

# Why Do People Migrate from Egypt? Determinants of International Migration- A Review and call for Research

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**Abstract:** Examining the migration decision is a complex task given that migration is changing over time and multicausal complicated processes. This paper provides an overview of international migration globally and focusing mainly on Egypt as the most populated country in the Arab world. Moreover, it explores the determinants of international migration in Egypt based on a systematic review of empirical studies. To identify potential studies, we conducted searches of JSTOR, Scopus, PubMed, Google Scholar and Web of Science databases published between January 1, 1961 and January 31, 2020 using combinations of “determinants of migration” and “international migration in Egypt” search terms. Furthermore, an investigation of estimated migrant stock flows, and its determinants can provide fertile ground for potential migration forecasts through furnish some required indications for the demographic and economic analyses and assist policymakers in preparing legislative frameworks and adequate policy and for their own country’s development.

**Keywords:** Migration review, Egypt, determinants of migration.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The United Nations defines international migration as "Moving a person who is living in a country other than his or her country of birth" (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2017). Globally, the number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow rapidly in recent years, 258 million in 2017, up from 220 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000, which represents about 3.41 percent of the total world population in 2017. The MENA region has increasingly become a location for all types of Migration (regular, irregular, and refugees) where the migratory patterns have become much more complex and diversified due to patterns of globalization, a series of wars and conflicts, transit migration, emerging transnational networks, and changing labor market. Many interrelated factors account for the large flows of involuntary migration within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries: political instability, civil wars, religious and ethnic discrimination, repression of opposition groups, and poverty (Howaida, 2006). As a part of MENA, Egypt is a major migration player in the Middle East and North Africa and in the Global South more broadly, experiencing large, diverse patterns of emigration and immigration.

Rapid population growth is one of the crucial problems that have hindered development efforts in Egypt; Egypt’s population doubled from 9.7 million to 19 million in 50 years (between 1897 and 1947), it took less than 30 years (1947-1976) for the next doubling to 38 million people. Since then, the population size has more than tripled, totaling 102 million in 2020 while it's expected to reach 120 million in 2030 and rise up to reach 155 million by the end of 2050(Barakt, 2018). The echo effect of births occurred 15-30 years ago represents the generation of youth that is now taking on adult roles, including childbearing, which represents a high pressure on education and health services (Assaad & Krafft, 2014). Egypt’s rapid population growth is further complicated by the fact that its cultivable land is extremely scarce relative to the size of its population. More than 90 percent of Egypt's population is concentrated on the narrow ribbon, which follows the course of the Nile and represents only around five percent of the total land area of 1,000,000 square kilometers (CAPMAS, 2018; Zohry, 2007). The rapid population growth would lead to a high level of unemployment. As for the unemployment rate, the latest statistics show a continued decrease in unemployment, albeit at a

slower place between 2013 and 2016 from 13.2 percent in 2013 to 12.5 percent in 2016. Therefore, the unemployment rate afterward decreased sharply to 9.9 percent in 2018 (CAPMAS, 2018). Moreover, Egypt is considered one of the most countries which have historical experiences in migration and a complicated migratory pattern because of geographic location, population structure, and economic problems. Egypt also considered as a transit country that received migrants coming mainly from sub-Saharan Africa en route to Europe, most of them are undocumented labor migrants, refugees, and trafficked migrants. Moreover, Egypt is the second country experienced by Arab Spring revolutions. For these reasons, this research will focus on Egypt as a good case study of international migration. Therefore, we conducted a systematic review of the literature on the determinants of an international migration published on top research databases. Our main objective is presenting both updated literature reviews until February 2020 and expand on the approach of the original review to account for developments in the study of migration in MENA countries.

The paper is structured as follows; Section 2 presents the methods used to obtain the literature reviews; Section 3 shows in detail the history of international migration in Egypt for more than 50 years ago; While, section 4 displays the review of determinants of international migration; Finally, section 5 shows the concluding remarks and literature gaps.

## 2. METHODS

We conducted a systematic review of the literature on the determinants of international migration and review the history of migration in Egypt by examining factors that drive people to move from Egypt by using a more comprehensive set of search terms and five databases. Furthermore, to find out the potential studies for review, we conducted searches of English language articles utilizing the JSTOR, Scopus, PubMed, Google Scholar, and Web of Science databases between January 1, 1961 and January 31, 2020 using combinations of “determinants of migration” and “international migration in Egypt” search terms.

## 3. RESULTS

### 3.1 History of Egyptian migration

Egypt has a long history of using emigration as a means of soft power to promote its foreign policy goals, especially through educational programs in the Arab world. In the last 50 years, it has also become heavily reliant on economically driven regional labor emigration while also reaching out to its diaspora communities in most parts in the world. Egypt's policy has been one of promoting migration as a means of solving some of its demographic and economic problems such as overpopulation, unemployment and foreign exchange.

Different phases of migration can be differentiated in the evolution of Egyptian migration, characterized by changing international conditions, events, and labor market needs, particularly in the Arab region, but also by different economic factors and national policy decisions. Before discussing the evolution of Egyptian migration in the last fifty years, it is important to shed some light on Egyptian emigration before 1970.

Systematic migration started only with Egypt's provision of school teachers to Iraq in the 1930s, a program that spread to additional countries after the 1952 revolution (Sell, 1988). Until about 1961 other migration policies mostly concerned immigrant issues, especially the political refuge and the reception of African political leaders and revolutionist at the time of Nasser. Little attention was paid to Egyptians who left or wanted to leave. Political controls on migration were in force, mainly through ‘exit visa’ requirements (Choucri, 1977). Egyptians' interest in migration began in the mid-1950s. It was due to pressure from politics, demographics, and the economy. The government was inspired by offering work opportunities to support the burden. However, rising population growth, along with a lack of development in the economic and technical sectors, has diminished the capacity of the state to provide jobs. After 1967, Many factors combined together to push the state to encourage migration. Previously, the state had put limits and restrictions on skilled labor migration, but in mid-1966, it relaxed migration procedures, and permanent migration began. After the war of 1967, many graduate students were forced to live outside because of poor economic conditions at home. This was the start of the Egyptian ‘brain drain’ (Thani, 2006). On the other hand, Egypt has considered economic remittances to be a key source of income, which now constitutes a significant share of its gross domestic product (GDP) (see figure 3.5). Considering that remittances are often carried out via unofficial networks that are untraceable, the economic importance of migration is even greater for Egypt (H. A. Hafez, 2010; H. Hafez & Ghaly, 2012).

### *The 1970s: Migration to the Gulf*

The government of Egypt was motivated to bear the burden by providing job opportunities. However, increasing population growth, along with the lack of growth in the economic and technological sectors, diminished the state's ability to provide jobs. In 1971, permanent and temporary migration was authorized under Article 52 of the 1971 Constitution, which stated that 'all Egyptians are granted the right to emigrate and to return home'. Also Prior to 1974 the lifted restrictions and other legal impediments on labor migration were removed. The period of expansion started immediately after the War of 1973. The oil embargo led to a substantial rise in oil prices, followed by aggressive development projects in the oil-producing Arab countries. That situation increased Egyptian labor demand (J Stace Birks & Sinclair, 1980). The gradual exodus of graduate students had already begun after the 1967 war ended. The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) estimated the number of Egyptian emigrants to be 300,000 between 1970 and 1974, compared with a migrant stock of 70,000 in 1970, while by 1976, according to the census of that year, the figure had increased to about 1.4 million (Choucri, 1999).

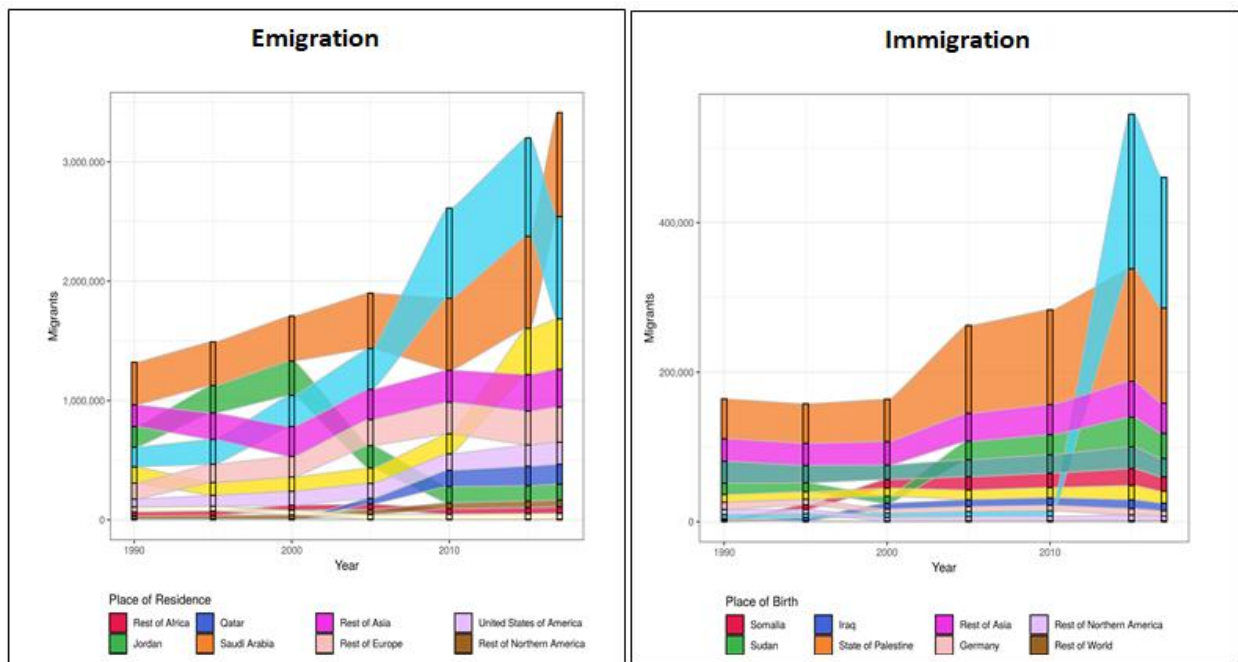
### *The 1980s: The Decade of Iraq*

The 1980s witnessed an increasing flow of Egyptian emigration. The increased oil prices fueled ambitious development programs in the Arab oil-producing countries which lead to increasing the demand for foreign labor, especially the demand for teachers. Moreover, at this time, the Egyptian Government supported migration from the health sector, including doctors, veterinarians, pharmacists, and dentists.

The internal challenges like unemployment and how to manage remittances to supply payment deficits and finance private projects, in addition, outside challenges represented by the inflow of cheaper Asian and South Asian labor to the labor-importing Arab countries began to threaten Egyptian workers pushed the Egyptian government further eased migration procedures and created the Ministry of State for Emigration Affairs (1981) that sponsored Egyptian migrants and drew up an overall migration strategy aimed at national development. In 1980, the number of Egyptian emigrants increased to around two million, with teachers in Arab countries increasingly demanding. Because of liberal immigration policies that Iraq followed towards fellow Arabs, it became a favored destination for semi-skilled labor (Zohry, 2005).

The 1980s can be considered the golden decade of Egyptian migration to Iraq; precisely from 1980 to 1988, the duration of the Iran-Iraq war. Despite the depression of oil revenues caused by the war, Egyptians migrated to Iraq intensively to fill in the labor market gap caused by recruiting most of the working-age Iraqi males to participate in the war against Iran. At that time, Egyptians in Iraq almost enjoyed rights and freedom close to national Iraqis (Bel-Air, 2016). After the end of the Iran-Iraq war, fall of oil prices and the return of Iraqis from the war to join civilian work again, in addition, declining demand for construction workers in Arab countries and Egyptian workers in Iraq were subject to harsh measures and expulsion thus the number of Egyptian emigrants pushed down to about 1.4 million (1985). Towards the end of the 1980s, Egyptians in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries comprised a much smaller proportion of the foreign workforce than in the late 1970s. In the 1980s, Egyptian workers represented 40 percent of Saudi Arabia 's overall foreign labor. A smaller workforce was in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman. The number of workers from South-East Asia increased over the same time period (Shah, 2004). Enactment of the Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law No. 111 of 1983 was one of the most important outcomes of this period which grants migrants the right to retain their Egyptian nationality along with the nationality of the country of destination and covers migrants' rights to sponsorship and to an exemption from taxes and fees on the returns of their deposits invested in Egyptian banks.

Although the United Nations Population Division (UNPD) International Migrant Stock data is helpful for understanding the migration flows in Egypt during the last two decades, it cannot provide a complete picture of bilateral migration flows in Egypt because of the lack of historical data (i.e., prior 1990s) and the available data are undercounting for some destination countries (G. Abel et al., 2018). The following section describes the main features of international migration in Egypt since the 1970s according to the literature and various data sources.



**Figure1. Migration flows in Egypt during the period 1990-2019 based on UN2019 stock**

### *The 1990s: The Return from Iraq and Kuwait*

The First Gulf War of 1990-91 forced all Egyptian workers to leave Iraq, as Egypt condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. The total number of return migrants from Iraq and Kuwait was estimated at a level of one million. Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Libya afforded many contracts, thus many Egyptian return migrants from Iraq and Kuwait found their way to these countries (Bel-Air, 2016). Generally, this decade was characterized by a stagnation of the number of Egyptian emigrants, the 1990 Gulf War forced almost all Egyptian immigrants to return to Egypt however the situation changed with the end of the Gulf War. By 1992, the number of Egyptian migrants exceeded 2.2 million while according to the findings of the latest census of 1996, the number of migrants abroad was almost 2.8 million. This rise can in part be due to Kuwait's liberation and the return of Egyptian workers in the Gulf (Zohry, 2003).

### *The 2000s: The decade of GULF Countries*

By the 2000s, it noticed that an increasing share of the migrants going to Arab countries went to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates over the 1990s and the 2000s. On the other hand, the share of Egyptian migrants going to Iraq decreased sharply from 44.1% in 1990 to 3.4% in 2000 and then to 0.3% in 2009; this is mainly attributed to political instability in Iraq. In 2000, the number of Egyptians abroad reached 2.7 million. Egyptians found Libya a good destination for work (Haas et al., 2019) or passing through to the Mediterranean to Europe where some individuals put their lives at risk by attempting to enter Europe on board unseaworthy and overcrowded boats or traveling in conditions of extreme hardship, which all too often result in their deaths (Simon, 2006). In 2006, it allowed Egyptians to enter and reside in Libya with an ID only and without obtaining visas or work contracts to enter Libya thus it was difficult to estimate the total number of Egyptian migrants in Libya. However, It is estimated that 147,800 Egyptian migrants returned from Libya via Tunisia and Sallum in February and March 2011 (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2012), thus, the impact of the current crisis in Libya for the Egyptian economy are important. Since the last two decades, Egypt has become increasingly familiar with irregular migration, in fact, the proximity of Europe together with declining employment opportunities in the Gulf countries were the main factors causing irregular migration (Zohry & others, 2007).

### *3.2 The immigration in Egypt*

Regarding immigration in Egypt, Egypt is hosting limited number of migrant workers, however, the number of refugees and asylum seekers is growing. Palestinians fled to Egypt after the wars of 1948, 1956 and 1967, moreover, Palestinians expelled from Jordan, following the events of Black September. Palestinians were regarded as equal to Egyptian nationals

and were able to access education and other state services and to work without restrictions but since 1982 they are considered as foreigners. They have hence lost their right to residency, the right to own property and work granted to them under Nasser's Pan-Arabist policies. Several Palestinians, mainly Christians, granted Egyptian citizenship through marriage or by other means with Egyptian nationals, while others and their descendants preferred to keep the distinct status of the Palestinian refugee (Bel-Air, 2016). Estimates of the size of the Palestinian population in Egypt range from 200,000 to 270,245 during the period 2015-2020 among of them some 70,000 Palestinian refugees, whose families arrived in 1948 and after, in addition, tens of thousands of refugees from neighboring African countries due to conflict and political instability like Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia, as well as Iraq and most recently, Syria which represents the largest group of registered refugees, are now stranded in Egypt. Taking consideration those transit migrants fleeing the war in Libya. Moreover, in the current 2014 Constitution, Egypt introduced numerous constitutional provisions such as the acceptance of political asylum.

### 3.3 Determinants of international migration: Empirical Evidence.

Migration determinants are recognized as an important research topic which increasingly complex and change over time, thus studies show different results related to the sample of countries, the time-frame, and methods applied in the research. Several studies classified drivers of migration into five categories as being the most important ones while explaining the migration process among different samples of developed and less developed countries in different parts of the world as follows: (1) demographic factors; (2) Economic drivers; (3) Social drivers; (4) Environmental drivers; (5) Political drivers. In addition, the potential migrants' characteristics and household characteristics, beside the expected challenges and obstacles which will be faced during the journey and staying in the destination region.

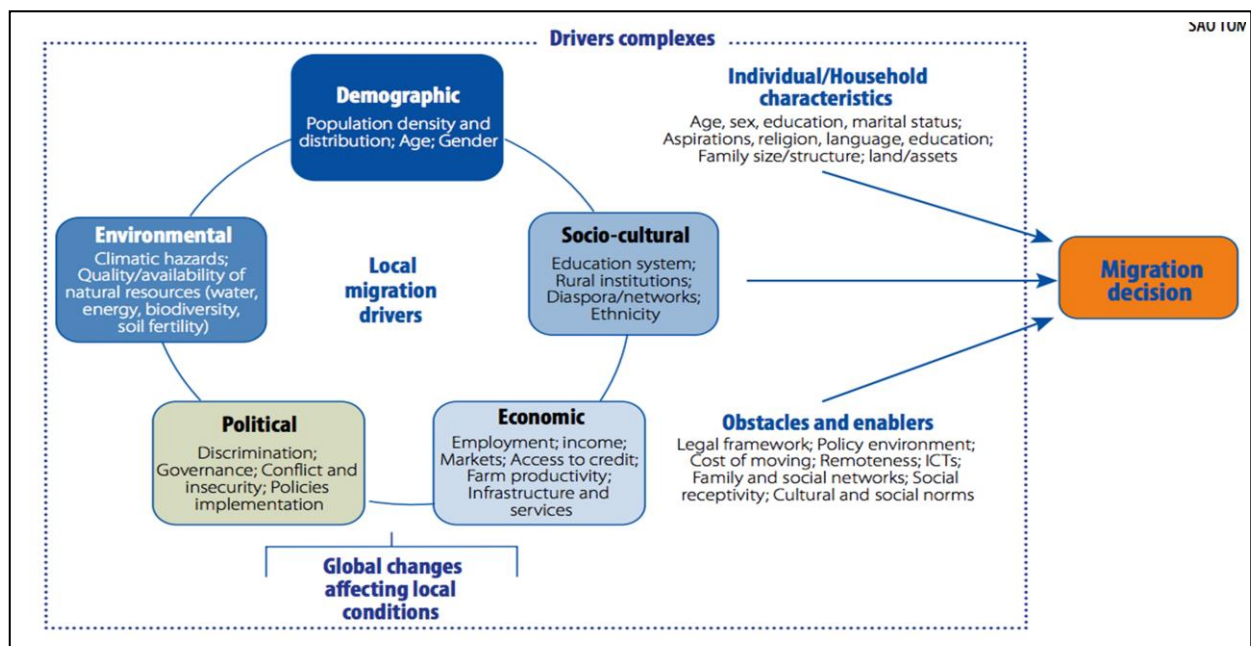


Figure 3.7 A conceptual framework for the 'drivers of migration' presented by Black et al. (2011, p. S5).

#### 3.3.1 Demographic factors

Several studies using various country samples emphasize demographic characteristics as a significant factor in assessing migration flows. The effect of demographic factors on migration is most likely to be seen through interaction with economic ones, and some of the demographic factors are even used as proxies for economic or living conditions (Kim & Cohen, 2010).

The population size of both the sending and receiving region can jointly determine the scale of migration, while demographic trends can alter the volume of demand and supply of migrants (A. Zaiceva & Zimmermann, 2016). However, it is not the presence of large numbers of people in a region per se that will force to outmigration, but rather the presence of large numbers without, for example, livelihood opportunities or access to employment (Plane, 1993). By examining the determinants of labor migration in Egypt, Greenwood (1969) concluded that as the higher population size

in the origin region, the higher likelihood to be the number of persons having several reasons to migrate. The higher the population size of the receiving countries, the greater the expected number of job opportunities is likely to be. Also, migration is an important driver of population change through the migration policies in origin and destination countries and regions to manage the migration streams. Moreover, the study of Kim & Cohen (2010) which examines the migration flows to a selection of developed countries between 1950 and 2007, find a significant influence of population sizes of the origin and destination countries in absorption and dispatch migrants.

Various studies confirmed that the aspiration to migrate is also generally higher amongst younger people, for instance, Farid & El-Batrawy (2015) display the majority of Egyptian migrants are from among the youth, and 70 percent of migrants were aged 20-39, and almost exclusively male, so the demographic characteristics of origin countries will influence who migrate in response to economic factors. Moreover, Dao et al. (2018) used migration data across the world for about a half-century and concludes the rapid growth rate of young people in working age in origin countries in Asia is said to exert pushing toward thinking of immigration, especially amid high unemployment among educated young people, though their chances of migrating for work depending on the availability of suitable jobs in the receiving countries.

These demographic characteristics may be affected not only by birth and death rates, but also the morbidity and burden of disease within a community. Also, Kim & Cohen (2010) refer that demographics (log population of source and destination and log infant mortality rate (IMR) of origin and destination) as highly significant variables in affecting the migration flows among selected developed countries between 1950 and 2007. Likewise, the demographic characteristics of destination region – such as an ageing population – may influence the employment opportunities and demand for workers, and hence the perceived attractiveness of that region. Oh & Jung (2013) point out that demographic factors, especially the ageing population of advanced countries, have an impact on shaping the migration flows, in addition, Dao et al. (2018) suggest that demographic drivers govern migratory flows and exert greater effect than socioeconomic factors. Developed economies drawing significant shares of migrants of Asian areas are facing population aging and reviewing their immigration systems to attract more migrant workers in domestic work, health and care services, knowledge-intensive sectors, and construction.

Although most studies find a significant role for demographic characteristics in explaining migrant populations, the multivariate analyses used by De Haas (2010) and (De Haas & Fransen, 2018) did not report a significant effect on both immigration and emigration rates by the fertility levels and other demographic indicators such as the share of youth (18–35). Moreover, (Simpson, 2017) states that the set of demographic characteristics that matters most varies significantly over time and across specific migrant flows. For instance, the role of language differences may matter less in the future as English increasingly becomes the lingua franca of the world.

### **3.3.2 Economic factors**

The main theories of migration mainly argue that Economic drivers have direct effects on both internal and international migration and migration is caused by the level of development of the destination countries including the labor market and economic development where the chance to find a better job, a higher standard of living, a more comfortable safety net, or access to a better education system. To examine the effect of economic factors, most of the studies mentioned that four different elements; unemployment rate, economic growth, foreign direct investment and, inflation rate should be taken into consideration (Vogler & Rotte, 1998; Jennissen, 2003; Mayda, 2005; VanWey, 2005; Mayda, 2010; Balderas & Greenwood, 2010; Pânzaru, 2013; ampaniello, 2014).

#### **3.3.2.1 Unemployment rate**

Based on the related literature, the main economic driver is unemployment rate (Jennissen, 2003; Mayda, 2005; Etzo, 2008; Sulaimanova & Bostan, 2014). The rise of unemployment rate and the impossibility of finding employment may push people to move to other countries in order to improve their financial situation (Hunt, 2006). On the other hand, a favorable situation in the labor market in the destination countries like the availability of job employment attracts potential immigrants, and in the end increases emigration flows. In Egypt, (Zohry, 2003) mention that high unemployment rates among youth in Egypt force young people to move to another country legally or illegally by crossing the Mediterranean Sea to Europe however, for those employed (formal/informal) reduce the propensity to emigrate (David et al., 2016). In the context of Egypt, with rationing on the skilled labor market (Assaad, 2014), these results suggest that the lack of perspectives in the country for young graduates is one driver of migration flows. Naudé (2010), reports that

better access to jobs in the destination country is a significant factor attracting migrants. On the other hand, it can be argued that decrease of the unemployment rate has opposite effects on emigration process. Moreover, Lewis & Swannell (2018) investigate the factors affecting international migration using pairwise data from around 160 origin countries to 35 developed destinations countries during the period 1990–2013. the unemployment rates in both sending and receiving and destination are significant, as a 1% rise in the unemployment rate of sending countries drives to a 0.18% rise in the emigration, and a corresponding 1% rise in the unemployment rate of destination leads to a 0.23% fall in inward migration. Interestingly, neither interaction term is significant, implying that freedom of movement doesn't increase the sensitivity of migration decisions to unemployment.

### ***3.3.2.2 Economic growth, and foreign direct investment***

Incomes (as measured by per capita GDP) in source and destination countries understood as wage differentials and income volatility along with labor market conditions play key roles in driving migration (Clemens, 2014; Ozden et al., 2018; Sahota, 1968). Generally, the wider the income gap between origin and destination regions the higher the incentive to migrate. However, rising incomes in source countries alone can also drive migration as they allow more people to afford the upfront costs of migrating (Martin, 1996). This fact is also confirmed by the empirical analyses from the scientific literature. Mayda (2005) used annual panel data set on the sample of the OECD countries from 1980 to 1995 and showed that an increase of GDP per worker in the destination area increases the emigration rate in the origin country.

Anzelika Zaiceva & Zimmermann (2008) reported that a higher GDP per capita increases the incentives to migrate for European Union "15 countries". Also, Sprenger (2013) states that besides the influence higher unemployment rate in the home country as a pushing factor to emigration, the increase of GDP per capita of the host country play a significant role to attract those migrants. Moreover, The analysis did by Kennan & Walker (2011) to investigate the Effect of expected Income on individual migration decisions indicates that the relation between the expected income and the migration decision depends on the geographical differences between the mean wage and the technology to migrate in search of a better place match when there are income differences in the present location. Economic growth and increased foreign direct investment are having positive effects on the states' economies. Any of these variables ensure economic stability as a whole (Yüksel et al., 2018). Income variability can also influence the migration decision. If income is highly volatile, individuals may be a larger incentivized to look for stable income streams, especially in regions. Various studies mentioned that labor wage differences potentially make play a significant role in stimulating migration more than the effect of an unemployment rate; for example, House and Rempel, 1980 used a sample from Kenya and (Arnold & Cochrane, 1980) used a dataset from Thailand, they reported that link migration flows to wages in receiving countries with differences in unemployment levels in different areas are worth mentioning here. Overall, wage levels and income gaps are usually considered among the most significant determinants in the migration decision, by influencing the net benefits of migration.

### ***3.3.2.3 Inflation rate***

Besides income, many other macroeconomic factors like Inflation rate exchange rates may have a direct effect on the level of migration flows obviously, the high rate of inflation affects negatively on net incomes of individuals, and in case of the low level of salaries, individuals may seek new job opportunities abroad. moreover, and higher inflation demonstrates the fragility in the economy. In this case, they should increase international migration from this country (Ahad, 2015; Deluna & Darius, 2014). on the other side, exchange rates have direct or indirect effects relative prices abroad also the purchasing power. Generally, a strong foreign currency will allow the money earned abroad to buy more back home and hence increasing the net benefit to migration. Conversely, a strong home currency (relative to the currency in the destination countries) would lower the value of earnings abroad. The exchange rates work in influencing the migration decision by both wages and remittances.

### ***3.3.3 Social drivers***

In addition to the economic factors, A broad stream of literature emphasizes that social-cultural drivers include an education system, the search for educational opportunities, family and cultural expectations, networks, ethnic, cultural practices regarding inheritance, the need to acquire funds for dowries or bride payments, and the search for educational opportunities lead to international migration according to the results of some other studies (Acupan et al., 2007; Brücker & Siliverstovs, 2006; Naudé, 2010; Pedersen et al., 2008; Yang & Guo, 1999). By analyzing the factors that influence

people to migrate from China, Yang & Guo (1999) confirmed that a study social factors play a key role in this phenomenon. The educational factors could be considered as important variables measuring the role of social factors in international migration. When the total number of schools and teachers is high, people are likely to migrate from the country (Jennissen, 2003; VanWey, 2005). However, since the rate of illiteracy represents a negative situation in the country, there should be a positive relationship between this variable and international migration from the country (Sprenger, 2013; Yang & Guo, 1999).

Migrant networks have been emphasized as an important factor to drive continuous labor migration flows in both developed and developing countries as they reduce migration costs and the social and psychological costs (Y. Zhao, 2003), not depending on economic and other factors that might have caused the initial flows (Garip & Asad, 2015; Liu, 2013). Migration networks can be described as 'sets of interpersonal links that link migrants, former migrants, and non-migrants in their areas of origin and destination through ties of, friendship, kinship, and shared community origin' (Massey et al., 1993). Some in-depth qualitative studies used smaller samples to examine the effects of migration networks on international migration, but it was not enough to these effects as there is a need for structuring the process and interviews in both sending and receiving regions to analyze these effects (Haug, 2008). Furthermore, Some studies claim that migration network theory is losing its importance with the development of technology that drives to more accessible information than in previous periods (Wickramasinghe & Wimalaratana, 2016).

Also, as expected, this effect is particularly relevant for Egyptian migrants as around 65 percent of current migrants had networks in the destination country before departure from Egypt. The choice of destination areas is relying heavily on extended family members and friends abroad and mostly made of prior male migrants who can assist aspiring emigrants from Egypt by financing trips providing information, facilitating legal entry, helping to find employment and housing and other assistance that may also reduce the economic costs of migration and the burden of resettlement (Zohry, 2006). Farid & El-Batrawy (2016) state that more than four-fifths of Egyptian migrants who had a network at their destination were assisted by relatives or friends before and/or upon arrival in the country of destination. Thus, the pre-migration network increases the probability for the Egyptian household to send a migrant abroad. Moreover, when the social network increases, poorer households can afford to send migrants as well (David et al., 2016).

Sharing a language or cultural ties and being healthier leads to lower psychological costs and reduce the transaction costs associated with migration (e.g accessing the information on jobs and social amenities) since the transitions into the culture and work are easier (Simpson, 2017). These factors also often drive to the formation of diaspora communities and migration networks within hosting countries, which then invite subsequent waves of migration through job referrals and family reunifications (Massey et al., 1999; McKenzie & Rapoport, 2010). Over time, as migrants assimilate to their new destination country, their reliance on the migrant community may diminish as they learn the culture and language of the host country, thereby reducing the net benefits generated by the local migrant community. Furthermore, migration also has an impact on the socio-cultural development of origin countries (J. S. Birks, 1980; Brink, 1991; Levitt, 1998; Sørensen, 2007).

### **3.3.4 Environmental factors**

Environmental factors and climate changes such as pollution levels, tsunamis, soil degradation, earthquakes, drought or flooding, anomalies in rainfall or temperature, as well as natural disasters may push migrants out of their home country as households are experiencing a huge sudden (and often uninsurable) shock. Migrants commonly return to their origin countries once the event has receded, often after only a short time has elapsed but also constrained by issues such as political stability, fear of repeat events, or the completed destruction of their home and livelihood, or the optimistic one is that the migrant finds new opportunities in their new location (Black et al., 2011). These factors have been identified as potential causes of large migration flows (Fisher et al., 2009).

Most recently, the effects of environmental factors and climate change on migration have received more attention from academics and policymakers (Yonetani, 2015; Cattaneo & Peri, 2016; Simpson, 2017). Simpson (2017) states that these environmental conditions such as high pollution levels and worsening air quality in the destination regions can discourage migration. (Yonetani, 2015) states that the natural disasters displace three to 10 times more people than all conflicts and war in the world combined, it's estimated that 19.3 million people forced to flee their homes in 100 countries worldwide in 2014 only; as 17.5 million people have been forced to flee their homes by weather-related disasters such as floods and storms and 1.7 million by geophysical hazards such as earthquakes. Conversely, improvements in the quality of life in the



origin regions may also reduce the incentive to leave. The availability and access to, and stability of, ecosystem services could be considered as the three primary mechanisms by which well-being and livelihood are manifest in societies which their economic systems depend heavily on agriculture or fisheries. Therefore, a change in ecosystem services directly affects wellbeing and the demand for migration (Black et al., 2011). Moreover, Aburn & Wesselbaum (2017) confirmed that the temperature influence at sending countries is stronger than the joint effect of income and political freedom at home country. In addition, the total number of weather-related disasters in sending countries increases migration flows. In the same context, this influence is of the same significance as the income effect at the origin countries (Aburn & Wesselbaum, 2017).

Most studies and research on climate change investigate the short term climate variability (e.g. storms, floods, drought), but sometimes this approach unable to examine the long term impact of climate change on populations (e.g. a rise in sea level, increased salinization) (see for example Alexeev et al., 2011; Cattaneo & Peri, 2016; Drabo & Mbaye, 2015; Reuveny & Moore, 2009). In Egypt, there are no pure environmental migrants. Climate change is not the sole driver of international migration in Egypt. Its role as a factor of migration can only be examined when considering its interrelationship with other migration drivers. Furthermore, the direct influence of environmental change on migration in Egypt should not be overestimated (Wodon et al., 2014). We can summarize that climate change is commonly associated with the lack of natural resources (e.g. water scarcity in Egypt and other North African countries) which may lead to increasing the vulnerability to conflict and war between countries. The limited resources combined with issues of political stability may increase the potential conflict in the region as a result of climate change-induced migration (Reuveny, 2007).

### **3.3.5 Political drivers**

Although the most important among these factors is the labor market at the international level (De Haas, 2011; Massey et al., 1993), Mansoor & Quillin (2007) states that non-economic factors like the political aspects in both sending and receiving countries are important in explaining migration where migration flows are changing with the altering socioeconomic and geopolitical conditions (Choucri, 1999; De Haas, 2011; Deheza & Mora, 2011; Hunter et al., 2013; Massey, 2015; Portes, 2007; Wickramasinghe & Wimalaratana, 2016). Various forms of conflict and violence can drive migration. These include inter-state conflict, but it is more likely that conflict within states, such as civil war, discrimination, communal violence, genocide, and denial of human rights can lead to forced migrations within states or across their borders (Efendic, 2016).

By 2009, every African state had sent or received political refugees, whilst in the Middle East 2.2 million refugees were recorded (Raleigh, 2011). Various studies examined the relationship between different political factors and migration, for instance, evidence from Kosovo (Kotorri, 2017) and from analyzing data containing 212 origin and 167 destination countries Ravlik (2014) show that political factors were also important in the case of returning migration. Adserà et al. (2016) reports factors related to political pressures and find a significant influence of coups and political instability, as well as of violent events, on migration. During the period from 1964 to 1989, Davenport et al. (2003) use a dataset of cross-sectional time-series data set for 129 countries. They confirm the significant effects of civil wars, genocide, and dissident threats on forced migration. Also, a panel of 175 countries during the period (1952 - 1995) used by Moore & Shellman (2004), they conclude that dissident and government violence to be the main causes of forced migration. Egypt, being the main sending country in the region, will be affected by the uprisings on many levels: not least in terms of the potentiality of migration, especially among Egyptian Christians (Amer & Fargues, 2014) because of the perception of increased insecurity and political instability that followed the 2011 revolution, also on the return of Egyptian expatriates.

### **3.3.6 Individual and household characteristics**

Individual characteristics such as migrants' age, gender, and education, have a significant influence on migration decisions as it helps to identify the demographic features that could lead potential migrants to leave their home country and lead to the self-selection of migrants (Asad & Hwang, 2019; Takenaka & Pren, 2010; Bohra & Massey, 2009; Mora & Taylor, 2006; Peña Piña et al., 2000).

In Egypt, the majority of migrants are of working age. (Farid & El-Batrawy, 2015) states that the age composition of current migrants takes an inverted U-shaped pattern with respect to the current age as follows, It begins with a low level among young migrants aged 15-19 years (2.5 percent), then sweeps upward forming a broad peak extending over the age range 20-39 years which includes almost 70 percent of current migrants. At first migration, the median age for males was 25.1 years and for females was 25.6 years. Migrants in working age are highly likely to successfully overcome the

obstacles, migration costs, burdens which they face both before and during the migration (Dasgupta et al., 2016; Lauby & Stark, 1988). Moreover, Working-age migrants are the ones subject to despair and disappointment if the job opportunities are not available to earn a living both for themselves and their families (Kosec et al., 2018).

It is worth mentioning that empirical researches suggest that Females are less likely to migrate than males. Migration from Egypt is predominantly male, especially those who are young working-age males. In Egyptian culture, men are more responsible for supporting their parents, whereas girls normally leave their parents' family and join their husbands' one after the marriage (J. Zhao & Zhong, 2019). Women mostly depend on loyal family networks to move abroad while males often rely on friends and less intense networking relationships (Beine & Docquier, 2011; Toma & Vause, 2014). Also, women seem to be more sensitive to migration costs (Kirwin & Anderson, 2018). Women's and men's migration decisions are driven by different factors (Heering et al., 2004) as men are more driven by economic factors while women's motivations to move are often to help the family or due to family reunification (Afsar, 2009; van Dalen et al., 2005).

Education also proves to be an important determinant of migration in Egypt. The inability to find adequate employment that fits their education is a major motivation for skilled, educated migrants to leave their home (Kirwin & Anderson, 2018) as the more educated an individual, the greater are his employment opportunities and the better is his employment information (Greenwood, 1969). van Dalen et al. (2005) confirmed that educated people wanted to migrate more often in Ghana and Egypt. This migration of lower educated individuals has been reported by several authors in recent studies covering various different world regions. Samir Farid & El-Batrawy (2016) found that a majority of current migrants in Egypt are well educated. Overall, 86 percent of current migrants had ever attended school, and more than three-fifths have completed secondary education or more, including 48 percent who completed secondary education and 15 percent who have university education. Also, lower educated individuals has been reported in various studies (see Kuhnt, 2019) because of dense migration networks, the costs of migration which lead to a selection of lower-skilled migrants (Beine & Docquier, 2011; Bertoli & Ruysen, 2018; McKenzie & Rapoport, 2010).

Marital status is also important determinant, In India Shanthi (2006) finds that marriage is a significant determinant for migration, but the recent trend also shows the rise of independent women migration on the background of an increase in job opportunities in the export industries and the garment sector. The migrants tend to be single rather than married or in any other type of familial relation, Simpson (2017) states that in general, married people are less likely to migrate by themselves, in addition they are more likely to return their home country after a short term migration. In Egypt, Samir Farid & El-Batrawy (2015) report that at the time of the first migration, about three-fifths of current migrants were never married, compared to 65 percent who were married. Also, the median age of current migrants at first marriage is 28.9 for men, and 27.6 for women.

It is noteworthy, besides individual variables, the household's sociodemographic, economic, and cultural characteristics also play in the migration decision process (Asad & Hwang, 2019; Bohra & Massey, 2009; Taylor, 1999; Stark & Bloom, 1985). Zhao and Zhong (2019) confirm that number of siblings in Egyptian household has a positive effect on migration decision and brothers has a more significant effect on migration decisions than does having sisters.

### **3.3.7 Obstacles and challenges**

The empirical studies state that the economic costs of migration include the travel costs associated with the move. According to the gravity model of migration, the distance traveled as airfare and other travel-related costs typically increase with the distance which is significantly and negatively correlated with migrant flows. Moreover, individuals need to pay travel fees like visas and resident permits to gain legal entry. These fees and costs vary significantly across both sending and receiving countries (Simpson, 2017). In addition, the common borders, languages, historical relationships, the physical and social distance between origin and host countries, also the non-money costs of migration like psychic costs that involve the reluctance of emigrant to leave his family and friends (Fafchamps & Shilpi, 2008). These psychic costs are likely to increase with increased distance from a person's home (Greenwood, 1969).

Furthermore, the longer distance between the regions of origin and destination, the more costly it is to acquire information ex-ante about the foreign labor market (Mayda, 2010). Therefore, social networks and technological progress thereby reducing the cost of migration and facilitating flows by correcting for the asymmetry of information that potential migrants face (Beaman, 2012; Munshi, 2003; Simpson, 2017).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This paper presents an overview of international migration globally and focusing mainly on Egypt as the most populated country in the Arab world. Moreover, this paper discusses in detail the history of migration in Egypt and presents the determinants of international migration based on a systematic review of empirical studies through searching of Five databases between January 1, 1961 and January 31, 2020 using combinations of “determinants of migration” and “migration in Egypt” search terms. Reviews show how An Egyptian migration pattern has affected by the foreign policy toward the destination countries, for instance, the labor migrants prefer to work in Gulf countries and Iraq until the Gulf war 1990-91 when Egypt followed policies against Iraq that forced all Egyptian to leave Iraq. In addition, using the migration as a soft power, Egypt has received refugees from Palestine and neighboring African countries due to conflict and political instability like Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia, as well as Iraq and most recently, Syria which represents the largest group of registered refugees, are now stranded in Egypt. Moreover The literature has investigated the determinants of international migration through investigating five main factors; (1) demographic factors include the structure and size of populations in source areas, together with the prevalence of diseases that affect morbidity and mortality; (2) Economic drivers cover the unemployment rate, Inflation rate, and income differentials between places; (3) Social drivers include familial or cultural expectations, the search for educational opportunities, and cultural practices concerning, for example, inheritance or marriage; (4) Environmental drivers of migration like the natural disaster, climate change and exposure to hazard and availability of ecosystem services; (5) Political drivers refer not only to discrimination, security, conflict, and persecution but also to the political drivers of public or corporate policy over, for example, land ownership or enforced relocation. In addition, the potential migrants' characteristics and household characteristics, besides the expected challenges and obstacles which will be faced during the journey or/and staying in the destination region.

The literature as a whole has also improved in relation to study design, however more studies making use of cross-sectional studies. Although the frequency of studies on drivers of international migration has grown substantially, the number of studies examining the environment and political drivers which lead people in the Arab World to mover aboard was still relatively sparse. To study the impact of the Arab Spring revolutions on migration, we need longitudinal data to study the changing of determinants of international migration before and after the uprisings. Although such progress is promising, considerable data limitations persist. For example, there is still room for improvement with regard to the measurement of using the reference year and the definition of minimum period staying abroad to be defined as migrants. Also, as stated above, another shortcoming of current research is the limited number of studies that have analyzed the determinants of circular and return migration in MENA regions maybe because of the data limitations. A final gap in the existing literature is the lack of studies that compare the migration intention before and after the Arab Spring uprisings and the micro, miso, and macro factors that affect the intention to move abroad.

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