees in particular repeatedly confirmed their collective destiny by saying: “We have suffered a lot.”

The construction of such a self-image provides one way to burst the constraints of labels and limiting conditions. Another process that tends to transform identities is political mobilization. The location of refugees in particular places may affect institutionalization. Although refugee camps and other institutions such as prisons tend to fix and objectify

5. Peteet, *Landscape of Hope and Despair – Palestinian Refugee Camps*, p. 48.

6. Liisa H. Malkki, “Refugees and Exile: From ‘Refugee Studies’ to the National Order of Things,” *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 24 (1995), pp. 495-523.

7. Laura Hammond, *This Place will Become Home: Refugee Repatriation to Ethiopia* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2004).

people as “refugees” or “inmates,” they also may become generative, productive sites for social and political invention.⁸ Objectification was thus not completely out of the control of Dheisheans. Their active involvement in the struggle against occupation and their reputation for bravery, as well as the many political prisoners and martyrs originating from Dheishe are part of this transformation of self. The Palestinian national discourse, in which “the refugee” and “the refugee camp” has become emblematic⁹ interacted with the refugees’ own elaborations of their identity so as to distinguish them as true fighters and sufferers. Dheisheans and other Palestinian refugees also have used their refugee status for concrete political aims, by claiming their right of return to their home villages, refusing to pay bills to the Palestinian Authority (PA), protesting about PA corruption, autocracy, and so on.

Some places are made in the absence of other places or as a direct response to the loss of a place. For refugees in particular, memories of a lost place might become significant building blocks of emplacement somewhere else. When the displaced arrived at Dheishe or another Palestinian refugee camp, they not only registered as refugees, but they also settled according to their village origin and they named their neighborhoods after these villages. This settlement pattern was an attempt to socially recreate the lost villages. When people are in situations of displacement and crisis, they are usually unwilling to experiment with social innovation, but instead tend to consciously seek to maintain social and symbolic structures.¹⁰ Dheisheans, however, managed only partially to maintain familiar structures since people from the same village ended up in different camps and had to deal with the death and dispersal of relatives. The divisions between villages were recognizable in the camp for several decades.

The displaced villagers attempted to recreate their dispersed worlds morally and socially.

Another way of re-establishing the social structures of the lost communities was to intermarry according to village. This overlapped with the ideal of cousin marriage, since villagers were often related. On the other hand, in the early 21st century, both the village quarters and village endogamy were disappearing. New social networks that extended beyond village origins were necessary and an outcome of the accidental community of the camp. Dheisheans’ social networks derived from multiple sources, such as school, work, political party affiliation, NGO activity, and location in the camp.

The importance of village origins did however linger on in other ways. Rural origins were, for instance, still evident in camp dwellers’ accents, particularly those of older Dheisheans, and they were often clearly distinguishable from those of urbanites and villagers around them. People also tended to know which family and village other camp inhabitants came from. Since most of a person’s kin would stem from the same village, attendance at funerals and weddings allowed people to display support both as kin and as co-villager. In the traditional conflict resolution (i.e. *Sulha*) that was often used in the camp, fellow villagers were an important resource for support and solidarity. Some former villages also had organized village committees or associations that supported members economically and socially. People in Dheishe were normally also buried at the local graveyard but in a distribution that reflected their village of origin.

New naming practices also used the names of villages. New shops and restaurants were called after the owners’ place of origin. Children, especially girls, were also occasionally named after the geography of Palestine. Karmel was a popular girl’s name taken from Mount Carmel, now inside Israel’s borders, as was Yafa, after the coastal town Jaffa. The names of the more than 40 villages that Dheisheans had come from had been painted on the walls of a youth organization in the camp.

8. Liisa H. Malkki, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).

9. Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State – The Palestinian National Movement 1949-1993* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Helena Schulz Lindholm (with Juliane Hammer) *The Palestinian Diaspora – Formation of Identities and Politics of Homeland* (London: Routledge, 2003); Laleh Khalili, *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine – The Politics of National Commemoration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

10. See, for example, Elizabeth Colson, *The Social Consequences of Resettlement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971).

Gren...

CONCLUSION

In sum, the UN and other aid organizations provided the physical structure of the camp and a bureaucratic refugee identity, while the displaced villagers attempted to recreate their dispersed worlds morally and socially. Community formation in Dheishe followed certain patterns that reflected both familiar social structures and the disruption that these structures underwent due to displacement. The empowerment of politicization and a strong sense of community contested both victimization and marginalization; it was an attempt to reframe “the Palestinian refugee” and the powerlessness attendant upon this label. To be a Dheishean was meaningful and valued in a number of ways.

Beyond El Ghurba: Caught between Homeliness and Homelessness in the Lebanese Diaspora

Nelia Hyndman-Rizik

This essay explores the liminal position of second-generation Lebanese-Australians and their struggle to find home in the context of racism in the host-nation and ambivalent belonging in Lebanon. The case of immigrants from the village of Hadchit, a Maronite Catholic village in north Lebanon, who reside in Sydney shows that physical mobility between Lebanon and Australia cannot resolve *el ghurba*, the feeling of homelessness and exile. Rather, women's practices of care within domestic space mediate the contradictions of the migration process by defining the emotional and spiritual core of home within mobility. Home transcends place and is defined, not by geography, but by its affective and spiritual dimensions, which are socially constructed by women.¹



MIGRATION FROM HADCHIT TO SYDNEY

Migration from the village of Hadchit began during the first wave² of Lebanese emigration in the 1890s and went to 14 countries,³ with the majority of migrants settling in the United States (in St. Louis, Missouri, Butte, Montana, and Portland, Oregon). In the post-World War II period, migration from the village of Hadchit shifted to Sydney, Australia, and intensified in the aftermath of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). Today there is a migration cluster of approximately 500 households from Hadchit in the suburbs surrounding Parramatta, who are part of the broader Maronite Diasporic community in Sydney.⁴ Lebanese Christians comprise 50.3% of Australia's Lebanese population, while 40.5%⁵ are Lebanese Muslims. The remainder derive from Lebanon's 18 confessions and minorities, which together include eastern rite Christian denominations (including Maronite Catholic and Orthodox), Sunni, Shi'ite, and Alawite Muslims, and Druze.⁶ Lebanese settlement patterns in Australia have tended to reproduce the spatial segregation of Christians and Muslims between Parramatta Local Government Area (LGA) and Bankstown/Lakemba LGA,⁷ but not exclusively. In total, there are 74,850⁸ Lebanese-born adults in Australia; their children, the second generation, are thought to number at least 200,000.⁹

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1. This article draws on the findings of my doctoral thesis, submitted in November 2009 (ANU), "At My Mother's Table: Migration, (Re)production and Return Between Hadchit, North Lebanon and Sydney."

2. A. Hourani and N. Shehadi, eds., *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration* (London: The Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I.B Tauris & Co Ltd, 1992).

3. R. Kepler-Lewis, "Hadchite: A Study of Emigration in A Lebanese Village," PhD. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1968.

4. N. Hyndman-Rizik, *At My Mother's Table: Migration, (Re)production and Return Between Hadchit, North Lebanon and Sydney* (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, forthcoming).

5. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census 2006 — People Born in the Middle East, in *3416.0 Perspectives on Migrants* (2008), p. 8.

6. H. Cobban, *The Making of Modern Lebanon* (London: Hutchinson, 1985).

7. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census QuickStats: Parramatta (C) — North-West (Statistical Local Area) (2006).

8. Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census QuickStats: Parramatta (C) — North-West (Statistical Local Area) (2006).

9. A. Batrouney, *The Lebanese in Australia* (Sydney: Melbourne: Ae Press, 1985).

While contact between the American Hadchit descendants and Lebanon became attenuated over time, the Australian Hadchitis claim a transnational and synchronic connection, which has been facilitated by globalization and electronic technologies such as phone, satellite, and the Internet. A paradox of this new-found connectivity between Diaspora and homeland peoples is that it has been accompanied by the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment in immigrant-receiving nations, especially for Arabs living in the West in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. Lebanese migrants in Australia have found themselves in a particularly difficult position after a series of moral panics since the late 1990s,¹⁰ which culminated in the Cronulla Riots of 2005.¹¹ The experience of social exclusion in Australia amplifies the feeling of *el ghurba* and has led members of the second generation to reconnect with Lebanon.

RETURN TO THE SHRINE

Return visits to Hadchit from Sydney are popular, and have steadily increased since the end of the Lebanese Civil War in 1990. The 500-household Hadchit Survey¹² in Sydney found that 31% of respondents have returned frequently to Lebanon, with a further 30% having returned at least once in the last five years. Through return visits, returnees seek to re-connect with the land (*ard*) of Hadchit. A common narrative of return is a description of touching and kissing the ground and feeling a love of the soil of Hadchit as if it were sacred. But even the intensity of this connection is experienced simultaneously with being “out of place” and an “Australian” in the village, as this second generation returnee describes:

I felt more Australian there, but on a spiritual level I felt connected and the ground was holy — sacred and I wanted to take a piece of that land home and I felt an appreciation of Aboriginal people. I felt the soil was speaking to me — and then I understood what the Aboriginal people were talking about. When I went there I felt more Australian. They spoke too much in the village about everyone else’s life — they would tell you every detail about everyone’s life and the girls. When I got up and walked outside everyone knew I had got up and had breakfast. The gossiping got to me. Also — their spirituality — they are surrounded by saints and churches and they didn’t go to church on Sunday and I was shocked by that.

Through return visits, returnees seek to re-connect with the land (*ard*) ...

This interview highlights the construction of the ancestral village and its land as sacred. Yet, the spiritual construction of the home village is “undone” by the lack of interest in religiosity and church attendance amongst the villagers themselves. These narratives of connection/disconnection, and the contradiction between the sacred and secular, highlight both the liminality and the fragility of the construction of the homeland as being intrinsically sacred.

In fact, finding identity and belonging in the home village of their parents has turned out to be fraught with contradictions. Often, return migrants find themselves positioned as “Australians” or at best “*Mughtaribi*” (return immigrant), but certainly not “locals” as this interviewee tells us:

Did they accept you in Hadchit?

Yes and no. When you go there you sort of feel you are ‘in-between,’ when you go there you feel like you are part of Hadchit and you are Lebanese and when you go there they call you the ‘Australian’ — the ‘Australi’ — it is like you are caught in two worlds because here you are still a ‘new Australian’ or a ‘wog’ and you feel that Hadchit is where you belong and then you go there and it is as if there is no where you belong — I don’t belong anywhere — where do I belong? It is psychological.

10. J. Collins, G. Noble, S. Poynting, and P. Tabar, eds., *Kebabs, Kids, Cops and Crime: Youth Ethnicity and Crime* (Annandale: Pluto Press, 2000); S. Poynting, G. Noble, P. Tabar, and J. Collins, *Bin Laden in the Suburbs: Criminalizing the Arab Other* (Sydney: Sydney Institute of Criminology Series, 2004).

11. N. Hyndman-Rizik, “Shrinking Worlds: Cronulla, Anti-Lebanese Racism and Return Visits in the Sydney Hadchiti Lebanese Community,” *Anthropological Forum*, Vol. 18 (2008), pp. 37-55.

12. N. Hyndman-Rizik, *Hadchit Household Survey* (Sydney: St. Raymond’s Charities of Hadchit Committee, 2006).

According to the Hadchit Household Survey, 28% of returnees strategically time their return visits for the St. Raymond's Day Festival, named for the patron saint of Hadchit, which is held in Hadchit every September. When asked why, they say they go there to dance *Dabki*, the Lebanese spiral dance, in the village square of their forefathers:

The St. Raymond's Festival in Hadchit is Arabic music and *Dabki* dancing. I am really into it. I really love *Dabki*. It gives you a big high — I get emotional — you get sort of — you are with your family [and] you don't see them — but then you get really high and you feel like you belong, that this is where you should be for that moment. Then you come back to reality the next day and think that you work tomorrow and how are you going to make the next dollar.

This interviewee describes his desire to unify and transcend the experience of contradiction and liminality. Through the cathartic power of the *Dabki* dance, returning emigrants experience *communitas*¹³ and are able to unify the two competing conceptions of home: one that moves with the migrant, and the other that is tied to the primordialism of place and ancestry, if only for a moment.

If dance momentarily unifies the competing constructions of home between Sydney and Hadchit bodily, how is it resolved conceptually?

What is your relationship to Hadchit?

Australia is home, I love Australia, this is where I belong, this is where I am connected, this is my base. Lebanon is my spiritual home — Australia is my other home.

This interview describes the construction of dual belonging by making a division between two kinds of home — the everyday home, which moves where the migrant moves, and the conversion of Hadchit into a spiritual motherland where the connection to place is symbolic and spiritual.

Women perform a mediating role between the sacred and profane and resolve contradiction through a “spiritual division of labor” within the home ...

THE SPIRITUAL RESOLUTION OF EL GHURBA

If home is shifting, what defines the core of home for immigrants from Hadchit? I conclude that it is highly gendered. Where is home? A common reply is “at my mother's table:”

Is Australia home?

Absolutely — friends, work make us feel at home. This is where we grew up and made our daily routines. Mum's cooking is one thing that you become accustomed to and you never enjoy anything other than your mum's food at her table with her tablecloth. Doesn't matter where you go — even in Hadchit it is not the same as your mum's table.

In this formulation, home transcends place and is defined not by geography, but by sitting at “mum's table.” It is here that the immigrant can “be at home.” Eating the food of one's mother at her table provides the ultimate feeling of nurturance that forms the core of home, identity and belonging. The feeling of home, therefore, is defined by its affective and spiritual dimensions, which are socially constructed by women. The most important woman for the construction of home is the matriarch, *sit el bayt*, the power of the house. Women perform a mediating role between the sacred and profane and resolve contradiction through a “spiritual division of labor” within the home, where they construct and reconstruct home at the “kitchen table.” This is the key to being “at home” within mobility.

13. V. Turner, “The Anthropology of Performance,” in V. Turner, ed., *Process, Performance, and Pilgrimage* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 1979); P. Tabar, “The Cultural and Affective Logic of the Dabki: A Study of the Lebanese Folkloric Dance in Australia,” *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, Vol. 26 (2005), pp. 139-57.

The Lebanese Jewish Community: Emigration and Diasporic Relations

Paul Tabar

Information on the Lebanese Jewish community has always been sketchy at best. Looking back at Lebanese history, it is clear that the Lebanese Jewish community played a pivotal role in civil society. Throughout modern history, Lebanese Jews have been portrayed as being as “Lebanese” as any of their other countrymen. In addition, they were committed to the identity of Lebanon as a multi-communal state. They chose to be predominantly apolitical, and had good relations with all recognized confessional groups in Lebanon.¹

However, over the past 50 years — with the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 and the successive Arab-Israeli wars and the Lebanese Civil War — the size of the Lebanese Jewish population has greatly diminished. This community witnessed prolonged marginalization, discrimination, and hostility. Fearing for their safety and seeking to express their identity as being both Lebanese and Jewish, many members of this community departed the country. As a result, very few Lebanese Jews remain in Lebanon, and they have chosen to live as discretely as possible.

The number of Lebanese Jews who live in Lebanon has been the subject of intense debate in the media, with estimates ranging from just a handful to around 200 — and with nearly 2,000 dividing their time between Lebanon and other countries. Consequently, there are several thriving Lebanese Jewish communities worldwide, particularly in the United States, Mexico, Brazil, Italy, France, and Canada.² It has become apparent over the past few years that Lebanese Jews living in the Diaspora, despite their ordeal, have maintained their national identity through recreating Lebanese cultural ties abroad. They have formed vibrant, dynamic communities where Lebanese traditions and values are maintained and where memories of Lebanon, albeit painful, are constantly recalled and shared.

Lebanese Jews always have been a unique minority among many in Lebanon. The first significant wave of Jews arrived in Lebanon, particularly the Chouf mountains, in 1710. At that time, a large number of Andalusian Jews fled to Lebanon for safety. As a result, the Chouf village of Deir al-Qamr became one of the first villages in Lebanon with a significant Lebanese Jewish population. From there, several members of the community began to migrate internally to the commercial cities of Saida and Tripoli. Towards the beginning of the 20th century, as Beirut established itself as a dominant commercial hub, Lebanese Jews started to move towards Wadi Abu Jamil, which came to be regarded as the Jewish quarter of Beirut. As they became successful in commerce and trade, they began moving to the neighborhoods of Hamra and Clemenceau.³

The internal migration of Lebanese Jews and their historical presence in and outside Beirut can be documented through the various Jewish religious sites located throughout Lebanon. Deir al-Qamr is home to the oldest synagogue in Lebanon, which unfor-

1. See K. Schulze, *The Jews of Lebanon: Between Coexistence and Conflict* (Portland: Sussex Academic Press, 2009).

2. C. Haibi, “There’s No Place Like Home,” *Now Lebanon*, March 13, 2009, <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=83932>.

3. Schulze, *The Jews of Lebanon: Between Coexistence and Conflict*.



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unately lies in ruins. The Beth Elamen cemetery still exists in Sodeco Square. The Magen Avraham synagogue located in Wadi Abu Jamil, previously considered as one of the most ornate synagogues in the Middle East, was a source of pride for the Jewish community in Beirut.

According to an interview with Isaac Arazi, the leader of Lebanon's Jewish community, the Lebanese Jews were highly integrated into Lebanese society and lived "normal" lives as Lebanese citizens. They held "good positions" throughout Lebanon, even in the army and the internal security forces.⁴ In addition, two schools that teach Hebrew and subjects related to Judaism — the Talmud-Torah Selim Tarrab School and the Alliance School — were established in Beirut. Even after the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948, the Lebanese Jewish community expressed their Jewish identity through sharing their religious traditions with fellow Lebanese citizens of all religious beliefs. Schulze writes: "In 1951, during the Passover celebration, the president of the Jewish community Joseph Attie held a reception at Magen Avraham synagogue which was attended by Lebanese Prime Minister Sami as-Solh, Abdallah Yafi, Rachid Beydoun, Joseph Chader, Habib Abi Chahla, Charles Helou, Pierre Gemayel and the Maronite Archbishop of Beirut." Before the onset of internal strife in Lebanon in 1958, an estimated 14,000 Jews resided in Lebanon.⁵



Outside the Beth Elamen cemetery in Beirut (photo: Qasamaan)

The exodus of Lebanese Jews began in 1958, and increased following the Six-Day War in 1967. After 1967, only 3,000 Lebanese Jews remained in Lebanon as a result of the climate of fear that this community began to experience.⁶ However, the Israeli invasion and occupation of Lebanon in 1982 was the event that marked the beginning of the large decline of the Lebanese Jewish community in Lebanon on the one hand, and the growing suppression of their Lebanese identity on the other. Many Lebanese Jews who fled Lebanon during this period reported that although initially they did not feel directly threatened, eventually they began to feel unwelcome in their own country. Even though they were born Lebanese, Jews fell victim to brutal violence, discrimination, and hostility. Yet throughout all these hardships, many of the Jews maintained a strong sense of Lebanese identity. In the wake of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, *The Times of London* reported that Lebanese Jews who had remained in Lebanon rejected an offer by the Israeli government to take up Israeli citizenship.⁷ However, as the Lebanese civil war progressed, the widespread rejection of the Jews as "Lebanese" and the increase in violence against them drove the overwhelming majority of the remaining community to flee the country. The Jewish area of Wadi Abu Jamil was turned into an area of intense and vicious fighting, and was occupied by both the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Amal Movement. In addition, between 1984 and 1987, several leading members of the Jewish community were kidnapped and killed by the Organization of the Oppressed of the Earth, a Shi'ite Islamist organization.⁸

Currently, the Lebanese Jewish community in the Diaspora has maintained its Lebanese identity through strong Diasporic community cohesion. Many of the Lebanese Jews who fled Lebanon are in constant contact with their relatives and friends and even with other members of the Lebanese Jewish community abroad. The Internet has become the main vehicle through which Lebanese Jews can maintain contact. Social networking sites such as Facebook have allowed Lebanese Jews worldwide to create groups and fan pages to express their identity and share their experiences. One group on Facebook, the Kosher Sephardic Lebanese Cookbook group, was created to help Lebanese Jews in making Lebanese food for the Sabbath (*Shabbat*) dinner. The Magen Avraham synagogue not only has its own Twitter page,⁹ but

4. Personal interview, October 2009.

5. Schulze, *The Jews of Lebanon: Between Coexistence and Conflict*.

6. Schulze, *The Jews of Lebanon: Between Coexistence and Conflict*.

7. Reported in R. Chatah, *Now Lebanon*, March 7, 2008, <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=33607>.

8. "The Jewish Revival," *Executive*, No. 120 (July 2009), pp. 58-62.

9. For further information, visit: <http://twitter.com/MaghenAbraham>.

also has its own page on Facebook with over 3,000 followers who share pictures of the synagogue and of the Lebanese Jewish community abroad, in addition to discussing various events and topics concerning the Lebanese Jewish community. The “CyberWadi State”¹⁰ website was launched by Lebanese Jews to find long-lost friends and relatives, share memories and experiences of Lebanon, as well as Lebanese jokes. In fact, the Internet has been vitally important in enabling the Lebanese Jewish Diaspora to highlight their attachment to their home country. Several Lebanese Jews stated that being Lebanese is “in their blood,” and that they live their lives according to Lebanese culture and traditions. One Lebanese Jewish woman living in New York who left Lebanon in October 1968 stated that she speaks Arabic fluently and enjoys watching Arabic movies and listening to Arabic music.¹¹ In addition, although most Lebanese Jews no longer have living relatives or friends in Lebanon, they all wish to be able to visit Lebanon and one day be able to practice Judaism while at the same time expressing their Lebanese identity and citizenship in their homeland. One Lebanese Jew living in New York claimed that “It is very important for people to know: A Lebanese is a Lebanese. No matter where he goes, he will never forget his country.”¹² One of the Lebanese Jewish community’s spiritual leaders agreed by saying, “My spirit is still in Lebanon, after all these years. It is the place I was born in and the culture I was brought up into.”¹³ This strong expression of Lebanese identity usually evident in first-generation Lebanese Jews. However, it also is reflected, though to a lesser extent, in second- and third-generation Lebanese Jews living in the Diaspora. These younger generations are characterized by a religious yet modern and open-minded outlooks with a touch of Lebanese heritage that is relayed by their parents.



Magen Avraham synagogue (photo: NYC2TLV)

Furthermore, the official Lebanese Jewish Community Council recently launched its own website¹⁴ — a significant move that gives the remaining Jewish community in Lebanon an official face, and allows for the Jewish community to initiate a call to raise funds for restoration of the Magen Avraham synagogue. Through the effort to rebuild the synagogue, the reconstruction of the public Jewish identity in Lebanon has taken a step forward. The previously rundown and abandoned Magen Avraham synagogue, which once was nearly all that symbolized the historical presence of the Jewish community in Lebanon, has recently begun renovation. This project was launched by the Lebanese Jewish Community Council and funded by both the Lebanese Jews still residing in Lebanon and those abroad.¹⁵ In fact, Lebanese Jewish businessmen living in the Diaspora have helped by donating a large amount of money for this project alongside a \$150,000 donation from Solidere.¹⁶ These private Jewish donors constantly visit Lebanon to supervise the progress of the work. This project was launched with the dream that the Magen Avraham might be reestablished as a functioning synagogue in Beirut, a testament to the strength and persistence of the Lebanese Jewish identity. Many Lebanese Jews in the Diaspora believe that if the reconstruction of the synagogue is successful, this would be one factor that would bring the Lebanese Jews back home. Many Lebanese Jews have stated that the Magen Avraham synagogue would be the “biggest blessing” for the Jews of Lebanon — one that hopefully will lead Diaspora Jews to return to Lebanon. A Lebanese Jew claimed that it would be much easier to visit Lebanon once Lebanese Jews have their own place of worship in Lebanon for the Shabbat.¹⁷

10. For further information, visit: <http://www.B400.net>.

11. Personal communication, December 2009.

12. C. Haibi, “There’s No Place Like Home,” *Now Lebanon*, March 13, 2009, <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=83932>.

13. Haibi, “There’s No Place Like Home,” *Now Lebanon*, March 13, 2009, <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=83932>.

14. For further information, visit: www.thejewsoflebanonproject.org.

15. “The Jewish Revival,” *Executive*, No. 120 (July 2009), pp. 58-62.

16. Personal communication, October 2009. Solidere is a construction firm led by Prime Minister Saad Hariri and tasked with rebuilding central Beirut from the destruction of the 1975-1990 Lebanese Civil War.

17. Personal communication, December 1, 2009.

Many efforts have been undertaken to bring the presence of the Lebanese Jewish community back to life. A modest attempt by Lebanese authorities and political parties pushing towards the inclusion of the Lebanese Jewish community in public affairs and Lebanese civil society came through Interior Minister Ziyad Baroud, through his proposal that the Lebanese Cabinet amend the legislation that labels Lebanese Jews as “Israelis.”¹⁸ Instead, they would be identified as “Jewish Lebanese.” One of the main reasons preventing the Lebanese Jewish community from participating in Lebanese civil society and public affairs is the stigma that surrounds them as being referred to as “Israelis” on their identification cards. Baroud’s proposal highlighted the importance of recognizing the Jewish sect in Lebanon as one of the 18 officially recognized religious sects “whose rights are legal and protected by the constitution.” Baroud stated that “The Jewish sect in Lebanon is recognized, and its rights are guaranteed by the ninth article of the Lebanese constitution that guarantees all the Lebanese freedom of religion.” He added that the proposal to adopt this draft law helps to differentiate between an officially recognized sect and “between the subjects of an occupying entity.” Even Hizbullah’s support in the restoration of the synagogue was seen as a blessing. In fact, Hizbullah welcomed the restoration of the synagogue, as it is a place of worship. “We respect divine religions, including the Jewish religion,” said Husayn Rahhal, Hizbullah’s media chief. He continued: “The problem is with Israel’s occupation (of Arab lands), not with the Jews.”¹⁹

One of the main reasons preventing the Lebanese Jewish community from participating in Lebanese civil society and public affairs is the stigma that surrounds them as being referred to as “Israelis” on their identification cards.

However, it is unfortunate that the efforts to link the Lebanese Jewish Diaspora to Lebanon falls in line with the dilemma that Lebanon faces in dealing with the Lebanese Diaspora as a whole. Such efforts must be improved and developed through coordinating with civil society initiatives and individual Lebanese in order to nurture Diasporic relations with this community. As one Lebanese Jewish citizen living in New York stated, “We are just as [much] proud Lebanese as the rest of the people in Lebanon.”²⁰

While it is true that many segments of the Lebanese Diaspora engage in family and communal practices to recreate their imaginary homeland, the Lebanese Jewish Diaspora do so to an even greater degree, as the scale of their displacement is far larger and as Jews are one of the smallest minorities in Lebanon. This fact explains, to a large extent, the active role of the Lebanese Jewish Diaspora in recreating their homeland in cyber space and their enthusiasm about the renovation of the synagogue in downtown Beirut.

18. “Baroud Proposes Draft Law to Change Lebanese Jews’ Status from Israeli to Jewish Sect,” *Now Lebanon*, April 27, 2009, <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArchiveDetails.aspx?ID=90782>.

19. “Restoration of Lebanon Synagogue in Danger Despite Rare Hezbollah Support,” *Associated Press*, November 21, 2008, <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1039482.html>.

20. Personal communication, December 1, 2009.

Transnational Networks of the Lebanese-Nigerian Diaspora

Peter Adebayo

Recent studies have accorded great importance to the role of transnational migrant community networks in international migration.¹ According to Hourani and Dabbous, there are several prerequisites for the development of such networks, including the presence of the migrant community in different parts of the world, diverse transnational relations — financial, commercial, political, religious rituals, or family ceremonies — and visits between the migrants and relatives in their country of origin.²

The creation of the Lebanese community in Nigeria, as well as its contributions to Nigeria's economy, began with the arrival of the first Lebanese immigrant, Elias Khoury (who hailed from Miziara in the northern part of Lebanon), in Lagos in 1890.³ There followed other Lebanese families, and the formation of this community and the related transnational network began to expand. Advances in transportation and communication have strengthened transnational networks of Lebanese-Nigerians between Lebanon and Nigeria as well as between the various Lebanese migrant communities in other parts of the world.

COMMUNITY CREATION AND NETWORK

Economic prosperity, capital formation, investments, and socio-cultural development, have all been attained as a result of the various components of networks (i.e., family members, friends, business contacts, etc.) used by the Lebanese community. In a survey conducted in Lagos, Kano, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, Calabar, and the villages of Miziara, 80% of the interviewees claimed that their migration and the success of their enterprises in Nigeria were due to such components.⁴ The networks have provided information to “help migrants reduce uncertainty and mitigate risks and thereby help them overcome traditional barriers associated with moving.”⁵ They have helped to support migrants financially, psychologically (through the provision of a social community), and instrumentally by assisting migrants to assimilate into their new community.⁶

The family is the main refuge for members of Lebanese society. Indeed, Lebanese turn first to their families for assistance in almost every aspect of their lives, including migra-



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1. T. Hammar *et al.*, eds., *International Migration, Immobility and Development: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (Oxford: Berg, 2000); L. Pries, *International Migration and Transnational Social Spaces* (London: Routledge, 2001); and A. Portes, “Immigration Theory for a New Century: Some Problems and Opportunities,” *International Migration Review*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (1997), pp. 799-825.

2. G. Hourani and E. Sensenig-Dabbous, “Insecurity, Migration and Return: The Case of Lebanon Following the Summer 2006 War,” Research Report, European-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration, 2007.

3. P. Adebayo, “The Lebanese in Nigeria: The Lebanese and Economy of Lagos, 1890-1980,” Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of History, University of Ilorin, 2003. Though some continue to dispute the arrival date of the first Lebanese to Nigeria, most historians of West Africa accept 1890.

4. Interviews by author in 2000, 2006, and 2008.

5. D. Leblang, J. Fitzgerald and Teets, “Defying the Law of Gravity: The Political Economy of International Migration,” Department of Political Science, University of Colorado, Boulder, November 2006, http://socsci.colorado.edu/~leblang/Research_files/Defying.pdf. Cited in G. Hourani and E. Sensenig-Dabbous, *Insecurity, Migration and Return*, p. 13.

6. Hourani and Sensenig-Dabbous, *Insecurity, Migration and Return*, p. 13.

tion. The kinship contract “has been grounded in material realities. Kinship relations have been, for the Lebanese, the core of social identity, economic stability, political security and religious affiliation and the first, often last line of care. It has been kin against whom one has had irrevocable rights and toward whom one has had religiously mandated, at times legally prescribed, moral responsibilities.”⁷

Lebanese-Nigerians have used modern means of communication such as telephone, fax, text messages, video, letters, and photos to remain connected with their families not only in the Christian village of Miziara and the Muslim village of Jwayya but wherever they are located.⁸ This aspect was confirmed by various returnees interviewed in the villages of Miziara and Jwayya.⁹

FAMILY SUPPORT THROUGH REMITTANCES

Remittances are by far the most outstanding aspect of the network through which the Lebanese-Nigerians have been able to improve the lives of their families and their relatives in the villages of Miziara and Jwayya, as well as in Nigeria. Remittances are vital to the lives of residents, especially during times of crisis. Therefore, it is not surprising that they have emerged as critical insurance mechanisms for residents of countries afflicted by economic and political crisis, such as Lebanon during its civil war. During the 2006 war, Lebanese-Nigerians were able to mobilize \$500,000 that was sent through the Lebanese Ambassador to the victims of the war.¹⁰

Remittances are a fundamental feature of Lebanon's economy.

Indeed, remittances are a fundamental feature of Lebanon's economy. They represent a sizable proportion of the country's foreign revenue. In 2001, for example, remittances constituted 22% of household incomes and 88% of household savings in Lebanon. In 2004, Lebanon received \$2.7 billion in workers' remittances.¹¹ According to a survey conducted in Miziara and Jwayya, virtually all of the household respondents stated that they rely mostly on remittances from migrants in Nigeria for survival.¹²

TRANSNATIONAL PHILANTHROPY

Transnational philanthropy is an adjunct to remittances. This is a process by which migrants in the diaspora allocate a certain portion of their remittances to fund development projects in their home societies.¹³ Formal structures, through which migrants make philanthropic donations, include religious, district, village, or other organizations of common interest, non-governmental organizations; and public relations and lobbying associations outside of the home country. In this respect, the Lebanese Ladies Society of Nigeria — a non-profit, voluntary humanitarian organization established in 1975 — has been involved in charitable activities offering scholarships to indigent students and donating to orphans in Lagos. Informal structures include families, broader kinship groups, and friends.¹⁴

7. S. Joseph, “Civic Myths, Citizenship and Gender in Lebanon,” in S. Joseph, ed., *Gender in the Middle East* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2006), p. 116.

8. A. Peleikis, *Lebanese in Motion: The Construction of a “Gendered” Global Village* (Frankfurt: Verlag, 2003), pp. 83-119. See also M. Hudson, “Information Technology, International Politics and Political Change in the Arab World,” *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies*, Vol. 4 (Autumn/Winter 2002), p. 118, <http://nmit.georgetown.edu/papers/mchudson.htm>.

9. Interview by author with Maxelle Chagouri, Miziara, June 2006 and September 2008.

10. Wale Olakitan, *The Guardian*, August 2, 2006.

11. D. Kapur, “Remittances: The New Development Mantra?” G-24 Discussion Paper Series, No. 29, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, April 2004, http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/gdsmdpbg2420045_en.pdf.

12. Interviews by author in Miziara and Jwayya, September and October, 2008.

13. J. Opiniano, “The Dynamics of Transnational Philanthropy by Migrant Workers to Their Communities of Origin: The Case of Pozorubio, Philippines,” Fifth International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR) International Conference, University of Cape Town, South Africa, July 10, 2002.

14. Interview by author with May El-Khalil, former president of the Lebanese Ladies Society of Nigeria, October 1997.

In normal times, migrants donate funds to good causes, such as churches or mosques, construction/renovation, rural schools, cemetery improvements, health facilities, rest homes for the elderly, and orphanages. A typical example of this in Nigeria is the donation of a renovated old family building by the Moukarim family, which the Jigawa state government converted into a hospital (the Faiz Moukarim General Hospital, named after the first Lebanese to settle in the village of Majia).¹⁵ The Hajig family renovated a girls' secondary school, renovated Government College Birini Kudu, and constructed a 1.5 kilometer road leading to the school in Jigawa State.¹⁶ Similarly, the El-Khalil family helped renovate some secondary schools in Kano State.¹⁷ In the city of Ibadan, Raymond Zard has provided scholarships to 15 students drawn from various universities across the country.¹⁸ In 1992, Chief Marcel Chagouri built the Mother of Mercies religious monastery for the elderly in Miziara village in northern Lebanon.¹⁹ Mother of Mercies also has served as a religious pilgrimage center. The Lebanese Community in Nigeria, which built a Maronite Church in Lagos in 1966, also built churches in the eastern, western, and northern parts of the country.²⁰

It is important to emphasize that remittances have not been the only way of maintaining family members in Lebanon. Because of the proximity of Lagos to Beirut by air, Lebanese-Nigerians are able to visit friends and relatives, assist residents during natural and man-made disasters, and gather to address issues related to their country of origin.²¹ Lebanese-Nigerians also have been able to contact their families in West African countries, Australia, Western Europe, Brazil, and American cities — trying to build what Hourani and Dabbous have referred to as a “transnational abode.”²²

The role of returnees in facilitating and enhancing the various components of network towards developmental activities in both Nigeria and Lebanon, cannot be overemphasized. Members of the first ever Nigerian Trade Delegation to Lebanon (July 28- August 2, 2008) were astonished when they saw the series of development projects undertaken by returnees in the two villages.

Migrants donate funds for such good causes as church or mosques, construction/renovation, pastoral schools, cemetery improvements, health facilities, rest homes for the elderly, and orphanages.

CONCLUSION

Lebanese-Nigerians have succeeded, not only in maintaining contact with their home villages and elsewhere, but they also have forged local-global linkages and transnational networks. By facilitating interactions between Nigeria and the homeland (Lebanon) and among the Lebanese-Nigerian diaspora (e.g., in Australia, Brazil, Britain, Canada, France, and the United States), these links have created a “transnational abode.” They also have fostered the development of e-commerce. Hopefully, Lebanese-Nigerians will use the transnational network to facilitate and enhance socio-cultural and business trading relationships between Nigeria and Lebanon.

15. Interview by author with Chief Hasib Moukarim, Lagos, Nigeria March 2009.

16. Interview by author with Mohammed Hajaig, Beirut, September 5, 2008.

17. Interview by author with Abdul Naser Hajaig, Beirut, September 5, 2008.

18. “Dr. Are Zard, a Worthy Philanthropist,” *Sunday Tribune*, October 3, 2004, p. 5.

19. Interview with Chief Marcel Chagouri, who built the Monastery of the Holy Mother of Mercies, where I spent one month while conducting research.

20. *Daily Times*, August 12, 2004.

21. A. Siedu, “Some Benefits of Migrants ‘Return Visits’ to Ghana,” paper presented at the International Workshop on Migration and Poverty in West Africa, University of Sussex, Brighton, UK, 2003; M. Leichtmann, “Reexamining the Transnational Migrant: The Afro-Libanais of Senegal,” in P. Tabar, *Lebanese Diaspora: History, Racism and Belonging* (Beirut: Lebanese American University, 2005); and Patricia Nabti, “International Emigration from a Lebanese Village: Bishmizzinis on Six Continents,” PhD dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1989.

22. G. Hourani and E. Sensenig-Dabbous have introduced the term to mean the environment that emerges from ICT use, through the interaction of a migrant or a community of migrants with his/their resident families, friends, or townspeople in the community of origin, and a migrant or a community of migrants with his/their families, friends, or townspeople in other diasporic communities.

State Efforts to Regularize Labor Migration into Jordan

Riad al Khouri

Migrant labor is more than ever part of economic life in a globalizing Middle East dependent on workers from across borders. Yet, with recession and unemployment buffeting Arab countries, are migrants less welcome? The average unemployment rate across the Middle East will rise to 11% in 2009, according to the International Labor Organization, which also estimates real GDP growth at 4% in 2009 (compared to 6% in 2007) though other forecasts put this even lower. The impact of the global crisis on employment at the regional level means that exceptional measures should be taken to address the situation. Recommendations of the Arab Economic Summit held in Kuwait in January 2009 included facilitating labor movement between Arab countries (as well as setting up a regional customs union by 2015 and an Arab common market by 2020). In fact, typically governments in such crises do the opposite: restricting the movement of goods, labor, and capital, in order to keep investments at home, and foreign workers and products out. Happily, in this globalized age, that is not easy, and more or less free flows of human resources (as well as of cash or goods) are not being affected drastically by the region's current economic troubles.

Yet, other forces end up restricting labor flows into and out of the region as well as within it — in particular trends towards labor market regulation by governments. Irrespective of boom or slump, states are imposing tighter restrictions on guest workers to promote security, social cohesion, or the fight against chronic unemployment, among other goals. Jordan is a case in point: Jordan's economy relies on guest workers in the primary, transformative, and services sectors. In some areas, their presence is crucial (e.g., Egyptians in agriculture, Bengalis in the textile industry, and Sri Lankans in domestic service); in turn, workers remit much needed funds home. However, the influx of migrants recently has been subject to more serious efforts at state control by both Jordanian and labor-sending countries alike.

In fact, Jordan's and sending-countries' attempts at regulation of the Kingdom's migrant workers antedate the crisis; though the issue has been on Amman's agenda for over a decade, it was only in 2007 that Jordan started more seriously to regulate bilaterally the entry of workers from outside the Kingdom (as opposed to previous steps taken on a unilateral basis towards foreign workers). That year, Jordan signed memoranda with Egypt and other states to regulate the entry of workers into the Kingdom. Under the agreement between Jordan and Egypt, the sectors in which Egyptian laborers can work are specified (though some bending of the rules seems to take place). Laborers coming into the Kingdom from Egypt must meet (reasonable) Jordanian requirements, such as undergoing medical tests, holding certificates appropriate to the field of work, and proving that they have no criminal record.

Such tightening up is accompanied by guest worker deportation for violating job and residency regulations: approximately 313,000 non-Jordanian laborers held valid work permits at the end of 2007, rising to 318,000 in mid-2008 before falling to 304,000 by the end of that year, a drop partly due to the economic slowdown in Jordan. However, the trend was also due to the Kingdom getting tougher on guest workers, an attitude manifested by the expulsion of over 10,000 of them (mostly Egyptians) in 2008. Though



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much is still needed to organize the Kingdom's guest worker sector, the process of legitimizing these workers continues, and well over 110,000 Egyptians have applied to work in the country in the two years since the 'Amman-Cairo labor agreement. (Under the memorandum of understanding, which was only finalized in 2009, Egypt also is required to keep a database of all laborers seeking employment in Jordan, to be made accessible to all concerned parties.)

Yet, the news regarding guest workers coming to Jordan from other states is not as encouraging. For example, in 2009 the government enacted a two-week suspension of the recruitment from Indonesia and Sri Lanka of domestic workers in order to accredit medical centers in both countries that were suspected of issuing false certificates of good health to migrants who were in fact ill. To help solve the problem, a Jordanian delegation representing the government and the country's recruitment association headed to Indonesia and Sri Lanka to accredit medical centers. Meanwhile, the Jordanian Health Ministry will terminate agreements with medical centers in Indonesia thought to have issued forged health certificates to domestics coming into Jordan. Many Indonesian workers are issued forged certificates that state they do not have any communicable disease; but during the first seven months of 2009, 181 Indonesian workers in Jordan tested positive for serious communicable illnesses, including tuberculosis, hepatitis, and HIV, while six Sri Lankan domestic workers were diagnosed with tuberculosis, two with hepatitis, and one with HIV during the same period. Of course, some of these ailments could have been picked up in Jordan, but the suspicion is that guest workers are sometimes turning up ill on arrival from these, and other, countries.

However, the inflow into Jordan of workers from both these countries is now subject to regulation, with Sri Lanka in 2007 and Indonesia in 2009 signing memoranda with Jordan to regulate the hiring of domestic helpers for work in the Kingdom. The agreement between Amman and Jakarta provides Indonesian domestic helpers with legal protection under the two countries' legislation and activates the role of Indonesia's Embassy in Jordan to address domestic helpers' problems. About 1,000 Indonesian domestic workers in Jordan run away from employers annually, and the 'Amman embassy offers them shelter, food, and basic needs until they can return to Indonesia (in 2009 the Embassy housed a few hundred of these girls).

Happily, however, most Indonesian guest workers in Jordan have not needed such sheltering: There are nearly 30,000 Indonesians (mostly in domestic work) currently employed in Jordan, up from 21,000 in 2007 (the figure for Sri Lankans has held steady at around 20,000 during the past few years). In fact, these two nationalities are the largest non-Arab ones in the Kingdom's labor force today. However, Indonesians, Sri Lankans, and all other workers from outside the Arab world still make up only a small minority of Jordan's guest workers. The situation for migrants from Arab countries, led by Egypt, is on its way to being regularized — an important step to stabilize labor markets in times of rising unemployment. After having fallen the past few years, Jordan's jobless rate again has risen, to 14%. This is a further challenge to the status of migrant workers in the Kingdom. It will be interesting to observe the sustainability of bilateral state controls on migrants in the context of recession and of rising unemployment, among other important elements with an impact on labor markets.

Indonesians, Sri Lankans, and all other workers from outside the Arab world still make up only a small minority of Jordan's guest workers. The situation for migrants from Arab countries, led by Egypt, is on its way to being regularized ...

Regulation of Migration in Egypt

Ray Jureidini

Egypt is a sending, receiving, and transit country for both migrants and refugees. In the early part of the 20th century, nationals were required to apply for exit visas and only a limited number of highly skilled Egyptian professionals were allowed abroad under strict emigration controls, such as the state-sponsored transfer of school teachers to Iraq in the 1930s. From the 1970s to the present, however, there has been large scale internal rural-urban migration, as well as international emigration, primarily to the oil rich Gulf states and other Arab countries, such as Jordan, but also to Europe, North America, and Australia, including permanent, temporary, and irregular migration. Egypt is also a destination country for many thousands of asylum seekers from Palestine, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and more recently, Iraq.



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According to the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the total number of Egyptians living abroad in 2006 was approximately 6.5 million — 74% in other Arab states, 12.2% in North America, 12.1% in Europe, and 1.6% in Australia.¹ Saudi Arabia is by far the main destination for Egyptian labor (receiving around half of the total), followed by Jordan, Libya, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Based upon the type of destination countries of emigrants, about two-thirds of Egyptian migrants are assumed to be temporary, while the other third are permanent.² For example, most Arab countries accept migrant labor under the *kefala* system, where permanent residency and citizenship possibilities are closed to foreign nationals.

In domestic legislation, the key instrument related to the emigration of Egyptians is the *Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law no. 111 of 1983*, which covers both permanent and temporary emigration, the rules and procedures to be followed before emigration, rights of migrants, and privileges afforded to migrants and returnees. While there are no other formal domestic policy documents dealing with labor emigration, it has been argued that a *de facto* policy exists that can be gleaned from the informal statements of officials. It has a number of general aims: to ease the pressure on the domestic labor market by encouraging legal emigration, to increase the economic rewards of remittances, to safeguard the welfare of Egyptian migrants abroad, and to meet the demand for immigrant labor in destination countries, while at the same time to combat irregular migration.³

Although Egypt does not have a comprehensive migration strategy, a number of legal and policy measures are in place that include international, regional, and national provisions for the regulation of migration, including forced migration. For example, Egypt

1. Heba Nassar (forthcoming), “Egyptian Migration,” Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, American University in Cairo, Egypt.

2. Leila Simona Talani, “Why Do Migrants Leave Their Countries? Motivations at the Point of Departure: The Case of Egypt,” Monograph, Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Migration and the British Academy (2003); Jackline Wahba, “An Overview of Internal and International Migration in Egypt,” Working paper 0703, Economic Research Forum, Cairo (2007); Heba Nassar, “Temporary and Circular Migration: The Egyptian Case,” CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes 2008/2009.

3. Ayman Zohry, “The Migratory Patterns of Egyptians in Italy and France,” CARIM, Research Reports 2009/17, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole, European University Institute (2009).

is a party to the 1990 *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families* that came into force in 2003; the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* and its 1967 *Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*; and the 1969 *Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa*.

In January 2009, there were some 112,000 refugees and asylum seekers from 38 countries (mainly African) registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), although it is widely recognized that many more (up to 500,000+) actually reside in the country. More than half of the registered refugees and asylum seekers were Sudanese, followed by Iraqis (24%) and Somalis (12%).⁴ The government has never assumed full responsibility for refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt, but delegated the role to UNHCR and, despite a government decree in 1984 that sought to establish a permanent standing committee for refugee affairs in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, no local legislation has been enacted covering the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers. Egypt's reservations to the 1951 Convention on Articles 22 (primary education) and 24 (labor legislation) have been generally understood as not granting rights of refugees to schooling and employment, resulting in refugees being forced to be self-reliant in informal sectors. Although refugees are treated as any other foreigners (requiring work permits that are rarely granted), irregular work in the informal sectors, such as domestic work, cleaning, construction, and other unskilled laboring employment is tolerated, perhaps the main and most lucrative sector being domestic work, where there is evidence of many Sudanese, Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Somali women.

Although refugees are treated as any other foreigners (requiring work permits that are rarely granted), irregular work in the informal sectors ... is tolerated.

Egypt has also ratified the 2000 *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*, its supplementing *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Person, Especially Women and Children*, and the *Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air*. There have been considerable efforts in the last few years to publicize the issue of human trafficking with the cooperation of the National Council for Human Rights and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Although local anti-trafficking legislation has been drafted, there is no formal victim of trafficking identification procedure in place — and thus not much in the way of concrete evidence of human trafficking.

At the regional level, Egypt is a party to the 1965 *Agreement of the Council of Arab Economic Unity* that sought development with regional economic and social integration through freedom of movement, employment, and residence. Complementing this, the *Arab Declaration of Principles on the Movement of Manpower* was adopted in 1984 that called for intra-regional cooperation to give migrant labor preferences to Arab nationals. Historically, the only Arab states that remained faithful to this agreement were Iraq and Libya in the face of the Asian migrant replacement programs of the Gulf states from the mid-1980s.

On the bilateral level, Egypt has signed a number of memoranda of understanding aiming at regularizing the stay and work of Egyptians abroad. For example, Jordanian authorities and the Egyptian government signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* in March 2007 that established basic operating procedures for temporary Egyptian laborers to enter Jordan (primarily in the agricultural Jordan Valley) with labor contracts, medical screening, and entry visa fees. Another bilateral agreement was the *Cooperation Protocol between Egypt and Saudi Arabia* signed in 2007, which established employment procedures for up to 120,000 Egyptian women to work in Saudi Arabia as hairdressers and housemaids. Under severe criticism by local human rights organizations and some members of Parliament, the arrangement did not proceed. Lastly, although no details were publicly available at the time of writing, in December 2009, Libyan and Egyptian officials signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* concerning Egyptian workers in the Libyan labor market.

Prompted by the need to stem the flow of many thousands of young Egyptians traversing the Mediterranean to reach

4. UNHCR 2010 Country Operations Profile, Egypt, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/page?page=49e486356>.

Italy, often with tragic outcomes, an example of a practical step towards the implementation of a regulatory policy is the project entitled *The Integrated Migration Information System (IMIS)*. The project, carried out from 2001 through 2005, was financed by the Italian government and jointly implemented by the Emigration Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration and the International Organization for Migration. The second phase of the project, involving the same stakeholders and donor, is being implemented in 2010. The objective is to aid the management of regular migration flows from Egypt, improve the social status of Egyptian migrants in receiving countries (specifically Italy), and encourage the contribution of migrants to development in Egypt by channeling human and financial resources generated by migrants abroad.⁵ The practical output of the project has been a website which aims to connect Egyptian job seekers with employers abroad through an automated matchmaking system, a data-bank called “Misriat,” which provides potential Egyptian migrants with information about a number of destination countries, and an info-portal for Egyptian migrants abroad. Since its inception, the website matchmaking system has received 170,000 applications from potential Egyptian migrants. Of these, 1,500 applicants were selected for interviews for positions of machine operators, assistant cooks, cooks, engineers, system developers, and construction workers. Out of the interviewed candidates, 200 passed a practical test and only 178 were selected to work in Italy. The available results of the IMIS matchmaking system of facilitating and regulating labor migration are not optimistic.

Migration policies that target specific labor demand abroad are not evident, although there are relatively *ad hoc* arrangements being attempted, reducing Egypt’s ability to react flexibly and maximize the returns of international migration. Furthermore, elements of migration management, such as pre-departure training and orientation or skills training for prospective migrants, are also missing. Lack of these mobility management tools points towards a policy and planning deficiency rather than the lack of legal basis.

A number of government ministries and instrumentalities are involved with migration issues. The most influential in developing migration policy and mobility management tools is the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, which has a specially designated Emigration Sector. It attempts to encourage and facilitate regular migration as well as establish and enhance cultural and social ties with the Egyptian diaspora. The Minister of Manpower and Emigration is also the head of the Higher Committee for Migration, established in 1977. The task of ensuring policy development, coherence, and coordination of all bodies involved in mobility management was delegated to the Higher Committee for Migration, but has been largely moribund. The Ministry of Interior facilitates administrative steps related to regular migration, in particular visa issuance, registration of documents of foreign origin, registering international marriages and divorces of Egyptians, registering educational certificates and issuing labor certificates for the purpose of travelling abroad. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides the Egyptian citizens abroad with an array of assistance and services including emergency repatriation, renewal of passports, or authorization of personal documents. The Ministry of Defense plays a role in situations involving the military service duties of Egyptians abroad.

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Migrant remittances to Egypt have been increasing since 2000, reaching \$5.9 billion in 2007, representing 5% of GDP.⁶ The rules and regulations dealing with migrant remittances have been experimented with over time. In the 1960s the government asked emigrants to repatriate part of their earnings through personal accounts at the government owned bank (single migrant households were required to transfer 25% of their income and family households 10%), a measure that was unsuccessful. To draw more remittances, exchange rates were altered at the end of 1960s and early 1970s and special government bonds for emigrants were issued. Again, this did not prove attractive. The government changed its

5. Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, <http://www.manpower.gov.eg/>; Christine Fandrich (forthcoming), “Facilitated International Egyptian Labour Migration and Development” Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, American University in Cairo.

6. Ahmed Ghoneim (forthcoming), “Rules, Regulations and Policies Governing Doing Business, with Special Focus on SMEs,” in Ray Jureidini, Iveta Bartunkova, Ahmed Ghoneim, Nadia Ilahi, and Erin Ayjin, *A Study on Egyptian Migrants Abroad and Remittances to Egypt*, International Organisation for Migration, Geneva.

policy in the 1980s and encouraged migrants to remit into a foreign currency account in Egypt by offering favorable exchange rates. Bonds for Egyptian migrants also were introduced. None of the measures had the expected result of an increase of remittance flows through formal channels. Part of the reluctance, of course, was the lack of trust in governmental activities and fears of bureaucratic delays. None of these policies led to the significant growth of access to remittances by official sources,⁷ and no special facilities remain for investing the savings of emigrants while abroad or when they return home. In 2004, however, one bank sought to enhance its remittance business by eliminating remittance transfer fees. The project failed with the realization that the migrants were not leaving their money in the bank.

The entry of foreign migrant labor to Egypt is best characterized as cautious and restrictive. In 2005, there were almost 250,000 voluntary migrants in Egypt, half from other Arab countries and a quarter from Europe, mainly skilled professionals, technicians, managers, craftsmen, and some in agriculture. In Egypt, it seems that there was never specific legislation to facilitate the entry of migrant workers into the country. A law passed in 1952 following the Nasser revolution, prohibited foreigners from obtaining work permits as long as the labor market had Egyptians to fill the positions. The principle remains the same today. An organization cannot exceed 10% of its workforce with unskilled or semi-skilled non-Egyptian labor, or 25% in the case for skilled workers. In 2006, the Egyptian government placed a strict control on the formal entry of foreign domestic workers, prohibiting any “request for a work permit for a house manager or a similar position such as a nanny, cook, maid, etc. of any nationality.”⁸ The rights and entitlements of non-Egyptian labor in the country are the same as those of Egyptians under the Egyptian Labor Code, but “subject to the condition of reciprocity,” where Egypt has labor agreements with other countries that host Egyptian migrants.

The entry of foreign migrant labor to Egypt is best characterized as cautious and restrictive.

With increasing recognition of the importance of migration, Egypt is gradually attempting to develop more systematic facilitation of its nationals into international labor markets, but more specifically within the Arab region, where most of its recent migration history is based. Migration and development is the key to its most recent deliberations in association with the League of Arab States. Because of the levels of poverty and unemployment within the country, however, restrictions on migrant labor entry into Egypt will remain restrictive.

7. Ali Sawi, “Migration-Related Institutions and Policies in Egypt,” Analytical and Synthetic Notes 2005/08, Political and Social Module, CARIM, European University Institute, Florence, Italy (2008).

8. Ray Jureidini, “Irregular Workers in the Labour Market: migrants and refugees working as domestic workers in Egypt,” *International Journal on Multicultural Societies (IJMS)* Vol. 11, No. 1 (2009), pp. 75-90.

The “Youth Bulge” in Egypt: Is Labor Migration the Solution?

Mona Said and Kathleen O’Neill

Egypt, a country of 72.5 million, is experiencing a “youth bulge.” In fact, according to Egypt’s Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), since 1976, approximately 80% of the population has been under the age of 45. In 2006, 48.2% of the population was between the ages of 15 and 45.¹ Today, 80% of those who are unemployed are youths. Labor migration often is seen as a solution to the unemployment situation in Egypt. However, migration cannot fix the underlying problems that are chiefly responsible for it.

EGYPT’S PRECARIOUS LABOR MARKET

According to a 2006 survey, 75% of men reported that it took up to five years to acquire their first jobs, though this represents a decrease from 1998 reports, which indicated an eight year average to secure one’s first employment.²

Perhaps more important than the size of the total population are the educational and sectoral breakdowns of the population and labor force. Thirty percent are employed by the public sector and 70% by the private sector, with only a tenth of the latter group employed by the formal private sector.³ One hundred million new jobs will need to be created regionally by 2020 to absorb the increasing youth labor force, which is equal to the total job creation of the preceding 50 years. The magnitude of this increase is reducing the opportunities within the Gulf region.⁴

Although Europe only absorbs 4% of Egyptian labor migrants, younger migrants are increasingly turning to Europe with the assumption that one year there is better than ten years in the Gulf — the traditional destination for migrants from labor exporting countries such as Egypt.

The above-mentioned statistics paint a precarious situation for Egypt’s labor market. What seems to be at the heart of the matter is a gross mismatch between the skills of new graduates and the types of jobs that are available. Quality education is a major contributor to gainful employment. Egypt suffers from overcrowding in its public schools and the poor quality of education, which often make it necessary for students to obtain private lessons in order to pass exams and waste the opportunity of using schooling to acquire employable skills.

Studies show that problem-solving, rote memorization, arithmetic, and literacy all have



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1. CAPMAS, Statistical Yearbook, 2006 and 2007.

2. Ragui Assaad and Ghada Barsoum, “Youth Exclusion in Egypt: In Search of ‘Second Chances,’” Middle East Youth Initiative Working Paper No. 2, Wolfensohn Center for Development, September 2007.

3. Jackline Wahba, “Labour Markets Performance and Migration Flows in Egypt,” in Labour Markets Performance and Migration Flows in Arab Mediterranean Countries: Determinants and Effects, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Cairo, October 11-12, 2009.

4. Magda Shahin, “Movement of Natural Persons: Challenges and Opportunities for Egypt,” paper submitted to the WTO Symposium on “Mode 4 of the GATS — Taking Stock and Moving Forward,” Geneva, September 22-23, 2008.

proven to be major areas of concern within the Egyptian educational system, creating a labor force that is unqualified for many positions both domestically and abroad. The overcrowding of the public sector and the queuing for jobs exacerbates the unemployment rates within the domestic labor market. Hence, rising unemployment rates in Egypt are primarily among university and technical degree holders. Furthermore, the size of the labor force is unimportant if its quality is uncompetitive and thus ill-suited to both domestic and international labor needs. This poses a serious problem for graduates and a rather large predicament for the government.

The rising costs of housing — spurred by the increase in oil money coming into the country — has made it difficult for younger people to buy a house. This is exacerbated by unsatisfactory credit markets, which often fail in their basic purpose. The inability of Egyptian youths to afford to live on their own causes many of them to postpone marriage. This, in turn, makes them depend on the older generations for an extended period. This has particular implications for women, who are seen as the responsibility of their families until marriage, and as a result, are bound by the rules of the household, which often include restricted movement in an effort to preserve reputations.

Rising unemployment rates in Egypt are primarily among university and technical degree holders.

In contrast, structural change in Europe in the form of the shift from agriculture to services has resulted in an increase of jobs. A declining population growth rate and an aging population open up opportunities for migration. It is expected that as a result of these two factors approximately 1.15 million temporary migrants will be needed to fill the job gap within the European Union in 2010, increasing to 4.9 million in 2015 and 11.8 million in 2020.⁵

IS LABOR MIGRATION THE SOLUTION?

The benefits of labor migration are often assumed to be financial, with remittances being the predominant issue, and often a motivating cause of migration. Studies indicate, however, that the benefits of remittances may be less than previously anticipated, especially with regards to investment. Remittances are often not invested in the home country, but instead spent on immediate consumption.

While labor migration may prove to be an immediate solution to the problem of the youth bulge and unemployment, the solution is only temporary. In order to alleviate the problems of the labor market, the root causes need to be addressed. As mentioned above, the skill mismatch between those entering the labor force and the demands of the domestic labor force is the key problem. Labor migration is not, however, the panacea that some may perceive it to be. The skills possessed by migrants must match the needs of the receiving countries. However, given the previously mentioned problems with the quality of education, this could result in fewer opportunities than necessary to alleviate the burden on the Egyptian labor market.

Moreover, much of the migration that occurs — particularly migration to Europe — consists of the illegal migration of unskilled workers. This is problematic for a number of reasons. First, illegal or “irregular” migration increases xenophobia and stereotypes in the host community, which can result in more restrictive laws in the host country. Second, illegal migration does not take into account the needs of the home country. In this form of migration, the matching of skills to needs does not take place. Third, temporary migrants, even if legal, are vulnerable to economic and political crises that may arise. This was exemplified during the first Gulf War in 1991, when thousands of temporary migrants were forced to return to their countries of origin.

THE WAY FORWARD

Addressing the many issues facing education, housing, marriage, and labor market requires several steps. The simple expansion of the private sector through privatization and encouraging competitive forces through tariff reductions, 5. Magda Shahin and Akram Bastawi, “Trade in Services Through Temporary Presence of Natural Persons: A Win-Win Formula for Egypt and the EU,” Egyptian Center for Economic Studies, Working Paper No. 131, April 2008.

floating the Egyptian pound, and a number of free trade agreements that have been enacted since 2004 are only likely to have a limited immediate impact on alleviating unemployment and creating jobs. Initial assessments of these measures in the Egyptian manufacturing sector show that the benefits mainly have accrued to the more skilled workers while completely overlooking the poorer and lesser skilled workers.⁶

What is still missing are more youth specific and targeted reforms, which include training programs for unemployed new graduates; micro finance programs to help trigger self-employment; and formalized assistance in job searches by the government. The success of any of these projects will depend on the involvement of the three social partners: workers, especially youth job-seekers, potential employers, and the government through formalized modalities of dialogue and action.

Attempts to tackle this issue in a trans-migration framework also can be formulated within the Euro-Mediterranean Neighborhood Action Plans currently under negotiation, which include technical assistance on employment policymaking and capacity building to manage labor markets while focusing on the promotion of youth and female employment. Formalized migration actually may help to develop skill sets that will fill the void within the home country upon return — essentially creating a brain drain. However, the success of any such formalization will be based on the laws that govern and the way in which youth can access and benefit from these partnerships.

While labor migration may provide an immediate partial solution to the youth bulge and unemployment rates in Egypt, it is only a temporary one. Greater attention needs to be paid to the deficiencies within the domestic labor market as destination markets are unlikely to absorb the entirety of the surplus labor originating in Egypt. As indicated above, more target programs and greater cooperation between businesses (local and abroad), education and training authorities, and potential workers must take place in order to tackle the chronic skill mismatch problem underlying the phenomena of unregulated migration.

Greater attention needs to be paid to the deficiencies within the domestic labor market as destination markets are unlikely to absorb the entirety of the surplus labor originating in Egypt.

6. Mona Said and Shireen Al-Azzawi, "Trade Liberalization, Inter-Industry Wage Differentials and Job Quality in Egyptian Manufacturing," Gender and Work in the MENA Region Working Paper Series, Population Council, No. 6, 2009 and Shireen Al-Azzawi and Mona Said, "Poverty, Pro-Poor Growth and Trade Liberalization," paper Submitted to African Econometric Society's 15th Annual Conference of Econometric Modeling for Africa, Cairo, July, 2010.

ADDITIONAL INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO) RESOURCES

ILO Statistics and Databases: http://www.ilo.org/global/What_we_do/Statistics/lang--en/index.htm

Laborsta: Database of Labor Statistics: <http://laborsta.ilo.org/>

Labor Force Surveys: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/lfsurvey/lfsurvey.home>

Child Labor Statistics: <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/ChildlabourstatisticsSIMPOC/lang--en/index.htm>

CISDOC: Occupational Safety and Health Database: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/cisdoc/index_html?p_lang=e

ILOLEX: Database of International Labor Standards and Recommendations: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/index.htm>

LABORDOC: <http://labordoc.ilo.org/>

NATLEX: Database of National Labor, Social Security, and Related Human Rights Legislation: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.home?p_lang=en

TRAVAIL: Database of Conditions of Work and Employment Laws: <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/travmain.home>

ILO Publications and Research: http://www.ilo.org/global/What_we_do/Publications/lang--en/index.htm

ILO Constitution: <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/constq.htm>

ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: <http://www.ilo.org/declaration/lang--en/index.htm>

ILO Arab States homepage: http://www.ilo.org/global/Regions/Arab_states/lang--en/index.htm



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