

# THE EGYPTIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO RURAL GEOGRAPHY STUDIES

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## **Abstract:**

The purpose of this article is to evaluate the interest of the Egyptian geographers and their institutions in the scientific field of the rural geography. It may be anticipated theoretically that the predominant physical and culture landscape of Egyptian countryside has a positive role in orienting the interest towards rural fields for geographical studies.

The landmarks of the Egyptian contribution in this broad branch could be extracted from investigating seven sources: academic institutions concerning in teaching courses of geography discipline in undergraduate and postgraduate levels, textbooks prepared in the field of rural geography, dissertations submitted to gain academic degrees specialized in the domain of rural geography, Scientific associations responsible for the discipline promotion, articles discussing the rural geography's subjects published in scientific periodicals, symposiums and conferences that illuminate current issues, and the outdoors interactive communications with related bodies which bear the same concern.

Having compiling data from the previous sources, sorting methodology was applied to distinguish types and extents of the presented contribution, either in quantity or in quality, and its effect either in theory or in application in terms of spatial covering levels. [*Bul. Soc. Géog. d'Égypte, Special issue, 2022, PP. 1 - 22*]

**Key Words:** Rural Geography; Egyptian rural studies; Egyptian Geographical Group for Rural Development; the CSRS of the IGU.

## **1) Introduction:**

The rural scene is a prominent and lasting component in Egyptian civilization during all periods. Most of habitants involved in rural life, particularly in agriculture activities. Traditional Egyptian farmer (Fallah) acquired high talent and skills related knowledge and practice in agriculture fields.

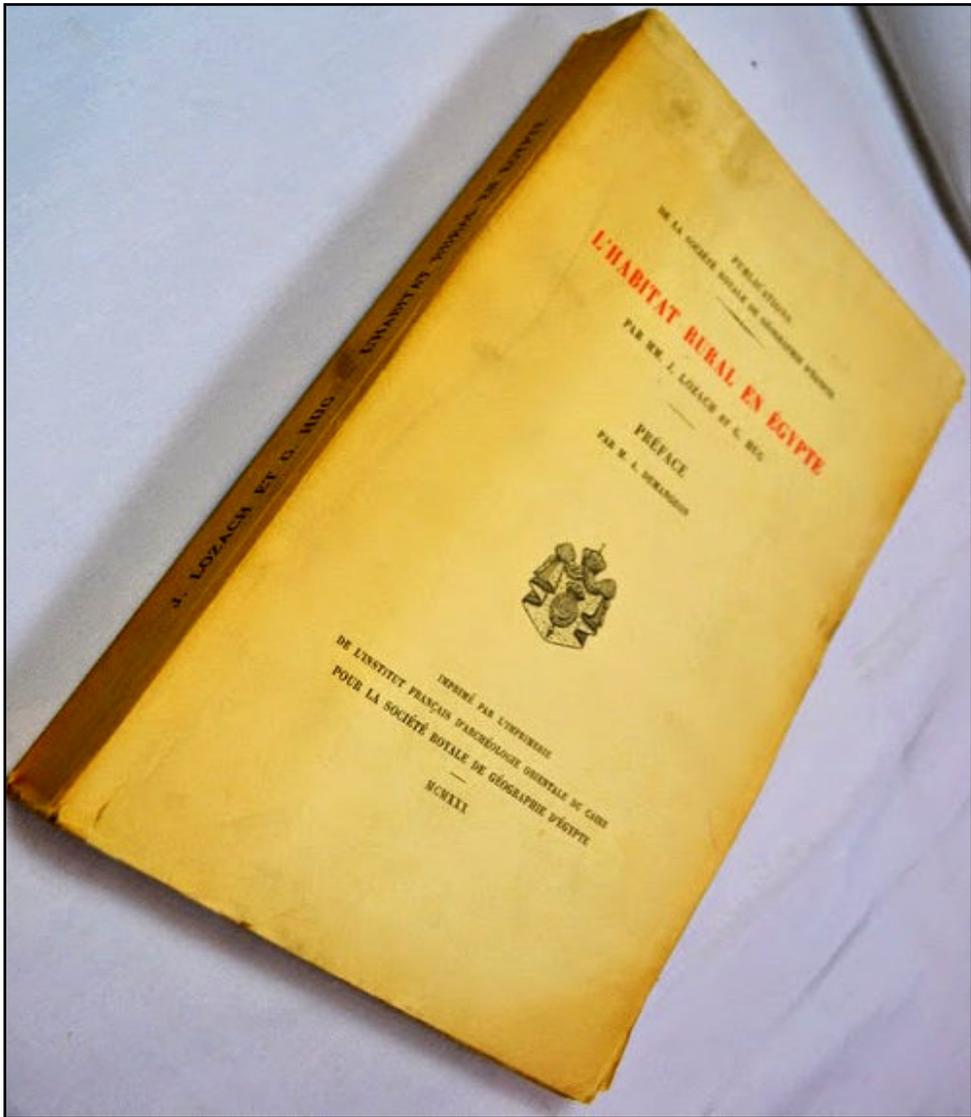
Modern Egypt has known agricultural education since the era of Muhammad Ali, who established the first agricultural school in the Citadel in 1830, and a school for agriculture was established in Nabrouh in 1836, and it was transferred to Mansoura in 1844. Another school for agriculture was established in Shubra in 1867, followed by a school for agriculture established in Giza in 1889, affiliated to ministry of Al-Maaref, which started in 1890. It's study period included four years, three theoretical and one practical, (El-Rasoul, 2018). That school was the nucleus of the Faculty of Agriculture, Cairo University, which concerns the rural economy and society.

The Egyptian Geographical Society founded in 1875 witnessed in its halls the setting of rural settlement approach during the holding of the eleventh International Geographical Congress in Cairo, April 1- 9, 1925 (Baulig, 1925) (Fig. 1). That was when Albert Demamegeon, the professor of geography in Sorbonne read a paper about agricultural systems and schemes of population distribution of Western Europe, addressing the need of studies of the village in relation to agriculture in different regions as widely distributed as possible (BAE, 1934).



**Figure 1.** The first Plenary Session of the 11th IGU Congress 1925, in the seat of the Egyptian Geographical Society

The Egyptian Geographical Society published in 1930 the study of Lozach and Hug about rural housing in Egypt, “L’Habitat rural en Egypte” (Fig. 2), which identified five elements that can build patterns according to one of them: building materials - roof shape - land use system - property system or land tenure - characteristics of the territory in which the settlement is located and its effect on the dwelling. As a result of the different characteristics of the three regions: Lower Egypt - Middle Egypt - Upper Egypt, the rural housing varies in each of them.



**Figure 2.** Lozach and Hug, 1930, “L’Habitat rural en Egypte”

The purpose of this article is to evaluate the interest of the Egyptian geographers and their institutions in the scientific field of the rural geography. It may be anticipated theoretically that the predominant physical and culture landscape of Egyptian countryside has a positive role in orienting the interest towards rural fields for geographical studies.

## **2) Materials Methodology:**

The study adopts an evolutionary inductive approach that means tracing the parts to reach a general conclusion or a general rule.

Data and literature were compiled from seven authentic sources: academic institutions – scientific association - textbooks – published scientific articles – conference proceedings – graduate thesis – International communication with bodies concerned in rural studies.

In pursuing scientific articles concerning the field of rural geography, the study depends on lists of the Arab Geographical Journal issued by the Egyptian Geographical Society, as the most attractive for specialized and distinguished geographical research, since 1968 up till now.

The author chose to depend on the records of graduate thesis (MA and PhD) submitted to three academic institutions concerning Geography discipline: the faculty of Arts in Cairo university (founded in 1925), Women faculty in Ain-Shams university (founded in 1950) and the faculty of Arts in Menoufia university (founded in 1987).

Having compiling data from the previous sources, sorting methodology via content analysis approach was applied to distinguish type and extent of the presented contribution, either in quantity or in quality, and its effect either in theory or in application in terms of spatial covering levels (Egypt – region – governorate - district – local unit – village – hamlets).

### **2.1) Insights:**

#### **- Scope of the Rural Geography:**

A definite subject and title for the rural geography do not go back further than the 1960s, but the geographical interest in rural areas extends in the past even further. We can say, with Andrew Gilg (Gilg, 1985), that most geographies were rural, when the world was mostly rural and urban existence was an exception (Eisa, 2019: 34).

Rural geography is one of the new fields to which a group of geographers focused their attention in the second half of the twentieth century, with a relatively noticeable increase in this interest during the last quarter of that century. Anyhow, rare treatments of topics concerning the countryside appeared during the first half of the twentieth century.

From reviewing a number of geographical literatures under the title of "rural geography", it is noticed a contrast in understanding the affiliation of "rural geography" among other geographical branches.

To elucidate that matter, the "Geography of Rural Settlements" concerns with describing and analyzing the distribution of dwellings erected by residents in countryside, thus, buildings herein are the basis of study, while the settlement as a whole is the cultural constant and the pivotal element, beside other elements of rural environment when studying the rural geography.

Similarly, there is a difference between approaching rural geography, and rural land use. What is considered an element in the rural geography study resembles an influencing factor in rural land use approach.

The difference is also noticeable between the economic geography of the countryside and the geography of the countryside. The former focuses on one aspect of the concerns of rural geography.

Embodying this understanding, the author proposed the following definition of rural geography: "Rural geography is the geographical branch that study and analyze the rural lifestyle, through an evolutionary context interacting with its environment, and for a utilitarian target" (Eisa, 2019).

Rural geography is very broad in its scope, ranging from studies of environmental management and policy to various economic, political, and social formations and processes, to cultural analyses of rural life and how it is understood by urban dwellers (Rogers, et al, 2022).

From the attempts for defining the content of rural geography, the author has highlighted the following authentic themes that constitute fundamental contents of the rural geography (Eisa, 2019): rural methodologies - rural land characteristics - productive activities - rural housing - rural population - rural services - integration of spatial relations - rural systems sustainability - rural planning and development.

## **2.2) Findings:**

### **2.2.1: Institutional contributions:**

Institutional contribution refers to academic courses and programs presented in Geography Departments of the Egyptian Universities assigned for rural geography interests. The most effective of these contributions are:

- In the Department of Geography at Cairo University, Prof. Muhammad Safi Al-Din Abu Al-Ezz launched the subject of Egyptian rural settlements, in the focus of research for students of the pre-master's year in 1973/1974.

Since those students were new to the topic of rural settlements, Dr. Abu Al-Ezz designed a methodological framework for the geographical treatment of rural settlement consisting of seven elements that could represent chapters or sections to study the subject, arranged logically as follows (Eisa, 2007): the geographical features of the study area which are related to rural settlement – origin and development of settlements - distribution of settlements and its geographical factors - rural population as a component of settlement - settlement classification in terms of distribution pattern, shape, size and function - rural housing in terms of :shape, building material, and function - relationships between settlement, whether rural/rural, or rural/urban.

- The author prepared and taught a course in "Rural Geography" at the Faculty of Arts at Zagazig University in the academic year 1980/1981, when that curriculum topic was newly introduced at that year.

### **2.3) Published Textbooks in Rural Geography:**

- The first textbook by Egyptian geographers under the title of "Rural Geography" or belonging to its fields was that of Mohammad Hegazy 1982, who pointed out that rural geography is one of the newly developed branches in geography, therefore. there is controversy about the topics it deals with. Thus, Hegazy focused on four topics: rural and urban areas, human stability in rural areas, rural communities and agricultural land use, and the rural structure (Hegazy 1982).

- In 1992, Muhammad Khamis Al-Zoka and Nawal Hamed released a textbook title: "On Rural Geography". The same item was released again with modifications in 2014 by Al-Zoka (Al-Zoka, 2014).

In 1996 Salah Abdel-Gaber Eisa released a textbook titled:” Rural geography, an integrated methodological framework, via Menoufia University Press. Then he modified its contents and approaches in a modernized edition under a new title: “Rural geography, advanced methodologies and issues”, that was released in 2019 via the same press (Eisa, 2019).

- Beside these three-textbook encircled frankly in the entire scope of rural geography, there are other textbooks which deal partially with some aspects of that rural scope, such as rural settlements. The most well-known of those textbooks are of: Fathi Abu Ayanah (2005), Mohamed Medhat Jaber (2006), Salah Eisa (2008), Hamdi El-Deeb (2015), and Salah Eisa (2021).

### **3) Egyptian scientific dissertations related to rural geography:**

Depending upon records of geographical dissertation for M.A and PhD degrees granted by three Egyptian academic institutions: the faculty of Arts in Cairo University, Women faculty in Ain-Shams University, and the faculty of Arts in Menoufia university, it is possible to point out thesis’s concentrating on rural geography as such, or on other subjects related to it.

#### **3.1) In the Faculty of Arts Cairo University:**

Omar Al-Farouk Rajab, Ph.D. 1972, “Geography of Residence in Kafr El-Sheikh Governorate, Muhammad Al-Mu'tasim, Ph.D. 1973 “Human settlement on the eastern side of the Nile Valley between Helwan and Qena”, Salah Eisa, MA 1977, “Geography of Rural Settlements of Rashid District”, Mokhtar El-Shahawi, MA 1977, “Geography of Rural Settlements in Mansoura District, Mohamed Qassem, MA 1978, “Rural Settlements in the Beni Suef District, a study in Settlement geography”, Siraj al-Din Saad, MA., 1979, “Minya El-Qamh District, a study in the geography of rural Settlements”, Ahmed Hamid, MA, 1979, “Abu Kabir District, a study in the geography of rural Settlements”, Salah Eisa, Ph.D. 1980, “Geographical patterns of rural settlements in the Fayoum depression”, Mokhtar El-Shahawi, Ph.D. 1980, “Human settlements on the Damietta branch”, Abdel-Moaty Shaheen, MA 1980, “Rural Settlements in Samannoud District”, Hosni Attia, MA 1984, “Rural Markets in Gharbia Governorate”, Abdel Moneim Abu Zeid, MA 1989, “The rural urban margin of Greater Cairo, a study in settlement geography”, Fatima Ibrahim, MA 1990, “Settlement patterns at the top of the Nile delta to the south of Shebin El-Koum”, Magdy Saqr, Ph.D. 1996, “Settlement Patterns in Lake Manzala Region”, Ahmed

Abu Zaid, MA 1996, "Sidi Salem District: A study in rural geography", Fathy Shalaby, PhD. 1997, "Settlements on Rashid branch", Emad Ahmed, PhD., 1999, "Rural Settlements in Dakahlia Governorate: Forms and trends", Hamida Othman, MA 2005, "Rural Settlements in Al-Wasta District", Maha Ahmed, MA 2007, "Rural Settlements in Al-Saff and Atfih Districts in Giza governorate", Shaima El-Sawy, MA 2008, "The weekly markets in Kafr El-Sheikh District", Reda Mahmoud, MA 2013, "Land use change in the rural margin of Greater Cairo", Doaa Abdel-Khaleq, PhD 2021, "Metropolitan villages in Dakahlia governorate".

### **3.2) In Women Faculty, Ain Shams University:**

Nawal Hamed, PhD. 1987, "Sharkia Governorate, a study in Rural Geography", Shawky Dabi, MA. 1988, "Geography of Rural Settlements in Shebin El-Qanater District", Solaeman El-Sayed, PhD. 1989, "Rural weekly market in Sharkia Governorate", Fayez Ghorab, Ph D 1990, "Rural weekly market in Menoufia Governorate", Mona Shawkey, MA 1998, "Maghagha District, a study in rural geography"

### **3.3) In the Faculty of Arts, Menoufia University:**

Ismael Yosef, PhD. 1995, "Vertical growth of the rural houses in Menoufia Governorate", Hasan Shehata, MA 1999, "The twin villages in Gharbia Governorate", Sherif Abdel Salam, MA, 2000, "Integrated rural development in Sherbin District", Rashad Atif, MA. 2009, "The twin villages in Kafr El-Sheikh Governorate", Rashad Atif, PhD. 2017, "The changes in rural population composition of Kafr El-Sheikh Governorate", Reham Ghorab, MA 2018, "The changes of rural houses structure in Menouf District", Reham Ghorab, PhD. 2021, "The Sustainability of rural systems in Badr District". Samah Al-Tesha, MA 2022, "Animal production in Ashmoun District".

It is worthy to mention that some dissertation submitted to other institutions shared as pioneer in this context, such as the PhD by Nawal Abdullah at Ain Shams University in 1971 which studied the "settlements of the eastern edge of the delta", and the MA by Muhammad Al-Fadhili, at Alexandria University in 1973 which studied the "traditional rural settlements at the Abu al-Matamir District".

#### **4) Geographical Associations concerning rural geography:**

- Within the containment of the Egyptian Geographical Society, Egyptian Geographical Group for Rural Development (EGGRD) is one of five specific groups within the Egyptian Geographical Society: Geomorphology, rural development, climatology, modern technologies, and population.

The (EGGRD) was established according to the approval of board of directors of the Egyptian Geographical Society on January 16, 2011 to give priority to conducting survey research that deals with rural development issues in their geographical dimensions, focusing on land uses, and starting a field research dealing with the geographical dimensions of land use in Kutama al-Ghaba village, Basyoun district, Gharbia Governorate, where the of, in which the charitable endowment lands of the Egyptian Geographical Society are located.

The specific objectives of that group are: clarifying the concept of rural systems in their geographical and environmental dimensions, communication locally and globally with bodies interested in developing the concept of sustainability applied to rural systems, encouragement and stimulation of research that confirms the interrelationship between the structures and processes of rural systems, and introducing the results of research carried out by the group to various bodies to benefit from it.

The group identified the priorities of its concerns research in:

- Keeping abreast of global trends in rural geographical studies in theory and practice.
- Study and analysis of the carrying capacity and sustainability of the Egyptian countryside.
- Studying the position of the settlement estate of the Egyptian villages affected by building encroachments in the countryside accompanying the January 2011 revolution and its aftermath.
- Analysis of environmental, administrative, economic, social and habitation changes in rural Egypt.
- Applied studies on sustainable rural development in selected environments and regions.

The group's first research project was: "Land use in the village of Kutama Al-Ghaba", carried out by a team of four members of the group, and was submitted to the Egyptian Geographical Society on April 20, 2013.

### **5) Published articles in geographical periodicals:**

The Arab Geographical Journal issued by the Egyptian Geographical Society since 1968 until now is the most attractive for specialized and distinguished geographical research.

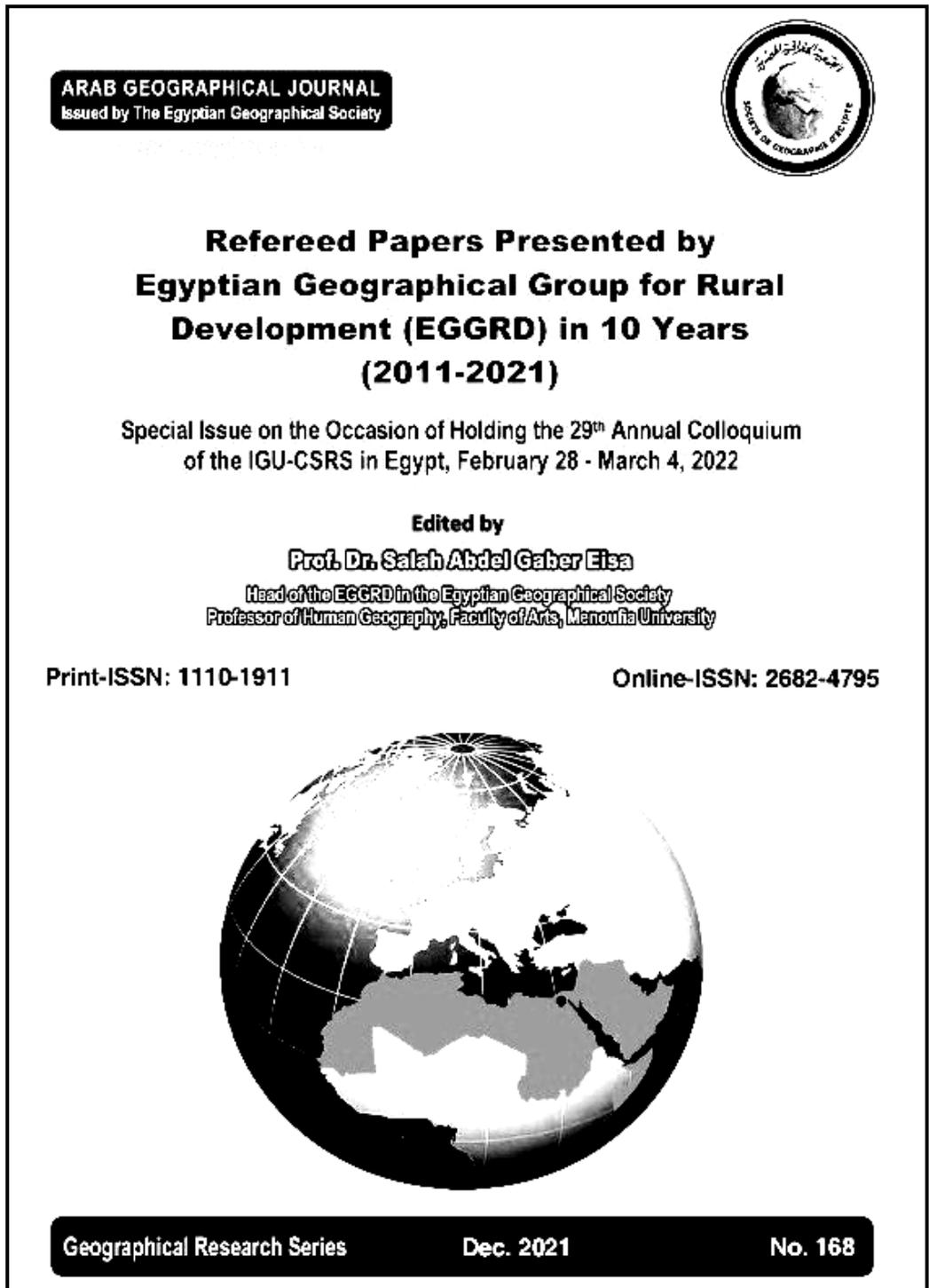
Referring to the scientific articles, concerning the field of rural geography, published in the Arab Geographical Journal since 1968 until now, the following remarks could be disclosed:

- The beginning of geographical interest towards the Egyptian countryside via published articles in the Arab Geographical Journal appeared within the issue of 1980 which included the following three articles: "Geographical problems facing the horizontal agricultural expansion in Egypt" by Taha Gad, "The countryside in geography" by Nawal Abdullah, and "Rural settlements in Aga district" by Samir El-Desouky. Hilmi Jaafar wrote an article on: "Agricultural tenure" in 1981 issue, then Salah Eisa wrote an article on: "Applications for the use of aerial and remote sensing images in the geography of rural settlements" in 1985 (Eisa, 1985).
- In the issue of 1991 Abdul-Majid Fouda wrote an article on: "Land use in Al-Wafaia village", followed by another one on: "Distribution of Rural Urban Settlements in Suhag" in the issue of 1992, then an article by Nabil Othman on: "Development of the Villages of Minya district" appeared in the 1998's issue.
- In the 2005 issue, two articles were published, the first on: "Rural employment and its trends in Egypt" by Mohamed Maklad, and the second was about: "The impact of educational service on settlement growth in an Egyptian village" by Fathi Shalaby.
- In 2009's issue, two articles were published, the first by Abdel-Moati Shaheen that tackled "The economic and social effects of rural electrification in an Egyptian village", and the second by Ashraf Abdo that titled: "Changing the boundaries of the urban rural margin for the Greater Cairo Complex".

- In 2010 Huda Hassanein published an article on: “Rural Development in Dakahlia Governorate”.
- Two articles were published in 2011, the first on: “Change in the areas of agricultural land in an Egyptian village” by Alaa Elwan, the second was about: “The rural urban continuum in Kafr ElSheikh/Al Qarda axis” by Ahmed Abu Zaid.
- In 2014’s issue, an article by Abdel-Azim Ahmed titled: “Geographical dimensions of the problem of urban sprawl on agricultural land in the villages of Bastra and Manshat Nassar” was published.
- Finally, an article by Eman Hassan titled: “Modifying Egypt’s agricultural map in light of our water resources and food needs” was published in 2016’s issue. Since that date upward till Volume 52, Issue 77, Winter and Spring 2021 of the Arab Geographical Journal, no article relating the subject of rural geography has been published in these issues.

### **6) Specialized symposia related Rural Geography:**

- The symposium organized by the Geography Committee of the Supreme Council of Culture, held on May 19-20, 2001, concerning “The Egyptian countryside, its present and its future”. Its research papers dealt with the topics related to the concept of the countryside and its distinguishing criteria, distribution patterns, sizes, functions, structures, services, of the Egyptian villages and some case studies, illustrating their geographical factors (Supreme Council of Culture, 2003).
- The EGGRD organized six annual symposiums (2016-2021) tackled geographic topics about the countryside entitled as the following: 1- “The land of the Egyptian countryside is an irreplaceable strategic resource”, on November 19, 2016, illustrated by eight research papers. 2- “Advanced Research Methodologies in Rural Geography”, on May 4, 2017. 3- "Rural Housing in Egypt - present and future" on February 24, 2018, explained by ten research. 4- "Sustainable Rural Tourism in Egypt - potential, reality, and future" on February 23, 2019, treated by eleven papers. 5-"Rural services in Egypt and their role in achieving sustainable development", on February 29, 2020, discussed within twelve papers. 6- "Rural productive activities in Egypt” on May 22, 2021, for which six papers were presented (Fig. 3).



**Figure 3.** The Issue of refereed papers presented in EGGRD symposiums

## **7) Specialized external scientific communication:**

- Intending to set up international communication with the authorities concerned with rural studies, the author as an Egyptian geographer began to link with and follow up activities of the IGU Commission on the sustainability of rural systems since 1998. That was during the activities of the first forum of Arab Geographers in Sana'a, Yemen, November 1998, whereas the President of the International Geographical Union, Prof. Bruno Messerli invited the attendees to join the union's commissions and let available application forms for admission according to the interest of each participant. Thus, the author, Prof. Salah Abdel-Gaber Eisa chose to join the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems (C12.35 Sustainability of Rural Systems: 1996- 2000) as associated member.

- During the attendance of the author, Prof. Salah Abdel-Gaber Eisa in the 22 Annual Colloquium of the IGU Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems in University of Bucharest, August 2014, he handed, on behalf of The Egyptian Geographical Society, the Egyptian desire for hosting a forthcoming CSRS Colloquium, to the co-chairs of that commission (Fig, 4). The official letter containing that desire was discussed by the steering committee and was welcoming accepted and included in the list of those wishing to host the symposium in the coming period.

- Egypt is a basic member in the African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO) is a non-political body founded on March 1962 with a view to promote coordinated efforts, exchange of experiences and cooperative action for furthering the objectives of development of the rural areas (<https://aardo.org/about.html>).

AARDO is an autonomous inter-governmental Organization comprising 31 member of country governments in Africa and Asia. Its headquarter is located at New Delhi, India.



**The Egyptian Geographical Society**  
A member of IGU

Cairo,  
Egypt.  
5 August 2014

**Dear, Professor Ana Maria Viegas Firmino**  
**Dear, professor Doo-Chul KIM**  
Chiefs of CSRS in IGU

Looking forward to a fruitful integration between the Egyptian Geographical Society and the IGU Commission for Sustainability of Rural Systems (CSRS) hopeful, I would like to appreciate the participation of Dr. **Salah Abdel Gaber Eisa** with a paper to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Colloquium of CSRS at Romania 24 August 2014, after his successful participation to IGU- KRC 2013.

**Dr. Salah Abdel Gaber Eisa** is a professor of Human Geography, Faculty of Arts, Monufia University, Egypt. He is also a member of the Egyptian Geographical Society Board of Directors, and a chief of the attached Group of Egyptian Geographers for Rural Development that has been established since two years within The Egyptian Geographical Society.

The Group of Egyptian Geographers for Rural Development works according a wide program of activities, its first out put is a team field study concerning land use of Kotama village, place of the benevolent Endowment appointed for the Egyptian geographical Society (founded at 1875).

The Group of Egyptian Geographers for Rural Development inspires to set up ties with the IGU Commission for Sustainability of Rural Systems, taking in mind that bases of rural settlement geography were presented for the first time at the International geographical Congress held in Cairo, Egypt, April, 1925. Besides, the salient matter of sustaining Egyptian arable lands has to make use of experiences and help of the CSRS.

**Dr. Salah Abdel Gaber Eisa**, (d\_salah\_eisa@hotmail.com), on behave of Group of Egyptian Geographers for Rural Development, is approved to present and discuss a proposal for future cooperation with the CSRS, for example: co-works, visits, meetings, colloquium, publishing, etc.



**Best wishes**

Yours

**Prof. M. S. Abulezz**

President of the Egyptian Geographical Society

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**Figure 4.** Letter of the Egyptian desire for hosting a CSRS Colloquium

In the fifth symposium of the EGGRD in 2020, about rural services, the representative of AARDO in Egypt was invited and participated in its activities. He and the Secretary-General of the organization also have been invited to attend the 29th colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems in Egypt 2022.

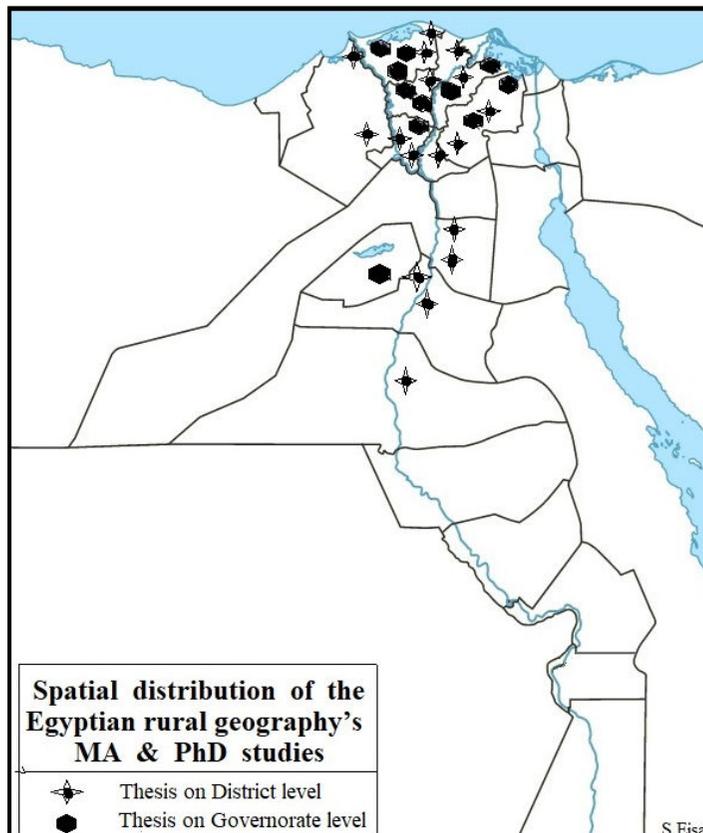
## **8) Results and Discussion:**

### **8.1) As for Egyptian master's and doctoral thesis in Rural Geography:**

- Over the course of fifty years (1972 - 2022) the total number of master's and doctoral thesis in the fields of rural geography granted by the three chosen departments was 35 theses. The Department of Geography at Cairo University granted 22 (62.9 %), five theses by the faculty of women (14.3 %), and eight theses (22.8 %) by the Faculty of Arts in Menoufia university.
- It is noted that Cairo University was distinguished by the chronological and numerical precedence in this of geographical field. Most of its the qualified scholars in the rural geography disseminated that research interest in the universities in which they worked, such as: Omar Al-Farouq at Ain Shams University, Salah Eisa at Menoufia University, and Samir El-Desouki and Ahmed Hamid in Zagazig and Benha faculties of Arts.
- Five only thesis titles declared its affiliation to the Rural geography, while fifteen titles clarified its concerns in rural settlement. The rest theses dealt with other features of rural scope such as: rural markets, rural transport, rural production, rural-urban margins, rural development, and sustainability of rural systems.
- Seven study areas cover spatial belts or axes (the eastern side of the Nile Valley - Damietta branch- Rosetta branch - the top of the Nile delta to the south of Shebeen El-Kom - great Cairo margins - Lake Manzala Region).
- Twenty-seven study areas are tied up with administrative divisions, either in governorate or district name, as shown in Tab. 1 and Fig. 5.

**Table. 1 Spatial distribution of the Egyptian rural geography's MA & PhD studies**

Government	Study numb.	District	Study numb.	Total studies	%
Kafr ElSheikh	3	Kafr ElSheikh - Sidi Salem	2	5	17.9
Gharbia	2	Samannoud	1	3	10.7
Menoufia	1	Ashonn – Menouf	2	3	10.7
Behera	-	Badr - Rashid	2	2	7.4
Sharkia	2	AbuKabir - Minya ElQamh	2	4	14.3
Dakahlia	2	Sherbin – Mansoura	2	4	14.3
Qalyubia	-	Shebin ElQanater	1	1	3.6
Giza	-	AlSaff - Atfih	2	2	7.4
Fayoum	1	-	-	1	3.6
Beni Suef	-	Wasta - Beni Suef	2	2	7.4
Menia	-	Maghagha	1	1	3.6
<b>total</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 5.** Distribution of MA & PhD's in Egyptian rural geography

## **8.2) As for articles of rural geography published in the Arab Geographical Journal:**

- Seventeen articles only in the field of rural geography were published in the Journal during a period of fifty-three years (1968 - 2021). In any case, this limited amount of rural research indicates a diminishing representation of rural geography concerns compared to the increasing interests of some other geographical branches.

- Articles in the field of rural geography didn't appear in the journal until 1980, i.e., 12 years after its issuance, because of the delay in the emergence of rural interest among Egyptian and Arab geographers before that date.

- The period from 1980 - 1985 is considered the most prominent in research interest in rural geography, distinguished by five articles, while that rural interest disappeared in the journal's issues during the five years (1986-1990).

- It is noted that the publication of rural geography topics in the Journal has been discontinued during relatively long years or periods, especially after 2016. This is not explained by the decrease in interest in these topics, but it is more likely to be explained by two facts:

- = The seminars of the Egyptian Geographical Group for Rural Development (EGGRD) have attracted a tangible share of research activities of most interested rural geographers in Egypt. The evidence for this saying is the issuance of a book that includes refereed research for the (EGGRD) over a period of ten years within the publications of the Egyptian Geographical Society.

- = The publishing of applied research related to rural geography in many scientific journals of the faculties of arts in many Egyptian universities.

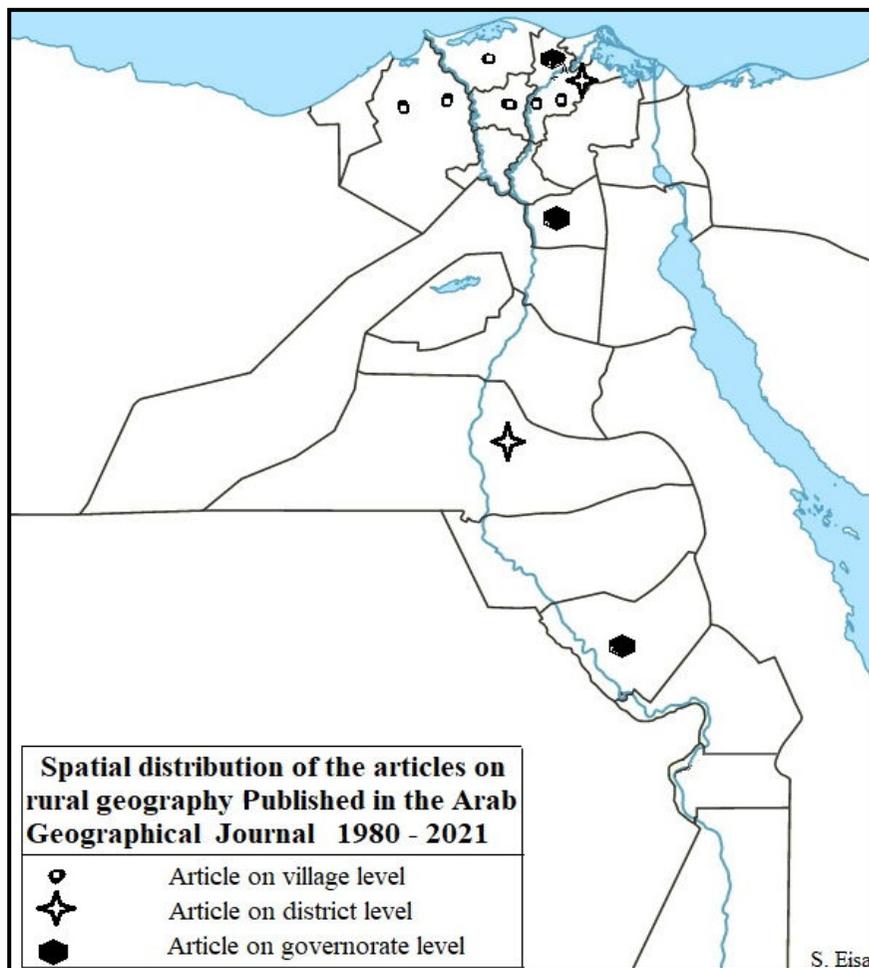
- The following Tab. 2 & Fig. 6 expose the distribution of eleven published articles in terms of its study area, either governorate, district, or village:

- There are four articles involved in topics cover all over Egypt: (Modifying Egypt's agricultural map - Rural employment and its trends in Egypt - Agricultural tenure - agricultural expansion in Egypt).

- It is noted that two of the total rural articles concern in methodological themes (Countryside in Geography - the use of aerial and remote sensing images in the geography of rural settlements), while the rest are dealing with applied subjects.

**Table 2. Spatial distribution of the articles on rural geography Published in the Arab Geographical Journal 1980 - 2021**

Government	Study numb.	District	Study numb.	Village	Study numb
K. ElSheikh	-	-	-	KafrElSheikh/AlQarda	1
Gharbia	-	-	-	Balqina village	1
Beheira	-	-	-	Bastra and Manshat Nassar + Al-Wafaia	2
Dakahlia	1	Aga	1	Al-Bramoun +Tafahna	2
G. Cairo	1	-	-	-	-
Menia	-	Menia	1	-	-
Sohag	1	-	-	-	-

**Figure 6. Articles on rural geography published in AGJ 1980-2021**

Although the limited number of case studies, villages grasped 54.5% of these cases, leaving 18.2% for districts, and 27.3% for governorates.

### **8.3) Concerning the outdoor contacts and its impacts:**

As an Egyptian geographer participating in international geographical meetings and conferences over a period of thirty years, the author presented a number of methodological contributions, the most prominent of which are:

- A paper entitled "Methodological trends in rural geography, with a proposed methodological framework," has been presented at the first Forum of Arab Geographers in Sana'a, Yemen, 1998.
- A paper entitled "Sustainability of rural environment systems in theory and practice", at the Fifth Forum of Arab Geographers in Kuwait in 2008.
- A paper entitled "The Effects of Globalization on the Sustainability of Communities in Rural Areas Adjacent to the Suez Canal Corridor in Egypt" at the 33rd International Congress of the International Geographical Union held in Beijing, China, August 2016.

Finally, actual steps were taken to achieve the Egyptian desire to host the colloquium of the Commission on the Sustainability of Rural Systems during the author's attendance at the 27th colloquium in 2019 at Macalester College in Minnesota, USA.

After the twenty-eighth colloquium of the Commission was held virtually in Croatia in 2021, the 29th International Conference of the Committee on the Sustainability of Rural Systems of the International Geographical Union was held in Egypt on February 28, - March 4, 2022, via the Faculty of Arts, Menoufia University, and the Egyptian Geographical Society.

### **9) Conclusion:**

- Egypt has contributed to the modern development of rural geography since the convening of the International Geographical Congress within its Geographical Society in 1925.
- Through teaching and searching, Egypt could activate and benefit the supremacy of the rural scene in the Egyptian environment.
- A good base has been established for the launch of rural geography in Egypt to the prospects of solid geographical research at the theoretical and applied levels.

- Some geographical institutions in Egypt still consider the study of rural settlements as an alternative to rural geography, and do not adopt the concept of rural systems, which identify a distinct environmental entity for the countryside in contrast to the urban and Bedouin environments.
- In the Egyptian countryside, there are wide and promising spatial and qualitative opportunities for geographical researchers, whether at the level of graduate students or post-doctoral students.
- It is now possible for rural geography in Egypt and those who are interested in it to communicate and interact positively with global geography in this multi-interest field through the Commission for the Sustainability of Rural Systems of the International Geographical Union.

### **Future insights:**

It might be appropriate for the author to renew his hope to be responded regarding his detailed proposal to establish a postgraduate institute for “Rural Studies and Sustainable Rural Development”, and to be adopted by an Egyptian university. Successive presidents of Menoufia University have been addressed with this proposal, but no positive results have been achieved so far.

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