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**EGYPTIAN YOUTH AND THE EUROPEAN ELDORADO:
JOURNEYS OF HOPE AND DESPAIR**

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Abstract

In this paper, I explore characteristics of Egyptian irregular migrants to Europe and reasons of irregular migration from the point of departure through a field survey in some Egyptian villages known of sending irregular – as well as regular - migrants to Italy and France (mainly). The fieldwork was carried out in eight Egyptian governorates to identify the push factors in the country, with particular attention to the dynamics governing the irregular migratory flows from Egypt to the EU. The research focuses on the broad dimensions of migration, both legal and illegal, towards the northern shores of the Mediterranean. The research further tries to define the socio-political and economic environment in which the decision to migrate mature. The survey gathered information about the level of awareness of potential migrants about irregular migration and migrants smuggling from Egypt. The results of the filed survey indicates that the vast majority of youth who want to migrate to Europe as well as current migrants intend to return to Egypt after a temporary stay in the countries of destination. In spite of the fact that the legal framework for migrants to the Arab Gulf countries – the traditional destination of temporary Egyptian migration - is very different to the legal framework in Europe, these findings suggest that the Egyptian migration to Europe is a re-production of the pattern of Egyptian migration to the Arab Gulf countries, where young males migrate to achieve specific financial goals and then they return to Egypt. With respect to the reason for migration, the study indicated that the main reason behind migration is the lack of employment job opportunities in Egypt, especially among fresh graduates and the low wages and salaries in Egypt.

Introduction

Until the mid-1950s, foreigners came to Egypt but Egyptians rarely migrated abroad (Zohry, 2003). Egyptian emigration was not only a reflection of the oil boom in the Arab Gulf countries and the need for manpower in neighbouring countries in mid-1970s, but also of economic difficulties and high rates of population growth in Egypt in the second half of the 20th century. Rapid population growth is one of the crucial problems that have hindered development efforts in Egypt. While the doubling of Egypt's population between 1897 and 1947, from 9.7 million to 19 million, took fifty years, the next doubling took less than thirty years, from 1947 to 1976. Today, Egypt's population is about 74 million which means that another population doubling occurred in the last 30 years. The annual population growth rate is around two percent. About 95 percent of the population is crowded into around five percent of the total land area that follows the course of the Nile. The remaining 95 percent of the land is arid desert. Although it can be seen as a kind of 'natural response' to the geography of economic opportunity, migration to large cities has further unbalanced Egypt's population distribution.

Associated with rapid population growth is a high level of unemployment. Current official unemployment rate in Egypt is about 10 percent, but independent estimates push the rate up to 20 percent (UNDP, 2005; Zohry, 2005a). However, to control unemployment, Egypt will need to achieve a sustained real GDP growth rate of at least 6 percent per year¹. The economy has to generate between 600,000 and 800,000 new jobs each year in order to absorb new entrants into the labour force. The size of the informal sector and the level of over-employment in the public sector add to the complexity of the problem.

This study explores characteristics of irregular migrants to Europe and explain reasons of irregular migration from the point of departure through a field survey in some Egyptian villages known of sending irregular migrants to the EU countries; mainly Italy and France. This working paper sheds some light on the findings of this field survey in order to understand the current migration stream between Egypt and the European Union. However, before highlighting some aspects of the field survey and suggesting some policy recommendations, it is important to elaborate a bit on international migration of Egyptians, with a special focus on Egyptian migration to Europe.

¹ Current GDP growth rate is 4 percent (World Bank, 2006).

International Migration of Egyptians

“Egyptians have the reputation of preferring their own soil. Few ever leave except to study or travel; and they always return ... Egyptians do not emigrate” (Cleland 1936: 36, 52). This was the case until the middle of the twentieth century with few exceptions. Only small numbers of Egyptians, primarily professionals, had emigrated before 1974. Then, in 1974, the government lifted all restrictions on labour migration. The move came at a time when Arab Gulf states and Libya were implementing major development programs with funds generated by the quadrupling of oil revenues in 1973. The number of Egyptians working abroad in the Arab region around 1975 reached about 370,000 as part of about 655,000 total migrants (Brinks and Sinclair 1980). By 1980 more than one million Egyptians were working abroad. This number more than doubled by 1986 with an estimate of 2.25 million Egyptians abroad (CAPMAS 1989). The emergence of foreign job opportunities alleviated some of the pressure on domestic employment. Many of these workers sent a significant portion of their earnings to their families in Egypt. As early as 1979, these remittances amounted to \$2 billion, a sum equivalent to the country’s combined earnings from cotton exports, Suez Canal transit fees, and tourism.

The foreign demand for Egyptian labour peaked in 1983, when an estimated 3.28 million Egyptians workers were employed abroad. After that year, political and economic developments in the Arab oil-producing countries caused a cutback in employment opportunities. The decline in oil prices during the Iran-Iraq War forced the Arab Gulf oil industry into a recession, which costs some Egyptians their jobs. Most of the expatriate workforce remained abroad but new labour migration from Egypt slowed considerably. Even so, in the early 1990s, the number of Egyptian workers abroad still exceeded 2.2 million (Farrag, 1999; Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, 2003; Zohry 2005b).

The majority of Egyptian labour migrants are expected to return home eventually, but thousands left their country each year with the intention of permanently resettling in Europe, Australia, or North America. These emigrants tended to be highly educated professionals, mostly doctors, engineers, teachers, and highly skilled professionals.

EGYPTIAN MIGRATION TO ARAB COUNTRIES

Migration of Egyptians to Arab countries is know as “temporary Egyptian migration”, simply because Egyptians who go to work in Arab countries – as well as other nationalities – do not

gain any rights by staying longer time in these countries; they are not eligible to any kind of citizenship rights, so that they always return to their origin. With the long tradition of temporary migration of Egyptians to Arab countries, Egypt is now experiencing what is called “*the permanence of temporary migration*” (Farrag 1999: 55), or what I may call “the culture of temporary migration”. Migration to the West is referred to as “permanent migration” since a great proportion of migrants stay in destination countries, gain some rights, naturalize, and then enjoy full citizenship rights.

In the last three decades, flows of “temporary” migrants to neighbouring Arab countries exceeded permanent migration to Europe and North America. Official secondment through government authorities on the basis of bilateral contracts is one of the main forms of temporary migration, with work largely in branches of Egyptian companies, particularly the construction sector. According to estimates of the Central Agency of Statistics (CAPMAS) estimates, the total number of Egyptian temporary migrant labourers is about 1.9 million. Most of the demand for Egyptian labour comes from Saudi Arabia, Libya, Jordan, and Kuwait. Migrants to these countries comprise 87.6 percent of the total number of Egyptian migrant labourers.

EGYPTIAN MIGRATION TO EUROPE

From the beginning of the 1960s, political, economic, and social developments led some Egyptians to migrate permanently to North America and European countries. According to CAPMAS estimates, the total number of permanent Egyptian migrants in non-Arab countries is slightly more than 0.8 million (824,000). About 80 percent of them are concentrated in five countries: USA (318,000 or 38.6 percent), Canada (110,000 or 13.3 percent), Italy (90,000), Australia (70,000), and Greece (60,000). The other 20 percent are mainly in Western European countries, such as Netherlands, France, England, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and Spain (CAPMAS, 2001).

Egyptian migration to Europe started about two hundred years ago in the beginning of the 19th century, after the Napoleon’s Egypt Campaign (1798-1801) when Mohamed Ali, the founder of modern Egypt, sent the first Egyptian mission to Italy in 1813 to study printing arts, and another mission to France in 1818 to study military and maritime sciences in order to form a strong Egyptian Army, based on European standards of that time. Since that time, there were always a channel of communication between Egypt and Europe. Europeans used

to migrate to Egypt and they formed successful minorities in Alexandria and Cairo until early fifties of the 20th century². The economic pressures and transition to socialism at the Nasser era led many European Egyptians to return to Europe. In addition, Egyptians started to migration to the West in the 1960's. Active and successful Egyptians live at present at most of the large metropolitan areas in many European countries.

Egyptians in the West are perceived to be more educated than migrants to the Arab gulf countries, their migration is a family-natured migration, and they comprise a brain drain to their origin. They include Egyptians who were sent by the Egyptian government to study abroad but many of them preferred to stay in the country of destination after the end of their missions to teach and research in the West. They also include a successful segment of businessmen.

Egyptian networks in Europe are well-established. For example, Egyptian medical doctors established their own society (Egyptian Medical Society) in the United Kingdom, which includes more than 120 members, many of whom reside in London and are university professors (Egyptian Medical Society UK, 2006). In addition to medical doctors, Egyptians in the UK are mostly highly skilled professionals (scientists, pharmacists, journalists, engineers), in addition to a small proportion of semi-skilled workers. Egyptians in Italy founded many Egyptian clubs and NGO associations. They also founded what is called "Italy-Egypt Cultural Association" and they lobby to support the idea of the introduction of courses in Arabic language in the Italian public schools (Stocchiero, 2005).

The statistics given by CAPMAS are just estimates which are drawn from the reports of Egyptian embassies abroad, records of cross-border flows from the Ministry of Interior, emigration permits from the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, and some other sources. Receiving countries' estimates differ from those of CAPMAS. For example, the Italian government estimates there are around 35,000 Egyptians in Italy whereas CAPMAS gives a figure of 90,000 (Fargues, 2005).

² Mainly Italians and Greeks.

Table 1
Estimated Number of Egyptian Migrants in Europe by Country of Destination
(circa 2000)

Country of Destination	Number in Thousands	Percent
Italy	90	27.6
Greece	60	18.4
Netherlands	40	12.3
France	36	11.0
United Kingdom	35	10.7
Germany	25	7.7
Switzerland	14	4.3
Austria	14	4.3
Spain	12	3.7
Total	326	100

Source: CAPMAS 2001

IRREGULAR MIGRATION OF EGYPTIANS TO EUROPE

In the face of the tightened policy adopted by the European Community (European Union), especially after the Schengen agreement in 1990 and the Maastricht Treaty (requiring a visa, strict border surveillance, and imposing a selective ceiling for work permits), illegal migration increased and illegal migration networks grew, especially from Morocco to Spain across the Straits of Gibraltar and from Tunisia and Libya to the nearby Italian coasts and islands across the Mediterranean. Statistically speaking and due to the clandestine nature of this movement of people, accurate figures of the numbers involved are difficult to estimate. Although the governments of sending countries set measures to stop illegal migration, they can not eradicate it completely. Similarly, the governments of host countries in Europe can not stop the movements of illegal migration with high rates of success due to the complicated nature of this phenomenon and its linkages to policy and socioeconomic conditions in the sending and receiving countries.

The current stream of Egyptian irregular migration to Europe started in the eve of the 21st century with massive number of fresh graduates and poorly-educated unemployed youth engaged in irregular migration to Europe either through the Mediterranean Sea via Libya or by over staying touristic Schengen visas. The main reasons behind this new type of migration are

not related to the tightened policy adopted by the European community, but mainly to high unemployment rates among Egyptian youth, the difficulty for Egyptian youth to find employment opportunities in the Arab Gulf countries due to the competition they face there due to the massive number of cheap South East Asian labour that migrate to the same destination, and the geographical proximity between Egypt and Europe and the ease of travelling to Libya where most of the boat journeys to Europe are originated (Zohry, 2005a; 2005b).

Attitudes of Egyptian Youth towards Migration to Europe

A KAP survey (Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice) was carried out by the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Emigration to identify the push factors in Egypt as identified by ever and potential migrants. The research further tries to define the socio-political and economic environment in which the decision to migrate matures, with the aim of finding appropriate responses at the point of origin. The survey also gathers information about the level of awareness of potential migrants about irregular migration and migrants smuggling from Egypt. An important element of the survey is the identification of the information consumption habits of the potential target group³.

The study population was set to be young males between 18 and 40 years old. This segment of population forms the pool from which illegal as well as legal migrants (regular/irregular) come from. The fieldwork took place in urban and rural areas in eight Egyptian governorate (provinces); Cairo, Alexandria, Gharbiya, Dakaqliya, Sharqiya, Fayoum, Menoufiya, and Luxor. The total number of completed questionnaires was 1,552. Except for Cairo and Alexandria, the selection of the governorates within each region and the selection of fieldwork sites within each governorate were based on the existence of well-established migration streams (legal and illegal) between these sites and European countries. The judgment was based on media reports in the last two years, the few available research reports, and personal experience of the prin-

³ This survey was carried out by the Emigration Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration in cooperation with Italia Cooperation and the International Organization for Migration. The field work took place from October 2005 until March 2006 and the author of this paper used to be the Principal Investigator of this study. Data used in this study come from the published tables in the study report.

cial investigator. A listing team was sent to the selected sites to construct lists of potential interviewees. However, interviewers were asked to interview any person who could be available in the data collection phase. Interviews took place in the coffee shops, workplaces, houses of respondents, youth centres, and many other places where youth could be available.

The standard questionnaire included sections on background information, migration intentions, international migration experience, migration of friends and relatives, exposure to media, and youths' plans for the future. In addition to the field survey, six focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with youth in four governorates (Menoufiya, Gharbiya, Sharqiya, and Fayoum). Through FGDs, qualitative data on migration intentions and experiences were collected to support and explain quantitative data collected through the field survey. The results of the FGDs are integrated with the analysis of the quantitative data.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDY POPULATION

Socioeconomic and Demographic Characteristics

The educational profile of respondents indicates the dominance of the "technical secondary certificate" and the "university degree". Respondents with technical secondary diploma comprise 42.3 percent of the total number of respondents followed by respondents with university degree who comprise 23.6 percent. Respondents with no education comprise less than one-tenth of the total respondents. This educational profile is higher than the national average with illiteracy rate around 30 percent. This is attributed mainly to the young age structure of respondents. With respect to marital status and given the relative young age structure of the respondents, the percentage of singles is high (59.3 percent) and the percentage of married respondents is 40.1. Only few cases of respondents are divorced or widowed (see Table 2).

Work status of respondents indicates a high level of unemployment (38.2 percent) compared to the national level (around 10 percent). But we should keep in mind that measuring unemployment using a simple unique question is not the most appropriate way; it just gives a rough estimate of unemployment among the study population. Respondents who are engaged in paid work were asked to give estimates of their monthly income. While the average monthly income was 527.7 Egyptian Pounds, more than 50 percent of respondents' income was less than 400 pounds.

Table 2
Background Characteristics of Respondents

Background Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Age of Respondents		
18-24	599	38.6
25-29	411	26.5
30-34	253	16.3
35-40	289	18.6
Total	1552	100.0
Mean Age		27.4 years
Highest Level of Schooling Successfully Completed		
None	139	9.0
Primary	92	5.9
Preparatory	115	7.4
Secondary (General)	183	11.8
Secondary (Tech.)	657	42.3
University or more	366	23.6
Total	1,552	100.0
Marital Status		
Single/Engaged	917	59.3
Married	621	40.1
Divorced/Widowed	9	0.6
Total	1,552	100.0
Work Status		
Yes	959	61.8
No	592	38.2
Total	1,551	100.0
Income		
LT 200	108	11.8
200 -	408	44.6
400 -	192	21.0
600 -	81	8.9
800 -	33	3.6
1000 +	93	10.2
Total	915	100.0
Mean		527.7 LE
Mean (Average) Family Size		5.4 Persons

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration 2006.

Family size is an important demographic indicator; it summarizes many socioeconomic factors; dependency burden, extended family norms and traditions, cultural and societal factors. In addition, Family size affects migration decisions and utilization of family labour force (Hugo, 1998; Siegel and Swanson, 2004; Stark and Lucas, 1988; Stark, 1991). The results indicate that respondents come from families with an average of 5.4 persons which is around the national average.

Migration Experience of Respondents

Out of the 1,552 individuals who were interviewed, less than one-third (31.6 percent) ever migrated to any European country, while 68.4 percent never migrated. When they were asked about their desire to migrate to any European country, 87.1 percent of the youth who declared that they never migrated, expressed their desire to migrate to Europe (see Table 3).

Table 3
Migration Experience and Intentions

Question	Frequency	Percent
Migrated to any European Country?		
Yes	491	31.6
No	1,061	68.4
Total	1,552	100.0
Want to Migrate to any European Country?		
Yes	924	87.1
No	137	12.9
Total	1,061	100.0

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration 2006.

MIGRATION INTENTIONS

Migration intentions are just the starting point of the migration project. Prospective migrants have to go through many stages in order to realize their migration intentions. Considering the large supply of potential migrants on the one hand, and the limited access to securing abroad jobs through legal channels on the other, some prospective migrants may go through various schemes of irregular practices prior to migration. The need to address pre-migration conditions is important to prevent other problems later on, particularly when migrants are already in the countries of destination and are beyond the reach of national laws. In the interest of

promoting safer migration, this field survey collected data on migration intentions of youth and their knowledge of countries of destination. Some issues related to of migration intentions are discussed below.

Countries of Desired Migration

The results of the field survey indicate that the prime desired destination for Egyptian youth who wish to migrate is Italy. More than one-half of the study population (53.4 percent) stated Italy as their favourite destination. France comes second with almost one-fourth of respondents stated it as their favourite destination in Europe (23.2 percent). The relative weight of other countries is almost negligible; other countries include the United Kingdom (6.5 percent), Netherlands (3.6 percent), Greece (1.8 percent), and Sweden (1.2 percent).

Table 4
Countries of Desired Migration

Country	Frequency	Percent
Italy	492	53.4
France	214	23.2
Germany	60	6.5
United Kingdom	52	5.6
Netherlands	33	3.6
Greece	17	1.8
Sweden	11	1.2
Switzerland	3	0.3
Don't know/Any country	9	1.0
Other Countries	31	3.4
Total	922	100.0

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration 2006.

Reasons of Migration

Respondents who expressed their desire to migrate to any European country were asked about their reasons behind their intention to migrate. Reasons are classified under two categories; reasons related to origin (push factors), and reasons related to destination (pull factors). With respect to push factors, three main reasons were stated by a significant number of respondents; "income in Egypt is lower than in Europe" (stated by 53 percent of respondents), "bad living conditions in Egypt" (stated by 52.8 percent of respondents), and "no job opportunities available in Egypt" (stated by 36.6 percent of respondents).

It is clear that all the main push factors are economic; they are related to income disparities between Egypt and receiving countries, bad living conditions, and unemployment. It was also clear from the focus group discussions that most of those who wish to migrate and also those who were deported while attempting to migrate are young unemployed males. Most of them are primarily unemployed and lack the opportunity to join the labour market for many years after their graduation.

Table 5
Reasons for the Intention to Migrate Abroad

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Reason for Migration Related to Origin – Push Factors		
Income in Egypt is lower than in Europe	490	53.0
Bad living conditions in Egypt	488	52.8
No job opportunities available in Egypt	338	36.6
Help my family	173	18.7
To improve my knowledge	75	8.1
Family reunification	13	1.4
Escape from family pressures and troubles	7	0.8
Other	21	2.3
Reason for Migration Related to Destination – Pull Factors		
Having friends in Europe	218	23.6
Having relatives in Europe	156	16.9
Having a job offer in Europe	135	14.6
Want to see Europe	88	9.5
More job opportunities available in Europe	83	9.0
Want to live in Europe	56	6.1
Could study in Europe	22	2.4
Other	31	3.4
Total	924	100.0

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration 2006.

Note: Each respondent was allowed to state up to three reasons, this is why the sum of percentages may be more than 100 percent.

The results indicate that youth's pull factors are their relatives and friends who ever migrated to Europe. As youth clarified in the focus group discussions, job offers are not documented job offers; they are just promises from their relatives and friend to introduce them to the labour market in Europe *should they arrive*.

The focus group discussions with youth revealed another important factor that pushes youth to think of migration; it is the temptation of wealth and decent life as stereotyped by remittances, luxurious houses in the village, automobiles, and social status of those who succeeded to migrate to Europe, especially those who were the poorest of the poor in such villages.

Source of Information Regarding Desired Country of Migration

Friends and relatives are the main source of information regarding the desired country of destination. More than 80 percent of the respondents rely on their relatives and friends on sketching a hypothetical picture on conditions prevail in the country of destination. The role of media is less than 10 percent while the role of the Internet, general readings, embassies, and the Egyptian authorities is almost negligible. The conclusion to be drawn from these surprising results is that migration to Europe in general is a sort of a family-managed process where potential migrants rely on their relative and friends – usually from the same village – to lubricate their migration to Europe, especially with respect to illegal migration. Hence, they don't rely on formal entities since they have the feeling that these entities will not help them fulfil their intentions (see Table 6).

Table 6
Source of Information Regarding Desired Country of Migration

Source	Frequency	Percent
Friends/Relatives	749	81.1
Media	77	8.3
Internet	38	4.1
General Readings	38	4.1
Embassies	4	0.4
Egyptian Authorities	1	0.1
Other	16	1.7
Total	923	100.0

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration 2006.

Awareness of Illegal Migration and its Hazards

Generally, most of the respondents are aware of illegal migration and its hazards, but at the same time they realize that legal migration to Europe is not easy. About 85 percent of respondents mentioned that they would not migrate to Europe without the needed documents, only 15.2 percent are willing to migrate without the needed documents. In addition, 82 percent of respondents believe that there are groups that facilitate illegal migration from Egypt to Europe.

The vast majority of respondents (94.7 percent) mentioned that they ever heard about the deported illegal migrants. Some of the focus group discussions' participants mentioned that they were deported while attempting migration to Italy. Almost three-fourth of the respondents are aware of the consequences of illegal migration but at the same time 78 percent of the respondents believe that legal migration to Europe is not easy. Many of the focus group discussions' participants tried to migrate legally but they failed to do so. As it was mentioned above, it is the contradiction between what is legal and what is possible that drive youth to migrate illegally.

Intention to Stay Abroad

In case of travelling abroad, do you intend to come back to Egypt after a specified period of time? The responses to this question indicate that the vast majority of youth (87.9 percent) who want to migrate to Europe intend to return to Egypt after a temporary stay in the countries of destination. Only 7.2 percent indicated that they may permanently stay abroad (with 5 percent are not sure).

MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

This section presents the experience of ever migrants (current and previous migrants). It includes the experience of legal and illegal migrants to Europe. Current migrants who were on a visit to their home country were interviewed. In addition, previous migrants who returned to Egypt after fulfilling specific targets and those who were deported were interviewed as well. This section sheds some light on the process of migration, its cost, and an evaluation of the migratory experience in order to explore the *practice* dimension of the *Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practice* approach.

Countries of Destination for Return Migrants

Again, and the same as the distribution of countries of destination by potential migrants, come Italy and France on top of the list of countries of destination. Some 61.2 percent of return migrants targeted Italy and 15.7 targeted France, then come Germany (3.9 percent), the United Kingdom (3.1 percent), Netherlands (2.7 percent), Greece (2.2 percent), Sweden (2 percent), and Switzerland (1.8 percent). Current Egyptian migration streams nowadays target Italy and France (see Table 7).

Table 7
Countries of Destination for Return Migrants

Country	Frequency	Percent
Italy	300	61.2
France	77	15.7
Germany	19	3.9
United Kingdom	15	3.1
Netherlands	13	2.7
Greece	11	2.2
Sweden	10	2.0
Switzerland	9	1.8
Other	36	7.3
Total	490	100.0

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration 2006

Reasons for Migration to Europe

Ever migrant youth we asked about reasons behind their migration decision; reasons are classified under two categories; reasons related to origin (push factors), and reasons related to destination (pull factors). With respect to push factors, they follow the same pattern as youth who intend to migrate where the three main reasons stated by a significant number of respondents are (a) income in Egypt is lower than in Europe (stated by 57.2 percent of respondents), (b) bad living conditions in Egypt (stated by 54.9 percent of respondents), and (c) no job opportunities available in Egypt (stated by 52.4 percent of respondents). The findings indicate the important of economic factors in shaping migration decision and implementation.

With respect to pull factors, the main three reasons that shape migration decision to Europe are (a) having a job offer in Europe (stated by 28.1 percent of respondents), (b) having relatives in Europe (stated by 27.5 percent of respondents), and (c) having friends in Europe (stated by 19 percent of respondents). It is evident that pull factors for ever migrants are the same as the pull factors for those who intend to migrate to Europe.

Table 8
Reasons for Migration to Europe for Current and Return Migrants

Reason	Frequency	Percent
Reason for Migration Related to Origin – Push Factors		
Income in Egypt is lower than in Europe	250	57.2
Bad living conditions in Egypt	240	54.9
No job opportunities available in Egypt	229	52.4
Help my family	62	14.2
To improve my knowledge	18	4.1
Family reunification	9	2.1
Escape from family pressures and troubles	5	1.1
Other	11	2.5
Reason for Migration Related to Destination – Pull Factors		
Having a job offer in Europe	123	28.1
Having relatives in Europe	120	27.5
Having friends in Europe	83	19.0
Wanted to see Europe	50	11.4
Wanted to live in Europe	33	7.6
Other	15	3.4
Total	437	100.0

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration 2006.

Note: Each respondent was allowed to state up to three reasons, this is why the sum of percentages may be more than 100 percent.

Source of Information Regarding Country of Destination before Migration

Friend and relatives are the main source of information regarding the desired country of destination. Almost 95 percent of the respondents relied on their relatives and friends on sketching a hypothetical picture on conditions prevail in the country of destination before migration. The role of other sources of information is negligible. This pattern is similar to the non-migrants who intend to migrate. The results confirm the family/friend nature of current Egyptian migration streams to Europe.

Persons who Help Youth Migrate to Europe

Who are the persons who helped youth migrate to Europe? On whom do youth rely on their endeavours to the unknown? Do they rely only on friends and relatives? Do they rely on migration brokers? The results of the survey indicate that relatives (in Europe and Egypt), along with migration brokers are the main key players in paving the way for those who wish to cross the Mediterranean Sea to the northern coasts. Relatives in Europe and Egypt helped 47.4

percent of ever migrants to cross the Mediterranean while migration brokers helped 22.5 percent of them.

Table 9
Persons who Helped Youth Migrate to Europe

Source	Frequency	Percent
Relatives in Europe	121	24.7
Relatives in Egypt	111	22.7
Migration brokers	110	22.5
Egyptian friends in Europe	49	10.0
Friends in Egypt	28	5.7
Travel agency	12	2.5
European Friends in Europe	10	2.0
No Body	27	5.5
Other	21	4.3
Total	489	100.0

Source: Ministry of Manpower and Emigration 2006.

MIGRATION DYNAMICS

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

Cost of Movement

Youth who experienced migration to Europe were asked about the monetary cost of their movement. By cost here, we mean any expenses that were paid to facilitate migration, not the cost of transportation or ordinary visa fees (if they migrated legally). About 80 percent of the respondents who experienced migration indicated that they paid money to migrate (78.8 percent); the average amount of money was 15,890 L.E. It ranges from less than 5,000 L.E (13.7 percent of migrants) to 50,000 L.E or more (only 1.6 percent of migrants) with more than 70 percent of migrants paid between 5,000 and 40,000 L.E to migrate to Europe.

The focus group discussions with the return migrants indicated two groups of migrants with two patterns of financial expenses; the first group follows the Egypt-Libya-Italy route via

migration brokers who facilitate their migration in boats through the Mediterranean, and the second group migrates by air through a touristic Schengen visa with the intention to overstay it. The sea route cost is cheap; it amounts for an average of 15,000 L.E, while the air route cost amounts for an average of 50,000 L.E and in many cases amounts for 70,000 L.E. So that it is clear that the cost of migration increases as the probability of success increases and hazards decrease.

The sea route is the choice of the poor; those who can not afford the cost of a Schengen visa (true or falsified). However, the hazards associated with the sea route do not prevent youth from trying this route. It is important here to indicate that the cost of migration is only to facilitate entry to the destination countries; they do not include any other services such as facilitating entry into the labour market. Migrants who take any of the routes know where to go when they enter the country of destination. They go directly to their friend and relatives who help them settle and introduce them to the labour market.

Work Contracts and Visa

Most of those who migrate to Europe do not have work contracts. Only 6.9 percent of those who migrate to Europe have work permit before migration. Those who have had official visa before migration comprise 57.4 percent and more than 40 percent migrate without visa. More than 60 percent of those who migrated without visa tried to get visa before migration but they failed. Many interviewees indicated that having just a touristic visa is almost impossible, so that they don't think of a work permit, and they believe that they will not be eligible to apply since most of them did not have a work contract beforehand.

Voluntary versus Forced Return

About 80 percent of interviewees indicated that they returned voluntary to Egypt either to spend some time with relatives before return to Europe to resume work or to stay permanently in Egypt after fulfilling monetary and social achievements. More than 20 percent of migrants were deported and sent back to Egypt because they overdue their visa or their attempt to enter Europe illegally. With respect to their intention to go back to Europe, 83.4 percent of ever migrants expressed their intention to go back to Europe. Only 11.2 percent of returnees (voluntarily or forced) expressed their intention to stay in Egypt. However, in the focus group discussions, current migrants indicated that their stay in Europe is temporary even if it lasts for many years. Moreover, they mentioned that Europe to them means working hard and remitting money to their families in Egypt. It is clear that the psychic base of unskilled and semi-skilled Egyptian migrants is still there in their villages in Egypt.

These findings indicate that the current stream of Egyptian migration to Europe is a re-production of the Egyptian migration experience to the Arab Gulf countries, where young males migrate to achieve specific financial goals and then they return to Egypt. Hence, Egyptian migration to Europe is different from other migration streams that target Europe; Egyptian migration to Europe is mainly male-dominated and temporary labour migration in general, while other migration streams to the same destinations involve males and females with higher level of intention to stay in the destination countries in general (Boubakri, 2004; Hamood, 2006).

Evaluation of Migration Experience

In spite of the fact that 70 percent of migrants were not working in their specialization in Europe, more than three-fourth of the migrants evaluated their migratory experience positively; 33.1 percent regarded their migration experience as a “very good” experience while 44.7 percent regarded it as a “good” experience. Only 22.2 percent regarded their migration experience as “bad” or “very bad”. In their evaluation, youth reflected on their work and stay in Europe as well as the returns of migration (remittances and work opportunities). Again, it is important to indicate that satisfaction as regarded by ever migrants is to find a job, any job, and to be able to remit money to their left-behind families in Egypt.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Recently, a new stream of migration to Europe can be easily recognized; current migrants to Europe are less educated than Egyptian migrants to Europe in the 1960s and 1970s. Current migration stream can be regarded as “the migration of the poor” or “Egyptian Youth’s Exodus” since migrants are pushed by unemployment and economic hardship and their movements are sometimes irregular. This study presented the characteristics of the current migration stream depending on the report on a field survey on “Attitudes of Egyptian Youth Towards Migration to Europe.” The results of this survey identified push factors in the country that affect youth’s migration decisions.

CONCLUSIONS

Push factors in the country of origin (Egypt) are overwhelmingly economic. Egyptian youth regard migration – legal or illegal – as a possible way to escape poverty and unemployment. With respect to the reason for migration, the study indicates that the main reasons behind migration are the low wages and salaries in Egypt compared to Europe, bad living conditions, and the lack of job opportunities in Egypt, especially among fresh graduates. At the time of the fieldwork about 40 percent of the interviewees were not engaged in any work for cash. This is not a precise measure of unemployment but it reflects the degree of unrest among youth for not being engaged in any productive work. Many of those youth are university graduates who failed to find any job opportunity for years after graduation.

The choice of destination country in Europe is not a free choice; it is closely related to the migration networks and linkages between origin and destination which determine the choice of the country of destination in Europe. Migration networks that stimulate migration flows between Egypt and Europe are completely different from migration networks between Egypt and Arab Gulf countries. Migration of Egyptian youth to Europe is managed and activated by family kinship and ties while migration of Egyptians to Arab Gulf countries are usually managed by a set of regulations, certified migration brokers, and many other conditions. Migration to Europe is concentrated in a set of Egyptian villages in specific governorates; each village has its own destination; the two major destinations are Italy and France. So that one may confidently say that migration to these two destinations are operated in a *close market* where new entrants come from the same village or group of adjacent villages. For example, a single village in Fayoum governorate is specialized in sending migrants to Italy while another village in Gharbiya governorate is specialized in sending migrants to France.

Some villages in the Nile Delta shifted their migration directions from the Arab Gulf countries to Italy. Youth in this village claim that migration to the Arab Gulf countries is not beneficial like before and “*working for one year in Italy is better than working ten years in the Gulf*”. The migrant population to Italy from this village is increasing and youth compete to find a way to migrate, legally or illegally. Fieldwork in this village indicated that there are many young males who attempted to migrate to Italy through Libya more than once.

An important factor that plays a major role in stimulating migration streams to Europe is the wealth of successful migrants and return migrants. Remittances of Egyptian migrants who work in European countries are important factors that stimulate a continuous stream of migration. Potential migrants claim that ordinary workers can save an average amount of 6,000 Euro per annum while working abroad (about 40,000 Egyptian Pounds). Potential migrants claim that the “*savings of one-year work in Europe is more than a lifetime salary in Egypt*”. Building luxurious houses in rural Egypt, marriages, and consumerism behaviour of returnees are strong factors that attract new young men to migrate. When youth weigh the risks of illegal migration against the expected returns, they prefer to take the risk for an *assumed* better life.

“Egyptians have the reputation of preferring their own soil. Few ever leave except to study or travel; and they always return ... Egyptians do not emigrate” (Cleland 1936: 36, 52); after 70 years of Cleland’s famous conclusion on Egyptians’ migration behaviour, his conclusions on return are still valid. The results of the study indicate that the vast majority of youth who want to migrate to Europe intend to return to Egypt after a temporary stay in the countries of destination. In spite of the fact that the legal framework for migrants to the Arab Gulf countries is very different to the legal framework in Europe, these findings suggest that the Egyptian migration to Europe is a re-production of the Egyptian migration pattern to the Arab Gulf countries, where young males migrate to achieve specific financial goals and then they return to Egypt.

Egyptian migration to Europe is different from other migration streams that target the same destination: Egyptian migration is mainly male-dominated and temporary labour migration in general, while other streams involve males and females who usually intend to stay in the destination countries in general. Also it is important to note that contemporary Egyptian migration stream to Europe is different from the Egyptian migration stream to the West in the 1960s and early 1970s which was motivated by political unrest, economic pressures, and transition to socialism at that time. Most of Egyptian migrants at that time were highly educated and economically established. Contemporary migrants to the West (to Europe) are

less educated males who suffer poverty and unemployment to the extent that one may call this new stream of migration “*migration of the poor*”.

Regarding youth’s awareness of illegal/irregular migration and their consequences, the results of this study indicated that most of the interviewees are aware of the negative effects of this phenomenon. Youth also know the consequences of illegal migration such as arrest in the migration country, expulsion, arrest in the origin country, fines, as well as hazards in the journey between origin and destination. Many of the youth we interviewed in the focus group discussions experience one or more kinds of these consequences. We interviewed youth who were arrested in Europe and Libya, youth who were about to die in the Mediterranean sea, youth who were returned to Egypt after the failure of their attempt to migrate, and youth who were subject to humiliating experiences in their attempt to enter the “*European Eldorado*”. Graduates with secondary technical certificate and university express intensive frustration at their inability to find work suited to their level of education in their home country. Youth express a high degree of depression and hopeless regarding their current conditions in Egypt given their unemployment status and poverty. These conditions made them prefer taking the risk of illegal migration – including the probability of dying – rather than staying in Egypt without any source of income.

Youth indicated a high degree of awareness of legal migration procedures such as having a valid travel document, visa, work permit, and so on, but they believe that the legal migration route is almost impossible. They believe that they can not comply with the regulation of legal migration to Europe. Many of those who took the short cut to Europe through Libya tried to get visas to Europe but they failed. They claim that this is a valid justification of their illegal attempt to migrate to Europe. Young men in the villages with migrants in Europe witness families who have a relative in Italy becoming richer while their own family situation remains the same with little prospect of improvement. This comparison pushes thousands of Egyptian youth to regard migration as the sole alternative to improve their conditions.

With respect to migration smuggling and the role of migration brokers, the focus group discussions indicated that the Libyan route of migration is the cheapest and the frequently used route. Due to the open borders between Egypt and Libya, Egyptians do not need a visa to get into Libya; they do not even need a valid passport. Egyptians can enter Libya using their Egyptian national identification card only. Daily buses between Cairo and Tripoli are there for an average of LE 100 (about \$17). Mini vans and minibuses from home to home are available from some villages in rural Egypt to specific destinations in Libya, where all passengers belong to one village and in many cases one family.

Migration brokers in Libya have their own agents and mediators in the Egyptian villages. Agents and mediators prepare youth and direct them to specific places in Libya where they are received by the Libyan brokers who keeps them in a big house (called *hawsh*) nearby the coast. In the *hawsh*, Egyptian youth meet people from other nationalities (mainly Sub-Saharan African citizens). Their stay in this *hawsh* may extend to three months until their boat becomes ready to sail. The date and time of departure is set by the brokers. Interviews with youth indicated that the main principal moments at which migrants are at risk of arrest and detention is when trying to leave by boat to Italy. Some migrants were arrested when the Libyan police attacked them at *hawsh* while waiting for the boat to be prepared.

The boat adventure is the most dangerous step towards the European coasts. The boat is manufactured for one-way journey. In order to increase their revenues, brokers always overload their boats. Usually, the driver of the boat is one of the migrants with no past experience in driving boats. The driver is given a compass and told a general direction to follow. As a result, many boats do not go far, often only ending up on the Tunisian coast or drifting in the sea until they are rescued by the Italian, Tunisian or Libyan authorities, depending on where they are found. Many of boats sink before reaching the European coasts. Egyptian youth who went through these experiences are completely aware of the hazards associated with this route to the European coast. At the same time, many of those who experienced these hazards expressed their willingness to take the risk again.

The role of formal/governmental media as a source of information on migration is almost negligible. The vast majority of youth indicated that they do not depend on formal/governmental sources. The main source of information about migration is relatives and friends. The very limited role of governmental agencies, journalism, media, and embassies makes it easy for rumours and falsified information on migration to widespread. Due to the way information about migration is disseminated, it is not a surprise to notice that migration streams to Europe are originated in a network of a group of villages in the Nile Delta and Upper Egypt where family members and relatives help each other in sustaining migration flows and lubricating migration through legal and illegal means. The results also indicated the importance of migration brokers in the process of illegal migration.

SOME POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Building on the experiences of the current stream of Egyptian youth migration to Europe, some policy recommendations may emerge. Since low income and unemployment are the

main push factors that affect migration, and in order to decrease unemployment rates, the government of Egypt should create new job opportunities in the local market through attracting foreign direct investment and the private sector. This should go hand in hand with an emigration-oriented policy and opening new markets for Egyptian labour force. Bilateral agreements between Egypt and European countries regarding labour mobility are important. The quota for Egyptian migrant workers should be negotiated with receiving countries in Europe.

Egypt should make for creating new jobs within the Egyptian economy to decrease irregular migration streams to Europe. If not sufficient jobs opportunities are created in Egypt, a great proportion of the surplus of the Egyptian labour force will be channelled – regularly or irregularly - to labour markets abroad. After the saturation of the labour market in the Arab Gulf countries and the increasing competition that Egyptian labour face in the Gulf due to the increasing number of South East Asian migration to this region, the most feasible destination for Egyptian migration is Europe. Regulating Egyptian migration to Europe should be one of the priorities of the Egyptian government. Job matching schemes and pre-departure training of migrants should be considered.

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