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THE MIGRATORY PATTERNS OF EGYPTIANS IN ITALY AND FRANCE

Ayman Zohry

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**Cooperation project on the social integration
of immigrants, migration, and the movement
of persons**

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Ayman Zohry

CARIM

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN CONSORTIUM FOR APPLIED RESEARCH ON INTERNATIONAL
MIGRATION**

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- Mediterranean migration database;
- Research and publications;
- Meetings of academics;
- Meetings between experts and policy makers;
- Early warning system.

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Abstract

In recent years, a new migration stream from Egypt to Europe, especially to Italy and France, has been observed. In this study, an attempt is made to explore Egyptian migratory patterns in these two countries.

Firstly, migration statistics and estimates of Egyptians abroad vary according to source. The Egyptian estimates are always higher than the receiving countries' estimates and, sometimes, estimates vary from one source to another within one country. These discrepancies in the statistics are explored.

Secondly, a qualitative research project was carried out in Italy and France to learn about the patterns of Egyptian migration in these two countries. Moreover, migration policies and the living and working conditions of Egyptians in these two destinations are explored. Qualitative methods are utilized through the interviewing of 36 Egyptians in Milan and Paris in 2008. Interviewees were identified utilizing the snowball technique. In addition to the in-depth interviews, group discussions and observations were utilized to fulfill the objectives of this study.

After the introductory section, contemporary Egyptian migration is explained in Section II. Section III is devoted to the explanation of the discrepancies between statistics on Egyptian migrants. Section V explores Egyptian migration policies and cooperation on migration. The penultimate section is devoted to the living and working conditions of Egyptians in Milan and Paris, while the last section offers a conclusion.

Résumé

Depuis quelques années, un nouveau mode d'émigration égyptienne vers l'Europe se profile en particulier vers la France et l'Italie. Cette étude constitue une tentative pour explorer les formes de la migration égyptienne vers ces deux pays.

Premièrement, les estimations de nombres d'égyptiens à l'étranger varient selon le pays et la source. Les estimations en Egypte sont plus élevées que celles des pays d'accueil. En outre, les effectifs varient d'une source à l'autre et ces divergences dans les sources ont été examinées.

Deuxièmement, une recherche qualitative a été conduite en Italie et en France pour s'enquérir sur les formes et des modes de la migration égyptienne dans ces deux pays. Ensuite, les politiques migratoires et les conditions du travail et de vie des égyptiens dans ces deux destinations ont été revisités. On a ainsi procédé par des méthodes qualitatives pour interviewer 36 migrants égyptiens à Milan et à Paris en 2008. Les interviewés ont été identifiés par la méthode « boule de neige ». Entretiens approfondis, groupes de discussion et observations figurent parmi les méthodes utilisées pour remplir les objectifs de cette étude.

Après la section introductive, la migration égyptienne contemporaine a été expliquée à la section II. La section III est dédiée à l'explication des divergences entre les statistiques sur les migrants égyptiens. La section IV explore les formes et les profils de la migration égyptienne. La section V s'est focalisée sur les politiques et la coopération en matière des migrations. En avant dernière section, on retrouve les résultats de la recherche exploratoire sur les conditions de travail et de vie des égyptiens à Paris et Milan pour déboucher sur la section conclusive.

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I. Introduction

Over the last four decades, two distinct destinations have emerged for Egyptian migrants. Emigrants have moved to the Arab Gulf countries, especially after the 1973 oil crisis, benefiting from the need for foreign labour in these countries for large-scale development plans and projects. Then, since the 1960s, growing numbers have also migrated to Europe, North America and Australia with the intention of staying permanently in the destination countries. In recent years, a new migration stream from Egypt to Europe, especially to Italy and France, has been observable. Most Egyptian migrants to Italy and France are irregular. Migration statistics and the estimates of Egyptians abroad vary according to source. However, the Egyptian estimates are always higher than the receiving countries' estimates. Moreover, Egyptian estimates vary from one source to another which makes it difficult to make an accurate estimate of the number of Egyptians abroad.

I.1 Objectives of the study

In this study, an attempt is made to explore Egyptian migratory patterns in Italy and France. The discrepancies that may exist between, on the one hand, the numbers of Egyptian migrants provided by the official statistics of these two host countries and, on the other hand, Egyptian statistics that show higher numbers are explored. In addition, a qualitative research project was carried out in Italy and France with a significant number of Egyptians to learn about the patterns of migration in these two countries. Moreover, migration policies and the living and working conditions of Egyptians in these two destinations are explored.

I.2 Methodology and fieldwork

Quantitative and qualitative measures are utilized to fulfill the objectives of this study. Quantitative measures are used to explore the statistical discrepancies in estimating numbers of Egyptians abroad and the two countries of destination specified in this study (Italy and France). Qualitative methods are utilized through the interviewing of 36 Egyptians, 17 in Milan, Italy and 19 in Paris, France (See Appendix I for interview guidelines). Names and addresses of interviewees were obtained from the researcher's contacts in Egypt while utilizing the snowball technique abroad. In addition to the 36 in-depth interviews, group discussions and observations were utilized to fulfill the objectives of this study. Given the fact that the contact names came from different regions, and in order to decrease the bias of the snowball technique (cluster effect) several entries (starting individuals of the snowball method) into the population were selected independently from one another. The field work took place in Paris, 13-21 October 2008 and in Milan, 27 October-3 November 2008.

The background characteristics of respondents are presented by destination in Table 1 below. The mean age of respondents in France is higher than in Italy (36.6 years for France vs. 33.3 years in Italy) with an overall mean age of 35 years. With respect to education, most respondents in both countries have a vocational secondary degree (commercial, industrial, and agricultural certificates). With respect to the migrants' governorate of origin most Egyptian migrants interviewed in Italy are from the Fayoum and Dakahlyia governorates, while most migrants interviewed in France are from the Gharbyia and Menoufyia governorates. Most migrants interviewed came from Lower Egypt (Delta) governorates; with only one migrant is from an Upper Egyptian governorate (Souhag).

Table 1 - Background characteristics of respondents by destination

Background Characteristics	Destination		Total
	Italy	France	
-30	10 (58.8%)	7 (36.8%)	17 (47.2%)
30-39	2 (11.8%)	4 (21.1%)	6 (16.7%)
40-49	3 (17.6%)	7 (36.8%)	10 (27.8%)
50-59	2 (11.8%)	1 (5.3%)	3 (8.3%)
Total	17 (100.0%)	19 (100.0%)	36 (100.0%)
Mean Age (years)	33.3	36.6	35.0
Below Secondary	1 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.8%)
Secondary (Vocational)	12 (70.6%)	15 (78.9%)	27 (75.0%)
University	4 (23.5%)	4 (21.1%)	8 (22.2%)
Total	17 (100.0%)	19 (100.0%)	36 (100.0%)
Governorate of Origin			
Alexandria	1 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.8%)
Behera	0 (0.0%)	3 (15.8%)	3 (8.3%)
Dakahlyia	4 (23.5%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (11.1%)
Fayoum	7 (41.2%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (19.4%)
Gharbyia	1 (5.9%)	9 (47.4%)	10 (27.8%)
Menoufiya	1 (5.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (2.8%)
Menoufyia	1 (5.9%)	6 (31.6%)	7 (19.4%)
Sharkyia	2 (11.8%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (5.6%)
Souhag	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.3%)	1 (2.8%)
Total	17 (100.0%)	19 (100.0%)	36 (100.0%)

I.3 Organization of the study

After this introductory section, contemporary Egyptian migration is explained in Section II. Section III is devoted to the explanation of the discrepancies between Egyptian migration statistics and receiving countries' statistics on Egyptian migrants. Section V explores Egyptian migration policies and cooperation on migration. The penultimate section is devoted to the living and working conditions of Egyptians in Milan and Paris, while the last section offers a conclusion.

II. Contemporary Egyptian Migration

“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, with few exceptions, the case until the middle of the twentieth century. 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 the 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 c. 370,000 as part of c. 655,000 total migrants (Brinks and Sinclair 1980). By 1980 more than one million Egyptians were working abroad. This number had more than doubled by 1986 with an estimated 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 proportion 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 Egyptian workers were employed abroad (Farrag, 1999). 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 started in 1979 and forced the Arab Gulf oil industry into a recession, which cost 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 (Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, 2003; Zohry 2005).

The majority of Egyptian labour migrants are expected to return home eventually, but thousands also left their country each year with the intention of permanently resettling in Europe, Australia, or North America. Some of these emigrants were highly-educated professionals, including doctors, engineers, teachers and professionals. The number of Egyptians abroad was estimated at approximately 3.9 million in 2006 (CAPMAS 2008). According to the Egyptian consular offices and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the number of Egyptians abroad in the same year (2006) was 4.7 million. Both numbers have a margin of error; the CAPMAS number – 3.9 million – was arrived at with an indirect method through questions to non-migrant respondents in Egypt. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' estimates depend on consular records which are incomplete because not all Egyptians abroad – especially irregular migrants – register in Egyptian consulates.

II.1 Egyptian Migration to Europe

Egyptian migration to Europe started about two hundred years ago in the early nineteenth century, after 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 establish a strong Egyptian army, based on the European standards of that time. Since then, there has always been a channel of communication between Egypt and Europe. Europeans migrated to Egypt and they formed successful minorities in

Alexandria and Cairo that survived until the 1950s.¹ The economic pressures and the transition to socialism in the Nasser era led many European Egyptians – individuals with European ancestry and Egyptian nationality, in addition to those with dual nationality – to migrate to Europe. In addition, Egyptians started to migrate to the West in the 1960s. Active and successful Egyptians live at present in most of the large European metropolitan areas.

From the beginning of the 1960s, political, economic, and social developments led some Egyptians to migrate to North America and European countries. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' estimates based on consular records, the total number of Egyptian migrants in non-Arab countries is about 1.4 million comprising about 29% of the total number of Egyptians residing abroad. According to the same source, the total number of Egyptians in Europe is more than half a million. About 80% of Egyptians in Europe are concentrated in three countries; Italy (210,000 Egyptians, 41.1%), The United Kingdom (74,764 Egyptians, 14.6%), France (70,000 Egyptians, 13.7%), and Greece (50,000 Egyptians, 9.8%). See Tables 2 and 3 for more details.

Table 2 - Egyptian Abroad by major receiving areas (Circa 2006)

Region	Country	Number	Total	Percent
Arab Countries	KSA	1,350,000	3,346,859	70.8
	Libya	950,000		
	Jordan	500,000		
	Kuwait	250,000		
	UAE	160,000		
	Oman	40,000		
	Other Countries	96,859		
Europe			510,828	10.8
North America	USA	635,000	776,000	16.4
	Canada	141,000		
Oceania	Australia	80,350	83,350	1.7
	New Zealand	3,000		
Other Countries			10,359	0.3
Total			4,727,396	100.0

Source: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration

¹ Mainly Italians and Greeks.

Table 3 - Egyptians in Europe (Circa 2006)

Country	Number	Percent
Italy	210,000	41.1
UK	74,764	14.6
France	70,000	13.7
Greece	50,000	9.8
Germany	40,265	7.9
Netherlands	20,000	3.9
Austria	20,000	3.9
Switzerland	12,000	2.3
Sweden	3,510	0.7
Denmark	2,000	0.4
Cyprus	2,000	0.4
Spain	1,000	0.2
Belgium	1,000	0.2
Other European Countries	4,339	0.8
Total	510,878	100.0

Source: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration

Egyptians in the West are perceived as being better educated than migrants to the Arab Gulf. Their migration is family-natured, and they comprise a sort of a brain drain for Egypt. They include Egyptians who were sent by the Egyptian government to study abroad but who 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 group of businessmen. But there is too a number of unskilled workers in the construction and retail sectors.

Egyptian networks in Europe are well-established. For example, Egyptian medical doctors have established their own society (the 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). Egyptians in Italy founded what is called the “Italy-Egypt Cultural Association” and they lobby to support the introduction of Arabic language courses in Italian public schools (Stocchiero, 2005).

II.2 Irregular Egyptian Migration to Europe

The irregular migration of Egyptians to Europe is driven by complex factors, including unemployment and the lack of livelihood opportunities, not to mention the demand for cheap labour in destination countries and the lack of regular migration opportunities. Irregular migration is then facilitated by criminal networks that profit from migrant smuggling (Roman, 2008). Statistically speaking and due to the clandestine nature of this movement of people, figures of the numbers involved are difficult to come by. Although the governments of sending countries set measures to stop irregular migration, they cannot eradicate it. Similarly, the governments of host countries in Europe cannot stop the movement of irregular migration due to the complicated nature of this phenomenon and its linkage to policy and socio-economic conditions in the sending and receiving countries.

The current stream of Egyptian irregular migration to Europe started in the 1990s and has increased in the last decade with thousands of fresh graduates and poorly-educated unemployed youth engaged in irregular migration to Europe either across the Mediterranean via Libya or through overstaying on tourist Schengen visas (Zohry, 2006). The main reasons behind this new type of migration are not

related to the tightened policy adopted by the European community, but rather to high unemployment rates among young Egyptians. There is particularly the difficulty these young Egyptians experience in finding employment opportunities in the Arab Gulf due to the competition that they face there from cheap South East Asian labour, and the geographical proximity of Egypt and Europe and the ease of travelling to Libya where most of the boat journeys to Europe begin (Zohry, 2006).

A survey that was carried out in 1996 in Egypt as part of the “Push and Pull Factors on Migration” (Eurostat, 2000a & 2000b) indicates that Egyptian non-migrants and return migrants would prefer to migrate to an Arab country, Saudi Arabia being the favourite destination (40.0%), compared to only 6% who would prefer to migrate to a European country. A recent survey carried out by the European Training Foundation (ETF) indicates a shift in preferred destination among young Egyptians. The survey reveals that 33.7% of the surveyed population, who expressed a desire to migrate, would prefer to migrate to a European country, compared to 61.9% who would prefer to migrate to an Arab country (ETF, 2007).

III. Explanation of the discrepancies in migration statistics

Though it is extremely difficult to infer migration flows from existing data, some conclusions can be drawn from census returns, register data, consular office statistics, and other sources in the main destination countries in Europe. In absolute numbers, Italy has attracted the largest share of this migration, followed by Germany, the United Kingdom, and France. This growing flow of Egyptian migrants to Western destinations is consistent with the stagnation or even reduction of migration flow towards the Arab Gulf. According to OECD data on Egyptians in Italy and France c. 2000 (Table 4), it is clear that Egyptian migration to these two countries is gender imbalanced with females comprising 38.5% and 36.1% respectively in Italy and France. If we assume that established migrants have a balanced gender composition, the estimated percentage of single males will be 23.0% in France and 27.8% in Italy. Due to the increasing number of irregular migrants to Italy and France in the last few years one might reasonably expect that the percentage of single males among Egyptians in these two countries has increased.

Table 4 Number and gender of Egyptian immigrants to Italy and France (c. 2000)

Country of residence	Males	Females	Total
France	12,962 61.5%	8,107 38.5%	21,069 100,0%
Italy	20,667 63.9%	11,676 36.1%	32,343 100,0%

Source: Data extracted on 2008/07/24 15:34 from OECD Statistical database

As shown in Table 5, it is clear that the discrepancies between the estimates of Egyptians in Italy and France according to the Egyptian statistics and the statistics of destination countries are high. In addition, and due to the increasing number of migrants from Egypt to these two destination countries, the discrepancies are increasing. While the relative difference between the estimates of Egyptian migrants in Italy was 178% in 2000, this difference increased to 220% in 2006. It is, however, striking that the difference between the estimates of the number of Egyptians in France between Egypt and France is less than the difference in the case of Italy.

The discrepancies that exist between, on the one hand, the numbers of Egyptian migrants in the official statistics of these two countries and, on the other, Egyptian statistics, which show higher numbers of Egyptian nationals, can largely be attributed to two factors:

1. The naturalization of Egyptians abroad and the fact that these Egyptians are counted as nationals in the statistics of the receiving countries, while they are counted as Egyptians in the Egyptian statistics.
2. Irregular migration and the inability of receiving countries to count them due to the clandestine nature of this phenomenon.

Taking into account differences in the definition of a migrant, irregular migration, nationality acquisition in destination countries and other sources of error, it is clear that the estimates by Egyptian consulates are closer to reality than the estimates of destination countries. However, CAPMAS and data from consular records are not a result of actual statistical data processing, but rather of estimates made from indirect methods (CAPMAS Census data) and consular records of Egyptian consulates abroad (consular records). As noted by Fargues (2005), the main limitation of data on migrants provided by consular records is their voluntary nature. Individual migrants are free to register their arrival and cancel their registration upon departure. In addition, not all migrants register. Moreover, migrants often fail to indicate any subsequent migration, so that, migrants may move to a third country without notifying their consulates. Also, irregular migrants tend not to register in consulates so as to remain 'in order' with their home country's authorities. In addition, and as also mentioned by Fargues (2005), many biases affect the reliability of data provided by host countries due to naturalization and irregular migration. Many biases also arise in the migration statistics provided by origin countries.

Table 5 - Number of Egyptian emigrants according to the statistics of origin and destination countries (circa 2000 and 2006)

Country of Destination	Year of Estimation	Country where migrants are counted			
		Country of Destination	Country of Origin	Difference (Origin – destination)	
				Value	%
France	2000	21,069	36,000	14,931	71%
	2006	NA	70,000		
Italy	2000	32,343	90,000	57,657	178%
	2006	65,700	210,000	144,300	220%

Source:

Source of country of destination data:

2000 country of destination data: data extracted on 2008/11/24 15:34 from OECD Statistical database

2006 Italy destination data: OECD 2008. International Migration Outlook: Annual Report 2008 Edition, OECD.

Source of origin country data:

2000: Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS)

2006: Estimates of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

IV. Patterns of Egyptian Migration

Among Egyptian migrants in Europe, one can identify two major groups; established migrants, and contemporary (recent) migrants. In this section, I explore Egyptian migratory patterns in Europe and, more particularly, modes of entry into Italy and France.

IV.1 Established Migrants

By established migrants I mean those who migrated in the 1960s and early 1970s. This stream of Egyptian migrants to the West was a silent protest against the socialist regime led by Nasser and the nationalization of the main sectors of the economy at that time, which affected the private sector. In addition to this anti-socialist stream, there was another stream of migration including academics and the political opposition, Egyptians who preferred to stay in the West. Established migrants include

other categories such as students who were sent to Europe in government missions for graduate studies and stayed in destination countries after the completion of their graduate programs.

It is important to note that among European countries, the UK and France were the most attractive countries for the Egyptian elites, who afterward became established migrants. Under President Sadat, many opposition think tanks and journalists escaped the regime and established or joined Arabic journalist organizations in London and Paris. In addition to the thousands of Egyptian professionals who migrated and established new lives in the United Kingdom and France, many legendary Egyptians chose to live and work in the diaspora such as the Egyptian philosopher Abdul Rahman Badawi (1917 – 2002), the Francophone novelist Albir Qosiri (1913-2008), the Egyptian poet Ahmed Abdel Moaty Hegazy (1935-), and the Egyptian artist George Bahjouri (1932-). However, the last two decades have seen the return of many established migrants such as Sherif Elshoubashi, Said El-lawendi, Ahmed Abdel Moaty Hegazy, Mahmoud Emar, and George Bahjouri.

A sketchy comparison between established migrants in Milan and Paris suggests that established Egyptian migrants in Paris are more educated than their counterparts in Milan. This may be attributed – in part – Egyptian perceptions regarding Milan and Paris; with Milan being regarded as the commercial and financial capital of Italy while Paris is regarded as a capital of culture and innovation. Moreover, more Egyptians speak French than speak Italian. This classification stimulated two different migration streams; academics and professionals to Paris, and businessmen and skilled workers to Milan. After lifting the last barriers to migration in 1975, the stream of Egyptian migration to the West slowed, while migration to the Arab oil-producing countries peaked in the late 1970s and the 1980s.

IV.2 Contemporary Migration

By contemporary migration, I mean migration that occurred in the last 15-20 years. Generally speaking, contemporary migration is dominated by unskilled irregular, male migrants who managed to build a migration network that constantly brings new migrants to Europe. This new migration stream is associated with the competition that Egyptian migrants face there due to the increasing number of cheap South East Asian labour and the end of Egyptian migration to Iraq by the end of Iran-Iraq war in 1988, the first Gulf War of 1990-91, and, afterwards, the American occupation. Due to the male-dominated nature of the current migration stream from Egypt to Europe, it can be regarded as a reproduction of the Egyptian migration experience in the Arab Gulf countries, where young males migrate to achieve specific financial goals before returning to Egypt. Hence, Egyptian migration to Europe is different from other migration streams that target Europe; Egyptian migration to Europe is male-dominated and temporary labor migration in general, while other migration streams to the same destinations involve males and females who are more inclined to stay in the destination countries (Zohry, 2006).

Figure 1 below summarizes the typology and frequency of contemporary Egyptian migration to Italy and France. The figure indicates that there are two types of work; regular and irregular interacting with two types of entry; regular and irregular also. Hence one can pick out four types of contemporary Egyptian migration to Italy and France;

1. Regular entry and regular work which is rare,
2. Irregular entry but regular work which is virtually inexistent,
3. Irregular entry and irregular work which is very common, and
4. Regular entry but irregular work which is common.
5. Below is an illustration of each of these types.

Figure 1 - Typology and frequency of contemporary Egyptian migration to Italy and France

	Regular Entry	Irregular Entry
Regular Work	Rare	Extremely Rare
Irregular Work	Common	Frequent

1) Regular entry and regular work:

Other than for the established migrants who migrated early in the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s, the option of regular entry and regular work is rarely now available since it attracts highly-skilled migrants. Only one Egyptian representing this type of migration, Dr. I. A., was interviewed (in Italy), a migrant who had worked in Egypt as an expert in medical sciences. Last year he accepted an offer to work for an international pharmaceutical company based in Italy. Dr. I. A. lives alone in Italy, but he intends to bring his family from Egypt to live with him.

2) Irregular entry but regular work:

Irregular entry with regular work is almost non-existent since it is as good as impossible to arrange. However, many of those who entered Italy and France irregularly in the past managed to regularize their stay and managed to obtain permanent residence permits so that it was possible for some of them to work regularly afterward. The regularization occurs by different means: marriage; the obtaining of work contracts; or through government actions in regularizing irregular migration. Despite the restrictions and obstacles set by the host country, marriage of a citizen of the host country is a common strategy for those who seek naturalization. This naturalization marriage is termed “White Marriage” since it is usually a document-based marriage and does not involve cohabitation and family formation. Young males who choose this option usually marry host country nationals with a large age gap between spouses. They also prefer to marry second generation brides, originally from Maghreb (Tunisia, Algeria, or Morocco). The migrant bridegroom usually pays monthly fees to his bride until he gets a permanent residence. Few of these marriages result in family formation. Out of the Egyptian migrants in France who were interviewed in this study only two got married to French women with Maghreban origins to facilitate permanent residence. One of these marriages resulted in family formation in France, while the other marriage ended in separation.

Finding a work opportunity is another way to obtain a residence visa, especially in Italy. Established Egyptian migrants in Italy help their relatives get residence visas by offering them job opportunities in their ventures. Host country governmental actions are also important in regularizing job opportunities. But these actions are applied in the case of Italy only. In 1997 and 2002 the government of Italy regulated the status of thousands of irregular migrants including Egyptians. Right before the years of generalized regularization in Italy, thousands of Egyptians migrated to Italy, not only from Egypt but also from other European countries to benefit from the generalized regularization. However, the regularization action in 2002 will be the last of its kind since the European Union’s new immigration pact calls for case-by-case regularization, rather than generalized regularization (European Policy Centre, 2008; Ministry for Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and Co-development, 2008).

Despite the fact that generalized regularization is no longer possible, many Egyptians in Italy are still waiting for host country action to regularize their status as they are not yet aware of the changed circumstances.

3) Irregular entry and irregular work

Irregular entry and irregular work is the most common mode of Egyptian migration into Italy and France. This category is a preliminary step that might lead to the previous category (irregular entry and regular work). This category can then be regarded as an earlier stage of a migrant's life cycle, before regularization. In the last two decades, thousands of Egyptians managed to migrate to Italy and France irregularly either through the sea route from Libya to Italy or through the eastern borders of the European Union via Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, or through Bulgaria and Romania before these two countries joined the European Union in January 2007.

The in-depth interviews with Egyptian migrants in Italy and France indicate two groups of migrants with two patterns of entry into the European Union; the first group follows the Egypt-Libya-Italy route via migration brokers who facilitate their migration in boats across the Mediterranean; and the second group migrates by crossing the eastern borders of the European Union with the assistance of migrants brokers and smugglers. The cost of the sea route is almost the same as the cost of crossing the eastern borders of the European Union: 15 to 25 thousand Egyptian Pounds. It is important here to indicate that these sums are for facilitating entry to the destination countries; they do not include any other services such as help with the labor market. Migrants on all of the routes know where to go when they enter the destination country. They go directly to their friends and relatives who help them settle and introduce them to the labor market.

4) Regular entry but irregular work

Regular entry but irregular work is the second most common mode of Egyptian migration into Italy and France following on from irregular entry through Libya to the coasts of Italy or entry through the eastern borders of the Schengen zone. Thousands of Egyptians who managed to secure a "visit visa" – for tourism or business – overstay their visa to work illegally in France or Italy, assisted by a widespread network of relatives, friends or persons from their own home districts in Egypt. However, this option is more expensive than irregular entry since the cost of securing a Schengen visa is usually three-times the cost of the irregular route through Libya or the eastern borders of the Schengen Zone. The cost of the Schengen visa is associated though with safety: a valid visa means that a migrant gets into the Schengen zone by airplane rather than through a hazardous Mediterranean Sea journey. The cost of the Schengen visa is about 70 thousand Egyptian Pounds. Hence, one can confidently state that the sea route and the roundabout route through the eastern borders of the European Union are the methods of choice for relatively poor migrants.

Within this category it might be possible to find some people who do not overstay their visas, but simply move back and forth between Egypt and Europe for short periods of irregular work in Europe with a regular (tourist) visa. However, due to the fact that getting a visa to Italy or France from Egypt is both difficult and expensive, those who get visas for the purposes of migration, usually overstay their visa to work in Europe. Hence the rarity of Egyptian migrants using tourist visas for work. Certainly I did not come across any examples in my fieldwork.

V. Migration policies and cooperation on migration

What are the Egyptian government's policies regarding international migration? Are there any initiatives regarding the regularization of migration with concerned countries and regions? An attempt is made in this section to answer these two questions.

V.1 Migration Policies and Laws

Migration Laws

The promulgation of the Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law no. 111 of 1983 is regarded as the main migration law in Egypt². The law consists of five chapters that cover general provisions applicable to all migrants, duration of stay abroad and rights of migrants (temporary versus permanent stay abroad), and privileges of migrants and return migrants. The law indicates that migrants' capital utilized in investment projects in Egypt is to be granted the same advantages granted to foreign capital. In general, the Egyptian Emigration Law has two objectives:

- To arrange both permanent and temporary emigration; the law secures, in fact, the right of any individual to emigrate in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. It also outlines the rules and procedures to be followed in order to emigrate.
- To outline the provisions providing the necessary care to Egyptian emigrants before their actual departure from Egypt or after their arrival in host countries as well as to those who decide to return. The goal here is to maintain strong ties with Egyptians abroad.

The Egyptian Emigration Law is perceived as the practical formulation of the Egyptian government's tendency to free up people's movement associated with the implementation of the "open door" economic policy. However, while this law allowed Egyptians to move and to migrate abroad more freely, articles relating to investment in Egypt and attracting established Egyptian migrants abroad and return migrants to invest in Egypt need to be reinforced. This will help create new jobs in Egypt through migrants' and return migrants' investment in their home country.

Migration policies

Other than the Law number 111, a single, formal document on migration policy in Egypt does not exist. However, Egyptian migration policy has five general aims:

1. Encouraging emigration to ensure equilibrium in the domestic labor market;
2. Fighting illegal migration;
3. Maximizing the economic benefits of migration and increasing migrants' remittances;
4. Ensuring the welfare of emigrants; and
5. Meeting labor demand in receiving countries.

These five points can be inferred from the policies and acts of the government and verbal statements by policy makers. Also, in practice, Egypt has no concrete policies or programs to tap into global demand for labor (through there are diversified migration, channels, or special migration programs). Pre-departure orientation (language/culture) and skills training for migrants do not exist though, they are clearly described in Article No. 5 of the Migration Law No. 111.

One may safely say that the government of Egypt has implemented the emigration law in a way that facilitates migration and that eases people's movement after a period of restriction, rather than by regulating migration in a way that maximizes benefits through pre-departure training for example.

V.2 Migration management and cooperation on migration

With respect to migration policies and laws, these cannot be separated from their legislative and implementing bodies, the authorities and entities. Several ministries and authorities are responsible for legislating, analyzing and organizing migration issues. The main authorities include:

² The Emigration and Sponsoring Egyptians Abroad Law no. 111 is basically for Egyptian migrants abroad. It does not include anything about migration to Egypt for refugees or foreign workers.

1. The Higher Committee for Migration
2. The Ministry of Manpower and Emigration
3. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and
4. The Ministry of the Interior.

A brief description of these entities and their competencies is given below.

The Higher Committee for Migration (HCM)

The Higher Committee for Migration was formed by Resolution no. 2000 of 1997, and incorporates all the main entities concerned with migration. Article 4 of the Emigration law states that a Higher Committee for Migration will be set up and headed by the Minister concerned with emigration affairs – currently the Minister of Manpower and Emigration. The membership of the said committee includes representatives of the ministries and entities concerned with migration. Based on this article, the Prime Minister Resolution No. 2000 of 1997 was issued for the purpose of setting up the Higher Committee for Migration, which is headed by the Minister of Manpower and Emigration in his/her capacity as the Minister concerned with emigration affairs.

The competences of the Higher Committee for Migration include considering the establishment of professional training centers for potential migrants, the organization of specialized courses for the purpose of qualifying potential migrants and also discussion of any facilitations to be granted to migrants, whether before their departure or during their stay abroad or after temporary or permanently returning to their homeland. The Higher Committee for Migration should be convened at least once every three months, upon the request of its chairman (the Minister of Manpower and Emigration). The committee may also set up other secondary committees from among its members or other members to study the issues put forward.

Despite the fact that HCR should meet at least once every three months, on the request of its chairman, HCR does not, in fact, meet regularly and most of the tasks of the HCM were not carried out, particularly the establishment of professional training centers for potential migrants. The current Minister of Manpower and Emigration, Mrs. Aisha Abdelhadi, gives more attention to the activation of the HCR as an important policy and coordination mechanism.

Ministry of Manpower and Emigration (Emigration Sector)

The post of Minister of State for Emigration Affairs and Egyptians Abroad was created in 1981 by the Presidential Decree No. 574 and was enacted to define the responsibilities of the Minister. The Presidential Decree No. 165 of 1996 transferred the responsibilities of the Ministry of State for Emigration Affairs to the Ministry of Manpower and Employment (currently, the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration).

The current strategy of the Emigration Sector focuses on two dimensions; first, developing work systems by introducing new technologies to establish an updated Egyptian Migration database that includes job opportunities abroad as well as numbers and statistics, and a computerized system through the Internet to link Egyptians abroad to their homeland. The second dimension of the Emigration Sector strategy is to reinforce the role of the “Union of Egyptians Abroad” and other civil society organizations that represent Egyptians outside the homeland.

The Emigration Sector is dependent on projects funded and supported by foreign governments and international organizations; for example, the establishment of the Migration Information System is part of the Integrated Migration Information System project (IMIS) project, and a national survey on “the Attitudes of Egyptian Youth towards Migration to Europe” was carried out by Information

Dissemination for the Prevention of Irregular Migration from Egypt (IDOM)³. Both were funded by the Italian Government.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Egyptian embassies and consulates provide Egyptian citizens abroad with an array of services such as:

- Free registration in the consulates' records during the first six months of their stay abroad.
- Repatriation of families in case of emergency.
- Renewal of passports and other documents.
- The authentication of formal documents.
- The recording of civil events such as birth, death, divorce, and marriage.

The Ministry aims to protect legal migrants from racial discrimination, and guarantee the rights and dignity of the Egyptian community abroad, in full respect of the laws of host countries. The Ministry cooperates with different bodies to fight the illegal migration of Egyptians through joint technical, security, judicial, and legislative mechanisms.

Ministerial Decree No. 121 was issued in 1969, whereby this Ministry established a division responsible for coordinating with other government bodies in order to facilitate the migration process and to undertake studies that could enhance policies.

The Ministry of the Interior

The Ministry of the Interior grants work permits to temporary Egyptian migrants prior to their departure, as well as keeping records of all passengers who cross the Egyptian borders through its control points at airports, ports, and land points. The Ministry of the Interior controls migration from/to Egypt and regulates non-nationals' residence in Egypt. The Ministry of the Interior works in cooperation with other ministries such as Foreign Affairs, Education, and Labor. With respect to irregular migration, the Ministry of the Interior cooperates with all relevant organizations and institutions in order to reduce illegal migration from/through Egypt.

V.3 Regional and bilateral cooperation on migration

Regional and bilateral cooperation on migration in Egypt depends on other parties and key international players rather than the Egyptian government alone. Two examples of bilateral cooperation on migration are: “the Integrated Migration Information System” and “the Information Dissemination for the Prevention of Irregular Migration from Egypt” projects. The institutional frameworks of these projects are based on cooperation between the Italian Government as a funding agency, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as the provider of technical support, and the Emigration Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration through which the projects are implemented. A brief description of the two projects is given below.

Integrated Migration Information System project (IMIS)

The Integrated Migration Information System project (IMIS) started on the 22nd of June 2001 and is the result of a joint project between the Emigration Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, the Italian Government as the donor partner and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as the implementing agency. IMIS is a technical tool and a capacity building mechanism that supports the Emigration Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration in the

³ The IDOM project is implemented by the Emigration Sector with technical support from IOM to reduce, using information dissemination, the volume of irregular migration from Egypt.

management of regular migration flows from Egypt, improving Egyptian migrants' social status in receiving countries and channeling human and financial resources resulting from migration.

The setting up and launching of a website for *job opportunities* abroad and the creation of a *portal for Egyptian migrants* represent the main outputs of the project. The web site is tailored to provide services to employers abroad and Egyptian job seekers. It furnishes an automatic job matchmaking system that takes supply and demand into account.

It is important to highlight that the job matchmaking system does not create a binding relationship between the employers and the potential candidate. Foreign employers reserve the right to choose employees according to their recruitment needs. In addition to the job seekers' roster, the website provides users with practical and comprehensive information concerning the receiving countries (mainly western European). This set of information is gathered in a module called "Misriat". Currently "Misriat" contains information about France, Italy, Norway, and Spain. In the near future, the project aims to expand the "Misriat" module to other potential countries of emigration. Moreover, by using Italy as a pilot case study, the project endorses an awareness campaign for entrepreneurs in need of employees.

The portal for Egyptians abroad is a tool provided by the Egyptian Government to reinforce relationships between the Egyptian Diaspora and the home country. The system is a pilot scheme that aims for self-sustainability. As a matter of fact, the job matchmaking mechanism represents a practical example of the applicability of the system. Full deployment of the system would require the planning and implementation of *ad hoc* projects. Likewise, the Italian case study is a testing ground, the outputs of which will determine the development of an *ad hoc* project for the application of the mechanism at a national level in Italy and other countries. The International Organization for Migration, in full cooperation with the Egyptian Government, implemented the project by providing capacity building. The IMIS project helps as a mechanism for capacity building in the Emigration Sector as well as offering a policy-making tool.

Within this system, 170,000 applied via the internet portal. Out of this number, 1,500 were selected for individual interviews for jobs.⁴ Out of the selected candidates, only 200 passed the practical test that took place in a vocational training center in Cairo. The selected candidates were enrolled in an Italian language course for three months, and 178 were selected to work in Italy. Despite the poor results achieved by the IMIS project, IMIS can be considered as a learning experience that indicates the need for training programs for potential migrants to match the needs of the EU countries' economies, as well as the local needs of the Egyptian economy. In addition, the IMIS project's experience is replicable and the Egyptian government should seek other partners in Europe.

Although there are more than 1,200 vocational training centers in Egypt, the scarcity of skilled labor is still striking. So much so that it is important to restructure the educational and training systems to match the demand of the labor market, internally and externally. The cooperation between entrepreneurial sectors and schools is a key to improving the competitiveness of Egyptian labor (Roman, 2008).

Information Dissemination for the Prevention of Irregular Migration from Egypt

The International Organization for Migration, the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, the Emigration and Egyptians Abroad Sector, and the Italian government have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the implementation of the "Information Dissemination for the Prevention of Irregular Migration from the Arab Republic of Egypt" project (IDOM).

This project aims to limit irregular migration and to reduce its risks. Through the provision of information, it aims to positively influence the choices of potential Egyptian migrants and to let them

⁴ Italian industry was looking for machine operators (drivers), assistant cooks, cooks, engineers, system developers, and construction workers.

achieve a better understanding of migration realities (Ministry of Manpower and Emigration, 2007). The Emigration and Egyptians Abroad Sector of the Ministry of Manpower and Emigration cooperates with IOM in defining the profile of irregular Egyptian migrants and in raising awareness about the realities and risks of irregular migration including migrant trafficking. With this project IOM aims to assist the Government of Egypt in developing specific means of information through the cooperation of institutional, non-institutional and media counterparts in order to reach potential target groups and influence their perception of migration realities. A mass Information Campaign combining selected media, the participation of NGOs/Youth groups and the multiple aspects related to irregular migration was launched in 2006/2007. In addition a toll-free number has been set up to provide information on legal migration and the procedures that those who intend to work in Italy should go through.

VI. Living and working conditions of Egyptians in Italy and France

This section draws on fieldwork, in-depth interviews, group meetings, and observation. It seeks to explore the living and working conditions of Egyptians in Milan and Paris. Due to the distinctive nature of the two cities, as well as the varied composition of the Egyptian community, separate subsections are devoted to each city.

V.1 Egyptians in Milan

Wherever you go in Milan, you will hear Egyptians chatting with each other loudly in colloquial Egyptian; they can easily be identified on public transport and many other places in Milan such as via Padova and the nearby Maciachini metro station. Despite the fact that the last King of Egypt, King Farouk I (1921-1965) was exiled to Italy, Italy was not an important destination for those Egyptians who left Egypt due to Nasser's economic and social policies. This may be attributed in part to the fact that, until the early 1970s Italy, sent migrants to other European countries and North America. According to the personal estimates of Mr. M. Mohamed who arrived in Italy in 1978, Egyptians in Milan exceed the estimates of the Egyptian government; Egyptians in Milan alone – according to him – are more than the estimated number of Egyptians in Italy as a whole (210 thousand). *“When I arrived in Italy thirty years ago, there were few Egyptians in Milan. In the 1980s we managed to establish a union for Egyptians in Milan, but this didn't work as the Egyptians here don't work as a group and they individualize everything,”* Mr. Mohamed. M. said.

According to Mr. M. Mohamed and Mr. M. Mahboub, those Egyptians who arrived in Italy in the late 1970s and the 1980s are successful and they are keen to have good relations with each other as well as with the local society. *“The problems of Egyptians in Italy emerged with the increasing numbers of Egyptians who invaded Italy in the 1990s and more recently,”* Mr. Mahboub said. Despite the irregular status of many Egyptians in Milan, Egyptians in general are successful and they work in many professions in construction and the services.

Italian Pizza and Pane but Egyptian bakers:

Egyptian migrants in Milan go to make up a majority of workers in pizzerias and bakery shops. *“The best Italian pizza and bakery products in Milan are produced by Egyptians. They dominate this field of specialization and many of them, if not working as masters in this field, own pizza restaurants and bakery shops,”* Said Mr. M. Mohamed. Egyptians who have managed to secure permanent residence visas own a significant share in this industry and they are keen to employ Egyptians from their home district in this field. *“When any Egyptian secures a residence visa, he starts his own project and in many cases competes with other Egyptians,”* said Mr. M. Mahboub *“When I first arrived in Italy, I spent eight years without papers working as a baker. In 2003, I managed to secure a permanent residence visa. I went directly from the visa office to the airport to see my family after this long time away from them. Now I have my own bakery shop and I have managed to bring my brother from Egypt to work with me,”* Mr. R. S. confirms Mr. Mahboub's conclusion.

Via Padova and Maciachini

The Kharboush Egyptian coffee shop and restaurant at Via Padova in Milan is considered a focal point for Egyptian workers in Milan. The coffee shop is owned and operated by an Egyptian migrant from Alexandria. *Kharboush* is not the only Egyptian or Arab coffee shop here; it is surrounded by many other Egyptian coffee shops, restaurants, Islamic Butcheries, and communication centers offering low price calls to Egypt. Mr. Kharboush is keen to run his business as if he is in Egypt. He does not serve alcoholic beverages in his restaurant and the television in his restaurant broadcasts Egyptian music and movies and Egyptian football. In addition, he has decorated his restaurant with pictures of Egypt and verses from the Quraan. Mr. Kharboush's coffee shop and restaurant provides the well-known Egyptian smoking device, the *shisha* or water pipe.

Maciachini is the main residence of Egyptian workers in Milan. Living alongside Latin American migrants, Egyptians comprise the majority of residents in Maciachini. They live 4-6 persons per room. Occupants of one room or sometimes one apartment often come from the same part of Egypt and, in many cases, work in the same profession. The monthly rate for a bed – the unit used for accommodation – is about 150 Euros. Egyptians who live in Maciachini depend on themselves in preparing cheap Egyptian food and they are keen to save money, money that will be remitted to their families in Egypt. They have also brought with them the *shisha* or Egyptian water pipe and they bring tobacco with them too from Egypt. Irregular migrants and those who have managed to secure permanent residence visa live together. The relation between the residents of Maciachini and Egyptian family migrants is strong since most Egyptian family migrants are the masters and employers of these workers.

The Maciachini zone is full of Egyptian shops that serve Egyptian residents. A couple of shops provide communication services, mobile phones and mobile phone repair and the Arabization of mobile phones, in addition to Egyptian ringtones. Egyptian mini markets are also on hand.

When compared to Egyptians in France, Egyptians in Italy suffer higher rates of unemployment. W. F. (32 years old) who came from a village in the Sharqia governorate more than one year ago is still looking for a job. *"I arrived here 15 months ago after leaving a profitable job in Egypt. I was lured by migrants from my village who managed to remit enough money to change their way of life in my village. They built modern houses and owned modern cars and established a wealthy life there. No one was honest with me and told me about their miserable life here. I lost my job in Egypt and borrowed 20 thousand Egyptian Pounds to come here. So far I have not found a job and I work for few hours every week as a garbage collector. If I don't find a profitable job, it will take me the rest of my life to cover the initial cost of my migration. In addition, I can't return to Egypt before getting the money I borrowed,"* said Mr. W. F.

Wood Floors by Egyptians

According to Mr. M. Mahgoub, an established Egyptian migrant in Milan, the majority of those working in wood floors installment in Milan are Egyptians. M. Mahboub was the first Egyptian to work in this field in Milan in the early 1980s. Nowadays, he manages a very successful business. Many members of Mr. Mahboub's family migrated to Italy and joined this business. Mr. Mahboub's youngest brother owns another company that works in the same field. Attracted by the success and credibility of Mr. Mahboub and his family's business, other Egyptians joined this field. Mr. Mahboub and his family prefer to employ Egyptians and relatives in their business. *"We don't face real competition in our field of specialization, but the problem is that with the increasing number of irregular Egyptian migrants and the increasing number of companies that work in this field the quality of the work in this field of specialization has gone down and the revenues have decreased owing to the entry of new players. But still the good work is rewarding,"* said Mr. Mahboub. Due to the fact that Mr. M. Mahboub is from the Mansoura governorate, located in the Nile Delta, most Egyptians who work in this field are from the same destination.

Egyptian Families and the Second Generation

Building on remote familial ties with some Egyptians in Milan, I managed to visit Egyptian families there. Despite the fact that these families arrived in Italy more than 25 years ago and despite the fact that all of their children were born in Italy, an Egyptian can easily feel at home when visiting them, where everything reminds that visitor of Egypt from their accent and dialect to the taste of the food they offer. In addition, Egyptian families are keen to keep strong ties with their homeland through annual visits to their villages and localities, building or re-furbishing their family houses in Egypt, telephoning Egypt frequently, keeping strong ties with other Egyptians in Milan, and celebrating religious occasions with their relatives and other Egyptian families in Milan.

Egyptians are fully integrated economically into the society where they work and participate in all economic sectors, especially in the field of construction and services. With respect to social integration, Egyptian families are keen to bring up their children according to Egyptian norms and traditions, especially their girls. *“It tests our nerves and is very stressful taking care of our daughters in this open society. We need them to grow up in the Egyptian way,”* said one of the Egyptian mothers in Milan. Sons are freer than girls. They usually have two zones of interest: the world of their Italian friends: and another world related to their Egyptian friends and relatives. But generally speaking, males and females live a sort of dual identity. Young Egyptians who live with their families still listen to Egyptian songs, follow the achievements of Egyptian football teams through Egyptian satellite channels and use Egyptian ringtones on their mobile phones. The language that Egyptian families use at home is a mixture of Arabic and Italian. However, Egyptian families encourage their children to take positions in the public and governmental sectors of the Italian economy and government. *“I feel so happy when I go to a hospital or a public government office and I see an Egyptian doctor or an Egyptian government employee there,”* said Mr. Hussein M., an Egyptian migrant in Milan.

Tatounians in Milan

A strong migration stream exists between the town of Tatoun and Milan. Tatoun is a large village in the Itsa district in the Fayoum governorate, one of the poorest governorates in Egypt. Tatoun's population according to the latest census of 2006 is about 40,000. Tatounians in Milan claim that more than xx thousand of their village's population are migrants in Milan and almost every household in the village has one or more migrant in Italy: most Tatounians migrate to Italy by crossing the Mediterranean via Libya. Tatounians in Milan generally work in construction. Tatounians start thinking and preparing for their migration to Italy right after completing their secondary education in their village, so that migrants from this village are, in general, very young when compared to migrants from other governorates. Like most irregular Egyptian migrants in Milan, Tatounians live on the margin of the society, either to save money to cover the initial cost of migration or to maximize their savings and remittances. Despite the thousands of Tatounians in Milan, they have not developed their businesses in a cooperative way and most of them are still working as individual construction workers.

V.2 Egyptians in Paris

Generally speaking, Egyptians in Paris are better off than their counterparts in Milan. In addition, they do not suffer unemployment like their Italian counterparts. Egyptians in Paris mainly work in two domains; *Le Marché* – Fruit and vegetable markets – and *la peinture* – decorating and interior design. A few others are working in restaurants and services. Mr. Saleh Farhoud, a prominent figure from Mit Badr Halawa village in the Nile Delta and the head of the Egyptian Society in France is one of the major merchants in the fruit and vegetable market. According to the personal estimates of Mr. Farhoud, there are about 150,000 Egyptians in France; and only 10,000 of them are naturalized. Mr. Farhoud indicated that established migrants live in isolation and do not have strong contacts with the new streams of Egyptian migrants.

Mit Badr Halawa

Cent Badr Gâteau is the French translation of Meet Badr Halawa a village mentioned by Mr. Mohamed Zahran, the head of the Association of the Sons of the Gharbiya Governorate in Paris; Meet Badr Halawa is the most important Egyptian sending village to France. Despite the fact that the Association of the Sons of the Gharbiya Governorate is a registered NGO, its offices are exactly the same as any popular coffee shop in Egypt where Egyptians gather to chat, drink tea, and smoke shisha after a hectic day of work or while waiting for work opportunities through the coffee shop's network. This coffee shop is not limited to the "Sons of Gharbiya Governorate" or the Badrawiya – the natives of Meet Badr Halawa. Rather it is considered as a focal point for many Egyptians in Paris. Mr. Saleh Farhoud, the head of the Egyptian Society in Paris estimates the number of Badrawiya in Paris at about 6,000; more than 25% of the residents of this village according to the 2006 population Census (about 22,000 inhabitants). Mr. Farhoud himself employs many Badrawyas in his business. Mr. Farhoud claims that of the 6,000 Badrawyas there are at least 100 successful businessmen who work in the Fruit and vegetable market and decorating and construction.

The contributions of Meet Badr Halawa's workers in Paris to their Egyptian home are documented in Saad (2005 and 2007). In her study on Egyptian workers in Paris, Saad indicates that the development impact of migrants from Meet Badr Halawa is critical in their village; the most important of which is the establishment of a sewage system, in addition to a school, and a health unit. Indeed, the previous Mayor of the village used to make special trips to Paris in order to collect money from the migrants for these matters.

La peinture ou le marché

Decorating (*la peinture*) or the fruit and vegetable markets (*le marché*) are the main careers for Egyptians in Paris. Those who started their work as vendors in the weekly fruit and vegetable markets a few decades ago became the main employers and heads of this profession in Paris. Mr. Farhoud, the head of the Egyptian Society himself started his career in France as a fruit and vegetable vendor in the weekly markets. Many Egyptians who started their career as fruit and vegetable markets subsequently became successful businessmen in that field.

Mastering French is an important asset in career development. According to Mr. Hatem Bedeiwy, who arrived in France in 1992 and who is today owner of a decorating company, many Egyptians lack the ability to communicate successfully in French. Mr Bedeiwy claims that more than 40% of the Egyptians in France cannot communicate in French; they depend on working with French-speaking Egyptians who communicate for them. Mr. Bedeiwy regards this as a big problem compared to Maghrebans – Algerians, Tunisians, and Moroccans – who know French and who can communicate easily with people in the labor market. *"If we master French language like the Maghrebans we may dominate decorating and perhaps other fields of specialization. Egyptians here are hard workers, but the language problem is an obstacle that hinders our potential contributions in the labor market,"* Mr. Bedeiwy said.

Paris as a second step and transit

Due to the relatively good conditions of Egyptians in Paris when compared to their counterparts in Italy, it comes out – in interviews – that there is an evolving migration stream from Italy to France. Those who fail to find any job in Italy due to the saturation of the labor market in Italy re-migrate to France to find jobs there. In a group interview with six Egyptians in France I found that four of them crossed the Mediterranean to Italy and stayed there for more than one year without being able to find jobs before re-migrating to France. There they managed to find employment through the Egyptian network in France. In addition, two of those migrants from the Beheira governorate intend to cross *La Manche* (the English Channel) to join their counterparts from the Beheira governorate who work in the United Kingdom.

Marginal work and private cargo

Due to the fact that most contemporary Egyptian migrants are males who are living in France while their families are still in Egypt much importance is given to contact between Egyptians in Paris and their families back home. As a response to this situation and because in-kind remittances from the Egyptian diaspora are relatively high, a new body of remitters has come into being. In fact, a small group of Egyptians in Paris specializes in in-kind remittances. They travel frequently between Cairo and Paris just to facilitate the transfer of in-kind remittances as private and informal cargo agents. This group of remitting facilitators is well-known among Egyptians in Paris and their services are used frequently. The in-kind remittance facilitators charge 8 Euros per kilogram and they offer door-to-door in-kind remittances delivery. Egyptians do not miss any opportunity to remit in-kind goods and one of them sent two mobile phones with me to hand over to his family in Egypt. In-kind remittances include – among other things – furniture, clothes, and electronic devices. Most of the in-kind remittances from Egyptians in Paris are available in Egypt, but sending them from Paris to Egypt gives them an extra value in the eyes of the family. This pattern of in-kind remittances is a reproduction of remittance patterns among Egyptian migrants in the Arab/Persian Gulf countries.

Living conditions and the family

Despite the fact that contemporary Egyptian migration to France is male-dominated, a small proportion of migrants are married and live with their families. Among those who live with their families, it is common to find mixed marriages between Egyptian males and females of Maghreban origin. The singles and the single-like migrants – those who are married but whose family is still in Egypt – reside in shared apartments, sleeping about three to a room. The important thing for most migrants is to maximize their remittances to their families in Egypt. Because of this, they have poor life quality. Most of them are living on the margin of Parisian society and many of them communicate with no one but their Egyptian colleagues for days on end. In addition, many Egyptian migrants to Paris insist that their stay in France is temporary, even if it lasts for many years. Moreover, they state that Europe to them means working hard and remitting money to their families in Egypt. It is clear that the true home of Egyptian migrants in Paris – as well as Egyptians in Milan – is back in their villages in Egypt.

V.3 Egyptians in Milan and Paris according to the typology of migration

The fieldwork carried out in Milan and Paris indicates that most of the Egyptian migrants interviewed in the course of this study belong to the irregular entry and the irregular work category. Over time, they move from this category to the irregular entry and regular work category, acquiring a legal status. However, it is striking that Egyptians in France have a better network than Egyptians in Italy. Egyptians in France welcome newcomers and absorb them into the Egyptian network much more than Egyptians in Italy. It is also striking that France has become a destination for Egyptians in Italy who fail to find jobs in the Italian labor market. In addition, France attracts Egyptian migrants who intend to cross the English Channel to join their counterparts working in the United Kingdom.

VI. Conclusion

In this study, an attempt was made to explain the discrepancies that may exist between, on one hand, the numbers of Egyptian migrants provided by official statistics of these two host countries and, on the other, Egyptian statistics that show higher numbers of Egyptian nationals abroad. In addition the study explored Egyptian migration policies and cooperation in migration. Modes of entry into Italy and France and living conditions of Egyptians in Milan and Paris were also explored.

The discrepancies that exist between, on the one hand, Egyptian migrants provided by the official statistics of these two countries and, on the other hand, Egyptian statistics that show higher numbers of Egyptian nationals are mainly to be attributed to two factors; (1) naturalization among Egyptians abroad and the fact that they are counted as nationals in the statistics of the receiving countries, while they are counted as Egyptians in the Egyptian statistics, and (2) irregular migration and the inability of the receiving countries to count these clandestine migrants.

Like other diasporas, Egyptian irregular migrants contribute to the economy of the host countries through participation in economic activities and, in many cases, accept jobs that nationals refuse. In addition there is the low cost of irregular migrant laborers when compared to the national standards in receiving countries. Generally speaking, Egyptians in Milan and Paris are among the most successful diaspora communities and they contribute to the economic development of their host countries through economic integration, as well as to their country of origin through strong linkages and remittances.

The Egyptian government should open new markets for Egyptian labor internally – inside Egypt – and externally through bilateral and regional cooperation in the field of migration management. In addition, the budget of the Emigration Sector of the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower and Emigration should be increased in order to integrate activities related to data management, data collection, and research as essential elements under the Emigration Sector mandate. Funds for training and capacity building of researchers and employees should too be made available within the government budget and should not be completely dependent on foreign aid.

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Appendix I

In-depth interview guidelines

The in-depth interviews with Egyptians in Italy and France were made with the aim of acquiring in-depth knowledge about the migration trajectory of Egyptians in those two countries, their living and working conditions, and their legal status. In addition to background characteristics of respondents, the main questions asked in the in-depth interviews were the following:

1. What are the factors behind migration and the factors that push Egyptians to leave their country?
2. How do Egyptians migrate to Europe?
3. What is the current legal status of Egyptian migrants in the selected destination countries (documented vs. non-documented)?
4. What are the economic activities of Egyptians in Europe and how are they related – or not related – to their migration status?
5. What are the concerns and the priorities of Egyptians in host countries?