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Narrative analysis of Syrians, South Sudanese and Libyans transiting in Egypt: A MOA approach

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1. Introduction

Although some persons may develop an intention to behave in a certain manner, they may not take any action to do so. This discrepancy has been called in the literature the “intention-behaviour gap”. In the field of migration, such a situation is common especially for transit migration. Asylum seekers and refugees usually consider their host country a transit country that they would leave in the short or medium run. However, because of the concomitance of interdependent factors, this intention is often not converted into action. This condition has led some scholars to talk about transit-turned-host countries (Hoeffler, 2013; Norman, 2019). They refer to these countries, typically Egypt, Morocco or Turkey in the Southern Mediterranean, as ones for which migrants and asylum seekers were initially intending to pass through while migrating to Europe and on their way to their final destination, their settlement country.

Indeed, the failure to convert intention into behaviour is explained by several factors well identified in the literature. The most common ones designate economic, social, political and financial aspects of transit migration decisions (Collyer, 2007; Brekke and Brochman, 2015). However, a second more recent wave emerged in the literature reinforces the first one by also considering socio-psychological and subjective mechanisms causing migrants to transit to another country or to return to their origin country (Kunuroglu *et al.*, 2018; Puvimanasinghe *et al.*, 2015; Mallet and Hagen-Zanker, 2018 among others).

This study is motivated by the desire to integrate the current empirical evidence into a detailed theoretical framework that could analyze and discuss the respective role of the factors that lead refugees or asylum seekers to think about transiting through Egypt and those factors which command whether people act on their intentions and subsequently leave the country in the short or medium run. The motivation – opportunity – ability (MOA) theory typically offers a structure to analyze the transition from intention to behaviour in this context.

Initially designed by MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) within the context of information processing, the approach has been successfully adopted by several scholars on various research topics including travel decisions (Hung and Petrick, 2012) or teaching approaches (Lai *et al.*, 2018). A similar approach can be found in Carling (2002) who developed the aspiration-ability analytical framework to justify the difference between the desire to study abroad and the ability to do so; nonetheless, it is reasonable to think that the MOA appears a more comprehensive one. The backbone of the MOA approach postulates that behaviour is directly affected by motivation, which is in turn moderated by the respective effect of opportunity and ability (MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989). However, despite such academic acceptance, we did not find any study applying this analytical framework to transit migration.

Our present paper aims to fill the gap by structuring and discussing the respective role of motivation, opportunity and ability in asylum seekers’ and refugees’ transit migration decisions. To do so, we collected primary data on narratives from fifteen asylum seekers and

refugees, from South Sudan, Libya or Syria who were currently based in Cairo, Egypt at the time of the study. Narratives are a spoken or written account of connected events. In our case, it allows a focus on identity construction which is crucial while dealing with transit migration.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 reviews the previous literature. Section 3 explains the theoretical MOA framework, while section 4 exhibits the methodology and participants. Section 5 discusses the main results before concluding in the last section.

2. Literature review

The issue of transit migration has been recently receiving growing attention in the migration literature. While this is usually considered as an umbrella and synthetic concept, scholars define transit migration as both certain forms of supposedly temporary immigration and migrants who keep moving from country to country, either intentionally or not (Düvell, 2008). In the literature on the determinants of transit migration, we distinguish two waves. A first one focuses mainly on the economic, social, political and financial aspects of transit migration decisions (Brekke and Brochman, 2015; Collyer, 2007; Nolin, 2005; Bensaad, 2003; Mares, 2001; Van Hear, 1998; Richmond, 1994). Van Hear (1998) and Richmond (1994) among others offer such approach. They identify three sets of factors that theoretically explain transit migration. The first one is called the root causes, which point out structural socio-economic and political factors, while the second one called proximate causes refers to more immediate change like the death of a family member or the outbreak of violence. Means to migrate are the third factor and especially include social networks, these interpersonal ties that link kin, friendship and community members.

Collyer (2007) belongs also to the first wave of study. As a geographer specialized in migration, Collyer (2007) contributes to the understanding of transit migration by talking about fragmented journeys and places in-between origin and destination countries. He studied the fragmentation of undocumented migrants' journeys in Morocco and underlines the role of social organization and social networks but goes a step further by discussing the new spatialities of migration control policies. According to his analysis, migration policy is a significant determinant of transit migration. The author explains that strong ties of absent family members push migrants to reach Europe which is seen as a guarantee of securing a regular income that would support these family members. However, because of the externalization of the European migration policies, migrants have to fragment their journey and stop at the doors of Europe, typically in Morocco.

This first wave early identified technological developments as a facilitator of small scale organization of transit migration (Collyer, 2007; Alioua, 2005; Bensaad, 2003 among others). Technological infrastructure, financial technologies (fintech) and uninterrupted access to the internet provide the necessary support to such fragmented journeys. They reinforce the role of the social network as well. Alioua (2005) underlines their important role to remain in contact with family members at home relatively cheaply. According to Collyer (2007), migrants now report that they rarely lose reception on their mobile phones during the trans-Saharan desert crossing.

The second wave in the literature reinforces the first one by also considering socio-psychological and subjective mechanisms causing migrants to transit to another country. This wave is more recent based on acculturation and cultural shocks' theories developed in the 1970s by Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) especially. It introduces emotional, behavioural and cognitive aspects in transit migration decision-making processes (Mallet and Hagen-Zanker, 2018; Kunuroglu *et al.*, 2018; Therrien, 2018; Collins, 2017 and Puvimanasinghe *et al.*, 2015 among others). Such studies put emphasis on individual changes in the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours (Sussman, 2010). It is worth mentioning the work of Mallet and Hagen-Zanker (2018) who show that the determinants of migration trajectories are financial capital, social networks, the role of smugglers, factors well established in the literature, but most importantly perceptions or feelings about where to go, when to do it and how. They finally find that refugees' journeys are the product of a contextual and subjective decision-making process. Another study made by Kunuroglu *et al.* (2018) identifies four main factors that impact Turkish returning migrants who lived in the Netherlands, France or Germany as follows: adaptation, sense of belonging, discrimination, and intergroup relations which depend on socio-psychological factors. Migrants go systematically through an acculturation process in the migration context. While both parts are affected, the minority is often most affected than the majority (indigenous). Acculturation and cultural shocks can therefore be strong motives to leave the host country and continue the migration journey.

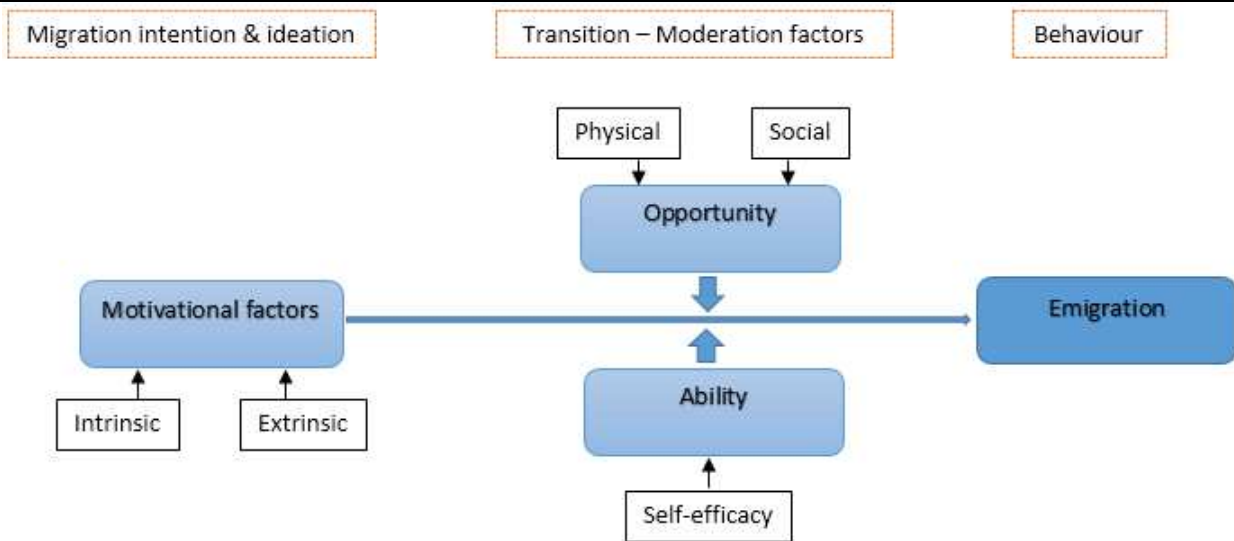
To conclude, we note that the vast majority of studies does not rely on a robust theoretical framework that would organize their approach. Our study aims to structure these factors by relying on the MOA approach. Its theoretical origins and conceptual rationale are presented in section 3.

3. Theoretical origins and conceptual rationale of the MOA approach

The theoretical framework of the MOA approach is structured around three main elements, motivation, opportunity and ability. These elements are declined and considered important drivers to transit from a migration intent and ideation to a migration behaviour. The below figure (figure 1) synthesizes the model.

This framework indicates that motivational factors ground a migration intention and ideation to the individual. This intention is defined as a person's perceived likelihood or subjective probability that he or she will engage in a given behaviour. This intention depends on the motivational factors (M) and is then moderated by opportunities (O) and ability (A). More accurately, in reference to Michie *et al.* (2011) motivational factors activate or inhibit behaviour, opportunities enable the behaviour while ability factors enact the behaviour.

Figure 1: The MOA model – Transition from migration intention and ideation to migration



Source: Author's computation

Motivation is the first element of the MOA approach which plays a role in the decision-making process. Motivation can directly affect the occurrence of individual behaviours, in terms of both intensity and direction (Bettman, 1979; Hung and Petrick, 2012). It includes behaviours that are derived from an individual's beliefs and values. Studies in psychology (Kagan, 1972; Ryan and Deci, 2000 for instance) usually distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations which lead to different behaviours and to different ways to pursue goals. While the first deals with stable personality traits and is known academically as the challenge motivation, the latter refers to external impacts and is known as the compensation motivation (Amabile *et al.*, 1994; Lai *et al.*, 2018). Intrinsic motivation derives from intangible factors, arising from within and is personally rewarding. On the contrary, extrinsic motivation arises from outside and leads to the exhibiting of a behaviour so as to avoid a penalty or earn a reward. In our case, investigating refugees' or asylum seekers' motivational factors can help understand and predict behaviour in terms of future mobility.

The second element of the MOA approach which affects decision-making process is opportunity. As per Hung and Petrik (2012), opportunity is the circumstances that allow for or facilitate people to perform a behaviour. It points out that behaviour under external environmental constraints (Lai *et al.*, 2018). It also corresponds to the facilitating conditions' concept developed by Triandis (1977) in his theory of interpersonal behaviour. The author states that individuals may have the intention to perform a certain act, however they may be unable to do so as the environment prevents the act from being performed. In our study, we distinguish between physical opportunity and social opportunity in reference to Michie *et al.* (2011). While the first one refers to the opportunities afforded by the environment, including time, location and resources, the latter is defined as the opportunities afforded by social factors, including cultural norms and social cultures. Cultural norms are defined as attitudes

and behaviour that are considered normal, typical or average within a society or a group. Literature distinguishes four degrees of cultural norms from the taboo to the laws, through folkway and mores which can define how a society or a community deals with a specific topic. A taboo in sociology is defined as a topic refrained from being talked over normally and implies harsh consequences if broken, while a folkway is a taboo for which breaking the topic does not cause such severe impact. Mores denote topics that sound normal in usual circumstances in a given society, while the last degree is laws, corresponding to a set of agreed rules and regulations. Depending on the cultural origins, migration and transit migration especially could be seen as a taboo, folkway or mores. Social culture is another dimension of the social factors which are defined as a complex set of meanings, habits, values and behaviour adopted by one or more social formations, like the family or the religious institution. Again, (transit) migration might be a taboo subject in some societies and a habit or a value in others thereby impacting in different ways the migration intentions and behaviour of their members.

The third element of the MOA is ability. Ability alludes to behavioural decisions under the constraints of available resources and knowledge (Hung and Petrik, 2012). Like opportunity, ability is a moderation factor. A person must possess the appropriate set of skills and knowledge in the relevant area of behaviour, in order to be able to perform a given behaviour. Ability is commonly measured in the literature by self-efficacy, which defined as the perceived capability of one's self to perform a behaviour (Bandura, 1977). In other words, self-efficacy refers to a person's self - confidence related to their ability to perform an action which could lead to desired outcomes.

Most research has suggested that empirical measurement of self-efficacy is based on four elements (Bandura, 1977; Maddux, 2005). The first one is performance experience, which incorporates the notion of habit. A habit is defined by a frequently executed behaviour in the past that seems to be less guided by intentions. A habit develops both specific knowledge, which is the awareness or familiarity gained by experience of a situation or a fact and skills that are useful to take decisions. Evidence shows that past behaviour, especially in the field of migration, moderates motivational factors. In our case, performance experience is defined as the past international mobility experience of the individual, prior to migrating to Egypt, that we call the capital mobility (Syed Zwick and Syed, 2015; Teichler and Jahr, 2001). The second category of self-efficacy is social persuasion from family and friends who persuade the individual concerned that they possess the capabilities to master specific activities. It relates to all direct learning experiences. Getting encouragement affects behaviour since one will be more self-confident and then more likely to put in the effort and sustain it when problems arise. The third category is imaginal experiences. One might visualize future success and may get receive images deriving from actual experiences with situations similar to the one anticipated, or deriving from social persuasion. Finally, vicarious experience by opposition to social persuasion, relates to all indirect learning experiences. In our case, modeling success of transit migrants help one judges his abilities by comparing himself to individual that he believes are like himself.

4. Methodology and participants

4.1 A qualitative methodology based on narratives' collection

The research process ultimately aims to build-up a researcher-constructed narrative and consists of three main steps: first, data collection, second, narrative analysis and third, in-depth discussion of results.

Our methodology begins with the collection of primary data through narratives. Narratives are a relevant and appropriate way to feed the MOA approach and discuss the respective roles of its elements (M, O and A) in the transit migration intention – behaviour gap for three reasons. First, as per Shubin (2015), narratives help provide scholars and their audience with a holistic approach over time for the history of the migrant. It gives a window into the process of identity construction, since respondents articulate the past and the present to form and reform their aspirations (Riessman, 2008). Second, narrating is a component for a dynamic identity-construction process: by relating his/her own story, the respondent becomes aware and therefore able to adapt their desires, hopes and intentions (Holley and Colyar, 2009). In that sense, narratives have become one of the preferred methods of data collection for researchers interested in identity (Block, 2006). Third, it allows for a co-construction between the researcher and the respondents (Sfard and Prusak, 2005). In other words, stories are jointly constructed by relational partners about events in their lives. This approach offers a way for participants to actively construct a version of a relational event that provides insight, understanding, and in-depth and complex reflection of their experience (Given, 2008).

It is worth mentioning that there we opt for a naturalist stance over the two other types of methodological stances – sociocultural and literary – to collect our primary data (Elliott, 2005; Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007) and support narratives of the respondents. Naturalist stance aims to preserve an idiosyncratic account of experience. We raised three types of questions: (i) what experiences has this person had, (ii) what is the meaning of these experiences to them, and (iii) what complicating actions and evaluative aspects are highlighted (McAlpine, 2016). By relying on fifteen different narratives, our study documents both events *within* and *between* individuals.

The second step of our methodology is the narrative analysis. This step aims to create a holistic and low-inference narrative that preserves the respondents' voice (Coulter and Smith 2009; Sfard and Prusak, 2005). It produces generalizations of thinking, actions, attitudes and meanings related to transit migration by relying on the qualitative-purpose software, MAXQDA.

Finally, the third step consists of seeking out and discussing in-depth commonalities and differences in patterns across our three groups in light of the previous literature and the theoretical framework. We report the degree of importance of each factor, motivation,

opportunity and ability as follows: low, medium and high when the five persons rarely, often and systematically respectively refer to it.

4.2 Participants

We contacted and interviewed fifteen asylum seekers and refugees based in Cairo, Egypt for a maximum of five years. Five are South Sudanese (Sudanese I to Sudanese V), five are Libyans (Libyan I to Libyan V) and five are Syrians (Syrian I to Syrian V). Table 1 displays the main descriptive statistics of our respondents.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

<i>Origin country</i>	<i>ID</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Birth year</i>	<i>Current occupation</i>	<i>Date of arrival in Egypt</i>
South Sudan	Sudanese I	Female	1985	Housekeeping	2018
	Sudanese II	Female	1990	Housekeeping	2015
	Sudanese III	Female	1974	Housekeeping	2017
	Sudanese IV	Male	1986	Food industry	2018
	Sudanese V	Male	1988	Mechanic industry	2017
Syria	Syrian I	Female	1999	Education	2014
	Syrian II	Female	1984	Housekeeping	2015
	Syrian III	Female	1986	Housekeeping	2014
	Syrian IV	Male	1986	Transportation	2016
	Syrian V	Male	1990	Transportation	2015
Libya	Libyan I	Female	1990	Education	2012
	Libyan II	Female	1996	Housekeeping	2012
	Libyan III	Female	1975	Food industry	2014
	Libyan IV	Male	1969	Food industry	2010
	Libyan V	Male	1988	Food industry	2013

We have for each origin country group three women and two men aged from 22 to 49 years old in 2018. All of them are economically active, working in the formal or informal sector, in the food industry, transportation industry (as taxi drivers), as car mechanics or domestic services (housekeeping). All of them said they consider Egypt as a transit country and confirmed their intention to migrate from Egypt either to a Western country (European or North American country) or back to their respective origin country. Discussions were held in English, in French or in Arabic, depending on the respondents' language skills. An assistant translated from French to Arabic, Arabic to French, English to Arabic and Arabic to English.

5. Analysis of the narratives

This section analyses and compares the respective role of each factor, motivational, opportunistic and ability across our three country groups of respondents.

5.1 Motivational factors

Results for motivational factors show that there are significant differences across our origin country groups. A summary of the respective moderation role of motivation for each group is given in table 2. The five Syrian respondents reported being more intrinsically motivated than extrinsically. As Syrian III states

I would dream go back to my village, I would feel fulfilled and relaxed. I have lost my optimism by staying here in Cairo, I need to look again at the trees. My employer here is kind, I am trying my best to be happy here, but I don't know, my heart is elsewhere.

In her case, transit migration refers to return migration. The migrant left her country, with the intention to migrate to Egypt for a short period of time. Interestingly, Syrian II says

I spent now three years in Cairo. I can already imagine how pride I will be when I will be back to Syria. [...] You know, in Syria you have this feeling of being peaceful.

Syrian respondents show stronger feeling of nostalgia for the homeland than for the other people in general. They seem also confused about their future plans. They ignore when and where they would leave Egypt. In contrast, the Libyan and South Sudanese respondents reported being more motivated by external factors than internal ones. The focus on the external motivational factors draws our attention to two main dimensions. The first one is the Egyptian policy towards asylum seekers and refugees, and migrants in general, which appears as an important dimension for the three origin country groups. For instance, Libyan III reports

I have faced for the last two years problems in renewing my visa. I do not know what will happen in the future. My whole family is here with me, so I should not complain so much, but I am worried. We will have to leave soon, maybe this year.

The Egyptian policy towards asylum seekers and refugees is well explained by Norman (2019, 2016) and Davis *et al.* (2017). Norman (2019) argues that the government moved from a attitude of indifference towards a more repressive strategy following the military coup d'état on June 2013. Davis *et al.* (2017) use a slightly different theoretical framework to reach the same conclusion. They analyze the changes over time of the refugee management model in Egypt and Jordan and find that the Egyptian model changed from an inclusive one to a more exclusionary or a temporary absorption scheme. Such an approach combined with the externalization and securization of European migration policies is largely responsible for transit migration in North Africa and in Egypt especially.

The second dimension of extrinsic motivation is related to the influence of the network. Social support and recognition by the peers, friends, siblings, especially for South Sudanese respondents are an important motivational factor to leave Egypt. For instance, South Sudanese II states:

When I will reach Belgium, my reputation will be totally different. My friends who will stay here in Chobra will respect me and my siblings will be proud of me.

His statement is similar to South Sudanese I who highlights the importance of escaping from a negative condition here in Egypt:

I cannot just stay here because I do not have any future here. There is no good job, no money; life here is a hassle and I had in mind that I would go to Europe, maybe France, after spending some time here. People are waiting for me there [in France]. We talk every now and then; they are upset because I keep on postponing my venue.

South Sudanese tend to identify themselves by clan or tribe. They benefit from a large community who have become accustomed to moving away from its homeland. On the contrary, confusion seems to characterize the motivations of our Libyan respondents who seem to be motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Beside this, while Syrians and South Sudanese are fairly clear about their migration intentions and the destination country, Libyan respondents seem uncertain. Some would like to stay in a Middle East country, Oman being a preferred destination, while some would rather migrate to the United States of America (USA). Libyan IV says

Migrating to Oman would impress my friends. One of them married an Egyptian woman and his life is now here, but I do not want that. Oman would also impress my two brothers, I am sure. They do not agree with me, they want us to migrate to Europe.

Libyan V explains

I am planning to leave Egypt next year because I am not happy here, we became very poor, with no job security. I would like to go to America; I have my wife and three kids who need to see that I am brave enough to start a new life again. I will do it for us, for them. This is my responsibility.

Table 2: Degree of importance of motivational factors by type and by origin country

	<i>Syria</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>South Sudan</i>
<i>Intrinsic motivation</i>	High	Low to medium	Low
<i>Extrinsic motivation</i>	Low	Low to medium	High

Source: Author's computation

To conclude, motivations from Libyan respondents seem more confused than for Syrian and South Sudanese respondents. The origin of their motivation is not so clear, giving the feeling that the lack of clear migration project might delay the time when they would leave. On the other hand, South Sudanese and Syrian migrants appear more motivated and focused overall.

5.2 Opportunistic factors

Opportunistic factors include physical and social dimensions and their respective moderating role on transit migration for each origin country group is shown in table 3. Regarding physical opportunities, almost all the respondents mention them in terms of time, location and resources. For instance, South Sudanese IV reports

Nowadays it is much easier to reach Western countries from Egypt. I have time to plan my journey and I benefit from good logistic support. [...] I tried to save money, but with my job in the restaurant, I cannot. I have to send back money to my siblings. I am more worried for the money than for me to cross the sea.

Additionally, Libyan II states

My brother and I are in permanent contact with our cousins who settled in Italy. Hopefully he will send us enough money to avoid as many problems as possible when it will be time for us to join him.

From the analysis of the respondents' narratives, we discover that respondents rely heavily on new technologies, not only to maintain ties with their home country but to facilitate the migration process itself. Syrian V says

My friend called me and told me last month that he successfully reached Italy and that he is waiting for me. He gave me good advice.

In his case, Syrian V will adjust his own journey accordingly; his friend might continuously guide him. Diminescu (2008) explains well the new age of connected migrants who became the actors of a culture of bonds. The author talks about the relational settlement which allude to the social device by which migrants organize their life of mobility and which is especially visible in the organization of the departure and the return, but also in the intermittent integration. In that sense, new technologies grease the wheels of the fragmented journeys of migrants. Their relation with time, location and resources revolutionizes the role of physical opportunities and made them highly important in the transit migration process for our three origin country groups.

Besides, technological infrastructure impacts social opportunities, which deal with cultural norms and social cultures. South Sudanese respondents highlight particularly their role in this area. South Sudanese III explains

Transiting through Egypt or Libya? Nowadays my friends said this is much better through Egypt, it became the norm actually. This is a must for all the Sudanese who I know. There is no taboo about that we openly talk about it.

Migration and transit migration are not taboo for South Sudanese respondents. It sounds normal to them. It became a mores. The back and forth displacement within the region led South Sudanese consider movements away from home a normal phenomenon for the last fifteen years.

Regarding social culture, again South Sudanese respondents appear the most opened in talking about emigration and transit migration. South Sudanese IV says

All my friends from the village left. The ones who stayed are planning also to leave. This is now part of our culture. This is a must do.

Libyan respondents talk freely as well about transit migration and fragmented journeys. Libyan V confirms

I cannot imagine stay in Egypt. Around me there is no one thinking about staying in the country. It became natural for us to continue our journey and not just settle down here.

Table 3: Degree of importance of opportunistic factors by type and by origin country

	<i>Syria</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>South Sudan</i>
<i>Physical opportunity</i>	High	High	High
<i>Social opportunity</i>	Medium	Medium	High

Source: Author's computation

For Libyan and South Sudanese respondents, transit migration became almost an obligatory rite of passage and a consumption good in opposition to an investment, as they would have consumed any other migration journey, without revealing specific intrinsic motivations. Syrian respondents, on the opposite, reacted over a specific situation in their home country. Transit migration is more a folkway than a mores in their case.

5.3 Ability factors

We measure ability by referring to the four components of self-efficacy. Their respective role is synthesized in table 4. We note again significant differences between our origin country groups and the specificity of South Sudanese for whom the overall self-efficacy is very high.

Table 4: Degree of importance of ability factors by type and by origin country

	<i>Syria</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>South Sudan</i>
<i>Performance experience</i>	Low to medium	Low to medium	High
<i>Social persuasion</i>	Medium	Low to medium	High
<i>Imaginal experience</i>	High	High	High
<i>Vicarious experience</i>	Low	Low	High

Source: Author's computation

Let us start with performance experience, which refers in our case to capital mobility. We notice significant difference between Syrian and Libyan respondents on one side, and South Sudanese respondents on the other. While the formers have already a substantial experience in migrating, the latter have a low mobility capital. Syrian III explains

This was the first time for me to leave my region. I had no experience before.

Syrian II completes

I was used with my two sisters to go every month to my village in the mountains, because I have my relatives there. I travelled once to the South of Syria also, but I could have never imagined that one day I would be stuck outside the country.

Libyan respondents do have a similar limited experience in geographical international mobility. Libyan I says

Our country was everything. I grew up there, and never travelled abroad before 2012.

Libyan IV, who found refuge in the USA for four years, is the only Libyan respondent with a pronounced international mobility experience. The cultural gap led them to fly back to a country with a culture more similar to Libya. He says

I know what means leaving everything and feeling homeless. I do not mind now leaving again, I think actually that I got used to.

By the same token, South Sudanese respondents have a significant mobility experience due to the history of their country. South Sudanese V explains

I left my village in 2014 [...] to stay in Sudan. Then, I moved to Libya and thought I would be able to reach Italy. I had some problems in Libya, so then we decided to come to Cairo.

In 2017, the European Union signed a migration deal with Libya to curb irregular migration, making it more difficult for migrants, asylum seekers included, to migrate to Europe. The migration journeys thus led these migrants to Egypt.

Scholars show that past behaviour, especially in the field of migration, does have a predictive power. Therefore, we might reasonably assume that the South Sudanese are the most likely to emigrate from Egypt in the short or medium run.

The second element of self-efficacy is social persuasion. In our case, results are consistent with findings on the role of extrinsic motivational factors. We observed that the role of peers is much more significant for South Sudanese respondents than for Syrian or Libyan respondents. This solidarity network provides them with practical, emotional and technical support.

Similarly, vicarious experience plays a significant moderating role for South Sudanese respondents contrary to the other two country groups. South Sudanese V says

I learnt from the others. I can follow them on Facebook. One of them explained how, from Egypt, he managed to reach Italy.

South Sudanese respondents especially gained knowledge from the actions of other migrants who share common characteristics. Decisions made by others also provide relevant information for them when they are taking their decision to migrate from Egypt. Besides, they learnt by observing the behaviour of others. Again the role of technological

infrastructure and the concept of migratory traceability developed by Diminescu (2008) are crucial at that stage.

Finally, the imaginal experience does not vary across our three origin country groups. All seem to visualize themselves effectively transiting to their chosen destination country. Syrian I says

Sometimes when I sleep, I dream about me being free. I see myself elsewhere, I do not know where it is exactly, but I am sure that Europe would give me this freedom.

Additionally, South Sudanese IV announces

I know that in Europe I will quickly find a good job and settle properly. I heard that life is much easier than anywhere else. I am sure of that actually.

A misleading myth of freedom, protection and successful employment surrounds the process of emigration to Europe appearing therefore as a strong feature of the behavioural planning of each of our three origin country groups.

6. Conclusion

In this study, we aimed to explore the role of different factors which influence refugees' and asylum seekers' intention to migrate from Egypt by using an alternative decision-making process model based on the MOA framework.

This detailed theoretical framework allows us to structure and assess the role of factors that lead people to think about emigrating from Egypt and those factors which guide whether people act on their thoughts and actually leave the country. To do so, we collected the narratives of fifteen refugees or asylum seekers from South Sudan, Syria and Libya and based in Cairo, Egypt at the time of our study.

The below table (table 5) summarizes our findings. Three specific points emerge from our results. Firstly, results show that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, physical and social opportunities and self-efficacy are important drivers for behavioural transit migration planning. The reference to the elements of the MOA approach by our fifteen respondents indicates and confirms the necessity to include more systematic behavioural patterns in the study of transit migration and to structure these patterns with strong theoretical frameworks such as MOA. Such a holistic approach was unfortunately neglected in the previous literature.

Table 5: Degree of importance of MOA factors by type and by origin country

		<i>Syria</i>	<i>Libya</i>	<i>South Sudan</i>
Motivation	<i>Intrinsic</i>	High	Low to medium	Low
	<i>Extrinsic</i>	Low	Low to medium	High
Opportunity	<i>Physical</i>	High	High	High
	<i>Social</i>	Medium	Medium	High
Ability	<i>Performance experience</i>	Low to medium	Low to medium	High
	<i>Social persuasion</i>	Medium	Low to medium	High
	<i>Imaginal experience</i>	High	High	High
	<i>Vicarious experience</i>	Low	Low	High

Source: Author's computation

Secondly, the role of motivational, opportunistic and ability factors is significantly different from one origin country group to another. South Sudanese respondents are the most likely to leave Egypt in the short or medium term. Except for intrinsic motivation, the role of each motivational, opportunistic and ability factors is high. On the contrary, we notice that Syrian and Libyan respondents show comparable factoring patterns despite the presence of some exceptions. On average, we can say that their respective behaviour is moderately driven by ability factors, except for imaginal experience. At the same time, they benefit from similar physical and social opportunistic factors, while South Sudanese respondents refer more systematically to the social dimension of opportunities. While Libyan respondents demonstrate a medium role for both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, Syrian respondents and South Sudanese respondents underline the crucial role of the first and second ones respectively.

Lastly, this analysis confirms that a one-size-fits-all approach towards asylum seekers and refugees is not appropriate. On the contrary, the question of tailored migration policies, especially integration policies, which take into account the diversity of factors for transit migration needs to be addressed not only in Egypt but in the whole Mediterranean region.

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