FEBRUARY 2020
No. 127

Authors
Anda David
Nelly El-Mallakh
Jackline Wahba
Coordination
Anda David (AFD)

Research papers

Internal versus International Migration in Egypt: Together or Far Apart

AFD éditions
AGENCE FRANÇAISE DE DÉVELOPPEMENT

Agence française de développement

Papiers de recherche

Les *Papiers de Recherche de l'AFD* ont pour but de diffuser rapidement les résultats de travaux en cours. Ils s'adressent principalement aux chercheurs, aux étudiants et au monde académique. Ils couvrent l'ensemble des sujets de travail de l'AFD : analyse économique, théorie économique, analyse des politiques publiques, sciences de l'ingénieur, sociologie, géographie et anthropologie. Une publication dans les Papiers de Recherche de l'AFD n'en exclut aucune autre.

Les opinions exprimées dans ce papier sont celles de son (ses) auteur(s) et ne reflètent pas nécessairement celles de l'AFD. Ce document est publié sous l'entière responsabilité de son (ses) auteur(s).

AFD Research Papers

AFD Research Papers are intended to rapidly disseminate findings of ongoing work and mainly target researchers, students and the wider academic community. They cover the full range of AFD work, including: economic analysis, economic theory, policy analysis, engineering sciences, sociology, geography and anthropology. AFD Research Papers and other publications are not mutually exclusive.

The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the position of AFD. It is therefore published under the sole responsibility of its author(s).

Internal versus International Migration in Egypt: Together or Far Apart

Anda David
Agence française de développement

Nelly El-Mallakh
Paris School of Economics, Institut Convergences Migrations, and Faculty of Economics and Political Science, Cairo University

Jackline Wahba
University of Southampton

Abstract
This paper examines the relationship between internal, international, and return migration in Egypt. Using the Egypt Labor Market Panel Survey (ELMPS), this paper documents the evolution and patterns of internal migration over time. We examine patterns and trends of international and return migration, as well as the characteristics of international and return migrants. We then investigate the relationship between internal and international migration. We find evidence that internal migration has been rather low in Egypt. However, international migration rates have been rather high and prominent across all educational groups. Suggestive evidence indicates that individuals tend to engage in one type of migration only and that few engage in both internal and international migration.

Keywords
Internal migration, return migration, international migration, Egypt

JEL Classification
R23, F22

Acknowledgments
We acknowledge the support of Agence Française de Développement (AFD). We also acknowledge the general support of the World Bank, the International Labour Organization, AFD, UN Women, and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development for the Egypt Labor Market Panel Survey 2018, on which this paper is based. The authors appreciate the editorial assistance of Barbara Salinas.

Original version
English

Accepted
December 2019

Résumé
Cet article examine la relation entre la migration interne, internationale et de retour en Égypte. À l'aide de l'Egypte Labour Market Panel Survey (ELMPS), cet article documente l'évolution et les schémas de la migration interne au fil du temps. Nous examinons les modèles et les tendances des migrations internationales et de retour, ainsi que les caractéristiques de ces migrants. Nous étudions ensuite la relation entre migration interne et migration internationale. Nous constatons que la migration interne a été plutôt faible en Égypte. Cependant, les taux de migration internationale ont été plutôt élevés dans tous les groupes éducatifs. Nos résultats indiquent que les individus ont tendance à s'engager dans un seul type de migration et que peu d'entre eux se livrent à la fois à la migration interne et internationale.

Mots-clés
Migration interne, migration internationale, migration de retour, Egypte.

Introduction

For many developing countries, urbanization is an inevitable consequence of economic development. Nonetheless, for many developing countries, over-urbanization is a challenge. Egypt is a country with a population of almost 100 million, where a quarter of the population lives in the main capital city, Cairo. This high population concentration provides opportunities, but also serious negative externalities. Hence, there has been a strong drive to build new cities and towns on the outskirts of Greater Cairo, as well as building a new capital.

In this context, an important issue is the extent to which internal migration has been responsible for urbanization in Egypt, as opposed to natural population growth. Previous studies document very low internal migration rates in Egypt, see e.g. Wahba (2009) and Herrera and Badr (2012). The first half of the 20th century witnessed a large flow of the rural population moving into urban areas, however, this urbanization has since halted. The current share of the rural population is virtually at the same level as it was 50 years ago (57 percent), according to the UNDP (2018). At the same time, Egypt remains the largest migrant sending country in the MENA region and the one with the largest population. Thus, it is important to understand how the demographic flows shape Egyptian society.

This paper studies the recent patterns and trends of internal migration in Egypt. It also examines the relationship between internal and international migration, given the importance of international migration since the 1970s. Egypt has been an important labor sending country to neighboring Arab countries. At the peak, almost 10 percent of the labor force was return migrants. This paper investigates whether internal and international migration substitute or complement each other. More precisely, this paper studies the different patterns of internal migration, their evolution over the last decade, and the profile of internal migrants. It also examines the patterns and trends of international migration and return migration, and whether these patterns have changed since the Arab Spring. Furthermore, it studies the extent to which internal migration rates have changed relative to changes in international migration rates and measures whether both types of migration have increased over the last few decades or moved in opposite directions. We finally investigate whether there is any evidence that individuals engage in both types of migration; i.e. both internal migration and international migration.

I. Data and methodology

In this paper, we use data from the Egypt Labor Market Panel Survey (ELMPS). The ELMPS is a nationally representative panel survey carried out by the Economic Research Forum (ERF) in cooperation with Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). The ELMPS is a wide-ranging panel survey that covers topics such as employment, unemployment, job dynamics and earnings, and also provides very rich information on residential mobility, international and return migration experiences, education, and socio-economic characteristics.

The ELMPS has been administered to nationally representative samples since 1998. The 2018 ELMPS follows three survey waves that were conducted in 1998, 2006 and 2012.[1] The 2018 round surveyed 61,231 individuals who belonged to 15,746 households. It tracks households and individuals that were previously interviewed in 2012, some of which were also interviewed in 1998 and 2006. Others belong to a refresher sample of households added in 2018.

Using the ELMPS 2018, we examine the evolution of internal migration since the 1980s, relying on retrospective information on individuals' mobility. Individuals were asked if they had changed their location of residence from their place of birth, whether the move was inside Egypt or abroad, the year of the move, the governorate, city or town (*qism* or *markaz*) and village (*shyakha*) of the move. Individuals could report as many moves as occurred, but the maximum number of moves reported in the ELMPS 2018 is equal to 20 geographical moves. Based on this retrospective information we were able to track individuals' mobility over various decades, starting from the 1980s. Therefore, the analysis considers internal mobility in the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, though it is important to note that for each decade we consider 10 years, e.g. for the 1980s, we consider 1980-1989, but for the 2010s, we only observe 9 years (2010-2018) and the last year is partial, as the survey was fielded starting in April 2018.

For internal migration, first, we studied internal migration patterns for mobility between regions,[2] governorates, cities/towns, and villages by decade of migration. For each decade we only considered individuals who were aged between 15 and 64 years old. We examine the evolution of internal migration rates during these periods and define an internal migrant as an individual who changed his or her location of residence in the

[1] See Krafft et al. (2019) for further details on ELMPS 2018. Data will be publicly available through the Open Access Microdata Initiative, www.erfdataportal.com, in October 2019.

[2] Greater Cairo, Alexandria and the Suez Canal cities, Urban Lower Egypt, Urban Upper Egypt, Rural Lower Egypt and Rural Upper Egypt.

years under consideration compared to his or her previous location of residence.[3] For instance, in the 1980s decade, when considering mobility between villages, we define an internal migrant as an individual who changed his village of residence in the years between 1980 and 1989, compared to his previous village of residence. Similarly, when considering mobility between cities/towns, or between governorates or between regions, we define an internal migrant as an individual who changed his or her city/town, governorate or region of residence compared to his or her previous city/town, governorate or region of residence. For internal migration, we also examined internal mobility between urban and rural areas.

Finally, we also examined internal migration based on place of birth. We compare an individual's residence at birth to the current residence at the time of the survey using the four waves of ELMPS. Here we rely on an alternative definition of internal migration. According to this definition, an internal migrant is an individual who changed his governorate of residence compared to his governorate of birth or an individual who was living in an urban area at birth and moved to a rural area (and vice versa).

For the analysis of recent trends in international and return migration, we relied on two survey waves of the ELMPS: 2012 and 2018. The return migration module surveyed individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. It asked surveyed individuals whether they have worked abroad for more than six months and features return migrants' characteristics before, during and, after migration, frequency of migration, reasons for migration, reasons for return, year and country of first migration episode, year of final return, whether the individual travelled alone or with other family members, whether the individual planned on traveling temporarily or permanently, as well as other relevant information on remittances and savings abroad, among other information. Household members were also asked if they had household members living or working overseas. Information on the characteristics of these current migrants and their migration experience was collected including age, sex, education, reason for migration, year of migration, country of destination, labor market status, employment status, and sector of employment before migration. In this paper, we examine the recent trends in international and return migration focusing on individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. First, we examined the share of international migrants and return migrants by year of migration. We also examined the distribution of international and return migrants across destination countries. Moreover, we examined international migration

[3] For the 1980s decade, we consider the years between 1980 and 1989, inclusive. For the 1990s decade, we consider the years between 1990 and 1999, inclusive. For the 2000s cohort, we consider the years between 2000 and 2009, inclusive. For the 2010s decade, we consider the years between 2010 and 2018, inclusive.

and return migration rates by levels of education. We also analyzed the employment characteristics of international migrants before migration in terms of work and employment statuses. For return migrants we investigated the reasons for migration and the reasons for return. Relying on individual and household level data, we also computed international and return migration rates, as well as the incidence of any overseas migration (international and return) at the individual and household levels.

We also attempt to capture complementarity versus substitution between internal, international, and return migration by examining these migration rates in 2012 and 2018, the two most recent ELMPS rounds. In order to capture complementarity versus substitution, we investigated the relationship between international and internal migration, by analyzing the percentage of returnees who were internal migrants, the percentage of internal migrants who were returnees, and the percentage of non-migrants who were internal migrants.

II. Migration in Egypt

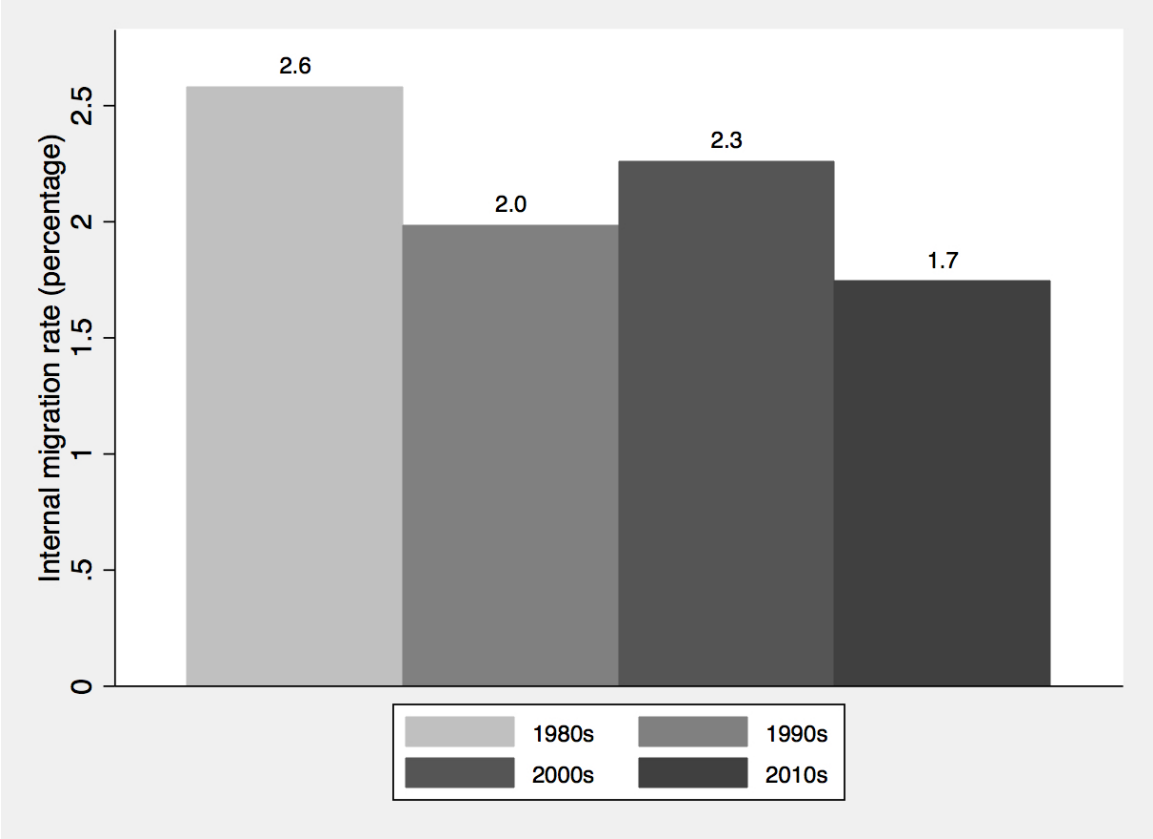
2.1. Trends and characteristics of internal migration

Egypt is known to have one the lowest internal migration rates in the world, with Herrera and Badr (2012) having estimated it at around 8 percent, compared to a world average of around 15 percent. Using the ELMPS 2018, we find a similar figure: 9 percent of individuals declared that they had moved from their place of birth (however, the percentage reaches 12 percent if we restrict the sample to those aged 15 or more). However, this internal migration rate captures all moves from an individual's birth place including those that were short distance moves within the same city.

In order to have a dynamic view of internal migration we computed, for different administrative divisions, internal migration rates by decade. In Figure 1, we plot the evolution of internal migration rates between regions and we see that mobility was low. The highest regional migration rates were in the 1980s and the lowest in 2010s. Overall, regional migration rates were around 2-3 percent over those four decades. Similar trends were observed for migration rates between governorates in Figure 2. Higher rates of inter-governorate migration occurred in the 1990s while the 2010s had the lowest rates. Although intra-village migration (Figure A1) and intra-town/city migration rates

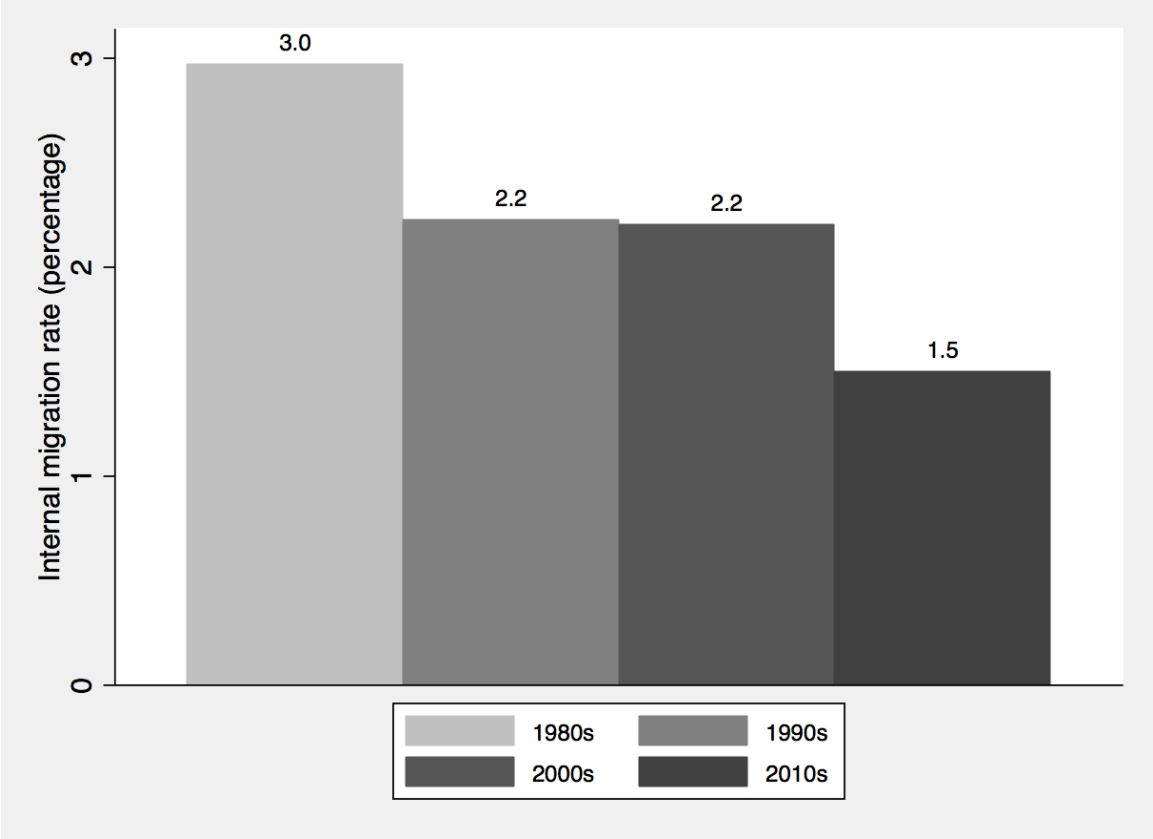
(Figure A2) were slightly higher, the patterns and trends were very similar to the regional migration rates.

Figure 1: Internal migration rates (percentage) by decade of migration, mobility between regions



Notes. This figure features internal migration rates by decades of migration. An internal migrant is defined as an individual who reported a geographical move within Egypt in the years between 1980 and 1989 (for the 1980s decade), the years between 1990 and 1999 (for the 1990s decade), the years between 2000 and 2009 (for the 2000s decade) and the years between 2010 and 2018 (for the 2010s decade). This figure presents mobility at the regional level. Mobility between regions corresponds to any type of move that involves a change in the region of residence in the years under consideration compared to the previous region, unless reversed at the end of the decade. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2018.

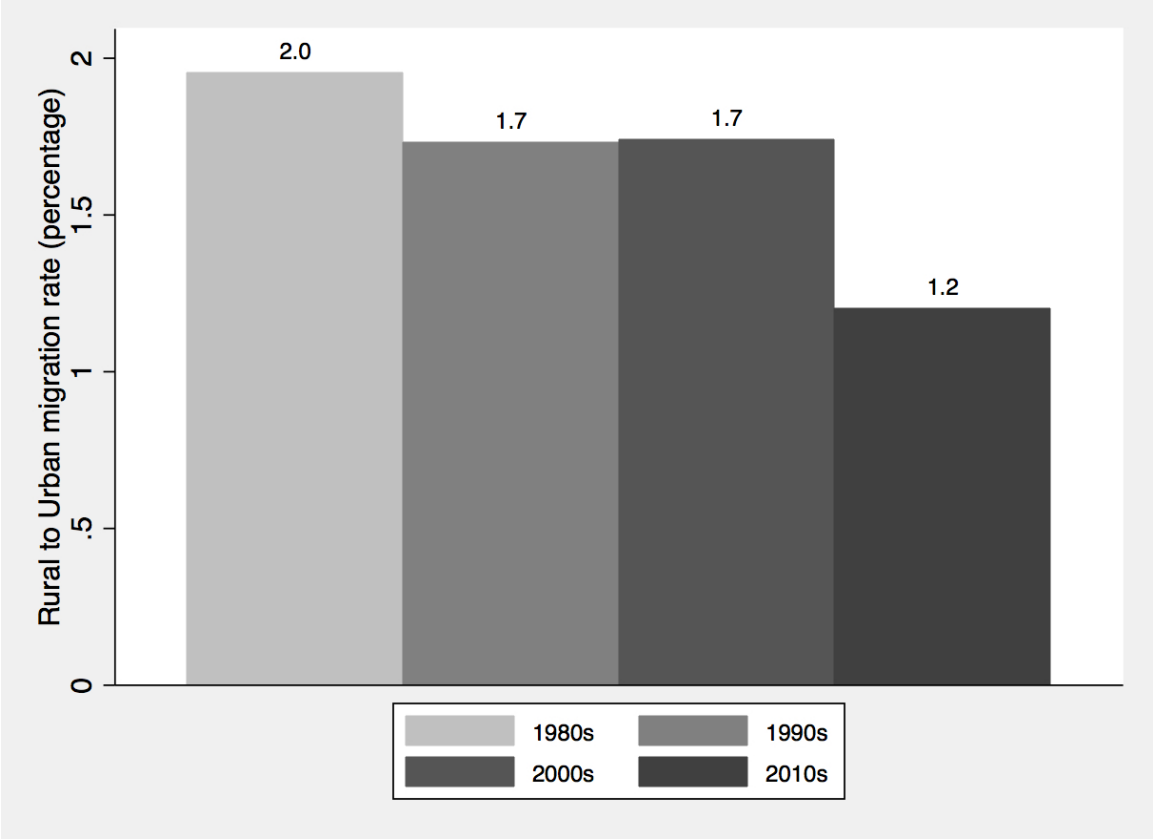
Figure 2: Internal migration rates (percentage) by decade of migration, mobility between governorates



Notes. This figure features internal migration rates by decades of migration. An internal migrant is defined as an individual who reported a geographical move within Egypt in the years between 1980 and 1989 (for the 1980s decade), the years between 1990 and 1999 (for the 1990s decade), the years between 2000 and 2009 (for the 2000s decade) and the years between 2010 and 2018 (for the 2010s decade). This figure presents mobility at the governorate level. Mobility between governorates corresponds to any type of move that involves a change in the governorate of residence in the years under consideration compared to the previous governorate, unless reversed at the end of the decade. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2018.

Interestingly, if we only analyze migration across urban-rural settings we see a clear decrease in rural to urban migration rates between the 1980s and 1990s but almost stable trend in the 1990s and 2000s, before a sharp drop in 2010s (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Rural to urban migration rates (percentage) by decade of migration



Notes. This figure features internal migration rates between rural to urban areas by decades of migration. For each decade, we computed rural to urban migration rate as the share of individuals who moved to an urban area while previously residing in a rural area, unless reversed at the end of the decade. For the 1980s decade, we consider the years 1980 and 1989. For the 1990s decade, we consider the years between 1990 and 1999. For the 2000s decade, we consider the years between 2000 and 2009, and for the 2000s decade, we consider the years between 2010 and 2018. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2018.

In order to capture internal migration irrespective of the decade we compare the place of birth with the current place of residence at different waves of the panel. We also look at urban-rural migration in addition to rural-urban migration. Table 1 shows similar rural-urban migration patterns to those in Figure 3, a downward trend in rural-urban when comparing 2012 and 2018. There was a steep decrease in mobility from 5.4 percent for rural-urban migration in 2012 (4.7 percent for urban-rural migration) to 3.9 percent in 2018 (3.1 percent for urban-rural migration). Similarly, if we use the panel structure of ELMPS we can compute mobility across urban and rural settings by analyzing changes in locations in different waves of the survey (Table 1).

Focusing on the four waves since 1998 we see a decrease in mobility across each of the periods covered by the survey. Rural to urban migration was dominant, although, the difference with urban to rural migration is very small. If we focus on changes in location between survey waves we observe a gradual decline in rural-urban (urban-rural) migration from 2.6 percent (2.4 percent) in the period 1998-2006 to 1.2 percent (0.9 percent) in the most recent period 2012-2018. It is important to note that comparing 2012 to 2018 is useful in highlighting the impact of the Egyptian revolution in 2011. This has led to a period of political and economic instability and resulted in almost stagnant or even a fall in internal mobility rates.

Table 1: Rural-urban and urban-rural migration rates 1998-2018 (percentage)

	Rural to Urban	Urban to Rural
1998-2006	2.6	2.4
2006-2012	1.7	1.3
2012-2018	1.2	0.9
Birth Place - 2012	5.4	4.7
Birth Place - 2018	3.9	3.1

Notes. First three rows are based on ELMPS panel. The analysis is restricted to individuals aged at least 15 years old in 1998 and less than 65 years old in 2006 (first row), to individuals aged at least 15 years old in 2006 and less than 65 years old in 2012 (second row), and to individuals aged at least 15 years old in 2012 and less than 65 years old in 2018 (third row). Rows 4 and 5 are comparing birth place with location of residence in 2012 or in 2018 and the analysis is restricted to 15-64 years of age at the time of the survey; i.e. 2012 in row 4 and 2018 in row 5. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS panel data and the ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

Although internal migration rates were low it is still important to map the mobility among regions over the two recent time periods to better understand the underpinnings of internal migration. Hence, we compute the transition matrices among movers only. Tables 2 and 3 show similar patterns of mobility between regions in 2012 and 2018, albeit the rates are lower in 2018 compared to 2012. Although Greater Cairo had more in-movers than out-movers in 2012 (28 percent versus 19 percent), the gap between the in-migration and out-migration has narrowed substantially by 2018 (17 percent versus 16 percent). There is still evidence of migration from the South (Upper Egypt) to the North (other regions) a pattern which has characterized internal migration in Egypt, as highlighted by Zohry (2009).

Table 2: Transition matrices for the 2012 internal migrants between the region of birth and current region of residence

	Current geographical region in 2012 (N=2,777)							
Region of birth	Greater Cairo	Alexandria and Canal cities	Urban Lower Egypt	Urban Upper Egypt	Rural Lower Egypt	Rural Upper Egypt	Total	(percent of total)
Greater Cairo	42	9	9	9	16	15	100	(19)
Alexandria and Canal cities	20	16	13	10	36	6	100	(7)
Urban Lower Egypt	20	26	11	2	39	1	100	(15)
Urban Upper Egypt	29	11	5	14	3	38	100	(13)
Rural Lower Egypt	22	24	31	1	18	3	100	(23)
Rural Upper Egypt	29	6	2	52	3	8	100	(23)
Total	28	15	13	16	17	11	100	(100)

Notes. This table presents the geographical transition matrices for the 2012 internal migrants, at the regional level, between the region of birth and the current region of residence. The analysis is restricted to 15-64 years old in 2012. Internal migration is defined with respect to the place of birth. An internal migrant is defined as an individual who changed his governorate of residence compared to his governorate of birth or an individual who was living in an urban area at birth and moved to a rural area (and vice versa). The diagonal cells represent the percentage of internal migrants who moved within the same geographical region, while the cells above and below the diagonal represent the percentage of individuals who moved to a different geographical region. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012.

Table 3: Transition matrices for the 2018 internal migrants between the region of birth and current region of residence

	Current geographical region in 2018 (N=1,935)						
Region of birth	Greater Cairo	Alexandria and Canal cities	Urban Lower Egypt	Urban Upper Egypt	Rural Lower Egypt	Rural Upper Egypt	Total (percent of total)
Greater Cairo	26	9	9	12	24	20	100 (16)
Alexandria and Canal cities	11	14	10	13	42	10	100 (7)
Urban Lower Egypt	8	23	9	1	56	2	100 (15)
Urban Upper Egypt	10	10	4	16	2	58	100 (13)
Rural Lower Egypt	14	20	41	1	22	2	100 (25)
Rural Upper Egypt	24	12	4	43	4	14	100 (24)
Total	17	15	15	16	22	16	100 (100)

Notes. This table presents the geographical transition matrices for the 2018 internal migrants, at the regional level, between the region of birth and the current region of residence. The analysis is restricted to 15-64 years old in 2018. Internal migration is defined with respect to the place of birth. An internal migrant is defined as an individual who changed his governorate of residence compared to his governorate of birth or an individual who was living in an urban area at birth and moved to a rural area (and vice versa). The diagonal cells represent the percentage of internal migrants who moved within the same geographical region, while the cells above and below the diagonal represent the percentage of individuals who moved to a different geographical region. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2018.

The profile of internal migrants also seems to have changed little over the years, as shown in Table 4. Recent internal migrants, those who changed the governorate of residence or urban/rural residence with respect to place of birth, were on average similar in terms of educational levels. Internal movers were less likely to be living in Greater Cairo and more likely to be living in other urban areas in 2018 compared to 2012. In terms of their current economic activities, internal migrants in 2018 were also found to be significantly more likely to work in agriculture, education and health and less likely in trade and public administration.

Table 4: Characteristics of the 2012 and 2018 internal migrants

	Internal migrants in 2012	**Internal migrants in 2018**	
	(1)	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	Mean	Mean	Difference 2012-2018
Individual characteristics			
Age	39.9	41.23	-1.4***
Married	82.4	82.8	-0.4
No education	27.7	26.5	1.2
Primary or preparatory education	17.0	15.7	1.3
Secondary education	31.7	34.7	-3.0**
Above secondary education	23.6	23.1	0.5
Household characteristics			
Household size	4.3	4.2	0.1**
Number of adults	2.9	2.7	0.1***
Number of children	1.4	1.4	0.0
Rural	30.5	30.5	0.0
Current geographical region			
Greater Cairo	40.8	31.8	9.0***
Alexandria and Canal cities	13.0	15.9	-2.9***
Urban Lower Egypt	10.3	12.5	-2.2**
Urban Upper Egypt	7.4	9.7	-2.3***
Rural Lower Egypt	18.0	19.7	-1.7
Rural Upper Egypt	10.6	10.4	0.2
Current job characteristics			
Public sector	37.2	33.2	4.0*
Private sector	62.8	66.8	-4.0*
Job tenure in years	14.2	14.46	-0.3

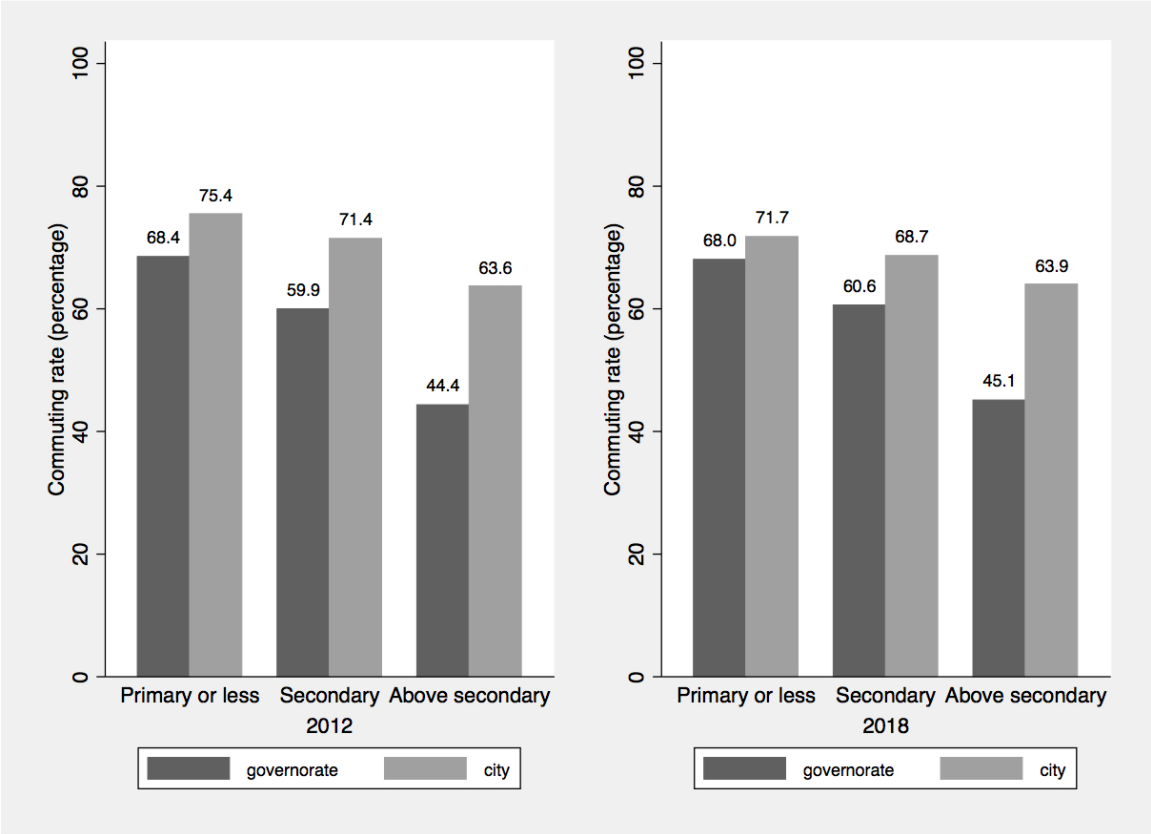
Current economic activities			
Agriculture	14.9	21.8	-6.9***
Manufacturing	11.6	12.4	-0.8
Trade	16.1	13.1	3.0**
Public administration	10.0	7.31	2.7**
Education and health	16.3	19.3	-3.0*
Other activities	31.1	26.1	5.0**
Observations	2,796	1,974	

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Notes. Column 5: is t-test for whether the difference in means between 2012 and 2018 is statistically significant. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

The low levels of internal migration might be partly linked to high rates of commuting. However, Figure 4 shows that there was little to no difference in commuting rates between 2012 and 2018. There was a clear pattern seen in both years: commuting rates were highest for less educated individuals were less likely to be able to afford housing in large cities and would tend to commute longer distances relative to highly educated individuals.

Figure 4: Rate of commuting (percentage) among employed individuals, ages 15-64, by education



Notes. This figure presents the rate of commuting among working individuals in 2012 and 2018 by educational attainment. The figure reports the percentage of workers who commuted at the governorate level and the percentage of workers who commuted at the city or town level (qism). A commuter at the governorate (city) is an individual who worked in a governorate (city) for his primary job that was different from his governorate (city) of residence. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

Our findings highlight that internal migration was low in Egypt. Furthermore, looking at the share of the urban population in Egypt and comparing 1970 to 2018, there has hardly been a change in fifty years. The share of the population in 2018 in urban areas was 43 percent compared to 41 percent in 1970, making Egypt the least urbanized North African country. Although Morocco's population was 34 percent urban in 1970 and Tunisia's 43 percent (almost similar to Egypt), Morocco in 2018 was 62 percent urban and Tunisia 69 percent (UNDP, 2018). Even though Egypt's population tripled during those fifty years from 34.5 million in 1970 to 100 million in 2019, the population has not urbanized, unlike other MENA countries. [4] One potential culprit for Egypt's low mobility rates has been the housing market and the severe shortage of affordable housing.[5] Below we also examine the extent to which international migration might have reduced internal migration in Egypt.

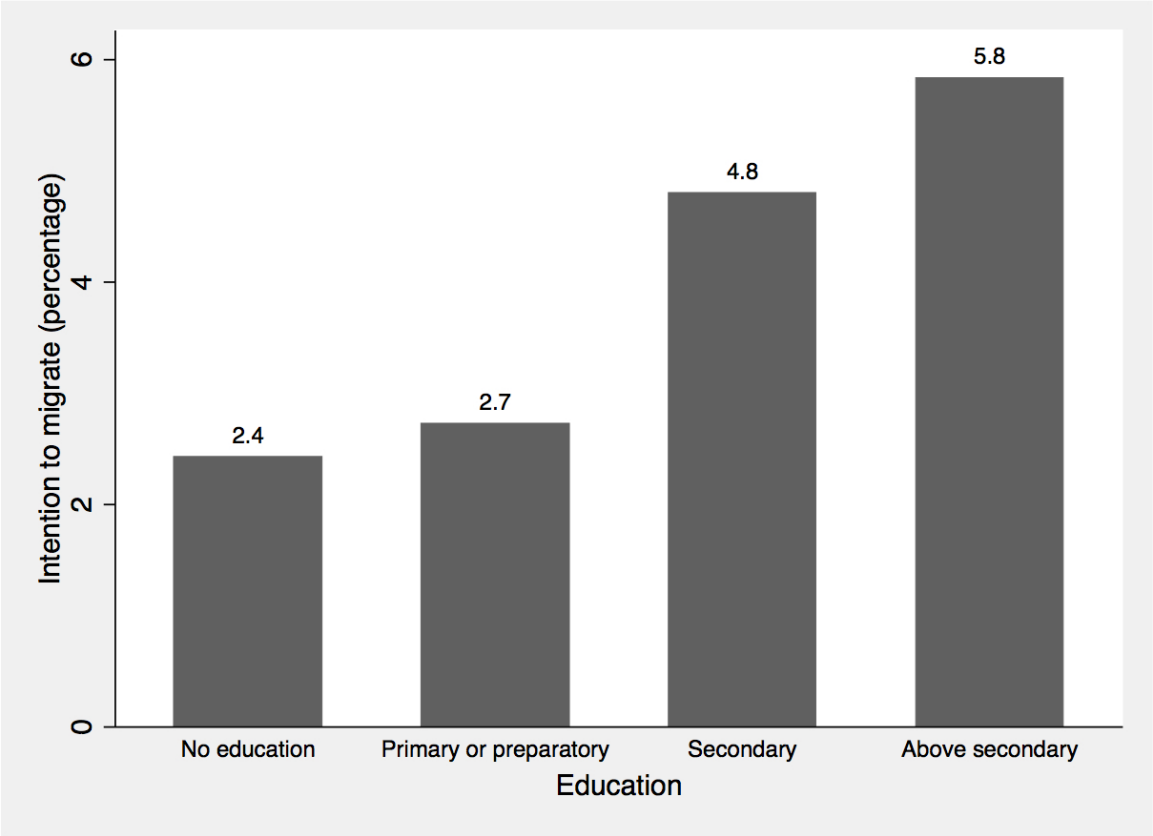
2.2. Trends and characteristics of international migration

While internal migration is relatively small in the broad picture of mobility in Egypt, international migration, and more particularly return, play an important role. Both the intention to migrate and the reality of international migration are important dimensions to consider. Figure 5 examines the intentions to travel to another country for work, to live or study in the next 5 years. Overall, we find only 4 percent of 15-40 years old aspired to migrate. Migration intentions were much higher among males (5 percent) compared to only 1 percent among women, and were even higher amongst younger men: 7 percent of males 15-29 years of age aspired to migrate. This is lower than other estimates for Egypt. For example, the 2014 Survey of Young People in Egypt showed that 17 percent of the 15-29 years old in Egypt aspired to migrate within the next 5 years (Papoutsaki and Wahba, 2015). In Figure 5, we show the intentions to migrate increase with the education level.

[4] United Nations Population Division. World Urbanization Prospects: 2018 Revision.

[5] See Abd El-Hameed et al. (2017) on the housing problems in Egypt.

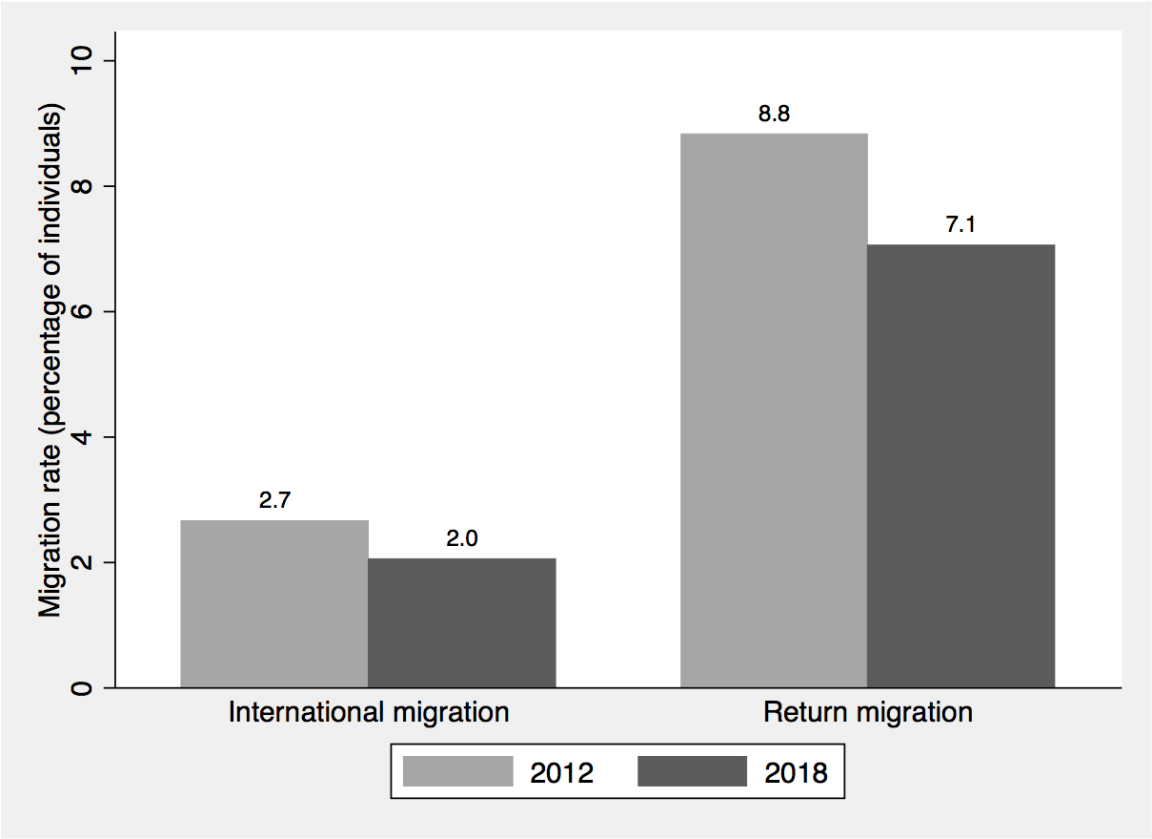
Figure 5: Intention to migrate (percentage) by education, ages 15-40, 2018



Notes. This figure presents the percentage of individuals who reported that they intend to travel to any country to work/live/study within the next five years, by educational attainment. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2018.

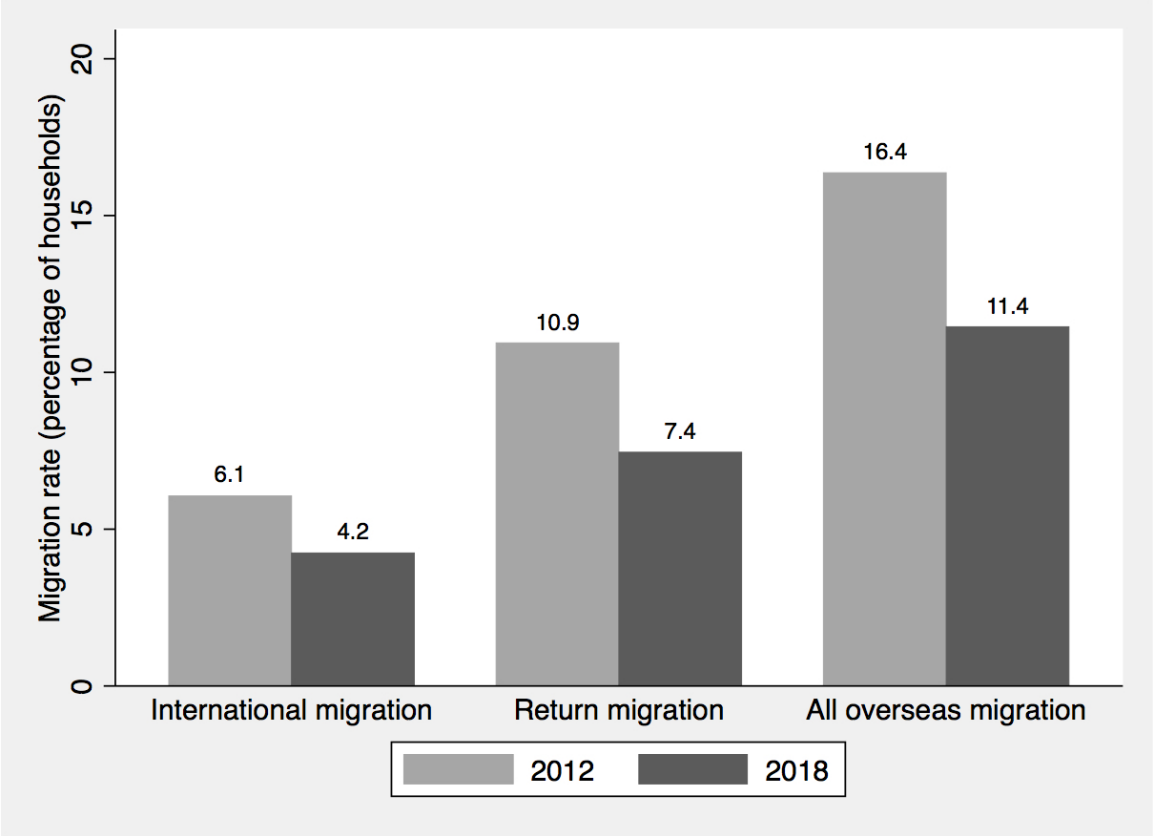
In 2018, current international migrants represented 2 percent of all individuals aged 15 to 59, while returnees represented 7 percent. Almost 9 percent of the entire working age population has had an international migration experience and that 11 percent of all Egyptian households in 2018 have, or had, a migrant member (Figures 6 and 7). However, it is worth noting that these rates were slightly lower than in 2012.

Figure 6: Return and international migration rates (percentage of individuals), ages 15-59, 2012 and 2018



Notes. This figure presents return and international migration rates in the years 2012 and 2018. For international migration, the figure reports the proportion of international migrants among all individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. For return migration, the figure reports the proportion of returnees among all individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

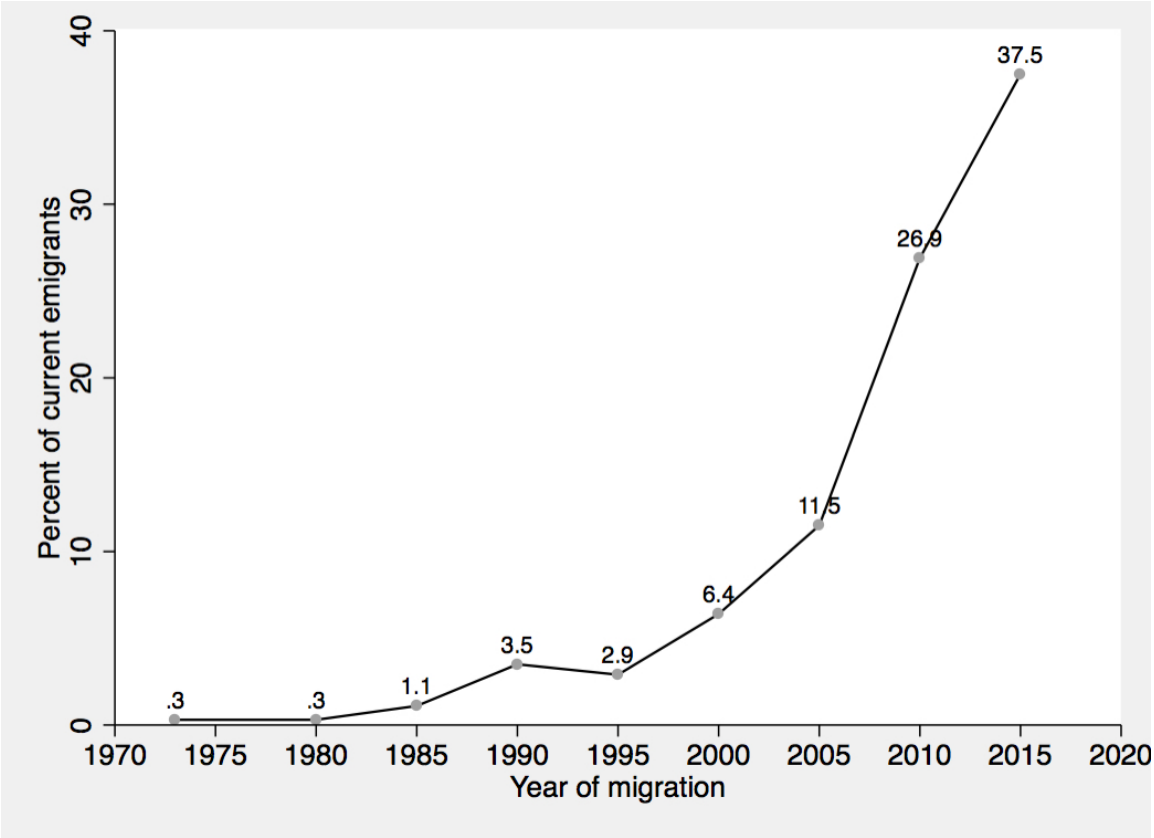
Figure 7: Return and international migration rates (percentage of households with an international migrant) in 2012 and 2018



Notes. This figure presents return and international migration rates in the years 2012 and 2018. For international migration, the figure reports the percentage of international migrant households among all households. For return migration, the figure reports the percentage of return migrant households among all households. For all overseas migrants, the figure reports the proportion of return and international migrant households among all households. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

Figure 8 depicts the share of current international migration by year of migration. Not surprisingly this share is highest for the most recent years as migration is predominately temporary in nature. Indeed Figure A3 and A4 show the share of returnees by year of migration and year of return underscoring the temporary nature of international migration in Egypt.

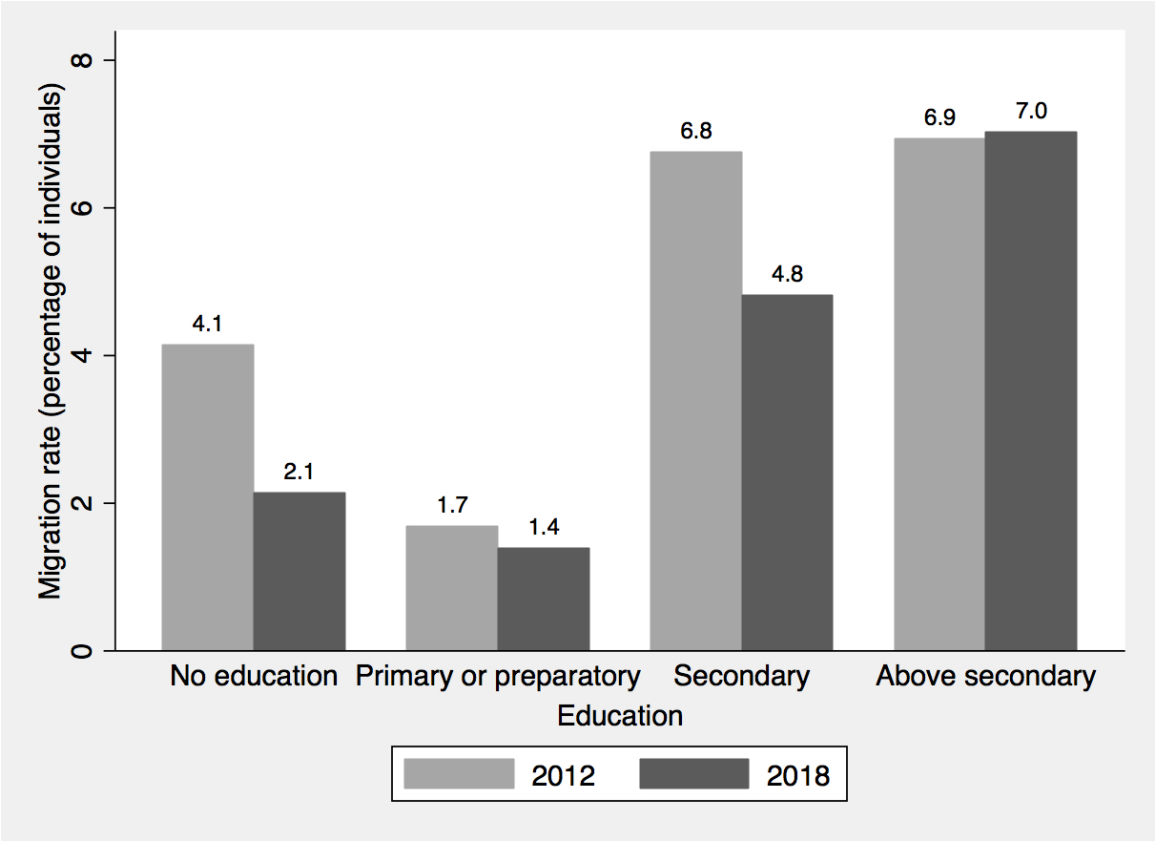
Figure 8: Year of migration (percent of current emigrants)



Notes. The data is categorized into 5 year intervals. The 2015 data point is not a full 5 year interval as it corresponds to the period between 2015-2018. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2018.

As Table 4 shows, overseas migration is male dominated with almost 98 percent of current migrants being males in 2018. Hence, focusing on males and looking at their education level, Figure 9 shows the international migration rates by educational levels for 2012 and 2018. We can observe that the decrease in migration rates was mostly among individuals with no education and secondary education or less. This was likely due to the recent political situation in Libya, which was a large destination for less educated individuals. The recent decrease in demand for foreign workers by the Gulf countries and their increasingly selective immigration policies has resulted in lowering overall emigration rates and a stable emigration rate of the highly educated. Altogether, the evidence suggests the important role played by overseas opportunities in directing migration across the Egyptian border.

Figure 9: Current international migration rates by education, men, ages 15-59, in 2012 and 2018



Notes. This figure features the share of current international migration by levels of education, among males aged between 15 and 64 years old. A current international migrant is an individual who is currently working or living abroad. The educational level includes: no education (either illiterate or literate without any diploma), primary or preparatory education, secondary education (general or vocational) and above secondary education (university degree or above). The analysis relies on data from the ELMPS 2012 and the ELMPS 2018. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

Table 4, comparing current international migrants in 2012 and 2018, confirms that recent international migrants tended to be older and more educated, thus, had a higher probability of being married. They were also significantly more likely to travel alone as opposed to traveling with other family members compared to current migrants in 2012. Potentially reflecting the economic instability that followed the Egyptian uprising, recent migrants were also more often unemployed before having migrated and had more volatile jobs. Among those who were employed before migration, current migrants in 2018 were also significantly more likely to have a regular wage work before migration and less likely to be self-employed compared to current migrants in 2012.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics on current migrants in the years 2012 and 2018

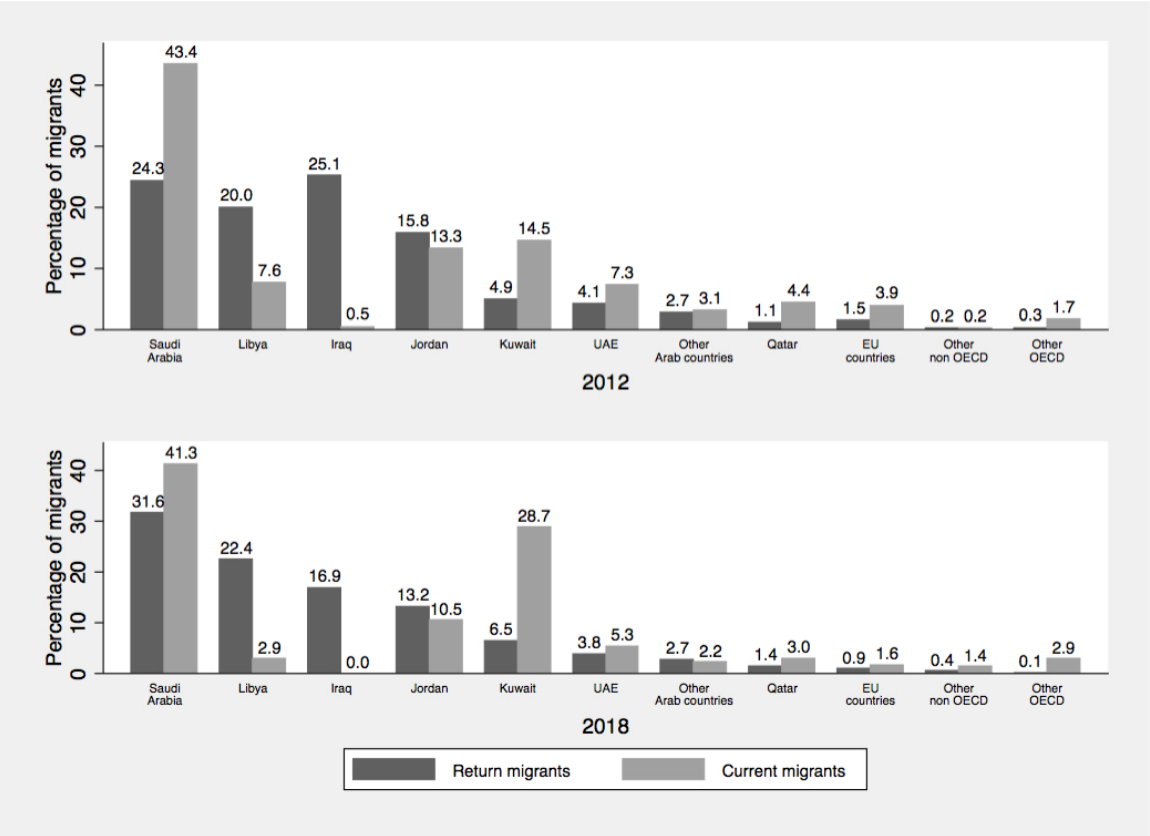
	Current migrants in 2012	**Current migrants in 2018**	
	(1)	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	Mean	Mean	Difference 2012-2018
Individual characteristics			
Male	96.0	97.5	-1.5
Age	34.6	36.7	-2.1***
Married	76.3	79.8	-3.5*
No educational degree	16.9	11.5	5.4***
Primary or preparatory education	7.7	7.7	0.0
Secondary education	47.3	45.5	1.8
Above secondary education	28.1	35.4	-7.3***
Relationship to the household head			
Spouse	56.5	66.1	-9.6***
Son or daughter	34.4	30.5	3.9*
Other	9.1	3.4	5.7***
Migration experience			
Traveled alone	88.6	95.7	-7.1***
Traveled with other household members	11.4	4.3	7.1***
Work status before migration			
Working	68.2	65.5	2.7
Unemployed	27.3	29.9	-2.6
Not working and not seeking work	4.5	4.6	-0.1
Employment status before migration			
Regular wage worker	30.1	36.5	-6.4**
Irregular wage worker	48.6	51.4	-2.8
Employer	3.4	1.9	1.6
Self-employed	7.3	2.9	4.4***
Unpaid worker	10.6	7.4	3.2*
Sector of employment and formality status before migration			
Public sector employment	9.2	7.3	1.9
Private sector employment	90.8	92.7	-1.9
Incidence of work contract	29.4	23.9	5.5*
Incidence of social security	18.0	12.0	6.0**
Number of observations	818	810	

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Notes. Column 5: is t-test for whether the difference in means between 2012 and 2018 is statistically significant.

In terms of destinations, it seems that the war in Libya resulted in a switch in migration flows (Figure 10), with Kuwait having almost doubled the share of Egyptian migrants – in 2012 it hosted 15 percent of Egyptian migration, while it hosted 29 percent in 2018. Saudi Arabia remains the top destination for Egyptian migrants, a fact also highlighted by Wahba (2015). Another noteworthy change is the decrease of migration to EU countries, from around 4 percent in 2012 to 2 percent in 2018.

Figure 10: Destination countries of return and current migrants in 2012 and 2018 (percentage)



Notes. This figure presents the share of return migrants and current migrants as a percentage of total current migrants by destination countries using data from the ELMPS 2012 and ELMPS 2018. Other Arab states include Algeria, Bahrain, Lebanon, Oman, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. EU countries include Cyprus, France Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Other OECD countries include Australia, Bermuda, Canada, Mexico and the United States. Other non-OECD countries include Argentina, Brazil, Belarus, Colombia, Congo, Hong Kong, Guinea, Russia Vanuatu, South Africa, Suriname and Zambia. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

Concerning returns, the increase in returnees from Saudi Arabia (32 percent in 2018 compared to 24 percent in 2012) might be a sign of the economic downturn in the GCC countries. The typical profile of the returnee also seems to have changed slightly (Table 5): returnees in 2018 were older, as expected, but also less educated and more rural, which was not expected. Their reasons for having migrated also differed from the earlier returnees and reflect economic instability. A higher share declared having migrated because they were unemployed and looking for higher wages, while a lower percentage declared having

migrated because they found a better job. Interestingly, most returnees declare having returned because of poor working conditions and this percentage slightly increased in 2018. End of contract and to get married were the other two main reasons for return in both waves. Interestingly, we also find that return migrants in 2018 were more likely to have traveled alone and to have planned to travel temporarily compared to return migrants in 2012. Current return migrants are also more likely to be out of the labor force after return compared to return migrants in 2012.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics on return migrants in the years 2012 and 2018

	Return migrants in 2012	**Return migrants in 2018**	
	(1)	(2)	(3)
VARIABLES	Mean	Mean	Difference 2012-2018
Individual characteristics			
Male	97.5	99.0	-1.5***
Age	43.6	47.8	-4.2***
Married	90.7	91.4	-0.7
No educational degree	27.0	30.9	-3.9**
Primary or preparatory education	15.6	11.9	3.7***
Secondary education	40.6	40.1	0.5
Above secondary education	16.8	17.1	-0.3
Rural	65.6	72.7	-7.1***
Migration spells and experience			
Traveled once abroad for work	79.8	75.8	4.0***
Traveled twice abroad for work	14.3	15.6	-1.3
Traveled more than twice abroad for work	5.9	8.6	-2.6***
Traveled alone	94.2	96.6	-2.4***
Traveled with other household members	5.8	3.4	2.3***
Planned to travel temporarily	85.8	88.2	-2.4*
Planned to travel permanently	14.2	11.8	2.4*
Reasons for migration			
Unemployed and seeking work	19.0	23.8	-4.8***
Found a better job	65.6	49.2	16.4***
Higher wages	5.0	12.6	-7.6***
To help the family financially	3.4	6.7	-3.3***
Other reasons	7.0	7.7	-0.7
Reasons for return			
Poor working conditions	24.4	27.9	-3.5**
Contract ended	21.1	20.2	0.9
To get married	13.8	16.0	-2.2*
Sudden termination by employer	6.6	6.4	0.2
Other reasons	34.1	29.5	4.6***

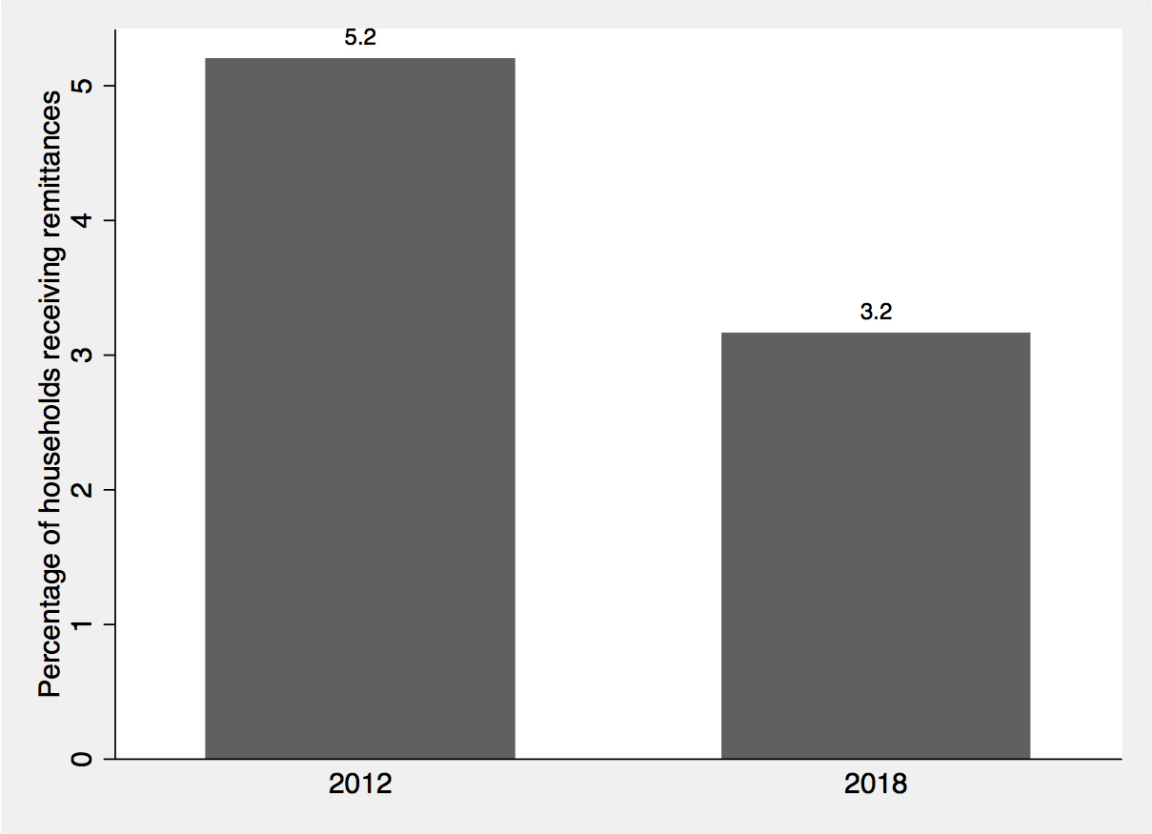
Current work status			
Employed	91.5	91.1	0.4
Unemployed	3.7	1.8	1.9***
Out of labor force	4.8	7.1	-2.3***
Number of observations	1,381	1,647	

*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Notes. Column 5: is t-test for whether the difference in means between 2012 and 2018 is statistically significant. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

To sum up, there has been a slight decline in the share of current migrants and returnees in the total population between 2012 and 2018, whether measured at the individual or household level. Figure 11 shows how there has also been a decline in the share of households receiving remittances between 2012 and 2018. Both immigration and remittances may be playing a smaller role in Egypt's society and economy.

Figure 11: Percentage of households receiving remittances, 2012 and 2018

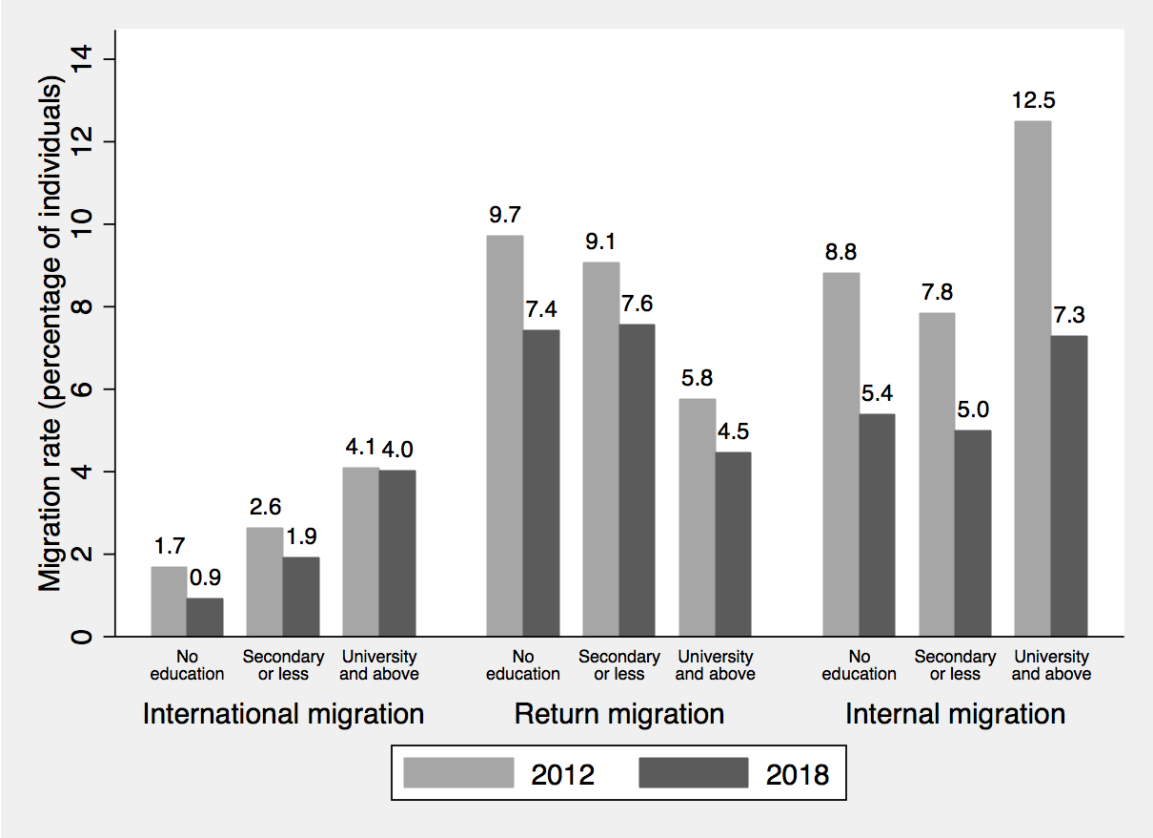


Notes. This figure presents the incidence of receiving remittances among households. The analysis relies on data from the ELMPS 2012 and the ELMPS 2018. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

2.3. Internal migration versus international migration

Given low internal migration in Egypt and the resilient trend of international migration, an interesting question is whether the two are linked, and if so, how? In essence, our earlier findings that internal migration rates have been very low and the share of urban population has hardly increased in 50 years suggest that overseas migration might have been a safety valve. Examining migration rates by educational levels shows that international migration has not been the sole privilege of the highly educated. While internal migration rates were systematically higher than international migration rates in 2012, internal migration rates decreased substantially in 2018 (Figure 12). International migration also fell.

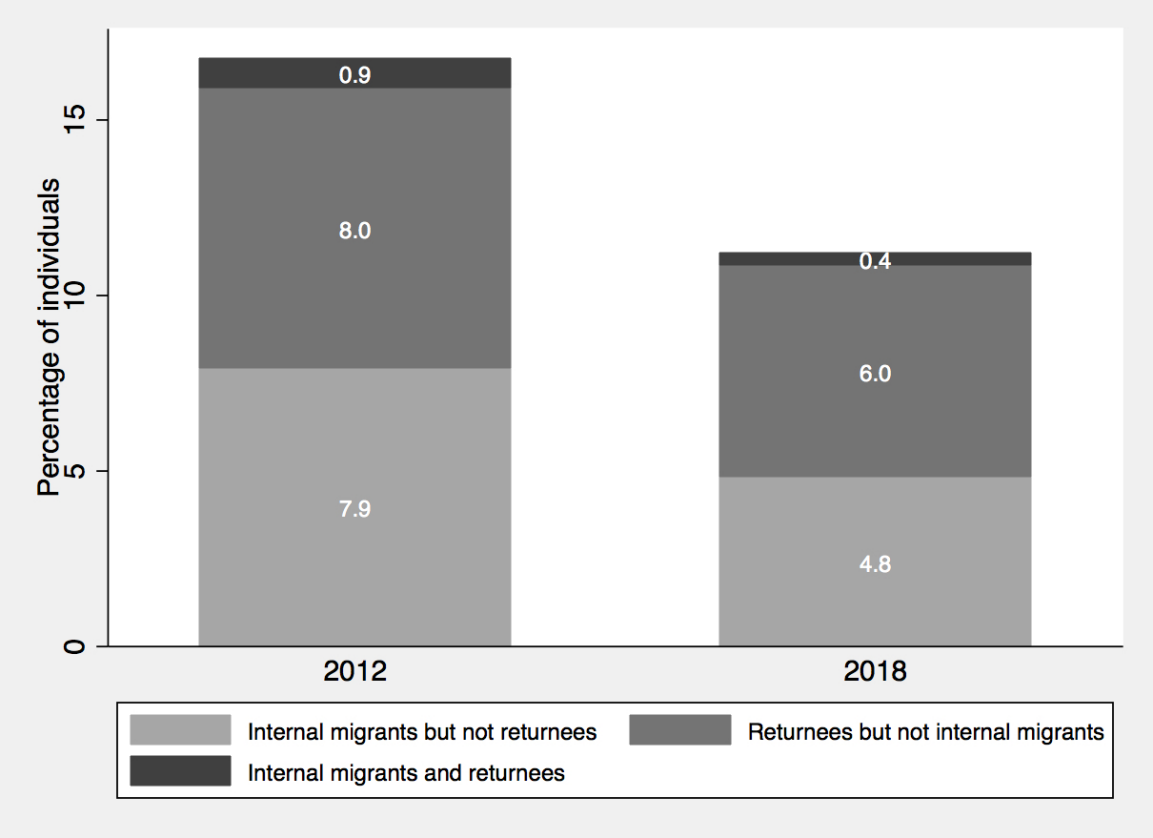
Figure 12: Migration rates (percentage) by education and type of migration, men, ages 15-59, in 2012 and 2018



Notes. This figure presents international, return and internal migration rates in the years 2012 and 2018, by educational levels. The analysis is restricted to individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. For international migration, the figure reports the proportion of current international migrants among all individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. For return migration, the figure reports the proportion of returnees among all individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. For internal migration, the figure reports the proportion of internal migrants among all individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. Internal migration is defined with respect to the place of birth. An internal migrant is an individual who changed his governorate of residence compared to his governorate of birth or an individual who was living in an urban area at birth and moved to a rural area (and vice versa). Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

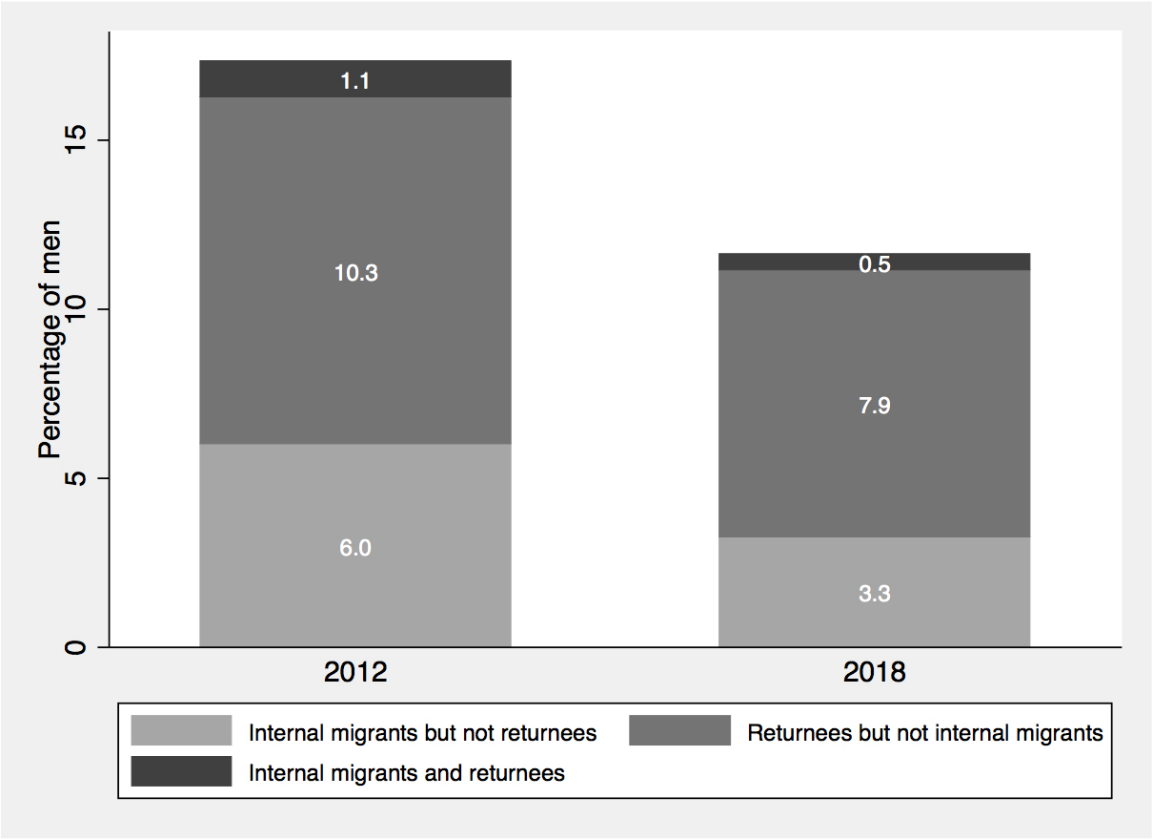
To explore further the relationship between the two types of migration, we examine the extent to which households and individuals engage in both activities. First, we look at the rate of (current and return) international migration and internal migrants at the household level. The evidence suggests a very small proportion of households engaged in both internal and international migration. More importantly, at the individual level in Figure 13, looking at individuals who were returnees and internal migrants we find a very small proportion (less than one percent) who engaged in both types of migration. This is also seen when focusing only on men, who tend to have higher international migration rates, in Figure 14.

Figure 13: The relationship between return and internal migration in 2012 and 2018 (percentage of individuals)



Notes. This figure presents the percentage of individuals who are returnees and internal migrants, the percentage of individuals who are internal migrants but not returnees and the percentage individuals who are returnees but not internal migrants. The analysis is restricted to individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. Return migrants are individuals who lived or worked for more than six months. Internal migrants are defined according to their place of birth. An internal migrant is an individual who changed his place of residence compared to his place of birth. Non-migrants are individuals who do not have any migration experience abroad. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

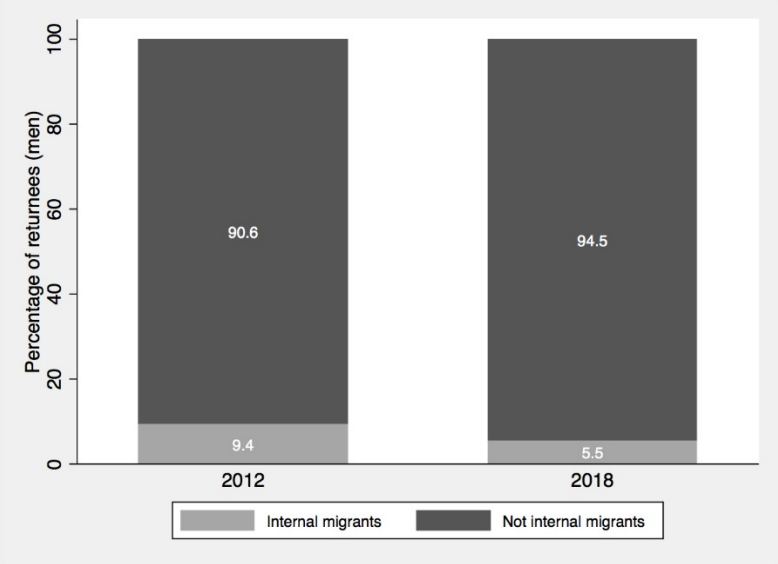
Figure 14: The relationship between return and internal migration in 2012 and 2018, men (percentage of men)



Notes. The analysis is restricted to men. This figure presents the percentage of individuals who are returnees and internal migrants, the percentage of individuals who are internal migrants but not returnees and the percentage individuals who are returnees but not internal migrants. The analysis is restricted to individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. Return migrants are individuals who lived or worked for more than six months. Internal migrants are defined according to their place of birth. An internal migrant is an individual who changed his place of residence compared to his place of birth. Non-migrants are individuals who do not have any migration experience abroad. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

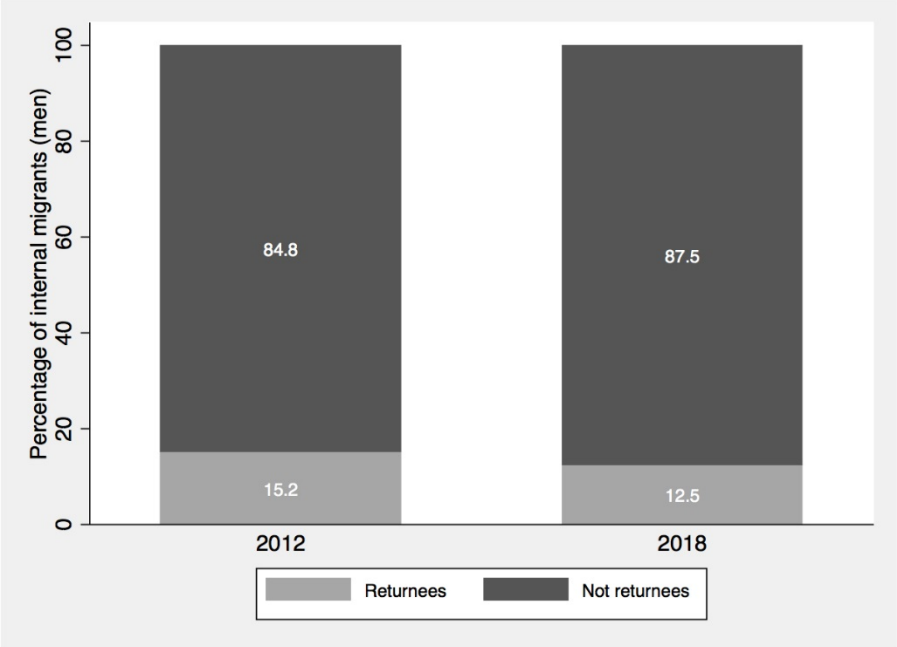
In 2018, among returnees, 6 percent of men were also internal migrants (Figure 15). Among internal migrants, 13 percent of men were also return migrants in 2018 (Figure 16). Thus, the suggestive evidence indicate that the majority of individuals tend not to engage in both types of migration; i.e. hence little evidence that internal migration is a stepping stone for international migration.

Figure 15: The relationship between return and internal migration in 2012 and 2018, conditional on return migration, men (percentage of return migrants)



Notes. The analysis is restricted to men who are return migrants. Conditional on return migration, this figure presents the percentage of returnees who are internal migrants and the percentage of returnees who are not internal migrants. The analysis is restricted to individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. Return migrants are individuals who lived or worked for more than six months. Internal migrants are defined according to their place of birth. An internal migrant is an individual who changed his place of residence compared to his place of birth. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

Figure 16: The relationship between return and internal migration in 2012 and 2018, conditional on internal migration, men (percentage of internal migrants)



Notes. The analysis is restricted to men who are internal migrants. Conditional on internal migration, this figure presents the percentage of internal migrants who are returnees and the percentage of internal migrants who are

not returnees. The analysis is restricted to individuals aged between 15 and 59 years old. Return migrants are individuals who lived or worked for more than six months. Internal migrants are defined according to their place of birth. An internal migrant is an individual who changed his place of residence compared to his place of birth. Source: Authors' calculations based on ELMPS 2012 and 2018.

III. Conclusion

This paper examined the relationship between internal, international and return migration in Egypt. We explored the evolution of internal migration and the different patterns of internal migration, focused on mobility between governorates, cities and towns, and villages, as well as internal mobility at the regional level and mobility between urban and rural areas. The findings suggest that internal migration was still low in Egypt, which was consistent with the stagnant share of the urban population that has been around 41-43 percent for the last fifty years, making Egypt the least urbanized North African country. This is quite remarkable given the size of the population, which has tripled over that period.

Examining the patterns and trends of international and return migration, as well as the characteristics of international and return migrants, the results showed a slight decrease in international migration and return migration rates.

Finally, investigating whether individuals engage in both types of migration, we find that individuals typically engage in one type of migration and very few engage in both types of migration. These findings suggest the need to better understand the barriers to internal migration and their drivers.

References

Abd El-Hameed, Ahmed K., Mansour, Yasser M., Faggal Ahmed A. (2017)
"Challenges and Issues for Affordable Housing in Egypt: A Review", Ain Shams University mimeo.

Herrera, S., & Badr, K. (2012)
"Internal migration in Egypt: levels, determinants, wages, and likelihood of employment", Policy Research Working Paper 6166, Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Krafft, C., Assaad, Ragui and Rahman, Khandker Wahedur, (2019)
"Introducing the Egypt Labor Market Panel Survey 2018", ERF Working Paper (forthcoming).

OAMDI (2019)
"Labor Market Panel Surveys (LMPS)", http://erf.org.eg/data-portal/. Version 3.0 of Licensed Data Files; ELMPS 2012. Cairo: Economic Research Forum (ERF)

OAMDI (2019)
"Labor Market Panel Surveys (LMPS)", http://erf.org.eg/data-portal/. Version 2.0 of Licensed Data Files; ELMPS 2018. Cairo: Economic Research Forum (ERF).

Papoutsaki, D. and Wahba, J. (2015)
"The Change in International Migration Aspirations of Egyptian Youth", in Roushdy, Rania and Sieverding, Maia (eds.), Panel Survey of Young People in Egypt (SYPE) 2014 Generating Evidence for Policy, Programs, and Research, Population Council.

United Nations Population Division (2018)
"World Urbanization Prospects: 2018 Revision".

Wahba, J. (2009)
"An overview of internal and international migration in Egypt", in R. Assaad (ed) Egypt's labor market revisited, Ch. 5. Cairo, Egypt: The American University in Cairo Press.

Wahba, J. (2015)
"Through the Keyhole: International migration in Egypt", in R. Assaad and C. Krafft (eds) The Egyptian Labor Market in an Era of Revolution. Oxford University Press, 2015.

Zohry, A. (2009)
"The development impact of internal migration: Findings from Egypt", International Union for the Scientific Study of Population.

Appendix

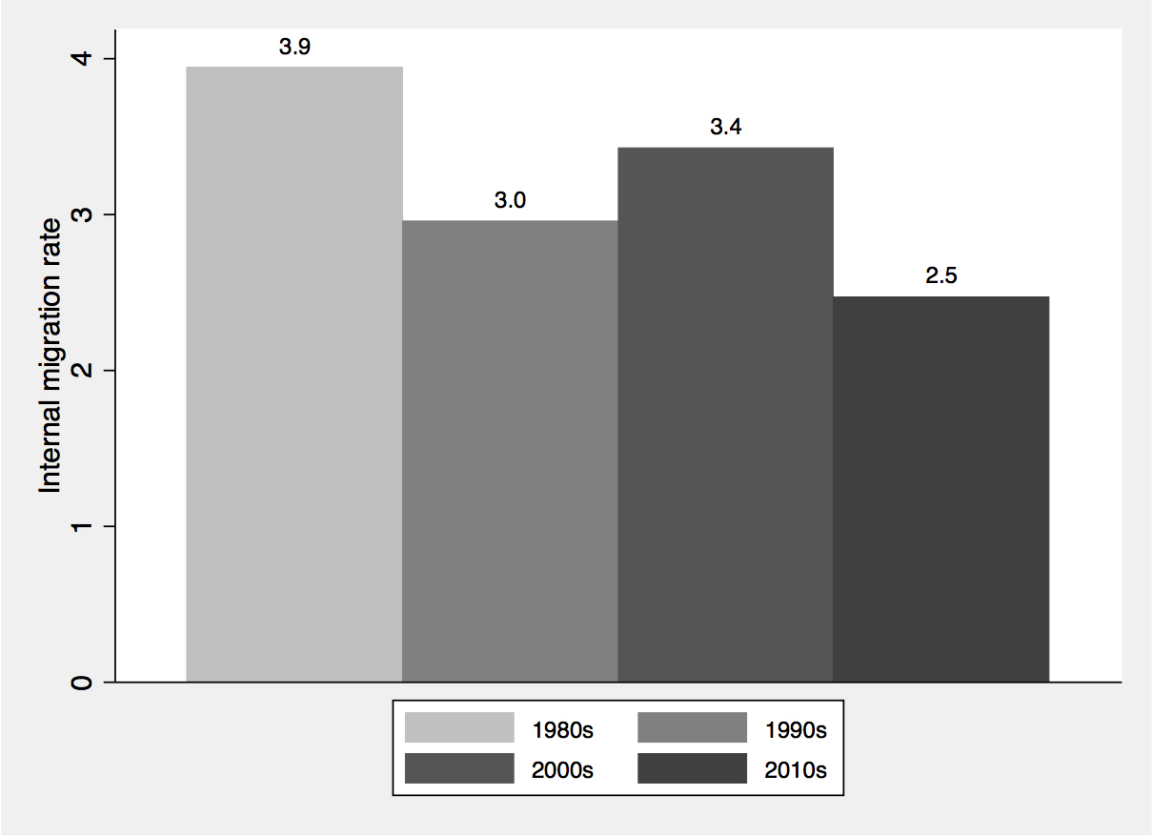


Figure A1: Internal migration rates (percentage) by decade of migration, mobility between villages

Notes. This table features internal migration rates by decades of migration. An internal migrant is defined as an individual who reported a geographical move within Egypt in the years between 1980 and 1989 (for the 1980s decade), the years between 1990 and 1999 (for the 1990s decade), the years between 2000 and 2009 (for the 2000s decade) and the years between 2010 and 2018 (for the 2010s decade). This figure presents mobility at the village level (shyakha). Mobility between villages corresponds to any type of move that involves a change in the village of residence in the years under consideration compared to the previous village of residence.

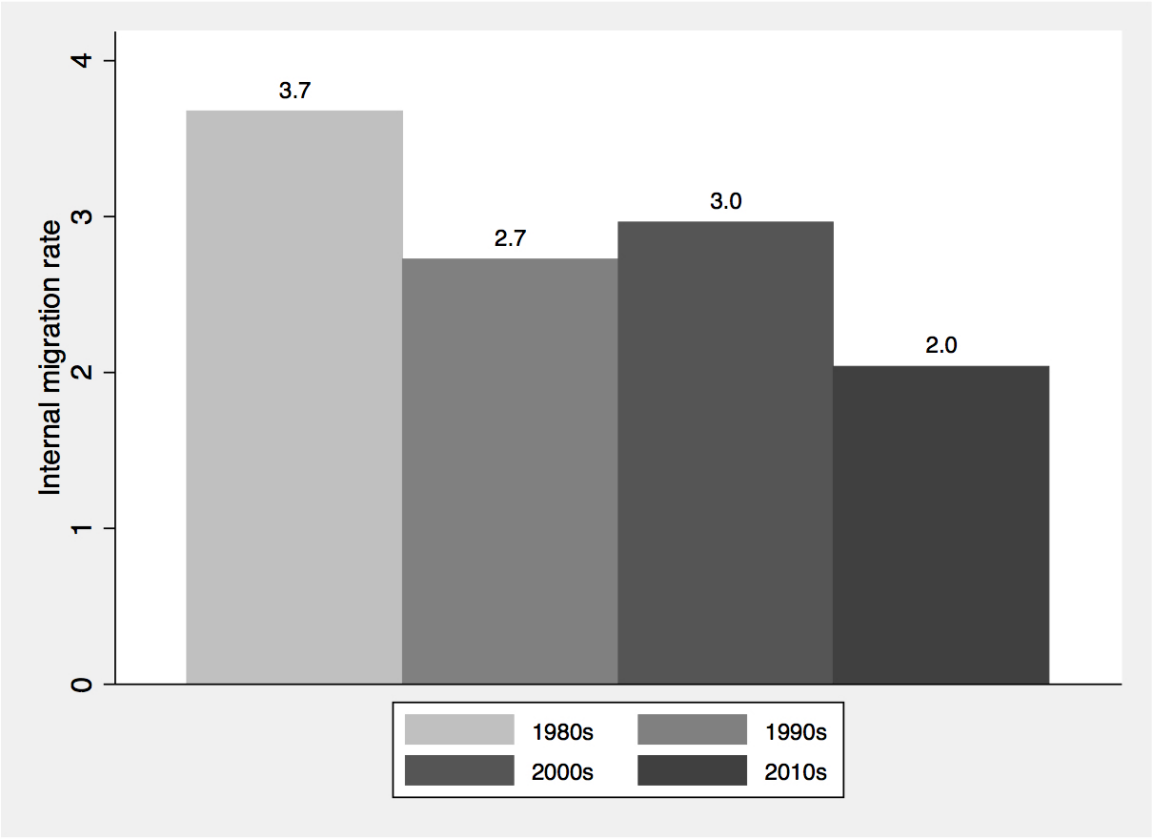


Figure A2: Internal migration rates (percentage) by decade of migration, mobility between cities or towns

Notes. This table features internal migration rates by decades of migration. An internal migrant is defined as an individual who reported a geographical move within Egypt in the years between 1980 and 1989 (for the 1980s decade), the years between 1990 and 1999 (for the 1990s decade), the years between 2000 and 2009 (for the 2000s decade) and the years between 2010 and 2018 (for the 2010s decade). This figure presents mobility at the city or town level (qism). Mobility between cities or towns corresponds to any type of move that involves a change in the city or town of residence in the years under consideration compared to the previous city or town.

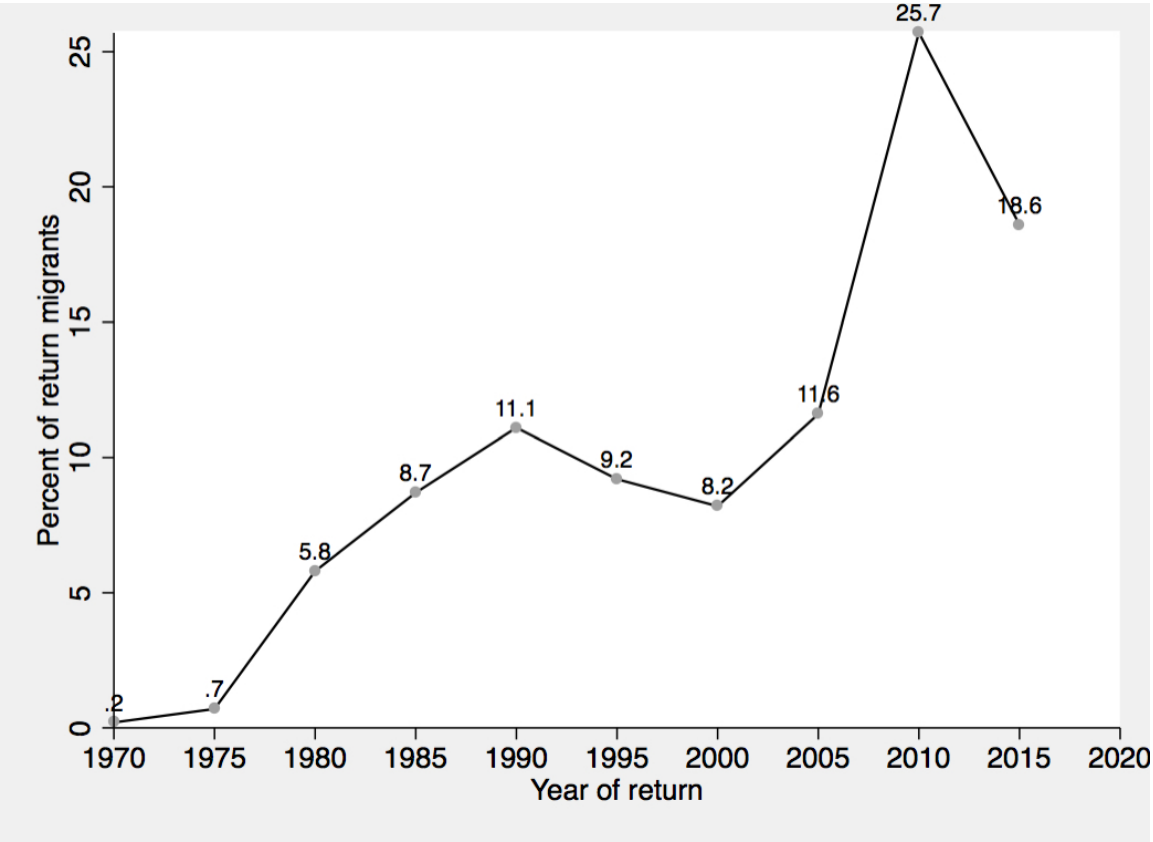


Figure A3: Year of return (percent of return migrants)

Notes. This figure presents the share of return migrants as a percentage of total returnees by year of final (most recent) using data from the ELMPS 2018. The data is smoothed over 5 years' intervals. The 2015 data point is not a full 5 year interval as it corresponds to the period between 2015-2018.

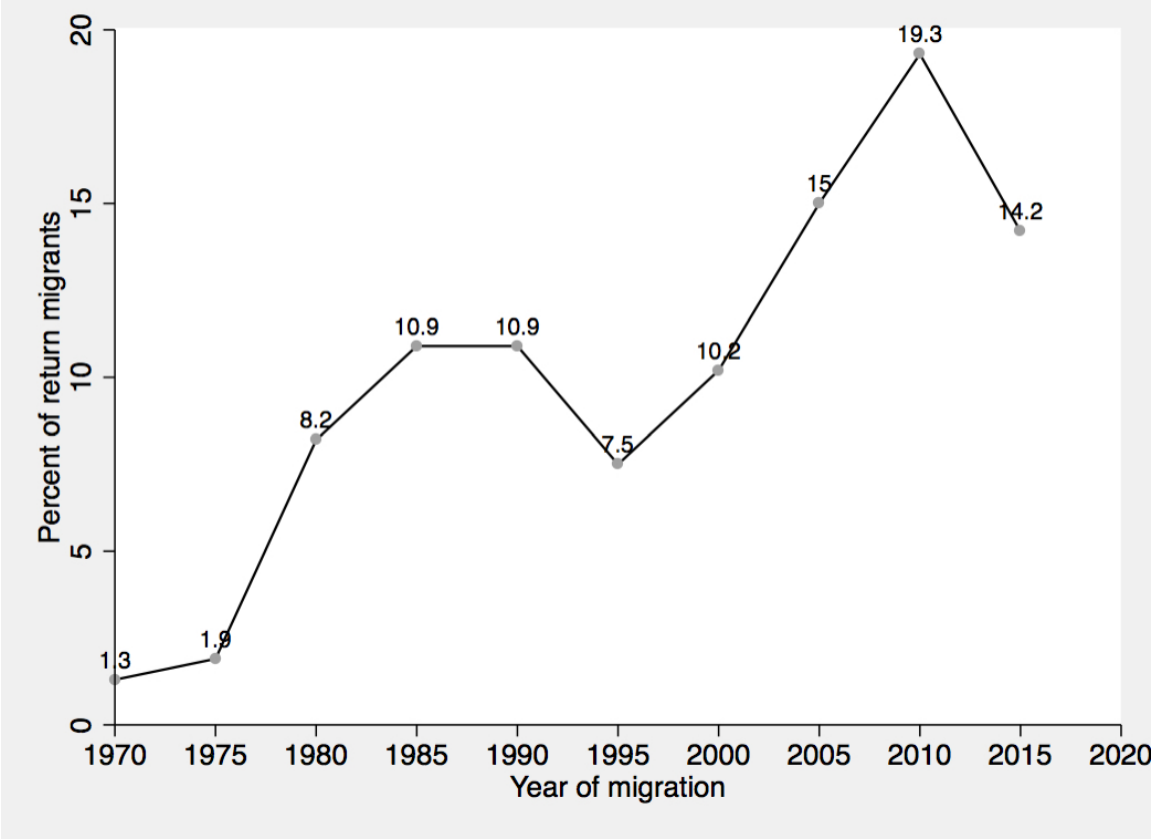


Figure A4: Year of migration (percent of return migrants)

Notes. This figure presents the share of return migrants as a percentage of total returnees by year of migration using data from the ELMPS 2018. The data is smoothed over 5 years' intervals. The 2015 data point is not a full 5 year interval as it corresponds to the period between 2015-2018.

Agence française
de développement
5, rue Roland Barthes
75012 Paris I France
www.afd.fr

What is AFD ?
The Agence Française de Développement (AFD) Group is a public entity which finances, supports and expedites transitions toward a more just and sustainable world. As a French overseas aid platform for sustainable development and investment, we and our partners create shared solutions, with and for the people of the global South.
Active in more than 4,000 projects in the French overseas departments and some 115 countries, our teams strive to promote health, education and gender equality, and are working to protect our common resources – peace, education, health, biodiversity and a stable climate.
It's our way of honoring the commitment France and the French people have made to fulfill the Sustainable Development Goals.
Towards a world in common.

Publication Director Rémy Rioux
Editor-in-Chief Thomas Melonio

Legal deposit 1st quarter 2020
ISSN 2492 - 2846
Graphic design MeMo, Juliegilles, D. Cazeils
Layout Denise Perrin, AFD
Printed by the AFD reprography service

To browse our publications:
https://www.afd.fr/en/ressources-accueil