



The American
University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs
and Public Policy

Center for Migration and Refugee
Studies



Issue:

No.13

Date:

September 2020

THE IMPACT OF THE SYRIAN INFLUX ON EGYPTIAN MIGRANT WORKERS IN JORDAN

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The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS)

The Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) is an interdisciplinary center of the American University in Cairo (AUC). Situated at the heart of the Middle East and North Africa, it aims at furthering the scientific knowledge of the large, long-standing recent refugee and migration movements witnessed in this region. But it also is concerned with questions of refugees and migration in the international system as a whole, both at the theoretical and practical levels. CMRS functions include instruction, research, training, and outreach. It offers a Master of Arts degree and a graduate diploma in Migration and Refugee studies, working with other AUC departments to offer diversified courses to its students. Its research bears on issues of interest to the region and beyond. In carrying its research out, CMRS collaborates with reputable regional and international academic institutions. The training activities that CMRS organizes are attended by researchers, policymakers, bureaucrats and civil society activists from a great number of countries. The center also provides tailor-made training programs on demand. CMRS outreach involves working with individuals and organizations in its environment, disseminating knowledge and sensitization to refugee and migration issues. It also provides services to the refugee community in Cairo and transfers its expertise in this respect to other international institutions.

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Acknowledgment

We would like to thank the Swiss Cooperation Office in Jordan for funding and supporting this study and for providing insightful comments and edits, particularly Simone Troller-Alderisi and Aya Maraqa. We would also like to thank the Swiss Embassy in Egypt for funding the dissemination event in Cairo.

Special thanks are due to the Interdisciplinary Research Consultant (id:rc) in Jordan for conducting the survey, facilitating the qualitative data collection and recruiting the participants in Jordan.

The authors of this report are grateful for the collaboration with the Ministry of Manpower in Egypt. We would also like to thank all our stakeholders who participated in our activities and events for their invaluable technical comments and feedback.

Our appreciation goes to the data collection team for their commitment and high-quality work. Finally, we express our appreciation and gratitude to the study participants whether Egyptian migrant workers, Syrian refugees or Egyptian returnees who openly shared their views and experiences and gave us their time to contribute to the completion of this study.

Preface

As the largest migrant sending country in the region, labor migration plays an important role in Egypt's economy. It relieves heavy pressures on its domestic labor market and is a crucial source of foreign exchange for its economy.

Egyptian labor migration encompasses two systems, one to the Arab Middle East and one to Europe and North America. Mass Egyptian labor migration to countries in the Arab Middle East started in the mid-1970s when emigration was encouraged by the new constitution. One essential consideration for encouraging migration was the need to find external outlets for the growing Egyptian labor force and to, thus, defuse the employment question. The domestic labor market was not deemed capable of absorbing the Egyptian supply of labor.

Demand for labor exploding in the mid-1970s in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), after the historical oil price increases of 1973-74, met the supply of Egyptian labor. It caused large flows of Egyptian workers to the Gulf. Egyptian workers also headed to Jordan, Libya, Lebanon and, until 1991, to Iraq.

Many Egyptians have chosen Jordan as their country of destination due to its easy entry requirements and its relatively low costs of work permits. Bilateral agreements between Egypt and Jordan have been signed to encourage and regulate the migration of Egyptian. The first agreement dates back to 1985 and was followed by a Memorandum of Understanding in 2007.

With the Syrian crisis occurring in 2011, many fled to neighboring Jordan, making it among the three largest refugee-hosting countries worldwide. With the presence of many Syrians in Jordan, the question around their impact on the Jordanian labor market was raised, with a particular attention to competition with migrant workers, of whom Egyptians constitute the majority. This report aims to explore the impact of the influx of Syrian refugees, triggered by the political unrest in Syria, to Jordan on the supply and demand of Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan and suggests policies to improve the governance of Egyptian labor migration to Jordan.



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Table of Contents

THE CENTER FOR MIGRATION AND REFUGEE STUDIES (CMRS)	i
Acknowledgment	ii
Preface	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Abstract	vi
Acronyms	1
Introduction	3
1. The Context	5
Legal Framework for Egyptian labor migration to Jordan	5
Labor Agreements between Egypt and Jordan	5
Salaries, Working Hours, Accommodation and Reunification with Family	7
Protection Measures	7
Syrian Refugees in Jordan	8
Egyptian Migration to Jordan	10
The Stock	10
The Flow	12
Remittances Received from Jordan	15
2. Objective of the Study and Conceptual Framework	16
3. Conceptual Framework	16
3. Methodology	21
Data Collection Procedures	22
Data Management and Analysis	22
Ethical Considerations	23
Limitations of the Research	23
4. Findings	23
Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics	24
Conditions in Jordan	28
Migration Process	30
Reasons of Migration	30
Source of information regarding Jordan	31
Persons who facilitate migration	32
Migration Dynamics	33
Relations in Country of Destination	39
Remittances and Transfer of Knowledge	40



Remittances pattern and volume	40
Use of Remittances	41
Skill Acquisition and Transfer of Knowledge	42
Reasons for Return	43
Syrian Refugees and Egyptian Migrants in Jordan	44
Competition with Egyptian Migrants	48
Other Factors	49
5. Discussion	49
6. Implications for Policy, Practice and Research	55
Policy Implications	
Programmatic Implications	55
Research Implications	57
7. Bibliography	58




Abstract

Over the past forty years, the situation of the Egyptian labor market has not improved and remains to be the principal factor determining labor migration. In the past decade, creation of job opportunities has lagged behind labor force growth, which has led many to resort to migrating. According to the Egyptian Population Census (2017), Saudi Arabia and Jordan are the main countries of destination for Egyptian migrants. This report tackles the current situation of Egyptian labor migration in one of its major Arab destinations, Jordan.

The Syrian crisis in 2011 has generated millions of refugees with Jordan being among the major countries hosting them. Among these refugees are hundreds of thousands of workers who have necessarily affected the Jordanian labor market and may have affected the demand for Egyptian migrant workers. In addition to the demand, the terms and conditions of Egyptian workers employment may have been affected by the excess labor supply, the low wages and long working hours accepted by refugee workers out of necessity.

The overall objective of this study is to understand the impact of the regional political environment in terms of the large Syrian influx to Jordan on Egyptian Migrant workers in Jordan. The findings of the study indicate the importance of the economic factors in shaping migration decision and the centrality of migration networks in sustaining migration streams from Egypt to Jordan. The primary drivers for migration are low wages and lack of opportunities in Egypt. The preference for Jordan is that it is considered a close familiar country that offers financially rewarding job prospects and is less costly to migrate to in comparison to other countries in the region. There are bilateral agreements that regulate the migration process between Egypt and Jordan. However, the reliance of migrants on migration networks makes the recruitment process largely informal. This leaves room for brokers and intermediaries to overcharge potential migrants who are not always aware of the procedures. A key concern is, also, the increased cost of work permits that pushes more Egyptian migrants to violate the regulations and turn towards irregularity of their migration status.

The study concludes that Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan, who are predominately semi and low skilled workers, face many challenges. The study specifically highlighted the difficult working conditions and the inadequate housing. According to the survey with Egyptian migrants, the presence of Syrians had some negative impact on their chances of finding jobs in Jordan. However, on the other hand, the interviews revealed that the jobs taken by the two groups are different. Moreover, although according to secondary data, the flow of Egyptian workers to Jordan has been decreasing since



2016, the interviewed returnees did not attribute their return to Egypt to the presence of Syrian refugees in Jordan. They rather associated it to wanting to reunite with their families, to the limited opportunities and increased living expenses in Jordan and to their intention of retirement and decreasing their exposure to further health risks. Many of the returnees have also indicated their aspiration of returning to Jordan once more, if the opportunity arises, as it still offers better financial opportunities.

The study concludes with a set of recommendations for the two governments as well as for civil society organizations in the two countries with the ultimate hope of improving the migration experience of Egyptian migrants in Jordan and enabling the two countries to reap the benefits of migration. The study calls for further quantitative and qualitative research particularly with regard to the actual number of Egyptian migrant workers as well as the role of intermediaries and brokers in the migration process.



Acronyms and Abbreviations

EGP	Egyptian Pound
GoE	Government of Egypt
GoJ	Government of Jordan
JOD	Jordanian Dinar
ILO	International Labor Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MoL	Ministry of Labor in Jordan
MoM	Ministry of Manpower in Egypt
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NASI	National Authority for Social Insurance
SSC	Social Security Corporation
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States Dollar



Introduction

Egypt is by far the most populous Arab Country. Its economic and political stability are crucial for countries in the Arab world and beyond. As the largest migrant sending country in the region, Egypt considerably depends on labor migration to boost its economy. It relieves heavy pressures on its domestic labor market and is a crucial source of foreign exchange. Mass Egyptian labor migration to Arab countries in the Middle East started in the mid-1970s. Article 52 of 1971 constitution was dedicated to migration. It stipulates, "Citizens have the right to permanent or temporary migration abroad. The law regulates this right, as well as the procedures and conditions for migration and departure from the country".

As a migrant receiving country, Jordan has always been regarded as the second option for Egyptian youth who wish to escape unemployment and underemployment. Since the 1970s, the first option for Egyptian labor has always been the Arab Gulf oil-producing countries. After the Libya uprising and the return of hundreds of thousands of Egyptian workers in 2011, the distinction of Jordan as a destination for Egyptian labor has increased. This increase has coincided with the massive Syrian refugee influx into Jordan.

The Syrian conflict has resulted in hundreds of thousands of Syrians seeking refuge in Jordan, which resulted in a considerable growth in labor supply in the Jordanian labor market. The labor market in Jordan is now comprised of three distinct groups; Jordanians, migrant workers and refugees. Until the 1970s, this was not the case. Jordanians worked in all occupations and all sectors. Starting in the 1970s, many educated Jordanians left to work in the Gulf. At the same time, Jordan brought in increasing numbers of migrant workers to remedy labor shortages in certain sectors which were no longer appealing to Jordanians.

The majority of migrant workers in Jordan is Egyptian. With Egypt as the top migrant sending country to Jordan, it is legitimate to explore if the influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan impacts Egyptian migrant workers there. Since the majority of Egyptian migrants are allowed into three main sectors only in Jordan, namely construction, agriculture and service, a closer look is needed to assess the magnitude of the impact in these sectors, and to understand whether or not this contributed to any trends of return migration to Egypt.

This report is divided into six sections. The first section provides an overview of the context of the study. It includes an overview of the legal framework for Egyptian labor migration to Jordan, an explanation of the magnitude of the Syrian influx to Jordan, and an overview of the numbers and trends of Egyptian labor migration to Jordan over the past three decades. The second and third sections explain the objectives of the study, its conceptual framework and the methodology. The fourth and fifth sections are devoted to the presentation and discussion of the findings and the last section highlights the implications of the study and put forward recommendations.

1. The Context

Legal Framework for Egyptian labor migration to Jordan

In relation to labor migration, Labor Law in Jordan stipulates that an employer in Jordan can recruit non-Jordanian workers if the work requires experience and qualifications that are unavailable among Jordanians, or if the number of qualified Jordanian workers is less than needed. The exception of employing non-Jordanian workers also depends on the type of company and work sector, which are mainly agriculture, construction and services in the case of Egyptians. This is further defined and structured by the bilateral agreement between Egypt and Jordan.

Labor Agreements between Egypt and Jordan


Egypt and Jordan have a long-standing bilateral agreement for cooperation in the field of labor, manpower and migration (see Figure 1). This agreement is mainly between the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower (MoM) and the Jordanian Ministry of Labor (MoL). It was initially signed in 1985 with a subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2007 that regulates the entry of Egyptian laborers to Jordan, based on the needs of the local labor market. In 2006, a prior MoU had been signed between the Egyptian National Authority for Social Insurance (NASI) and the Jordanian Social Security Corporation (SSC) to ensure further cooperation in the field of social security front and to ensure the access of Egyptian migrant workers to social security in Jordan. In 2009, a set of regulations was put in place by the two governments regarding family reunification and visits in Jordan. The last MoU between the two governments was signed in 2012 to regulate the entrance of migrant workers upon their first arrival in Jordan as well as govern the waiver periods that give grounds for status adjustment for Egyptians of irregular migration status.

Figure (1): Timeline of Labor Agreements between Egypt and Jordan



Regulations for Departure and Arrival

The current immigration system in Jordan, codified in Law No. 24 of 1973 on Residence and Foreigners' Affairs, is commonly referred to as kafala or sponsorship system. According to this system, a labor migrant cannot enter the country without being sponsored by an employer. To be sponsored, Egyptian workers need to provide a certificate of no criminal records, a copy of their passport and a valid work contract to the MoM to get an approval to travel. In addition, the worker needs to submit a health certificate and get a work permit from the Egyptian Ministry of Interior (MoI) through the labor office in his respective governorate. As per the government's view, this procedure is to ensure that Egyptians who have a criminal record are not employed by any foreign entity in order to safeguard the country's reputation, and ensure that Egyptians do not work for foreign entities engaging in hostile activities against the interests of the nation and its citizens.



Once the process is finalized, the work contract is submitted by the employer in Jordan to the MoL, which validates and sends it to the MoM in Egypt through an established electronic portal between the two ministries. Under the 2007 MoU, Egypt and Jordan were required to have a shared electronic portal through which work contracts are sent from the Jordanian Ministry of Labor to the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower. The portal provides a database of Egyptian workers who wish to work in Jordan, to facilitate the selection and recruitment process for Jordanian authorities. This initiative is said to have significantly decreased the work permit black-market and reduced malpractices, since both parties are state institutions (ILO 2017a).


The employment contract is then presented to obtain the work permit in Jordan. The Labor Law in Jordan explicitly specifies that the “employee must obtain a work permit” and that the “Ministry shall charge the employer a fee” for the work permit issuance. Therefore, the employer is to act as the migrant worker’s sponsor who covers round-trip ticket, work permit fees and other recruitment costs. A worker should adhere to the regulations of the work permit, which dictates that he cannot change the employer or place of full-time employment throughout his contract period. The duration of the contract between the employee and the employer is one year, and the employer is required to renew the worker’s permit annually, if his services are needed.

Violation of such terms would render both the worker and the employer subject to sanctions. In the case of Egyptian migrant workers, they may run the risk of being fined up to a total amount of (JOD 3,000) or deported¹. According to the Jordanian Labor Law and previous studies (Tamkeen 2014), violations usually take three main forms: 1- a migrant is working in Jordan without or with an expired work permit, 2- a migrant is working for an employer or a place different from the one indicated in his work permit, and 3- a migrant is working in a sector different from the one indicated in his work permit. In light of these violations, and in recognition of the high unpaid accumulated costs and fines imposed on any Egyptian migrant to legalize his migration status retroactively, occasional grace periods are given to exempt migrants from all fines and grant them the opportunity to apply for a new/ or renew work permit, change an employer legally or transfer to a different work sector.

Work permit fees change frequently. In September 2019, a new fee schedule was issued which sets the basic work permit fee for all three sectors at JOD 500. Previously, lower fees were set for the agricultural sector (JOD 350), whereas higher ones were set for the construction and services sector (JOD 500). Among the new changes, flexible work permits system for Egyptian migrants have been introduced. Unlike regular work permits, flexible work permits allow Egyptian migrants to move from one employer to another within the sector. It is considered a progressive step in certain sectors, as it accommodates jobs that are highly transitory or seasonal. Therefore, a flexible work permit for the agriculture sector was created for a cost of (JOD 1500) and (JOD 2000) for the construction sector. These flexible work permits, however, do not guarantee that the worker is covered by social insurance, as they are considered self-employed.

In order to move to Jordan, the usual point of departure for Egyptian migrant workers is Nuweiba, from which they cross the Gulf to El Aqaba port. Upon entry, Egyptian migrant workers are the only nationality required to pay a 250 USD insurance fee that can be redeemed once the work permit and paperwork have been completed

¹ The order of deportation is issued by the Ministry of Labor in Jordan, on a case by case basis, if the worker violates the conditions of his work permit.



with their employer. Such procedures need to be completed by both the worker and employer within 45 days. The worker is also required to obtain a health certificate, which costs 85 JOD. Once the Egyptian worker is officially employed in Jordan, his work permit stipulates that he cannot change employment, transfer to another sector or leave the country without first obtaining a written permission from the employer (unlike other migrants who are allowed more freedom of movement).

Salaries, Working Hours, Accommodation and Reunification with Family

The Jordanian Labor Law sets a minimum wage for non-Jordanian workers that is equivalent to (JOD 150). If the wage is not given promptly to the employee (within seven days of the date of entitlement) or if the employee is paid less than the minimum wage, the employer becomes subject to penalization according to law. It is worth-mentioning that the minimum wage for non-Jordanian workers is different from that of Jordanian ones (JOD 220).

With regards to social security, all workers, under the Social Security Law, are covered regardless of nationality and type of contract. The law requires employers in all sectors to register their workers with the Social Security Corporation. Although workers with agriculture work permits are rarely covered by social security, the law extends coverage to them and expects employers to register them as well. On the other hand, workers with irregular status face non-affiliation with Social Security, as they do not have a valid work permit and are not associated with a specific employer.

Accommodation and family reunification in Jordan are comprehensively addressed in the Jordanian labor law and the bilateral agreement. The law stipulates that the number of normal working hours per day is eight, five days a week, up to 48 hours per week over a maximum of six days. It also guarantees a total number of 14 days of paid annual leave and another 14 days of paid sick leave per year. Although neither specified in the Labor Law nor touched upon in the bilateral agreement, employers in principle are expected to offer safe and decent accommodation to their workers. Migrant workers should be able to exercise their right to adequate housing, like their Jordanian counterparts. With regards to unification with family, Egyptian migrant workers with a one- year residence in Jordan and an income of not less than JOD 350 per month are granted the right of visit for the wife, parents and children.

Protection Measures

The Jordanian Labor Law mandates employers to provide a safe workplace equipped with adequate and precautionary measures against any hazards or diseases. They are required to reduce risks that workers might be subjected to and apply methods of protection. Any establishment that does not comply with such safety rules is subject to closure. In addition, the law protects workers by prohibiting the seizure of passports and forced confinement. Thus, employers are at risk of a penalty if they commit such acts. As a form of law enforcement, the Ministry of Labor (MoL) established the Inspection Unit to carry out inspections across all sectors at the national level. However, it is falsely believed that the unit does not cover the agriculture sector, given that it is difficult to monitor work conditions in farms. The Ministry has also created a complaints hotline to receive calls reporting violations from migrant workers as well as employers.

Syrian Refugees in Jordan

Ever since the Syrian conflict in 2011, approximately 5 million Syrians have been displaced. The number of registered Syrian refugees with UNHCR is 656,512 (UNHCR 2019). However, since not all Syrians in Jordan are registered with UNHCR, the estimate of the Jordanian government's census is 1.3 million. (DOS 2015). This influx rendered Jordan a major refugee-hosting country worldwide (UNHCR 2019). Therefore, the initiation of the Jordan Compact was raised for discussion, and then agreed upon in February 2016 at the Supporting Syria and the Region Conference in London. The Compact stipulated that the Government of Jordan (GoJ) is to improve access to education and legal employment for its Syrian refugees by offering 200,000 job opportunities over a period of three years in return for USD 1.7 billion to Jordan in the form of grants and loans (Government of Jordan 2016). The primary donors behind the Compact, that was set out to turn the influx into an opportunity for the country, were the European Union and other multilateral organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (Government of Jordan 2016).

Under the Compact, a new permit system was introduced that does not tie the worker to a single employer and thus, allows higher job mobility. The issue was raised as a result of acknowledging that the majority of Syrian refugees preferred working in the informal sector as the previous permit system restricted them to a single employer, similar to what their Egyptian counterparts experienced. As a way of facilitating the provision of the 200,000 opportunities, some bureaucratic, financial and administrative barriers have been removed to further encourage both the Jordanian employer and the Syrian worker to engage into this work scheme. The system waived the fees for the three-year permits, medical examinations required and the proof of social security that was previously required from the employer (ILO 2017b).

Despite these encouraging arrangements targeting Syrian refugees, the Compact is believed not to have achieved its goal. Despite the increased number of work permits issued, the Compact only achieved a quarter of its objective by mid-2017, with approximately 51,000 work permits issued between February 2016 and May 2017 out of a 200,000 target (Lenner & Turner 2018). Up until October 2019, a total of 164,636 work permits were issued for Syrian refugees in Jordan. This is due in part to the reluctance of Syrian refugees to join formal jobs, and their limited knowledge of the new permit scheme (ILO 2017b; Barbelet & Wake 2017).

According to a study conducted by Leading Point² in 2016 and as commonly known, the majority of Syrian refugees in Jordan are with their families. However, Syrian men and women's participation in the labor force is limited: 20 percent of Syrian men and less than 7 percent of Syrian women (ILO & FAFO 2015). Moreover, it is believed that they are pushing down wages. According to Jordanians, this is for two reasons. On one hand, the benefit from humanitarian assistance allows them to accept lower wages and on the other hand, some employers are exploiting their vulnerability and offering them lower wages. (ILO & FAFO 2015). It is worth noting that only Syrian refugees who are registered with UNHCR are eligible for humanitarian assistance. This implies that those who are not registered (approximately half of the Syrian population in Jordan according to the government census) are not offered support. According to the Department of Statistic's (DOS) Household International Migration Survey of 2014, only

² Leading Point Management Advisory Services is a consultancy firm based in Amman, Jordan.



29.9 percent of Syrian refugees have received assistance at some point since they arrived in Jordan. The assistance comes in the form of coverage for food and housing from the World Food Programme and UNHCR (ILO 2017c).

Regarding the impact of the Syrian influx on the job market, a World Bank/UNHCR report (2017) found that there was no discernable impact on Jordanians. However, according to a report by ILO (2017c) and as previously mentioned, the primary impact of Syrian refugees on Jordanian workers was believed to have driven wages down. In other words, the increased bulk of labor force is felt to have resulted in a decrease in wages, primarily in the informal sector, where most Syrians are present. Looking at the impact of the influx on non-Jordanian workers, a study by Wahba and Malaeb (2018) also highlights that migrant workers have undergone worse labor market outcomes in neighborhoods where Syrian refugees are highly concentrated, particularly in the informal sector. The study specifically suggests that migrant workers work less hours as a result of the influx, thus, earn lower wages. Therefore, a study to explore the specific impacts of the influx on Egyptian migrant workers was needed to further understand how this contributed to current Egyptian labor migration trends and flows.

Egyptian Migration to Jordan

In this section, the numbers and trends of Egyptian labor migration to Jordan are explored over the past three decades to understand the context further. The main cause of migration to the region is overwhelmingly economic. The economic boom in the oil-producing countries in the 1970s and the ambitious development plans have been associated with the demographic deficit in these countries and the demographic surplus in other sub-regions made for establishing a strong migration stream from the Arab region and South and South East Asia targeting the oil-producing countries in the Gulf in addition to Libya. Later on, Jordan, a country of origin and destination, became a major destination of semi-skilled workers, mainly from Egypt and Syria. In addition to the GCC countries, Libya, Jordan, and Iraq were also important recipients of migrants prior to the occupation of Kuwait in 1990. Unemployment and underemployment in the sending countries can be regarded as the main reason for emigration. In addition to unemployment and deficient forms and conditions of employment, income disparities between sending and receiving countries is another cause of emigration (Zohry, 2006). In migration statistics, one should differentiate between the stock of migrants in a given point of time, and the flow of migrants in a well-defined period. Usually, the statistics on the stock of migrants are more in the Egyptian case. The stock and the flow of Egyptians in Jordan are explored below.

The Stock

In an attempt to construct a time series, different data sources are used. The main markets of the Egyptian labor force abroad during the 1970s and most of the 1980s were Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Jordan. During the 1990 the relevant share of Jordan as a destination country for Egyptians decreased, mainly for Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. In 1994, the number of Egyptians in Jordan reached its minimum level, with only one percent of Egyptians in the Arab region; the equivalent of about 25 thousand migrants (Farrag, 1999).

In 2010, the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs estimated the number of Egyptians in Jordan at 525,000, equivalent to 11 percent of the total number of Egyptians in Arab countries (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Manpower and Emigration 2010). In the same year, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) estimated the number of Egyptians in Jordan at 136,000; only about 25 percent of the national estimate. The UNDESA estimate is also less than the number of work permits³ issued to Egyptians to work in Jordan in 2010 (163 thousand).

Two different numbers are available for Egyptians in Jordan in 2015: the first is the United Nations' estimate of 139,000 and the second is the Jordanian figure of 636,000. In fact, the announced Jordanian figure is not an estimate since it is drawn from the results of the population census. The census figure is based on the count of all inhabitants in Jordan at the reference date of the census. Hence, this figure can be considered as the most accurate one. The question around this figure is related to the gender-composition of Egyptian migrants. The number of Egyptian females in Jordan, as per the population census, amounted to 113 thousand or 18 percent of Egyptians in Jordan. This figure is very high compared to the number of work permits issued to females to work in Jordan in the same year. However, this may be attributed to the fact that Egyptians who go to Jordan, for reasons other than work, are exempted from

³ There are two types of work permits issued in the context of Egyptians migrating to Jordan; there is the Egyptian work permit which is sort of an "exit permit" whereas there is the Jordanian work permit which allows Egyptian to work within Jordan. The work permits indicated here are the Egyptian ones.

visa. Egyptian females counted in the Jordanian census may represent the partners of Egyptian males resident in Jordan.

The current main destination of Egyptians is the Arab oil-producing countries (The Gulf Cooperation Council- GCC countries), Jordan & Sudan. According to the estimates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, published with the results of Egypt's population census 2017, the number of Egyptians in Arab countries reached 6.2 million by the end of 2016. Jordan ranked second as the main Arab destination of Egyptians after Saudi Arabia. Egyptians in Jordan reached 1.15 million, comprising 18 percent of the total Egyptians in the Arab region. Compared to the results of the Jordanian census, this estimate looks extreme and exaggerated.

Another extreme and distinct estimate was made by the UNDESA, which estimates Egyptians in Jordan at the level of 133 thousand in the same year (2017). As stated clearly, the two estimates of 2017 are missing the point. An estimate close to the results of the Jordanian population census is more to accept (See Tables 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 below). The number of Egyptians in Jordan may range between 600 thousand and 800 thousand with a high confidence level.

Table 1.1
Estimates of Egyptian Workers in Jordan (1994–2017)

Year	Estimate			Source
	Male	Female	Total	
1994			25,000	M. Farrag (1999)
2010	NA	NA	525,000	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Egypt
	110,942	25,052	135,994	UNDESA
2015	113,065	25,874	138,939	UNDESA
	523,634	112,636	636,270	Department of Statistics (DoS) Jordan
2017	NA	NA	1,150,000	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
	107,864	24,839	132,703	UNDESA

Table 1.2
Jordanians and Non-Jordanians in the 2015 Jordanian Population Census

Nationality	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Jordanian	3,368,042	3,245,545	6,613,587
Syrians	628,226	637,288	1,265,514
Egyptians	523,634	112,636	636,270
Palestinians	349,062	285,120	634,182
Iraqis	66,019	64,892	130,911
Yemenis	18,756	12,407	31,163
Libyans	13,575	9,125	22,700
Other nationalities	79,510	117,875	197,385
Total Non - Jordanian	1,678,782	1,239,343	2,918,125
Total Kingdom	5,046,824	4,484,888	9,531,712

Source: Department of Statistics (DoS), Jordanian Population Census 2015.

Table 1.3
Egyptians in the Arab Region 2017: CAPMAS estimates

Receiving Country	Number of migrants	Percent
Saudi Arabia	2,925,000	47%
Jordan	1,150,000	18%
UAE	765,000	12%
Kuwait	500,000	8%
Sudan	500,000	8%
Qatar	230,000	4%
Oman	56,000	1%
Lebanon	40,000	1%
Bahrain	21,000	0%
Libya	-	-
Other Arab Countries	49,050	1%
Total Arab countries	6,236,050	100.0%

Source: CAPMAS (2017) based on estimates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Flow

As indicated above, the flow of migrants is measured during a well-defined period rather than a point estimate. The statistics on the flow are more to be found in administrative statistics such as work permits and border statistics. In this study, we depend heavily on the administrative statistics of the so-called work permits. The added value of work permits is the fact that they are considered a reliable administrative source of data on migration streams from Egypt. Work permits issued for Egyptians to work abroad make available data on migrants by country of destination, education, type of contract, and gender. Work permits data are available until 2017.

Work Permits by Gender

Work permits issued to Egyptians in Jordan by gender (2010–2018) are shown in Table 1.4 below. As shown in the table, work permits issued to Egyptians to work in Jordan fluctuated from 125 thousand to 181 thousand between 2010 and 2018. The percent of work permits issued to Egyptians to work in Jordan to the total number of work permits issued to Egyptians to work in all Arab countries fluctuated between 10.5 percent and 15.0 percent within the same period. As for the gender composition of migrants, it is evident from the data that the migration flow of Egyptians to Jordan is masculine. Work permits issued for females is negligible compared to work permits issued to females.

Work Permits by Education

Work permits issued to Egyptians to work in Jordan by educational level (2010–2018) are shown in Table 1.5 below. As shown in the table, most Egyptian migrants to Jordan have less than university educational level. Almost 95 percent of migrants have intermediate certificates or below. Intermediate certificates usually include vocational industrial, commercial, and agricultural secondary education certificates. The percent of intermediate certificate holders fluctuated between 49 percent and 76 percent of migrants, while the percent of the holders of below intermediate or no certificate fluctuated between 19 percent and 47 percent of migrants. No general trend can be detected from the time series.

Table 1.4
Work Permits issued to Egyptians to Work in Jordan by Gender (2010–2018)

Year	Gender		Total	Percent to Work Permits to All Arab Countries
	Male	Female		
2010	163,034	90	163,114	15.0%
2011	149,762	99	149,861	13.7%
2012	148,368	350	148,618	13.0%
2013	160,525	284	160,809	12.8%
2014	180,342	491	180,833	14.1%
2015	165,981	395	166,376	12.9%
2016	127,713	225	127,938	10.5%
2017	125,470	193	125,277	11.1%
2018	125,519	242	125,761	12.0%

Source: compiled from the Work Permits Bulletin, CAPMAS 2010–2018.

Table 1.5
Work Permits issued to Egyptians to Work in Jordan by Educational Level (2010–2018)

Year	Educational Level			Total
	Below Intermediate	Intermediate	University	
2010	76,591	80,437	6,086	163,114
	47.0%	49.3%	3.7%	100.0%
2011	70,379	350		148,618
	47.0%	49.6%	3.4%	100.0%
2012	45,213	98,710	4,695	148,618
	30.4%	66.4%	3.2%	100.0%
2013	29,783	122,032	8,994	160,809
	18.5%	75.9%	5.6%	100.0%
2014	49,969	124,401	6,463	180,833
	27.6%	68.8%	3.6%	100.0%
2015	46,201	113,210	6,965	166,376
	27.8%	68.0%	4.2%	100.0%
2016	55,718	65,762	6,458	127,938
	43.6%	51.4%	5.0%	100.0%
2017	54,850	61,935	8,685	125,470
	43.7%	49.4%	6.9%	100.0%
2018	55,201	64,502	6,059	125,761
	43.9%	51.3%	4.8%	100.0%

Work Permits by Governorate

Little is known about the origin of Egyptian migrants in Jordan or their governorates of residence before migration. Moreover, the available data on work permits issued to Egyptians to work abroad by governorate are not published by country of destination. However, Table 2.6 below sheds some light on the origin of all Egyptian migrants by governorate; precisely where they applied. Despite the fact that it is not obligatory for migrants to apply for work permits in their governorates of residence, especially in the case of Cairo governorate, data may give a sketchy idea about the distribution of migrants by governorate.

It is evident from the table that about 50 percent of migrants come from five governorates; two in the north, Daqahliya (13.2 percent) and Sharqiya (9.9 percent), two in the south Souhag (10.0 percent) and Qena (7.8 percent), in addition to Cairo (9.0 percent). Other main Sending governorates include Gharbiya in the heart of the Nile Delta with 7.2 percent of the total work permits issued in 2016, Menia in Upper Egypt with 5.9 percent, and Kafresheikh in the Nile Delta with 5.7 percent. better chances of success.

Table 1.6
Number and Percent of Work Permits issued to Egyptians to Work Abroad by Governorate, Egypt 2016

Governorate	Number of Work Permits	Percent
Daqahliya	152,897	13.2%
Souhag	115,667	10.0%
Sharqiya	115,080	9.9%
Cairo	104,435	9.0%
Qena	90,253	7.8%
Gharbiya	83,877	7.2%
Menia	68,009	5.9%
Kafresheikh	66,512	5.7%
Fayoum	43,885	3.8%
Menoufiya	43,906	3.8%
Alexandria	41,649	3.6%
Assiut	40,541	3.5%
Beni-Sueif	38,365	3.3%
Behera	33,354	2.9%
Giza	32,235	2.8%
Other Governorates	89,342	7.7%
Total	1,160,007*	100.0%

Source: Calculated from the Work Permits Bulletin 2016, CAPMAS 2017.

* Total number does not include 92,246 permits for work at the sea, airports or work permits issued by the Egyptian consulates.

* This table is not available in the Work Permits Bulletin 2017.

Remittances Received from Jordan

Financial remittances are first and foremost private individual earnings sent by migrants to their families and communities, as an expression of migrant workers' solidarity with their families and communities. Formal remittances (sent through banks, post offices, exchange houses and transfer companies) are the only form that can be accurately measured. Frequency is determined by factors such as the number of migrant workers, wage rates, exchange rates, political risk, economic activity in the host and sending countries, the existence of appropriate transfer facilities, migrant education level, the number of people accompanying the migrant, the number of years since migration, and the different interest rates in sending and receiving countries (Zohry, 2014).

Data on remittances of Egyptian migrants in Jordan to their home country and their relative contribution compared to total remittances to Egypt from 2010 to 2017 are shown in Table 1.7 below. The data indicate that the remittances of Egyptian workers in Jordan increased from about 2.4USD billion in 2010 to about 2.7USD billion in 2011, and then to 3.8USD billion in 2012 before its sharp drop in 2013 to less than 1.2USD billion. The level of 2013 continued through 2017; the latest available data point. In the period preceding the impact of the "Arab Spring," remittances from Jordan were amounting for about 19 percent of total remittances by Egyptian workers abroad. This share decreased to less than seven percent in the period 2013-2017.

This sharp decrease of remittances started in 2013 can, partially, be attributed to the impact of the political instability associated with Arab uprisings and the political uprising in Syria. Affected by the Syrian refugee influx that started in 2012, non-Jordanian workers have experienced worse labor market outcomes in localities of high of Syrian refugee concentration (Wahba, 2018). The presence of Syrians in the Jordanian labor market has led to declined wage levels in many professions, as well as negative effects on the enjoyment of decent work conditions by various workers (Economic and Social Council 2016).

Table 1.7
Migrants' Remittances to Egypt from Jordan and their Relative Contribution Compared to Total Remittances to Egypt 2010-2017 (millions of USD)

Year	Remittances From Jordan	Percent to Total Remittances	Total Remittances
Daqahliya	2,356	18.9%	12,453
Souhag	2,659	18.6%	14,324
Sharqiya	3,809	18.6%	20,515
Cairo	1,168	6.6%	17,833
Qena	1,284	6.6%	19,570
Gharbiya	1,196	6.5%	18,325
Menia	1,074	6.5%	16,590
Kafresheikh	1,293	6.5%	19,983

Source: Compiled from the Bilateral Remittances Matrix, The World Bank, 2019.

2. Objective of the Study and Conceptual Framework

Objectives

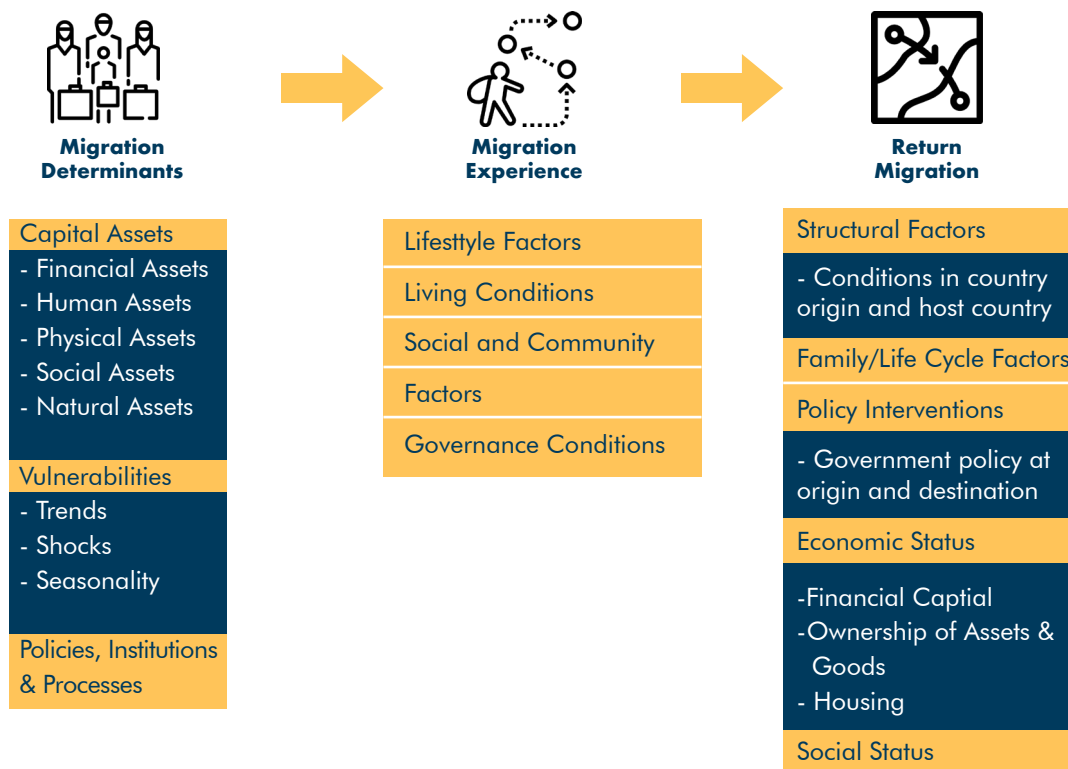
Having explored the context of Egyptian labor migration in Jordan and the presence of Syrian refugees there, as well as understanding the trends of Egyptian labor migration to Jordan, a research gap has become evident. The impact of the Syrian influx on Egyptian migrant workers in particular needs to be addressed. Therefore, the overall objective of this study is to understand the impact of the large Syrian influx on Egyptian Migrant workers in Jordan. The study has two major objectives:


- 1: To understand the conditions of Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan and the impact of migration in terms of financial remittances and transfer of knowledge
- 2: To understand the impact of the influx of Syrian refugees on the demand and supply of Egyptian migrant workers and on their working conditions.
- 3: To propose policies that can improve the governance of Egyptian labor migration to Jordan

3. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework has been drawn up that allows a systematic organization of migration themes and a deeper understanding of the determinants, experiences and outcomes of Egyptian workers' migration to Jordan, using a sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA). This conceptual framework (See figure 2 below) investigates how, when, and why livelihood assets interact with migration.

Figure (2): Conceptual Framework






The SLA was one of the various methods that emerged as a result of the growing dissatisfaction with the income and utility-led definitions of development (Serrat, 2008:1). It puts individuals as well as households at the center of the development definition instead (Ashley & Carney, 1999). Its concept incorporates people's assets as a starting point to respond to their vulnerabilities using a livelihood strategy that will transform these assets into positive outputs. This livelihood strategy concentrates on people's own objectives/choices to pursue certain goals and adopts issues of participation and sustainability, which were not recognized in the previously mentioned approaches.

The SLA's assets comprise five categories called capital assets that an individual uses to combat hardships. These assets are not just financial or physical, but also human, social and natural. Physical assets are those resources related to infrastructure, tools and man-made production equipment. Financial assets consist of the individual's financial resources and savings, while human assets include education qualifications, work experience and good health. Social assets are defined as the shared values and norms, societal connections and social networks. This aspect is critical, especially in the marketplace, as it vests individuals with privileges in certain societies, which facilitates the process of migration and overcoming barriers. Finally, natural assets are the environmental capital represented in the soil, water, atmosphere, wildlife, ... etc (DFID, 1999). These assets are mainly used within the framework to overcome vulnerabilities.

How does the SLA define vulnerabilities? They are the insecurities that threaten the well-being of individuals and communities. These vulnerabilities consist of three types; trends, shocks and seasonality. Trends are usually predictable to a certain extent as compared to shocks that have an unexpected impact such as droughts, conflicts, ...etc. Seasonality is related to issues of environmental and price changes (Serrat, 2008:3). These three vulnerability types may drive people to migration or seeking refuge in other countries.

Capital assets are used in spaces where policies, decision-making and norms take place. These spaces are referred to as Policy, Institutions and Processes (PIPs) within the SLA. The DFID SLA Guidance Sheets refer to institutions as the 'hardware' (structures and organizations) to forming legitimate governance structures, while processes are the 'software', since they focus on the delivery procedures of legislation. They [processes] are "the processes of change in policies and institutions" (Lowe & Schilderman 2001:13). DFID also refers to policies as the legislative and constitutional norms and procedures. PIPs are initially applied to provide mechanisms for the most vulnerable to maximize the utilization of their assets and are considered the rules of the game that affect people's overall livelihoods. According to DFID (1999) papers, "it is the context that confers legitimacy on different organizations and provides the framework within which they operate". It also illustrates that PIPs' influence extends throughout the framework, because the vulnerability context can be either directly or indirectly affected by it. For example, efficient labor market policies may reduce the impacts of external shocks (ex. financial crisis). In addition, these PIPs may restrict people's usage of their capital assets and thus constrain one's choices. Therefore, they have a direct impact on the outcomes.

Starting with migration determinants and factors contributing to an individual or a household's decision to migrate, it could be highly attributed to capital assets, vulnerabilities and PIPs. As previously mentioned, this set would be eventually translated to experiences and outcomes within the migration context.



Among the capital assets are social assets explained in the migration networks theory. Those networks refer to ties of kinship, friendship and community origin that connect migrants, former migrants and non-migrants in country of origin and destination country. Costs and risks of migration usually diminish as a result of those networks. Hence, “they increase the likelihood of international movement” (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, Taylor, 1993, p. 449). Having interpersonal connections with migrants gives non-migrants in the country of origin good access to information on the migration procedure, the experience and the challenges. This allows potential migrants to take informed decisions regarding migration and prepares them for the migration experience with realistic expectations. Moreover, it allows them to be prepared for the challenges they are expected to face. Hence people would be more likely to migrate if they possess such a form of social capital.


The social capital of migration networks reduces the risk of migration. Having interpersonal connections with migrants in the destination country helps a prospective migrant secure a job there before migration and thereby renders migration less risky (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, Taylor, 1993, p. 449).

Migration networks reduce the cost of migration (Massey et al., 1993 p. 449). Having access to information about the migration procedure and the costs it entails makes migrants less prone to mistakes in the process, which could incur a high cost. In addition, having a job secured prior to the departure, decreases the period during which the migrant does not earn any money.

Migration determinants are not only related to the sending country but also to the receiving country. According to the dual labor market theory developed by Michael Piore (1979), migration is not primarily triggered/induced by push factors in sending countries, but by pull factors in receiving countries. Industrialized countries have an inherent shortage in labor, which they try to fill by recruiting foreign labor. The labor market in industrialized countries is divided into two sectors, a primary and a secondary sector (Piore, 1979, p. 35). The primary sector, which draws natives, is capital-intensive. It is characterized by relatively higher wages, job security and opportunities for occupational advancement. A shortage of labor in the secondary sector is created due to its unappealing nature for natives. In this labor-intensive sector, wages are low, working conditions are unstable and opportunities for occupational advancement are limited. The shortage in this sector is compensated by migrant labor.

As a result of the labor market gap created by citizens or permanent residents of industrialized countries, declining jobs at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy, temporary migration programs usually evolve. Those fall under the category of policies, institutions and processes. Governments sign agreements and based on that recruitment starts as in the case of Jordan and Egypt. The governments of the two countries signed a bilateral agreement in 1985 with subsequent memorandums of understanding in following years that facilitated and regulated the migration process. As Piore suggests, recruitment is often the key to understanding migration paradoxes such as migration flows between countries that are not geographically close and do not share historical ties. However, in the case of Egyptian labor migration to Jordan, the geographic proximity as well as the shared historical and cultural ties could contribute to the analysis of the influx of the Egyptian labor migration to Jordan alongside the recruitment aspect.

As a result of increased migration from poorer countries to capital-rich countries, an imbalance occurs between the number of people seeking residency there and




the number of offered immigrant visas. Hence, institutions develop to regulate this dynamic, seizing the opportunity to make profit out of this imbalance in supply and demand. This leads to the emergence of a black market where for-profit organizations and private entrepreneurs offer services to migrants and prospective migrants in exchange for a fee that it set on the market. These services include:

“surreptitious smuggling across borders; clandestine transport to internal destinations; labor contracting between employers and migrants; counterfeit documents and visas; arranged marriages between migrants and legal residents or citizens of the destination country; and lodging, credit, and other assistance in countries of destination” (Massey, Arango, Hugo, Kouaouci, Pellegrino, Taylor, 1993, p. 450).

The migration experience may include increased income, reduced vulnerability, improved security and more sustainable use of resources. Conversely, it can be a disabler from achieving better trajectories. Thus, the migration experience could be categorized to lifestyle factors, living conditions, working conditions, social and community factors and governance conditions. Lifestyle factors within this context could be defined as socio-economic, cultural and linguistic facilitators and/or barriers. Living conditions include access to safe housing and transportation and whether the individual has access to clean water and sanitation as well as food. Working conditions are mainly seen as financial benefits or wages (that could be channeled as remittances or savings) but they also include suitable working hours and social/health benefits. Social and community factors here mean one’s capability to integrate into the host country and build a social network that could be a source of support. Finally, governance conditions mean the existence of policies or legislation within the host country that shape directly or indirectly the experience of the migrant.

Migrant workers are usually hired on temporary contracts, leaving them with restricted options in the country of destination. This directly affects their living and working conditions. As opposed to permanent residents, temporary labor migrants do not have the freedom of choice as to where to live or what and for whom to work. “These areas of life choice are severely circumscribed by the terms of migration visas and state-administered migration programmes for many categories of workers on temporary work permits” (Stasiulis, 2008, p. 102). For example, choosing to work in an occupation different from the one specified in the contract would be considered a legal violation and would have legal implications for the worker. It is argued that temporary migrant workers fall under the category of non-free labor since their life-choices are very limited in the country of destination (Sharma, 2001). This comparison between permanent residents and temporary labor migrants serves as a reference in the analysis of the case in Jordan, where the employment of Syrian refugees is promoted and facilitated by the Jordan Compact, while Egyptians work there as temporary workers under the restrictive kafala system.

The jobs taken by migrants in any country, usually share a set of characteristics. According to Michael Piore (1979), those jobs require unskilled labor, are generally low paying and “carry inferior social status”. In addition, they often involve “hard and unpleasant working conditions”, “considerable insecurity” and “a highly personalistic relationship between supervisor and subordinate”. Lastly, they “seldom offer chances of advancement”. Macklin (2003) describes those jobs as ‘3d’ jobs, namely dirty, dangerous and difficult.



The eventual outcome of the migration experience is the migrant's decision to stay in the host country or to leave. For the purpose of this study, we will be limiting the framework to those who return to their home country, Egypt, as it is commonly known that Egyptian migrants return to their home country after working in Jordan for an extended period of time. Since return migration is not believed to be a cyclical process but rather a linear procedure, the diagram illustrates five components that contribute to the return of migrant workers. The return migration section in the diagram adapts the causes and effects framework developed by King (2000). As already been highlighted, there is no single holistic theory that explains international migration (Kritz et al., 1981; Massey et al., 1993). The two key effects of return migration according to the causes and effects model relate to; (1) the human capital accumulated abroad through education and on the job training and; (2) the financial capital that is channeled into the home region through remittances and savings. Variables regarding the socio-economic status of return migrants were not well articulated in the original framework. In this regard, some variables, which were not included have been added. These include assets and consumer durable goods, housing, occupational changes and the human capital accumulated abroad.

The missing 'socio-economic status' component explained most of the variables required for this study and broadly categorized into economic and social factors. Within the context of this study, assets and consumer durable goods include all the wealth and property acquired by returnees abroad and after their return. Housing deals with the type of houses the returnees are living in and their occupancy status. Social status as highlighted in the diagram deals primarily with the returnee's human capital and social and occupational status within the community. Human capital of the returnees is composed of formal education, work experience as well as the skills and know-how they have acquired overseas. Occupational changes on the other hand involve issues regarding the returnees' occupational outcomes upon return. That is, whether their occupational status has improved, remained unchanged or worsened after their return (issues of occupational mobility and fluidity). For instance, it is possible for a returnee to move from a production-service occupation into trading, or agriculture-related occupation, or to an occupation of similar status as the previous one. It is also believed in some instances that migrants gain an elevated social status within their community for having lived abroad and gained money and skills.

Migration was expected to have a positive economic impact on the sending country through migrant remittances and skills acquired abroad that could be applied upon return to the country of origin (Piore, 1979). Migrant remittances are mostly spent on consumption goods. Most consumption behavior is directed towards reinforcing social status. This includes, high payments for wedding cost, feasts, funerals and the construction of luxurious houses (Lipton, 1980). Remittances are also sometimes used to finance the migration of relatives. As for the application of the skills acquired abroad in the country of origin, the most skilled migrants usually refuse to return to their countries of origin, and those who return are reluctant to work in the industries and occupations in which they worked abroad (Piore, 1979).

Investments only come late on the list of priorities regarding remittance use. "Typically, they (the migrants) plan to utilize funds acquired abroad to establish themselves in an activity that will give them independent, entrepreneurial status" (Piore, 1979). However, those investments are sometimes "non-productive investments" (de Haas, 2010). They do not create employment opportunities. Remittances are often spent on the mechanization of agricultural processes, which in turn has a negative impact on the labor market in the country of origin (Lipton, 1980).

3. Methodology

We conducted a multi-site, mixed methods study comprising a primary quantitative research in Jordan and primary qualitative research in both Jordan and Egypt.

Survey in Jordan

The quantitative component was carried out in Jordan to include a sample of 501 Egyptian migrants in Jordan who responded to the survey across six Jordanian governorates: Amman, Balqa, Irbid, Karak, Jerash and Zarqa (See Figure 3). The questionnaire has been conducted with participants in coffee shops, streets, workplaces and houses

Questionnaire Development

The standard questionnaire has been designed to provide some data that would formulate answers to the research objectives stated above. In drafting the questionnaire, we linked the research objectives with relatively simple questions that could be readily understood by the respondents. However, we have also cross-checked the design of the questionnaire with other surveys carried out in Egypt and other developing countries related to migration research.

An English translation of the final Arabic language questionnaire is included in the appendix. It includes the following main groups of topics:

1. Background information: Age, education, marital status, work and income, family size, among other related questions.
2. The migration process: Reasons behind migration, source of information regarding destination, initial cost of migration, duration to cover the initial cost of migration, among other related questions.
3. Relation with origin and host countries: Frequency of visits to Egypt, relationships with Jordanians outside the workplace, registration in the Egyptian embassy/consulates, among other related questions.
4. Labor Migration and crises in the region: The presence of Syrian refugees in Jordan and its impact on the chances of Egyptians working in Jordan, ways the presence of Syrians affected the chances of Egyptians working in Jordan.
5. Remittances: Sending remittances, use of remittances.
6. Skill acquisition and transfer: Acquisition of skills, applicability skills to the Egyptian context, and barriers disabling the application of skills acquired abroad in Egypt.

The Qualitative Component

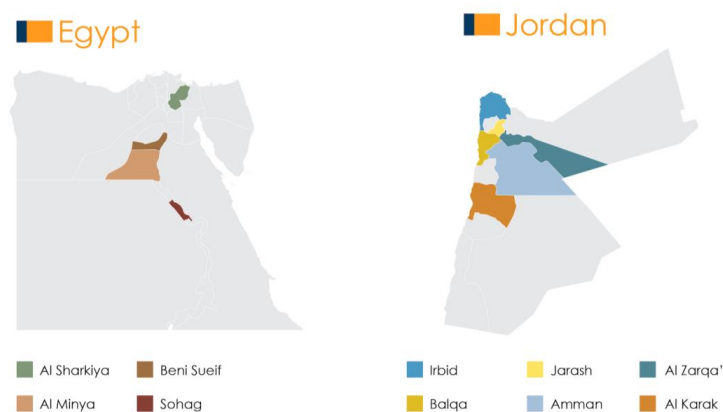
The qualitative component was drawn from the following sources:

- 58 in-depth interviews (IDIs) with Egyptian migrants in Jordan.
- 71 IDIs with Egyptian returnees. The IDIs in Egypt were carried out in four governorates: Sharkeya, Al Minya, Beni-Sueif and Sohag (See Figure 3). The selection of these four governorates was based on the results of the survey conducted in Jordan, which showed that the highest numbers of Egyptian migrants in Jordan have come from particular governorates.
- 14 key informant interviews (KIIs) in Jordan- including interviews with government officials, civil society representatives and business owners.

- Six KIIs in Egypt- with government officials, civil society representatives and a broker.
- 20 IDIs with Syrian refugees in Jordan. The IDIs in Jordan were conducted across three governorates: Amman, Balqa and Irbid (See Figure 3). This is to cover the different labor sectors within the different governorates in Jordan.

Given that the majority of the Egyptian labor migrants are males, all selected research participants were men. To be considered for an interview in Jordan, Egyptian migrants need to have lived in Jordan for at least four months. The selection criteria for male Egyptian returnees was based on their experience of currently living in Egypt for not less than six months and not more than five years. This is to ensure that the migrant has returned to Egypt to stay and exclude the possibility of him returning only for vacation. Also, we needed to guarantee that the returnee has attended the Syrian influx while he was in Jordan. Therefore, migrants who have returned to Egypt before the Syrian crisis would not have helped inform the study objectives.

Figure 3: Data Collection Locations




Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected between March and October 2019 by nine trained male data collectors (four in Jordan and five in Egypt). Prior to fieldwork, data collectors participated in a two-day training workshop in both Jordan and Egypt on the research topic, study instruments, research ethics, maintaining confidentiality, and effective interviewing, including probing in a non-judgmental and non-directive manner. The study tools were also revised during the workshop.

Snowball sampling was applied to identify individuals who fit the eligibility criteria. We collaborated with local NGOs and gatekeepers in each area whether in Jordan or Egypt to identify participants for the interviews. Key informants were selected based on suggestions from the Swiss Cooperation, the Swiss Embassy in Egypt and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). All the interviews were conducted in spaces that provided auditory privacy. They were conducted and transcribed in Arabic. During these visits, data collectors discussed their experience and challenges.

Data Management and Analysis

Upon completion of the quantitative data collection, questionnaires were reviewed for consistency and completeness, and then coded by office editors. The data were entered and edited on micro-computers. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to produce tables and to carry out statistical analysis of the



survey data. The data entry, computer editing, tabulation, and statistical analysis were completed in three months.

Regarding the qualitative component, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed into Arabic. A sample of the transcripts was checked to ensure transcription accuracy. A codebook was developed using deductive codes – identified a priori – based on the research objectives. This was coupled with an inductive approach in which we applied initial coding followed by focused coding (Charmaz 2008). During initial coding, a sample of thick, contextually-rich transcripts was selected and scrutinized line by line which allowed for codes to emerge from the data – including in vivo codes that preserved the participants' language and terminology. The most useful initial codes were then selected and tested against the data. Coding of the Arabic transcripts was done using Dedoose, qualitative analysis software, to facilitate data management and organization. In November 2019, the research team in Egypt organized an analysis workshop to review preliminary findings with the in-country data collection team. The workshop helped establish the credibility and accuracy of the findings and provided an external check to the analysis process (Creswell 2013).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval of the research was secured from the American University in Cairo's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participation in the study was voluntarily and permission to obtain verbal consent from adult participants was obtained.

Limitations of the Research

The main limitation has to do with the inability to carry out a survey in Egypt. As part of the study, a survey was planned to document the experience of returnees from Jordan. However, due to lack of security approvals, the survey could not be conducted in Egypt. Although, we increased the number of IDIs in Egypt, their results cannot be generalized due to lack of 'representativeness given their qualitative nature.

Few challenges were also encountered while doing the research in Jordan. For example, while implementing the survey in Jordan, the Jordanian government launched a campaign to round up undocumented migrants. The campaign started in Irbid governorate, but was announced to be extended across all governorates. Some of the potential respondents refused to participate in the survey as a result. Another limitation faced the research team during data collection was that some of the interviews conducted with Egyptian migrants in Jordan were carried out by Jordanian data collectors. Given the sensitivity of the topic, some respondents were reluctant to express their opinions fully. To overcome this challenge, Egyptian data collectors were sent to Jordan to conduct what is remaining of the qualitative data collection.

4. Findings

The first part of this section presents the findings concerning the conditions of Egyptian migrant workers in general in Jordan. And the second part presents the findings concerning the impact of the Syrian influx. The findings concerning both sections are based on the survey in Jordan and the in-depth interviews with Egyptian migrants in Jordan, Egyptian returnees in Egypt, and key informants in both Egypt and Jordan. In addition, the in-depth interviews with Syrian refugees in Jordan informed the findings of the second section.

Egyptian Migrant Workers

The findings are presented as per the following sub-headings:

- Socio-economic and demographic characteristics
- Conditions in Jordan
- Migration process
- Relation with origin and host countries
- Remittances and transfer of knowledge
- Reasons for Return

Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics

Due to the masculinity nature of Egyptian labor migration where migration is dominated by males, the study population were all males.

Table 2.1 shows the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the study population. With respect to the geographical location of respondents by governorate in Jordan, almost 60 percent of respondents interviewed were in Amman. About 50 respondents were interviewed in each governorate of Balqa, Irbid, Karak, and Jerash. Only one respondent was interviewed in Zarqa.

The table also shows that the majority of respondents are from Al Sharkeya (a governorate of Lower Egypt), Beni-Sueif, Souhag and El Menia (governorates of Upper Egypt) respectively. Most respondents in the IDIs highlighted that the majority of Egyptian migrants are originally from rural settings in these governorates.

Age of respondents ranges between 19 and 65 years old with a mean age of 37.5 years. However, more than 25 percent of the total respondents are less than 25 years old (25.4 percent), and 54 percent are between 25 and 44 years old. Hence, almost 80 percent of the respondents are less than 45 years old.

As for the marital status of respondents, singles are 26.2 percent and the married ones are 69.8 percent. Only 20 cases of respondents are divorced or widowed.

Educational attainment is an important factor to explain social behavior. The educational profile of respondents is generally low, with almost 60 percent of respondents with no education or less than secondary education. Respondents with secondary diploma (General or technical/vocational certificates) comprise 37.9 percent of the total number of respondents. Respondents with university degree or more comprise 3.2 percent only.

Even though the majority of respondents in the IDIs highlighted that Egyptian migrant workers have attained some level of education, many stakeholders believed (Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labor in Jordan as well as the Egyptian Embassy) that they are usually illiterate. This common misconception on the part of the stakeholders is believed to have emerged as the professions Egyptian migrant workers usually work in does not require any level of education (such as that of farming or construction).

It was also highlighted among a few IDI respondents that Egyptian migrant workers who have arrived recently to Jordan are mostly educated while those who have been in Jordan for the past 20-30 years were mostly not. This could be attributed to the

increased education rates in Egypt generally, but it was not explicitly illustrated by the respondents.

As previously mentioned, Egyptians in Jordan are mainly engaged in three economic sectors; service, agriculture, and construction. About 80 percent of respondents interviewed are in the service and agriculture sectors while 20 percent are engaged in the construction sector.

Since the majority was raised in rural settings/governorates, Egyptian migrants are believed to be skilled and to own significant knowledge and experience, particularly in the agricultural sector. That is why, as explained by IDI respondents, the agriculture sector in Jordan highly relies on them. The professions taken up by Egyptians are those that Jordanians are not interested in. Therefore, Egyptian migrant workers fill a gap in the market, especially in agricultural, construction and services sectors. These professions are considered physically challenging, which is a condition only Egyptians, as highlighted by the majority of respondents, are willing to take, unlike other nationalities.

"The Egyptian worker endures higher temperatures and has more physical strength than all other nationalities. Even the Jordanian worker does not have these capabilities and cannot withstand this [agricultural] sector as much as the Egyptian worker, in addition to the experience of the Egyptian worker on how to deal with plants and harvesting methods. The Egyptian migrant is an artist in this field. With the arrival of the Syrians and giving them permits, the Egyptian workers' entitlement rate (the allowable percentage of the farm owner) has decreased, thus increasing the hourly wage for the Egyptian agricultural worker. However, employers pay more to the Egyptian worker in agriculture and seeks to hire him more because of his experience, especially in the flourishing agricultural seasons."- Civil society representative in Amman

Family size is an important demographic indicator. It summarizes many socioeconomic factors; dependency burden, extended family norms and traditions, cultural and societal factors. Results indicate that respondents come from families with an average of 5.8 persons, which is significantly higher than the national average estimated at 4.0 persons per family according to the 2017 population census data.

Table 2.1
Background characteristics of Respondents

Background characteristics	Number	Percent
Governorate of Residence in Jordan		
Amman	300	59.9
Balqa	54	10.8
Irbid	51	10.2
Karak	49	9.8
Jerash	46	9.2
Zarqa	1	0.2
Total	501	100.0

Governorate of Residence in Egypt		
Sharkyia	60	12.0
Beni Sueif	46	9.2
Souhag	46	9.2
Menia	39	7.8
Port Said	26	5.2
Assuit	25	5.0
Other Governorates	259	51.7
Total	501	100.0

Age of Respondents		
15-19	1	0.2
20-24	27	5.4
25-29	99	19.8
30-34	74	14.8
35-39	103	20.6
40-44	93	18.6
45-49	56	11.2
50-54	26	5.2
55-59	11	2.2
60-64	10	2.0
65-69	1	0.2
Total	501	100.0
Mean Age		37.5 years

Marital status		
Single/Engaged	131	26.2
Married	350	69.8
Divorced/Widowed	20	4.0
Total	501	100.0

Table 2.1 Cont'd
Background Characteristics of Respondents

Background characteristics	Number	Percent
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Highest level of schooling successfully completed		
None	55	11.0
Primary	99	19.8
Preparatory	141	28.1
Secondary (General)	126	25.1
Secondary (Tech.)	64	12.8
University or more	16	3.2
Total	501	100.0

Economic Sector		
Services	202	40.3
Agriculture	199	39.7
Constructions	100	20.0
Total	501	100.0

Income in Jordanian Dinar	
Minimum income	150.0
Maximum income	600.0
Mean income	354.1
Median income	350.0
Std. Deviation	69.2
Total (cases reported their income)	447

Family size in Egypt	
Minimum family	1
Maximum family	23
Mean family	5.8
Median family	5.0
Std. Deviation	2.4
Total	501

Conditions in Jordan

The duration of stay of the respondents interviewed ranged between less than one year and 35 years. The average duration of stay in Jordan was about eight years (See Table 2.2). These findings indicate that Jordan is an old and established destination of the Egyptian labor force. From the qualitative data, it has become evident that Egyptians stay for a significant period of time in Jordan to cover the expenses of their travel as well as allow for sufficient time to create financial capital.

As shown in Table 2.3 below, the number of Egyptian workers living together in Jordan ranges between one worker living alone to 15 workers living together. The average number of workers living together in Jordan is 4.5 persons, which is, in fact, less than the average family size of the migrants' families in Egypt.

When asked about their housing conditions, the majority of interviewees highlighted that their housing is usually inadequate and unsuitable. They expressed their concerns regarding health and safety with some expressing that their housing conditions cannot withstand the cold and humid weather. Provision of accommodation by the employer is evidently highly reliant on the nature of the migrant's job. If the worker is employed as a porter/janitor, a farmer or in a stone factory, there is a high probability that the employer will offer accommodation. They would usually work and live in the same place, which could subject them to violations and ill-treatment by the employer. If the migrant is on a regular migration status, this raises his housing chances. This does not guarantee, however, that the accommodation is safe or free. As for migrants who were not provided accommodation by the employer, they tend to settle for poor housing to save money.

"We live here in a room, not an apartment, and I share it with someone else. A room, a bathroom and a kitchen. Or you can take a partially demolished house and the employer will still consider it a room suitable for you to live in. The ceiling is not there, I can show you. It's not like in Egypt. Here, they cover the ceiling with straw, which falls off, as the weather here is cold and humid. The employer wouldn't live in it, but would make you pay for your accommodation."- An Egyptian migrant working in a stone factory in Amman

Interviewed Egyptian migrant workers and returnees seem to have a very communal experience. Their living conditions are characterized by a culture of sharing. Most participants reported living in a shared room with several other Egyptians. The kitchen and the bathroom are usually shared with residents of other rooms who are also Egyptian. One participant reported paying a fee for using the kitchen. As explained by several interview participants, Egyptian migrant workers sharing accommodation, gather over one meal daily which is dinner. Cooking takes shifts, on a rotating basis. It is obvious that Egyptians live together exclusively. None of the interview participants mentioned living with people from other nationalities.

Egyptian migrants in Jordan are generally not accompanied by their wives and children. Several reasons for that have been mentioned by the interviewed migrants and returnees. Most migrants referred to the high living costs for a family in Jordan as the primary reason for not getting their wives and children to Jordan. Many participants mentioned the difficult and costly process of bringing wives and children to Jordan. Some also stated that they are not allowed to go through the family reunification process because the Egyptian authorities have prohibited it. This was further confirmed by a governmental stakeholder interview in Egypt who stated that

the Government of Egypt (GoE) does not look favorably to such matter as it wants to guarantee decent living conditions to its citizens in Jordan. Despite the fact that the majority of respondents referred to economic reasons, some mentioned that, according to the norms observed in their villages, it is inappropriate to take their wives away from their homes and families to live with them abroad. One participant mentioned that he needs his children to stay in Egypt to look after the cattle of the family.

“It is difficult to get my wife and family. It is better for them to stay in our village back in Egypt with our relatives. According to traditions in Egypt, it is considered inappropriate to let them travel with me.”- Egyptian agricultural worker in Al Balqaa

Although those are the general living conditions of Egyptian migrants, there are some exceptions. People working in the services sector as porters, are usually offered safe and free accommodation in the buildings they work in. Those are deemed privileged, as they do not have to share accommodation with anyone. Furthermore, their meals are usually provided by the residents of the building.

Respondents were asked to give estimates of their monthly income, which ranges between 150 and 600 JOD with an average monthly income of 354.1 JOD. It is commonly known among the interviewed migrants that those who worked in the agricultural sector do not earn as much as those in the construction and services sectors. Also, work in the agriculture sector is highly seasonal which limits the number of working hours and thus, affects the overall pay.

Table 2.2
Migration Experience: Duration of Stay in Jordan (in years)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Duration of Stay in Jordan (in years)		
Minimum duration		0.0
Maximum duration		35.0
Mean duration		7.9
Median duration		6.0
Std. Deviation		6.2
Total	501	100.0

Table 2.3
Number of Egyptian Workers Living Together in Jordan

Indicator	Value
Minimum	1
Maximum	15
Mean	4.5
Median	4.0
Std. Deviation	2.2
Number of respondents	501

Migration Process

This section sheds some light on the process and costs of migration, and an evaluation of the migratory experience.

Reasons of Migration

Egyptian migrants in Jordan were asked about the reasons behind their migration decision. Reasons are classified under two categories; reasons related to origin, and reasons related to destination. With respect to the first category, three main reasons were stated by a significant number of respondents:

- Income in Egypt is lower than in Jordan (stated by 69.1 percent of respondents)
- Lack of job opportunities available in Egypt (stated by 58.5 percent of respondents)
- Helping the family in Egypt (stated by 52.1 percent of respondents)

Clearly, all the main reasons related to origin are economic. They are related to low paying jobs, lack of job opportunities and bad living conditions.

With respect to reasons related to destination, the main three reasons that allure Egyptians to migration to Jordan are as follows:

- Having a job offer in Jordan (stated by 14.2 percent of respondents)
- Having relatives in Jordan (stated by 11.4 percent of respondents)
- Having friends in Jordan (stated by 8.6 percent of respondents)

The results indicate that reasons related to Jordan are not only economic but also related to the factors that facilitate migration; the migration networks or the intermediary factors, which are their relatives and friends who ever migrated to Jordan.

Other economic reasons that drove many individuals to move to Jordan, that arose during the IDIs, were the aspiration for building a future for oneself, saving up for marriage and supporting a big family. Some respondents also explained that they were either pressurized to migrate, or encouraged to imitate returnees depicted as successful. Finally, there were accounts of Egyptian migrants who were forced to return from Libya after the crisis in 2011 and thus, chose to continue their migration experience alternatively in Jordan. Jordan was chosen over other countries including those of the gulf as it is considered a cheaper migration destination, with a similar culture, and is known for its familiar jobs, which will not require additional training.

“In the beginning, I was still a young man. I travelled to be able to save up and get married when I return to Egypt to build a future. After that, I got married and had children, so I travelled to be able to build a house for them in Egypt and then I travelled again to be able to sustain a living for them.”- An Egyptian returnee in Beni-Sueif

“First, we as youth aspire to build a future. Second, as you know the situation [in Egypt] does not allow for staying there, saving up, getting married or financially support your family. I am telling you, the situation in Egypt does not allow me to save up and sustain a family.”- An Egyptian migrant worker in Amman

Table 3.1
Reasons for Migration to Jordan

Reason	Number	Percent
Reason for Migration Related to Origin		
Income in Egypt is lower than in Jordan	346	69.1%
No job opportunities available in Egypt	293	58.5%
Helping family in Egypt	261	52.1%
Escape from family pressures and troubles	24	4.8%
Reason for Migration Related to Destination		
Have got a job offer in Jordan	71	14.2%
Have relatives in Jordan	57	11.4%
Have friends in Jordan	43	8.6%
Other	6	1.2%
Total	501	100.0

* Multiple responses allowed.

Source of information regarding Jordan

Friends and relatives are the main source of information regarding the desired country of destination. More than 80 percent of the respondents rely on their relatives and friends in sketching a hypothetical picture on conditions prevailing in Jordan. The role of other sources is less than 20 percent. Some migrants mentioned during the interviews that most of the men in the village they come from, in Egypt, travel to work in Jordan, hence, the procedures of travelling to Jordan are considered common knowledge there. The conclusion to be drawn from these results is that migration to Jordan in general is a sort of a family-managed process where potential migrants rely on their relatives and friends – usually from the same village – to facilitate their migration to Jordan. Therefore, the process of migration is highly characterized by informality.

“It was well known. The information was available to everyone. At the time when I migrated, our relatives were there. All young men, my age, even younger and older than I am were there. Our whole generation was there.”- An Egyptian returnee in Sohag

Table 3.2
Source of information regarding desired country of migration (Jordan)

Source	Number	Percent
Friends / Relatives	420	83.8%
Internet	38	7.6%
General Readings	16	3.2
Media	10	2
Embassies	2	0.4
Egyptian Authorities	2	0.4
Other Sources	13	2.6
Total	501	100.0

Persons who facilitate migration

The results of the survey indicate that Egyptian relatives and friends in Jordan are the main key players in paving the road for those who wish to migrate. Relatives in Jordan helped 70.2 percent of Egyptians to migrate to Jordan, while friends helped 19.4 percent of them. These findings underscore the importance of migration networks in the Egyptian case. Recruitment companies in Egypt ranked third with only five percent of migrants. These findings confirm the small volume of commercialized migration process in contrast with Asia migration (Sørensen & Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2013). The interviews also unraveled that, sometimes, the procedures are facilitated by a broker. Relatives, friends and brokers⁴ do not only provide the potential migrants with information, but they often facilitate the migration process by asking employers to send contracts to potential migrants and thus, the potential migrants are sometimes left not fully aware of the procedures and their rights upon arrival to Jordan.

“What would you do if you grow up finding your father and your uncles working here, and everyone you know migrating to Jordan?! You wouldn’t be able to go anywhere else. You need a place like that where there are people to help you find a job.”- An Egyptian Agricultural Worker in Sohag

Table 3.3
Persons who Helped Egyptians Migrate to Jordan

Source	Number	Percent
Egyptian Relatives in Jordan	348	70.2
Egyptian Friends in Jordan	96	19.4
Recruitment Companies in Egypt	25	5.0
Relatives in Egypt	22	4.4
Friends in Egypt	5	1.0
Total	496	100.0

⁴ In the context of Egypt, relying on brokers to migrate to Jordan subjects the potential migrant to increased migration costs and abuse without redress because brokers are unregulated. On the other hand, recruitment agencies that operate under the Ministry of Manpower are licensed and abide by the rules and regulations of the bilateral agreement.

Migration Dynamics

Within the context of this study, migration dynamics are defined as factors and procedures associated with the movement of respondents from origin to destination and their migration experience. These factors include payment for migration, amount of money paid to facilitate migration, and other migration-related experiences.

Money paid for migration and cost of movement:

The results of the field survey indicate that the percent of migrants to Jordan who paid money to migrate is 37.5 percent of migrants. Respondents who paid money to migrate were asked about the cost of their movement. By cost here, we mean any expenses paid to facilitate migration, not particularly the cost of transportation or visa fees. The average amount paid was 8,822 EGP. It ranges from less than 1,000 EGP to 70,000 EGP. Even though the bilateral agreement dictates that the cost of the work permits is to be covered by the employer, the majority of the migrants and returnees interviewed disclosed that they have fully paid these amounts themselves⁵. The costs were illustrated to have varied in the IDIs as well as the KIIs primarily due to the role of the intermediaries and brokers who may facilitate the process and charge the migrant extra amounts of money. Also, some migrants disclosed that they moved to Jordan with the initial intention of violating their work permit to enjoy more freedom and earn more money as day laborers. Therefore, they were charged more money by their official *kafeel* to allow for that as a part of a mutual agreement.

Source of money to cover migration expenses

Migration is expensive, in consequence the poor do not migrate because they cannot cover the initial cost of migration (FAO 2018). In order to overcome this obstacle, the main two sources of money to cover migration expenses reported by the respondents were relatives and friends (53.7 percent and 26.6 percent respectively). This was further confirmed in the qualitative data. Own savings ranked third with 11.2 percent.

Duration to cover the initial cost of migration:

The duration to cover the initial cost of migration depends on two factors; the amount of money paid to facilitate migration and migrants' income level and savings in the country of destination. The results of the field survey indicate that the duration to cover the initial cost of migration ranged between one month and 48 months with an average of 14.7 months or one year and three months approximately.

⁵ Only a few of the respondents mentioned that only half of the amount of their annual work permits were covered by their employer while they were expected to pay for the remaining cost.

Table 3.4
Dynamics of the Egyptian Workers' Migration to Jordan

	Number	Percent
Migrants who paid money to migrate	188	37.5%
Amount of money paid to migrate (in EGP)		
Minimum amount		1,000
Maximum amount		70,000
Mean amount		8,822
Median amount		6,000
Std. Deviation		8,949
Total		187

Source of money to migrate*		
Borrowed from Relatives	101	53.7%
Borrowed from Friends	50	26.6%
Won savings/money	21	11.2%
Other	16	8.5%
Total	188	100.0%

Duration to cover the initial cost of migration (in months)		
Minimum duration		1
Maximum duration		48
Mean duration		14.7
Median duration		12.0
Std. Deviation		11.6
Total		181

Days and hours of work last week

As shown in Table 3.5 below, the number of working days within the survey ranged between zero days (unemployment) and seven days with an average of five days. As for the number of working hours in the last working day of the last week before the interview, it ranged between one hour and 18 hours with an average of 8.2 hours per day. In addition to the fact that the average working days and hours show full employment, the minimum and the maximum working days and hours show little underemployment among Egyptian workers in Jordan.

Table 3.5
Days and Hours of Work the Week before the Interview, Egyptians in Jordan

	Days respondents have worked last week	Hours respondents worked the last day they have been working
Minimum	0	1
Maximum	7	18
Mean	5.0	8.2
Median	6.0	8.0
Std. Deviation	1.79	2.61
Number of respondents	501	501

Additional work benefits


Most Egyptian migrants and returnees noted that benefits, aside from their daily/monthly income, were limited. Some of the migrants who worked in the construction and services sector knew that they were covered by social insurance. However, a limited number of them were aware that they would be able to collect the amounts indicated for social insurance and pensions by the end of their work contract. For agriculture sector workers, the majority has indicated that they were not covered. With regards to other work benefits, most interviewees stated that they do not get any paid leaves and are rarely covered by medical insurance. The most recurring benefit, especially among workers in the services sector, was the tips earned for the good service offered.

“Those who have been working in companies were enrolled in social security. I tried to find a job in a company, but could not find any. People there have social security and pensions. Their conditions are better.”- An Egyptian returnee in Beni Sueif

“He (the employer) enrolled everyone in social security. 15 JD are deducted from our salaries every month. You receive the whole amount after 10 years when you’re not coming back to Jordan anymore. You get them from the social security bureau and return home, but that’s only if you’re not coming back here anymore.”- An Egyptian migrant worker in Amman

Status of Migration

It is clear from the data that Egyptian migrant workers arrive to Jordan on regular terms. However, not abiding by the regulations of their work permits or failure to renew them is what creates a hurdle in the migration status of Egyptians in Jordan. According to many respondents, it is evident that the majority come to Jordan as per agriculture sector permits, given they were the cheapest permits that migrants can afford (costs 350 JOD), before the introduction of the new permits scheme in September 2019. These permits oblige the worker to work on a particular farm specified in his contract and with a specific landowner or what is commonly referred



to as *kafeel*⁶. However, many workers change their workplace to a different sector or for a different employer not specified in their work permits to earn more money. As mentioned earlier, those who work in the agriculture sector are believed to earn less than other sectors. Therefore, they are encouraged to escape the agriculture sector and search for more rewarding opportunities elsewhere. With such violations in place, they are subject to fines or deportation. Many respondents, stakeholders and migrants, highlighted that the majority of Egyptian migrants currently residing in Jordan are irregular. They mentioned that the status of irregularity is largely related to the high cost of work permits and the difficulty of finding a good *kafeel*.

Consequences of Irregular Migration


The consequence of the irregular status reported by most interviewees, is living in insecurity. Interviewed migrants and returnees explain that migrants working in Jordan without a permit, or violating any of the employment terms, such as working for an employer other than their sponsor, working in a different sector, or in a governorate other than specified in their permit, are living in constant fear of being caught by the Jordanian authorities, particularly the police. According to some migrants, civil society representatives in Jordan and a business owner, they have witnessed cases of Egyptian migrants risking their lives to escape the police. They jump off scaffolds or run through traffic to avoid getting caught. It was emphasized that if the migrant gets caught, they would be required to pay 3000 dinars to legalize their presence in Jordan. If they refuse to pay, they would be deported. One migrant pointed out that deportation was less frequent in the past because the fines were reasonable and hence, irregular workers were able to pay them and find a new sponsor. However, according to him, the current amount of the fine is prohibitive, hence more people are deported. In spite of that, government representatives in both Jordan and Egypt as well as some migrants explained that migrants working in Jordan irregularly wait and usually seize the opportunity of the grace periods that allow for migrants to regularize their situations without paying the cumulative fine.

“I paid the broker and my sponsor extra money to allow me to work for different employers, so instead of working with my sponsor and getting 150 per month, I work for different employers and get 300 or 350 per month, which is double the salary and at the same time it gives me flexibility. However, I might be caught by the police and I would be required to pay a fine. In the past, there was no deportation. You would pay a fine and issue a permit with a different sponsor. That’s it. However, now, if a person is caught working illegally, they are deported and the fine reached 3000 JD. Some people refuse to pay it and prefer getting deported since the only reason for coming here is to sustain a living and save money”- An Egyptian worker in Amman

Exposure to violations

Violations are evidently common in the context of Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan, especially among migrants who stay irregularly. Working conditions of irregular workers are seen to be worse than those of migrants working regularly in Jordan. It has been explained by business owners as well civil society representatives that irregular workers are more vulnerable since their work conditions are not respected

⁶ A sponsor.



by their employers. Migrants also illustrated that if there is not much work, the salaries of migrants without valid work permits could be reduced while those of regular migrants cannot. Furthermore, exploitation by employers in the form of unpaid work or coerced overtime is more prevalent among irregular workers since they cannot report violations. A few accounts of migrants being exposed to physical violence by their employers were reported. However, due to their irregular status, they avoid any contact with Jordanian authorities out of fear of being caught, fined and deported. Other violations take the form of health risks and safety hazards many migrants are exposed to in their place of work. Such health violations were primarily reported by construction and agriculture workers who face heightened risks yet were expected to incur the cost of medical examinations in the event they were injured or hurt during work.

“Migration costs you a lot of money when you work for someone and they refuse to give you your salary at the end of the month.”- An Egyptian agricultural worker in El Balqaa.

Relation with country of origin

Relation with origin and host country is measured by migrants’ frequency of visits to their country of origin, and the means of information about Egypt. As for the frequency of visits to Egypt, the results indicate that 47.7 percent of the respondents visit Egypt annually, while 24.6 percent visit Egypt every two or three years. Egyptians in Jordan who visit Egypt every five years or more comprise 2.4 of the respondents only. Surprisingly, 22.8 percent of respondents reported that they visit Egypt less than once every five years.

As for the means of contacting their relatives and friends in Egypt, 43.1 percent reported that they usually use Facebook Messenger. Internet calls are used by 38.5 percent of respondents. Telephone calls are reported by 16.8 percent of respondents. In general, origin countries should forge strong relations with their nationals in order to strengthen linkages between migration and development. In addition, the relationships between nationals abroad are important assets for the transfer of migration benefits, not only among expatriates themselves, but also between expatriates and their origin through migration networks (Massey et al. 2005).

As shown in Table 4.1 below, only 38.1 percent of the respondents reported that they registered themselves in the Egyptian embassy/consulate in Jordan. Needless to say that registration in the Egyptian embassy/consulate in Jordan is meant to enable Egyptian expatriates to get benefit from the protection services that Egyptian consulates can provide to Egyptian workers in Jordan given the fact that a labor counselor is based in the Egyptian embassy in Amman.⁷ Further confirming the results of the survey, according to the interviewed migrants, the role of the Egyptian consulate in Jordan is believed to be limited. Most of them indicated that the consulate does not provide them with support in the case of violations against them or in the case of work injuries. However, the interviewed representative of the consulate asserted that the embassy solves 70 - 80% of the cases, which they receive, and the rest are referred to the Ministry of Labor. Those cases mostly relate to salaries not paid to the workers. According to one business owner, the cases of unpaid salaries are those specifically which the embassy does not intervene in due to their vast amount and the limited capacity of the embassy. According to the representative of the workers union, the

⁷ Protection is provided in principle by 1- the Egyptian Embassy/Consulate, 2- and by the labor counsellor who represent the Ministry of Manpower.

embassy helps migrants; yet confidence in the embassy depends on the official they deal with. A civil society representative explained that Egyptian migrants usually approach the embassy for administrative matters such as renewing their passport or issuing a document. He added that they also ask the embassy to intervene in cases of workers being a casualty in traffic accidents.

Table 4.1
Relation with origin and Destination Country

	Number	Percent
Visits to Egypt		
More than once a year	13	2.6%
Once a year	239	47.7%
Once every two or three years	123	24.6%
Once every five years	12	2.4%
Less than once every five years	114	22.8%
Total	501	100.0%

	Number	Percent
Contact with Egypt (Means of)		
Facebook Messenger	216	43.1%
Internet Calls	193	38.5%
Phone Calls	84	16.8%
WhatsApp	5	1.0%
Other	3	0.6%
Total	501	100.0%

Respondents who are registered in the Egyptian embassy/consulate in Jordan	191	38.1
Respondents who maintain regular contacts with other Egyptians in Jordan	464	92.6%

Relations in Country of Destination

Relationship with fellow Egyptians and Jordanians

As for respondents who maintain regular contacts with other Egyptians in Jordan, the percent is very high (92.6 percent). However, the percent of those who reported that they have any relationships with Jordanians outside the workplace is low (only 23.8 percent). Despite the reported low interaction with Jordanians outside the workplace, respondents reported a strong sense of integration in Jordan. By integration here we mean the process by which immigrants become accepted into society, both as individuals and as groups. This definition of integration is deliberately left open and there were no particular indicators associated to it, as the requirements for acceptance rest not with one particular group, but rather with many actors (Egyptian migrants themselves, the host government, institutions, and communities) which would have required a prolonged assessment, beyond the scope of the study. The percent of Egyptian migrants in Jordan who reported that they are fully integrated is almost 60 percent. In addition, 25.5 percent reported that they somewhat integrated. The percent of the two categories (those who reported that they are fully or somewhat integrated together) amounts for 85 percent of respondents.

Based on the above results and the majority of statements in the IDIs, it is clear that most Egyptian migrants are clustered together and are not well integrated into the Jordanian society, contrary to what survey respondents claim. The relationships between Egyptians and Jordanians are seen to be mostly professional and therefore, superficial. Some migrants and returnees stated that there is a sense of superiority from Jordanians towards Egyptians and that jobs taken up by Egyptians are considered of inferior status. Many, however, said that their attitudes vary between good and bad. In addition, many indicated that integration in the Jordanian society has been difficult at the beginning due to the slight difference in dialect.

“Integration is easy because you only owe him (the employer) 4 or 5 hours of work then he takes you back to the accommodation and that’s it.”- An Egyptian agricultural worker in Al Balqaa

Relationship with Syrians and other nationalities

Relationships between Egyptian migrant workers and Syrian refugees seem to be mostly superficial or nonexistent. The majority of the interviewed migrants indicated that there is no contact between them and Syrian refugees. The reason for that might be that they mostly work in different sectors. In the agricultural sector, where they both work, they do not perform the same tasks and hence, there is minimal to no interaction. Many of them said that they are on good terms with Syrian refugees; yet some indicated that there is tension between them initiated by Syrian refugees because of competition.

The interviewed Egyptian migrants indicated that other migrants in Jordan come from India, Bangladesh, Palestine, Iraq and Yemen. According to the interviewed Egyptian migrants, there seems to be minimal or no contact between them and migrants from other nationalities. The few who have expressed that they interact with migrants from other nationalities, explained that these interactions are usually friendly.

Remittances and Transfer of Knowledge

This section examines remitting patterns, volumes and the use of remittances. Skill acquisition and transfer of knowledge to sending country are also examined.

Remittances pattern and volume

As shown in Table 5.1 below, 76.2 percent of the survey population sends remittances to Egypt. About 24 percent do not. The absence of remittances may be attributed, in part, to the short duration of migration for newcomers or financial hardships. As for the method of sending remittances to Egypt, money transfer companies rank first with about 62 percent of respondents, followed by sending money with relatives or friends with 22.5 percent of the migrants, while bank transfers are used by 15.4 percent of the respondents.

As for the recipients of remittances in Egypt, respondents indicate that the main recipients are their partners (53.3 percent) and their parents (38.8 percent). With respect to the percent of income saved/remitted by Egyptian migrants in Jordan, the results indicate that Egyptian migrants save/remitted an average of 56.7 percent of their income while abroad. The annual amount of money a migrant sends to Egypt averages 2009.15 JOD which is equivalent to about 47 thousand Egyptian Pound.

When asked how the remittances volume changed over the years, the IDI responses were diverse. Some participants indicated that their remittances have been maintained throughout the years. Others explained that the amounts they send decreased due to the increasing living expenses in Jordan and the limited opportunities of work. Contrary to the quantitative results, the IDIs revealed that day laborers, who are predominantly irregular migrants, work less days per month and thus, their remittances have been negatively affected. As for full-time employees who used to work overtime as a way of increasing their income, they have also been negatively affected due to the lack of opportunities for working extra hours. The influx of Syrian refugees and the increased permit costs have been mentioned as factors that impacted migrants' remittances. Some participants indicated that their remittances have increased over the years. Some attributed this to salary increase and other attributed it to the increasing living costs of their families in Egypt and the decreasing value of the currency which encouraged them to increase the amounts that they remit.

"I increased my remittances in recent years because life in Egypt has become more expensive. I had to move in with another person and to get a second job in order to be able to sustain a living here."- An Egyptian worker in Amman.

Table 5.1
Remittances Pattern and Volume of Egyptian Workers in Jordan

	Number	Percent
Migrants who send remittances while in Jordan	382	76.2
Method of sending remittances to Egypt		
Money transfer companies	236	61.8
With relatives/friends	86	22.5
Bank transfer	59	15.4
Bring money with me when I visit Egypt	1	0.3
Total	382	100.0

Recipients of remittances in Egypt		
Partner (Wife/Husband)	203	53.3
Parents	148	38.8
Own bank account	13	3.4
Other relatives/cousins	8	2.1
Others	9	2.4
Total	381	100.0

Percent of income saved/remitted while abroad		
Less than 25%	14	3.8
25%-49%	36	9.4
50%-74%	291	76.1
75% or more	41	10.8
Total	382	100.0
Mean		56.7

Amount of money saved/remitted in the last year abroad (JD)

Minimum		200
Maximum		5000.0
Mean		2,009.2
Std. Deviation		826.8
Total		382

Use of Remittances

The literature on return migrants' use of remittances in Egypt indicates that remittances are mainly used to cover household living expenses. Only a small percentage of remittances is used for savings and "productive investments", i.e. for activities with multiplier effects in terms of income and employment creation (Brink 1991; Zohry 2005). However, the entrepreneurial activities of return migrants contribute to the Egyptian economy. Investments by return migrants are a continuation of their support to the national economy. The results of the field survey yield the same pattern of remittances utilization (Wahba & Zenou, 2012). As shown in Table 5.2 below, 96.9 percent of the study population indicated that they use remittances to cover their households' living expenses, while only 2.9 percent indicated that they use remittances to start a business. When asked to prioritize remittances utilization, covering household living expenses ranked first with 76.9 percent, followed by buying/building a house (12.3 percent).

The qualitative data further confirms that remittances are used to cover the living costs of the migrants' families in Egypt. They are also used as investments in human capital directed towards education for children and healthcare for the elderly. It has also been mentioned by some participants that their remittances are used to cover their marriage costs, or those of sisters or daughters. Moreover, some indicated that they have used their remittances to build a house in their village in Egypt.

The use of remittances seems to be related to the profile of the migrant and the life stage that they are in. For example, young unmarried migrants tend to use their

remittances to cover their marriage costs. However, if they have younger siblings, the remittances are often sent to the parents to cover the living costs of the family. After getting married and having children their remittances would be usually used to sustain a living for their wives and children in Egypt.

Table 5.2
Use of Remittances of Egyptian Workers in Jordan

	Number	Percent
Use of remittances*		
Covering household living expenses	369	96.9
Buying/building a house	116	30.4
Total	382	100.0

Buying agricultural land	63	16.5
Putting them into a savings account	36	9.4
Starting a business in Egypt	11	2.9
Improving an existing business in Egypt	8	2.1
Other	24	6.3
Total	381	100.0

Most important aspect for remittances utilization		
Cover current expenses of the family	369	96.9
Buy or build a house / apartment	116	30.4
Purchase agricultural land	382	100.0
Put them into a savings account	12	3.1
Develop an existing project	3	0.8
Other	7	1.8
Total	381	100.0

* Multiple responses allowed.

Skill Acquisition and Transfer of Knowledge

In addition to monetary and in-kind remittances, skill transfer through return migrants is an important aspect that links migration to the development of origin countries. According to the field survey results, only 19.6 percent of migrants indicated that they acquired new skills while in Jordan.

As for the type of new skills migrants acquired abroad, the results indicate that out of those who declared that they acquired new skills, the type of skills are mainly technical/work-related skills. About 75 percent of respondents indicated that they think they can apply these skills when/if they return to Egypt. Only 24 respondents indicated that they can't apply the skills they acquired in Jordan when/if they return to Egypt.

Those who indicated that they cannot apply the acquired skills upon return were asked to give reasons for their inability to apply such skills in Egypt should they return. Some 37.5 percent of respondents attributed that to the fact that the acquired skills serve experiences other than their work in Egypt, while 25 percent attributed their inability to apply acquired skills to the poor or no infrastructure to enable them to apply their skills in Egypt. In addition, 37.5 percent attributed their inability to bureaucracy in Egypt.

Table 5.3
Skill Transfer through Return Migrants from Jordan

Skill Transfer	Frequency	Percent
Number/Percent acquired new skill while abroad	98	19.6
Kind of skills acquired while abroad*		
Technical/work-related skills	98	100.0
Administrative skills	1	1.0
Personal and communication skills	3	3.0
Total	98	100.0
Number/Percent acquired new skill while abroad who think they can apply these skills when/when they return to Egypt	74	75.5
Reasons behind failure to apply skills acquired abroad upon return		
Different field than respondents' work in Egypt	9	37.5
Poor or no infrastructure to enable application of skills in Egypt	6	25.0
Unsuccessful examples respondents heard about	9	37.5
Total	24	100.0

* Multiple responses allowed.

Reasons for Return

Migrants return to Egypt for various reasons. Those can be classified under social, economic, health and legal reasons. The social reasons are reuniting with family and the desire to settle down. Among the economic reasons are the increase in living expenses in Jordan and the rising permit renewal fees. Health reasons either relate to aging or health conditions, which prevent migrants from continuing to work in Jordan. Those are usually associated with high-risk jobs in the construction sector. For example, workers at stone factories are exposed to dust for a prolonged period of time and thus they often develop respiratory problems. One returnee explained that he has experienced a foot injury at work, which has debilitated him from working, thus he decided to return to Egypt. Another returnee lost an eye in a work accident in Jordan, thus the company refused to renew his contract. The legal reasons for return are usually the termination of the contract, or deportation in the case of irregular work. There were also temporary reasons for return such as marriage. In other words, an Egyptian migrant would travel to Jordan with the intention of saving for marriage. Once he is financially capable of getting married, he returns to Egypt temporarily and resumes his work in Jordan after landing on a suitable opportunity.

“I got tired of living abroad. I stayed for a long period there and then I thought I might find a job here. I got tired of travelling. I wanted to live with my children.”- Egyptian returnee in Beni Sueif

“I returned to Egypt to get married, then I wanted to travel back to Jordan, but I found out that the system changed, and I had to get a work contract. The first time I traveled before 1985, there were no contracts.”- An Egyptian returnee in Beni Sueif

It is evident as such that none of the returnees associated their return to the Syrian influx specifically. The impact of the Syrian influx will be explained in the next section.

With regard to reintegration in Egypt, there are two aspects that have most affected returnees; financial and social. Many participants explained that integration in Egypt was difficult for them in terms of finding jobs and being able to cover the living costs of their families. As for the social aspect, responses have been diverse. Some indicated not having had any difficulties in integration upon their return to Egypt. Others expressed having difficulties due to the long periods they spent away from their family and friends. It is worth highlighting, however, that the majority of interviewed returnees expressed their wish to return to Jordan if the opportunity arises. This aspiration was highly attributed to economic reasons, as they believe they would be capable of saving more money if they were in Jordan, despite the increasing migration and work permit costs.

“I swear to God, if I get the chance, I would travel back as soon as possible because I want to support my children, for example to help one to get married, and to help the other to buy an apartment”- An Egyptian returnee in Beni-Sueif

Syrian Refugees and Egyptian Migrants in Jordan

As shown in Table 6.1 below, 77.4 percent of respondents reported that they believe that the presence of Syrians in Jordan (negatively) affected the Egyptians job opportunities in Jordan. Respondents who reported that Egyptian workers in Jordan were affected by the presence of Syrians were asked to report the nature of this impact. About 96 percent of respondents reported that Syrians affected Egyptians because they accept lower wages than Egyptians for the same job. The second form of Syrian influence as stated by respondent was that Syrians can work without a work permit, stated by 68.6 percent of respondents. Other reasons stated by respondents include that Syrians help each other (in finding jobs), stated by 14.7 percent of respondents; Jordanians prefer Syrians over Egyptians, stated by 11.1 percent of respondents, and that Syrians are professionally better than Egyptians, stated by 3.6 percent of respondents.

Moving from the general question about the impact of Syrians on the opportunities of Egyptians in the Jordanian labor market, respondents were asked to declare whether they were personally affected by the presence of Syrians, and in which way. Regarding their own work, 62.1 percent of the respondents stated that their own work was affected by the presence of Syrians in Jordan. The main impact stated by 66.4 percent of the respondents was their decreased saving amount. Decreased salaries/income was stated by 54.8 percent of respondents. As a consequence of the decreased income and decreased savings, 44 percent of respondents reported that the amounts they used to send to Egypt decreased. Moreover, 38.2 percent of respondents reported that they stayed unemployed for a while. In addition, about 25 percent of respondents reported that they changed their job as a consequence of the presence of Syrian in the Jordanian labor market. No salient variations of the impact of the presence of Syrians on the chances of Egyptians working in Jordan by

sector. See Table 6.1 for more details.

The qualitative data results, however, unfold that at the micro-level the impact of the Syrian influx may not be as explicit as was indicated in the survey results. When asked whether or not Syrians compete with Egyptian migrants in the job market, most IDI participants explained that Syrian refugees generally compete with Egyptians on jobs that are not physically demanding, which is slightly contrary to the results of the survey. As it has appeared in some KIIs, Egyptians are willing to take on physically exhausting jobs, work for longer hours and are seen to be innately more physically capable than Syrian refugees. Therefore, there is limited presence of Syrians in the construction sector, as many have explained. However, Syrians are believed to compete mainly with Egyptians on certain jobs in the agricultural sector and in the services sector. In the agricultural sector, Syrians are given the role of harvesting and collecting produce on farms more than Egyptian migrants, as they are usually accompanied with their families who assist in the labor and cost the employer less in terms of wages. The more technical jobs in the agricultural sector are given to Egyptians, as they are more familiar with farming generally.

On the other hand, the majority of Egyptian migrants believe that Syrian refugees drive down wages. They attribute this to the fact that Syrian refugees receive humanitarian assistance for food and accommodation, which allows them to cover their basic needs and thus can accept low salaries. This encourages more employers to hire Syrian refugees, for a less cost. However, some migrants expressed that employers still prefer Egyptian migrants as they are highly reliable, willing to take on any task and are more committed to the job, despite costing employers more. Finally, some migrants and returnees disclosed that many incentives are given to employers to hire Syrian refugees as opposed to Egyptian migrants, since their employment paperwork is easier and they do not need to give proof to enjoy social security.

“We [Egyptians] work here as farmers, but they [Syrians] did affect the workforce. You used to bring in 10 to 15 [Egyptian] farmers to harvest the produce, and you work for an equivalent of 2.5 JOD per hour, while the Syrian earns 1 JOD. The employer would think that instead of recruiting an Egyptian to harvest, I’d bring in two Syrians. They’ll work more than the Egyptian, as they’ll finish the work in two hours whereas the one Egyptian might take up to four hours. But every job has its expert. Syrian girls are capable of carrying out the easy jobs on the farm but the hard jobs generally are only done by the Egyptians anywhere. They [Syrians] maybe affecting the easy jobs but no one, not even the Jordanian, can fill in for the demanding jobs as much as the Egyptians.”- An Egyptian agriculture worker in Al Ghour.

“They [Syrians] had a great impact [on the labor market]. Some Jordanian employers instead of bringing an Egyptian and pay him 400 JOD, would bring a Syrian and pay him 200 JOD instead. They would say it’s a hassle to issue an Egyptian a work permit and he would cost me more. They divert their attention to the Syrian as long as he is clean and he doesn’t owe anyone anything. Even if he gets arrested [for not having a work permit], he’ll stay in prison for two days and get released. Us, Egyptians, if we get arrested, we either pay a fine or get deported”- An Egyptian migrant working in a restaurant in Amman

Table 6.1
General Impact of the Presence of Syrians on the Egyptians' working opportunities in Jordan by Sector


	Sector			Total
	Services	Agriculture	Constructions	
Respondents who think that the presence of Syrians in Jordan affected the Egyptians working opportunities in Jordan	137 (67.8%)	188 (94.5%)	63 (63.0%)	388 (77.4%)
Reasons the presence of Syrians affected the Egyptians working opportunities in Jordan*				
Because Syrians accept lower wages than Egyptians for the same job	132 (96.4%)	181 (96.3%)	60 (95.2%)	373 (96.1%)
Because they can work without a work permit	95 (69.3%)	126 (67.0%)	45 (71.4%)	266 (68.6%)
Because their number is large in Jordan	49 (35.8%)	50 (26.6%)	17 (27.0%)	116 (29.9%)
Because they help each other	24 (17.5%)	20 (10.6%)	13 (20.6%)	57 (14.7%)
Because the Jordanians prefer Syrians over Egyptians	30 (21.9%)	5 (2.7%)	8 (12.7%)	43 (11.1%)
Because they are professionally better than Egyptians	11 (8.0%)	1 (0.5%)	2 (3.2%)	14 (3.6%)
Other	2 (1.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.6%)	3 (0.8%)
Total	137 (100.0%)	188 (100.0%)	63 (100.0%)	388 (100.0%)

* Multiple responses allowed.

Table 6.2
Direct Impact of the Presence of Syrians on the Egyptians' working opportunities in Jordan by sector

	Sector			Total
	Services	Agriculture	Constructions	
Respondents who reported that their work was affected by the presence of Syrians in Jordan	60 (43.8%)	147 (78.2%)	34 (54.0%)	241 (62.1%)
Ways the presence of Syrians affect the chances of Egyptians working in Jordan				
The amount of money respondents used to save decreased	24 (40.0%)	111 (75.5%)	34 (54.0%)	241 (62.1%)
Respondents' salary / income decreased	37 (61.7%)	77 (52.4%)	18 (52.9%)	132 (54.8%)
The amount of money respondents used to send to Egypt decreased	24 (40.0%)	67 (45.6%)	15 (44.1%)	106 (44.0%)
Respondents left work and stayed unemployment for a while	25 (41.7%)	60 (40.8%)	7 (20.6%)	92 (38.2%)
Respondents changed their jobs	18 (30.0%)	34 (23.1%)	8 (23.5%)	60 (24.9%)
Other	5 (8.3%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (29.4%)	15 (6.2%)
Total	60 (100.0%)	147 (100.0%)	34 (100.0%)	241 (100.0%)

* Multiple responses allowed.



To get a better perspective on the status of the competition between Egyptian migrants and Syrian refugees in Jordan, a number of Syrian refugees were interviewed who worked in the same three sectors most Egyptians were present in. Understanding the other side of the competition confirms certain factors that may have been unraveled from the Egyptian side.

Competition with Egyptian Migrants


Most Syrian interview participants indicated that there is limited competition between them and Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan, allegedly due to the better quality of the work performed by Syrians. Several Syrian interview participants working in interior decor mentioned that Palestinians are those competing with them the most as their level of technical skills in this field is comparable to that of Syrians. As indicated by the interview participants, very few Egyptian migrants in Jordan have the technical skills that allow them to compete with Syrian refugees in the field of interior decor. Egyptians, according to them, are more prevalent in jobs that require physical strength rather than technical skills such as construction work.

“To tell you the truth, Egyptians are hard workers, however they lack the technical skills especially in our work of interior decor and painting.” - Syrian refugee in Irbid

“It takes me half a day to paint one wall, so I charge 50 JOD for it. The materials cost me 20 JOD and I charge 30 JOD for my labor so a full daily wage. Then comes an Egyptian, does the job with a lower quality and charges 10 JOD.” - Syrian refugee in Amman

Competition between Syrians and Egyptians in Jordan seems to be present, yet it is weak. It depends on the type of job within the work sector. Based on the results of the interviews, jobs that require physical strength are mostly occupied by Egyptians and jobs that require technical skills are mostly occupied by Syrians. Both Egyptian migrant workers and Syrian refugees in Jordan indicated that the other accepts lower wages to compete with them. This finding has been quite perplexing. However, going to a deeper level of analysis yields a plausible explanation for this finding. It can be inferred that Egyptians accept lower wages when trying to compete for a job that more Syrians have the skill for in order to compensate for their limited technical skills. An Egyptian worker seeking a job as a wall painter would accept a lower wage than a Syrian worker competing for the same job as he is aware of the inferiority of his technical skill compared to the Syrian worker. Syrians seeking a job that requires physical strength also accept lower wages to compensate for their low productivity in those jobs compared to Egyptian workers. For example a Syrian worker cognizant of his competitive disadvantage in competing for a job in construction would accept a lower wage to compensate for his relatively low productivity.

Another possible explanation for the slight competition between Egyptians and Syrians in Jordan is according to one Syrian participant that Egyptians ask for lower wages for jobs because they take more than one job. He gave the example of porters who do wall painting as a second job. Since they have regular income from the first job, they appreciate any additional income, which would be insufficient for a Syrian worker who only has one job.



“The problem is that if you trace him (an Egyptian worker), you would find out that he works primarily as a porter; yet still wants to take a second job as a plumber, a painter or a smith. He needs to send his family 400-500 JOD weekly, so he works in everything.” - A Syrian refugee in Amman

Most Egyptian workers live in Jordan without their families. This exempts them from family obligations, which allows them to take a second job in Jordan. Moreover, their need to send remittances to their families in Egypt gives them the incentive to take a second job. Seeking any opportunity to increase their income, Egyptian workers would accept a lower salary for this job than a Syrian worker who plans to take one job only. Syrian workers are less likely to take a second job since they have their families with them in Jordan. This does not give them the time to take an extra job. In consequence, Egyptian workers taking second jobs seem to be pulling wages down in certain jobs, negatively affecting the livelihoods of Syrian workers.

Other Factors

There are a couple of factors that affect the employment of both Egyptians and Syrians in Jordan. The fees for issuing or renewing a work permit for a Syrian refugee in Jordan are by far less than those for an Egyptian migrant. Moreover, there is not much control on Syrians working irregularly since, as explained by many Egyptian migrants and stakeholders, they can get arrested for a few days but they cannot get deported like it is the case with Egyptian migrant workers who work irregularly. This gives Syrians an advantage allowing them to ask for lower wages; yet their living costs in Jordan are higher than the living costs of Egyptians since they have their families with them in Jordan. In addition they have family obligations which usually do not allow them to take more than one job. Egyptians however, usually live in Jordan without their families.

5. Discussion


Following the conceptual framework explained above, we try to unpack and further analyze the results of the study according to the three divisions indicated in the framework; migration determinants, migration experience and return migration.

Migration Determinants

In the context of this study, capital assets of migrants are the resources in migrants' possession enabling them to migrate to Jordan. Those are financial, natural, human, physical and social.

Financial assets are migrants' financial resources, which enable them to migrate. The majority of migrants do not have sufficient financial resources to cover the cost of migration. Hence, they resort to borrowing money from relatives and friends. The majority of survey respondents borrowed money from relatives followed by fewer respondents who borrowed money from friends. Since relatives and friends are considered migrants' social assets in the SLA, it is obvious that there is sometimes an intersection between financial and social assets. According to the survey results, when financial assets are insufficient, social assets could make up for this gap.

The *natural assets* in the context of this study are the geographic location of Jordan and the slightly similar agricultural system in both Egypt and Jordan. A natural asset that facilitates the migration of Egyptians to Jordan is the proximity of Jordan. The geographic proximity renders travelling to Jordan not very costly or exhausting. The



other natural asset that enables Egyptians to work in Jordan is the similarity of the nature of agriculture in Jordan. The majority of Egyptian migrants in Jordan come from rural areas in Egypt. Thus, many among them have experience in agriculture. Due to the similar crops and similar weather conditions, Egyptians can apply the skills that they have acquired while working in agriculture in Egypt, on their work in Jordan.


Human assets refer to education qualifications, work experience and good health. The majority of migrants who have participated in the survey have obtained some level of education. The majority have completed intermediate education which includes technical and vocational education. It is, however, not clear if the education, which they have received, raised their ability to migrate. None of the interviewed migrants have mentioned anything regarding that matter. As for work experience, some migrants explained that they have learned the skills needed for their jobs in Jordan from supervisors or co-workers with more experience. Some also passed on those skills to other new-coming Egyptian migrants. Those working in agriculture often had the needed skills from their work experience in Egypt and thus did not need much training in Jordan. Good health is a requirement for migrating to Jordan. Migrants go through a medical check-up in Egypt before travelling and a medical check-up as well in Jordan after they arrive. This ensures that all migrants travelling to Jordan are healthy.

With regards to *physical assets* that include supporting infrastructure, tools and equipment, our study found that there are no particular physical assets facilitating migration of Egyptians to Jordan.

The *social assets* of migrants are their networks of friends and relatives living in Jordan as well as those who have returned to Egypt. Migration networks reduce the risk and cost of migration for migrants. According to the survey results, the vast majority of respondents indicated that their source of information regarding migration to Jordan, have been friends or relatives. This is also supported by the qualitative findings, where the majority of the interview participants indicated having known about the process of migrating to Jordan or having found an employment opportunity in Jordan through relatives or friends.

Migrants from the same families or coming from the same villages in Egypt, are often clustered in certain areas in Jordan. Some of the interviewed migrants explained that they go to live in the areas where they have relatives or friends since they could provide them with financial and social support in the beginning of their migration experience. This has been noticed by the research team during the fieldwork in Jordan.

Regarding *vulnerabilities and trends*, and according to the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study, the two main reasons that lead Egyptians to migrate to Jordan, are low wages in Egypt and the lack of job opportunities. Low wages and unemployment are trends that have influenced many Egyptian males to migrate to Jordan. Wages in Egypt are considerably lower than in Jordan. The value of the Jordanian Dinar is much higher than that of the Egyptian Pound. This encourages many Egyptian males to migrate to Jordan, expecting to receive higher wages there. Egypt has been offering low paying jobs and experiencing high unemployment rates since the 1980s. The labor market has not been able to absorb the vast number of youths looking for jobs. Hence, in the last four decades, many Egyptian males who have found difficulty in finding employment opportunities in Egypt, have sought employment in Jordan.



In terms of *policies, institutions and processes*, even though the process of migration to Jordan is considered less costly and generally easier than other countries, a key concern is the increased cost of work permits that pushes more Egyptian migrants to violate the regulations and turn towards irregularity of their migration status. The informality of the migration process also leaves room for brokers and intermediaries to overcharge potential migrants who are not always aware of the procedures. A further concern is linking work permits to specific employers. This exposes Egyptian migrant workers to exploitation and denies workers any bargaining powers. It also raises challenges for workers who wish to work across a portfolio of jobs to support their livelihoods. However, with the introduction of the flexible work permits scheme, such a concern could be addressed, even though it is expensive and does not guarantee social security for the employee.

Migration Experience


Examining work conditions, the study specifically highlighted the risks facing workers in the construction and sometimes the agriculture sectors, noting that they are often denied the right to just and favorable conditions of work through non-enforcement of labor legislation (CESCR General Comment No. 23 2016). Their reliance on deregulated labor regimes, non-enforcement of labor-law protections and migrant workers who are less likely to exercise their labor rights to increase productivity and lower costs (Lenner & Turner 2018) has often been held to be incompatible with the requirements of international human rights law to ensure jobs are free from harm, abuse and exploitation. Of the experts and migrant rights organizations interviewed, human rights concerns were highlighted in regard to Egyptian migrant workers working in the agriculture and construction sectors who tend to live on-site, work longer hours and be more easily exploited.

At the macro level, starting from 2013, remittances to Egypt from Jordan decreased sharply. Remittances reached their peak in 2012 by recording a level of 3.8 billion USD.

In 2013 and afterward, remittances decreased to an average level of 1.1 billion USD only. These findings are supported by the micro level data of this survey where about two-thirds of respondents who reported that their work was affected by the presence of Syrians in Jordan reported that the amount of money they used to save decreased. In addition, 44 percent reported that the amount of money they used to send to Egypt decreased. A few, on the other hand, in the qualitative results mentioned that they remitted more.

As for the perceptions of Egyptian workers regarding the negative impact of the presence of Syrians on the chances of Egyptians working in Jordan, these findings support the findings of previous studies such as the study of the Economic and Social Council (2016) and the study of Wahba (2018). The qualitative data also reveal that Syrian refugees cost employers less than Egyptian workers, in terms of work permits and wages, which thus works as an incentive for employers to hire Syrian refugees. In addition, there is generally a differentiation between wages among Jordanians and non-Jordanians acts as an incentive for employers to hire foreigners, rather than nationals. Given that Jordan seeks to lower unemployment, this is an anomaly that should be addressed as it decreases the employment of Jordanians.

From a *lifestyle factors* perspective, Egyptians have a close cultural affiliation and are easily able to communicate with their employers. Even though Egyptians are generally not culturally affiliated with the countries of the Levant who share distinct



cultural practices (including cuisine and attire) and a close dialect, unlike Syrians, they are still considered familial relation. With the shared language, traditions, religions as well as the proximity of the two countries, Egyptians and their Jordanian employers find it easy to interact with one another.


With regards to *living conditions*, most Egyptian migrant workers who have been interviewed, live in inadequate accommodation. It is not always provided to them by the employer; however, when it is provided, it is often in a very poor condition. Some interview participants described that the rooms that they are offered, are covered by metal sheets as a ceiling which exposes them to very harsh weather conditions both in summer and in winter.

Many of the interviewed migrants whose employers did not provide them with accommodation tend to rent shared rooms, which are usually overcrowded. On average four to five people live together in one room. They opt for this to minimize their living costs in Jordan. This illustrates the temporary nature of Egyptian labor migration to Jordan. Egyptian migrants consider their stay in Jordan temporary. They have a clear objective namely to increase their income; thus, the majority of them compromise their living conditions to maximize their remittances. They consider living in decent accommodation as a luxury that they cannot afford. If their remittances are not significantly higher than the income that they would have earned if they had stayed in Egypt, working in Jordan would not be worth the hassle for them. Hence, they compromise their comfort in every aspect.

The life choices of migrant workers are limited by the terms of their temporary employment contracts (Stasiulis, 2008). Egyptian migrant workers live in proximity of their workplace indicated in the work permit. They rarely travel to other governorates because if they are caught, it would be suspected that they might be working for a different employer than the one who has sponsored them which would then be considered a legal violation. Syrian refugees, however, are granted more freedom of mobility since their contracts are not tied to a specific employer or a specific geographic location.

As part of *the social and community factors*, Egyptian migrants in Jordan live in clusters and their interactions with Jordanians are only considered superficial. According to the quantitative findings of the study, Egyptian migrants consider themselves to be well integrated in Jordan. The majority of survey respondents indicated that they are fully integrated in Jordan. However, the percentage of those who reported that they have any relationships with Jordanians outside the workplace is low. This seeming contradiction in the survey results is clarified by the results of the interviews with the migrants and the returnees. It can be inferred from the qualitative findings that the understanding of most of the survey respondents and interview participants of the concept of integration refers to integration within the Egyptian communities in Jordan rather than integration within the Jordanian society. Many interviewees explained that they feel that they are well integrated in Jordan because they spend most of their time with Egyptians. Their relationships to Jordanians are superficial and mostly professional. As for survey respondents who maintain regular contacts with other Egyptians in Jordan, the percent is very high (92.6 percent). This further supports the argument that Egyptians live in clusters and only have superficial interactions with Jordanians.

The temporary nature of Egyptian labor migration to Jordan is further asserted by



the fact that migrant workers in Jordan are rarely accompanied by their families. Among the migrants who have been interviewed, none mentioned that they are accompanied by their wives and children. Very few migrants and returnees said that they brought their families to Jordan but had to send them back to Egypt due to the high living costs for a family in Jordan. The rest did not get their families because of the legal restrictions and because it is considered inappropriate in some parts of Egypt that migrants take their wives abroad with them. Their relationships to their families in Egypt are only virtual, mainly via Facebook Messenger according to the survey results.


The engagement of Egyptian migrant workers in social activities is obviously very low. As explained by the migrants, they do not have time or energy for social activities. They wake up early in the morning for work. In the evening, they return home to cook and eat dinner together, then they rest for a while and go to bed. They consider engagement in social activities as a luxury that they cannot afford. However, the lack of engagement in social activities by Egyptian migrants and the lack of family support available to them in Jordan might have a negative impact on migrants' psychological state, even unconsciously. Most of the interviewed migrants mentioned the feeling of home-sickness as a disadvantage of living in Jordan. Hence, the availability of social activities targeted at Egyptians might help them overcome this feeling.

As for *governance conditions*, inspection of violations, whether on the part of the worker or the employer is evidently a major overlooked issue. A further concern that was unraveled is the wage discrepancy between nationals and non-national workers in Jordan. Semi-skilled jobs available to Egyptian migrants attract only a minimum wage, which is JD 60 a month lower than that paid to nationals for equivalent work. Jordanian stakeholders and experts themselves have voiced concern at the inadequacy of this wage amount to meet the high costs of living in Jordan during the validation workshops. Such low wages are exacerbated by inadequate or no social protection, especially in the agricultural sector, which is a risk facing many migrants. Moreover, where wages are insufficient to meet the cost of living and risk placing migrants into destitution and poverty, is itself contrary to international human rights law and international labor law.

Return Migration

Qualitative data evidently show that the migration process to Jordan is cyclical with the majority of respondents wanting to return to work in Jordan if the chance arises. Structural factors relate to conditions at home and in host country. Jordan has been experiencing an economic slow-down in the past few years, which according to migrants and returnees has negatively affected their wages and their chances of finding employment opportunities in Jordan. Day laborers seem to be the ones who have been most affected by the economic slow-down since their work conditions are very precarious and their income is unstable. In consequence, the amounts that they remit decrease. At that point, some migrants consider their stay abroad not worth the hassle and therefore, decide to return to Egypt.

Another *structural factor* that influences migrants' decision to return to Egypt, are the rising permit renewal fees. A few migrants and returnees expressed that they decided to return to Egypt since they could not afford to renew their permit. They referred to the high fees for contracts and for the medical check-up as well as the high amount paid to the broker.



Among common reasons for return from Jordan are *family and life cycle* factors. Several interview participants indicated having returned from Jordan to settle down and spend time with their families. Since migrant workers usually live in Jordan without their families, they consider their stay there to be temporary. The question for them is not whether to return, but when to return. After having lived several years in Jordan, six years on average, many Egyptian migrants feel the desire to return to Egypt and settle down. Some migrants expressed that they need to return home to help their wives raise their children at the critical age of adolescence. This illustrates how family factors could influence migrants' decisions to return to Egypt.

In the context of this study, the main *policy interventions*, which could influence Egyptian migrants' decision to return to Egypt, are the waivers granted by the Jordanian government to encourage employers to hire Syrian refugees. Those include lower permit and medical check-up fees for Syrians as well as the waiver on submission of proof of social security. Many migrants referred to competition between Egyptians and Syrians over job opportunities. However, none of the returnees attributed their return to the competition with Syrians. One returnee who has returned in 2016 explained that it is now difficult for an Egyptian to find a job opportunity in Jordan; yet he himself returned due to the end of his permit and his interest to explore job opportunities in Egypt.

Many of the interviewed migrants expressed the desire to return to Egypt; however only after they have reached a certain *economic status* in the form of financial capital, ownership of assets and goods or housing. Some migrants would return after they have accumulated sufficient financial capital to fulfill certain duties/obligations such as covering their own marriage costs or costs of the marriage of their sisters or daughters. Those who have children, aim to cover the costs of their children's education before they return to Egypt. There are migrants who intend to return after they have secured assets in Egypt such as a land or agricultural equipment and there are those who would only return after they have built a house in Egypt.

The economic status plays a role in the dynamic of cyclical migration. Some migrants explained that they returned from Jordan after they fulfilled one form of economic status such as securing marriage costs. However, after that they aspire to build a house, so they travel to Jordan again to achieve that goal and then return. Some migrants go through this process multiple times before their final return.

Migrants' *social status* is related to their economic status. Many migrants mentioned that if they return to Egypt without having reached a certain economic status visible to everyone, they would be considered a failure. Thus, many migrants decide to stay in Jordan, even if they endure a bad work experience, only to reach a certain economic status that would make them look successful in the eyes of their communities in Egypt, hence worthy of respect upon their return.

6. Implications for Policy, Practice and Research

Policy Implications

Unify the minimum wage in Jordan all across nationals and foreigners, whether migrants or refugees

There is a significant gap between the minimum wage for Jordanian nationals and that for migrants and refugees. The minimum wage for Jordanians is 220 JOD and for migrants and refugees 150 JOD. To safeguard migrant workers and refugees against exploitation and to reduce their vulnerability in the labor market, the minimum wage in Jordan should be unified across nationals and foreigners. It is also worth-mentioning that this differentiation acts against the employment of Jordanians.

Unify the requirements for the social security system, medical insurance and work permits across all migrants and refugees

The requirements asked of migrants and refugees differ based on nationality. For example, the permit costs differ greatly between migrants and refugees. Also, given that Egyptians are the only nationality expected to pay the USD 250 upon arrival to Jordan, this instruction thus views Egyptians less favorably than any other migrant workers and refugees on the basis of nationality and which needs to be adjusted to ensure equal treatment. The equality of treatment would enable a level playing field for Egyptian migrant workers and Syrian refugees. Differences in conditions of work would then only be determined by qualifications and skills. In addition, there are a few differences across sectors that works against the migrants/refugees. For example, social security is not enforced in the agriculture sector whereas it is enforced in construction and services sectors. This needs to be unified by the Ministry of Labor and the Social Security Corporation to achieve equal conditions for all migrants. Equal treatment should be enjoyed by all migrants and refugees under the migration scheme dictated by GoJ.

Address loopholes in flexible work permits

In principle, the flexible work permit could be considered a positive development; however, some issues need to be addressed. Migrants with flexible work permits would not be covered by social security; hence they would be working under very precarious conditions. This puts them at a clear disadvantage compared to workers with regular contracts. In addition, the permit fees are considerably higher than those of regular construction or agriculture contracts and they are to be paid by the worker himself, even though the bilateral agreement states otherwise. This puts too much of a burden on the migrant worker. To encourage more migrants to opt for flexible permits, these loopholes need to be addressed first.


Ensure that migrants are not penalized for violations committed by their employers regarding social security

Employers often fail to pay the monthly fee for their employees' social security. In consequence the employees are denied social security when they leave Jordan. In such cases, employees should not be penalized, as they have not committed any sort of violation. In addition, such violations should be detected early on and the employers should be obliged to register their employees in social security as well as to pay the monthly amount to the Social Security Corporation.

Programmatic Implications

Guarantee that all migrant workers issue work permits on an annual basis

Migrant workers working with expired work permits are vulnerable. They live in a state



of insecurity in Jordan. Violations are committed against them and they do not report out of fear of being caught and deported. In addition, if their permits are expired, they do not qualify for social security. To reduce the vulnerability of migrants and to ensure that they get their rights, it needs to be guaranteed that all migrant workers issue work permits on an annual basis through regular inspection by the Ministry of Labor and constant awareness-raising activities by both governments and civil societies in Egypt and Jordan.

Ensure that all migrant workers are medically covered and informed of that

Migrant workers rarely have medical insurance although those working in the construction sector are often subject to work injuries and those working in agriculture live in inadequate accommodation leading to their frequent illness in winter. To ensure a dignified migration experience for Egyptian migrants in Jordan, whether their status is formal or informal, the Egyptian and the Jordanian government should cooperate to provide appropriate medical coverage for them. The migrant workers would need to be notified of such regulations to know their rights.

Raise the awareness of migrant workers on social security

Migrant workers are often unaware that they are enrolled in social security and thus, they return to Egypt without claiming the amount due to them. Workers need to be informed of their right to social security and the process of claiming the amount. This could be achieved through awareness-raising campaigns that would be implemented by the civil society in Jordan.

Conduct regular inspection on work conditions and workers' accommodation provided by employers

Violations are often committed by employers against migrant workers, such as unpaid work, confiscation of passport or not being enrolled in social security. Moreover, the accommodation offered to them is usually inadequate. To guarantee decent work and living conditions for migrants, regular inspection on the workplace and places of accommodation should be done, particularly in the agricultural sector.

Provide pre-departure and post-arrival orientation sessions to migrants

Despite the fact that it is stated in the bilateral agreement, migrants are often unaware of the rules and regulations of residing and working in Jordan, hence their unintended violation of the law. Furthermore, they do not report violations committed against them out of ignorance of their rights. In order to prevent Egyptian migrants from committing violations or accepting violations being committed against them out of lack of awareness, pre-departure and post-arrival orientation sessions should be offered to migrants. Pre-departure sessions are to be made by the Egyptian government and post-arrival sessions by the Jordanian government.

Facilitate the process for families to accompany migrants

Migrants incur the psychological cost of being away from their families. In case the migrant can prove that he has enough income to sustain a living for his family in Jordan, the process for his family to accompany him should be facilitated in order to promote further integration into the Jordanian society.

Promote societal integration of Egyptian migrants through the provision of social activities Egyptian migrants in Jordan rarely practice any social activities, although this could facilitate their integration and improve their migration experience. Social activities should be offered to migrants at a reasonable price. To ensure their participation, this should be close to their accommodation. Such activities could be provided by the civil society in Jordan.

Enforce further cooperation between civil society in Egypt and in Jordan

Civil society both in Egypt and in Jordan should seek to improve the migration experience of Egyptian migrants. Civil society in Egypt could prevent the exploitation of migrants by brokers, by establishing connections between those who wish to migrate and employers in Jordan for a nominal fee. Civil society in Jordan could raise the awareness of migrants about the mechanisms of reporting violations committed against them, including the complaints hotline. In addition, they could monitor employers who have a reputation of committing violations against employees.

Research Implications

Conduct further comparative research on Syrian refugees and Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan

Further comparative research needs to be conducted on the sectors and occupations of Syrian refugees and of Egyptian migrant workers and their terms and conditions of employment to understand fully the extent of the impact at a micro-level. Accurately defined results would help policy makers and development practitioners address current challenges more efficiently and effectively with regards to Egyptian migrant workers and Syrian Refugees in Jordan.

Conduct research that would further unpack the role of intermediaries and brokers

Despite the fact that the objective of this research has been to assess the impact of Syrian refugees on Egyptian migrant workers, research results clearly displayed the vital role of intermediaries and brokers in the migration process of Egyptians to Jordan and the exploitation they practice on Egyptian migrants. Therefore, more research is required in this domain to further unpack their actions, intentions and the benefits they gain.

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