

A New Look at Egypt's Brain Drain Within AUC

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Abstract

The emigration of highly skilled and educated Egyptian citizens has been on-going for decades and has had a relatively negative effect on Egypt's development. Drawing on results obtained from AUC students, this research assesses the extent to which the brain drain is an issue for this particular community. Questionnaires were handed out to 100 Egyptian undergraduate students—both male and female – in order to gauge a rough estimate of the number of AUC students who plan on traveling and living abroad as well as their reasons for doing so. The research showed that 90% of students wished to live abroad. In addition, interviews were held with Egyptian professors to discuss potential reasons for Egyptian nationals to remain within their country as well as the ways in which Egyptian emigrants can counteract some of the effects of the brain drain.

Introduction

The level of human capital, i.e. the productive skills and technical knowledge embodied in labor, is without a doubt related to a country's level of development (Appleton *et al*, 1), and it is because of this that the emigration of highly skilled and educated citizens is so problematic. Referred to as "brain drain," this phenomenon is, and has been, of consequence to Egypt's development process.

Emigration patterns are typically traced to the citizens' search for better standards of living in more developed countries abroad (Portes), and according to a joint report issued by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, the Egyptian diaspora numbered 2.7 million in 2004. Of these citizens, 1.9 million had found residence in the petro-states of the Gulf, with the remaining ones settled in the United States, Canada, and various Western European countries (Moll). The International Labor Organization estimates that Saudi Arabia is the primary destination for Egyptian migrants (Wahba).

Because brain drain is perceived as at least partially responsible for the lag in many countries' development, it is necessary to investigate possible solutions (Sako, 28) to the problems. Many attempts at encouraging citizens to remain within their home countries have focused on improving conditions within the developing countries themselves, but more realistic solutions have shifted the focus on the inclusion of the Egyptian diaspora in the development of the country (Ite, 77-78). In addition, other important solutions attempt to increase citizens' awareness of the benefits of remaining within the home country (Nwaochei, 53-55).

Review of Literature

Because of its importance to the fate of developing countries, much has been written on the subject of brain drain. The term “brain drain” was originally coined by Britain’s Royal Society following mass exoduses to the U.S. during the 1950s and 1960s. At the heels of WWII, jobs in the U.S. provided increased opportunities to everyone—immigrants included (Cervantes *et. al*) - and the resulting increase in brain drain prompted scholars to conduct studies in the two decades that followed. To date, scholars have concentrated on the causes of brain drain, the effects of the phenomenon on developing countries, as well as possible solutions for this problem.

The basic approaches to brain drain are outlined below:

I. Causes of Brain Drain

Alejandro Portes who, at 1976 was one of the first scholars to comment on causes of brain drain, identifies four main behind the drain’s existence. Claiming that higher income levels within more developed countries cause citizens to immigrate there, Portes explains that highly skilled professionals are also drawn to these countries because of their tendency to have better equipment, staff, and funding. In addition, the fact that professionals often receive more prestige in their host countries than in their native ones increase their desire to remain abroad. Lastly, Portes views political instability and a lack of political freedom as encouraging emigration (Portes, 492). Portes is not alone in claiming that these particular reasons have contributed most to the increased immigration rates to developed countries. See for instance, the work of Man Sing Das which also attributes the brain drain in Africa to the same reasons (27-29).

In addition to those mentioned by Portes and Man Sing Das, other causes - perhaps just as relevant for our purposes - have been discussed more recently by George J. Sefa Dei and Alireza Asgharzadeh in the year 2002. Focusing on Africa, Dei and Asgharzadeh partially trace brain drain in African countries to the colonial legacy of the continent. Observing that the colonial order cut off the educated elites’ natural attachment to their indigenous culture and communities, Dei and Ashgharzadeh claim that Africans are now plagued by an “infatuation with the West” and many go in search of the “Western Paradise” (Dei *et. al*, 32).

II. Effects of Brain Drain

Not surprisingly, much of the literature on brain drain has included a discussion about its effects on the countries ‘left behind’. Some scholars deny that brain drain has had any noticeable affect on developing countries, including Dhananjayan Srisankandarajah, associate director at the Institute for Public Policy Research, who recently asserted that brain drain “may not be so bad”, and Assistant Professor of African and World history at Shippensburg University, Kwabena O. Akurang-Parry, who believes that there can be net gains from the phenonmenon of brain drain. Akurang-Parry uses the example of

Ghana to show brain drain's contribution to society and economy. Claiming that taxes on remittances for families through the banks are a source of foreign exchange earnings for the state, Akurang-Parry adds that these remittances are a source of income for millions of families in Ghana, but continues to admit that such benefits may only be temporary.

Despite the above, a significant number of scholars observe the opposite of this, one of whom, the executive secretary of the African Capacity Building Foundation, Soumana Sako, argues that empirical evidence suggests that the brain drain has a negative effect on the growth rate of African economies and that it could possibly retard a country's long term development (28). Articles by George J. Sefa Dei, Professor and chair of the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies at the Ontario Institute, Alireza Asgharzadeh, a sociology lecturer at York University, Ben Nnaemeka Nwaochei, and Kaz Miyagiwa, Professor of Economics at Emory University all support this view.

III. Solutions for Brain Drain

Numerous scholars have also attempted to address the difficult issue of finding solutions to brain drain, and have recommended a variety of solutions to this problem—how successful these solutions may be, however, remains open to debate. Sako adamantly states that “working conditions must be improved, salaries must reflect market conditions, tertiary institutions of learning must provide facilities for teaching and research, and doctors and medical personnel must work in well-equipped hospital and medical centers” (28). In addition, he argues that African governments must make their countries more attractive places for these students and professionals to work. He adds that the emergence of a conducive political environment, a productive economic environment, and an enhanced social environment would help reverse the brain drain pattern (28). While these suggestions would without a doubt transform developing countries and encourage citizens to remain within their home countries, it is also highly speculative that any developing country is currently in a position to implement them.

Other solutions that concentrate on making the best of the brain drain are beginning to emerge as alternatives to the previously discussed solutions. Uwem E. Ite, for example, investigates the possibility of including the diaspora in the development of the country. He claims that “highly skilled expatriate networks, through a connectionist approach linking diaspora members with their country of origin” would turn the “brain drain into a brain gain.” Other ways in which to use the diaspora revolve around promoting international intellectual cooperation (Ite, 77-78). Additionally, Ainalem Tebeje, vice president of the Association on Higher Education And Disability, has recently suggested “virtual linkages” as means of channeling the diaspora. Virtual linkages are independent, non-political, and non-profit networks that facilitate skill transfer and capacity-building and are meant to mobilize skilled diaspora members' expertise in order to employ it in the development process in their home countries.

Such ideas have been further investigated in a recent study of Tebeje's titled *Semantics Aside: the Role of the African Diaspora in Africa's Capacity Building*. The study revolves around emerging diaspora efforts to assume a more active role in Africa's development

and examined virtual participation as a means to facilitate an effective and sustained diaspora commitment to Africa's development efforts. The study found that virtual participation could "channel the untapped intellectual and material input from the African diaspora" and that "a growing awareness among the African diaspora of its moral, intellectual, and social responsibility to contribute to Africa's development efforts" is emerging (Tebeje).

It is this growing sense of "moral, intellectual, and social responsibility" that Ben Nnaemeka Nwaochei focuses on when discussing "the case for return." Nwaochei explains that it is essential for Nigerians to be made aware of the important role they can play in developing their country, that higher income levels in developed countries are not essential for a good life, and that they may be awarded great respect and recognition if they return to their home countries. Also, Nwaochei believes that awakening feelings of patriotism and a love for humanity in citizens would encourage them to return to their home countries and assist in improving their home countries (Nwaochei, 53-55).

IV. The Brain Drain in Egypt

To date, few scholars have addressed the issue of brain drain in Egypt. Two articles published in the 1970's and 1980's do, however, deal with the emigration of Egyptian citizens, and both take into consideration the approaches to brain drain outlined above. In 1983, Nazih Ayubi, political scientist and author, outlined the various features of brain drain within Egypt of the day. Ayubi observed the acceleration of Egyptian immigration to the U.S. following the relaxation of immigration rules in the late 1960's. Furthermore, he noticed a higher percentage of scientific personnel among the immigrants—hypothesizing that their immigration to the U.S. was due to higher demand for scientists in industrial societies. While Ayubi outlined some of the patterns in Egyptian emigration, he did not address the effects of this pattern on Egypt itself. Ayubi states that "no comprehensive studies have been conducted by Egyptian authorities on the economic or social costs to the country." He goes on to say that "it is still too early in the history of Egyptian emigration to the New World" to properly assess the effect of remittances dispatched to Egypt by Egyptians working abroad (Ayubi, 445). Complementary to the work of Ayubi and Portes is that professor of Sociology at the American University in Cairo, Saneya Saleh's discussion of the reasons Egyptian scientists choose to emigrate. Saleh reasserts that low salaries at home, a superior scientific and intellectual climate abroad, as well as unemployment are critical causes for emigration. More specifically, Saleh addresses the rigidity of bureaucratic structures of national universities and annoyance with the Egyptian culture and work situation as country-specific causes for emigration.

In light of the above mentioned sources, this study views brain drain as a damaging phenomenon that continues to retard Egypt's development. In an attempt to assess the extent to which the brain drain is a present day issue among the American University in Cairo's (AUC) community, this study focuses on AUC's students and professors. It begins by providing a rough estimate of the number of AUC students who plan on

emigrating as well as discussing their reasons for doing so. The research also examines some of the problems AUC students fear they might run into while abroad. Taking into consideration these results, this research will explore reasons for Egyptian citizens to remain within Egypt as well as the ways in which the Egyptian diaspora can be channeled to improve Egypt's development.

Methodology & Findings

I. Questionnaires

This section of the study focuses on AUC students—a group known to be among the most highly Western- educated citizens of Egypt. The same group usually encounters fewer problems in obtaining visas and traveling abroad than the average Egyptian. It appears that AUC students are representative of a population of academically qualified Egyptian students that are generally able to obtain jobs abroad. Such characteristics ensure that AUC students are an exceptionally relevant group for a study on the Egyptian brain drain.

In order to assess the extent to which the brain drain is a present day issue among these students, questionnaires were distributed to a representative sample. Each questionnaire consisted of ten questions aimed at understanding how the brain drain phenomenon plays out within the AUC community. (See Appendix 1 for a copy of the questions.) This sample consisted of 50 male and 50 female AUC students, all in the process of completing their undergraduate degree. The surveyed students were all randomly selected and were all of Egyptian origin. Here it must be noted that this sample is not representative of any larger Egyptian populations and is only an attempt at representing AUC students. Furthermore it is important to keep in mind, when assessing the results of these questionnaires later, that the sample chosen is only approximately 2% of the AUC student body and that many generalizations will be made.

Estimates of Students Who Would Choose to Live Abroad

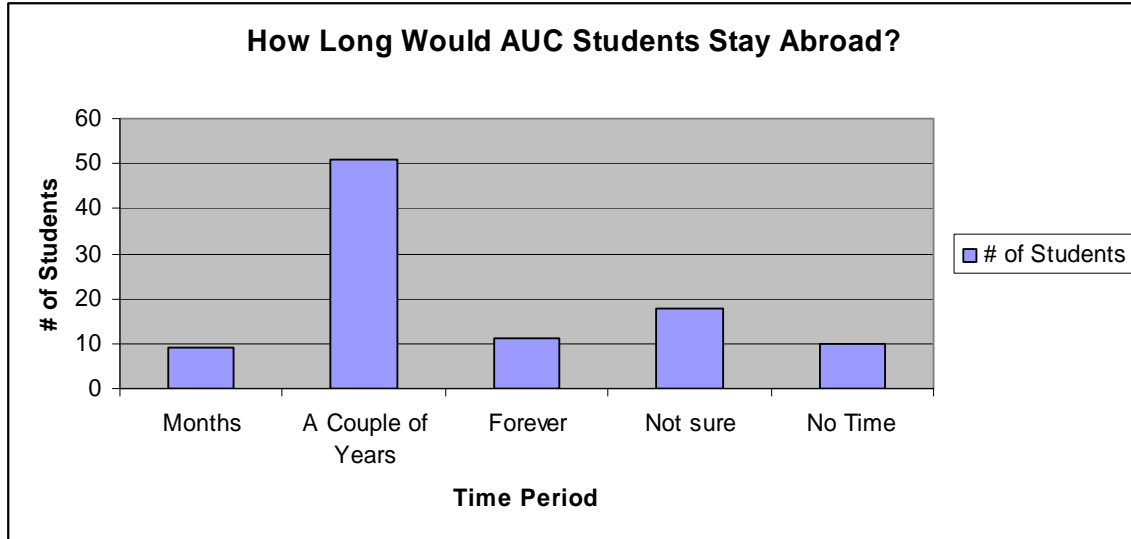
The first question of the survey was an attempt to obtain an estimate of the number of students that would choose to live abroad after graduation. Here it was found that 90% of students surveyed would choose to live abroad if given the opportunity. By contrast, a mere 10% reported that they would prefer never to live abroad. The statistics are interesting to note in light of the fact that the majority of students surveyed are relatively well off and generally enjoy high standards of living within Egypt.

Estimates of Time Spent Abroad

When asked how long they would choose to live abroad, the majority of students (51%) said they would like to spend a couple of years outside of Egypt. Following this majority, a significant number of students said they were unsure of how long they would like to stay abroad-but nevertheless wish to travel. Approximately 11% of students claimed that they would want to live permanently abroad after their graduation from AUC. At the

opposite end of the spectrum, roughly the same percentage (10%) also said that they would not want to live abroad at all; and a further 9% of students said that they would only like to live abroad for a couple of months.

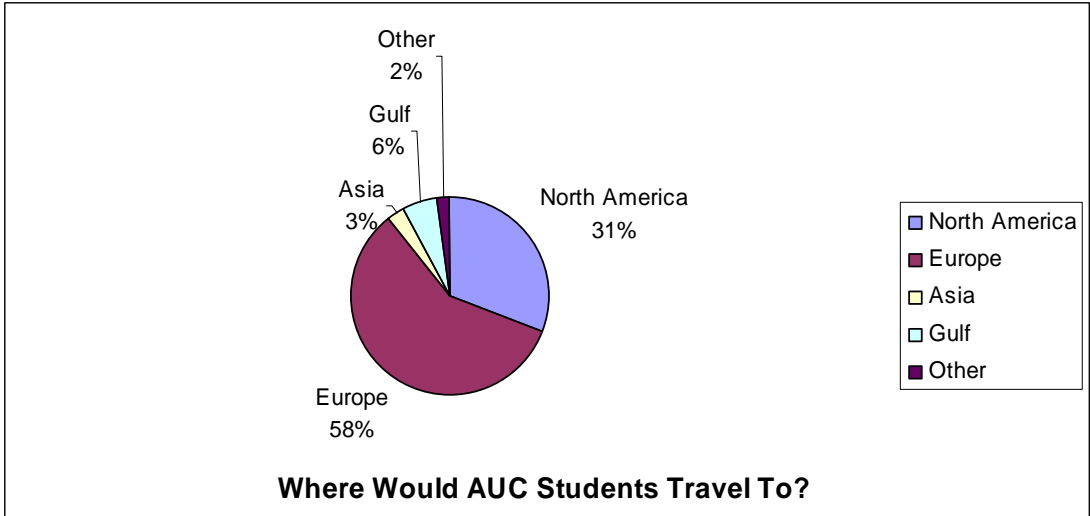
Graph 1: How Long Would AUC Students Stay Abroad?



Travel Destinations

The distributed questionnaire asked students where they would choose to live after graduation. 58% of the surveyed students chose Europe as a possible travel destination, with North America following in second place. Asia and the Gulf were also desired destinations; however, less than 10% said they would choose to live there. It is interesting to note that more males than females said they would want to live in the Gulf. While they did not list reasons why, it is possible that the Gulf is not a desired destination for female students because of the different working atmosphere and lifestyle for which the Gulf is known.

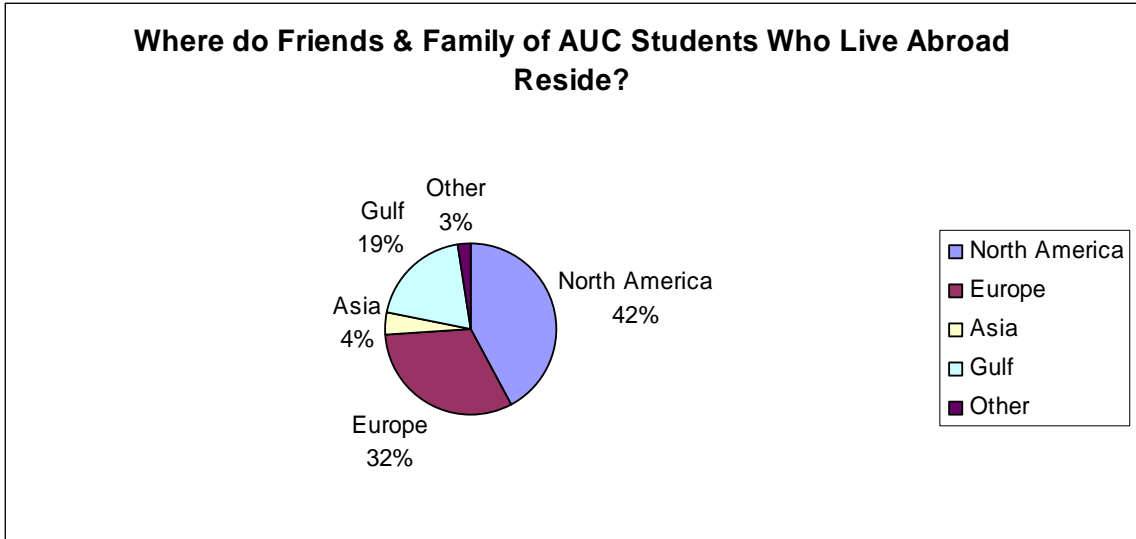
Graph 2: Where Would AUC Students Travel To?



The survey also asked students if they had any friends or family who live abroad and where these individuals currently reside: 92% of AUC students said they had friends or family living abroad, a figure that proves the extent to which the brain drain is also a problem among the extended AUC community. Perhaps not surprisingly, the countries in which students' family members reside are generally the same as those the students expressed interest in traveling to.

In contradiction to the above statement, however, is the fact that while more AUC students said they'd like to live in Europe than in North America, the same students reported that they had more friends and family in North America than in Europe – albeit that the percentage difference is slight and that Europe and North America are still the top two overall destinations. We also note that, although few AUC students said that they themselves would like to live in the Gulf, a substantial percentage (19%) of students know people who do live there.

Graph 3: Where do Friends & Family of AUC Students Who Live Abroad Reside?

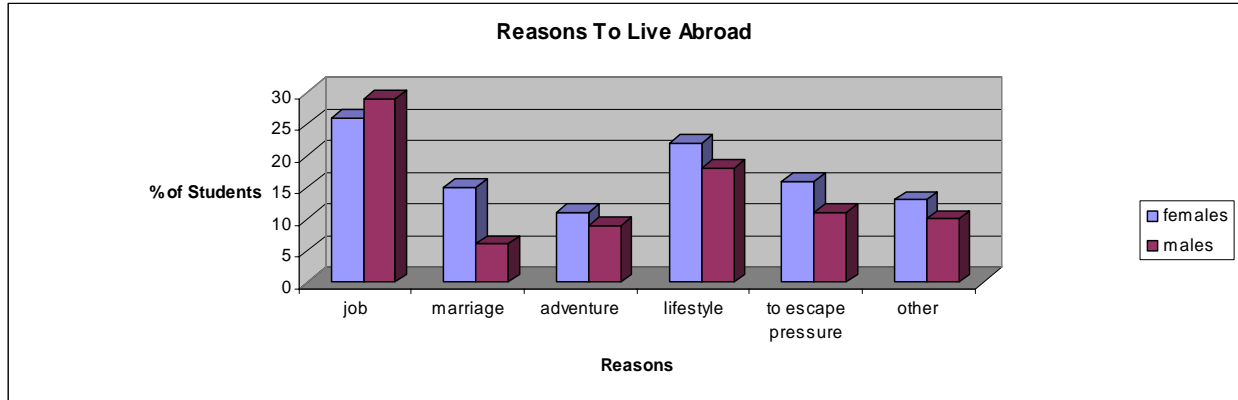


Reasons for Emigration

While it is important to get an idea of the number of AUC students that would like to live abroad, it is even more important to understand the reasons behind students’ desire to do so. Surveyed students reported job-related reasons as the primary factor for emigration. Following this closely was the desire for a better lifestyle—approximately 21% of students noted lifestyle-related reasons as a motive for emigration. The desire to escape any kind of pressure was also a reason for emigration among the AUC community, and other, less significant reasons were related to the search for adventure and reasons related to marriage.

Here it is interesting to note that more female students placed marriage as a reason for living out of Egypt—whereas only a few male students mentioned marriage as a reason at all. This is not surprising due to many present gender differences within Egyptian society, within which it is not uncommon for women to marry men who plan on starting a new life abroad. Egyptian females, if the circumstances permit, are usually expected to travel abroad with their husbands if the husband must travel for work related reasons (the opposite does not frequently apply).

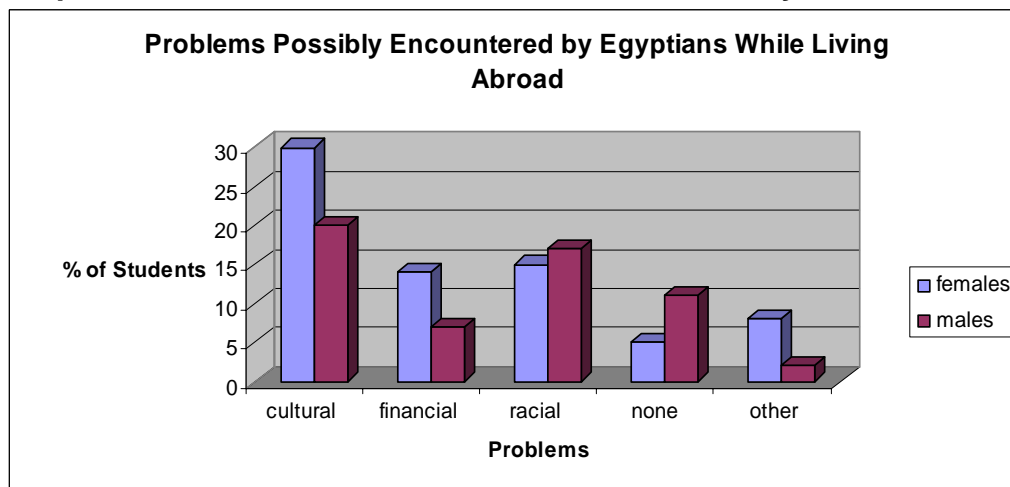
Graph 4: Reasons to Live Abroad



Possible Problems Encountered by AUC Students When Abroad

The majority of AUC students expressed a desire to travel and live abroad. While 20% of these anticipated a problem free experience, the majority of those asked expected some negative and/or problematic experiences, the most common of which were related to culture and race. Students also expressed some worry regarding the possibility of financial problems - though this was clearly less troubling than differences potentially resulting from cultural/racial concerns.

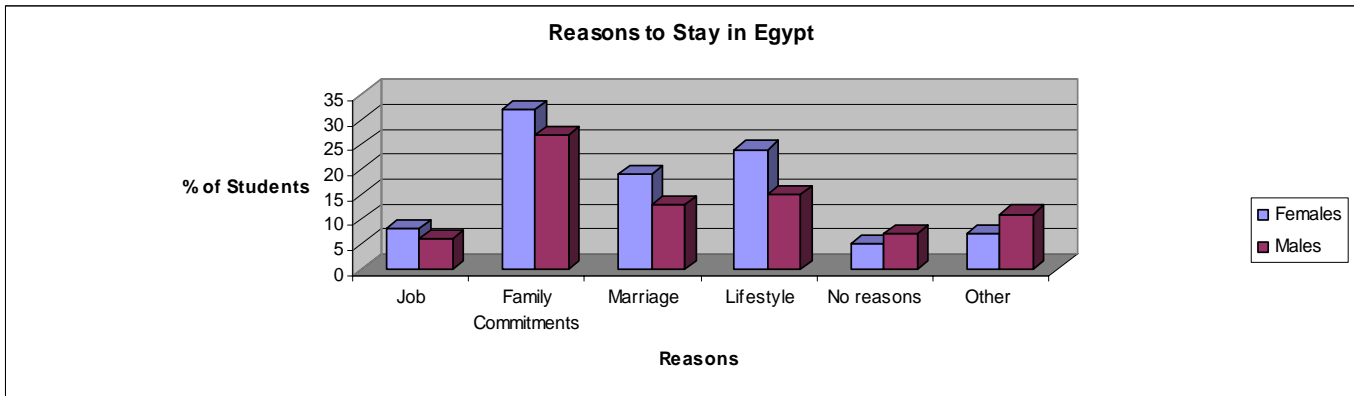
Graph 5: Possible Problems Encountered Abroad by AUC Students



Reasons to Remain within Egypt

In an attempt to examine why people choose to remain within Egypt instead of emigrating, students were asked to list possible reasons to stay within the country. Family commitments were the most frequently mentioned reason for Egyptian citizens to remain at home, while many also cited marriage and lifestyle as reasons to remain in Egypt (as with the previous point, female students were more likely to mention marriage as a reason than males). The number of students that listed job-related reasons was minimal—less than 10% of the total sample. Furthermore, a significant number of AUC students specifically said that they could find no reasons to stay within Egypt. Of itself, this is problematic and suggests that there is great dissatisfaction with life in the country.

Graph 6: Reasons to Remain Within Egypt



Solutions for Brain Drain

While by no means experts on the subject of brain drain, the students were still able to provide suggestions on ways to combat the phenomenon. It is, after all, these students that know best what it would take for them to stay within Egypt instead of emigrate. The solutions they suggested are listed below and divided into thematic categories. They will be later discussed in a broader context on page 20. However, it must be noted here that a significant number of surveyed students – approximately 17% - claimed that nothing could be done to encourage young people to stay in the country. Also, at least 54% of students mentioned increased job opportunities as a solution to the brain drain. Related to this is the percentage of students (over 20%) that specifically mentioned the need for higher salaries.

Job Related Changes

More Job Opportunities	54%
Higher Salaries	23%
Greater Appreciation of Individual Efforts	1%
Greater Variety of Career Options	2%
Better Business Environment	1%
Better Working Conditions	2%

Lifestyle Related Changes

More Freedom	6%
Cleanliness	3%
Better Organization	1%
A More Easy & Stress Free Lifestyle	8%
Improving Lives for Females	1%
Giving Citizens More Rights	4%
Better Environment	2%
Better Welfare & Health Benefits	3%
Higher Living Standards	2%
A Better Transportation System	1%
Reduction of Traffic	1%
A Change in Culture & Traditions	1%

Economic Changes

Greater Development	1%
Less Inflation & Greater Price Stability	1%
A Change in the Economic System	1%
Overall Changes in Economic Conditions	4%

Political Changes

Improved Rule of Law	1%
Reduction of Corruption	3%
A Change in Government	5%
Judicial Reform	1%
Political Stability	1%
Getting Rid of the Bureaucracy	2%

Education-Related Changes

A Change in the Education System	4%
Easily Available Student Loans	1%

II. Interviews

In order to better understand the brain drain within the AUC community, various interviews were held to compliment the quantitative data collected above. In an attempt to get a more in-depth understanding of why certain Egyptians choose to remain and work within Egypt, interviews were held with Dr. Monal Abdel Baki and Dr. Abeer Elshennawy. Both individuals received their doctorates from universities in the US. Following the completion of their studies, however, they chose to return to Egypt and currently teach at AUC. Furthermore an email interview was held with Solava Ibrahim—a PhD candidate at the University of Cambridge in the UK. Of Egyptian origin, Ibrahim has completed two Masters' degrees in development studies and has worked at the United Nation Development Program (UNDP). These interviews concentrated mostly on

periods of stay abroad and in Egypt as well as the reasons for doing so. Furthermore, because all 3 interviewees are more or less experts in economic and political development fields, the interviews held brought to light their opinions on the brain drain within Egypt as well as proposals for solutions for the brain drain within Egypt.

Periods of Stay Abroad & Reasons for Doing So

Dr. Abeer Elshennawy and Dr. Monal Abdel Baki both informed me that they traveled abroad with the intention of completing their doctorate and then returning to Egypt soon after. Both actually carried out their plans and returned to Egypt following the completion of their studies. In addition to discussing their personal stories with me, Dr. Abdel Baki and Dr. Elshennawy also elucidated on the shared experiences of their Egyptian colleagues. Dr. Abdel Baki said that making the decision to come back is not an easy one because the highest performers abroad are bombarded by offers from the best of institutions to remain and work there. She explained that many Egyptians are approached with job offers far better—in terms of better pay and prestige—than the job offers they could expect to receive in Egypt and, hence, choose to stay abroad following the completion of their studies. Furthermore she claims that because the Egypt is curbed by bureaucracy, lacking in opportunities and scholarships in academics, many students choose to remain abroad. Dr. Abdel Baki explains that this results in “the best of the best, and the cream of the cream” staying abroad instead of returning to Egypt. In addition, Dr. Elshennawy also commented on her colleagues who have chosen to live abroad, idealistically stating that that even those who have chosen to stay abroad continue to dream of returning to Egypt. She explains that most of her colleagues would rather return to their native country, but have chosen to stay abroad due to the lack of opportunities in Egypt. She also claims that many of her friends abroad have returned as soon as a good job opportunity opened up for them in Egypt.

When asked about the reasons behind their return to Egypt, Dr. Abdel Baki explained that she is strongly against the brain drain phenomenon and had always planned on returning in an effort to help Egypt develop. Although she admits she has had difficulty in adjusting to Egyptian life and the Egyptian educational system, she still believes that her decision to return was the correct one. Dr. Elshennawy, while also happy with the decision she has made, has come back primarily for family reasons. She explains that it is simply the “family ties that brought me back.” She also said that she hopes that, simply by being in Egypt and teaching, she is assisting in her country’s development.

Opinions on the Egyptian Brain Drain

Because the interviewees are experts on brain drain, a section of the interviews was devoted to discovering their opinion of the phenomenon within Egypt. Initially, all three interviewees argued that it was essential for Egyptian citizens to remain within Egypt. While Dr. Elshennawy felt like the “only way Egypt can progress” is if Egyptian citizens return, Ibrahim felt that Egyptian citizens should only return if they find a “suitable work environment which would allow them to unfold their capabilities and which would enrich their experiences.” Ibrahim expands on this by saying that returning to Egypt should be the long term goal of every Egyptian citizen, however, she explains that “s/he need to

carefully plan this 'return' in a way that would allow him/her to 'bring back the experiences' and make use of their stay in Egypt."

When asked how great a problem the brain drain is within Egypt, Ibrahim's opinion diverged from those of Dr. Elshennawy and Dr. Abdel Baki. Ibrahim does not seem to think the brain drain is a serious problem in Egypt. She explains:

"I think there is a hidden assumption that all the people who manage to go abroad are smarter and hence we need to get them back to benefit from their experiences. Although this might be partially true, the fact is that there are *a lot* of 'smart' people living in Egypt. The problem is not the brain drain, but rather that the capabilities of these people are sometimes neither discovered nor are they given the chance to 'prove themselves.'"

In this case, Ibrahim, seems to think that the real problem lies not in the brain drain but in "giving people enough 'space or opportunity' to prove their abilities and hence 'forcing' them to go abroad where these opportunities would be largely available."

Solutions for the Egyptian Brain Drain

Much as with the surveyed students, the interviewed experts were asked to provide suggestions for improving the situation of brain drain in Egypt. In response, Ibrahim explained that "there is no 'easy answer' or magic stick as there are a number of economic, social and political factors that are in play. Any solution however needs to carefully address each of these aspects." Nevertheless, Ibrahim shared the opinion of both Dr. Elshennawy and Dr. Abdel Baki regarding an increase in opportunities within Egypt. All three interviewees mentioned that enhancing job and research opportunities is the primary way to attract Egyptians to stay within or to return to the country after studying abroad. Here, all three interviews agreed that although this is not an easy solution, it is the most important change needed to reverse the brain drain in Egypt.

Another solution that Dr. Abdel Baki thinks needs to be taken more seriously is reform of the Egyptian educational system. Believing that the current system fails to foster students' creativity and fails to produce active citizens, Dr. Abdel Baki explains that only "people with a vision" are aware of the need to develop their country and an educational reform that encourages students' development efforts is needed.

Dr. Elshennawy, on the other hand, tried instead to turn brain drain into "brain grain" by suggesting the involvement of Egyptians living abroad in the development of their country. Dr. Elshennawy believes that it is important for the Egyptian government to find ways to "develop ties with those living abroad," and explained that even Egyptians who not permanently live in Egypt can still give back to the country. Dr. Elshennawy thinks that the government can "benefit from the brains" of those abroad by organizing international conferences or hiring them as consultants for example.

Ibrahim, currently residing in the UK, is herself an example of how Dr. Elshennawy's suggestion can work. Ibrahim explains that, even though she is abroad, she is able to maintain links with her old professors and university in Egypt. She explains "I am a member of the Development Initiative at AUC and follow up on the research that they conduct. I also occasionally attend conferences there, where I present my research and its results and learn more about the ongoing research in the field. I also maintain links with the UNDP office, where I used to work." Yet, while Ibrahim is definitely contributing to Egyptian development while abroad, the two other interviewees said that they were able to do very little when they were abroad that contributed to the Egyptian development process.

Finally, it must be noted that all three interviewees expressed reservations when discussing solutions to brain drain in Egypt. All three admitted that solving the brain drain in Egypt, or in any other developing country, is a difficult process. They all agreed that no easy solutions to the phenomenon can be found, and that the solutions suggested will take time to alter the nature of Egypt's brain drain.

Discussion of Results

Clearly the research shows that the issue of brain drain is of relevance within the AUC community. With 90% of surveyed students choosing to live abroad if given the opportunity—there is no doubt that the AUC community is overflowing with potential 'drained brains'. But while this may suggest that none of the students would choose to return, 51% of surveyed students said that they would choose to live abroad only for a couple of years. Such a percentage is reassuring because it would imply that these students would live abroad and gain new knowledge and skills and return with them to Egypt—hopefully assisting in Egypt's development. Nevertheless, it is oftentimes the case that those who plan on living abroad for only a couple of years end up remaining abroad for longer than their original intention—as was the case with one of the interviewed experts. Although of the experts interviewed, two saw brain drain as a very serious problem within the AUC community and Egypt in general, one expert expressed that she does not think it is "such a big problem in Egypt" and that "not all the smart people are abroad." The difference in opinion could be due to the fact that that expert is still living abroad at the moment. Furthermore, and upon being told the results of the survey handed out to AUC students, Dr. Elshennawy expressed the view that the AUC community is unique and that brain drain is exaggerated amongst its students (who are often luckier than most in obtaining visas to travel or reside abroad).

It is not surprising to note that Europe and North America are the primary destinations for members of the AUC community with 89% of surveyed students stating that they would choose to travel to Europe or North America, and all three of the experts interviewed had lived in North America or Europe at one point of their lives. Here it is interesting to note the uniqueness of AUC in terms of travel destinations. It seems as though if this research was conducted other communities within Egypt, the Gulf countries would be the primary travel destinations. When looking at the larger AUC community (friends and family of AUC students) the Gulf States are areas of residence for approximately 19% this larger community. When looking at Egypt as a whole, this

percentage becomes much higher—of the Egyptians living abroad approximately 70% are in the Gulf States. Nonetheless, this percentage does not necessarily represent a large community of brain drainers since the majority of these residents are usually migrant laborers (Zohry).

There is little divergence when comparing the AUC community's reasons for living abroad with the reasons collected by other scholars. Alejandro Portes' "Determinants of the Brain Drain" published in the 1970's is still of relevance today in propounding that the search for a better life—especially a better job—is the primary reason for traveling and living abroad within the AUC community. Saneya Saleh's reasons for Egyptian scientists' emigration published in 1977 also coincide with many of the reasons found by this study. Here, however, it is interesting to note that a new reason (marriage-related issues) was noted by AUC students as a main reason for living abroad. As previously mentioned, more female students identified marriage as a reason for traveling abroad, a factor due to certain characteristics in Egyptian society that result in women accompanying their husbands abroad in search of a better life.

Discovering the reasons for living abroad allows us to find ways in which we can solve brain drain and encourage young people to remain within Egypt. The solutions to brain drain suggested by AUC students and interviewed experts largely coincide with the solutions recommended by scholars such as Soumana Sako. An increase in job opportunities and salaries is the first and most essential change that needs to occur in order to encourage AUC students to remain within Egypt. Other things that can be changed within Egypt to encourage more Egyptians to remain within the country are of political, economic, educational, and lifestyle-related nature. All these solutions, however, remain in the realm of hypothesis. It is easy to say that more job opportunities need to be created within Egypt; it is not as easy for a country such like Egypt to make the changes and implement the suggested solutions.

Other solutions offered by scholars such as Ben Nnaemeka Nwaochei focus on making young citizens aware of the important role they play in the development of their nations, and, therefore, of reasons to stay in their home countries. Such a possibility was investigated in this study; the surveyed students actually noted multiple reasons to stay within Egypt. Family commitments, a familiar lifestyle, and marriage-related reasons topped the list in terms of reasons to stay within Egypt. While it is a good sign that AUC students are more or less aware of reasons to remain within Egypt, this does not guarantee that they will choose to remain within Egypt for the reasons they have mentioned. Likewise, it is important to keep in mind that over 10% of surveyed students said they could find no reason to remain in Egypt instead of living abroad.

Because the previously mentioned suggestions may be difficult to carry out, alternative solutions allowing Egypt to benefit from its citizens abroad should be considered. Such solutions, such as the ones investigated by Ainalem Tebeje and Uwem E. Ite come up with ways in which the Egyptian Diasporas can be included in Egypt's development process. These recommendations parallel the creative solutions that Dr. Elshennawy mentioned during her interview. Setting up international programs, hiring professionals

living abroad as consultants, hosting global conferences in Egypt, as well as strengthening ties with professionals abroad are all ways in which Egypt could get the most of the brains that have deserted it. Such solutions, while perhaps not preventing Egypt's most highly skilled and educated from leaving, will at least alleviate the effects the brain drain has on Egypt's development process.

Outside of Egypt, programs like the ones outlined above, are beginning to emerge. UNESCO, for example, has set up a project titled Piloting Solutions for Alleviating Brain Drain in South East Europe. This program aims to contribute towards turning the "brain drain" into "brain gain" by "offering modern technological and financial facilities to young scientists from the region to co-operate - within the framework of joint research projects - with their fellow-nationals living abroad" ("Piloting Solutions"). Because such a program has only recently been implemented, it is hard to assess its level of success. Nevertheless, this program seems to have much potential for alleviating brain drain within South East Europe. Other similar solutions have been implemented in Africa and revolve around the idea of virtual linkages. According to the International Research Development Centre, an area where the talents of Diasporas can be channeled is virtual linkages. The Centre defines virtual linkages as "independent, non-political, and non-profit networks facilitating skill transfer and capacity-building" and explains that, to date, 41 virtual networks in 30 different countries have been set up. Six of these virtual linkages are actually African. One of these virtual linkages is the South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA) and has members in 68 different countries (Tebeje). No details regarding the success of these virtual linkages were found, however, these linkages definitely seem to facilitate the development of countries affected by the brain drain.

Conclusion

With over half of surveyed AUC students reporting that they would choose to live abroad for at least a couple of years if given the opportunity, it is hard to ignore the issue of brain drain. In search of mainly better opportunities and better lifestyles, these AUC students would choose to live mainly in Europe and North America. While the majority of surveyed students admit that they may face some racial, financial, or cultural problems abroad, 90% of students still say they would choose to live abroad. Also, although the majority of AUC students admitted that there were reasons for them to stay within Egypt, these reasons did not seem enough to keep them within the country permanently.

Interviews held with experts on the subject have largely coincided with the results of the surveys reviewed above. Nevertheless, the interviews provided a deeper look at what could be done to turn the brain drain into a brain gain in Egypt. While both students and experts agreed that the provision of more job opportunities and higher salaries would encourage Egyptians to remain within Egypt, the experts expressed some skepticism. While political, economic, educational, and lifestyle-related changes would without a doubt improve the status of Egypt and allow for more citizens to remain within Egypt, such changes are not immediate and are of idealistic nature. Ways in which to incorporate the Egyptian Diaspora while it is abroad, however, can be seen as more

realistic and useful alternatives. Ideas of “virtual linkages” and international cooperation would open the way for the integration of Egyptian brains abroad and hopefully for more sustainable Egyptian development.

The results of this study have brought to light much about the nature of brain drain within the AUC community. While such a study has succeeded in highlighting many of the reasons young members of the AUC community choose to leave Egypt, more research on how to benefit from the Egyptian Diaspora needs to be conducted. Keeping in mind the results of this research would enable future research to concentrate on the possibilities of cooperation with Egyptians abroad. What are current Egyptians abroad contributing to Egypt’s development process? What kind of international programs are most beneficial? Would Egyptians abroad be interested in attending conferences in Egypt on a periodic basis? Research aimed at answering these questions would be highly useful and would set the stage for the realization of many Egyptian development goals.

Appendix I: Questionnaire Questions

My name is Iman Dawood and I am a political science sophomore currently researching the “brain drain” phenomenon within Egypt and the AUC community in specific. The “brain drain” phenomenon refers to the emigration of highly skilled and educated citizens from developing countries to usually more developed countries.

1) If you were given the opportunity to live abroad after you graduate, where would you travel?

North America/ Europe/ Asia/ Gulf / Other/ I would never travel?

2) How long would you choose to stay? (Months/A couple of years/Forever/Not sure)

3) What kind of problems do you think you might encounter while abroad?

a. Cultural/Racial/Financial (circle more than one if necessary)

b. Other? _____

4) Have any of your friends or family decided to live abroad? (Yes/ No)

5) Where did they go? (North America/ Europe/ Asia/ Gulf / Other) (circle more than one if necessary)

6) Why do you think they chose to live abroad?

(Job /Marriage/Adventure/ Lifestyle /To escape pressure /All of these /Don't Know)

Other (please be specific) _____

7) Can you think of any reasons for people to stay in Egypt as opposed to go abroad?

(Job/ Family commitments/ Marriage / Lifestyle/ No reasons /Don't know)

Other (please be specific)_____

8) What do you think could be done to attract more young people to stay working in Egypt?

Thank you very much for your time

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