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LIVELIHOODS AND FAMILY FORMATION AMONG ERITREAN REFUGEES IN CAIRO

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ABSTRACT

LIVELIHOODS AND FAMILY FORMATION AMONG ERITREAN REFUGEES IN CAIRO

by

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This thesis uses data gathered from a survey conducted in November and December of 2009 to provide an overview of the demographic profile and livelihoods strategies of a sample of Eritrean refugees in Cairo. Study results revealed that the Eritreans surveyed were predominantly single, childless and living in Cairo without family. While much of the existing literature on refugee livelihoods has focused on refugees living in camp settings and/or on refugees' roles as spouses and parents, this study examined the strategies engaged by a group of single, urban refugees.

Using a livelihoods framework comprised of capabilities, assets and activities, survey results were used to assess how respondents have established their livelihoods in Cairo, with particular attention being paid to the differences in strategies between men and women. Findings concluded that Eritrean respondents were meeting their needs through a combination of earned income and financial support from family and friends. Female respondents were more successful in finding employment than male respondents. While more women were working to support themselves and others, more men were meeting their expenses with support from employed community members in Egypt or abroad.

One of the most notable results of this research was the finding that, given the restricted opportunities to work and the uncertain future in Cairo, many Eritrean respondents were intentionally delaying starting a family. In lieu of a strong family base, Eritrean respondents reported relying on their social support network in Cairo for accommodations, referrals to employment opportunities and financial assistance.

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INTRODUCTION

Egypt is among the top five countries with the largest number of urban refugees in the world and is one of only two African countries that do not mandate that refugees reside in camps (Sperl 2001, Zohry 2005). The majority of refugees in Egypt live in the capital city of Cairo (Grabska 2005). Without the traditional camp support system in place, refugees in Cairo are left to support themselves most often without official assistance. Though Egypt is a signatory to 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the government does not recognize the right of refugees to work as outlined in the Convention.[1] Despite the lack of standardized formal assistance and the ineligibility of refugees to enter the labor market in a legal, systematic manner, refugees continue to reside in Cairo. This continued residence implies that refugees in Cairo are able to support themselves and meet their daily living expenses.

In the spring of 2009, two colleagues and I conducted two focus groups of Eritrean refugees in Cairo to investigate the changes within family units and traditional gender roles that resulted from the move from Eritrea to Egypt. The discussions generated in the focus groups revealed that within a limited sample of Eritreans, very few were actually living with family members. Participants discussed the difficulties and stresses of life in Cairo that they must face on a daily basis without the support of family, which they considered a primary support mechanism. Participants stated that they are merely "surviving" in Cairo and cited the lack of family and their insecure financial situation are the main causes of the difficulty in their lives.

[1] Article 17: Wage-earning employment, http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3b66c2aa10.pdf

A review of existing literature on refugee livelihoods reveals that much of the existing research findings focus on livelihoods in camp settings and on men's and women's roles in a family unit as husbands/fathers and wives/mothers. In addition, existing literature often highlights the presupposed vulnerability that accompanies displacement for women as a result of the loss of a husband or father. Based on the previously mentioned focus groups, however, it appeared that many of the Eritreans in Cairo were single and childless. There is a void in existing literature on livelihoods of single, urban refugees.

In considering discussions held in the aforementioned focus groups along with existing literature on refugee livelihoods, the following question was formulated: how do Eritreans establish and maintain their livelihoods in Cairo? In a more nuanced sense, are there gender-based differences in the livelihood strategies? How does gender influence livelihood strategies and choices? With these questions in mind, I created a survey to establish the demographic profile of the community, to ascertain how Eritreans are meeting their basic daily needs in Cairo and to assess what role, if any, gender plays in livelihoods strategies within the community. The results of the survey form the basis of this paper.

Chapter one provides an overview of the situation in Eritrea that is leading to an unprecedented refugee flow. [2] Chapter one also provides a context for the current study by assessing Cairo as a refugee-hosting city and giving an overview of the more widely studied refugee populations in the city. Chapter two presents a literature review of current livelihoods theories and past studies both in Cairo and in other

[2] Eritreans filed 62,700 asylum claims with UNHCR in 2008 (http://www.unhcr.org/4a375c426.html).

refugee-hosting areas to create the framework used to assess a sample of Eritreans in Cairo. In addition, chapter two gives a brief overview of the constraints of the Egyptian labor market. Chapter three then outlines the objectives of the research, the methodology used and the challenges encountered while conducting the field research.

Chapter four presents the findings of the research. The chapter begins by providing a demographic profile of research participants summarizing age and gender breakdowns, marital and family status and their reasons for coming to Cairo. The next section of the chapter uses the livelihoods framework established in chapter three to assess the livelihoods strategies being engaged by survey respondents. Survey results provide insight into how Eritreans are surviving in Cairo: what are the expenses of daily life for participants, how many participants are working, how are they meeting their expenses and what differences are noted based on gender. Finally, survey results provide information on how Eritreans in Cairo are assisting each other.

The final chapter summarizes the findings and draws several conclusions. Eritrean respondents in Cairo are predominantly young (20-30), single and living without family in Cairo. Eritreans in Cairo are primarily relying on income generated by women who are working to a greater extent than men. The most readily available form of work for refugees in Cairo is domestic work. As domestic work is traditionally performed by women, it is women who are more successful in obtaining employment. Men, meanwhile, are more reliant on financial support received from family and friends. The result of this situation is a conscious decision on the part of participants to delay family formation. While this strategy is effective in sustaining

the community in the immediate sense, according to the views expressed by focus group participants who lament the lack of family, it is not a feasible long-term solution. The apparent delay in family formation observed in this sample of urban refugees appears to be both a strategy to navigate life in Cairo, as well as an outcome of the financial situation in which they find themselves. In an effort to meet the expenses of daily life as urban refugees, Eritreans surveyed are forgoing their desire to start a family.

Chapter 1: BACKGROUND ON THE TARGET POPULATION AND HOST CITY

In order to begin to understand the current situation of a group of people, understanding their background is essential. To that end, this chapter begins with a review of why Eritreans are leaving home followed by an overview of the environment that awaits them in Cairo.

1.1 Eritrean Refugees – Reasons for Flight

As of 2009, Eritrea had a population of approximately 5.5 million people. It is a single-party country led by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ, the party that was formerly known as the Eritrean People's Liberation Front). Isaias Afwerki has been the head of state since its independence in 1993 and has never allowed elections to be held (US DOS 2009). In 2008, Afwerki publically declared that elections would not be held for decades to come, because elections would polarize the people and jeopardize the security of the country (HRW 2009). Given Afwerki's firm hold on the country and his public statements reflecting his intention to continue his current method of rule, the likelihood that exiles will be able to return home any time in the foreseeable future is slim.

Eritreans have been fleeing from their home country for more than 30 years (Zohry 2003). Eritrea has had a troubled history since its independence and has experienced several flows of refugees both before and after independence. Eritreans fled to Egypt in three primary phases prior to 2000: from 1977 to 1979 during the height of the Red Terror of the Dergue regime, from 1991to1992 during

the overthrow of the Dergue regime and from 1998 to 2000 during the Ethiopian-Eritrean border conflict (Zohry 2003). In the current decade, young Eritreans have been fleeing the country due to the repressive regime of Isaias Afwerki and his policy of military conscription, while Eritreans of all ages are fleeing religious persecution. Both military conscription and religious persecution have prompted Eritreans to seek asylum in Egypt and around the world. In 2008, Eritreans filed the second highest number of claims for asylum worldwide[3] despite the fact that Eritrea is one of the smallest countries in the world.

1.1.1 Military conscription

Eritrea maintains a policy of military conscription for both young men and young women. Though officially time-limited, in practice conscription can appear unlimited in duration (HRW 2009). Many men and women have left Eritrea before completing compulsory military service or during the service itself. The 1957 Ethiopian penal code, which was adopted by Eritrea at independence, and, according to the British embassy in Asmara was still in force in 2008, details various penalties for desertion from and evasion of military service. For example, penalties for refusal to perform military service, failure to enlist or self-infliction of injuries to avoid military service range from fines to simple imprisonment for a period of months to indefinite imprisonment including mental and physical torture (UK Home Office 2008). Over the course of this research, I have met Eritreans who have been granted refugee status based on their claims of draft evasion and military desertion.

[3] Eritreans filed 62,700 asylum claims with UNHCR in 2008, following only Zimbabweans who filed 118,500 applications. (http://www.unhcr.org/4a375c426.html)

The US Department of State notes that the government authorizes the use of lethal force against anyone attempting to evade government round-ups of suspected military deserters and draft evaders and that deaths were reported throughout 2005 (US DOS 2007). Human Rights Watch reported that persons detained for evading national service are often held incommunicado indefinitely (HRW Jan. 2009). Prison conditions are reportedly harsh and include overcrowding, extreme temperatures, solitary confinement, the absence of sanitation, starvation rations, hard labor and mental abuse.

Draft evaders are reportedly tortured, while conscientious objectors face severe physical punishment as a means of forcing them to perform their service. The law and unimplemented constitution prohibit torture; however, there were numerous reports that security forces resorted to torture and physical beatings of prisoners, particularly during interrogations. There were credible reports that several individuals, including young men and women rounded up for national service, died following torture or severe beatings by security forces. Security forces subjected deserters and draft evaders to various disciplinary actions that included prolonged sun exposure in temperatures of up to 120 degrees Fahrenheit or the binding of hands, elbows, and feet for extended periods (US DOS 2009).

In an effort to curb desertion, the government began punishing families of those who flee the country in 2009. According to Human Rights Watch's most recent report on Eritrea, the government fines families of those who have evaded service 50,000 Nakfa (approximately US$3,300). If the family cannot pay the fine, the

government arrests family members or seizes property (including land) (HRW 2009).

In May of 2008, the US Department of State received reports that Eritrean soldiers were killed by their own military near the border while allegedly trying to cross into Djibouti. The following month, news reports confirmed that the dead were killed by fellow soldiers while attempting to defect and seek asylum in Djibouti. Former soldiers who successfully defected claimed that government had issued a shoot-to-kill directive for potential deserters (US DOS 2009).

Many Eritreans evading conscription flee to nearby countries like Egypt. Many then attempt to continue on to Israel. In June of 2008, Egypt refouled more than 1000 refugees attempting to cross into Israel. According to Human Rights Watch, women with children were released by the government upon return to Eritrea, but childless women and many men were imprisoned in Wi'a, a military camp near the Red Sea known for its harsh conditions (HRW 2009). The Egyptian government does not recognize military desertion or draft evasion as grounds for refugee protection (Kagan 6 May 2009). Given this policy, such deportations may continue.

In 2008, President Afwerki proclaimed that reports of increasing numbers of Eritrean refugees fleeing conscription were unfounded and that those fleeing were actually the result of an orchestrated operation financed by the CIA (HRW 2009).

1.1.2 Religious persecution

In addition to fleeing indefinite conscription, many Eritreans are facing religious persecution within the country. Over the course of this research, I have also met Eritreans in Cairo who have been granted refugee status as a result of the religious

persecution they encountered in their home country. The government of Eritrea currently only recognizes four religions: Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism, Evangelical (Lutheran) Christianity and traditional Sunni Islam (HRW 2009). Government security forces are known to arrest, detain and torture members of nonregistered churches (US DOS 2009). During 2008, credible reports were received of hundreds of followers of various unregistered churches (mostly Protestant) being targeted by security. While some were released after recanting their faith, many others who refused to recant continued to be detained in civilian and military detention facilities across the country. There were approximately 3,000 individuals in detention at the end of 2008 because of their religious affiliation, according to the NGO Compass Direct (US DOS 2009). The government remains suspicious of religions that are not traditionally part of Eritrean history. It considers religions brought from outside Eritrea, like the Pentecostal faith and fundamentalist Islam, to be threats to national security (UK Home Office 2009).

The government in particular targets Jehovah's Witnesses due in part to their refusal on religious grounds to vote in the 1993 referendum for independence and their refusal to perform military service. The government has in the past terminated the employment of civil servants believed to be Jehovah's Witnesses and has evicted Jehovah's Witnesses from government housing. In addition, Jehovah's Witnesses have been denied passports, exit visas and, at times, identity cards (US DOS 2009).

As the number of people fleeing Eritrea increases, the government is attempting to restrict exit further. In August of 2008, the government stopped issuing exit visas and passports to its citizens. By the end of 2008, the government was providing travel services only to known government loyalists. The current state of the country leaves

little doubt that Eritreans will continue to migrate to other countries in search of safety, freedom and economic self-sufficiency.

1.2 Cairo as a refugee-hosting city

Egypt has hosted refugees from various regions since times well before the creation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). For much of that time, Egypt has allowed refugees to remain in urban areas living among the national population. Egypt is one of only two African nations without officially recognized refugee camps[4] (Bailey 2004).

1.2.1 Legal Status of Recognized Refugees in Cairo

Egypt is a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol. The 1951 Convention, which was only the second international instrument enshrining human rights, outlines the basic rights to which refugees are entitled.[5] In addition, Egypt is a signatory to the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.[6] Egypt is also a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (Zohry 2005), which, among other guarantees, states that all children must have access to primary education.

According to the 1951 Convention, refugees are entitled to the rights of non-discrimination, freedom of religion (as per regulations of the host country) and freedom of movement. They are also entitled to comparable access to education, public relief and social security as nationals. Refugees are entitled to comparable

[4] South Africa is the only other African country without designated refugee camps (Bailey 2004).
[5] The only pre-existing human rights instrument in 1951 was the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted in 1948.
[6] It should be noted that Egypt, in practice, only applies the OAU Convention to African refugees, therefore excluding such groups as Iraqis and Palestinians (Kagan 19 Oct 2008).

access to self-employment and housing as non-refugee aliens. And, specifically regarding wage-earning employment, refugees are entitled to the same regulations as the most favored alien for the first three years of residence and then to the same regulations as nationals thereafter (Hathaway 2005).

Though Egypt, along with Turkey, was one of the only two non-Western participating states in the creation of the Convention (Zohry & Harrell-Bond 2003), it did enter several reservations. Egypt objected to the articles of the Convention that granted refugees status comparable to nationals in regard to rationing, primary education, public relief and social security.[7]

Though Egypt's constitution includes an article pertaining to the granting of asylum to political refugees (Zohry & Harrell-Bond 2003), the Government of Egypt signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UNHCR in 1954 allowing UNHCR to take responsibility for refugee matters (Kagan 30 Nov 2008). Since that time, with only high profile exceptions, UNHCR has processed applications for asylum and has been charged with the protection of refugees (Zohry & Harrell-Bond 2003).

Despite the call of a number of refugee advocates and scholars to change the current situation, the Government of Egypt has not yet been willing to take over the determination of refugee status (RSD), which under international law is the responsibility of the host state. The Egyptian government's resistance to assuming responsibility for RSD is due in large part to the presence of so many Palestinian and Sudanese refugees. It would be politically disadvantageous for the Government of

[7] Egypt entered reservations to articles 20, 22 (paragraph 1), 23 and 24. http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/treaty2ref.htm

Egypt to grant refugee status to Sudanese thereby admitting that atrocities are being committed in Sudan. Likewise, Egypt does not want to directly address the Palestinian refugee situation as it does other refugee situations and risk jeopardizing the image of Arab solidarity regarding the plight of the Palestinians (Grabska 2006).

1.2.2 Refugee Populations in Cairo

For the purposes of this research, 'refugee' means anyone who has fled his/her country due to war, persecution or any other refugee-producing situation regardless of whether the individual has been formally recognized by UNHCR, unless otherwise noted. Unknown numbers of people from refugee-producing countries residing in Egypt have either not registered with UNHCR or have had their claims rejected, so discussing only those individuals granted refugee status by UNHCR would not likely be representative of the actual situation.

Egypt is among the top five countries with the largest number of urban refugees in the world (Sperl 2001, Zohry 2005). The majority of refugees in Egypt reside in Cairo, though there are also small populations living in Alexandria. Egypt has a very diverse urban refugee population comprised of more than 30 nationalities (Grabska 2006). The largest refugee groups are Palestinians, Iraqis, Sudanese, Somalis, Ethiopians and Eritreans (Zohry 2005).

Estimates of Palestinians in Egypt range from 50,000 – 100,000 (Zohry & Harrell-Bond 2003). Palestinians are in a very unique situation in Egypt as the government has never allowed the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the UN body responsible for assisting

Palestinian refugees, to operate in Egypt. Though prior to 1978, Palestinians in Egypt were granted similar rights and privileges as nationals, in 1978, all such rights and privileges were revoked. Since that time, Palestinians have been treated as most other foreigners, though there is a separate office within the Ministry of Interior tasked specifically with serving Palestinian refugees (Zohry & Harrell-Bond 2003).

Estimates of Iraqi refugees in Egypt range from 15,000 – 150,000 (Fargues el. al. 2008). The bulk of the Iraqi population is relatively new to Cairo and has only recently been addressed by researchers. The first comprehensive survey of this population was just recently conducted by the Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) at the American University in Cairo (AUC) in collaboration with the Government of Egypt. The results of the study show the Iraqi population of Egypt to be between 15,000 and 20,000 as compared to the government's previous estimate of 150,000-200,000 (Fargues et. al. 2008). By contrast, UNHCR has a caseload of 9,474 Iraqis as of July of 2009, representing 23% of their total caseload.[8]

Sudanese, primarily Southern Sudanese, constitute the largest group of African refugees in Cairo. Most Southern Sudanese in Cairo are Christian and are of a dark complexion. These differences from the host population put them at heightened risk of harassment by Egyptians and of being targeted by police. Estimates of the number of Sudanese in Egypt range from 22,514 (according to the UNHCR July 2009 Factsheet for Egypt[9]) to 2.2 million (according to the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement office) to 4 million (according to the Government of Egypt) (Grabska 2006).

[8] This figure is reflected in UNHCR's July 2009 Factsheet for Egypt.
[9] Sudanese comprise 54% of UNHCR's total caseload in Egypt.

The second largest group of African refugees in Cairo is Somali refugees with an estimated population of 6006 according to the UNHCR July 2009 Factsheet for Egypt.[10] In his assessment of the refugee situation in Cairo for UNHCR, Sperl (2001) found that Somalis are in a better position than Sudanese; however, this is in contrast to what Al-Sharmani (2003) found in an extensive field-based survey of Somali families in Cairo. While Sperl states that "the authorities have always maintained a supportive position towards Somali nationals" and that Somalis "Somalis enjoy a level of acceptance from the local population for cultural and religious reasons," (Sperl 2001: 22); Al-Sharmani (2003) conversely found that Somalis intentionally segregate themselves from Egyptians out of fear of racism and police harassment and due to linguistic and cultural barriers they perceive. Al-Sharmani (ibid) also found that Somalis believe that Sudanese are in a better position in Cairo as a result of their greater visibility, larger numbers and stronger connection with church-based service agencies.

The majority of Somalis live clustered within two areas of Cairo and prefer to remain within Somali neighborhoods working primarily for or with Somalis and socializing primarily with Somalis due to the difficulties they face outside of their own communities (Al-Sharmani 2003). Many of the Somalis currently residing in Cairo have come to Egypt after living for varying lengths of time in countries such as Libya, Saudi Arabia and Kenya (Sperl 2001).

[10] Somalis comprise 14% of UNHCR's total caseload in Egypt.

The Ethiopian and Eritrean combined population has been estimated to be 5000 people (Zohry & Harrell-Bond 2003, Zohry 2005). The numbers of Ethiopians and Eritreans registered with UNHCR is about half this estimate, however. According to the UNHCR Factsheet for Egypt in July 2009, there were 924 Ethiopians[11] registered with UNHCR, and 1717 Eritreans[12] registered with the refugee agency.

These two populations are often treated as one in many studies, though the legitimacy of this approach can be questioned. Ethiopians and Eritreans are not a unified group and are often suspicious of each other (Thomas 2006). Prior to the arrival to the country of asylum, Ethiopians and Eritreans have been persecuted by each other and by each other's governments. At times, they have been persecuted by their own government on accusation of supporting the other (Thomas 2006). Given the general level of distrust and suspicion, attempting to treat them as one group is not an appropriate approach.

Not only do Ethiopians and Eritreans not form one unified group in Cairo, they do not form cohesive groups individually, either. Ethiopians and Eritreans live spread out across the city partially in fear of drawing attention to themselves in an insecure environment but also out of a general level of suspicion that exists throughout the communities (Brown et. al. 2004). It should also be noted that there are also small numbers of mixed Ethio-Eritrean families and people of mixed Ethio-Eritrean heritage in Cairo. These people are especially vulnerable in that they are ostracized by most communities of Ethiopians and Eritreans if they disclose their mixed background. As

[11] Ethiopians comprise just 2% of UNHCR's total caseload.
[12] Eritreans comprise just 4% of UNHCR's total caseload.

a result, these people generally try to hide the fact that they come from a mixed background and decide to be known as either Ethiopian or Eritrean (Thomas 2006).

The most current data available on Eritreans in Cairo is data that was produced during research on domestic workers in Cairo in 2007. Throughout the year, 633 migrant and refugee domestic workers were surveyed, including 118 Eritreans (Jureidini 2009). Though this data pertains exclusively to women working as domestic workers, the data serves as a useful basis of comparison for this current study and will be discussed in Chapter 4 – Survey Results.

1.2.3 Needs of Refugees in Cairo

A summary of the principle findings of a survey conducted for the Joint Relief Ministries (JRM), the refugee services program operated by All Saints Cathedral, in 2002, aids in providing an overview of the general situation of refugees in Cairo. The All Saints Cathedral's refugee program was founded in 1991 to serve the needs of Sudanese refugees. It soon grew to offer services to Somalis, Ethiopians and Eritreans and was renamed the Joint Relief Ministries (JRM). [13] Refugees surveyed in regard to JRM programming prioritized needing assistance with health care, housing, access to UNHCR, and training/employment (Briant & Kennedy 2004).

1.2.3.1 Employment

Refugees across communities report serious problems with employment. As Egypt filed a reservation on the right to work granted to refugees in the 1951 Convention, refugees are treated as all other foreigners in Egypt regarding employment: they can

[13] After the conclusion of the needs assessment, JRM changed its name to Refuge Egypt.

only work legally with a work permit. Very few employers are willing to take the time and incur the expense to apply for a work permit for a refugee as the process involves demonstrating that no Egyptian is qualified to do the job (Bailey 2004). While these limitations make sense in regard to the current unemployment rate in Egypt, which ranges from 20% (Sperl 2001) to 30% (Grabska 2006), it creates a situation in which many refugees are barely able to survive.

Refugees report receiving low wages and facing frequent harassment from employers when they can find jobs (Al-Sharmani 2003; Bailey 2004; Brown et. al. 2004). As a coping mechanism, Somalis prefer to work within their own communities and neighborhoods (Al-Sharmani 2003). Sudanese, Ethiopians and Eritreans women have had greater luck in finding employment in the domestic sphere both exposing them to greater harassment and shifting traditional gender roles with women now often the primary breadwinner (Bailey 2004; Brown et. al. 2004). Ethiopians and Eritreans in particular reported past experiences of practical servitude and trafficking including sexual abuse while working as domestic workers both in Egypt and prior to arrival (Brown et. al. 2003).

1.2.3.2 Relations with the Host Community

Black Africans in Cairo report racism in the form of verbal and physical assaults on a regular basis. They report that racial discrimination is often the root cause of unfair rent practices, limited access to healthcare and targeting by the police (FMRS 2006). While Sperl speculates that Muslim refugees are better tolerated by the host population (Sperl 2001), Grabska posits that racial/ethnic discrimination and hostility override shared religion (Grabska 2006b).

Sudanese report hostility and abuse from Egyptians in public places. They are called "'oonga boonga' or 'samara' (meaning 'black')" (FMRS 2006: 15). Ethiopian and Eritreans face similar harassment, though Ethiopian women seem to face the worst of it. They are regularly sexually harassed verbally and physically as there is a belief among the local population that Ethiopian women are prostitutes. Ethiopians and Eritreans report added harassment based on disagreements between Ethiopia and Egypt over the Nile and accusations regarding the 1995 attempted assassination of President Mubarak in Addis Ababa (Brown et. al. 2004).

Somalis report racial discrimination and harassment by the local population on a regular basis despite the fact that all of the Somalis are Muslim (Al-Sharmani 2003). Somalis report coping by remaining predominantly within their own neighborhoods (Al-Sharmani 2003).

One of the greatest fears reported by all refugee communities is any kind of interaction with the police. A Human Rights Watch press release draws attention to the apparently racially motivated round up of Sub-Saharan Africans in Cairo in January 2003. Police canvassed neighborhoods in Maadi collecting numbers of black Africans to take them to the police station where they were held anywhere from hours to days. UNHCR was able to secure the release of recognized refugees. According to the accounts provided, the police were targeting black Africans regardless of their country of origin (HRW 2003).

While Al-Sharmani was conducting her research within Somali communities, several Somalis were arrested and detained. Families reported that they must often pay bribes to have the detained person released (Al-Sharmani 2003). The police especially target Ethiopians and Eritreans as there is a common perception within Cairo that Ethiopians and Eritreans have more money than other African refugees and, therefore, would be better able to pay bribes (Brown et. al. 2004).

The results of the JRM study highlight the most pressing issues affecting the refugee community at large in Cairo. Refugees report facing difficulty in finding employment and meeting daily expenses. They report facing discrimination and harassment from the host population, which contributes to limited access to health care, secure housing and other needed services. Refugees report living in fear of the police regardless of religious similarities with Egyptians.

While the JRM assessment is the most comprehensive assessment done of refugee communities in Cairo, the assessment did not differentiate Eritreans from Ethiopians or other refugee communities. Understanding the issues affecting other refugee groups provides a backdrop against which the situation of Eritreans as identified by the current research can be compared.

The next chapter provides a review of the current literature on livelihoods of refugees. The review will present a theoretical framework in which to examine the livelihoods of Eritrean men and women in Cairo and will highlight the findings of pre-existing studies on refugee livelihoods that provide the basis on which the current study was grounded.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Livelihoods Definitions

One of the more widely cited sources for defining livelihoods is Chambers and Conway's 1992 paper on rural livelihoods: "Sustainable Rural Livelihoods: Practical Concepts for the 21st Century" (for example, UNHCR EPAU 2006, Horst 2006a, Grabska 2005). According to Chambers and Conway,

> A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets and activities required for a means of living. A sustainable livelihood allows one to cope with and to recover from stress and shocks, to maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation. It also contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the long and short term. (as cited in UNHCR EPAU 2006: 1)

Chambers (1995) later refined the definition to include a distinction between tangible and intangible assets. Tangible assets include income and material goods, while intangible assets include access to such goods and social support networks. While this definition is not particular to a refugee context, it is nonetheless useful in understanding the concept of refugee livelihoods.

UNHCR presents a triangle analogy based on the above definition to help describe a framework for understanding refugee livelihoods. The three sides of the triangle are refugees' assets, capabilities and activities or strategies. Assets include what the refugee owns as well as things to which he has access. Capabilities include knowledge, skills, health and other factors that enable a refugee to sustain him/herself.

And finally, activities or strategies include how the refugee uses his/her assets and capabilities to be self-sustaining (UNHCR EPAU 2006).

Jacobsen and her colleagues at the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University have created a definition more tailored to situations of refugees or internally displaced people (IDPs) by placing greater emphasis on social networks both locally and transnationally.

> In communities facing conflict and displacement, livelihoods comprise the ways in which people access and mobilize resources that enable them to increase their economic security and thereby reduce the vulnerability created and exacerbated by conflict, and pursue goals necessary for their survival and possible return. (Jacobsen 2002a: 4)

In her assessment of Somali refugees in Cairo, Al-Sharmani defined livelihood as, "legal, economic, educational, and social capital that refugees strive to secure and maximize in order to get by in Cairo and plan ahead for their future" (Al-Sharmani 2003: 4). Al-Sharmani placed more emphasis on examining livelihoods in the context of integration into the host community as opposed to examining refugee livelihoods independent of the communities' surroundings. She also included an analysis of Somali identity as it pertains to the ability to survive in Cairo demonstrating that, for the community in Cairo, flight patterns can outweigh clan affiliation when forming support networks and that the overall identity as a Somali has taken on a stronger meaning than it held in Somalia (Al-Sharmani 2003).

Grabska, in her analysis of livelihood strategies of Southern Sudanese in Cairo, added

an additional dimension to the concept of livelihoods by looking at what she called productive and reproductive strategies. Productive strategies are activities that generate income, including paid work, savings from the home country, remittances and financial assistance. Reproductive strategies are those that involve social and cultural networks that foster not only financial gain but also help sustain the sense of self that can be lost in a new country (Grabska 2005).

Recently, the concept of a vulnerability context has been incorporated into the livelihood framework when assessing the situation of refugees, especially urban[14] refugees (UNHCR EPAU 2006). The vulnerability context considers factors that may limit or impede the full use of refugees' assets and strategies (Jacobsen 2006). For example, legal status (whether one is recognized as a refugee or not) may significantly impact a person's ability to access the labor market. However, as Bailey found in her assessment of refugees in Johannesburg, Cairo and Kampala, legal status does not guarantee a secure livelihood (Bailey 2004).

Similar to the more recent concept of a vulnerability context, Jacobsen (2002) previously identified policy factors that could impede refugees' ability to pursue successful livelihood strategies. Primary issues were the host government's intention to prevent refugees from having permanent residence, the lack of physical security and a solid standard of protection for refugees, restrictions on the movement of refugees and restrictions on employment and property rights of refugees.

2.2 Livelihoods in an urban context

[14] Urban refugee refers to a refugee (whether from an urban or rural background) who is residing in an urban area.

UNHCR estimates that about 18% of refugees worldwide live in urban areas. Urban refugees often face many of the same challenges as urban poor such as poor and/or insecure housing and unemployment. In addition, however, refugees may face the additional challenges of xenophobia and insecure legal status, all of which heighten the vulnerability context in which refugees struggle to survive. Despite the challenges, refugees continue to migrate to urban areas in the hopes of finding safety and security (Jacobsen 2006).

Studies conducted on livelihoods of urban refugees have identified several common themes. For example, there are general differences that have been observed when comparing livelihood strategies of men and women in cities. The most common way men support themselves in an urban setting is by acquiring day jobs. Men are only able to do this, however, if they have the networks to learn about jobs and if they have access to the labor market. Women, meanwhile, are more successful in finding employment in urban settings in either the informal market as traders or in the domestic (housekeeping) or service (restaurants and hotels) sectors (UNHCR EPAU 2006).

Reviewing individual case studies identifies other themes. An assessment of refugees living in Kampala found that the majority was able to sustain themselves, with only 25% struggling to survive. As in accord with UNHCR's findings, women were sustaining themselves more successfully. Overall, the study found that almost half of the refugees surveyed were able to sustain themselves and their families without formal assistance (Macchiavello 2003).

A smaller assessment of Congolese refugees in Nairobi found that while not only being able to sustain themselves, many refugees were also an asset to the wider community by starting businesses and employing locals. At the same time, however, refugees surveyed reported that they counted on remittances from friends and family to meet basic living requirements like food and rent. Without these remittances, they report that they would likely return to one of the refugee camps in Kenya (Campbell et. al. 2006).

Research into the Congolese community of Durban found that refugees there rely on social networks to survive life in the city. They turn to community members to secure accommodations, to get leads on work (primarily in the informal sector) and to obtain support and assistance in times of crises (for example, illness, death or arrest). In contrast to the studies in Kampala and Nairobi, however, Congolese men are notably more successful in securing employment. More men than women surveyed reporting working and being the primary breadwinner of the family (Amisi 2005).

2.3 Livelihoods in Cairo

Before examining livelihoods of refugees in Cairo, we should have a general understanding of the labor market of the host community. The current Egyptian labor market is having difficulty accommodating the ever-growing population of the country, which is greatly concentrated in Cairo. The unemployment rate is widely disputed but estimates range from 8.7%[15] to 20% (Sperl 2001) to 30% (Grabska 2006). Youth (aged 15 – 29) represent both the largest group of people entering the labor market, as well as the group with the highest rate of unemployment (El Zanatay

[15] The government's estimate according to the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) - http://www.capmas.gov.eg/eng_ver/homeE.htm

and Associates 2007). Based on results of the 2006 Egyptian Labour Survey, 81% of the unemployed are new entrants to the labor market, and 83% of 15 to 29 years of age (Amer 2007 as cited in Binzeland and Assaad 2009).

The government has been and remains the largest employer in the country (El Zanatay and Associates 2007, De Gobbi and Nesporova 2005). For women, in particular, government positions have been the preferred form of employment. Recent labor surveys (1998 and 2006) have shown that Egyptian women have been willing to wait for positions in government offices to become available or to forgo work altogether if employment in such positions have not been available. Looking at women's employment in general, women's participation in the labor force was only approximately one-third of men's between 1998-2006. At the end of the 2000s, Egypt ranked 120 out of 128 countries in terms of women's economic opportunity (Assaad and El Hamidi 2009).

The government sector, however, declined in strength as an employing entity between 1998 and 2006. The economic sectors that have been the strongest in employing entrants to the labor market are finance and business, agriculture, tourism-related industries and hunting and farming (Assaad 2009, El Zanatay and Associates 2007).

The informal economy has been more able to absorb new entrants into the labor market than the formal economy (El Zanatay and Associates 2007). By 2006, 61% of all employment was in the informal sector, and three-quarters of workers who entered the labor market between 2000 and 2005 entered informal work (Assaad 2009). Given the restrictions on refugees working, the only realistic option for the majority

of new arrivals to Cairo is to look to the informal economy (Jureidini 2009); and given that the informal economy is also the primary means of employment for many Egyptians entering the labor market, refugees and nationals may be competing in the same labor market.

The value of education in finding employment is also important to discuss. While one International Labour Organization (ILO)-funded study found that potential employers are untrusting of the educational system and value experience over education (El Zanatay and Associates 2007), another found that professions that have been increasingly available are those that require a higher level of education (De Gobbi and Nesporova 2005). The number of new graduates, however, outnumbers the number of positions available. As such, between 1998 and 2006, university graduates were the only educational group whose level of unemployment increased (Assaad 2009).

In addition to unemployment, underemployment is also a serious problem in Egypt (De Gobbi and Nesporova 2005). Given the levels of unemployment, underemployment and poverty in Egypt among nationals, the government policy addressing refugees as all other foreigners in regard to employment is logical. Refugees are only permitted to work legally if they obtain a work permit, as is the requirement for all foreigners (Jureidini 2009). Rarely, however, are employers willing to take the time, effort and expense to apply for a work permit for a refugee. In Cairo, as in many other refugee-hosting urban areas, both men and women must resort to looking for employment in the informal labor market where work permits are not required (Sperl 2001). Risks associated with working in the informal sector, however, include treatment and wages that are often both poor and exploitative

(Jureidini 2009).

UNHCR commissioned a study of refugees' livelihoods in Cairo in 2003 that surveyed the livelihoods strategies of a representative sample of the refugee population in Cairo. The populations surveyed included Somalis, Sudanese, Sierra Leoneans, Ethiopians, Yemenis, Afghanis and Liberians.[16] Only 40% of the refugees surveyed were engaged in income-earning activities. On average, of refugees who were employed, monthly expenses exceeded income earned, meaning that even employed refugees were surviving with either agency assistance or with the receipt of remittances. Of those who are not engaged in any income-earning activity, most stated lack of a work permit, lack of skills and lack of language ability as primary barriers to their employment. Overall, women (in contrast to the national population) were found to be more successful at finding employment than men (UNHCR RO-Cairo, 2003).

More recently, an assessment of the Somali population of Cairo found that networking (both locally and transnationally) is key to Somali livelihoods. Connections were based primarily on traditional clan affiliations, on shared refugee experiences or on a larger Somali identity, at times outweighing clan divides. As only 60 of the 300 respondents (20%) reported working in Cairo, social networks were essential for survival. To compensate for the lack of earned income, the majority (82%) received remittances from abroad (through established transnational networks) to meet basic living expenses. In addition, local social networks provided non-financial assistance in times of need (Al-Sharmani 2003).

[16] The study aimed to survey those populations not currently being considered for resettlement on a large scale.

In contrast to the results of the Somali survey, almost 75% of Sudanese respondents in a separate study reported being engaged in income-generating activities. Of those working, most worked with Egyptians or other foreigners, again in contrast to Somalis in Cairo, who reported primarily working with other Somalis. Women primarily worked as domestic workers and were able to earn more than men. As women were more successfully finding employment than men, women were becoming the primary breadwinners. This was a radical change from life in Sudan and was resulting both in greater empowerment of women but also in greater negative behavior of men including substance abuse and domestic violence. In addition to relying on income earned in the country, 60% of respondents received remittances from abroad. Sixty percent of respondents also reported having brought money with them from Sudan, though that money often did not last beyond the first few years in Egypt (Grabska 2005).

2.4 Coping strategies

Given the challenges inherent in living as a refugee in an urban setting, coping strategies are understandably varied. Many studies of refugee livelihoods have noted negative coping strategies ranging from selling personal effects or food rations, resorting to crime or turning to sex work (UNHCR EPAU 2006). There are also a number of more positive coping mechanisms that can be employed by refugee populations including utilizing strong social networks (both local and transnational), employing pre-existing skills, pursuing education and dispersing investments (Horst 2006a).

Recently, a small-scale assessment of Eritrean asylum seekers in Sweden was undertaken to ascertain how they were coping with life in Sweden and how they were supporting themselves. Though the size of the sample (7 people) makes drawing any generalizations risky, the results may serve as a basis of comparison. The assessment found that the asylum seekers relied more heavily on an Eritrean community based organization called the Association of Eritrean Asylum Seekers in Sweden (AEASS) than on the state welfare system. Community members turned to the AEASS both for social support as well as networking to aid in livelihoods. It is important to note, however, that the government of Sweden grants work permits to asylum seekers thereby facilitating employment options for Eritreans (Hassanen 2007).

The assessments of refugee livelihoods in Cairo discussed above found similar coping mechanisms among communities. For example, both Sudanese and Somali refugees reported sharing accommodations as a means of coping with the financial strains of living in Cairo (Grabska 2005, Al-Sharmani 2003). In addition, some Sudanese reported staying with friends or relatives as a long-term guest or staying at churches without paying any rent (Grabska 2005). Both Sudanese and Somalis reported relying not only on money made by working but also on remittances from abroad and limited financial assistance from UNHCR and implementing partners to meet their living expenses (Grabska 2005, Al-Sharmani 2003). Such coping mechanisms were also identified among refugees in Kampala (Macchiavello 2003) and Congolese refugees in Nairobi (Campbell et. al. 2006) and Durban (Amisi 2005).

2.5 Livelihoods of Eritreans Refugees Abroad

While according to UNHCR's 2008 Global Trends report, Eritreans represented the

second highest number of new asylum claims in the world[17] (UNHCR 16 June 2009); an extensive study of how Eritreans are surviving in exile has not been done. The most informative studies to date have looked at Eritrean populations in Sudan, which has been and will likely remain the primary first country of asylum for Eritrean refugees (Thiollet 2007), and in North America, a primary area of resettlement.

One trend that surfaced during assessments of Eritrean refugees both in Sudan and in North America in the 1990s was that women were much more likely than men to accept whatever kind of work they could find even if it meant going outside of their social status in the country of origin (Matsouka and Sorenson 1999, Kibreab 1996, McSpadden and Moussa 1993). By comparison, men were resistant to taking jobs they saw as beneath their status or background (Kibreab 1995). As women were more likely to accept the work they could find, the studies cited above showed they were becoming more greatly responsible for supporting friends and family both in the country of asylum and in the country of origin. As a result, there appeared an entire generation of women who were sacrificing their own life expectations (marriage and children) for the well-being of others. As they worked to support those who had become dependent on them, they were aging out of the acceptable marriageable age (Kibreab 1996).

Overall, Kibreab found that Eritrean refugees could either be burdens on the host community or advance the development of the host communities depending on a variety of factors. If refugees were able to use the skills and experience that they brought with them, they could not only sustain themselves but they could also help

[17] Eritreans follow Zimbabweans for number of asylum claims in 2008 with 62,700 claims. 118,500 Zimbabweans claimed asylum in 2008. http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=4a375c426&query=eritrean

develop the receiving country. Kibreab gave an example from Sudan regarding the contributions of Eritrean refugees there in the 1990s. The only field in which the Sudanese government allowed Eritreans to work was in transportation, and in this field, they excelled. Eritrean refugees owned and operated about 25% of all the trucks in Sudan greatly contributing to the development of the country. While this example alone should not be used to generalize, it does demonstrate the positive impact refugees can have if permitted to use the skills they possess. Policies of host governments, the attitude of the host population as well as the attitude of the refugees themselves all play a role in determining how successful refugees will be in re-establishing their livelihoods (Kibreab 1996).

This current study assesses the livelihoods of a sample of Eritrean refugees in Cairo by combining elements from previous research on refugee livelihood strategies to form a basic framework. This framework builds on the triangle as presented by UNHCR (UNHCR EPAU 2006), with the three sides of the triangle being the assets, capabilities and activities or strategies of the studied population. Incorporating the work of Jacobsen (2002a), Al-Sharmani (2003) and Grabska (2005), attention will be paid to the importance of social networks to the livelihoods of the study sample as an element of the intangible assets of refugees. In addition, particular attention will be on the difference between livelihoods strategies of men and women within the outlined framework.

Much of the research on the livelihoods of refugees as of the time of this writing has concentrated on refugees in camps (for example, Porter et. al. 2008, Horst 2006b, Gale 2006, Ager et. al. 1995). In addition, livelihoods research on refugees has often

focused on the increased vulnerability that comes with changes to a woman's identity as wife and mother and to a man's role as husband and father (Gale 2006, Jacobsen 2002a, Ager 1995). In the sample of Eritrean refugees studied for this current research, however, the majority of respondents were single. To date, there has been little research into the livelihood strategies of single, urban refugees. This study begins to fill this gap.

The following chapter outlines the objectives of the current study and reviews the methodology used to complete the study. A profile of participants, strategies designed and challenges encountered are presented.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

3.1 Objectives

As previously discussed, research into refugee livelihoods has focused primarily on refugees living in camp settings and more recently on protracted refugee populations (both in camp settings and in urban areas). When gender has been considered as a factor in the analysis of livelihood strategies, the focus has tended to be on men's and women's roles as husbands/fathers and wives/mothers. Little research has been conducted on livelihoods of recently arrived refugee populations and even less is known about how single urban refugees meet their daily needs. In addition, little is known about the Eritrean community in Cairo aside from what has been publicized of the mass deportations of Eritreans that have taken place over the past several years.

The results of this current research begin to answer the following questions in an effort to assess the livelihoods strategies of Eritrean men and women in Cairo:

1.) What is the basic demographic profile of the community?

   a. Age and gender: While UNHCR estimates that urban refugee populations mirror non-refugee populations with a profile of 48% female, 28% under the age of 18 and 12% over the age of 60 (Jacobsen 2006), is this representative of the Eritrean community in Cairo?

   b. Tribe & place of origin: Is the population in Cairo representative of the nine tribes of Eritrea, or are certain tribes more highly represented?

   c. Marital status & family size: Research from neighboring Sudan has shown that Eritreans in exile there are delaying family formation (Kibreab 1996). Is that the case in Cairo, as well?

   d. Educational & professional background: Eritreans arriving to Egypt

in the 1990s were believed to be primarily educated and skilled young men (Zohry 2005). Are Eritreans currently in Cairo primarily educated and skilled, as well?

e. Refugee status: Why did the Eritreans in Cairo leave Eritrea? Are they making claims for asylum with UNHCR? And are they being recognized as refugees?

f. Length of time in Cairo: How long have Eritreans been here? And are they coming directly from Eritrea, or is their arrival to Cairo a secondary movement after being in another country?

2.) What are the livelihoods strategies of Eritreans in Cairo?

a. What are the daily living expenses that Eritreans incur in Cairo?

b. How are they meeting these expenses? Are they earning money? Are they receiving money from friends and family?

c. Are Eritreans in Cairo able to work? If so, what kind of work are they finding? And if not, why not?

d. And what differences exist between the strategies of men and women?

3.2 Methodology

As this was an exploratory research endeavor targeting a previously little-researched community, the goal was to reach as many people as possible and to collect standardized quantitative data that would allow for comparison within the sample group and against results of earlier studies. The most efficient way to reach the largest number of participants and collect quantitative data was determined to be though the use of a survey. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

software was then used to compile and analyze the data collected from the 50 respondents.

In addition, the findings of previously held individual interviews and focus groups, as well as one impromptu focus group held during fieldwork will be used to supplement the findings of the survey. While survey results provide valuable quantitative data, focus groups and interviews contribute qualitative information that cannot be gathered through a survey.

3.2.1 Survey design & profile of participants

As informal interviews and focus groups conducted prior to the commencement of this research indicated that many of the Eritreans in Cairo are either single or not accompanied by a spouse or children, the unit of analysis for this study is the individual rather than the household. The questionnaire was therefore designed to be completed by an individual responding about his/her own circumstances rather than that of a household. 50 questionnaires were successfully completed during the fieldwork undertaken during November and December 2009. The questionnaire is included in the appendix of this paper (appendix 2).

Prior to completing the questionnaires, respondents were given a consent form explaining the purpose of the study and the guarantee of confidentiality. Respondents then decided whether they would agree to sign the consent form (appendix 1) and complete the questionnaire (appendix 2) or decline participation. The questionnaire consists of 58 questions including demographic and economic variables. The English-language questionnaire was translated into Arabic and Tigrinya. The

translated versions were then back-translated into English to confirm the legitimacy of the language. This process revealed only a few inconsistencies between the original English and the translated versions. For example, 'administrative/clerical professional' was translated into Arabic as 'administrative/religious professional.' The inconsistencies were corrected and the questionnaires finalized. Participants were able to complete the questionnaire in English, Arabic or Tigrinya.

At the design stage of the research, the intention was that a survey administrator would complete a questionnaire by asking the questions to a research participant and recording the answers on the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed accordingly. However, in carrying out the field research, we quickly learned that participants were more willing to participate if they were able to complete the questionnaires privately and then return them to the administrator. The research plan of having questionnaires administered individually was then revised to a strategy of explaining the purpose of study and reviewing the questionnaires with prospective participants and then giving the participant a questionnaire to complete privately and return at a designated later date.

As random sampling was impossible in a city the size of Cairo with a population as dispersed as Eritreans and because the size of the Eritrean population in Cairo is unknown, a snowball technique within various religious faiths was used to recruit participants. While this method undoubtedly excluded some people from participation, it was the most feasible way to reach a significant number of people in a

short period of time. From an informational interview held with a key informant,[18] Eritreans appear to be more segregated in Cairo by religion than they were in Eritrea. This would imply that Eritreans are more closely tied to religious institutions in Cairo than in Eritrea and would therefore be more easily reachable through religious groups than through any other means. Based on informal interviews with key informants,[19] the primary religious groups in Cairo are Catholics, Orthodox, Pentecostals and Muslims.

In an effort to have a balanced representation, these four religious groups were approached independently with a goal of receiving equal numbers of questionnaires from each faith. Several gatekeepers were recruited from within the communities through the assistance of a key informant (K.A.) who has been in Cairo for more than ten years and of a Tigray-American woman (T.G.) who was in Cairo to complete an internship. Through the referrals of these two people, four Eritreans were recruited to assist in administering the survey: one Muslim (M.O.), one Pentecostal (E.M.), one Catholic (K.A.) and one Orthodox (B.T.).

The expectation was that by using survey administrators from within the target communities, a certain level of trust would already exist that would facilitate the willingness of people to participate. This did prove to be the case. The assistance of the recruited assistants was invaluable in accessing groups of Eritreans. The following is an overview of the process of accessing each of the communities.

[18] Interview conducted with K.A., an Eritrean interpreter at UNHCR, August 17, 2009 at the Cilantro coffee shop on Gameat al-Dawal in Mohandiseen, Cairo.

[19] Interview conducted with N.O. on August 12, 2009 on the AUC Greek Campus in Cairo; interview conducted with K.A. on August 17, 2009 at the Cilantro coffee shop on Gameat al-Dawal in Mohandiseen, Cairo.

3.2.1.1 Muslim participants

In meeting with M.O., I learned that the majority of Muslim Eritreans in Cairo live in Ain Shams. As a female non-Muslim researcher, M.O and I jointly decided against attempting to meet Muslim Eritreans at a mosque. Instead, we decided that I would meet with a group of Eritreans who live in Ain Shams in a coffee shop. M.O. recruited a group of 9 Muslim participants who were willing to meet me to hear about the proposed research. Of the nine, six agreed to participate and agreed to recruit other members of their community to participate. One person declined, as he did not see a purpose in participating, another as he was suspicious of the motives of the researcher; and one person was a minor (17 years old) and therefore deemed ineligible. Willing participants were each given a questionnaire to complete themselves and several others to distribute to friends, family or neighbors who are also Muslim Eritreans. Completed questionnaires were later collected by M.O. and then returned to me. Approximately seventy-five percent of distributed questionnaires were returned.

3.2.1.2 Pentecostal participants

I was referred to two Eritrean Pentecostal congregations in Cairo: one in Mohandiseen and one in Al Isa'af. The pastor of the church in Mohandiseen declined my request to speak with members of his congregation after reviewing my research proposal, questionnaire, confidentiality agreement and supporting letter from the head of the department. No explanation was given.

The pastor of the Pentecostal church in Al Isa'af, however, agreed that I could speak with his congregation after services. My Pentecostal assistant E.M. was a member of

this congregation, so that was undoubtedly an advantage. I attended two church services and spoke with members of the congregation after the services. As was the situation with the Muslim participants, people preferred to take the questionnaires home with them to complete and then return at the following church service. After distributing questionnaires, I returned to two more services to collect completed questionnaires. Slightly more than half of the completed questionnaires were returned.

3.2.1.3 Catholic & Orthodox participants

St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Zamalek conducts services for both Catholic and Orthodox Eritreans. The priest of the congregation agreed that I could speak with his congregation; however, he recommended that I first speak with the chairman of the church committee to request his support. The chairman of the church was suspicious of the research motives and, despite the prior approval of the priest, said that I may not speak with church members on church grounds. He cited concerns that the research may either be for political purposes or to relay information to the Eritrean embassy in Cairo. He said that I was, however, welcome to speak with members outside the church compound either before or after services.

My Orthodox assistant B.T was a member of the congregation and was instrumental in enabling me to speak to as many people as I did. We stood outside the church compound and approached people individually as they were leaving the church. This was much less efficient than if we had been able to speak to groups inside the church compound as initially intended. This approach significantly reduced the numbers of potential participants as many people would leave as B.T. and I were speaking to one

or two people. In addition, as with the other groups, people were not willing to complete the questionnaires on the spot but preferred to take them home and complete them at a later time.

Additionally, one of my original informants K.A. assisted in recruiting Orthodox and Catholic participants from Mohandiseen who do not attend St. Joseph's Church to diversify the Christian pool and to increase the numbers of questionnaires for these groups given the difficulties encountered at St. Joseph's.

3.2.2 Focus Groups and Interviews

While survey results provide the hard data needed to begin to make an assessment of livelihoods strategies being engaged by respondents, they cannot provide insight beyond facts and statistics. To complement the data gathered through the survey, I will also include findings from interviews and focus groups conducted both prior to the administration of the survey and during the fieldwork itself.

I conducted one-on-one informational interviews with members of the Eritrean community while developing this thesis topic. Initial interview topics included the perceived demographic profile of the Eritrean community and the perceived most important issues facing the Eritrean community. Follow up interviews were conducted with the same informants once the thesis topic was developed to discuss strategies and approaches that would be effective and well received by respondents. In these interviews, informants shared their own views and their understanding of the views of their communities that can add additional voice to survey results.

Other voices were added to survey results from two focus groups conducted at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Zamalek, Cairo on April 2 and April 24, 2009 as part of a research project for the Methods of Research with Forced Migrants and Refugees course (MRS 576). My collaborators in this field research were classmates Danna Gobel and Paul Vieira. In total, there were ten participants in the focus groups. Four participants were single, two were married and living with their spouses in Cairo, and four were married but their spouses were still in Eritrea. In addition, one participant reported living with an aunt and uncle. Though the topic of the focus groups was family changes resulting from displacement, focus group participants were free to speak about whatever issues were most pressing for them.

Finally, one impromptu focus group was conducted during the course of survey administration. On the evening of December 13, 2009, one informant gathered a group of six Eritreans at his apartment in Nasr City, Cairo to complete the survey. My introduction to the research project gave way to a group discussion in which participants shared their views of and frustration resulting from living in Cairo. Someone points that were raised during the discussion provide additional insight into survey results.

3.2.3 Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Limitations in reaching urban refugees have been noted by multiple refugee researchers (Jacobsen 2006, Grabska 2005, Kibreab 1996). Refugees tend to keep a low profile and intentionally hide from authorities. In a city as large as Cairo, any minority group that wishes to remain anonymous can do so fairly easily. With that in mind, the most feasible way to reach a significant number of a relatively small group

was through organized entry points. These entry points were through religious institutions and groups as previously outlined. This approach excluded Eritreans not involved with any religious group or with a religious group not included in this study.

In addition, there comes a certain risk of using research assistants from within the community. This approach may bias the sample toward a certain set of people (those closer to the assistant). During the fieldwork, however, it became clear that utilizing the assistance of a known community member was an invaluable asset. Any possible limitations brought about by being assisted by a community member were undoubtedly outweighed by the advantages.

An additional concern was that some participants might have been resistant to disclosing certain information that they do not wish the assistant to know. This concern was realized and was addressed by allowing prospective participants to complete the questionnaires privately and then return them to the assistants at a later time.

During the course of the research, I remained mindful of the affiliation of some my assistants to agencies serving the Eritrean community like Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance[20] (AMERA), which provides legal assistance and psycho-social services to refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt, the International Organization for Migration[21] (IOM), which provides assistance with resettlement and repatriation operations from Egypt, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees[22] (UNHCR). One of my initial informants was an interpreter for UNHCR at the time of

[20] http://www.amera-uk.org/egypt/index_eg.html
[21] http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/egypt
[22] http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486356.html

interviews, while another previously worked for AMERA and was an interpreter for IOM at the time of interview. My assistants and I repeatedly emphasized that the immediate purpose of the survey was to learn about the community and that the research was in no way affiliated with any service provider, UNHCR or the Eritrean embassy, which was a concern expressed by several Eritreans when they were initially approached about completing the questionnaire.

In addition, all participants signed a consent form before completing the questionnaire that explained both the confidentiality of individual responses and the independent nature of the study. Both the questionnaire and the consent form are included in the appendix of this paper (appendices 1 and 2).

3.3 Challenges encountered

A general level of suspicion and skepticism exists within the Eritrean community. Eritreans in Egypt are targeted for arrest and deportation by Egyptian security forces. In addition, several Eritreans in Cairo have reported to me that they fear monitoring by their own government through Eritrean security agents from the embassy. How much of their fear is based in fact or in paranoia is unclear, but their fear itself is real. While I expected resistance from prospective participants for this reason, I did not expect two churches to deny my request to talk to their congregations for these reasons.

The return of questionnaires was a challenge. Allowing participants to take questionnaires home with them to complete privately increased the number of people willing to answer the questions, however at the same time, allowing questionnaires to

be taken home also lowers the return rate. While my initial intention was to have participants complete the questionnaires on site, participants were unwilling to do so. The risk of non-return was a risk that was unavoidable. The return rates at the Pentecostal and Catholic churches were approximately 50%. The return rates within the Muslim and Orthodox communities were higher but not 100%.

The results of the 50 questionnaires that were returned along with the views expressed by focus group participants and interviewees provided an insight into the lives of the participants. Data collected provides detailed information about the demographic profile of the participants and their livelihood strategies. A compilation and analysis of the data is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: SURVEY RESULTS

This chapter begins by introducing the Eritreans surveyed. Who are they, and why are they here? Once a basic demographic profile of respondents is provided, the livelihoods strategies in which respondents are engaged will be assessed, supplemented by findings from focus groups and individual interviews conducted with Eritrean refugees in Cairo prior to and during the administration of the survey.

4.1 Demographic Profile

The Eritreans surveyed in this study were predominantly male, single and childless. In addition, the majority of the surveyed sample was from an urban background and was well educated. The demographic make up of the sampled group is reflective of the primary flows of people out of Eritrea. The profile is not, however, representative of the greater population in Eritrea; nor is it similar to the profiles of other refugee groups in Cairo.

4.1.1 Age, Gender and Reason for Flight

The surveyed sample of Eritreans in Cairo was predominantly comprised of young adults, with 72% of respondents (n=36) being between the ages of 18 and 30, and with none over the age of 50.[23] Men comprised over half of the survey sample - 58% (n=29).[24] A survey conducted on female domestic workers in Cairo in 2007 found similar results for the ages of the 118 Eritrean respondents with 78% of respondents being between the ages of 20 and 29.

[23] By comparison, in Eritrea, 43% of the population is under the age of 15 https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/er.html

[24] While the ratio of men to women in the sample of Cairo was Eritrea between the ages of 15 and 64 in 2009 was 0.96 male(s) to 1 female,[24] the ratio in the Cairo sample was 1.45 male(s) to 1 female within the entire sample surveyed (age range 18 to 50).

Table 1: Age

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1-20	2	4.0
	21-25	11	22.0
	26-30	23	46.0
	31-35	7	14.0
	36-40	6	12.0
	46-50	1	2.0
	Total	50	100.0

Table 2: Gender

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	male	29	58.0
	female	20	40.0
	Total	49	98.0
Missing	System	1	2.0
Total		50	100.0

The age composition of the Eritreans surveyed in Cairo reflects the flow of people leaving Eritrea. As described in chapter 1, young adults are currently being targeted by the government of Eritrea for indefinite military conscription. As more than a third of the surveyed sample reported that they fled military service,[25] at least a third of the population would logically be comprised of young adults. In addition, while people of all ages are fleeing religious persecution in Eritrea,[26] only those with the means and ability to travel are able to reach Egypt. Families with children and/or elderly dependents may be less likely to be able to reach Egypt and may instead remain in countries closer to and more easily accessible from Eritrea like Ethiopia and Sudan.

[25] Thirty-eight percent of respondents (n=19) reported having fled Eritrea due to the policy of military conscription.

[26] Thirty-four percent of respondents (n=17) reported having fled Eritrea as a result of religious persecution. As would be expected based on country of origin information, the majority (75%, n=12) of respondents who cited religious persecution as the reason for flight were Pentecostal.

Table 3: Reason for Leaving Eritrea

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Draft evasion	7	14.0
	Military desertion	12	24.0
	Religious persecution	17	34.0
	Looking for employment opportunities	1	2.0
	Family reunification	2	4.0
	General persecution	1	2.0
	Other	9	18.0
	Total	49	98.0
Missing	System	1	2.0
Total		50	100.0

Similarly, the results of the domestic workers survey conducted in 2007 found that the majority of Eritrean respondents fled Eritrea as a result of persecution. Seventy-four percent of respondents came to Egypt as asylum seekers, while only 17% came to look for employment.

The demographic profile of the Eritreans sampled is notably different than the profile of urban refugees. UNHCR estimates that urban refugee populations mirror non-refugee urban populations with a profile of 48% female, 28% under the age of 18 and 12% over the age of 60 (Jacobsen 2006). This survey's results, however, showed that only 40% of respondents were female, and no respondents were over the age of 50. Sixteen percent of the surveyed group had children. 16 of the total of 22 children were under 18 years of age.[27] If these children were added to the population sample along with the two reported spouses cohabitating with the respondents, the population

[27] Only 16% (n=8) of the sample surveyed had children. The age range of the children was from two years to 25 years, with 73% (n=16) being under the age of 18.

breakdown would show 22% of the population is under the age of 18[28], slightly less than the urban refugee estimate of 28%. Overall, the surveyed sample is predominantly of a working age with few children and no elderly.

4.1.2 Regional, Ethnic and Linguistic Backgrounds

Seventy-two percent of respondents were from the four largest cities in Eritrea, with 50% of survey respondents originating from Asmara, the national capital and largest city in Eritrea, alone.[29] By contrast, only 21% of the population in Eritrea in 2008 was estimated to be urban.[30] While less than 30% of those surveyed in Cairo were from a rural background, the national average in Eritrea is almost 80% rural.

While government persecution on religious grounds and government round-ups of draft evaders and military deserters are equally documented in both urban and rural areas (UK Home Office 2009), Eritreans in urban areas are likely to be more readily able to flee the country. Urban populations, both in Eritrea and elsewhere in Africa, have greater access to education and income (Jamal and Meeks 1988). Greater education and financial means facilitate migration, whether forced or voluntary. The characteristics and advantages of urban life likely account, at least in part, for the high concentration of respondents with an urban background.

As in Eritrea, Tigrinyans were the largest group in the Cairo sample comprising 60% of the group surveyed, as compared to 50% of the total population in Eritrea. Tigres are the second largest group comprising 10% of the group surveyed. In Eritrea,

[28] 50 respondents + 2 reported cohabitating spouses + 22 reported children = 74 people, 16 of whom are under age 18. Though not an exact age breakdown, these numbers may give an idea of the age profile of the population.
[29] For a list of places of origin, see appendix 3.
[30] https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/er.html

Tigres are also the second largest tribe, though they make up 40% of the total population. The main difference in tribal composition in Eritrea and in the Cairo sample is that in the Cairo sample, the next largest groups were the Saho (comprising 14% of the surveyed sample) and the Bilen (also comprising 14% of the surveyed sample) while in Eritrea, these two groups combined formed less than 3% of the total population in 2009.[31]

Among the sample surveyed in Cairo, Tigrinya is the most widely spoken language.[32] More than half of respondents (n=30) reported that Tigrinya was their native language. An additional 34% of respondents (n=17) reported that though Tigrinya was not their first language, they did speak Tigrinya, meaning that 47 of 50 respondents (97%) spoke Tigrinya. Likewise, 70% (n=35) reported that Tigrinya was the primary language spoken in their homes at the time of the survey, followed by 26% (n=13) who reported that Arabic was their primary language. Fourteen percent of respondents (n=7) reported that they also spoke English, and 18% of respondents (n=9) reported attending English classes to learn or strengthen their English.

4.1.3 Religion

The majority of the surveyed sample was Christian (66%; n=33) and 32% (n=16) Muslim. The religious composition of the surveyed sample is attributable to the sampling technique used in the research as outlined in Chapter 3 (3.2.1 Survey Design and Profile of Participants). The survey conducted with Eritrean domestic workers

[31] Estimates of the tribal composition of the general population in Eritrea can be found in the CIA World Factbook on Eritrea: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/er.html

[32] Tigrinya is one of the three official languages of Eritrea. The other two are English and Standard Arabic (UK Home Office 2009).

found a more heavily Christian population with 93% of respondents being Christian and 7% being Muslim.

Table 4: Religion

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Eritrean Orthodox	11	22.0
	Roman Catholic	7	14.0
	Evangelical Protestant	2	4.0
	Pentecostal Holiness	13	26.0
	Muslim	16	32.0
	Total	49	98.0
Missing	System	1	2.0
Total		50	100.0

While there are no reliable statistics on the religious composition of the population of Eritrea, as the government has not allowed a census to be taken, estimates are that approximately half of the population is Sunni Muslim, 30% is Orthodox Christian and 13% is Roman Catholic. Protestants, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhists, Hindus, and Baha'is are estimated to comprise less than 5% of the total population.[33]

4.1.4 Marital Status and Children

The surveyed group was overwhelmingly single, with 82% (n=41) reporting never having married. Of the six respondents who reported being married, only two reported currently living with their spouse. Two reported that their spouses were in Eritrea, and two report that their spouses were in another country. Four of the married respondents were women, while the other two were men.

[33] Estimates http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108367.htm (US State Dept's International Religious Freedom Report 2008)

Table 5: Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	never married	41	82.0
	married	6	12.0
	separated	1	2.0
	widowed	1	2.0
	Total	49	98.0
Missing	System	1	2.0
Total		50	100.0

The Eritreans surveyed are unlike other refugee groups in Cairo with regard to marital status. A UNHCR-commissioned study of refugees in Cairo found that, overall, half of the refugees surveyed[34] were married, 40% were single and 10% were either widowed or divorced (UNHCR RO-Cairo 2003). Somalis matched this profile closely as per the findings of a separate study with 50% being married and 39% being single (Al-Sharmani 2003). Sudanese were slightly less likely to be married than the overall average with 41% being married while 39% were single (Grabska 2005). Delaying marriage appears to be a livelihood strategy being engaged by Eritrean respondents. This hypothesis will be explored in greater detail in chapters four and five.

In the sample group, only eight of the 50 respondents reported having children; and of the eight, five had only one or two children. Half of respondents with children reported that their children were living with them in Cairo while the other half reported that their children were in Eritrea. Among the 20 women surveyed, there were a total of 17 children. The estimated birth rate for this small sample

[34] The UNHCR study included Sudanese, Somalis, Ethiopians, Sierra Leoneans, Yemenis, Afghanis and Liberians participants.

approximately 0.85 children per woman. By comparison, the birth rate in Eritrea was estimated in 2009 to be 4.72 children per woman. [35]

Table 6: Number of Children

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	3	6.0
	2	2	4.0
	3-4	1	2.0
	5-6	1	2.0
	>6	1	2.0
	0	40	80.0
	Total	48	96.0
Missing	System	2	4.0
Total		50	100.0

Results of the domestic workers survey in 2007 showed similar results for Eritrean respondents with 80% reporting never having married. Of the 15 respondents who were married, 11 stated that their husbands were living in Egypt. Similarly, only 19% of domestic workers surveyed reported having children. Approximately half of the respondents with children reported that their children are residing with them in Egypt.

The demographic profile of Eritreans surveyed in Cairo bears similarities to that of Eritrean refugees who fled to North America. In North America, Eritrean refugee communities in urban areas have tended to be predominantly male, single, educated and from urban areas (McSpadden and Moussa 1993, Matsuoka and Sorenson 1999). This profile matches the sample in Cairo, though the ratio of men to women was closer than what was found in North America in the 1990s. However, as more Eritrean women began arriving to North American in the later 1990s (Matsouka and

[35] https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/er.html

Sorenson 1999), it is likely that at this time, the gap in the ratio of men to women has narrowed there as well.

4.1.5 Flight to Cairo

The majority of Eritreans surveyed (78%, n=39) have been in Cairo three or fewer years, though an additional 8% (n=4) have been in Cairo 15 or more years. Similarly, 72% of Eritrean domestic workers surveyed previously had been in Egypt for four or fewer years.

Sixty percent of respondents in the current research (n=30) did not come directly to Egypt from Eritrea. The majority of respondents (90%, n=27) who did not come directly to Egypt were in Sudan prior to their arrival to Cairo. Two respondents reported being in Ethiopia prior to coming to Egypt, and one reported being in Libya prior to arriving to Egypt. In addition, five respondents reported that they were born outside of Eritrea.

Table 7: Years in Cairo

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	1	2	4.0
	2	25	50.0
	3	12	24.0
	4	3	6.0
	5	2	4.0
	8	1	2.0
	15	2	4.0
	16	1	2.0
	21	1	2.0
	Total	49	98.0
Missing	System	1	2.0
Total		50	100.0

In focus groups conducted with Eritrean refugees, the majority of participants had also come to Cairo from Khartoum. They agreed that they had better lives in Khartoum than in Cairo as they were more successful in finding employment and suffered less harassment and discrimination than they do here. All participants who were in Khartoum prior to coming to Cairo stated that the reason they left Khartoum was due to fear of abduction by Eritrean security forces reportedly operating in Khartoum. If it were not for this fear, all agreed that they would have remained in Khartoum.

Almost half of survey respondents (46%, n=23) reported that Egypt was meant to be a transit country on their way to another country, while another 20% (n=10) reported that they came to Egypt because they had friends and family already in the country. Eighteen percent (n=9) reported that they came to Egypt due primarily to its proximity to Eritrea.

Over half of respondents (56%, n=28) reported that they chose Cairo rather than another city in Egypt due to the concentration of service agencies, including UNHCR, in the city. Another 16% (n=8) reported that they chose Cairo because friends and family were already living in the city.

The Eritreans surveyed in Cairo were predominantly educated, young adults. The differences between the demographic profile of the sample and of the general population in Eritrea reflects the demographics of the Eritreans leaving Eritrea and the likelihood of the ability of those leaving to reach Egypt. The most striking feature of the Eritrean sample, however, is not as readily explainable, namely the great majority of the sample in Cairo was single and childless. This is in contrast both to Eritreans of this age group in Eritrea and to other refugee groups in Cairo. A possible explanation lies within the livelihoods strategies that can be identified among the Eritreans in the sample surveyed. Men and women were encountering different opportunities and different challenges in establishing a livelihood in Cairo that are affecting their decisions regarding family formation.

4.2 Livelihoods Strategies

The Eritreans surveyed in this study were supporting themselves with income earned from paid employment, with assistance from friends and family in Egypt and with remittances received from outside of the country. Overall, employed Eritreans surveyed reported that their total income (wages earned combined with other financial support) exceeded their expenses. Unemployed respondents actually spent more on

daily expenses than employed respondents and met these expenses with support from the Eritrean community in Egypt and with remittances received from abroad.

The results of the questionnaires completed by 50 Eritreans in Cairo provide insight into their livelihoods. Using a framework comprised of capabilities, activities and strategies, and assets (both tangible and intangible) as outlined in Chapter 2 (UNHCR EPAU 2006, Chambers 1995) to assess the situations of the 50 respondents highlights where strengths and challenges lie, as well as what differences exist between male and female participants' strategies. With this analysis, we can begin to understand how these Eritrean respondents have been supporting themselves in Cairo.

4.2.1 Capabilities

Capabilities include the knowledge, skills, health and other factors that enable a refugee to sustain him/herself. The Eritreans surveyed brought with them education, experience, youth and health. All of these factors should have contributed to enabling respondents to create a productive livelihood in Cairo.

4.2.1.1 Educational and Professional Background

All respondents had at least some primary education. Forty-two percent (n= 21) had completed secondary school, while another 44% (n=22) had gone beyond secondary school with 18% (n=9) of those having completed university. Men were more educated than women with 62% of men (n=18) having more than a secondary school education, as compared to 20% of women (n=4). The Eritreans surveyed in Cairo were significantly more educated that the general population in Eritrea. While the

school expectancy rate in Eritrea was 5 years in 2004,[36] 94% of the respondents surveyed in Cairo had gone beyond 5 years of education.

Table 8: Level of Education

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Some primary	1	2.0
	Completed primary	2	4.0
	Some secondary	4	8.0
	Completed secondary	21	42.0
	Some vocational	2	4.0
	Completed vocational	3	6.0
	Some university	8	16.0
	Completed university	8	16.0
	Some post-graduate	1	2.0
	Total	50	100.0

The largest percentage of participants (24%, n=12) reported being in school prior to leaving Eritrea, followed by 16% of participants (n=8) who were in the military.[37] Eight percent (n=4) were homemakers, while another 10% (n=5) reported that they were unemployed. Occupations reported included the crafts industry, office and government work, farming and teaching.

[36] https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/er.html
[37] Respondents did not denote whether they were in the military voluntarily or if they were conscripted.

Table 9: Occupation in Eritrea

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Unemployed	5	10.0
	Homemaker	4	8.0
	Student	12	24.0
	Farmer, fisherman, hunter	1	2.0
	Craftsman	3	6.0
	Driver	1	2.0
	Vender/sales occupation	1	2.0
	Government employee (non-military)	3	6.0
	Military	8	16.0
	Administrative/clerical worker	3	6.0
	Educator	1	2.0
	Information technology	1	2.0
	other	5	10.0
	Total	48	96.0
Missing	System	2	4.0
Total		50	100.0

Of the five respondents who were in the highest income bracket in the survey, three had completed secondary school, and the remaining two had completed university. Having an education, however, did not guarantee an income. All respondents who reported earning no income in an average month had at least attended some secondary school, with several having attended some university.

As previously discussed, prospective employers in Egypt have been found to value experience over education and that education itself does not lead directly to employment in the current labor market. In addition, the leading sectors absorbing new entrants into the labor market in Egypt are agriculture, hunting and fishing (El

Zanatay and Associates 2007). As can be seen in the table above, however, only one respondent has experience in these fields. Therefore, the experience and education among the group of respondents may not be beneficial in establishing a productive livelihood in the context of Cairo.

4.2.1.2 Other Capabilities

Respondents' responses, for the most part, presented the image of a young, healthy and childless group of people. All of these characteristics are generally believed to be advantageous when establishing a livelihood strategy, but is this the case in Cairo?

The majority of the population surveyed was between the ages of 18 and 30 – old enough to enter the labor market and not too old to be excluded from it. In Cairo, however, being in this age group is not only not advantageous, but may actually be a disadvantage. Egyptians under 30 constitute both the largest group entering the labor force and the largest percentage of unemployed people. In addition, young Egyptians are more educated when entering the labor market than ever before (El Zanaty and Associates 2007). Eritrean respondents are therefore competing with Egyptians in the same age bracket with comparable or greater levels of education for a relatively limited number of jobs.

Only eight of the respondents reported having children. While having children would not necessarily preclude someone from finding employment, childcare responsibilities may impede someone's access to the labor market. Such a tendency can be seen in this sample of Eritreans. Three of the four respondents with children in Cairo were not working, while three of the four respondents whose children were in Eritrea were

working. No one, however, reported that lack of childcare was a barrier to employment.

All three respondents who had children in Cairo and were not working reported that they did not wish to work. These three women each had at least three children and were married. Two of the three women reported that their husbands were living with them in Cairo, while the third reported that her husband was in a third country. As respondents were asked about the desire to work in addition to the feasibility of working, these three respondents had made the decision that they would prefer not to work (as opposed to stating that they were not able to work), presumably to remain home with their children. Given that all three were married and reported not wishing to work, the plausible supposition would be that their spouses were able to provide the financial support the family needed.

Finally, the general health of respondents did not appear to be an impediment to establishing a livelihood. Only two respondents reported that a health problem was the reason they were not employed. In addition, more employed respondents actually reported having health care related expenses than did unemployed respondents.[38]

4.2.2 Activities and Strategies

Activities and strategies include how a refugee uses his/her assets and capabilities to create a self-sustaining livelihood strategy. The primary activity upon which respondents surveyed in Cairo relied to establish their livelihoods was employment. The most common form of employment among the surveyed sample was domestic

[38] Respondents who were not working were slightly less likely to spend money on health care with 67% of unemployed respondents (n=16) reporting usually having medical expenses on a monthly basis as compared to 77% of employed respondents (n=20).

work. Overall, women surveyed were more successful in finding employment than men.

4.2.2.1 Employment

Fifty percent of the Eritreans surveyed for this research reported that they were working at the time of the survey, and a total of 66% reported that they either were working or had worked in Cairo in the past. Of those who were not employed at the time of the survey, three respondents reported that they did not wish to be employed. In all, 42% (n=21) of those surveyed were not employed but would have liked to be employed.

Of particular note, four out of five respondents who reported that they were unemployed in Eritrea were employed in Cairo. When combining all respondents who were not working in Eritrea,[39] approximately half (48%, n=10) were working at the time of the survey. When compared by gender, more women who were not working in Eritrea had begun working in Cairo than men.

While 65% (n=13) of women reported working at the time of the survey, only 45% (n=13) of men reported being employed. For those not employed but who had worked in the past, the breakdown between the genders is very similar with 35% (n=6) of unemployed men reporting that they had worked in the past, and 37.5% (n=3) of unemployed women reporting the same. The only respondents who reported that they were not employed and would not like to be employed, however, were women whose children are living with them in Cairo (n=3), as discussed above.

[39] This figure combines those who reported that they were unemployed along with students and homemakers.

The most common form of employment among the sample surveyed was domestic work, with 52% of employed respondents (n=13) reporting that they were employed as domestic workers. This number included 3 men.

The issue of domestic work is a topic of research unto itself. Given the restrictions of the labor market, domestic work is the only form of employment available to many refugees in Cairo. Domestic work in Egypt, however, is excluded from domestic labor laws, meaning that such laws do not protect domestic workers. As Egypt formally views domestic work as a personal matter rather than an employment matter, domestic workers are not entitled to the same rights as other employees (Jureidini 2009). In this situation, domestic workers are vulnerable to the abuse and exploitation with little or no recourse.

Table 10: Moneymaking Activity

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	domestic worker	13	26.0
	daily paid laborer	5	10.0
	interpreter/translator	5	10.0
	other	2	4.0
	Total	25	50.0
Missing	System	25	50.0
Total		50	100.0

Though a sample size of 50 makes drawing conclusions about the greater community of Eritreans risky, it is interesting to consider survey results of this group while reviewing the findings of other communities studied. UNHCR's survey on livelihoods

of refugee communities[40] in Cairo found that only 40% of the overall population surveyed was working when surveyed (UNHCR RO-Cairo 2003). More specifically, while only 20% of Somalis reported working during a 2003 livelihoods assessment of their community (Al-Shamani 2003), 75% of Sudanese reported working in a separate study of that community[41] (Grabska 2005). The UNHCR survey found similar results with Somalis having the lowest rate of employment among African refugees in Cairo (21%) and Sudanese having the highest (60%) (UNHCR RO-Cairo 2003).

4.2.2.2 Education in Cairo

Approximately one third (32%) of respondents (n=16) reported that they were attending classes at the time of the survey. The largest percentage of those attending classes (56%, n=9) were attending English classes, followed by Arabic classes (three individuals) and vocational training classes (two individuals). As the top response as to what was the perceived barrier to employment from respondents was language difficulty, respondents may be attending languages classes with the goal of increased marketability in the labor market in Cairo.

However, another possible explanation for the interest in learning English may be the desire among survey respondents and focus group participants for resettlement to a third country (primarily the U.S., Canada or Australia). In the focus groups, all participants stated the desire to be resettled to another country as they were not comfortable living in Cairo and did not believe that a return to Eritrea would be

[40] The UNHCR study included Sudanese, Somalis, Ethiopians, Sierra Leoneans, Yemenis, Afghanis and Liberians participants.
[41] In Grabska's study, the study group included Northern, Western and Southern Sudanese.

possible in the foreseeable future. When asked why they could not remain in Cairo, one participant succinctly stated, "This is not life."[42]

4.2.3 Assets

Assets include things that a refugee owns and/or can access. Assets can be divided into tangible and intangible assets (Chambers 1995). Tangible assets include income and material goods, while intangible assets include access to such goods, as well as social support networks. A minority of Eritreans surveyed in Cairo brought money with them from Eritrea, but many more are generating income here through employment, while unemployed respondents are receiving financial support sufficient to meet their basic needs.

4.2.3.1 Tangible Assets

Money is the primary tangible asset reported by respondents. Only 22% of respondents (n=11) brought money with them from Eritrea to meet their needs upon arrival.[43] Therefore, the majority (if not all) of respondents have relied on new income since arriving to Cairo.

4.2.3.1.1 Income

Eritreans surveyed were meeting their expenses predominantly with income earned through work; however, income earned was at times supplemented with assistance from friends and family in Egypt or with remittances received from abroad. Eritreans surveyed who were not working were also meeting their expenses with remittances received from abroad. While in UNHCR's survey of refugees in Cairo overall

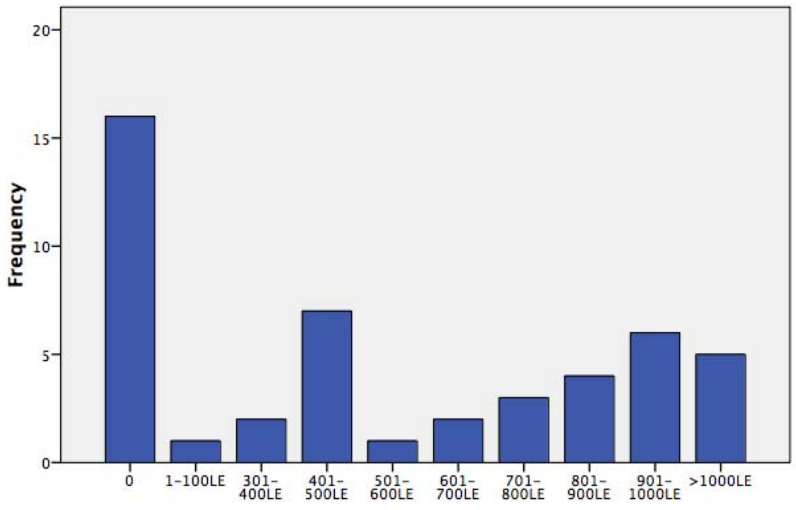
[42] Focus group participant K, a 32 year-old man, single. Focus group April 24th, 2009, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Zamalek, Cairo.
[43] Respondents were not asked to reveal how much money they brought with them from Eritrea.

expenses surpassed income for the target populations (UNHCR RO-Cairo 2003), this was not the case for the Eritreans surveyed in the current study.

4.2.3.1.1.1 Earned Income

Overall, 62% of respondents (n=28) reported earning some amount of money in an average month,[44] while 32% (n=16) reported earning nothing. Proportionately, more male respondents reported no earned income than female respondents.[45] Twenty percent of respondents (n=10) reported earning less than 500 LE (Egyptian pounds) in an average month. Thirty-two percent (n=16) reported earning between 500 and 1000 LE in an average month, and 10% (n=5) reported earning more than 1000 LE in an average month.

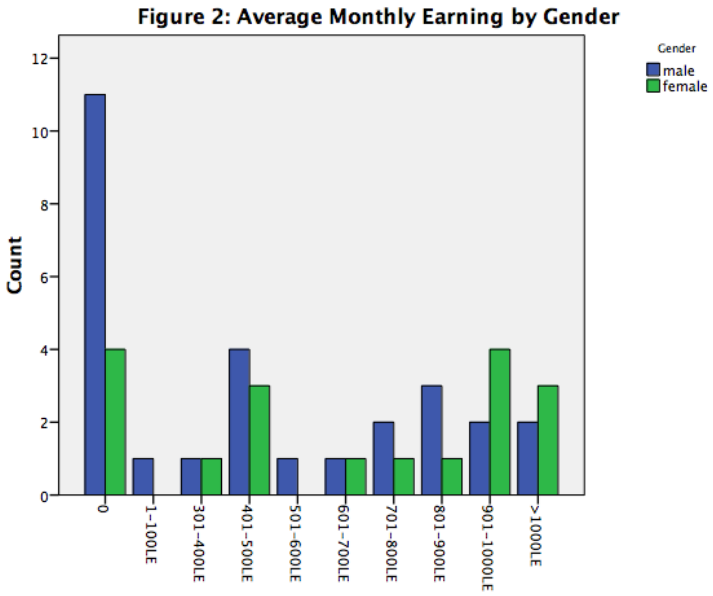
Figure 1: Average Monthly Earned Income



[44] While 52% of respondents reported that they were not working at the time of the survey, only 32% reported not earning any money in an average month. As the question posed to respondents was 'How much do you earn in an average month?' and was not specific to the time of the survey, I would theorize that respondents not employed when surveyed were reporting how much they generally earn in a month when employed. Three respondents did not answer the question.

[45] While 39% of men (n= 11) reported earning nothing in an average month, only 22% of women (n=4) reported earning nothing.

Women were more highly represented in the higher income categories, with three female respondents earning more than 1000 LE in an average month as compared to two male respondents.



The highest paid respondents were working as domestic workers or interpreters/translators. Of the five respondents who reported earning more than 1000 LE in an average month, three were working as domestic workers, and the remaining two were working as interpreters/translators.

The findings regarding income of domestic workers appear to be fairly representative of the situation. The survey of domestic workers conducted prior to this study found that more than half of respondents (59%) reported earning more than 1000LE in a month.

4.2.3.1.1.2 Other Income

Approximately half of respondents reported that they received financial assistance from family and/or friends. Approximately 30% received financial support from others in Cairo, almost half of respondents reported that they receive financial support from family and/or friends in another country, and 4 respondents reported that they received financial support from family and/or friends still in Eritrea.[46] Of those who reported how they use this money, all reported that the money was used for basic living expenses like food and rent. In addition, 16% of respondents (n=8) reported that they received financial assistance from an agency in Cairo, primarily in the form of an educational grant.

Proportionately, male respondents were receiving financial support from friends and/or family than female respondents. Likewise, unemployed respondents received more financial support than employed respondents. While 74% of respondents who were not working (n=17) received money from abroad (a country other than Eritrea) in an average month, only 23% of those working received money. As male respondents were proportionally more likely to be unemployed than female respondents, men's higher rate of receipt of financial support would be expected.

Other studies on urban refugees (Campbell et. al. 2006, Amisi 2005) also found that refugees depended, at least in part, on remittances to meet their needs. The reported rates of receiving remittances among Sudanese and Somalis were proportional to the reported rates of employment. Somalis, who had a lower rate of employment, reported a higher rate of receiving remittances (82%, Al-Sharmani 2003). Sudanese,

[46] 30% of respondents (n=15) reported receiving financial assistance from others in Egypt, 46% of respondents (n=23) reported receiving funds from another country (not Egypt or Eritrea) and 8% of respondents (n=4) reported receiving funds from Eritrea.

conversely, who had a higher rate of employment, reported a lower rate of receiving remittances (35%, Grabska 2005).

For breakdowns of income received from all sources, please see appendix 4, figures 4 through 7.

4.2.3.2 Expenses

4.2.3.2.1 Daily Living Expenses

Overall, respondents reported spending more on rent (including utilities) than on anything else. Though some respondents reported spending little on rent, no one reported living rent-free. Seventy percent of respondents (n=35) reported spending between 200 and 600 LE in an average month on rent and utilities. Proportionately, men and women spent approximately the same amount on rent.

All respondents reported spending more than 100 LE per month on food for themselves and their immediately family members.[47] Almost three-quarters (72%, n=36) of respondents reported spending between 100 and 400 LE in an average month on food. As with rent expenses, men and women proportionately spent similarly on food.

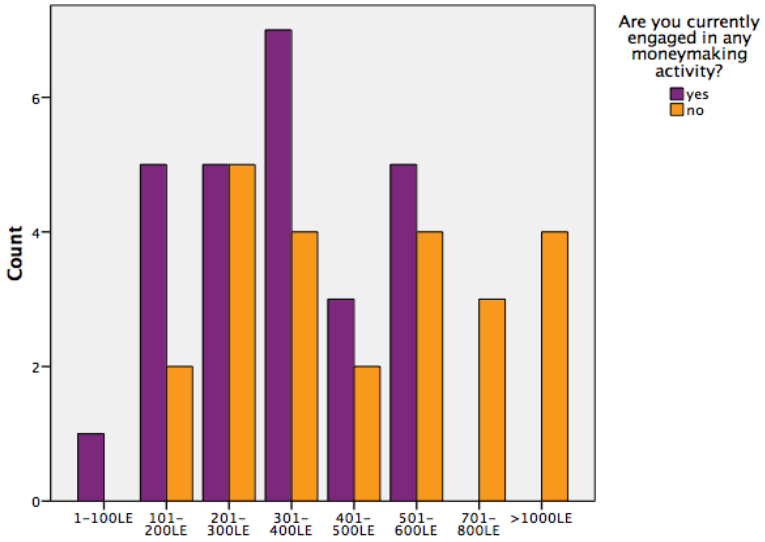
The majority of respondents (72%, n=36) reported having some medical expenses or health care costs in an average month. Sixty-three percent of respondents (n=31) reported spending less than 400 LE on medical expenses in an average month.

[47] Immediate family members were defined as spouse and/or children and/or parents living in the same household as the respondent.

Proportionately, more women reported medical expenses or health care costs with 90% of women (n=18) reporting such expenses as compared to 59% of men (n=17).

Overall, unemployed respondents reported spending more in an average month than employed respondents. For example, only four respondents reported spending more than 1000LE per month on rent, and all four were unemployed. Similarly, the highest spending bracket for food expenses (701-800 LE) was only reported by two respondents, both unemployed.[48]

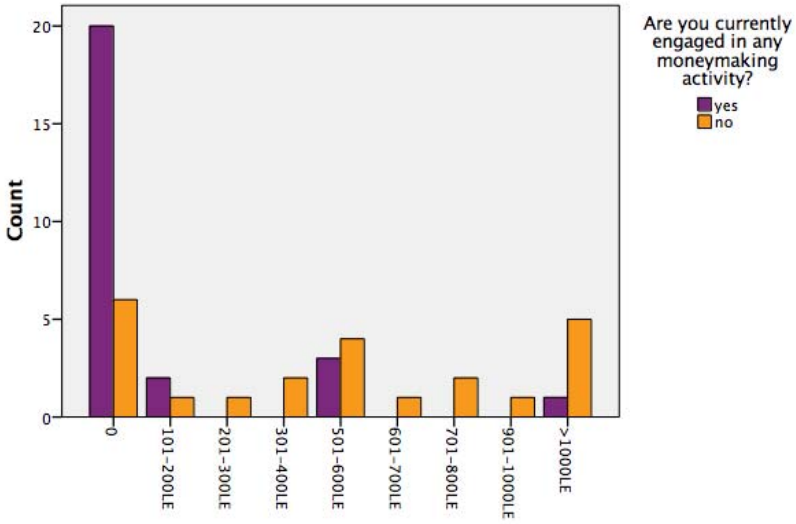
Figure 3: Average Monthly Housing Expenses



The difference in expenses between employed and unemployed can be explained in part by the fact that unemployed respondents reported receiving more financial support from both inside and outside of Egypt.

[48] For a breakdown of food expenses, see appendix 5, figure 8.

Figure 4: Average monthly amount received from friends/family outside Egypt/Eritrea?



4.2.3.2.2 Support to Others

The majority of respondents reported not spending any money supporting friends or family in Egypt, in Eritrea or in any other country in an average month. However, some did. Thirty-four percent of respondents (n=17) reported spending money supporting people in Egypt, though all spent less than 300 LE in an average month. Only two respondents reported spending money to assist friends or relatives living in a country other than Egypt or Eritrea.

Seven respondents reported sending money to Eritrea with the range of money sent being between less than 100 LE to 800 LE in an average month. Of particular note, only respondents working as domestic workers in this sample reported remitting money to Eritrea. The 2007 survey of female domestic workers in Cairo found that approximately 25% of respondents remitted money to Eritrea. By comparison, most Sudanese (96%) and more than half of Ethiopian (54%) and Nigerian (59%) respondents reported sending money home. Of the Eritreans who reported sending

money home, most sent to their mothers or to their family as a unit, and most reported that the money was used for monthly household expenses.

Proportionately, women in this sample were spending more money supporting friends and family than men. As with other expenses, employed respondents spent more supporting others, though several unemployed respondents also reported spending money supporting friends and family.

For additional information on monthly expenses supporting others as reported by respondents, see appendix 6, figures 9 through 11.

4.2.3.2 Intangible Assets

Intangible assets can be as important, or possibly more important, than tangible assets. The importance of legal status cannot be understated. Likewise, the importance of community members has been noted in livelihoods strategies of other refugee communities. Similarly, this support is an important element of Eritrean respondents' livelihoods strategies.

4.2.3.2.1 Legal Status

Almost all of respondents (92%, n=46) were registered with UNHCR. Of those who had registered, more than half (60%, n=30) had been granted refugee status. Eleven respondents were recognized as asylum seekers, and four respondents had closed files.[49] Only 6 respondents had had a resettlement interview, however, and none had

[49] One respondent who reported being registered with UNHCR did not disclose his/her status.

been given a final decision of the interview. Eritreans in this sample, therefore, will likely remain in Cairo for the immediate foreseeable future.

Of respondents who were registered with UNHCR, more than half (n=25) were working. There was little difference between those with blue cards (recognized refugees) and those with yellow cards (registered asylum seekers) concerning employment with approximately half of each group employed at the time of the survey. Three of the four respondents with closed files were also working at the time of the survey.

Eritrean survey respondents who also participated in a focus group held in a respondent's apartment in Nasr City reported that they believed that UNHCR was of no help to them and that they doubted the relevance of registering with the agency. They were continuing to register with UNHCR, however, in the hopes of being resettled out of Egypt. As they expected no immediate assistance from the agency, they continued working to the extent possible to support themselves while in Egypt.

By comparison, only one of the four respondents not registered with the refugee agency was working. The three unemployed respondents, however, reported receiving financial support both from within and outside of Egypt, with two reporting receiving more than 1000LE in an average month.

4.2.3.2.2 Social Networks

Social networks were relied upon on arrival and throughout Eritreans' stay in Cairo. Eighty-eight percent of respondents stayed with community members (including

friends, family and strangers) when they initially arrived to Cairo, and 64% met their initial expenses with the assistance of community members.

In addition, the most common means of finding employment for the sample surveyed was through the Eritrean social network. Sixty-four percent of respondents (n=21) who reported how they found their job reported that they found their job through a member of the Eritrean community, as compared to only three respondents (9%) who found work through a job posting[50] or two respondents (6%) who found work through an Egyptian friend of acquaintance. Similarly, UNHCR found that 60% of employed refugees surveyed in Cairo found their job through a friend or community member (UNHCR RO-Cairo 2003).

4.2.3.2.3 Other Intangible Assets

Unexpectedly, linguistic and religious similarity to the host community did not appear to be beneficial in finding employment for the Eritreans surveyed. Though participants of the focus groups held at St. Joseph's cited reasons of religious discrimination and lack of Arabic as reasons for their difficulty in finding work, survey results did not reflect this situation. While only 38% (n=6) of Muslim respondents reported working at the time of the survey, 56% (n=19) of Christian respondents reported being employed. Likewise, more non-Arabic speakers were employed than Arabic speakers.[51] By comparison, when asked why they thought they could not find employment, unemployed survey respondents gave a range of responses with no one response greatly outweighing the others. The most common

[50] All respondents who found work through a job posting or advertisement are working as domestic workers.
[51] 57% of respondents whose primary language was an Eritrean language other than Arabic reported being employed, as compared to 39% of respondents whose primary language was Arabic.

response as reported by 10% of respondents (n=5) was language difficulty. Other responses included racial discrimination (6%), lack of a legal work permit (4%), health problems (4%) and transportation difficulties (4%).

4.2.4 Coping Strategies

Refugees in Cairo, as in other areas, cope with the difficulties of unemployment and underemployment in several ways. In addition to relying on financial support from others as discussed above, another coping mechanism shared by Eritrean respondents and other refugee communities in Cairo is shared housing. Eritrean respondents reported living with at least one other person and most often with 2 to 5 other people. In more than half the households, the respondent was not related to anyone in the household. Of the 40% (n=20) of respondents who reported living with relatives, 12 report that they lived with siblings, four with their children, four with their parents and three with a spouse.[52] Similar results were found with Sudanese and Somali refugees in Cairo (Grabska 2005, Al-Sharmani 2003).

Table 11: Number in Household (including respondent)

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	2	6	12.0
	3-4	18	36.0
	5-6	15	30.0
	>6	9	18.0
	Total	48	96.0
Missing	System	2	4.0
Total		50	100.0

[52] The total does not equal 20 as several people live with more than one type of relative. For example, a respondent may report living with his parents and his siblings.

Within these households of both related and unrelated people, additional coping strategies have been reported. Focus group participants reported that both household chores and household income were shared. Male participants reported that they had assumed traditional women's roles (like cleaning and cooking – some for the first time in their lives) since leaving Eritrea as they were home while women living in their households were outside of the home working. These changes for some participants might reflect lasting changes, while for others, the change is temporary and might change when circumstances change. The two married male focus group participants whose wives were still in Eritrea reported that when reunited with their spouses, they would stop performing household chores. Conversely, the two male respondents who married in Cairo both reported that they would continue sharing the responsibilities for household chores even if their or their wives employment status changed: "Married life means helping each other. I will do my part, and she will do her part."[53]

The two men who are unaccompanied by their wives were approximately 5 years older than the two men who married in Cairo. In addition, while both of the unaccompanied married men were from rural backgrounds in Eritrea, both of the men who married in Cairo were from urban backgrounds. The age and regional differences between the men may account for the difference in views on partner responsibilities within the household.

[53] Focus group participant B., a 28 year-old man, married with wife and 6-month-old baby in Cairo. Focus group April 24th, 2009, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Zamalek, Cairo.

Sharing money was another coping mechanism identified by focus group participants. Financial obligations were met by pooling money earned by employed members of the household and remittances received by household members. All focus group participants agreed that money received by one member of the household (whether through employment or as remittances) would be used to meet household expenses. According to one focus group participant: "In our culture, we cooperate and help each other. We have love (for each other)." [54] Participants reported, however, that despite pooling all available resources, funds were still insufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living.

While living with others aided meeting the needs of daily life in Cairo, it also came with stresses. Focus group participants cited additional stresses of disagreements arising from crowded living conditions and a lack of privacy as part of life as refugees in Cairo. They also cited ethnic and regional differences among household members as occasional sources of tension. Households were not comprised of homogenous groups of people. According to focus group participants, household members were often from different parts of Eritrea, different tribes and different religions. Participants reported that people share houses out of necessity and support each other accordingly, but they do not form lasting bonds. When asked if they were still in contact with previous housemates, most participants responded that they were not. Households served as a temporary source of support but did not appear to fill the void of a family that most participants discussed missing.

[54] Focus group participant T., a 28 year-old man, married with wife and two children are still in Eritrea. Focus group April 24th, 2009, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Zamalek, Cairo.

The Eritreans surveyed had both the capabilities and the assets (both tangible and intangible) to engage their stated desired strategy of employment as a means to establishing a viable livelihood. Respondents were predominantly young, educated and healthy. The majority who were above school age at the time they left Eritrea were working and therefore came to Cairo with work experience. Respondents reported having a strong social network as a means to finding employment. Despite these factors, 48% of Eritreans surveyed reported that they were unemployed at the time of the survey and were relying on the support of others, both in Egypt and outside of Egypt. While part of the explanation for this situation is the labor market in Cairo itself (i.e. high unemployment of nationals, large numbers of qualified Egyptians entering the labor market), other possible explanations for this situation, as well as possible outcomes, including the effects on family formation, will comprise the following chapter.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 Overview and Employment

The majority of Eritreans surveyed in this study have been in Cairo for three or fewer years, having left their home country to seek safety in Egypt. Almost half, however, intended to continue on to another country. Despite their relatively recent arrival and their reported intention not to remain in Egypt, respondents have engaged themselves quickly in an effort to support themselves through a combination of earned income and assistance from their social network. Eritrean respondents have established livelihoods in Cairo despite the many obstacles they face.

Eritreans surveyed brought with them education, skills and health. Though these capabilities to do not inherently enable prospective workers to find employment in the context of Cairo, more than half of the respondents were able to find wage-earning employment. Others, however, have not been able to use these factors to their advantage. Approximately half of respondents were meeting their expenses with the financial assistance of friends and family both in Egypt and abroad, and approximately one third of respondents sustained themselves solely with the support offered by friends and family. With the exception of three people, unemployed respondents would like to be employed. Given that respondents were young, healthy and educated and that the majority had work experience prior to arrival to Cairo, the surveyed sample was a theoretically employable one.

As the Egyptian government does not adequately recognize refugees' right to work, the jobs that are available for refugees are predominantly jobs in the informal sector, including the private sphere (such as domestic work). This type of employment does not match with the capabilities of many of the respondents who have the education and experience to justify the aspiration of attaining a higher status job than that of a cleaner. In addition, domestic work is traditionally performed by women, meaning that more than half of the respondents would be considering employment in a field outside the gender framework to which they are accustomed. Though the profile of survey respondents does not make domestic work the most suitable form of employment and despite the fact that that no respondents reported working as domestic workers in Eritrea, more respondents were working as domestic workers than in any other position. Most of the respondents filling this role were women.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the labor market in Egypt is currently saturated with young, educated Egyptians. The groups facing the greatest risk of unemployment are exactly those – the young (in their 20s) and the recent university graduates. Eritrean refugees surveyed for this study are of a similar profile – they are primarily in their 20s and are also primarily either secondary school or university graduates. Given that the profile of Eritreans surveyed closely matches the groups of Egyptians most at risk of unemployment, Eritrean refugees in Cairo are not entering a hospitable labor market.

Some trends noted among survey respondents in Cairo have also been noted among Eritreans in other areas facing different labor market prospects, however. Assessments of Eritrean refugees both in Sudan (Kibreab 1996) and in North America

(Matsouka and Sorenson 1999, McSpadden and Moussa 1993) also found that women were inclined to accept whatever kind of work they could find even if the employment opportunities were not consistent with people's backgrounds. As women were more likely to be working, they were becoming more greatly responsible for supporting friends and family both in the country of asylum and in the country of origin. A similar trend has been observed in Cairo. Consistent with the findings of surveys of other refugee populations (UNHCR RO-Cairo 2003), female Eritrean respondents were more likely to be working than male respondents, and more women who were not working in Eritrea were working in Cairo than men in the same situation.[55]

Male respondents appeared to be having a more difficult time finding employment, reported earning less money and were receiving financial support to a greater extent than women. The fact that male respondents came to Egypt with stronger capabilities (higher education and more work experience) than female respondents would create the expectation that the men would have a higher employment rate than the women. The opposite, however, was found to be true. Every male respondent who was not working reported that he wanted to work, and the majority reported actively trying to find work at the time of the survey.

The strongest employment sectors in Egypt (business and finance, agriculture, hunting and fishing), however, are areas in which only one respondent reported having past experience. In addition, many of these positions would be unavailable to prospective workers without employment authorization. What remains is informal sector employment – work that would likely be more physically demanding and pay less. It

[55] 56% of women who were not working in Eritrea are working in Cairo as compared to 42% of men who were not working in Eritrea.

would appear that, as has been noted in Sudan, the U.S. and Canada, Eritrean men who were surveyed were less willing and/or unable to take jobs that were ill suited to their abilities and backgrounds.

Survey respondents were coping with this situation both at a community level and at a household level. Survey results show that respondents with earned income were sharing this income with friends and family members, while respondents without earned income were still able to meet the expenses of daily life with financial support received from others. Focus group participants recounted how the same is true at a household level. Within a household, both money and household responsibilities were shared regardless of whether or not household members were related.

Though focus group participants reported that family is one of the primary protective factors within their culture, many people in this study were enduring the hardships of life in Cairo without a family. While household member served the immediate function of supporting each other both financially and in terms of running a household, it does not appear, based on focus group discussions, that household members generally formed lasting bonds or replaced the need for a family. Focus group participants reported that when someone left the household, there was little lasting contact or maintained connection.

5.1.2 Family Formation

The sample surveyed in Cairo was mostly single and childless. Conversely, Eritreans in the same age range in Eritrea are largely married with children. The median age of

marriage for women in Eritrea in 2008 was 18.[56] Among the Eritrean women in Cairo, however, only 32% over the age of 18 have been married, and only 30% have children. Other refugee groups in Cairo were also found in other studies to be married with children to a much greater extent than the surveyed Eritrean group. Why are Eritreans different in this regard?

Eritreans are leaving a country in which, despite advances in gender equality made by the ruling party, men are of a higher social value and assume a position of authority both in public and private spaces (McSpadden 1999, Gruber 1999). Men are expected to provide for the family while women are expected to run the household. Eritreans are now finding themselves in places like Egypt, Sudan and North America where women are adapting more readily to work opportunities that are available. Men, meanwhile, are having a more difficult adjustment in all three locations; they are finding it difficult to find appropriate employment and are losing their position of authority within families and communities.

Unmarried Eritrean women in Cairo were reportedly too busy working to form partnerships. Whether the women were live-in domestic workers or working day jobs while living independently, they were spending so much time at work that they were not dating or investing time in a search for a husband. Men, while more often not able to work and therefore having free time, were choosing not to pursue a potential spouse, as they were not financially stable. [57] All unmarried focus group

[56] http://genderindex.org/country/eritrea

[57] This perspective was reported by Psycho-Social Training Institute in Cairo (PSTIC) community worker Nasir Omer during an interview on October 25, 2009, by Eritrean informant and UNHCR interpreter K.A. during an interview on August 3, 2009 and in two focus groups held on April 2 and April 24, 209 at St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church.

participants[58] agreed that they did not want to marry as refugees in Cairo given the uncertain financial situation in which they found themselves. When asked why he would not marry here, one male respondent replied, "What would I feed her?"[59]

In addition, both single and married focus group participants reported making the intentional decision not to have children while living as refugees in Cairo. Participants reported that though they did want children, they did not want to have children in Cairo. Participants cited the difficult financial situation above all else as the reason for delaying family formation. When asked why she did not want to have children in Cairo, one participant responded, "Life is too hard for me in Cairo. Why would I put my child in this situation?"[60]

Young Egyptians are also delaying marriage and children. The affects of the high costs of the wedding ceremony combined with the costs of acquiring and furnishing a flat prior to marriage are delaying marriages among unemployed and underemployed Egyptians (Singerman and Ibrahim 2001). In addition, recent studies have also shown that when an Egyptian man enters the labor market, whether he considers the job he finds to be of a suitable quality and various levels of education all affect when a man marries. The sooner he enters the labor market and the more highly he regards his job, the sooner he marries. Conversely, being enrolled in school and having a higher level of education both result in delayed marriage (Binzeland and Assaad 2009).

[58] Focus groups were held April 2nd and April 24th, 2009, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Zamalek, Cairo.
[59] Focus group participant T, a 28 year-old man, single. Focus group April 24th, 2009, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Zamalek, Cairo.
[60] Focus group participant A, a 24 year-old woman, single. Focus groups were held April 2nd and April 24th, 2009, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, Zamalek, Cairo.

Changes to traditional marriage patterns have also been noted among refugee populations in Cairo. In focus groups held of Liberian and Sierra Leonean men, participants reported that they were not marrying in Cairo as they were lacking money, a house, employment, a sense of self-reliability and a large enough pool of single women – all of which they considered essential in order to marry. Participants also reported that their insecure legal status was a barrier to planning for the future. Only a few of the participants reported being in any kind of romantic relationship with a woman (Coker et. al. 2003).

A study of Sudanese refugees in Cairo found that while Sudanese were still marrying, the approach to marriage had changed significantly within the context of exile in Cairo. Recognized refugee status and possibilities of resettlement were significant factors in marriages within the Sudanese refugee community. A marriage business has emerged within the community in which Sudanese with refugee status can charge prospective spouses to be added to their cases with UNHCR. Sudanese who have been approved for resettlement can charge an even higher price (Currie 2007).

Regarding children within the Sudanese community, study participants reported that Sudanese with closed files were postponing having children while those recognized as refugees by UNHCR were continuing to have children. This situation would imply that refugee status is more of a determining factor in child bearing given that Sudanese were facing the same labor market and job possibilities whether they had refugee status or not. A community leader, however, presented a slightly different perspective. He stated that couples were not having as many children as they may otherwise have had because more women are working than men, leaving men home to

care for small children. In addition, due to financial constraints, couples could not afford as many children as they would like to have had. While men are not pleased with the reduced fertility levels, they have no choice but to accept it (Currie 2007).

Delayed family formation has been noted in Egypt among nationals and non-nationals. While the Eritrean sample in this study is relatively small and therefore cannot be assumed to be representative of the Eritrean community at large, the findings are nonetheless notable. Like the Sierra Leoneans and Liberians, Eritreans interviewed stated that one of the primary reasons they were delaying marrying and having children was the perceived lack of financial stability. They also focused on the inhospitable environment they had encountered in Cairo. Unlike the Sudanese who appeared from the aforementioned study to be using marriage as a way out of Cairo, Eritreans interviewed in this study reported delaying marriage until they are able to leave Cairo. One possible explanation is that Sudanese have been in Cairo substantially longer than many of the Eritrean respondents in the current study and therefore have had a longer time to explore various options in finding ways to leave Cairo. The Eritreans, conversely, have not had as long a period of trial-and-error in exploring ways to leave Egypt.

This theory, however, may be questioned when considering Kibreab's findings among Eritreans in Sudan. The Eritrean community he studied in Khartoum was fairly well established as they had been there approximately a decade at the time of his research. The Eritreans he studied were also delaying marriage and family formation rather than attempting to use marriage as a means to leave as has been found within the Sudanese community in Cairo.

Abernethy's (2002) theory of economic opportunity would seem to apply to the situation of delayed marriage among this sample of Eritreans in Cairo. The economic opportunity theory posits that people naturally delay having children or reduce the number of children they would otherwise have when there is greater competition for limited goods (whether this means jobs, income, land, etc.). This theory has been used to explain declining fertility among the national population in Egypt as the number of people in the cities of Egypt has increased exponentially along with the unemployment and underemployment rates since the economic boom of the 1970s and early 1980s (ibid). As Eritreans in Cairo are attempting to enter the same labor market and sustain themselves in the same crowded city as Egyptians, it would be surprising if the same patterns did not emerge among this newer immigrant community.

While delayed marriage is one way to postpone having children, contraception is another. Eritrean key informants in this study reported that while many Eritreans in their community are not marrying, dating is not non-existent. Some members of the community are starting relationships and are sexually active. The most common form of birth control used within the community is condoms, which are readily available in Cairo. Community members who are involved in romantic relationships are also committed to postponing childbirth until they are somewhere they feel secure in their futures. They intend to accomplish this goal both by delaying marriage and delaying conception.

The implications of this situation are vast. In the immediate sense, Eritreans in Egypt and Sudan are facing the stresses of life in exile often without family present, a protective factor that Eritreans ranked highly in focus groups. Women may be dealing with a strenuous work schedule and possible work-related abuse often without family support. Men, meanwhile, may be dealing with unemployment or underemployment and the adoption of traditional women's responsibilities like cooking and cleaning often without family support.

In the longer term, as Kibreab (1996) theorized, there may be a whole generation of women who may be missing the opportunity to marry and have children. Though both Eritrean survey respondents and focus group participants reported that they do not intend to remain in Egypt, their time in Egypt may be longer than they anticipated when they arrived. Of the 50 survey respondents, only six had had a resettlement interview and none had received a decision from the resettlement process. Focus group participants, however, reported that their hope for the future was to be resettled to a Western country. The hope for resettlement and the reality of the likelihood of resettlement are not comparable. While respondents may believe that they are putting their desire for a family on hold for a few years, these few years can easily turn into a decade or more. This situation would likely have a greater effect on women than on men. As one of my interviewees told me, "A man can wait ten or fifteen years in Cairo until he is resettled to Canada or the US and still get a young wife from Eritrea; but a woman who waits ten or fifteen years, what is she going to do?"[61]

[61] Interview conducted with K.A. August 17, 2009 at the Cilantro coffee shop on Gameat al-Dawal in Mohandiseen, Cairo.

By comparison, Eritrean men and women in North America are experiencing similar shifts in roles with women being more readily employable by accepting whatever type of jobs they can find and with men have a more difficult time adjusting. Families are still being formed, however, and while many men report not being comfortable with the change, they are accepting it and adapting. The explanation for the difference is likely that many Eritreans see life in Egypt and Sudan as a waiting period before 'real life' begins – real life being defined as reaching a country of final destination, such as Canada or the U.S.

The men and women studied in Sudan, Egypt and North America are being confronted with a new reality: one in which women have greater opportunity and need to work while men have a lesser opportunity to find appropriate employment. This change has brought into question both men's and women's gender roles and how men and women relate to each other. Eritrean men are struggling to fulfill their traditional role as providers. Women, conversely, are struggling to be providers (often for the first time) while maintaining their traditional roles. Women are finding more opportunities to expand their role in society (into the work force) but this new opportunity may be coming at the cost of sacrificing the formation of a family.

Despite the delay in family formation in Cairo or possibly because of it, the importance of community in a larger sense is strong. Eritreans surveyed in Cairo relied more heavily on the Eritrean community than on anything else. While there is not an officially recognized organization in Egypt as there is North America and in Europe, Eritreans surveyed looked to their own community in its unofficial capacity for financial support upon arrival to Cairo, for support with accommodations and for

assistance in finding employment. Though almost all of the respondents had registered with UNHCR and more than half had been granted refugee status, very few received support from agencies in Cairo. In lieu of family support or agency support, Eritreans surveyed in Cairo looked to each other.

5.2 Conclusion

The existing research on livelihoods of urban refugees focuses primarily on men's and women's roles as husbands/fathers and wives/mothers. Exploring the livelihoods strategies of single, urban refugees is unusual. This research was undertaken with the goal of learning about the lives and livelihoods strategies of a sample of Eritrean refugees in Cairo. The results of this current study revealed that Eritreans surveyed in Cairo are predominantly single and childless. This situation appears to be both to a livelihood strategy of respondents itself (delaying family formation) and also a result of a livelihood strategy of respondents (a newfound reliance of women as wage earners).

The type of work most readily available to refugees in Cairo is domestic work, work that is traditionally performed by women. As such, women are the ones who are more employable in the host environment. Capitalizing on this situation, women surveyed are working and are becoming primary breadwinners. Out of necessity, a main livelihood strategy assumed by Eritreans surveyed is the expanded employment of women, many of whom were not employed in Eritrea.

A secondary livelihood strategy assumed by survey respondents and focus group participants is delayed marriage. While survey results identified that the majority of

respondents were single and childless, interviews and focus groups conducted prior to the administration of the survey put this situation into context. The data alone raised the question of whether the high proportion of respondents being single was the result of an intentional decision by the respondents not to marry (and if so, why?) or rather was the result of the lack of ability to marry (and again, if so, why?).

The survey data combined with the human voices heard in previous interviews and focus groups revealed that Eritreans in this study are largely remaining single as the result of a conscious decision that they are not financially able to provide for a family despite the fact that many desire a family. Kalmijn (1998) found in his studies of partner selection among migrants that people desire a mate who will assist them in creating and maintaining an economically comfortable life. Women's income is relied upon to support friends and family, while men are often relying on others' income to support them. Neither women nor men in the study consider their financial situation conducive to family formation.

This strategy appears to be proving effective in the immediate sense as Eritreans surveyed are meeting their basic expenses, as well as supporting others in their community. But what is the long-term cost of such a strategy? And is this strategy unique to the Eritreans surveyed or is it being practiced by other groups of single urban refugees? These questions merit attention in future research.

Assessing how men and women feel about their current situations was outside the scope of this research. While survey data and focus groups established that within this limited sample of Eritreans women are working to a greater extent than men,

what was not established was how women feel about their role as wage earner. Are women empowered by their greater involvement in the labor market than they experienced in Eritrea; or do they feel restricted by this new role, which appears to be limiting their ability to form a family? This question would be better investigated through future qualitative research.

Across cultures, across religions, and across continents, family is the foundation of society. The importance of the family as compared to the individual may vary, and what comprises a family may not be the same from one community to another; but the inherent desire to form a family is part of human nature no matter who you are or where you consider home. So important is the need for family that the concept has been incorporated into the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, one of the first international instruments to enshrine basic rights for all people. Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all adults have the right "to marry and to found a family."[62]

Due in part to financial obligations and restraints, Eritreans surveyed in Cairo are delaying family formation. Though Eritreans interviewed have voiced the desire to start a family, they are making the conscious decision to delay family formation due to the difficulty of establishing a solid livelihood in Cairo. Delaying growing a new family in the Cairo setting may be a rational decision, but what is the long-term cost?

Though Eritreans surveyed reported that they came to Cairo intending to move on to another country, the length of time they will remain in Cairo is unknown. None of the

[62] Universal Declaration of Human Rights: http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm.

50 respondents had been approved for resettlement at the time of the survey, and several of the respondents reported that they had lived in Egypt for 15 or more years. While Eritreans surveyed may intend to delay family formation for a limited period of time, they may find that that time is longer than they anticipated, and in the waiting period, some may be sacrificing the chance to start a family.

While the Eritreans in this sample are predominantly young, healthy and meeting their basic needs financially (whether by working or receiving financial support from others), does this mean that they are not vulnerable? In the conventional understanding of the term in a refugee context, they would not be considered exceptionally vulnerable, as vulnerable groups are generally considered to include: women, children and the elderly, along with survivors of violence, people with mental or physical disabilities and ethnic minorities.[63] While unknown numbers of Eritreans involved in this study may be survivors of violence, the majority upon initial assessment do not fit the vulnerability criteria as they are largely young, healthy men. This raises a question: is the current concept of vulnerability too narrow? If this community, as Kibreab suggested of Eritreans in Sudan, is possibly at risk of losing a generation based on situationally-induced delayed family formation, would that not be an example of substantial vulnerability?

Studies of Eritrean refugees in the U.S. and Canada have found that once established in a country considered to be a country of final destination, Eritreans resume forming families. When living in an environment considered secure and that provides the possibility of permanence, Eritrean refugees will marry and have children to a greater

[63] http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=search&docid=4371fa162&query=vulnerable

extent than they do while living in exile in an insecure environment (as in Cairo and Khartoum). Considering the importance of family and that Eritrean participants expressed the desire to form a family but are intentionally not starting families due to the circumstances in which they are living Cairo, remaining in Egypt is not in the best interest of the Eritreans included in this study. Eritreans must be able to live where they are able to have the means and ability to establish a stable and sustainable livelihood, thereby enabling them to form a family if so desired. Given that local integration is not an option for refugees in Egypt as per government policies and that Eritreans are not able to repatriate safely and with dignity to Eritrea, the only option for Eritreans to be able to establish the life that they desire is to relocate to a third country. The most plausible way for such a move to happen is through UNHCR-initiated resettlement. Resettlement to a third country is, at the time of this writing, the only realistic option that will provide Eritrean refugees in Cairo the possibility of establishing the life they desire.

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Appendix 1: Eritrean Livelihoods Survey Consent Form

Study Name: Livelihoods of Eritrean Refugees in Cairo

Researcher: Erin A Ajygin, MA Candidate

Institution: Center for Migration and Refugee Studies,
American University in Cairo

Purpose of the Research:
As very little is known about the Eritrean community in Cairo, the goal of this research is to learn more about why Eritreans are coming to Cairo and how they are supporting themselves once here. It is believed that knowing more about the community is essential in order to know how best to assist the community. Though the purposes of this study are purely academic, a summary of the results of the study will be shared with service providers in the hopes that the information may be used to better serve the community.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:
We are asking you to spend no more than one hour completing an anonymous survey including questions about you, why you came to Cairo and how you are surviving in Cairo.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary, and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Likewise, you may choose not to answer particular questions in the survey.

Confidentiality: All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence. Your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. Likewise, the survey administrator is also bound to keep any/all information s/he learns during the survey process confidential.

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Erin A Ajygin either by telephone at 018 883 6458 or by e-mail at eajygin@aucegypt.edu.

Signatures:

I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2: Eritrean Livelihoods Questionnaire

Eritrean Refugee Livelihoods Survey

Interviewer name: _____

Interview date: _____ **Interview location:** _____

Complete consent form (explaining purpose of study, confidentiality of information and voluntary nature of interview) prior to beginning the interview.

Demographic Information

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
1.	Nationality? _____	*If not Eritrean, thank participant for willingness to speak but explain that we are only interviewing Eritreans. End interview.*	1. Eritrean 2. Other: _____
2.	Age? _____	Record actual age.	1. 1-20 2. 21-25 3. 26-30 4. 31-35 5. 36-40 6. 41-45 7. 46-50 8. 51-55 9. 56-60 10. 61-65 11. 66+
3.	Gender? (circle one) Male / Female		1. Male 2. Female
4.	Tribe? _____		1. Afar/Danakils 2. Bilen/Bogos 3. Hedareb/Beja/Beni, Amber/Beni, Amer 4. Saho 5. Kunama 6. Nara/Baria 7. Tigre 8. Tigrinya 9. Rashaida 10. Jiberti 11. Other: _____

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
5.	Mother tongue? _____	*What language did the participant speak while growing up at home?*	1. Afar 2. Amharic 3. Arabic 4. Bilen 5. Hedareb 6. Saho 7. Kunama 8. Nara 9. Tigre 10. Tigrinya 11. Other: _____
6.	Other languages spoken? _____ _____	*List as many as the participant answers.*	1. Afar 2. Amharic 3. Arabic 4. Bilen 5. Hedareb 6. Saho 7. Kunama 8. Nara 9. Tigre 10. Tigrinya 11. Other: _____
7.	Primary language spoken in the home now (in Cairo)? _____		1. Afar 2. Amharic 3. Arabic 4. Bilen 5. Hedareb 6. Saho 7. Kunama 8. Nara 9. Tigre 10. Tigrinya 11. Other: _____

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
8.	Place of origin in Eritrea? _____	*Where the participant considers 'home.' This can be where the participant was born, where he/she grew up or where he/she was living prior to leaving Eritrea.*	1. Asmara 2. Agordat 3. Assab 4. Barentu 5. Dahlak islands 6. Dekemhare 7. Ghinda 8. Keren 9. Massawa 10. Mendefera/Adi Ugri 11. Nakfa 12. Semenawi Bahri/Filfil 13. Teseney 14. Other: _____
9.	Do you have children? Yes / No	*If the participant does not have children, skip to number 13.*	1. Yes 2. No
10.	How many children do you have? _____		1. 1 2. 2 3. 3-4 4. 5-6 5. >6
11.	How old are your children? _____	*List the age of each child.*	
12.	Where are your children living? _____	*Are the participant's children living here in Cairo, in Eritrea or in another country?*	1. Cairo 2. Eritrea 3. Another country: _____
13.	Marital status? (circle one) Never married / married / separated / divorced / widowed	*If not married, skip to question 16.*	1. Never married 2. Married 3. Separated 4. Divorced 5. Widowed
14.	Is your spouse living with you? Yes / No		1. Yes 2. No
15.	If your spouse is not living with you, where is she/he? _____		1. Eritrea 2. Other: _____

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
16.	What is your religion? _____		1. Eritrean Orthodox 2. Roman Catholic 3. Evangelical Protestant 4. Pentecostal Holiness 5. Jehovah's Witness 6. Baha'i 7. Islam 8. Other: _____
17.	What is the highest level of education that you have completed? _____	*Include education completed in Egypt or in any other country.*	1. No schooling 2. Some primary 3. Completed primary 4. Some secondary 5. Completed secondary 6. Some vocational 7. Completed vocational 8. Some university 9. Completed university 10. Some post-graduate 11. Completed post-graduate

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
18.	What was your occupation in Eritrea? _____		1. Unemployed 2. Homemaker 3. Student 4. Unskilled/day laborer 5. Domestic worker 6. Farmer, fisherman, hunter 7. Craftsman 8. Driver 9. Vender/sales occupation 10. Government employee (non-military) 11. Military 12. Administrative/clerical worker 13. Journalist 14. Educator 15. Medical professional 16. Legal professional 17. Information technology/computer science professional 18. Other: _____

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
19.	Where in Cairo do you live currently? _____		1. 6th of October 2. Abassiya 3. Ain Shams 4. Arba Wa Nuss 5. Attaba 6. Babalouk 7. Dokki 8. Garden City 9. Giza 10. Hadayek el Kobba 11. Heliopolis/Masr el Gedida 12. Helwan 13. Imbaba 14. Maadi 15. Mohandiseen 16. Nasr City 17. Ramses Square 18. Sheikh Zayid City 19. Zamalek 20. Zeitun 21. Other:
20.	How many people live in your house/apartment (including yourself)? _____		1. 1 2. 2 3. 3-4 4. 5-6 5. >6
21.	How many people in your household are related to you? _____		1. 1 2. 2 3. 3-4 4. 5-6 5. >6
22.	How are they related to you? _____ _____	*Please list each person who is a family member. For example, 1 – spouse, 3 – children, 2 – siblings.*	

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
23.	How many years have you lived in Cairo? _____		
24.	Did you come directly from Eritrea to Egypt? Yes / No		1. Yes 2. No
25.	If you did not come directly from Eritrea, where did you live between Eritrea and Egypt? _____ _____	*List the country or countries where the participant lived after leaving Eritrea and before arriving to Egypt.*	
26.	Why did you leave Eritrea? _____ _____	*Briefly explain the primary reason for leaving Eritrea. For example, draft evasion, fleeing military conscription, religious persecution, looking for employment, joining family members, etc.*	1. Draft evasion 2. Military desertion 3. Religious persecution 4. Looking for employment opportunities 5. Joining family members already in Cairo 6. Other: _____
27.	Why did you choose to come to Egypt (versus another country)? _____ _____	*Briefly give the primary reason. For example, family or friends were already in Egypt, it is the closest country, Egypt is only meant to be a transit stop on the way to another country, etc.*	1. Family or friends were already in Egypt 2. Egypt is the closest country 3. Egypt was meant to be a transit stop on the way to another country 4. Other: _____

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
28.	Why did you choose to come to Cairo (versus another city)? _____ _____	*Briefly give the primary reason. For example, family or friends were already in Cairo, better employment opportunities, better educational opportunities, etc.*	1. Family or friends were already in Cairo 2. Better employment opportunities 3. Better educational opportunities 4. Better access to agencies (ie. UNHCR) 5. Other: _____
29.	Are you registered with UNHCR? Yes / No	*If participant is not registered with UNHCR, skip to question # 32.*	1. Yes 2. No
30.	If you are registered with UNHCR, what is your status? (circle one) blue card / yellow card / closed file		1. blue card 2. yellow card 3. closed file
31.	If you are registered with UNHCR, have you had a resettlement interview? Yes / No If you have, what was the outcome of the interview? _____ _____		1. Yes 2. No

Basic living expenses

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
32.	In an average month, how much do you spend on housing (rent + utilities): _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE
33.	In an average month, how much do you spend on food (self and/or immediate family members in the same household): _____	*Explain that 'immediate family members' means spouse and/or children and/or parents.*	1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE
34.	In an average month, how much do you spend on education (self and/or immediate family members in the same household): _____	*Explain that 'immediate family members' means spouse and/or children and/or parents.*	1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE
35.	In an average month, how much do you spend on medical expenses/health care (self and/or immediate family members in the same household): _____	*Explain that 'immediate family members' means spouse and/or children and/or parents.*	1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
36.	In an average month, how much do you spend on transportation: _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE
37.	In an average month, how much do you spend on supporting friends and/or family members in Egypt: _____ How is the money spent? _____ _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE
38.	In an average month, how much do you spend on supporting friends and/or family members in Eritrea: _____ How is the money spent? _____ _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE

39.	**In an average month, how much do you spend on supporting friends and/or family members in a country other than Egypt or Eritrea: _____** **How is the money spent?** **_____** **_____**		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE

Current Livelihood Situation

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
40.	Are you currently engaged in any moneymaking activity? Yes / No	*Moneymaking activity is any activity through which the participant receives money, whether regular employment or daily jobs.*	1. Yes 2. No
41.	If so, how are you making money? _____ _____	*For example, working as a domestic worker, working for a refugee service agency, etc.*	1. Domestic worker 2. Daily paid laborer 3. Interpreter/translator 4. Other: _____
42.	On average, how much money do you earn in a month? _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE
43.	If you are not currently employed, have you been employed in the past? Yes / No		1. Yes 2. No
44.	If you are employed now or have been employed in the past, how did you find your job? _____ _____		1. Through an Eritrean friend, family member or community member 2. Through my religious institution 3. Through an Egyptian friend or acquaintance 4. Through a job posting or advertisement 5. Other: _____
45.	If you are not currently employed, would you like to be employed? Yes / No		1. Yes 2. No

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
46.	If you are not currently employed, are you currently trying to find employment? Yes / No		1. Yes 2. No
47.	If you are not currently employed but you would like to be employed, why do you think you cannot find work? _____ _____ _____	*For example, language difficulty, transportation difficulty, racial discrimination.*	1. Language difficulty 2. Transportation difficulty 3. Racial discrimination 4. Lack of needed skills 5. Child care difficulties 6. Other: _____
48.	Are you currently attending classes? Yes / No		1. Yes 2. No
49.	If you are attending classes, what type of classes are you attending? _____		1. English classes 2. Arabic classes 3. Secondary school 4. Vocational training 5. University (undergraduate level) 6. University – post-graduate level 7. Other:

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
50.	In an average month, how much money do you receive from friends and/or family in Egypt? _____ How do you use the money? _____ _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE
51	In an average month, how much money do you receive from friends and/or family in Eritrea? _____ How do you use the money? _____ _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
52.	In an average month, how much money do you receive from friends and/or family in a country other than Egypt or Eritrea? _____ How do you use the money? _____ _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE
53.	In the past month, how much money have you received from an agency (UNHCR, Caritas, etc.) or a religious institution in Egypt? _____ If you have received financial assistance, what type of assistance was it? (for example, educational grant, medical assistance, etc.) _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
54.	In an average month, how much do you spend on supporting friends and/or family members (non-household members) in Egypt: _____ How is the money spent? _____ _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE
55.	In an average month, how much do you spend on supporting friends and/or family members in Eritrea: _____ How is the money spent? _____ _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE
56.	In an average month, how much do you spend on supporting friends and/or family members in a country other than Egypt or Eritrea? _____ How is the money spent? _____ _____		1. 0 2. 1-100 LE 3. 101-200 LE 4. 201-300 LE 5. 301-400 LE 6. 401-500 LE 7. 501-600 LE 8. 601-700 LE 9. 701-800 LE 10. 801-900 LE 11. 901-1000 LE 12. 1001+ LE

Social support systems

Number	Question	Instructions	Coding
57.	On arrival to Cairo, with whom did you stay? _____		1. On my own (rented a room, etc.) 2. With family 3. With friends 4. With community members 5. Hosted by a religious institution 6. Other:
58.	On arrival, how did you meet your expenses? _____		1. With funds brought with me 2. With assistance from family 3. With assistance from friends 4. With assistance from community members 5. With assistance from a religious institution 6. Other: _____

Appendix 3

Table 12: Place of Origin

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Asmara	25	50.0
	Agordata	1	2.0
	Dekemhare	2	4.0
	Keren	7	14.0
	Massawa	2	4.0
	Mendefera/ Adi Ugri	2	4.0
	other	6	12.0
	born outside of Eritrea	5	10.0
	Total	50	100.0

Appendix 4: Financial Support Received

Figure 5: Average Monthly Amount Received from Friends/Family in Egypt

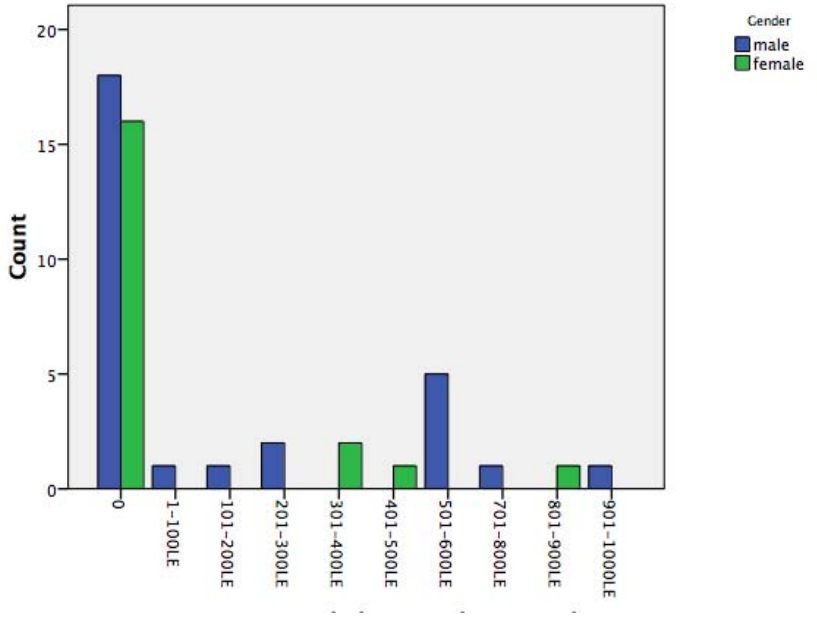


Figure 6: Average Monthly Amount Received from an Agency in Cairo

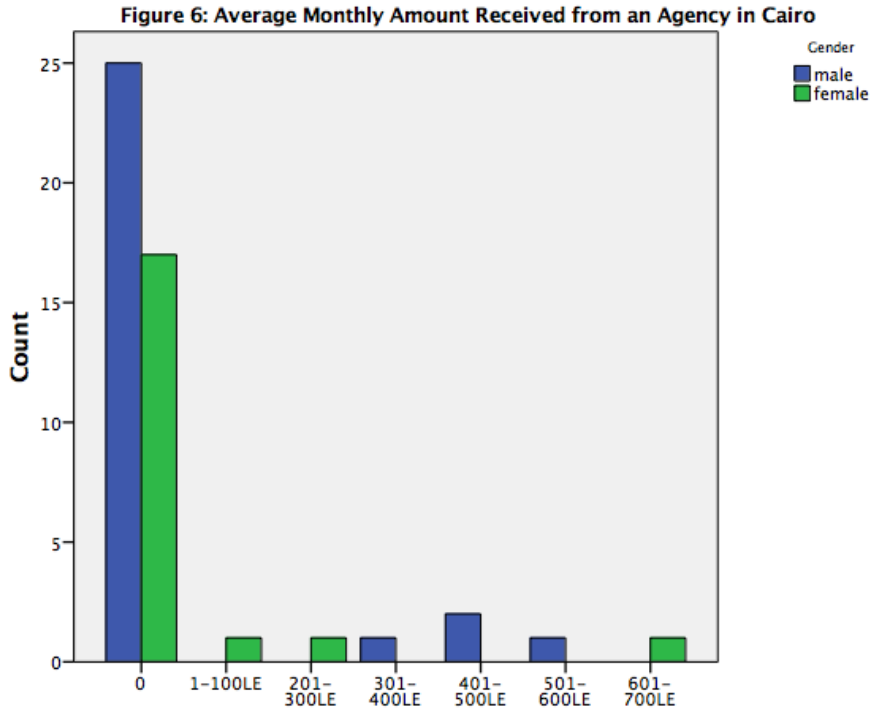


Figure 7: Average Monthly Amount Received from Friends/Family in Eritrea

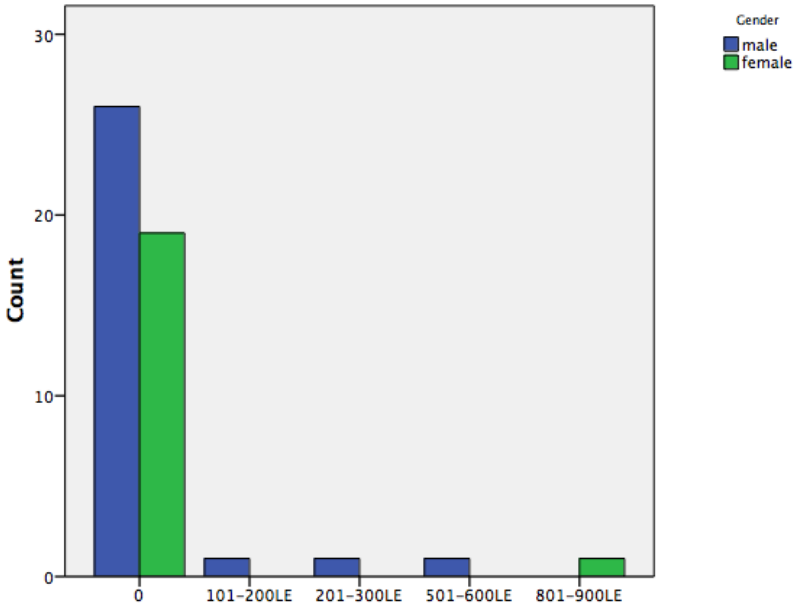
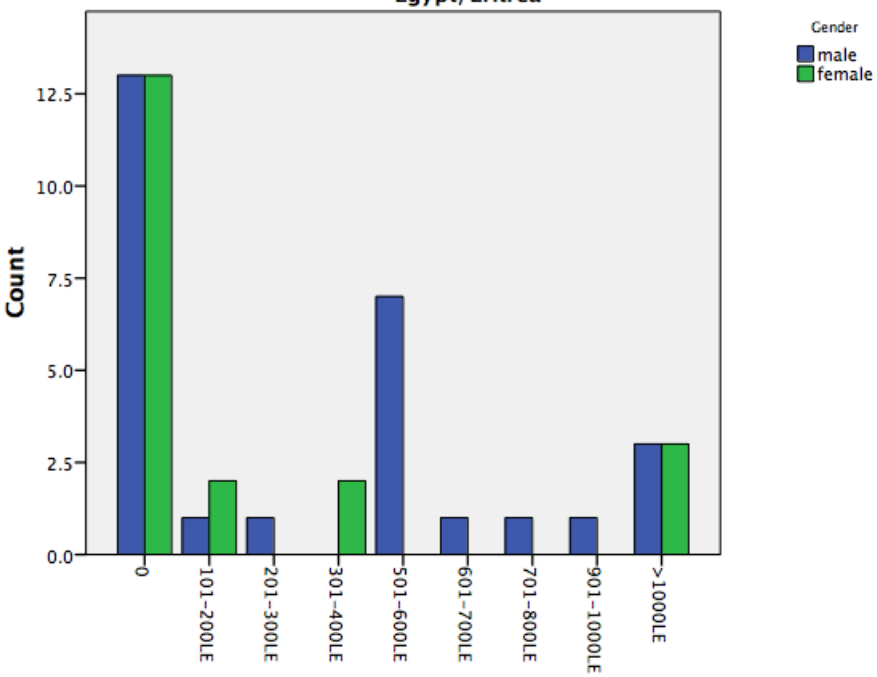


Figure 8: Average Monthly Amount Received from Friends/Family outside Egypt/Eritrea



Appendix 5

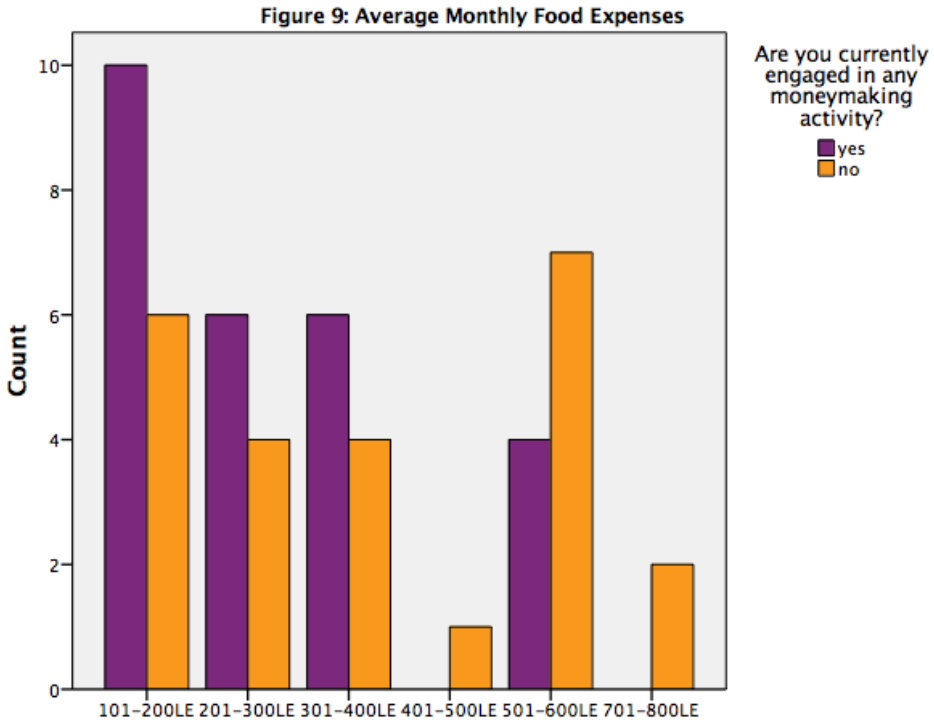


Figure 9: Average Monthly Food Expenses
Count
10
8
6
4
2
0
101-200LE
201-300LE
301-400LE
401-500LE
501-600LE
701-800LE
Are you currently engaged in any moneymaking activity?
yes
no

Appendix 6: Money Spent Supporting Others

Figure 10: Average Monthly Amount Spent Supporting Friends/Family in Egypt

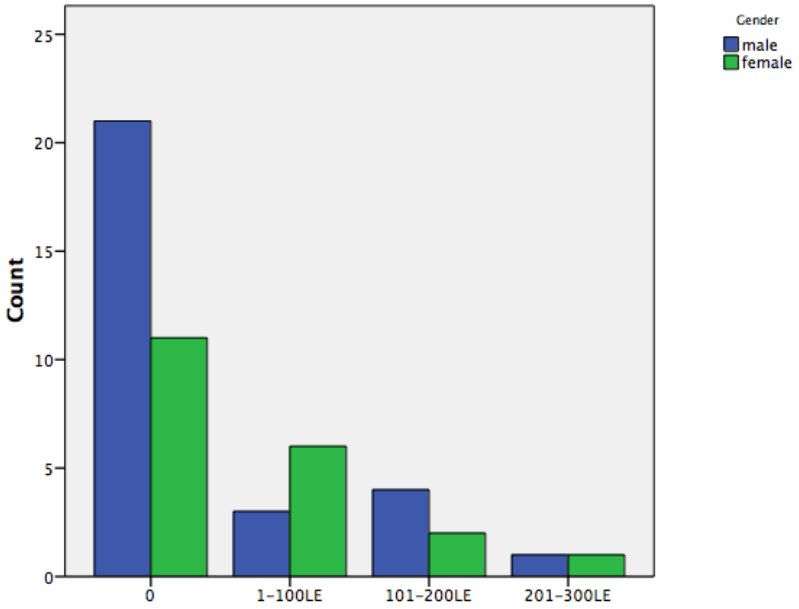


Figure 11: Average Monthly Amount Spent Supporting Friends/Family in Eritrea?

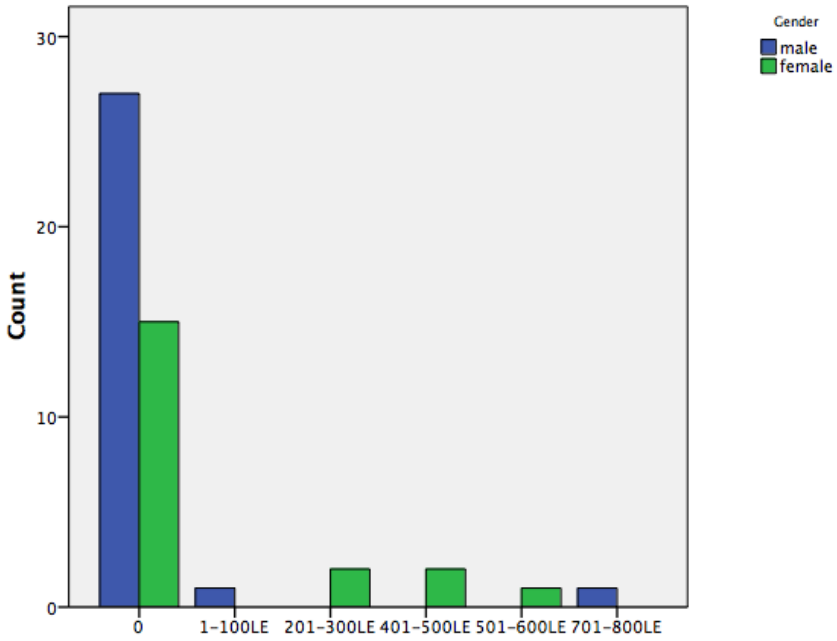


Figure 12: Average Monthly Amount Spent Supporting Friends/Family outside Egypt/Eritrea?