Mohammad A. Chaichian

THE EFFECTS OF WORLD CAPITALIST ECONOMY ON URBANIZATION IN EGYPT, 1800–1970

INTRODUCTION

This research paper provides an historical analysis of urbanization in Egypt and its relationships to her incorporation into the world capitalist economy during the last two centuries. My major concern is to discover more about the following issues: (1) the historical reasons for the structural disjunction of the peasant population from rural areas; and (2) the dynamics of rural–urban migration and the problem of overconcentration of population in a few major urban centers.

This paper is divided into two parts. It begins with an outline of the theoretical framework related to peripheral urbanization. Next, based on the historical stages of capitalist development as a world system of production, three distinct periods for the study of urbanization in Egypt are identified: (1) colonial penetration (1798–1882); (2) colonial domination (1882–1952); and (3) neocolonial domination (post-1952 era). Based on historical documentation, the paper concludes that what is called “peripheral urbanization” is in fact the spatial manifestation of the disintegration of a precapitalist economy, which particularly affected the rural population.

THEORETICAL ORIENTATION: UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT AND PERIPHERAL URBANIZATION

Neither orthodox development theories nor the dependency perspective that emerged as a reaction to them have been able to account adequately for the existence and persistence of underdevelopment in the periphery. Subsequent attempts to construct a Marxist theory of underdevelopment had their own shortcomings. That is, by assuming that contemporary capitalism is an unchanged system subject to the same laws as in previous centuries, this perspective does not conceive of a constantly evolving capitalism in different historical periods (see, for example, the works of Kay [1975] and Warren [1973]). As an alternative the “modes of production” approach has provided us with new conceptual tools. Based on the works of Bettelheim (1972); Godelier (1974); Bradby (1975); Wolpe (1975); Amin (1976); Foster-Carter (1978); and Taylor
(1979), the major assumptions of this approach can be summarized as follows. First, although it is important to analyze capitalism at the world level, the unit of analysis remains the “national economy,” which is a concrete, historically created social formation produced by the articulation of two or more modes of production. Except during the rapid transitional periods, one mode of production tends to be dominant within a given social formation. Second, modes of production have periods of ascension and decline that affect other modes within social formations. Third, development is understood as capitalist development. Finally, neither external nor internal relations determine forces of change a priori; rather, they exert different forces at different times (Chinchilla and Dietz 1981).

Related to peripheral urbanization, in line with the historical-structuralist analysis of the modes of production approach, the works of Mingione (1981) and Castells (1980), which are based on a sociodemographic analysis of peripheral urbanization are worthy of mention. Mingione (1981:137) defines peripheral urbanization as urbanization without industrialization and a conversion of rural overpopulation into urban overpopulation. That is, exposure to the world market and the need to increase productivity in agriculture in the absence of industrial technologies and goods, forces the rural areas into an underdevelopment cycle. Hence, in the cities reside a growing part of the rural surplus population, which, once settled in the cities, cannot find a job in the productive sectors of urban economy. In the same vein, Castells (1980:42–43) identifies four characteristics of urbanization in peripheral societies as: (1) concentration of population and economic activities in a few large urban areas without their integration into an urban network; (2) the absence of a continuum in the urban hierarchy; (3) sociocultural distances between rural communities and urban areas; and (4) the ecological juxtaposition of two cities: the “native” and the “Western” in the societies that have experienced colonial rule (such as Egypt). Within this context, I have identified three distinct periods of historical domination in Egypt during which peripheral urbanization reveals, in its form and rhythms, the concrete articulation of these political and economic relations:

1. **Colonial penetration and the disintegration of precapitalist social formation (1798–1882).** During the first period, the subsistence economy under which the country had lived for centuries was gradually replaced by an export-oriented economy.

2. **Capitalist–commercial domination, through the process of unequal exchange of raw materials and manufactured products (1882–1952).** In this period, the groundwork for future capitalist development was laid in the fields of industry, credit, and taxation.

3. **Neocolonialism and financial domination through speculative investment and control of import-substitution industries via the multinational corporations (post-1952 era).** During this period, despite Nasser’s efforts to introduce socialist principles in Egypt (especially from 1961 to 1967), Egypt failed to detach herself from the world capitalist economy. The following discussion is an historical analysis of peripheral urbanization in Egypt, taking into consideration the precapitalist relations of production; capitalist penetration; and articulation of the three types of domination and dependency relations listed above.
Historically, Egypt has been frequently cited as an example “par excellence” of an overurbanized society (Davis and Golden 1954). Some believe that Egypt’s concentrated water supply is partially responsible for the location of its cities because, away from water resources, there is little or no settlement of any kind. Thus population centers are located in the Delta or along the Nile above Cairo. It has been estimated that, around 1800, about 10 percent of Egypt’s population (nearly 300,000 people) lived in towns with 10,000 or more inhabitants (Issawi 1969:102). This is rather a high ratio for an urban population, but as Abu-Lughod (1965a:313–14) aptly argues, Egypt’s “overurbanization” is not as extreme as others have claimed, and in fact high overall density of rural settlements makes them look like urban centers. This seems to be a valid statement, especially in the Egyptian social formation of the early nineteenth century when the tributary mode of production was dominant over other forms of production such as slavery and mercantilism.

The main characteristics of the tributary mode were the division of the population into peasants and landholding masters; division of the social product into peasant means of subsistence and tribute in kind drawn by the ruling class; and a great centralization of state power in the hands of the appropriating class. Furthermore, slavery in Egypt was not a mode of production. That is, it did not constitute the combination of its forces and relations of production together with the mechanisms of reproduction of the tributary mode. Rather, it only constituted a framework of relations of domination and exploitation in association with the tributary mode of production. Like slavery, mercantilism was also not a mode of production, but was the way in which the merchant “go-betweens” exploited their monopoly position in trade activities by bringing other social formations into contact with Egypt.2

One of the major difficulties in the study of the urbanization process in Egypt is the lack of reliable data. Probably the works of McCarthy (1976) and Baer (1969) are the most reliable sources of information for the beginning of the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century (see Table 1).3

According to Baer (1969:136), during the first half of the nineteenth century, Egypt witnessed a great increase in the urban population. For example, while from 1821 to 1846, Alexandria, Damietta, Tanta, Rosetta, and Suez had annual growth rates of 10.3, 4.0, 2.6, 1.2, and 1.4 percent, respectively, growth of the total population was only 0.4 percent. Almost all of these cities were port cities and perhaps the simplest way to put it, according to Issawi (1969:108), “is that the economy began to be oriented outwards, toward the export of its primary products, that transport was developed accordingly, with railway lines or steamboat services pointing to the coasts, and that the alignment of towns shifted in consequence.”

The enormous growth of the seaports and relative stagnation of “inland” cities can be attributed to two factors: First, despite Muhammad Ḥammad ʿAli’s reforms in the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>1821-1826</th>
<th>1846</th>
<th>Average annual growth rate (%) (1821-1846)</th>
<th>1882</th>
<th>1882 Census</th>
<th>Average annual growth rate (%) (1846-1882)</th>
<th>1897</th>
<th>1907 Census</th>
<th>Average annual growth rate (%) (1897-1907)</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lower Egypt—inland</strong></td>
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<td>Cairo</td>
<td>218,560</td>
<td>256,679</td>
<td>+ 0.65</td>
<td>374,838</td>
<td>+ 1.0</td>
<td>570,062</td>
<td>+ 12.5</td>
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<td>33,750</td>
<td>+ 1.5</td>
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<td>+ 3.5</td>
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<td>17,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>+ 0.65</td>
<td>27,823</td>
<td>+ 0.9</td>
<td>31,100</td>
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<td>36,131</td>
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<td>+ 2.5</td>
<td>32,122</td>
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<td>−</td>
<td>19,815</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>35,715</td>
<td>+ 3.9</td>
<td>34,999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minuf</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>16,293</td>
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<td>19,726</td>
<td>+ 1.3</td>
<td>22,316</td>
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<td>4,500</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>16,250</td>
<td>+ 3.6</td>
<td>20,512</td>
<td>+ 1.5</td>
<td>21,567</td>
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<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>12,528</td>
<td>164,359</td>
<td>+ 10.3</td>
<td>231,396</td>
<td>+ 0.95</td>
<td>319,766</td>
<td>+ 2.1</td>
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<td>Damietta</td>
<td>13,600</td>
<td>37,089</td>
<td>+ 4.0</td>
<td>34,044</td>
<td>− 0.20</td>
<td>31,515</td>
<td>− 0.5</td>
<td>29,354</td>
<td>− 0.7</td>
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<td>Rosetta</td>
<td>13,240</td>
<td>18,300</td>
<td>+ 1.2</td>
<td>16,666</td>
<td>− 0.26</td>
<td>14,286</td>
<td>− 1.0</td>
<td>16,810</td>
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<td>4,160</td>
<td>+ 1.4</td>
<td>10,559</td>
<td>+ 2.6</td>
<td>17,173</td>
<td>+ 3.2</td>
<td>18,374</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>16,560</td>
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<td>42,095</td>
<td>+ 6.2</td>
<td>49,884</td>
<td>+ 1.7</td>
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<td>Madinat al-Fayyum</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>25,799</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>31,262</td>
<td>+ 1.2</td>
<td>37,320</td>
<td>+ 1.8</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>15,900</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>20,404</td>
<td>+ 1.7</td>
<td>27,221</td>
<td>+ 2.9</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>10,085</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>15,297</td>
<td>+ 2.8</td>
<td>23,357</td>
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<td>−</td>
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<td><strong>Upper Egypt</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Asyut</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>+ 0.4</td>
<td>31,389</td>
<td>+ 1.25</td>
<td>42,012</td>
<td>+ 1.9</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>18,792</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>27,953</td>
<td>+ 2.6</td>
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<td>−</td>
<td>15,402</td>
<td>−</td>
<td>24,364</td>
<td>+ 3.0</td>
<td>20,069</td>
<td>− 1.9</td>
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<td>Girga</td>
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<td>+ 1.9</td>
<td>14,819</td>
<td>+ 1.9</td>
<td>17,271</td>
<td>+ 1.0</td>
<td>19,993</td>
<td>+ 1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aswan</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Population</strong></td>
<td>4,423,396</td>
<td>4,476,439</td>
<td>+ 0.04</td>
<td>7,840,271</td>
<td>+ 1.6</td>
<td>9,734,405</td>
<td>+ 1.4</td>
<td>11,287,359</td>
<td>+ 1.5</td>
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</table>

land tenure system and the abolition of iltizam, the peasants remained attached to the land. Under iltizam, the land was theoretically owned by the state but was made over to tax farmers for the collection of its revenues. Furthermore, the creation of the first land register and distribution of two million feddans (1 feddan = 1.038 acres) among the military leaders, ruling family, bedouin, and former tax farmers hastened the disintegration of the tributary mode of production from within. Thus, the main structural change was a shift from the more or less decentralized mode of appropriation of taxes/tributes during the Mamluk’s reign to Muhammad 'Ali’s centralized government, which sought to improve agricultural production (especially cotton) for export to the ready European markets from 1821 onward. This meant that employment opportunities in the primary sector were sufficient to absorb the rural work force, which was still tied to the land by traditional bonds. On the other hand, production of cash crops for export enhanced the growth of port cities like Alexandria, which served as the main port for foreign trade. In fact, Alexandria’s growth was one of the main reasons for Egypt’s increase in urban population.

The diversion of long-distance trade routes from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic bypassed many inland cities. At the same time, concentration of trade activities in Alexandria marked the beginning of a new era of dependent economic relations between Egypt and the European market. For instance, Rosetta, once the main port of foreign trade in the western Delta, suffered from its commercial activities being transferred to Alexandria. Furthermore, the growth of Damietta (the only port in the eastern Delta) was impeded by a substantial decrease in the regional trade between Egypt, Greece, and Syria (Baer 1969:137–38).

Second, Muhammad 'Ali’s industrialization schemes partially contributed to an increase in the urban population. By importing machinery and technicians, and training and recruiting indigenous skilled workers, Muhammad 'Ali tried to carry out a program of “forced industrialization.” This is praised by some scholars, like Amin (1978), who acknowledge the imported nature of technology but at the same time argue that this technology was quickly assimilated by young Egyptians. Others, however, are skeptical about the nature of this industrialization due to a limited use of power-driven machines, lack of raw material and fuel, lack of an adequate local market, and absence of entrepreneurial and technical resources (Owen 1981:72). On the other hand, Issawi (1963:23–24) argues that Muhammad 'Ali’s main interest was in building a modern army to safeguard his position and influence.

Despite the fact that factories were dispersed all over the country and in conjunction with rural communities, there were a few towns with a greater concentration of industries among which Alexandria (glass, ropes, military plants, and arsenal), Rosetta (rice milling, and leather), Cairo (military factories, iron, paper, cotton textiles, and edible oils), and Bulaq (cotton textiles, woolen fabrics, printing, and armaments), seemed to have the highest share in industrial production and employment (Mabro and Radwan 1976:13–16).4 There are no reliable data about the industrial employment in each town, but Baer (1969:136) attributes Alexandria’s rapid growth during the 1821–1846 period to Muhammad
'Ali’s industrial and maritime enterprises in this port city. With regard to the number of industrial workers in Egypt, there are several estimates. While Owen (1981:72) gives a maximum of 15,000 workers, Fahmy (1954:84–85) puts the total number at 260,000. But as Mabro and Radwan (1976:16) argue, “the labor force in factories including arsenals and other military establishments has probably never exceeded 60–70 thousand workers, i.e., some 6 to 7 percent of total employment.”

The 1850–1880 period witnessed a structural transformation of Egyptian socio-economic relations that prepared the country for her gradual integration into the world capitalist system by producing cotton as a commodity for consumption in the world capitalist market. First, following Muhammad 'Ali’s efforts for reforms in the structure of land ownership, the 1850–1880 period witnessed the removal of restrictions on private ownership of land; the right to sell and mortgage land; and authorization of foreigners to acquire land in Egypt. This coincided with a rapid intensification of the cultivation of cotton (under Isma'il Pasha, 1863–1879) in order to supply the English textile factories deprived of raw materials by the American Civil War. Thus the cotton output rose from 501,000 qantars in 1860 to 3,124,000 qantars in 1879, which is an indication of Egypt’s increasing involvement in a “one-crop” economy. Consequently, the cultivated area increased from 4,160,000 feddans in 1862 to 4,743,000 in 1877. This was followed by a considerable increase in Egypt's foreign trade value between 1805 and 1880 (LE 1.5 million in 1805, compared to LE 22 million in 1880), with cotton becoming the major export commodity (about 71 percent of the total value of exports in 1880).

Second, transportation and communication networks were impressively improved and expanded in the 1850–1880 period. By 1877, there were 1,519 kilometers of standard-gauge railways and 13,500 kilometers of irrigation canals, many of them navigable throughout the year. The construction and consequent opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 increased Egypt’s link to the outside world and channeled a vast flow of international traffic through the country (Issawi 1963:18–31; Abdel-Malek 1968:6–9). During the thirty years between Muhammad 'Ali’s death and the beginning of British rule in Egypt, a substantial investment of funds was devoted to public works. According to Crouchley (1936:16; 1938:117), during Isma'il Pasha’s reign alone (1863–1878) about LE 40 million were spent in improvement of the infrastructure such as railways, the Suez Canal, the Nile canals, ports, etc.

A high proportion of these expenditures came from foreign investment and loans often on highly unfavorable terms. Barbour (1972:45) puts the borrowed money for the 1862–1873 period at about LE 68,500,000. This was followed by the strengthening of the financial link that bound Egypt to the world capitalist system. According to Crouchley (1936:29–37), a spectacular growth of banking activity started in the 1850s. By 1877 eight banks provided telegraph exchange in Paris and London and two foreign mortgage banks were opened in 1880.

Despite the fact that during the 1850–1880 period there was an increase in the rate of Egypt's total population growth, the overall rate of urban population growth declined (see Table 1). Interestingly, Cairo and Alexandria seem to have lower growth rates as compared to that of total population, an indication of
decline in immigration rates to these cities from other areas. The “urban” centers that had a higher growth rate than that of the overall population fall into two categories: (1) the provincial towns of Mansura, Damanhour, Shibn Al-Kawn, and Girga (with average annual growth rates of 2.8, 2.5, 3.6, and 1.9 percent, respectively); and (2) the port city of Suez (2.6 percent) for the period of 1846–1882. These changes are attributable to the following factors.

First, the digging of the Suez Canal and its opening in 1869 affected the port city of Suez. The establishment of foreign commercial agencies and the influx of foreigners into Suez accompanied by construction activities (either for building the Suez dockyard or other urban developments) more than doubled that town’s population between 1846 and 1882 (from 4,160 to 10,559). The newly established city of Port Said also benefited from the trade activity because of the Canal and, by 1882, had over 16,000 inhabitants. Alexandria, however, enjoyed its supremacy, remaining the center for foreign trade (imports and exports) even if its growth rate had slowed compared to the 1821–1846 period.

Second, it is important to take into account the immigration trend from Europe to Egypt that greatly affected city growth. According to Heyworth-Dunne (1938:343), the total number of foreigners in Egypt rose from 3,000 in 1836 to well over 68,000 in 1878, and were mostly concentrated in Cairo, Alexandria, and Port Said.

Third, there was a great improvement in transport, which in turn helped some of the provincial towns to flourish. For example, the connection of Mansura in 1855 and Tanta in 1856 to the railway network came about primarily because of the importance of cotton production for export to the European markets.

Thus, Mansura became one of the important market towns for the sales of cotton, wool, rice, and oil seed in lower Egypt, and Tanta was known as the principal market for a vast area of cotton plantations. This was the beginning of a trend in which provincial towns gained some prominence as the export-oriented economy expanded its network of transport and communications for siphoning off the cotton production. However, during the 1846–1882 period, the growth of provincial towns had little impact upon the overall rate of urbanization in Egypt. According to Baer (1969:140), this was due to the fact that the absolute number of their population remained quite low and most of them remained in the neighborhood of thirty thousand.

SECOND PERIOD: COLONIALISM, CAPITALIST-COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DOMINATION (1882–1952)

At the time of the British invasion and military occupation (1882), the structural changes in the land tenure system had laid the grounds for agricultural production based on capitalist relations. The Egyptian peasants were confronted with a steady rise in the land tax rates and the consequent loss of land due to inability to pay taxes. Richards (1982:22–38) sees the origins of “primitive accumulation” in the state’s role in depriving the peasantry of their land, paving the way for the formation of an “agrarian bourgeoisie.” This was further facilitated by the defeat of the national/patriotic and anti-imperialist struggle led by Colonel 'Urabi in 1881–1882, which was a protest against the European grip on
finances and economy, as well as against the absolute power of Khedive Tawfiq. Hence, a landowning class closely tied to the British cotton markets and British colonial interests emerged in Egypt (Mansfield 1971:17–50).

1. Spatial Manifestation of British Colonialism in Egypt

One of the dominant and common features of colonial domination is the concentration of commercial, administrative, and political institutions in a few localities for the purpose of reducing the costs of running the colony. Egypt was no exception and Cairo became the center of the British colonial administration. The growing need for numerous services attracted rural immigrants into Cairo. In addition, the number of government officials, servants, building and transport workers, petty traders, and members of similar occupations rose considerably. As a result, during the 1882–1897 period Cairo had an average annual growth rate of 12.6 percent, as compared to 1.4 percent for total population.

Furthermore, the efficient handling of the exporting of raw materials requires an adequate system of internal transport to channel the product to an exportation center. Expansion of the railway system during the second half of the century fulfilled the objective of efficient export handling and the concentration of export and import activities in a few port cities, particularly Alexandria, expedited channeling of the product to a center. With its efficient infrastructure, Alexandria did not grow as significantly as Cairo, but nevertheless remained the most important port. At the same time, Port Said and Suez had a considerable growth during the 1882–1897 period (3.2 and 6.2 percent, respectively). They owed their growth mainly to the Canal, which made them the principal fueling station on the Europe–Asia route. The excessive rate of growth for Port Said and Suez stemmed from the fact that one of the main reasons for the British occupation was to use Egypt as the stepping stone on the road to India, thus securing the Canal way. Another distinct pattern of urbanization was the growth of provincial towns with an average rate twice that of total population (see Table 1). Thus Tanta, Damanhur, Zaqaziq, Mallawi, and Qena had average annual growth rates of 3.5, 3.3, 3.9, 2.4, and 3 percent, respectively. There are several reasons for the increase in urban population. First, by legalizing the private ownership of tax-exempt land (1883) and of land under cultivation (1891), the last barriers for the recognition of full private property were removed. Gradually, the proportion of mulk (land held as private property) increased from one-seventh of the total area in the 1850s to one-third in the 1890s. Finally, the kharaj land subject to tax/tribute was fully assimilated to private property (Baer 1969:85). During this period, Egypt witnessed the increasing polarization of two classes of landholders with unequal access to the means of production: a tiny class of large landholders and an increasing number of small landowners owning less than five feddans (see Table 2).

As is shown in Table 2, in 1913 the large landowners represented only 0.8 percent of total proprietors, but held 44.2 percent of the land, whereas small landowners increased in numbers (from 80.4 to 90.7 percent between 1897 and 1913) and held only 25.9 percent of agricultural land. This, along with the
abolition of slavery, laid the grounds for the emergence of a new class of wage-earner peasants.  

Second, during the 1882–1890 period the production of cotton did not increase significantly and thus the volume of Egyptian cotton exports remained almost the same (see Table 3). This may have contributed to an increase in the rate of rural–urban migration and, hence, in urban population. What makes this rural–urban migration problematic is the British colonial administration's policy of blocking any serious attempt at industrial development and production of those commodities that were being manufactured in British factories (especially the textiles). The large landowning class also did not have any interest in investing in industries. However, the isolated attempts at industrial activities during the 1882–1900 period were concentrated either in Cairo or Alexandria.  

Finally, British colonialism brought with it a new wave of immigrants, mostly of European origin, who came to Egypt either as functionaries of colonial administration or as speculators, taking advantage of the new social relations. Of course, most of the foreign population was concentrated in Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, and Suez.

This increase in the rate of urban population, however, was short lived and by the end of the nineteenth century, Egypt witnessed a reversal of urban growth. That is, while Cairo, Alexandria and other port cities, and most of the provincial centers were stagnating, only a few towns (specifically those of the Middle Egypt) had a sizable growth (see Table 1). Baer attributes this to a tremendous development of agriculture, particularly the cultivation of cotton. This was due to improvements in agricultural technology and a shift from three-year to two-year crop rotation, which was labor intensive and created employment opportunities in the countryside. Thus, as is shown in Table 3, the volume of Egyptian cotton exports rose from 3,203,000 qantars in 1890 to 6,997,000 in 1907 and 7,369,000 in 1914.

Furthermore, in the absence of industrial development, many branches of local crafts that had previously flourished succumbed to European competition

### Table 2: Polarization of Landowning Classes and Concentration of Land Ownership in Egypt (1897–1913)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1897</th>
<th>1913</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total proprietors</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total agricultural land held by each group</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Note:**
- Land owners holding more than 50 feddans.
- Land owners holding less than 5 feddans.

*Source:* Table based on information given in Mabro and Radwan (1976:24–25).
and the influx of European goods, which were subject to minimum import duties. Therefore, as a result of the British colonial policies, the guild system under which Egyptian artisans and merchants functioned was eliminated at the turn of this century. In his 1905 report, Cromer (British Consul General, 1883–1907) pictured the balance sheet of this policy:

The difference is apparent to any man whose recollection goes back some ten or fifteen years. Some quarters of Cairo that formerly used to be veritable centers of varied industries—spinning, weaving, ribbon making, dyeing, tent making, embroidery, shoe making, jewelry making, spice grinding, copper work, the manufacture of bottles out of animal skins, saddlery, locksmithing in wood and metal, etc., have shrunk considerably or completely vanished. Now there are coffee houses and European novelty shops where once there were prosperous workshops (cf. Abdel-Malek 1968:8).

By the turn of the century, foreign residents comprised a sizable proportion of the population in the main urban centers. According to Issawi (1963:83), in 1907 the number of foreign citizens totaled 221,000 (2 percent of population) and represented about 16 percent of the urban population in Cairo, 25 percent in Alexandria, and 28 percent in Port Said. In Cairo alone, the number of foreign residents (Syrians, Armenians, Greeks, and Italians) almost doubled between 1897 and 1907 (from 31,543 to 62,000). This considerable influx of foreigners actually divided the city into two parts in a peculiar way: the decline of pre-capitalist Cairo (along with the dissolution of the guilds) was compensated for by the relative growth of the colonial Cairo (Baer 1969:37).

### 2. Ascendance of Capitalism and Peripheral Urbanization in Egypt

In his discussion of primitive accumulation, Marx (1977:713–14) identifies two major preconditions for capitalist production: a mass of money capital and a group of people who are forced to sell their ability to labor. Based on some estimates, by the end of the nineteenth century, 37 percent of Egypt’s agricultural

---

**Table 3: Volume of Egyptian Cotton Exports (1880–1914)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Volume ('000 qantars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>3,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>3,203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>4,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>6,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>6,376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>6,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>5,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>7,369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Crouchley (1939:263–65).*
work force were wage laborers (Richards 1982:61). This was also the period in which a new ruling class emerged consisting of high officials/landowners and the old landholders, who were consolidating their power by producing agricultural goods for capitalist markets. As a result, no “urban bourgeoisie” in the European sense (that is, a bourgeoisie dependent on industrial production) emerged in Egypt; and there was no social class whose principal interest was concentrated in the towns and in the promotion of urban centers (Baer 1969:224–25). Apart from establishing the National Bank of Egypt in order to hold the state’s receipts and the large landowners’ deposits, there was an increase in foreign capital investment in Egypt (from about LE 21 million in 1902 to LE 100 million in 1914), but with a high concentration on land speculation and mortgage (Abdel-Malek 1968:8–9).

During the First World War, the merchants and urban traders made fortunes by supplying British forces. Factories with fifty or more workers were established as a result of increasing demand by the war economy. In addition, while the Egyptian population rose from 9,714,000 in 1897 to 12,292,000 in 1914, the cultivated acreage increased negligibly from 5,327,000 to 5,652,000 (ibid. 9–10). This was at a time when approximately 80 percent of Egypt’s population was rural. Thus, the tightening population–land squeeze created by demographic pressures and declining agricultural productivity (especially cotton) from 1907 to 1916 created a pattern of rural–urban migration that was mainly toward a few major urban centers (Clawson 1977–78:19). As is indicated in Table 4, while Egypt’s population grew by 1.2 percent during the 1907–1927 period, almost all major cities had an average annual growth rate above 2 percent. Again, what is striking is the considerable growth of the port cities of Alexandria, Port Said, and Suez (2.7, 3.7, and 4.1 percent, respectively).

The interwar period marked the beginning of import-substitution-industrialization (ISI) in Egypt and its rapid and substantial progress. This was made possible by the support of foreign capital, technology, and expertise, and the import of manufacturing capital and consumption goods. The ISI was a historical consequence of the successive agricultural crises of 1920, 1921, and 1926, which culminated in the Great Depression of 1929–1932; and the rise of capital accumulation in Egypt in the 1920s and early 1930s (Mabro and Radwan 1976:27; Clawson 1977–78:20; Issawi 1963:44). Despite the fact that, after 1937, ISI offered employment to substantial numbers (577,000 in 1945), it was not sufficient to absorb the surplus agricultural labor force, which declined from 69 percent of the total workforce in 1907 to 58 percent in 1947 (Anis 1950:786; Nassef 1970:103). Instead, the service sector and petty trading absorbed most of the rural migrants (Tignor 1982:35–36). What is more, almost 56 percent of total investment in principal Egyptian factories founded between 1920 and 1952 was located in or around Cairo or Alexandria (Barbour 1972:66–67). This clearly manifests the uneven nature of capitalist production and the degree of centralization of the Egyptian economy.

As a result, although the growth rate of urban centers declined somewhat during the 1927–1937 years, the pattern of rural–urban migration targeting Cairo, the three Canal zone cities, and Alexandria remained constant until 1952.
Furthermore, the very high rates of growth in the late 1930s, and above all during World War II, can be attributed to hundreds of thousands of Egyptians who had been mobilized by the war effort, and decided not to return to their villages (Waterbury 1983:310).

With regard to the magnitude of rural to urban migration, as Abu-Lughod (1971:174) shows, since 1917 only 3 percent of Cairo’s population has come from other cities, whereas rural areas and especially the Nile Delta governorates have supplied most of its migrants. Between 1937 and 1947 the population of Cairo increased by 779,000, with almost 600,000 being migrants.

THIRD PERIOD: NEOCOLONIALISM AND EGYPT’S PECULIAR POSITION IN THE WORLD CAPITALIST ECONOMY (POST-1952 ERA)

Following the Egyptian Revolution of 1919–1923, which concluded in a formal declaration of independence, Egypt in fact became a semi-independent state and was ruled by the agrarian wing of the bourgeoisie, which was an ally of the British and in favor of foreign interests and capital. 12 Although under British
colonialism, capitalist production had become the dominant mode in the Egyptian social formation, the outward direction of agricultural production and the immature nature of capitalist productive forces deepened Egypt’s uneven economic development. The postwar period witnessed the intensification of conflict between the two factions within the ruling class: the landed merchants and the industrial bourgeoisie. The British wanted to avoid a conflict between these factions, but at the same time the political power of the landed bourgeoisie prevented capitalist production from dominating agriculture (Clawson 1977–78:21–23). While peasant uprisings were multiplying in rural areas (such as Kufur Negm, Bahut, and even the royal estates), and the influence of the Chinese revolution and the communist movement was growing both in rural and urban areas, the coup d’état of July 1952 brought the Free Officers and Nasser into power. Nasser’s rule had three distinct phases.

The first stage of the military regime (1952–1956) was aimed at modifying the structure of power in order to create a modern national, independent, industrialized society. The most important aspect of this period, the agrarian reform, sought to weaken the landed bourgeoisie, increase the number of small landowners, and redirect capital investment to industry. In fact, the Egyptian land reform was conceived and carried out from above in order to block any revolutionary effort by peasants and progressive elements such as industrial workers, students, and the intelligentsia. Thus, there was no question of taking steps toward socialist principles, but of converting a dominantly agrarian capitalist economy to a modern, predominantly industrial capitalism (Abdel-Malek 1968:74–79). However, the number of small landowners (owning less than 3 feddans) increased drastically.

The second stage (1956–1961) started with the Suez crisis (1956) and was followed by the nationalization of the Suez Canal Company, foreign aggression against Egypt, and unexpected nationalization/Egyptianization of 55 French and British-owned firms. The second stage of the military regime thus appears as a coalition between the military apparatus and the financial/industrial section of the bourgeoisie (Abdel-Malek 1968:XIII–XVI). The main objective of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) was to compel the landed bourgeoisie to redirect its capital investment into the industrial sector. This strategy did not work, however, and of LE 45 million taken out of the land, only LE 6 million was invested in industry.

The third stage (1961–1967) started with the laws of nationalization based on the principles set by “Arab Socialism” in Egypt. By early 1962, all banks, heavy industries and medium-sized economic units had to accept 51 percent state participation in their capital ownership/administration (Waterbury 1983:74–79). It must be noted that nationalization of the greater portion of private property is not synonymous with suppression of the right to private property in the constitution of a given country. A comparison of the nationalization process in Egypt with that of the Soviet Union supports this statement and reveals the shortcomings of Arab Socialism in Egypt:

In the former, much property was nationalized but the capitalist class was not expropriated and therefore, it was relatively easy to de-nationalize what had previously been
nationalized. On the contrary, the right to private property is forbidden de facto in the Soviet Union and that means in turn forbidden by the law and the secular arm of the law: the state and all its institutions. (Mandel 1979:109)

In fact, that the post-Nasser era was marked by Sadat’s initiation of open door policies (Infitah) in order to attract Western capital investments is proof of the inadequacy of nationalization without abolition of the right to private property. Thus, Nasser’s “socialism” was nothing more than state capitalism, and as such was an attempt to concentrate and direct investment toward nonagricultural capitalist production. This was at a time when multinational corporations were consolidating their power to invest in industries geared to the internal markets of peripheral societies (Evans 1979). At any rate, Egypt offers an example of a periphery in which for almost twenty years (1952–1972) the MNCs played no significant role. Instead, Egypt’s alliance with the Soviet Union based on the latter’s doctrine of a “noncapitalist path for development” severed her ties with the West.

1. The Effects of the Egyptian Revolution on Urbanization

Abu-Lughod (1965a:315–22) argues that the most critical problem of contemporary Egypt is “overconcentration of population in relatively few cities,” rather than “overurbanization per se.” She further claims that what appeared to be overurbanization is nothing but the reclassification of many rural settlements that exceeded the 20,000 threshold as urban. Based on this argument, by redefining “urban” as a place with at least 20,000 inhabitants with densities greater than 1,500 persons per square kilometer, and having no more than one third of its labor force engaged in agriculture, she concludes that Egypt is “less urbanized” as compared to the official classification. Abu-Lughod’s concept of “overconcentration of population” in urban areas becomes important in analyzing the process of peripheral urbanization. But whether Egypt has less or more urban population, or to consider the mass movement to the cities as “necessary” and “inevitable” (Abu-Lughod 1965a:315) is of no help in understanding the process. What is important are the trends and patterns of urban growth and/or decline related to the socioeconomic factors and historical events in order to understand the underlying reasons for this massive rural-to-urban migration.

In order to understand the unusual growth rates for the port cities of lower Egypt, one has to look at their importance for Egypt’s foreign trade. For instance, Alexandria was the most important port for the export of rice and cotton. It also accounted for 66 percent of the volume and 81 percent of the value of imports in the 1952–1956 period. Port Said and Suez accounted for the majority of the remaining import volume and value for Egypt in this period. Thus, almost 100 percent of Egypt’s imports passed through these three ports (Issawi 1963:210).

In general, the fluctuations of urban growth rates as compared to total population growth in different periods have to be related to structural changes in the economy of the Egyptian social formation. For example, a comparison of the growth rates for the 1937–1947 and 1947–1960 periods reveals the fact that while in the earlier period both provincial towns and lower Egypt urban centers had a
TABLE 5 Pre- And Post-Land Reform Landholding Patterns, 1952 and 1961

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1952 Owners (000s)</th>
<th>% of all owners</th>
<th>% of land</th>
<th>1961 Owners (000s)</th>
<th>% of all owners</th>
<th>% of land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small holdings (1–5 feddans)</td>
<td>2,642</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>2,919</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium holdings (5–50 feddans)</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large holdings (+50 feddans)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Table based on Waterbury (1983:264).

considerable growth, in the later period there was a general slowdown of urban growth, although lower Egypt urban centers (especially Cairo and Alexandria) continued to grow faster than other urban centers (see Table 4). As a comparison of data for 1952 (pre-Reform) and 1961 demonstrates, this can be attributed to the consequences of land reform: that is, an increase in the number of medium and small landowners in rural Egypt (see Table 5), and a steady fall in the absolute number of landless families in rural Egypt up to the mid 1960s.

At the same time, the number of landless families decreased from 44 percent of the total number of rural families in 1952 to 30 percent in 1961 (Abdel-Fadil 1975:44). However, despite these changes in the structure of rural land ownership, a slowdown in urban growth, and the absence of an intensified industrialization, one has to ask why major urban centers still had a rate of growth double that of the national population. This has to be answered by looking at the conditions of the new small landholders after the land reform.13

According to Ibrahim Amer (cf. Abdel-Malek 1968:58), in 1952 about 70 percent of the small holders—that is, 2 million—owned less than half a feddan each, so that they were virtually destitute. On the other hand, almost 8 million peasants owned no land at all and their only means of existence was either to rent a scrap of land and pay for rent in kind, or find salaried work on big farms. Furthermore, according to Abdel-Malek (1968:73), the smallholder was obliged to pay about LE 50 per year per feddan received from the state on paying the loan installments, irrigation facilities, farm supplies, etc. He concludes that the various disbursements incurred by a peasant owning 3 feddans amounted to more than LE 125/year, whereas his income was only LE 115. This resulted in deteriorating economic conditions of small landholding peasantry, their inability to subsist on the land, and their inevitable inclination toward finding new sources of survival in urban areas.

2. Effects of Rural Poverty on Peripheral Urbanization

Another important element in the study of the overconcentration of population in urban areas is the position of landless peasants in rural Egypt and their eventual migration to the cities. Abdel-Fadil (1975:44–46) identifies two types of landless peasants in Egypt. First are Permanent Agricultural Wage Laborers, who are mostly employed on medium and large farms and include all groups of specialized agricultural laborers such as tractor drivers, farm machine operators,
and the kallaf, who look after the livestock. They are also fully employed and enjoy steady income all the year round. Second are casual Farm Laborers or those landless peasants who enter into the labor force for short periods of time (as in the peak seasons) for harvesting and sowing and thus supplement the permanent regular labor force. Ayrout (1963:55) adds a third type: the Tarahil, casual laborers or the poorest of the rural poor, who comprise a substantial portion of landless peasants. Within a system called tarhila, these laborers are recruited for four to six weeks for the maintenance of canals and other rural public works and are extremely mobile.

Among the landless peasants, those who benefited the least from agrarian reform were the casual laborers. According to Abdel-Fadil (1975:125), in redistributing the land, preference was given to cultivators/tenants and permanent laborers, whereas not all casual laborers could receive a holding. This, plus the breakup of large estates, which caused a reduction in demand for their labor, further harmed the casual workers. Saab (1967:ch. VIII) and Abdel-Fadil (1975:125–26) attribute this reduction in employment opportunities to three factors: (1) a tendency for utilizing self-employed family labor by the new medium landholders, (2) a general slackening in agricultural investment by big landowners, and (3) a “voluntary” breakup of large holdings and their sale to small holders by the large-scale farmers. In short, Egyptian agrarian reform aggravated the landless peasants’ problems of employment.

Within this context, then, it is my contention that the question of urbanization or “overconcentration” of population in urban areas occurred because of the deterioration of employment opportunities and increasing poverty in rural Egypt, and not, as Abu-Lughod (1965a:315) argues, because it is “necessary and inevitable.” Hence, in the absence of industrialization, what is assumed here as urbanization is in fact an intensification of rural–urban migration facilitated by the availability of a relatively cheap labor force in the countryside. Abu-Lughod (1961:23) identifies two types of rural migrants: the “bright youths,” who migrate to towns in search of education or wider opportunities, and the “village poor,” who constitute the majority of the migrants. The fact that the larger portion of rural migrants come from the poorer strata is borne out by the results of an ILO-INP sample survey (cf. Abdel-Fadil 1975:113), in which 26 percent of migrants come from families earning less than LE 50/year; 40 percent from the LE 51–75 bracket; 22 percent from the LE 76–100; and only 6 percent from those with an income higher than LE 100. Furthermore, another ILO-INP rural employment survey (1968:29–30) illustrated that the strongest “push” factor for migration was peasants’ state of landlessness (86 percent) and the lack of rented land in their region of origin (53 percent). This further reveals the fact that this is not rural–urban migration per se, but migration of the poorest of the rural strata to urban areas.

In order to illustrate the historical trend of rural–urban migration, let us compare Cairo’s development during the 1927–1947 and 1947–1960 periods: While the rates of growth for both Cairo’s population and migration from other centers to Cairo declined drastically, there was a considerable increase in the rate of migration from upper Egyptian provinces during the 1947–1960 period. To be
TABLE 6 Growth of Egyptian Cities of 100,000 and More (1960–1976)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Cairoa</td>
<td>4,055</td>
<td>4,964</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>6,711</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>1,516</td>
<td>1,801</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2,319</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Said</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>−0.7b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suez</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>−3.1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanta</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mehalfa al-Kubra</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Mansura</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asyut</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaqqaziq</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damanhur</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ismailia</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>1.1b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Fayyum</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Minya</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>25,771</td>
<td>29,724</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>36,650</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aGiza and Shubra al-Khema became parts of the Greater Cairo.
bThese three port cities were evacuated during the 1967–1968 War. The population began to move back in 1974.

more specific, migrants from urban governorates during the 1927–1960 period comprised only 3 percent of Cairo’s population (Abu-Lughod 1971:74).

Along with structural developments in the rural areas and the absence of growth in industrial investment, there was an enormous investment in the construction industry by large landholders. According to Abdel-Malek (1968:81), investments in construction since 1949 have totalled LE 15–20 million/year, almost all of them concentrated in Cairo and Alexandria. In 1956, investment in construction reached 47.3 percent of the total number of investments, and 75.8 percent of all private investments. In addition, the structure of industry also shows a few peculiarities. In 1958 over half of the labor force in establishments employing ten or more workers were in Alexandria or Cairo (28 percent and 23 percent, respectively) while only 5 percent were employed in upper Egypt (Issawi 1963:174). This clearly indicates the uneven nature of capitalist development and its effects on peripheral urbanization.

The third stage of Nasser’s rule (1961–1967) did not alter the urbanization pattern and the rural–urban migration trend. A comparison of the average growth rates for the 1947–1960 period in Table 4 and that of the 1960–1966 period in Table 6 supports this statement.

However, the previous reductions in employment opportunities in rural areas were offset by the new demand for casual labor generated by the construction of the High Dam and the new land reclamation schemes (Abdel-Fadil 1975:125). Thus, during this period the work force grew by nearly 22 percent, or from 6 to 7.3 million. In absolute terms, 40 percent of the increase occurred in agriculture, 17 percent in industry, and 43 percent in the service or tertiary sector. As a
consequence, in this brief period the landless families as a proportion of total rural families further declined from 30 percent to 28 percent, and agricultural per capita income (in spite of undeniable poverty) increased slightly, while in the cities the service sector provided the rural migrants with employment opportunities (Waterbury 1983:90–92, 208–9). Finally, the subperiod of 1965–1970 was a period of no growth, no distribution, and the absolute number of landless families increased from 28 percent to 33 percent. This reversal of the trend is attributed to the growing population pressure on land and the freeze of agrarian reforms (Abdel-Fadil 1975:43).

CONCLUSION

It is my contention that urbanization is not an autonomous process but a part of socioeconomic and political changes in a historical setting. By placing Egypt within the context of the world capitalist economy, peripheral urbanization has to be analyzed through an examination of the interaction between internal and external forces of change. Based on historical documentation, it is possible to sketch the urbanization pattern in Egypt since 1800.

During the first period (1800–1882) the growth of towns and concentration of population was a reflection of Egypt’s increasing importance for the exportation of raw materials to the European markets. The growth of port cities (mainly Alexandria) and stagnation of provincial centers was the spatial manifestation of a disintegrating precapitalist mode of production and the introduction of an export-oriented economy. Even Cairo, as the center of political and economic administration, was a stagnating city. Improvements in communications and transportation networks and intensification of cotton cultivation during the period from 1850 to 1880, however, did contribute to the growth of provincial “inland” cities (as centers for regional distribution/administration). Furthermore, the overall low rate of urban growth compared to that of population also suggests that the growth of inland cities such as Tanta and Mansura was the result of interurban and not rural–urban migration.

The second period (1882–1952) provides yet a different picture of urban growth in Egypt. That is, while the export-oriented nature of the economy continued to stimulate growth in the main port cities, the emphasis of the colonial administration on the reorganization of a bankrupt agricultural economy led to internal expansion, which in turn boosted the growth of provincial towns. Moreover, Cairo owed its sudden and rapid growth during the 1882–1897 period to the replacement of a weak precapitalist central government with a strong centralized colonial administration. Disintegration of precapitalist agrarian economy and introduction of private property and capitalist relations into the Egyptian economy led to peasants’ detachment from the land. Thus the overall higher growth rates of major urban centers compared to that of total population can be attributed to rural–urban migration as a result of the above structural changes.

Finally, the socioeconomic changes following the Free Officers’ coup in 1952 to some extent fly in the face of the arguments made by the Dependency school.
That is, internal forces of change did in fact contribute and affect the course of events in Egypt (see, e.g., Dos Santos 1970). For a brief period, the implementation of the land reform policies increased the number of small landholders and slowed down the rural–urban migration. However, lack of structural support further led to the worsening living conditions of the rural population and their migration to the cities. Thus urbanization becomes an overconcentration of population in urban centers because of increasing poverty in the countryside and migration of the poorest peasants, and not because of a general rural–urban migration.

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NOTES

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1The terms “periphery” and “peripheral capitalism” have been deliberately chosen for their specific meaning, instead of using “dependent” and “dependent capitalism.” Slater (1978:29f.) clearly points to the rationale behind it:

The concept of “dependent capitalism” is most closely associated with the Latin American literature on dependency and a weakness of much of the theory originating from this tradition is that the term “dependency” is too vague... as we can include Canada and Australia under such category. On the other hand, “peripheral capitalist” as used both by Amin and Sonntag refers more specifically to those social formations that have originally been incorporated into the world capitalist economy as colonies and which continue to experience disarticulated forms of capitalist development.


3Among others who have done extensive research on Egyptian urbanization in this period, the works of Abu-Lughod (1961, 1965a, 1965b), and Issawi (1969) are important. It must be stated that the purpose of this paper is an historical investigation of the urbanization process in the Egyptian social formation with regard to socioeconomic and political changes, and not a “demographic” study. Thus, available data have been utilized by assuming their (relative) accuracy.

4For the range of industries under Muhammad ʿAli's rule see an interesting table in Mabro and Radwan (1976:14–15).

5One qantar is equal to 99 pounds, and one feddan equal to 1.038 acres.

6It has to be emphasized that calling a center of population concentration of 10,000 people or more “urban” is an ambiguous definition anyway. But in the absence of reliable information for nineteenth-century Egypt, I accept it for the sake of our overall historical analysis of socioeconomic changes and hence, “urbanization” in that century. Later, I will discuss the matter in more detail as it relates to twentieth-century development.

7This statement is based on Gabriel Baer's analysis of urbanization in Egypt. See Baer (1969, especially pp. 133–48).

8For a detailed discussion of slavery in Egypt see Baer (1969:161–89).

9For a discussion of the reasons for this reluctance, see Mabro and Radwan (1976:24–26).

10See the table in Barbour (1972:59–60).


12According to Abdel-Malek (1968:18), Egypt's quasi-independence was heavily mortgaged by four special clauses in order to protect the British capitalist interests: (1) the security of communication of
the British Empire; (2) the defense of Egypt against foreign aggression; (3) the protection of foreign interests; and (4) control of the Sudan.

According to Abdel-Malek (1968:100), between 1952 and 1957 industrial production rose too slowly in Egypt. If we assume the index of industrial production of 1954 as 100, that of 1952, 1955, and 1957 will be 92.9, 109, and 123.3, respectively.

REFERENCES


